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Moving from the Shadows: Shedding Light on Mixed-Citizenship Status Latino Families and Emotional Well-Being—a Mixed Methods Study

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Moving from the Shadows – Shedding Light on Mixed-Citizenship Status Latino Families and Emotional Well-Being: A Mixed Methods Study

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Ashley-Marie V. Hanna
March 2016
Advisor: Debora M. Ortega, PhD
ABSTRACT

Throughout history and in contemporary U.S. society, immigration policies and practices have been laced with racist nativism, benefiting the dominant (white, male elite) society at the expense of Immigrants of Color (Chavez, 2008; Hanna & Ortega, 2016; Huag, n.d.; Ortega, Hanna, & Haffejee, 2014; Pérez-Huber, 2008). Today, Latinos are particularly vulnerable as they are the target of racist nativist immigration policy and practices and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

This dissertation examines the emotional well-being of Latino youths and young adults in mixed-citizenship status families using mixed methods research methodology. The study is informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), which places this area of inquiry in the context of historical and contemporary immigration policies and practices, structural racism and individuals’ intersecting identities. The study analyzes quantitative data from two separate samples (high school students and adults), yielding a total of 214 respondents (40% U.S. native families, 40% immigrant families (non-mixed status) and 20% mixed status families). The qualitative strand of the study utilizes a grounded theory approach to analyze the interviews of 20 participants, 19 in immigrant families, half of whom were in mixed-citizenship status families. Although no statistically significant results were found, the qualitative data suggests that Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families are uniquely impacted by
current immigration policies and practices as they navigate various forms of structural oppression, including limited support structures in the education system; racial profiling and the active policing of the immigrant community; the inability of unauthorized immigrants to legally work, putting them at risk for exploitation or unfair working environments; and barriers for unauthorized immigrants to travel both domestically and internationally. These unique experiences take an emotional toll on all members of mixed-citizenship status families, including authorized immigrant and U.S. citizen family members. Merged quantitative and qualitative data displays the impact of perceived discrimination and structural oppression on the emotional well-being of Latinos. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of implications for social work practice, policy and research.
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Mom and Dad, I am forever grateful for your ongoing love and support. Thank you for making your seven children your biggest priority and for giving us each the space to pursue and live our own individual happiness. Your hard work and dedication to our family have given me the opportunities to grow and develop into the person that I dream to be, both personally and professionally. I also want to thank my brothers and sisters. My road to social work began with you, for you taught me how to negotiate difference, love, and have compassion for others no matter our conflicts or disagreements. You are my foundation and strength. I especially want to thank my sister and best friend, Julia. Whether I am near or far, you keep me connected and are a bottomless well of support.

Finally, I extend my deepest appreciation to the participants of this study. Without you, the research would not have been possible. I am especially grateful to the participants of the qualitative strand and to member check participants for taking the time to meet with me and sharing your stories. Your honesty, passion, and commitment to the project enhanced and strengthened the study.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I remember when I was having my green card and versus, being an American citizen now, I think that when you are having your green card it's still...you're still like a...you don’t feel 100 percent part of this country. Versus when you have your citizenship, you feel like you have all the privilege. And it’s just a different feeling. ... Citizenship makes you feel more stable. .... When you have the green card...if something goes wrong, if you do something wrong, they can still take away the green card and kick you out. But when you’re a citizen, they cannot do that.

—Rosa, a Peruvian immigrant and US citizen

I would potentially lose it [my authorized immigrant status] and that meant finding a way to get it back, because being legal...being able to realize your dreams in whatever way you want to is essential. So, you cannot be prevented from going to school or having the job that you want because you’re undocumented. Simply...that’s simply not having a life.

— Nancy, a Columbian authorized immigrant in an authorized immigrant family

They [my parents] could be driving, and they could get pulled over for a light. And just because they look a little darker, and they might not just get a ticket, they might get caught up. Where are your papers? And then you have to live with that
conscience here. Like, hey, I might get a call. My parents might be in the
detention center. They might be deported. I have a little brother I have to take
care of. It’s just…it’s all these things that…they’re kind of in more danger than I
am. Just because they don’t have those papers. And it’s…there’s a worry that’s
always in the back of your head, but you kind of learn to live with that worry.
— Gilda, a native born US citizen in a mixed status family

When I was in high school I found out that I was undocumented…I was…a
sophomore getting ready for the whole college thing, and we needed a social
security [number] and I didn’t have one. When I found out I thought…wait, what?
What does this mean really? What does this number mean? If I don’t have it, can
I apply for it? Like, is it hard to get it? What does it mean? Does my future
depend on these numbers?
— Lucia, a Mexican immigrant protected through Deferred Action through
Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in a mixed status family

Well, my younger brother who is 15 right now, and my younger sister, who is 13,
are [U.S.] citizens. They were born in this country. So they don’t have to worry
about being deported. My mother and father don’t have documents. So for a long
time my younger brother, who is 21 right now, and myself also didn’t have
anything [documents] at all. And we were at risk of being deported until deferred
action came along. So that [not having documents] just made it very difficult for
us to do many things… just the risk of just driving and being pulled over, and
getting taken to a detention center, down to a detention center after that. It was hard.

—Dante, a Mexican immigrant in a mixed status family who fell out of status while waiting for DACA paperwork to be renewed

Although these are just a few examples of the varying experiences of people who have grown up in Latino immigrant families, the participants’ quotes reveal how Latino immigrants are differently impacted based on U.S. citizenship and immigrant status (their own and their family members’) subsequent to the influence of historical and contemporary racist nativism in immigration policies and practices. Historically, immigration policies and practices have been laced with racist nativism, benefiting the dominant (white, male elite) society at the expense of Immigrants of Color. In addition, the same dehumanizing anti-immigrant rhetoric present in the 1800s continues to be commonplace today (Hanna & Ortega, 2016; Ortega, Hanna, & Haffajee, 2014). For instance, the political cartoons of the 19th century portrayed Irish immigrants as drunks, criminals and threats to the U.S. way of life (Huag, n.d.; Ortega et al., 2014). Similarly, in the recent U.S. presidential Republican primaries, presidential hopeful Donald Trump depicted Mexican immigrants as criminals, drug smugglers and rapists (Fang, 2015). This context is central to the experience of Latinos in the United States.

**Relevant Terminology**

It is necessary to define a few key terms that will be used throughout this dissertation prior to describing the research problem and purpose of the study. The term Latino refers to those living in the United States who are descendants of a country in Latin America, including the Caribbean, where Spanish is the dominant spoken language
(Varela & Hensley-Maloney, 2009). Hispanic refers to both Latinos and individuals who are decedents of Spain (Mari´n & Mari´n, 1991). For the purposes of the present study, when a person’s country of origin is not specifically stated, the term Latino will be used as it more accurately describes the population of interest.

An immigrant is “a person who enters the United States with the intention of remaining here permanently” (Erisman & Looney, 2007, p. 9). An immigrant can also be described as a foreign-born person who was not a citizen of the United States at birth, including people who have gained citizenship through naturalization (Gryn & Larsen, 2010). In current literature, the terms foreign born and immigrant are often used interchangeably, as they will be in this study.

An unauthorized immigrant is a foreign born non-citizen who is not a legal resident of the United States (Hoefer, Rytina, & Baker, 2010). While various terms have been used over the years when referring to people who are not legal residents (e.g., undocumented persons, illegal aliens, aliens, etc.), the term unauthorized immigrant will be used most often in this paper as this is the current language of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The term unauthorized immigrant includes immigrants who entered the United States without approval through the U.S. immigration process and immigrants who have fallen out of status by overstaying or otherwise violating the terms of their visas (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). This includes immigrants who are currently in the process of gaining legal status under U.S. law and immigrants who had legal immigration status at one time but no longer have the proper immigration documentation required to reside in the United States. It is important to note that the term undocumented immigrant is more widely known and was the preferred language of the
participants. Therefore, the terms unauthorized immigrant and undocumented immigrant will be used interchangeably within this dissertation.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status is not lawful immigrant status and does not provide a path for permanent resident status or U.S. citizenship. However, it does protect immigrants from the risk of deportation and allows them to receive employment authorization while protected under DACA status. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2015), DACA status can be terminated or renewed at its discretion. DACA status is not guaranteed and, once granted, individuals must apply for its renewal every two years.

In order for an unauthorized immigrant to be considered for protection under DACA, the following supporting evidence must be submitted through the application process: 1) as of June, 15, 2012, the applicant must have been under the 31 years of age; 2) have come to the U.S. prior to their 16th birthday; 3) have been a continuous resident in the U.S. since June 15, 2007; 4) have been present in the U.S. since June 15, 2012; 5) either have had their authorized immigration status expire prior to or have entered the U.S. without inspection prior to June 15, 2012; 6) at the time of application, be enrolled in school or have a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) certificate, or have been honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces or Coast Guard; 7) have no felony convictions, three or more misdemeanors, no significant misdemeanor, and be determined to not be a threat to public safety or national security (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

A mixed-citizenship status family (mixed status family) has members with both authorized and unauthorized statuses and is defined by Passel and Taylor (2010) as “a
family with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent and at least one U.S. citizen child” (p. 4). For the purposes of this dissertation, mixed-citizenship status families will be defined as a family with at least one unauthorized nuclear family member and one authorized, protected (through DACA) or U.S. citizen nuclear family member living in the United States.

The term racist nativism is defined as

[T]he assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be People and Immigrants of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites, or the natives, to dominance. (Perez Huber, 2008, p. 43)

This definition of racist nativism holds that racist nativism is a form of racism held by white, U.S.-Americans and directed toward all People of Color, not specific to Immigrants of Color as had been previously conceptualized. Perez Huber (2008) posit that as the white U.S.-American identity is based on white supremacy, white U.S.-Americans perceive only themselves as U.S. natives and therefore perceive all Persons of Color to be non-native. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, the term racist nativism will be used to describe white supremacy that targets people based on two components: 1) being a Person of Color and 2) being considered non-native to the United States.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Immigration is not a new phenomenon. It is a part of the social fabric of the United States of America. Although migration from Mexico has been a constant throughout history, recent policies of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s impacted immigration settlement patterns, decreased regular patterns of return migration, increased the
likelihood for immigrants to extend their stays or permanently stay in the U.S. and significantly increased the number of Latino immigrants and unauthorized immigrants residing in the United States (Card & Lewis, 2007; Hanna & Ortega, 2016; Massey & Capoferro, 2008; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Ortega et al., 2014; Passel, 2011; Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Subsequently, Latinos have become the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013); one quarter of all children live in immigrant families (Zong & Batalova, 2015) and over five million children, the majority of whom are Latino U.S. citizens, live in mixed-citizenship status immigrant families (Passel & Taylor, 2010). Given the recent trends in immigration, the literature aiming to capture the experience of the growing population of Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families is emerging.

Although the empirical literature specific to Latinos in mixed status families is sparse, there is a growing body of non-empirical literature that addresses the impact current immigration policy has on mixed status families (del Mar, 2013; Hwang & Parreñas, 2010; Morrison & Thronson, 2010; Sutter, 2006; Thronson & Sullivan, 2012). Other literature not only examines the trends and effects of immigration law on the Latino population and those in mixed status families, but also address the significance for child welfare and social work (Harris, 2010; Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007; Zayas, 2010). Even so, much of the existing literature that addresses the emotional well-being of Latinos in mixed status families is specific to the effects of immigrant detention and deportation.

The present research study is distinct in that it examines the experience of Latinos living in mixed status families through a mixed methods research approach, including
both a quantitative and qualitative component. In addition, the study utilizes Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework. Given the historical and contemporary racist nativist immigration policies and practices, CRT is an appropriate theoretical framework for a research study in this substantive area as it requires that power, privilege and oppression play a prominent role in the investigation of a research topic (Lawless, Brooks, & Julye, 2006). CRT is also well-suited for the field of social work, a field dedicated to social justice and the empowerment of marginalized populations (National Association of Social Workers, 2014). CRT demands that research studies aim to target structural forces that maintain the oppressive system (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010) and conclude with a call for action and an outline of specific recommendations or steps to inspire action (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Graham, Brown-Jeffy, Aronson, & Stephens, 2011).

The Purpose of this Dissertation

Immigration practices and policies have historically and continue to be laced with racist and nativist agendas. However, little research has been done to study the impact of such policies on immigrants. Although emerging research and scholarship has investigated various components of this substantive area, the majority has been specific to the impact of immigrant detention and deportation. This dissertation examines the impact of mixed-citizenship status on the emotional well-being of Latino youths and young adults, considering the influence of historical and contemporary racist nativism in immigration policies and practices. The aim of this dissertation is to determine the relationship between the unauthorized immigrant status of family members and emotional well-being. The present research study specifically investigates the documentation status
of family members and how this impacts levels of anxiety and depression. This field of study is significant as it contributes to filling a void in the literature.

**Research Design**

The present study employs a transformative convergent parallel design. It places the convergent parallel design within a transformative design that utilizes CRT, the overarching interpretive framework for the present study. This provides the necessary critical lens through which the research problem is understood. Within the convergent parallel research design, qualitative and quantitative data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The purpose of this design was to synthesize both the quantitative and qualitative results to allow for greater insight into the substantive area than would be obtained by only collecting and analyzing one type of data (either quantitative or qualitative data) to more fully uncover the complexities and nuances of the experiences of Latinos living in mixed status families (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2003). Given the dearth of literature in this field of study and the complexities of the substantive area, a mixed methods approach was deemed to be the most appropriate research method, enabling the potential for generalizable results and a greater depth of understanding of the research problem.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The overarching research aim of this dissertation is to understand how living in a mixed-citizenship status family impacts the social-emotional well-being (e.g., levels of anxiety and depression) of Latinos. Two research questions were developed to address this goal: Research question 1: How does living in a mixed-citizenship status family impact Latinos? Research question 2: In which ways does the citizenship status of family
members impact anxiety and depression levels of Latinos? The choice of CRT as the theoretical framework for this study necessitates that power, privilege, and oppression play a prominent role in the investigation of the research topic (Lawless et al., 2006). Therefore, in addition to the two research questions, the present study investigates how racialization contributes to the problem (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010).

Considering the research questions and potential relationships between key variables, four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, test these relationships and ultimately answer the research questions:

- **H0**: Mixed status and U.S.-born families have the same experience of emotional well-being (i.e., depression and anxiety).
- **H1**: Latinos in mixed status nuclear families have higher levels of depression and anxiety compared with their counterparts in U.S. citizen families.
- **H2**: Latinos in mixed status families have higher levels of depression and anxiety than their counterparts in authorized immigrant families.
- **H3**: Latinos (U.S.-born, immigrant and/or mixed status) experience higher levels of depression and anxiety than those in U.S.-born (non-immigrant) families of color or white families.
- **H4**: Latinos in mixed status families have higher levels of depression and anxiety than U.S.-born (non-immigrant) Persons of Color.

**Assumptions of this Dissertation**

CRT contends that part of what makes the oppressive system in the United States so difficult to dismantle are the existing systemic forces and macro-level factors that maintain the status quo (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). CRT research therefore aims to
target these oppressive structural forces and eliminate them (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Pursuant to this aim, this research study intends to expose how macro-level factors (anti-immigrant and anti-Latino policy and practices) impact Latinos and those living in mixed-citizenship status families. The underlying assumption is that the historical and contemporary racist nativist policies and practices inevitably impact the emotional well-being of immigrants. The hope is that this research will 1) expose a need for future research, interventions and policy reform; 2) reveal strategies or protective factors to the negative outcomes stemming from the current anti-immigrant state; and 3) provide evidence to support the dismantling of the anti-immigrant system (i.e., repealing laws that target and negatively impact immigrants, those living in immigrant families and Latinos).

**Social Location of the Author**

Similar to feminists, Critical Race theorists urge researchers to both personally and publicly recognize and acknowledge their interest in and intention behind researching their chosen subject matter (Gillies & Alldred, 2002). CRT compels scholars to engage in a process of reflexivity regarding one’s social location. Reflexivity emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness and ownership of one’s perspective. Being reflexive involves self-questioning and self-understanding…to undertake an ongoing examination of what I know and how I know it. (Patton, 2002, p. 64)

This includes “the cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of one’s own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voices of those one interviews and those to whom one reports” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). As an aspiring Critical Race theorist, it is therefore necessary for me to disclose information about my social location, interest in the topic and intention for this work.
Inevitably, my social location impacts the way I view the world and the way I am viewed by the world, including the participants of this study. It impacts my framing of the problem, the survey created for the quantitative strand of this dissertation, the participant interviews and my analysis and understanding of the data. It is necessary for me as a researcher to acknowledge this reality and how similar to the experience of many white people in the United States,

upon looking into and beyond the mirror, whites [including myself] have found their whiteness both opaque and transparent. Most whites have not thought much about their race. Few, upon being asked to identify themselves by attributes, would name whiteness among their primary characteristics. (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. 1)

Part of my growth as a social worker and a researcher has been to not only name whiteness as one of the primary characteristics, but also acknowledge the integral role it unavoidably plays in my research, including this dissertation.

As a white woman studying issues that affect those living in immigrant families, many of whom are of Latino descent, CRT gives me a perspective or framework to continuously revisit. In doing so, I become more aware of the many issues surrounding power, privilege and oppression. Each reflection is an opportunity to open my eyes a bit wider to the many inequities that exist within the U.S. system. To work and research within this substantive area, it is necessary for me to be aware of the master narrative based on white supremacy that exists in the U.S. culture and within us as individuals (Stanley, 2007). Not only have I been influenced by Eurocenticism from the time I was born, but also through the United States education system. The curriculum from which I have learned has been based “not simply upon an imagined superiority of Western endeavors and accomplishments, but also upon the notion that the currents of European
thinking comprise the only really “natural” – or at least truly useful-formation of knowledge/means of perceiving reality” (Churchill, 1996, p. 272). It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that my knowledge base as well as the way I have learned to think and view the world has been shaped by a Eurocentric society and education system. Nevertheless, I recognize that my way of understanding and interpreting the data collected in this dissertation “is very naturally and subconsciously interpreted through these beliefs” (Bernal, 2002, p. 111). In order to combat this, a CRT framework was needed to increase my awareness of my own Eurocentric thinking and bracket it as much as possible (although I fully acknowledge that this is not possible). By acknowledging my biases, I am more equipped to research in this area, incorporating the necessary feedback from Scholars of Color and community participants. Without this feedback and support, my bias based on my social location would have an even greater (detrimental) impact on my work. As a white scholar in academia, this is a constant struggle, a struggle that needs to be had every day and will never end.

Utilizing a CRT framework allows me to acknowledge that my research is not neutral as the research is shaped through my own identity and lens (no matter how hard I try to bracket my perspective). This is especially important for me as a researcher given my social location and the numerous privileged identities I hold that inevitably impact how I view the world, interact with others, approach and interpret research, etc. These privileged identities work as filters and often as blinders that necessitate ongoing self-reflection and ongoing discussion with peers and colleagues with different identities to allow me to see the world more fully, instead of simply through the master-narrative that privileges most aspects of my identity, every moment of every day.
My privileged identities include, but are not limited to, being a white, highly educated, middle class, English-speaking, able-bodied, native-born U.S. citizen, Cisgender female who was raised in a two-parent Catholic family by heterosexual parents. I identify as a woman and benefit from cisgender privilege, meaning that I was assigned a female sex at birth and have always identified as a female. I identify as white, Anglo-American of European descent, born into a family of Anglo-descent where English was the primary and only language spoken by my biological parents and siblings. I grew up in the Midwest, in a city segregated based on race and class, in an environment where almost everyone I knew was Catholic, white, middle to upper-middle class, English speakers, most of whom were politically conservative (or at least their parents were). I attended Catholic school from kindergarten through high school, before continuing onto a four-year state college where I received my BSW. I then received my MSW. After approximately five years living and working in Denver, Colorado, I returned to school to work toward my PhD in social work. As I grew up and in my adult life, due to my social location, most messages I heard told me that I was and am good, normal, healthy, morally appropriate, and have the potential to be successful and do whatever it was that my heart desires.

The Researcher’s Interest in Working with the Spanish-speaking Immigrant Community

There are many aspects of my social location that impact my decision to study this topic. I will try to briefly describe some of the major life experiences that brought me to focus my research on the experience of Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families. I’ll begin with my decision to learn Spanish after taking French throughout high school.
In reality, my choice to learn Spanish was a practical one. A friend asked me to volunteer at a nonprofit organization serving the Latino immigrant community in my college town in mid-Missouri. I did not speak Spanish at the time, but the nonprofit was in need of volunteers, so I decided to lend a hand however I could. That was where I had my first experiences with the Spanish-speaking immigrant community in mid-Missouri. I learned that there was an influx of Mexican immigrant families to the area (although I had been living in mid-Missouri, until that point, I had remained in a bubble surrounded with little diversity and interacting with people who generally looked, talked and thought very much like me). This was an eye-opening experience for me, and as a social work student, I thought it only practical to learn Spanish as I would likely need to interact with Spanish-speaking people in my field of choice. As a senior in college, I began to take Spanish courses. After college, I taught English in Spain and then returned to my hometown to begin my graduate degree and completed my social work practicum and lived in Guadalajara, Mexico, for approximately eight months. It was in Guadalajara that I learned Spanish and began to understand some of the reasons that Mexicans were migrating and/or immigrating to the United States. After graduating with my master of social work degree, I returned to Guadalajara, Mexico, for another eight months and taught English while I continued learn Spanish. It was also in Guadalajara where I met my partner of nearly a decade. From Guadalajara, we moved to Denver, Colorado in 2005.

While in Denver, I worked as a home-based and out-patient therapist, serving the English- and Spanish-speaking communities. It was my work with the Spanish-speaking community (majority Mexican immigrant community) that caused me to want to return to
school and get my PhD, in hopes that I would be able to effect greater change in what I saw as a broken immigration system that negatively impacted our community, especially those living in mixed-citizenship status families. While working as a therapist, it seemed that I heard similar stories over and over again of children who were feeling anxious and/or depressed after a parent or family member had been detained, deported or was facing deportation for being in the United States without the proper documentation (i.e., for being an unauthorized immigrant). On a personal note, within the Mexican immigrant community, I was constantly hearing about friends and acquaintances who had friends and families members who had either been detained or deported.

Living with my partner, a Mexican immigrant who came to the United States as a mono-lingual Spanish speaker, also opened my eyes to the ongoing discrimination and prejudice faced by Latino immigrants in Denver. Growing up with privilege and in a community that had similar privilege (i.e., majority white middle to upper middle class), I was unaware to the reality of the pervasive racism and racist nativism that exists in the United States. My privilege meant that I never had to think about such issues and when I did, it was told from the perspective of the oppressors. It was not until I saw my partner be refused service at a restaurant, heard about his experience having a gun pulled on him by a police officer when his license plates had expired or being pulled over for a “dimmed headlight” and then asked for identification, watched as people became impatient because they could not understand his broken English and heavy accent, etc. that I became more aware of the racism and racist nativism that is commonplace in the United States. I realized that racism is something not only experienced by African Americans in the United States, but by all People of Color.
On another personal note, an extended family member was deported during this time period of my life. This person was a white Canadian male who had lived in the United States for over 30 years as an unauthorized immigrant. Although directly affected by the increased immigration enforcement in the United States (i.e., his deportation), my white extended family members’ experiences in a mixed-citizenship family were very different compared with the many stories I had seen and heard from Latinos over the years. In addition, although my partner was and had always been an authorized immigrant, entering the country with the appropriate visa and remaining in the country with the appropriate visas, his experience as a Mexican male with brown skin and a thick accent was very different than the experience of my extended family member. These differences made me reflect on issues of race, national origin and immigration status. I began to realize that immigration status (being unauthorized) is not the only factor that impacts those in mixed status families. It is the combination of skin color, national origin and immigration status (among other things like class, accent, language ability, etc.) that impact those in mixed status families given the current racist nativist state within which we live.

Although this is an incomplete history of whom I am and what brought me to research this topic for my dissertation, I hope that it provides a level of transparency for readers to understand my social location and how my social location affects my work. This attempt at transparency is like my work toward self-awareness: admittedly incomplete, but always a work in progress.
Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation began with a brief introduction and discussion of the social location of the author. Next, Chapter 2 includes a review of the current state of the literature in this substantive area. Chapter 3 discusses the overarching theoretical framework that guides this research (Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory). In Chapter 4, the methodology is described in detail. In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed. Chapter 7 merges the quantitative and qualitative findings, discusses limitations, implications, as well as next steps for practice, policy, research and scholarship. Throughout the various chapters of this dissertation, the themes of racism, nativism, ethnicity/race, U.S. citizen and immigrant status of individuals and their family members will be woven together to better understand how mixed-citizenship status impacts the emotional well-being (levels of anxiety and depression) of Latinos.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a gap in the scholarship that investigates how living in a mixed-citizenship status family impacts anxiety and depression levels of Latinos. Given this void, it was necessary to pull literature from various areas within the larger substantive area to inform this dissertation. This literature review begins by describing demographic information about the Latino population residing in the United States, including information specific to the unauthorized immigrant population and mixed-citizenship status families. It addresses immigrant myths and realities involving their ability to integrate into U.S. society, fiscal contributions, economic well-being, criminal behavior and health outcomes. It also includes a discussion of the scholarship specific to Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families, incorporating the body of evidence specific to Latinos affected by immigrant detention and the larger body of evidence specific to anxiety and depression within the Latino community. This chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for practice and future research.

Latinos in the United States

Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). At an estimated 53 million, people of Hispanic descent constitute 17% of the U.S. population, making it the second largest Hispanic population behind Mexico (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The U.S. also has the third largest Latino population in the world, behind Brazil
and Mexico respectively. The majority (65%) of Latinos living in the United States is of Mexican origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

**Immigrant Demographic Information**

**Current statistics.** As of 2015, the total foreign-born population living in the United States reached over 41 million, nearly half (47%) of whom are U.S. citizens (Lopez, Passel, & Rohal, 2015). This is a slight increase from population estimates in 2012, indicating that the immigrant population consisted of 17.8 million (41%) naturalized citizens, 11.7 million (27%) legal permanent residents, 11.2 million (26%) unauthorized immigrants, and 1.9 million (5%) temporary legal residents. The Mexican immigrant population comprises a large percentage (28%) of the total foreign-born population and more than half of the Latino immigrant population (Grieco et al., 2012; Lopez, Passel & Rohal, 2015). The 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that 11.6 million Mexican immigrants are living in the U.S. (Zong & Batalova, 2015); an estimated 5.6 million are unauthorized (Krogstad & Passel, 2015).

**Unauthorized immigrants.** The most recent reports indicate that as of 2014, the unauthorized immigrant population reached approximately 11.3 million and that this number has remained fairly stable for the past five years (Krogstad & Passel, 2015; Passel & Cohn, 2015). Past estimates indicate that within the unauthorized immigrant population, there were an estimated 6.5 million (58%) Mexican immigrants, 2.6 million (23%) immigrants from other parts of Latin American (not Mexican), 1.3 million (11%) Asian immigrants, 500,000 (4%) European and Canadian immigrants and 400,000 (4%) African immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009). These demographics are fairly consistent in more recent reports (Zong & Batalova, 2015) with the exception of the Mexican
Unauthorized immigrant population which population dropped to 5.9 million (52%) in 2012 (Passel, 2015) and 5.6 million in 2014 (Krosgstad & Passel, 2015).

**Mixed-citizenship status families.** The 2.3 million mixed-citizenship status families living in the United States (Passel & Taylor, 2010; Passel, 2011) comprise unauthorized immigrant parents and over 5 million children, most of who are U.S. citizens and of Latino descent. Nearly 80% (4 million) of the 5.1 million children born to unauthorized immigrants are U.S. citizens (Passel & Taylor, 2010).

**Immigration Myths and Realities**

“The images we constantly consume not only inform us of life around us but also help construct our understanding of events, people, and places in our world” (Chavez, 2008, p. 5). Similar to the anti-immigrant sentiment of the 1850s, the immigration debate today is filled with misinformation and fear-inducing tactics rather than fairness, reason and human dignity (Cole, 1994). It is therefore imperative to address common immigrant myths to provide a more accurate portrayal of immigrants in the United States. This is also an opportunity to re-frame the often unchallenged narrative that immigration to the U.S. is a problem (Chomsky, 2007). Subsequently, this section addresses five myths (and the associated truths) that pervade the U.S. social imaginary. These five myths are: 1) Immigrants are taking over the U.S. (Khakoo, 2003) or the U.S. is being invaded by a foreign force (Chavez, 2008). 2) Latino immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). 3) Immigrants are a fiscal and/or economic burden to the United States (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey, 2005). 4) Immigrants are criminals and more prone to criminal activity, especially if they are not legally present in the
United States (Chavez, 2008; Rumbaut, 2008). 5) The immigrant paradox (Teruya & Bazargan-Hejazi, 2013), specifically that immigrants are at a health advantage compared with their U.S.-born counterparts.

**Myth 1**

Immigrants are taking over the U.S. (Khakoo, 2003) or that the U.S. is being invaded by a foreign force (Chavez, 2008).

Media and political discourse often portray immigration in the United States in crisis terms where the U.S. is being invaded or overrun by immigrants (Chavez, 2008; Khakoo, 2003). Although it is true that the sheer number of immigrants has increased as the United States has continued to grow in size (Passel, 2011), this myth has no real basis in the current context of the United States. The reality is that immigration has been a constant with ebbs and flows since the United States of America came into existence (Cole, 1994; Passel, 2011). If U.S. citizens are not of Native American lineage, they are descendants of immigrants to the United States. In this sense, the aforementioned myth is true because the U.S. as we know it today has become a nation of immigrants after Western Europeans nearly decimated the Native American population that inhabited the United States through an ongoing overt and covert genocide (Cole, 1994; Harvey, 2007).

The notion that the U.S. as we know it today is being taken over or invaded by Latino immigrants (Chavez, 2008) and that there are more immigrants than ever before (Anonymous, 2006) is distorted. In actuality, just as the number of U.S. citizens has grown over time, so has the number of immigrants. This does not constitute an overall and absolute proportional increase. In fact, immigrants currently comprise a smaller percentage of the total population than in the early 1900s (Khakoo, 2003; Rumbaut &
Ewing, 2007). In the early 20th century, the foreign-born population was 15% of the total population (Anonymous, 2006; Cole, 1994). Immigrants currently make up just fewer than 13% of the total population (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007). In addition, 70%-80% of immigrants are relatives of U.S. citizens or refugees and therefore not “foreign” to their U.S. citizen relatives (Cole, 1994).

**Myth 2**

Latino immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994).

It is a common belief that immigrants do not integrate into society as they are perceived to not learn English, marry within cultural enclaves and participate in mainstream U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). This has been an ongoing concern of U.S.-Americans as each new generation of immigrants has come to the U.S. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). Like previous immigrant groups (i.e., Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Southern Europeans, Latin Americans, Catholics, Jews, etc.), Latinos contribute to the changing culture of the United States (Cole, 1994). Further, similar to other U.S. Americans, Latinos are bound to change, “but they will also remain a richly varied population based on national backgrounds and regional histories in the United States” (Chavez, 2008, p. 179). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce refutes the myth that immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society, indicating that immigrants are learning English, buying homes and becoming U.S. citizens (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2013). Additionally, current data suggest that immigrants are integrating both economically and socially (Passel & Fix, 1994).
For example, literature demonstrates that immigrants do not remain on the outskirts of U.S.-American culture, only associating with each other as this myth suggests. Refugees and immigrants intermarry at a rate of 1 in 3 to persons outside their ethnic groups (Khakoo, 2003). This rate is substantially higher for their children, who intermarry at a rate of 1 in 2 (Khakoo, 2003).

Statistics on English language development contradict the common believe that most immigrants do not learn English, a vital component of integrating into mainstream U.S. culture (Chomsky, 2007). The reality is that after living in the United States for 15 years, approximately three quarters of Spanish-speaking immigrants regularly speak English, and the U.S.-born children of immigrants are considered proficient English speakers (Khakoo, 2003). Literature also suggests that not only do most children of first-generation immigrants speak English, but 50% of children of immigrants are bilingual by the age of 8 (Urban Institute, 2010) and generally prefer to speak English over their immigrant parents’ native language (Khakoo, 2003).

Research related to English language development indicates that 44% of first-generation immigrant Latino students speak English with difficulty (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). However, by the second generation (children of immigrants), just 20% of Latino students speak English with difficulty. By the third generation (grandchildren of immigrants), a mere 5% of Latino students speak English with difficulty (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). This demonstrates that over time, English language ability greatly improves, and by the third generation, students’ English language ability is similar to those in non-immigrant families.
Myth 3

Immigrants are a fiscal and/or an economic burden to the United States (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey, 2005).

A common misconception is that immigrants and/or immigration negatively impact the U.S. economy as they are perceived to not contribute through taxes, depress job opportunities and wages, and use welfare and public benefits at high rates. Given the complexity and multiple components within this third myth, it must be disaggregated so that it can be more fully understood. To address this myth, some historic context will demonstrate how immigrants and immigration have served a financial purpose that has benefited the United States. Then, each of the individual components that contribute to this myth will be addressed: 1) economic contributions, including tax contributions; 2) immigrants’ impact on wages and U.S. jobs; and 3) the use of welfare benefits and other public benefits by immigrants.

**Historical context.** Like many of the current myths regarding immigrants and immigration, the fear that immigrants will be a burden to U.S. society dates back to colonial times (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). Although some pundits point to various untruths to support the claim that immigrants are an economic burden (Anonymous, 2006; Chomsky, 2007; Khakoo, 2003), substantial evidence contradicts this assertion. In fact, evidence consistently indicates that the fiscal consequences of immigration are generally positive (Passel & Fix, 1994). Additionally, Chomsky (2007) contends that throughout U.S. history, immigration has served an important purpose and has become essential to the U.S. economy, providing cheap labor
to sustain businesses and the needs of U.S. citizens by keeping the cost to businesses down and profits up.

As the U.S. was developed, the cheap labor provided through immigration came in the form of indentured servitude and slavery (Chomsky, 2007). A century after slavery ended, ongoing racial distinctions and inequalities among U.S. citizens prior to the civil rights era guaranteed a secondary labor market that provided cheap labor by workers who were not protected by the law nor provided fair and equal pay compared with their white counterparts (Chomsky, 2007). As U.S. citizens (i.e., ethnic minorities and women) over time have been granted increased labor protections through U.S. law, immigrants have continued to provide a cheap minimally protected labor source (Chomsky, 2007). Chomsky (2007) explains that historically, as one group of marginalized workers has achieved rights and greater protection under the law, “businesses—with government help—have simply looked elsewhere to define or create a new group of rightless workers” (p. 26). Subsequently, immigrants today, particularly unauthorized immigrants without access to many of the protections and rights provided by the U.S. government, are a marginalized proletariat utilized to sustain business profit and U.S. citizens through cheap labor (Chomsky, 2007). A participant in a recent qualitative research study regarding the Mexican immigrant experience emphasized this point by stating “[Mexican immigrants are treated as] instruments to become rich, to generate wealth…and not human beings” (Hanna & Ortega, 2016, p. 8).

**Tax contributions.** A common fallacy used to bolster the myth that immigrants are an economic burden is the presumption that immigrants do not pay taxes (Anonymous, 2006; Capps & Fix, 2005; Chomsky, 2007). In this case, the evidence
points to the contrary. Immigrants, including unauthorized immigrants, pay real estate
taxes, sales taxes, etc., just like their U.S. citizen counterparts (Capps & Fix, 2005;
Chomsky, 2007; Passel & Fix, 1994). In a 2013 report addressing immigration myths and
facts published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, it was estimated that over half of the
unauthorized immigrant population have Medicare taxes, Social Security taxes, and state
and federal income taxes deducted from their paychecks (U.S. Chamber of Commerce,
2013). Because the unauthorized immigrants have these taxes withdrawn from their
paycheck and are not eligible to receive the state and the federal benefits these dollars
subsidize, they partially fund the social security system accessed by U.S. citizens and
legal immigrants (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2013).

Further evidence contradicting this myth is found in a recent report published by
the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy that indicated that unauthorized
immigrants contributed $11.84 billion (or 8% of contributions) in state and local taxes
alone in 2012; this number includes an estimated $7 billion in sales and excise tax, $3.6
billion in property tax and $1.1 billion in personal income tax (Gardner, Johnson, &
Wiehle, 2015). In addition, unauthorized immigrants contribute billions in unclaimed
payroll tax dollars every year. The U.S. Social Security Administration estimated that in
2002 three quarters of the 9 million W-2s with incorrect or fictitious social security
numbers (constituting $56 million in earnings) were submitted by unauthorized
immigrants (Porter, 2005).

In addition, a 2011 report aimed at estimating the financial costs or benefits of
unauthorized immigrants in Colorado published by the Bell Policy Center indicated that
the money collected from unauthorized immigrants through local and state taxes covers
the cost to state and local governments for providing federally mandated services (Fairley & Jones, 2011). The report indicated that unauthorized immigrants pay approximately $167.5 million in local and state taxes (e.g., personal income, property and sales taxes), and that the cost of mandated government services provided to unauthorized immigrants was $166.6 million annually (Fairley & Jones, 2011).

Although this estimated amount of tax paid by unauthorized immigrants is on par with findings by known anti-immigrant research organizations like Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) (which estimated that unauthorized immigrants in Colorado pay approximately $160 million in taxes), the 2011 Bell Policy Report’s estimate of the financial cost to local and state governments for federally mandated government services is significantly lower than the $1.1 billion claimed by FAIR. The Bell Policy report is unique to others of its kind (i.e., FAIR report) in that it clearly outlines the methodology behind the benefit estimates (e.g., federal, state and local tax collected) and cost estimates (e.g., k-12 education, emergency medical care and incarceration) for federally mandated services benefiting unauthorized immigrants (Fairley & Jones, 2011). For instance, it was estimated that approximately half of unauthorized immigrants pay federal income tax that is withheld from their paychecks (Fairley & Jones, 2011). To estimate the amount of local and state taxes, researchers took the estimated number of unauthorized immigrants living in Colorado, multiplied it by the amount of Coloradans with similar incomes pay in local and state tax, and then subtracted the estimated amount of remittances immigrants send back to their country of origin ($3,600 annually) (Fairley & Jones, 2011).
Literature suggests that even when local and state governments find themselves at a deficit for the cost of public services compared with unauthorized immigrants’ tax contributions, such losses are estimated to be modest. Findings from a 2007 report by the U.S. Congressional Budget Office indicated that with the exception of California, where spending for the unauthorized immigrant population was approximately 10% of expenditures, spending on the unauthorized immigrant community generally accounted for less than 5% of local and state spending for education, health and law enforcement services (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). Together, these various reports estimating taxes paid at local, state and federal levels indicate that authorized and unauthorized immigrants not only pay taxes, but as a whole, their contributions minimally cover costs of federally mandated services and also partially subsidize the social security system.

**Impact on wages and jobs.** Another prevalent falsehood in regards to the financial/economic impact of immigration is the opinion that immigrants negatively impact U.S. citizen wages (Chomsky, 2007; Passel & Fix, 1994) and steal U.S. citizen jobs (Anonymous, 2006; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). Although the literature suggests that immigrants work at similar or higher rates to U.S. citizens (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014, 2015), the body of evidence does not support the claim that this negatively impacts U.S. citizens’ ability to have jobs. Paral (2009) asserted:

unemployed natives and employed recent immigrants tend to have different levels of education, to live in different parts of the country, to have experience in different occupations, and to have different amounts of work experience. As a result, they could not simply be ‘swapped’ for one another. (p. 3)
Additional scholarship indicates that immigrants have a minimal effect on wages, no direct effect on unemployment rates and no clear positive or negative impact on the overall economy when accounting for local, state and federal economies (Chomsky, 2007; Immigration Policy Center, 2013; Paral, 2009; Passel & Fix, 1994).

In a review of economic literature, Passel and Fix (1994) indicated that no substantial job displacement effects result from immigration and that unemployment rates are more directly connected to the global economy, not immigration (Chomsky, 2007). In a similar vein, a briefing before the United States Commission on Civil Rights by a panel of experts representing various disciplines (e.g., public policy, economics, political science, etc.) refutes claims that unauthorized immigrants depress wages and employment for the larger U.S. population (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). Although the panel conceded that low-skilled black workers’ wages and employment are impacted to some extent as they are often in direct competition with the unauthorized immigrant population for similar jobs (e.g., low-paying jobs in the construction, transportation or service sectors), they noted that unauthorized immigration is just one of a variety of larger factors that impact the employment of low-skilled black workers (e.g., structural racism, high dropout rates, etc.) (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). Also of note is that the panel highlighted the national economic benefits of both authorized and unauthorized immigration.

In direct contradiction with the belief that immigrants depress jobs and wages is the literature that suggests that immigrants create jobs (Cole, 1994) and are more likely than their U.S. native counterparts to be self-employed (Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). For example, a study of 1,592 unauthorized immigrants, permanent or temporary
residents and U.S. citizens from the greater Chicago metro area found that unauthorized immigrants’ consumer spending generates more than 31,000 jobs and adds approximately $5.45 billion to the annual gross regional product (Mehta, Theodore, Mora, & Wade, 2002). Again, the available literature does not support the myth that immigrants negatively impact jobs and wages.

**Use of welfare and public benefits.** The argument that immigrants are a drain on U.S. resources (e.g., education and healthcare), consume more in social services than they invest (Cole, 1994; Massey, 2005) or come to the U.S. to receive welfare is often used to support the myth that immigrants negatively impact the U.S. economy (Anonymous, 2006; Capps & Fix, 2005; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Cole, 1994; Massey, 2005). Again, the literature points to the contrary—immigrants generate more in taxes than they cost through social services when accounting for local, state and federal taxes (Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Massey, 2005; Passel & Fix, 1994). Additionally, literature indicates that there is no credible evidence to suggest that public assistance programs draw prospective immigrants to the U.S. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey & Espinosa, 1997). To address suppositions of welfare and public benefit utilization within the immigrant population, sources are cited documenting the amount of taxes paid by immigrants and costs of welfare; the accessibility of social and public services to the immigrant population in light of current federal legislation; and the differences in public service utilization between the refugee, older adult and unauthorized immigrant populations. Also, education, healthcare and law enforcement costs are addressed. This subsection will conclude with a brief critique of the available literature.
Taxes paid by immigrants. A 1994 report addressing various aspects of the immigration debate indicated that immigrants who arrived after 1970 pay $70 billion in taxes to local, state and federal governments, generating $25 billion-$30 billion more than they consume in public services (Passel & Fix, 1994). A more recent source indicates that each year, immigrants pay $90 billion in taxes and receive just $5 billion in welfare (Khakoo, 2003). Unfortunately, a limitation of this literature is that it fails to define public services or welfare. Nevertheless, there is additional scholarship and research that indicates that public and social services are not being overly utilized by immigrants as current legislation restricts access to such services.

Accessibility of services. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 significantly limited immigrants’ ability to access social and public services (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). This legislation barred legal permanent residents from receiving food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and made it so future legal permanent residents were also barred from almost all other forms of federal assistance (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). Further, the requirement of a U.S. sponsor has also generally made most legal permanent residents ineligible for most federal cash assistance upon entering the U.S. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996).

Unauthorized immigrants are even more limited than their authorized immigrant counterparts to access social services. Unauthorized immigrants are ineligible for the following social services provided to U.S. citizens and qualifying legal immigrants: Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, housing assistance, welfare (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), Social Security, Supplemental Security Income and
higher education financial aid (Fairley & Jones, 2011; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2013, 2007), and they subsequently access social services/public services at a much lower rate than their authorized counterparts (Massey & Espinosa, 1997; Massey, 2005). In reality, the only public assistance accessible to unauthorized immigrants is emergency medical care under Medicaid, public health assistance (e.g., treatment of communicable diseases and immunizations), and limited assistance through Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition programs that provide nutritional assistance to women who are pregnant and breastfeeding (up to one year post-partum) and their young children (through four years of age the age of 4), most of whom are U.S. citizens (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2010). Even the most recent healthcare legislation—The Affordable Care Act—specifically excludes unauthorized immigrants, making it highly unlikely that they will benefit from its provisions (Wallace, Torres, Nobari, & Pourat, 2013).

**Differences in public service utilization.** In terms of overall access and utilization of public and social services within the larger immigrant population, the literature suggests that the immigrants who utilize public benefits tend to be refugees as they are the only immigrant group eligible for public benefits upon their arrival to the U.S. (Borjas & Hilton, 1996; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey, 2005; Passel & Fix, 1994). Conversely, non-refugee immigrants are less likely to use public benefits than U.S. natives (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). Work by the Urban Institute that compares public service usage between immigrant groups indicates that that refugees and older adult immigrants, not all immigrants, have higher rates of public service utilization (Carnegie
Endowment for International Peace, 1996). Otherwise, there appears to be little
difference between working-age, non-refugee immigrants and U.S. natives in terms of
their public service utilization. It is also necessary to note that the higher rates of public
service utilization by older adult immigrants compared with their working-age
counterparts is not a reflection of over use, but rather their accessing funds (i.e., SSI and
Medicaid/Medicare) that they have paid into through years of working and paying taxes
in the U.S. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). By utilizing these
public services, older adult permanent legal residents are simply accessing a service they
have paid into, which is their legal right.

To reiterate, the majority of immigrants who actually use public and social
services are refugee groups (i.e., Indochinese, Cubans, Russians, etc.) (Borjas & Hilton,
1996; Massey, 2005; Passel & Fix, 1994), and in general, immigrants are less likely than
their U.S. born counterparts to use social and public services (Massey, 2005). Massey
(2005) points out that

while 66 percent of Mexican immigrants report the withholding of Social Security
taxes from their paychecks and 62 percent say that employers withhold income
taxes, only 10 percent say they have ever sent a child to U.S. public schools, 7
percent indicate they have received Supplemental Security Income, and 5 percent
or less report ever using food stamps, welfare, or unemployment compensation.
(Executive Summary)

Additionally, although children of immigrants are more likely to live in low-income
families, they are substantially less likely to receive public assistance than low-income
children of native-born parents (food stamps 27% vs. 44%; welfare 7% vs. 12%)
(Chaudry & Fortuny, 2010).
Costs. A 2007 report by the U.S. Congressional Budget Office specifically addresses how unauthorized immigrants impact the budget of local and state governments (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). To do this, 29 reports published in the previous 15 years that investigated the fiscal impact of unauthorized immigrants to local and state governments were reviewed (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). Findings indicated that the effect on the federal budget versus local and state budgets vary due to their eligibility for the various services provided at local, state and federal levels (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). For example, as previously stated, unauthorized immigrants generally do not qualify for the needs based programs (e.g., TANF, non-emergent Medicaid services, food stamps, etc.) provided by the federal government (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). However, unauthorized immigrants do qualify for many services provided by local and state governments such as education, emergent health care and law enforcement (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007).

Education. In terms of education, federal law mandates that all children living in the U.S. have the right to receive a free public education; this includes unauthorized immigrant children (see Plyler versus Doe Court case) (Russo, 2008). Although this cost is incurred by state and local governments, it is important to keep this in perspective as unauthorized immigrant children attending public school make up just fewer than 4% of school-age children in the U.S. (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007).

Healthcare. Although quality data on immigrants health is limited (Goldman, Smith, & Sood, 2006), there is some evidence that suggests that medical costs of immigrants are not substantially burdening the U.S. economy. For instance, a study
aimed at understanding the cost of medical care to immigrants utilized data from the 2000 Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (LAFANS) (Goldman et al., 2006). This study used a stratified random sample of adults ages 18-64 from neighborhoods in Los Angeles county (N=2,543). Findings from this study suggest that immigrants, particularly those with unauthorized immigrant status, contribute less to the cost of health care and use fewer medical services compared with their citizen counterparts for two primary reasons—lack of health insurance and comparatively better health (Goldman et al., 2006).

In terms of emergency health care, since unauthorized immigrants do not qualify for Medicaid and Medicare provided by the federal government, they are less likely to receive preventative care through a regular doctor and more likely to depend on public hospitals and emergency rooms for non-emergent health issues (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). Even so, the available literature suggests that unauthorized immigrants are less likely than their U.S. citizen and documented counterparts to use emergency room services. For example, a study utilizing data from the 2009 California Health Interview Survey (N=47,614 adults) found that unauthorized immigrant adults had significantly less doctor visits and emergency room visits than their U.S.-born counterparts (Pourat, Wallace, Hadler, & Ponce, 2014). Also, it appears that the actual usage of emergency services by the unauthorized population is exaggerated. For instance, in Oklahoma, 80% of the emergent services used by the unauthorized immigrant population was for childbirth (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). Therefore, the services were for U.S. citizen children of unauthorized immigrants, not solely for the unauthorized immigrant.
Although these medical expenses result in a cost to the hospital and/or government, it is also a symptom of the poor healthcare system of the United States. A system providing basic preventative care to all people living in the United States might dramatically decrease any costs associated with emergency room visits for non-emergent health issues. Rather than putting the blame on unauthorized immigrants, the larger problem is the broken healthcare system in the United States. More specifically, if preventative care was provided to everyone living in the United States, including unauthorized immigrants, there would be no need to rely on more expensive emergency health care services.

**Law enforcement.** Some scholars attribute the incarceration of immigrants as a cost to law enforcement. But high and disproportionate incarceration rates are a problem in the United States (Erickson, 2014). The U.S. not only has one of the highest incarceration rates of any industrialized country in the world (Pizzi, 2012), but People of Color are disproportionately incarcerated (Erickson, 2014). This is a systemic problem that should be attributed to a flawed (i.e., racist) system rather than People of Color and Immigrants of Color. Just as the disproportionate policing and imprisonment of People of Color is a problem, so is the disproportionate policing, detainment and detention of Immigrants of Color. Blaming immigrants for the cost of their incarceration given the systematic injustices inherent in the U.S. legal and correction system would be like blaming People of Color for the racist system rather than the white dominant group that created the system. This type of thinking blames the victims of racist policies and ignores the structural oppression that exists. It is structural oppression and racist policies and practices that actually “cost” the government more money. Therefore, a better claim
would be that the white dominant group costs more to law enforcement because they impose inequitable laws, policies and practices on People of Color by disproportionately policing and imprisoning People of Color. More information regarding the criminality of immigrants will be addressed in Myth 4.

**Critique of the literature investigating the fiscal impact of immigrants.** There are numerous limitations to current claims that unauthorized immigrants positively or negatively fiscally impact the U.S. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007). One of the largest critiques is the unclear methodology (i.e., methodology lacks a detailed account of data) and disparate operationalization of terms utilized in the existing literature (e.g., the unauthorized population is defined differently; the types of benefits provided by local and state governments to unauthorized immigrants vary greatly, the type of tax discussed, etc.). These variables make assertions that the unauthorized immigrant population either positively or negatively impact the budget of local and state governments nearly impossible to prove (U.S. Congressional Budget Office, 2007).

A major contributor to the conflicting reports of immigrants’ utilization of public benefits and social services is the various ways researchers have defined service utilization (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). For instance, some researchers count the use of benefits by any household member against the immigrant head of household (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; see Borjas & Hilton, 1996; Camarota, 2004). This measurement technique has been criticized as it inflates the perception of immigrant utilization of public benefits by counting the U.S. citizens accessing public benefits against the immigrant head of household who is not
able to access the benefits for herself or himself (see the work of Michael Fix at the Urban Institute) (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996).

A 2013 U.S. Chamber of Commerce report specifically critiqued studies that attempt to inflate the actual cost incurred by the government due to the use of public benefits by immigrant-headed households (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2013). The report asserts:

Invariably, most of the “costs” calculated by such studies are for programs utilized by the native-born, U.S.-citizen children of immigrants. These children are counted as a “cost” of immigration if they are under 18, but as part of the native-born population if they are working, taxpaying adults. Yet all people are “costly” as children who are still in school and have not yet entered the workforce. (p. 12).

This double standard clearly inflates the estimated cost of welfare benefits utilized by the immigrant population. In actuality, most immigrant households (67%) have a U.S. citizen family member (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). If the U.S. citizen family member is eligible for social/public services and accesses such services, which is his or her right under the law, many researchers count that usage against the immigrant head of household and therefore cause the appearance of high levels of public/social service utilization by immigrants.

The various criterion for welfare (or definitions as to what counts as welfare) also contribute to conflicting reports of public assistance utilization in the immigrant community (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). For example, some researchers only include all cash assistance; others include cash and non-cash means-tested assistance programs and not free and reduced school lunches, while others include both cash and non-cash assistance programs and free and reduced school lunches.
(Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996). In addition, it is important to note that the U.S. census does not inquire about one’s immigration status, making it difficult to determine the actual number of unauthorized immigrants living in the United States, its states and its cities (Fairley & Jones, 2011). Subsequently, it is difficult to calculate the costs of services provided to unauthorized immigrants. This is a likely contributing factor to much of the misinformation circulating regarding the financial impact specific to the unauthorized immigrant community.

The work of Steven Camarota (2004) is an example of how a researcher creates the appearance of high public service utilization by the immigrant community by his choice of sampling criterion of immigrant service utilization and what constitutes public assistance. Camarota not only counts household utilization against an immigrant head of household (i.e., U.S. citizens accessing benefits who live with immigrant head of households who are not receiving benefits); he also includes a broad definition of public assistance, including the federal prison and court system. These criteria inflate the numbers and the perception of immigrant public assistance utilization.

Limiting discussion of costs and benefits to that of money is inhibiting and serves the anti-immigrant meta-narrative in the United States. Likewise, framing health care and education as “costs” is problematic. To gain a better understanding of the effects of unauthorized immigration, this narrative must be changed. Healthcare and education are viewed by many economists as investments with long-term returns (i.e., well-educated population will pay more in taxes because they have higher paying jobs, a healthier population needs less health care subsidies, etc.) (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2013). I
concur and reject the idea that health care and education of unauthorized immigrants are “costs” to society. Instead, they are viewed as investments that benefit U.S. society.

**Myth 4**

Immigrants are criminals and more prone to criminal activity (Chavez, 2008; Rumbaut, 2008).

Various anti-immigrant groups portray immigrants as criminals or highlight the criminal activity of some immigrants. This discourse supports the Latino threat narrative and spreads fear and xenophobia within the larger U.S. society (Chavez, 2008). The reality is that numerous studies over the past three decades consistently indicate that immigrants are less likely than their U.S.-born counterparts to commit crime (Butcher & Piehl, 1998; Khakoo, 2003; MacDonald, Hipp, & Gill, 2013; Nielsen & Martinez, 2011; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008). These findings remain true across every ethnic group and when comparing Latino immigrants with their white male U.S. born counterparts (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008). In fact, the incarceration rates of men ages 18-39 (constituting the majority of the U.S. prison population) indicate that less than 1% of Latino immigrants are incarcerated, compared with 1.71% of white, non-Hispanic U.S. born males, 1.86% of Asian U.S. born males, 6.72% of Latino U.S. born males and 11.61% of black, non-Hispanic males (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008).

Although most available data does not identify the documentation status of immigrants, some analysts filter immigrants by nationality and high school graduation rates to approximate documentation status (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008). Among Mexican immigrant men ages 18 to 39 with less than a high school diploma (the
most common demographic of unauthorized immigrant status), rates of incarceration are just .7% (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008). Researchers also point out that while immigration rates, especially unauthorized immigration, steadily increased over the past few decades until recently hitting a plateau, crime rates have declined, including in cities with large authorized and unauthorized immigrant communities (MacDonald et al., 2013; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007).

The media coverage and current immigration enforcement policies also contribute to the fallacy that immigrants are more prone to criminal behavior than their U.S. born counterparts. For instance, although being present in the United States without the proper authorization from the U.S. government is only a civil misdemeanor (similar to trespassing or public intoxication), many unauthorized immigrants, particularly Mexicans, face a similar fate to those who have committed severe crimes (Amnesty International, 2009; Brettell & Nibbs, 2011; National Immigration Forum, 2013).

In the decade since the Patriot Act and the creation of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the number of deportees has continued to increase exponentially, reaching record high levels in 2009 (395,165) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011). Since then, the number of deportations has remained fairly consistent. Although ICE reports that its focus is the detainment of “dangerous and repetitive criminal aliens,” the majority of immigrants who are detained do not meet those criteria (Schriro, 2009, p. 11). In fact, less than half have felonies, and of those with felonies, only 11% have committed a violent crime (Schriro, 2009). Similarly, despite the fact that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) claims to target criminal immigrants, the majority of those who are deported are considered by the DHS to be non-
criminal removals (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011). This is the primary factor that reinforces the common misperception that unauthorized immigrants are dangerous criminals.

Occasionally, there are reports indicating high rates of crime within the immigrant community living in the United States. These reports instill a sense of fear in the U.S. American populace, playing off the “Latino threat narrative” that has dominated U.S. media and political discourse for decades (Chavez, 2008). Although at first glance such reports appear to be valid, upon closer examination it becomes clear that the authors of many of these reports often misuse and misrepresent data to portray immigrants in a negative light. For instance, the work of Camarota and Vaughan (2009) includes statistics that suggest high levels of criminality within the U.S. immigrant community. However, upon closer review of their work, it appears that Camarota and Vaughan (2009) cherry pick reports that purposefully sampled county jails with large immigrant populations, including counties with immigrant detention centers that are not nationally representative, effectively creating the perception of large incarceration rates for immigrants. Camarota and Vaughan further deceive readers by critiquing one of their sources, but not others. For example, Camarota and Vaughan indicate that one source referenced in their work did not appropriately identify how the incarceration estimates used were generated. However, they do not critique other sources referenced in their work that lack similar disclosures. This gives the appearance that the authors critically analyzed all the literature utilized throughout their report. This critique masks the fact that the various sources throughout their report use faulty data collection methods (i.e., non-representative
samples) to suggest that immigrants are more likely to commit crimes and/or be incarcerated than their U.S. native-born counterparts.

A thorough review of the available literature indicates that there is no substance to the claim that immigrants in the U.S. have higher rates of criminality compared with their U.S. born counterparts. Although literature exists that appears to support this claim, the methodology within these reports is problematic, invalidating their claims of high levels of criminality within the immigrant population.

**Myth 5**

Immigrants are at an advantage compared to their U.S. born counterparts, particularly when it comes to health (i.e., the immigrant paradox) (Teruya & Bazargan-Hejazi, 2013).

There is substantial research that supports the immigrant and Hispanic immigrant paradox. This literature ranges from birth outcomes for Latinas (Bender & Castro, 2000; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007) to literature specific to mental health (Alegría et al., 2007; Alegría et al., 2008; Borges et al., 2008). However, some limitations cast doubt on the generalization of such studies across all immigrant groups (e.g., unauthorized immigrant population). These limitations include the heterogeneity of U.S. Hispanics and the researchers’ inability to determine if selective migration has impacted the outcomes (Borges et al., 2008). Another limitation of literature is bias, particularly for the literature that relies on physician or therapist diagnosis. For example, findings from a study investigating depression rates and physician recognition of depression indicate that higher levels of acculturation significantly predicted the identification of psychiatric distress by
doctors for Latino patients (Chung et al., 2003). These findings imply that doctors might be under-identifying foreign-born or less acculturated Latinos (Chung et al., 2003).

While there is a substantial body of evidence to support the immigrant paradox (across all ethnic groups), it can be overly simplistic when it does not take into account the heterogeneity of both the immigrant population and the Latino population. In fact, literature indicates that both nativity and immigration status are important factors to consider when researching the quality of health care and the health status of Latinos (Kelaher & Jessop, 2002; Rodríguez, Bustamante, & Ang, 2009). Unfortunately, there is a gap in the literature that disaggregates the data based on country of origin and immigrant documentation status. This leaves some room to question the generalizability of the healthy immigrant paradox when factors regarding immigrant status (i.e., immigrant documentation and citizenship status) are taken into account.

Some research suggests that when respondents are isolated based on immigrant status, country of origin, etc., the immigrant paradox does not always hold. Case in point: when comparing birth outcomes of babies born to Latina immigrants (Bender & Castro, 2000), findings from a study of 4,173 Latina women (including 2,398 Latina immigrants, 782 unauthorized Latina immigrants and 993 U.S. born Latinas) suggest that the “healthy migrant” effect is not consistent for children born to unauthorized Latina mothers (Kelaher & Jessop, 2002). The findings indicated that although documented Latina mothers were less likely to have low birth-weight babies than their U.S. citizen counterparts, no significant differences were found between unauthorized Latinas and U.S. citizen Latinas or documented Latinas (Kelaher & Jessop, 2002).
Literature also suggests that unauthorized immigrants experience disparities in their access to and the quality of both their mental and physical healthcare. They are less likely to access health care, less likely to have regular doctor’s visits and less likely to have a regular health care provider than their documented or U.S. citizen counterparts (Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, & Viramontez Anguiano, 2012; Fuentes-Afflick & Hessol, 2009; Rodríguez et al., 2009; Vargas Bustamante et al., 2012). With that said, it is not surprising that some literature has indicated that unauthorized immigrants tend to have poorer mental health outcomes compared with their documented and U.S.-born Latino counterparts (Coffman & Norton, 2010; Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). Moreover, emerging scholarship suggests that deportation concerns resulting from a new wave of anti-immigrant policies and practices put Latino immigrants at an increased risk for experiencing negative health and emotional states, immigrant stress, psychosocial stressors and below standard health status (Arbona et al., 2010; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007; Marshall, Urrutia-Rojas, Mas, & Coggin, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

It is also important to address the recent healthcare reform that has taken place and its impact on unauthorized immigrants. Although this recent healthcare reform will likely be a new area to consider when researching the health and well-being of immigrants, it is important to note that while experts expect the Affordable Care Act to reduce the number of U.S. residents forced to go without health insurance, thus alleviating a major barrier to accessing health services for some, this new legislation will likely have little impact on unauthorized immigrants as they are specifically excluded from its provisions (Wallace et al., 2013). In fact, it is reasonable to expect that it will
only widen the health gap between the unauthorized immigrant population and their authorized and U.S. born counterparts.

The literature clearly indicates that sweeping generalizations regarding the immigrant community can lead to inaccurate information. To better understand the immigrant community and their health and educational outcomes, it is imperative to look at individual groups (e.g., country of origin, ethnicity, acculturation, documentation/U.S. citizen status, etc.) and how current U.S. immigration policies and practices affect each group.

**Discussion of Mental Health Literature**

In light of the lack of literature specific to the mental health of Latinos living in mixed-citizenship status families (Zayas, 2010), the larger body of evidence was investigated to inform the present study. This section of the literature review begins by reviewing literature specific to the prevalence of anxiety and depression in the larger Latino immigrant community. It then addresses the existing empirical and non-empirical studies specific to mixed status families, as well as studies that investigate the effect of detention and deportation on the mental health of Latino immigrant families. This section concludes with a review of the scholarship specific to the mental health of unauthorized Latino immigrants.

**Mental Health of Latino Community**

**Depression and anxiety defined.** Depressive disorders, as types of mood disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), are some of the most common mental health disorders (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Approximately 9.1% of the adult population and 8.1% of the adolescent population in the U.S. experience symptoms of major depression annually (HHS, 2014).

Depression and depressive disorders include feelings of hopelessness, sadness, irritability and emptiness (HHS, 2014). These symptoms can cause cognitive and somatic distress that impact a person’s daily life (HHS, 2014). Different from natural emotions like sadness that result from realistic impressions of an event, a depressive disorder is a mental health illness that results from distorted thinking about oneself or an event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Depression can develop for a variety of reasons. Possible causes include biological, genetic and environmental factors, including stressful life experiences and negative or detrimental experience during childhood (HHS, 2014).

Anxiety is another common mood disorder found in the United States. Approximately 40 million people (or 18%) living in the United States experience a diagnosable anxiety disorder annually (HHS, 2014). Anxiety involves disproportionate amounts of fear or apprehension that is not only hard to manage, but also impacts a person’s daily functioning (HHS, 2014). This fear or anxiety “is out of proportion to the context of the life situation” (Pine, 1997, p. 329). Basically, fear or apprehension is considered “clinical anxiety” when it is unwarranted developmentally or within a person’s life situation (Pine, 1997). Similar to depressive disorders, anxiety disorders can develop for various reasons: personality, genetics, brain chemistry/biology and life events or other environmental factors, including negative childhood experiences (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2010-2014; HHS, 2014).
Discussion of Depression Literature

Prevalence of depression in the Latino community. The literature is ambiguous in regards to prevalence rates of depression within the Latino community and when comparing Latinos to other ethnic groups (Alegría et al., 2008; Mendelson, Rehkopf, & Kubzansky, 2008; Riolo, Nguyen, Greden, & King, 2005). While some literature indicates no differences between Latinos and their white counterparts (Mendelson et al., 2008), other literature indicates that Latinos have a lower probability than their white counterparts for depression (Alegría et al., 2008) or find that Latinos have a lower likelihood for major depressive disorder than their white counterparts, but a higher likelihood for dysthymic disorder (another depressive disorder) (Riolo et al., 2005).

A study utilizing the data from two major national surveys (N=6,776), including both adult whites and Latinos, compared the prevalence of the same psychiatric disorders in U.S. born and immigrant groups (Alegría et al., 2008). The results supported both the immigrant and Hispanic paradox. Specifically, findings indicated that Latinos of all subgroups (U.S. born and foreign born) reported lower lifetime prevalence of most psychiatric disorders (including depressive disorders) compared with their white counterparts (Alegría et al., 2008).

It is important to note potential limitations in research aimed at understanding prevalence among the Latino communities compared with the white communities. For example, different depression measures result in different findings (i.e., there are conflicting reports when comparing various depression diagnosis and depression symptoms) (Mendelson et al., 2008; Riolo et al., 2005). Findings from a meta-analytic review that included eight studies specific to major depressive disorder (N=76,270) and
23 studies that investigated depressive symptoms (N=38,997) indicated no significant differences in major depressive disorder when comparing Latinos and whites (Mendelson et al., 2008). However, findings also indicated that Latinos reported significantly more depressive symptoms compared with their white counterparts (Mendelson et al., 2008). These conflicting findings highlight differences when investigating a diagnosis of major depressive disorder compared with depression symptomology.

As previously stated, much literature supports the immigrant paradox; this includes literature in the field of mental health (Alegría et al., 2008; Borges et al., 2008). However, researchers have indicated that other factors such as heterogeneity of the sample and selective migration might impact outcomes. For example, a study aimed at investigating the epidemiology of depression within a sample of 7,651 Latino adults living in Mexico, Columbia and the U.S. (U.S. born and immigrants) indicated that U.S. born Latinos had a greater odds ratio of one year and lifetime prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), according to DSM-IV criteria, compared with their counterparts (Borges et al., 2008). Odds ratios for lifetime MDD were 1 in 6 U.S. born Hispanics, 1 in 8 immigrant U.S. Hispanics, 1 in 8 Colombians, and 1 in 13 Mexicans. Odds ratios for 12-month MDD were 1 in 12 U.S. born Hispanics, 1 in 17 immigrant U.S. Hispanics, 1 in 19 Colombians, and 1 in 26 Mexicans (Borges et al., 2008). These findings indicate support for the immigrant paradox (Borges et al., 2008). However, limitations include heterogeneity of U.S. Hispanics and that the researchers were unable to determine if selective migration impacted the outcomes (Borges et al., 2008).

In addition, as previously stated, there is some research that suggests that researcher or physician bias might influence findings that support the immigrant paradox.
For instance, a study including 252 patients and 11 primary care physicians that utilized the CES-D scale to measure depression examined the likelihood of a physician recognizing depression in the Asian and Hispanic populations and how socio-demographic factors (e.g., acculturation) impact the diagnosis of psychiatric distress in patients by their physician (Chung et al., 2003). The findings indicated that being Latino significantly predicted the likelihood for a doctor to classify a patient as depressed, and that, for Latinos (but not Asians), higher levels of acculturation significantly predicted the identification of psychiatric distress by their doctor. Also of note is that although 47.3% of Latino patients and 41.6% of Asian patients displayed symptoms of depression according to the CES-D scale, doctors classified 43.8% of Latinos and just 23.6% of Asians as distressed. These findings imply that doctors might be under identifying Asians and foreign-born or less acculturated Latinos (Chung et al., 2003). The specific results of this study cast doubt on the Latino immigrant paradox.

**Youth risk and protective factors.** Studies of adolescents suggest that the risk factors for adolescent depression include being female (Costello, Swendsen, Rose, & Dierker, 2008; Dawson, Perez, & Suárez-Orozco, 2012; Roberts & Sobhan, 1992; Van Voorhees et al., 2008; Varela, Weems, Berman, Hensley, & de Bernal, 2007); being an ethnic minority (Costello et al., 2008; Roberts & Sobhan, 1992; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); lower socioeconomic status (Costello et al., 2008; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); substance abuse (use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco) (Costello et al., 2008; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); delinquent behavior (Costello et al., 2008; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); low levels of family functioning (Céspedes & Huey, 2008; Hovey & King, 1996); neighborhood risks (Behnke, Plunkett, Sands, & Bámaca-Colbert, 2011); living in a rural
area (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fulgini, 2012); perceived discrimination (Behnke et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Ritt-Olson, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2011; Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012); and acculturative stress (Hovey & King, 1996), including gender role discrepancy (Céspedes & Huey, 2008). Protective factors for adolescent depression include: living in a two-parent household (Costello et al., 2008); feeling a connection to school, peers or parents (Costello et al., 2008; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); self-esteem (Behnke et al., 2011; Costello et al., 2008; Van Voorhees et al., 2008); and involvement in religious activities (Van Voorhees et al., 2008).

**Additional risk and protective factors specific to Latino immigrant youth.**

Additional risk factors specific to Latino immigrant youth include unauthorized immigration status, being in a mixed status family (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010) and family separation (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011). There are contradictory findings regarding the impact nativity and immigrant generation status has on depression (Peña et al., 2008; Polo & López, 2009). For instance, a study of 161 youth of Mexican origin found no significant correlation between nativity and depression and findings from a study of utilizing a subsample of 3,135 Latinos from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health indicated that second- and third-generation Latino immigrants are more likely than their first-generation immigrant counterparts to attempt suicide (Peña et al., 2008). In terms of protective factors, length of time living in the U.S. and support from teachers and family have been linked to a decreased likelihood for symptoms of depression for Latino immigrant youth (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

**Risk factors for the Latino immigrant community.** Although limited, existing literature suggests various risk factors for depression that impact both youth and adults
within the Latino immigrant community. These risk factors include: not having choice in the decision to migrate (Hovey, 2000; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010); stress and traumatic experiences when migrating (Lackey, 2008; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Todorova, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2008); discrimination and racial problems in their neighborhood post-migration (Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011; Phinney, Madden, & Santos, 1989; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010); and non-positive future expectations, family dysfunction and acculturative stress (Hovey & King, 1996; Hovey & Magaña, 2000; Hovey, 2000; Lackey, 2008).

**Additional risk and protective factors specific to Latino immigrant adults.**

Additional risk factors specific to adults include high levels of poverty pre-migration (Ornelas & Perreira, 2011), low-levels of religiosity (Hovey & Magaña, 2000), high education levels (Hovey & Magaña, 2000), and being female (Shobe & Boyas, 2011). In terms of protective factors, a study of 281 Latino immigrant parents (78% from Mexico) with children ages 12-18 indicated that family reunification, familialism and social support are protective factors against symptoms of depression (Ornelas & Perreira, 2011).

**Discussion of Anxiety Literature**

Interestingly, there is an overlap in literature examining the risk and protective factors and prevalence of depression and anxiety in Latino immigrants and children of Latino immigrants. In fact, much of the existing literature that explores anxiety in Latinos and Latino immigrants examines both depression and anxiety (Alegría et al., 2008; Familiar, Borges, Orozco, & Medina-Mora, 2011; Hovey & Magaña, 2000; Phinney et al., 1989; Polo & López, 2009; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Potochnick et al., 2012; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011; Varela et al., 2007). One reason for this might be because the
co-occurrence of both depression and anxiety is common (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2010-2014; Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005).

**Prevalence in Latino youth.** Although anxiety, when compared with other mental health illnesses, is relatively common in children and adults (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2010-2014; Pine, 1997), including in those of Latin American origins (Benjet, Borges, Medina-Mora, Zambrano, & Aguilar-Gaxiola, 2009), findings are nebulus when it comes to differing levels of anxiety when comparing ethnic groups. Some literature provides evidence that anxiety is not only higher in Latino youth when compared with their European American counterparts but also youth in other U.S. ethnic groups (Glover, Pumariega, Holzer III, Wise, & Rodriguez, 1999; Varela et al., 2004; Varela, Sanchez-Sosa, Biggs, & Luis, 2008; Varela & Hensley-Maloney, 2009), while other literature indicates there is little difference between levels of anxiety based on ethnic differences (Ginsburg & Silverman, 1996; Wood, Chiu, Hwang, Jacobs, & Ifekwunigwe, 2008). To further cloud the findings, some literature suggests that Mexican children living in Mexico and their Latino counterparts in the U.S. are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety than their white counterparts in the U.S. (Varela et al., 2004; Varela, Sanchez-Sosa, Biggs, & Luis, 2009), while other literature indicates similarities between Mexican children living in Mexico and their white counterparts in the U.S., but not Mexican American children living in the U.S. (Luis, Varela, & Moore, 2008).

**Prevalence in Latino immigrant youth.** Findings from a study of 161 Mexican immigrant and U.S. citizen Mexican-American youth indicate a greater likelihood to report social anxiety and loneliness than their U.S. born counterparts (Polo & López, 2009). Most pertinent to this dissertation are the findings from a study of 281 first-
generation Latino immigrant youth ages 12-19 that indicate that adolescents in mixed status families are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety than their documented, non-mixed status family counterparts (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

**Risk and protective factors for Latino youth.** Common risk factors for anxiety in the Latino youth population include: separation from parents (Santa-Maria & Cornille, 2007; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011), migration stressors (like documentation status, discrimination, choice of migration and traumatic events) (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010), being an immigrant (Polo & López, 2009), perceived discrimination (Phinney et al., 1989), living in a rural area (Potochnick et al., 2012), maternal perceived stress, mothers’ depressive symptoms, lower maternal educational attainment, lower adolescent educational attainment, larger family size (Ozer, Fernald, & Roberts, 2008) and negative social interaction with peers (Motoca, Williams, & Silverman, 2012; Potochnick et al., 2012). Contrary to what one may think, findings from a study of 557 Latino high school youth suggest that positive ethnic treatment and encouragement from school adults was positively related to anxiety (Potochnick et al., 2012). Although a seemingly surprising result, the increase of anxiety might be attributed to the pressure youths feel to do well when they have ongoing support and encouragement from adults in school.

**Prevalence in Latino adults.** Literature indicates that Latinos have a lower likelihood of an anxiety disorder compared with their white counterparts (Asnaani, Richey, Dimaite, Hinton, & Hofmann, 2010; Grant et al., 2005). For example, a study from a nationally representative sample of 43,093 adults indicated that according to the DSM-IV criteria for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), white adults have greater odds of GAD compared with their Hispanic counterparts (Grant et al., 2005). That said,
researchers indicated that a limitation of the findings was that disparities in treatment could not be ruled out and this might have been a contributing factor in the disparities in ethnic findings (Grant et al., 2005). Such limitations in research investigating racial/ethnic differences in diagnosis and symptomology should cause pause when interpreting the findings.

**Risk and protective factors for Latino adults.** The literature suggests that common risk factors for anxiety in the Latino population include acculturative stress (Hovey & Magaña, 2000); low levels of religiosity (Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002); not having a choice in the decision to migrate and working as a migrant farmworker (Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002); low self-esteem (Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002); high levels of education (Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002); family separation (Santa-Maria & Cornille, 2007; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011); U.S. nativity (versus immigrant status) (Alegría et al., 2008); low-income status; identifying as female; being middle-age; and being widowed, separated or divorced (Grant et al., 2005). Literature indicates that both ethnic minority status and being foreign born are protective factors (Alegría et al., 2008; Grant et al., 2005). However, as is true for the studies regarding depression, identified limitations of these studies include heterogeneity of U.S. Latinos, the possibility of selective migration impacting the outcomes, disparities in treatment and the under identification of less acculturated individuals (Alegría et al., 2008; Borges et al., 2008; Chung et al., 2003; Grant et al., 2005).

**Discussion of Mixed Status Families Literature**

The empirical literature specific to Latinos in mixed status families is scant. Of the empirical articles available, most took either a quantitative (Bean, Leach, Brown,
Bachmeier, & Hipp, 2011; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Capps, Kenney, & Fix, 2003; Kanaiaupuni, 2000) or qualitative (Brabeck, Lykes, & Hershberg, 2011; Chavez et al., 2012; Manguel, 2012; Schueths, 2012) approach to the research question versus a mixed methods approach (Xu & Brabeck, 2012). In addition to the available empirical articles specific to Latinos in mixed status families, there is also a fair amount of non-empirical literature that aims to create a dialogue around the contradictory immigration policies that negatively impact Latinos in mixed status families (del Mar, 2013; Harris, 2010; Morrison & Thronson, 2010; Sutter, 2006; Thronson & Sullivan, 2012; Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007; Zayas, 2010). This section of the literature review begins with a discussion of the empirical articles available on this topic area, followed by a discussion of the non-empirical articles that highlight the impact current immigration policy has on mixed status families. It also includes a discussion of studies that investigate the effect of detention and deportation on the Latino immigrant community.

**Quantitative Studies**

The four quantitative articles included in this literature review utilize various sampling techniques, including a random sample from two migrant communities in Houston and San Diego (Kanaiaupuni, 2000), already existing data taken from the National Survey of America’s Families (Capps et al., 2003), a convenience sample within five organizations serving the Latino immigrant community (Brabeck & Xu, 2010) and random digital dialing and the utilization of non-random telephone prefixes to target heavily immigrant areas (Bean et al., 2011). The reported sample sizes ranged from 132 to 4,780. While the larger samples found in two of the quantitative studies (Bean et al., 2011; Capps et al., 2003) included random samples, they did not limit the study
population to Latino immigrant families. The two studies with smaller sample sizes, 132 and 262, respectively, opted for targeted samples over random samples but were therefore able to target their sample to Latino immigrant families (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Kanaiaupuni, 2000).

The quantitative studies had disparate research aims, including examining the effects of recent migration and legal status on child health (Kanaiaupuni, 2000), examining health insurance coverage of low-income mixed status families compared with their counterparts with U.S. citizen parents (Capps et al., 2003), investigating the impact of immigrant detention and deportation on Latino immigrant parents and their children (Brabeck & Xu, 2010), and examining ethnic group differences (i.e., Mexican and Asian) concerning parents’ entry status, naturalization and legalization trajectories in relation to educational attainment of their children. Although the available literature had different aims, the findings overwhelmingly suggest: mixed status families had poorer outcomes than their counterparts in U.S. citizen or legal immigrant families. Findings specifically indicated that Mexican immigrant families had a greater likelihood than other ethnic groups to live in mixed status families (Bean et al., 2011); current immigrant deportation policies and practices negatively impact the financial, academic, relational and emotional well-being of Latino immigrant parents and their children (Brabeck & Xu, 2010); there is a greater likelihood for low-income mixed status families to be uninsured compared with their citizen counterparts (Capps et al., 2003); and there is a greater likelihood for children with two unauthorized parents or living in mixed status families to have poor health and live in poverty compared with their counterparts with two authorized or citizen parents (Kanaiaupuni, 2000).
Qualitative Studies

There were five qualitative articles found in the literature. Various sampling approaches were utilized to recruit participants. These sampling approaches include snowball sampling (Schueths, 2012), Participatory Action Research where participants were recruited through community-led workshops, bi-monthly support groups and leadership development workshops (Brabeck et al., 2011), and recruitment through the identification of key gatekeepers through the researchers’ community outreach work and subsequent snowball sampling (Chavez et al., 2012; Mangual, 2011). One study did not identify the sampling method (Figueroa, 2012).

Methodological approaches to data collection include ethnographies (Chavez et al., 2012; Mangual, 2011, 2012), semi-structured interviews grounded in Participatory Action Research (Brabeck et al., 2011) and semi-structured interviews (Schueths, 2012). These studies utilized various approaches for data analysis: grounded theory (Chavez et al., 2012); the coding of field notes focused on recurring topics, themes and grammatical patterns; and the triangulation of constructs with other data, including interviews analyzed through conversation analysis methods (Mangual, 2011, 2012); interpretive coding, including in vivo coding and a constant comparative method followed by member checks through participant feedback meetings at the midpoint and end of the research process (Brabeck et al., 2011); and inductive analysis utilizing three iterations of line-by-line coding (Schueths, 2012)

Similar to the quantitative studies, these qualitative studies had varying research aims. The qualitative research aims included: the discussion of citizenship and immigration status (Mangual, 2012); the impact of immigrant status on the family’s
participation in daily activities related to school (Mangual, 2011); the examination of how unauthorized immigration status impacts child well-being (Chavez et al., 2012); to document the experience of mixed status and divided families as they encounter various issues like deportation, economic marginalization, migration, etc. (Brabeck et al., 2011); and examining the experience of U.S. citizen women partnered with or married to unauthorized Mexican men (Schueths, 2012).

The findings of the qualitative studies highlight how current immigration policy and issues surrounding citizenship and documentation status not only affect immigrants who are unauthorized, but their entire family, including U.S. citizen and authorized immigrant family members (Brabeck et al., 2011; Chavez et al., 2012; Manguel, 2011, 2012; Schueths, 2012). For example, findings from a study including 18 families from Guatemala and El Salvador indicate that 44% of the parents reported either threatened or actual separation due to deportation-related experiences affected their children’s psychosocial development (Brabeck et al., 2011). Although this study did not specifically seek out mixed status families, it can be assumed that most of the families that reported threatened or actual separation lived in mixed status families (as 93% of the children were U.S. citizens). Parents in this study not only reported academic problems and behavioral difficulties for their children, but also depressive symptoms (i.e., crying, sadness, appetite and sleep disturbances, and a lack of pleasure in activities their children previously enjoyed) and anxiety symptoms (i.e., worry, fear, insecurity regarding the future, nightmares and separation anxiety). Additionally, findings from an ethnographic study of 40 Latino immigrant families indicated that unauthorized status impacts the family in regards to health outcomes, family stress, educational attainment, and that it
possibly leads to increased isolation of children (Chavez et al., 2012). Although this study also did not specifically target mixed status families, the majority of families included in the study was of Mexican descent and reported having an unauthorized family member.

**Mixed Methods Studies**

There was just one mixed methods study specific to mixed status Latino families (Xu & Brabeck, 2012). This research study investigated the service utilization of Latino immigrant families by administering a survey to 120 Latino immigrant parents with at least one minor child living in the U.S. (37% of these participants were unauthorized immigrants, of which 76% had a U.S. citizen child, making them mixed status families). Although no significant differences in service utilization were found based on the documentation status of the parents, unauthorized parents were significantly more likely to report that deportation and detention affects their access to services for their children.

**Non-empirical Literature**

Numerous non-empirical articles provide an analysis of contemporary U.S. immigration law and the impact on Latino families (del Mar, 2013; Harris, 2010; Hwang & Parreñas, 2010; Morrison & Thronson, 2010; Sutter, 2006; Thronson & Sullivan, 2012; Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007; Zayas, 2010). Most of these articles point out the many inconsistencies in U.S. immigration law that claims a goal of family reunification yet actively seeks the deportation of unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S., separating families in the process (del Mar, 2013; Hwang & Parreñas, 2010; Morrison & Thronson, 2010; Sutter, 2006; Thronson & Sullivan, 2012). Others not only provide commentary on the trends and effects of immigration law on the Latino population and those in mixed
status families, but also address the significance for child welfare and social work (Harris, 2010; Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007; Zayas, 2010).

**Discussion of Detention and Deportation Literature**

Much of the existing literature that addresses the mental health of Latinos in mixed status families is specific to the effects of immigrant detention and deportation (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Brabeck et al., 2011; Butler & Bazan, 2011; Chaudry et al., 2010; Kremer, Moccio, & Hammell, 2009; Sládková, Mangado, & Quinteros, 2012; Wessler, 2011). Although these studies do not specifically seek out information regarding the mental health of Latinos in mixed status families, the targeted population often also captured mixed status families. It is estimated that for every two immigrants arrested and/or deported due to immigration enforcement, one child is left behind (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007). This statistic demonstrates that immigrant detention and deportation not only impact people who are detained and deported, but also their children, partners and family members who remain in the United States.

Much of the existing literature specific to the psychological effects of the detention and deportation of immigrant parents on their children is criticized as anecdotal as it does not use rigorous, scientific methods and often utilizes second-hand report versus child report (Zayas, 2010). Even so, this is one of the few areas of study that provides insight into how current immigration policies and practices impact children of immigrants, many of whom are living in mixed status families. For instance, findings from a qualitative study (also mentioned in the previous section) specific to unauthorized Guatemalan and Salvadoran immigrants indicated that both the constant threat of deportation and their individual deportation experiences take a psychological toll that
impacts the way they interact with their children, subsequently impacting their children’s
development (Brabeck et al., 2011). More specifically, parents reported that the actual
deporation or threat of deportation caused academic problems, depressive symptoms,
anxiety symptoms and behavioral difficulties in their children (Brabeck et al., 2011).

Findings from a study including Mexican deportees living in Tijuana, Mexico,
and Mexican migrants living in the U.S. with a family member who had been deported
highlight the stress placed on families impacted by immigrant deportation (Butler &
Bazan, 2011). Findings indicated that these families are put in the seemingly impossible
situation to make the decision to remain separated with some living in Mexico and others
in the U.S. or attempt to reunite the family by either having the family member who was
deported to Mexico risk his or her life to return to the U.S. or having family members
living in the U.S. move to Mexico. Butler and Bazan (2011) suggest that this creates
family conflict because all the family members might not agree on how the family should
proceed. Additionally, findings indicate that the deportation of a family member causes a
financial strain.

A qualitative study following detention raids in Nebraska, Massachusetts and
Colorado indicated that the children of detained parents incurred immediate and longer-
term effects after detention (Capps et al., 2007). This study indicates that separation from
parents was emotionally traumatizing, and even when separation was short, it created
ongoing anxiety and insecurity for many children. The effects of separation were
particularly difficult for children who were separated from one or both parents for an
extended period of time (Capps et al., 2007). The lingering fear of detention and
deportation led to increased social isolation that further compounded children’s psychological duress (Capps et al., 2007).

Another qualitative study including six sites that had experienced work place raids documents the effects of detention on children (Chaudry et al., 2010). Findings indicate that in the first six months after the detention of a parent, approximately 65% of children experienced changes in their sleeping and eating habits. More than half of the children reported increased levels of fear and cried more. Over one third of the children were angry, aggressive, clingy, anxious or withdrawn. In addition, over 40% of these children continued to report symptoms more than six months after the detention of a parent. Although directly after the immigration raids behavioral changes were most prominent in children who were directly impacted (e.g., separated from a parent), even children who were not separated from their parents appeared to be affected. In fact, results indicate that nearly half of the children who were never separated from a parent cried more often, and one third had higher levels of fear (Chaudry & Fortuny, 2010).

**Mental Health of Unauthorized Latino Immigrants**

The literature specific to the mental health of unauthorized Latino immigrants tends to be quantitative in nature (Appleby, Luchins, Freels, Smith, & Wasmer, 2008; Arbona et al., 2010; Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2007; Coffman & Norton, 2010; Dey & Lucas, 2006; Marshall et al., 2005; Momper, Nandi, Ompad, Delva, & Galea, 2009; Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Shobe, Coffman, & Dmochowski, 2009; Urrutia-Rojas, Marshall, Trevino, Lurie, & Minguia-Bayona, 2006) with very few qualitative articles available to add a depth of understanding to the contradicting findings and complexities of the mental health status of unauthorized Latino immigrants (Joseph,
No recent mixed methods studies were found in this literature search. Although limited, it is important to review the literature about the mental health of unauthorized immigrants because the threats they face related to their citizenship status also affect their children (Thronson & Sullivan, 2012). This sub-section of the literature review will begin with a discussion of the available quantitative research, followed by a review of qualitative research.

**Quantitative Studies**

The 11 quantitative articles included in this literature review utilize various sampling techniques, including nonrandom purposeful samples (Arbona et al., 2010; Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2007; Coffman & Norton, 2010; Marshall et al., 2005; Momper et al., 2009; Urrutia-Rojas et al., 2006), a random, nationally representative sample (Dey & Lucas, 2006), existing data from state hospitals (Appleby et al., 2008), clinical chart reviews (Perez & Fortuna, 2005), stratified cluster sampling (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010) and convenience sampling (Shobe et al., 2009). The reported sample sizes range from 99 to 431. The sample size of the random, nationally representative sample utilizing the 1998 through 2003 National Health Interview Survey was not reported (Dey & Lucas, 2006).

The large number of non-random purposeful samples clearly indicates the difficulty of reaching this hidden, hard to reach population. Although not the ideal sampling technique for a quantitative study aiming at generalizable results (Singleton & Straits, 2010), non-random purposeful samples enable researchers to specifically study the unauthorized Latino immigrant population. Although easier to generalize the results
of a random, nationally representative sample, the nationally representative sample included in this literature review does not include unauthorized status of immigrants as a variable in the secondary data analysis and therefore simply compares the Latino foreign-born population to the Latino native-born population (Dey & Lucas, 2006).

**Findings.** Quantitative studies report conflicting findings regarding the mental health status of unauthorized Latino immigrants. Although findings from one quantitative article selected for this literature review suggest Latino immigrants report less symptoms of serious psychological distress compared with their native-born counterparts (Dey & Lucas, 2006), the literature specific to unauthorized immigrants indicates poorer mental health outcomes for unauthorized Latino immigrants compared with their documented and U.S.-born Latino counterparts (Coffman & Norton, 2010; Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). For example, in a secondary data analysis of 99 Spanish-speaking immigrants (70% of who were unauthorized immigrants). These findings suggest high levels of depression symptoms (Coffman & Norton, 2010). In fact, over a quarter (26%) of Latino immigrant participants reported depression symptoms. Both low health literacy and higher immigration demands were found to be predictors of higher depression scores. In addition, findings from a clinical chart review of 197 charts from an outpatient mental health clinic comparing both unauthorized and authorized Latino immigrants indicate that unauthorized Latino immigrants were more likely to have a diagnosis of an adjustment disorder, an anxiety disorder and an alcohol abuse disorder (Perez & Fortuna, 2005).

The literature also indicates that Latino immigrants with deportation concerns are at an increased risk for experiencing negative health and emotional states, immigrant
stress and below standard overall health status (Arbona et al., 2010; Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2007). Interestingly, findings from a study of 416 Mexican and Central American immigrants indicate that both authorized and unauthorized Latino immigrants reported similar levels of fear of being deported (Arbona et al., 2010). The findings also indicate that although unauthorized immigrants tended to have a greater average number of psychosocial stressors (work, legal and access to health care) than authorized immigrants, they were less likely to get ongoing mental health care compared with their documented and native-born counterparts. Unauthorized immigrants averaged 4.3 mental health appointments, compared with 7.9 for authorized immigrants and 13.3 for native-born Latinos.

Like the findings from the Perez and Fortuna (2005) study, findings in recent literature consistently indicate higher levels of psychosocial stressors, including limited access to health care and high levels of discrimination for unauthorized Latino immigrants compared with their authorized or native-born counterparts (Marshall et al., 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). For instance, findings from a random sample of 281 first-generation immigrant youth indicate that stressors from migration increase the risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Although minority status, poverty, unauthorized immigrant status and specific ethnic group experiences like immigration history, trauma, and economic difficulties present a unique set of mental health risks for Latino immigrants living in the U.S., these risks are made worse by the limited access to health care and other social services available to unauthorized Latino immigrants and their families because of the current restrictive laws and policies in place (Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Shobe et al., 2009; Urrutia-Rojas et al., 2006).
Conversely, social support (i.e. school, religion, family and friendships) buffers the negative effects of psychosocial stressors (Negi, 2011; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

**Qualitative Studies**

There were just three qualitative articles found in this literature search. Methodological approaches included a case study (Vesga-Lopez et al., 2009), an ethnography (Negi, 2011) and semi-structured interviews (Joseph, 2011). The number of participants ranged from one to over 150. The qualitative studies examined various aspects of the mental health of unauthorized Latino immigrants, including the psychosocial stressors and protective factors associated with substance abuse and well-being (Negi, 2011), the effects of being both racialized and unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. has on mental health (Joseph, 2011), and the mental health care of immigrants suffering from psychosis (Vesga-Lopez et al., 2009). Although the focus of each of these studies significantly differs, some overlapping themes emerged.

Findings in the available qualitative literature indicate that discrimination negatively impacts unauthorized Latino immigrants (Joseph, 2011; Negi, 2011). Moreover, although traditional measure for mental health diagnosis were not discussed in the qualitative studies, the findings that emerged through thematic analysis indicate that the marginalized lives of unauthorized Latino immigrants take a toll on their mental health. For example, findings from semi-structured interviews of 49 Brazilian return migrants (Brazilian migrants who for the most part had been unauthorized while living in the United States and had since returned to Brazil) indicate that migrants felt discriminated against based on their racial classification, perceived unauthorized or Latino status and lack of English language proficiency (Joseph, 2011). Participants
reported that while in the United States, they were in a state of anxiety and fear. This study is significant as it is one of the few that specifically aims to examine how being unauthorized and racialized in the U.S. affects mental health.

**Implications for Practice and Future Research**

There is significant need for improved access to mental health services (health fairs, community health services, affordable health insurance) for Latino immigrants (Coffman & Norton, 2010; Marshall et al., 2005), as well as health literacy training and education (Coffman & Norton, 2010). In addition, little is known about how the fear of deportation affects the emotional well-being of Latino immigrants and their families (Arbona et al., 2010). It is imperative that future research focuses on understanding these outcomes so that policy makers are better equipped to make informed decisions about the maintenance and/or implementation of restrictive immigration legislation.

Overall, the emotional well-being of Latino immigrants and those living in mixed status families is poorly studied (Zayas, 2010). More research (quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods) aimed at understanding the overall mental health status of Latino immigrants and their families, and more specifically if and how immigrant status (being unauthorized versus unauthorized) affects the emotional well-being of Latino immigrants and their families, is needed. Although the literature generally supports the immigrant paradox, it is necessary to disaggregate data and include documentation status in the analysis prior to generalizing findings about Latino immigrants to the unauthorized immigrant population and those living in mixed-citizenship status families.

Due to the complicated nature of this substantive area and minimal literature available, more qualitative research would be particularly beneficial. Qualitative research
adds needed depth to understanding the issues that face unauthorized Latino immigrants and their families and can be used as a guide for future research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Patton, 2002). Further, few mixed methods studies were found in this literature search. Although mixed methods methodology has its drawbacks, particularly the time and resources necessary to complete a successful mixed methods study, it appears to be the ideal methodology to explore the emotional well-being of Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Understanding the emotional well-being of Latinos in mixed status families is complex. Although there is a gap in both the available quantitative and qualitative research regarding the emotional well-being of Latino in mixed status families, a mixed methods research approach would be able to provide a more complete analysis of this substantive area. This type of study will allow for the individual stories and experiences of Latinos in mixed status families to emerge, while providing generalizable results as well. This is important given the heterogeneity within the Latino community and the need to better understand the issues that face Latinos in mixed status families on a larger scale.
CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL RACE THEORY

This chapter provides an overview of Critical Race Theory (CRT), a theory of significant relevance to the issues facing Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families. CRT is a valuable way to frame this dissertation as it calls for the inclusion of the voices of those who are pushed to the margins or traditionally excluded (Bell, 1995), in this case, the voices of Latino high school students and young adults living in mixed status families. Critical race work aspires to empower these voices and perspectives (Bell, 1995). This is particularly salient given the current state of the literature.

CRT also provides a critical lens through which the research question and subsequent answers can be understood for this dissertation. It is a guiding framework that not only demands the examination of issues of race, power, privilege and oppression, but that also necessitates appropriate action to be taken to address social justice issues that emerge from the results. This type of scholarship is well-suited for the field of social work, a field dedicated to social justice and the empowerment of marginalized populations (National Association of Social Workers, 2014).

In this chapter, information about the historical roots of CRT are shared, followed by information surrounding the basic tenets of CRT and how they connect to this dissertation. A brief description of Latino/a CRT is also included. This chapter concludes with a discussion of why CRT was selected and how it was utilized as a theoretical framework for the present study.
Critical Race Theory and its Historical Roots

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not just a body of scholarship, but a transformational movement focused on the relationship between power, race, racism and society (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, 2012). Derrick Bell, the “intellectual father figure” of the Critical Race Theory movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 5), describes CRT as “a body of legal scholarship…a majority of whose members are both existentially people of color and ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law” (Bell, 1995, p. 898). The impetus of CRT sprung from critical legal scholars’ realization that many of the gains for racial equality made during the Civil Rights Movement had stalled (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 1997, 2000; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). CRT therefore emerged as an attempt to expose the ways racism continues to affect every aspect of the lives of those living in the United States, something Critical Legal Studies (CLS) had not been able to effectively or adequately address (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

Although CRT grew out of Critical Legal Studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 2012; Lawless et al., 2006), it is multi-disciplinary as it draws upon the ideas of a variety of theorists, philosophers, activists and disciplines (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Matsuda et al., 1993). Influential theorists and philosophers of CRT include European scholars such as Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, U.S. scholars such as Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Cesar Chavez, and the Black Power and Chicano movements (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 2012). In addition, CRT draws from numerous disciplines, including history, economics, continental social and political philosophy, political science and law,
anthropology, sociology, gender studies, feminist and postcolonial studies, ethnic and cultural studies, and Freirean pedagogy (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 2012; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; Solórzano, 2013). This is important as the substantive area of this dissertation is complex. The diversity of views, influences and lenses within CRT allows for a more holistic view of the problem and potential ways for it to be addressed.

While many name Derrick Bell as the driving force and father of Critical Race Theory due to his profuse writing and active role in educating scholars (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2013), he is not solely responsible for the ideas behind CRT; Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado are also considered to be foundational in the CRT movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). There are many other foundational and emerging CRT scholars representing various ethnicities and disciplines who continue to push CRT forward (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This disparate group of scholars not only critically analyze the theory itself, but also apply it to the experiences of different marginalized groups (e.g., Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, women, etc.) and within various fields of study (e.g., law, immigration studies, education, etc.).

**Critical Race Theory and Its Core Tenets**

Part of what makes CRT unique is not only its activist dimension (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), but also its candor regarding its social justice aims. CRT scholars do not hide behind the false assertion that their work is neutral and unbiased as do many disciplines in academia (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In fact, CRT has been described as a “transformative resistance strategy,” aimed at creating a “more egalitarian, state of affairs” (Bell, 1995, p. 902). CRT’s broad mission is to investigate, deconstruct and
ultimately eliminate racist structures and inequities (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). It is grounded in the belief that “the standards and institutions created by and fortifying white power ought to be resisted” and that “scholarly resistance will lay the groundwork for wide-scale resistance” (Bell, 1995, p. 901).

Although no agreed upon set of CRT tenets exist (McDowell & Jeris, 2004), a review of the literature on CRT reveals consistent themes across diverse disciplines. From a review of 16 peer-reviewed journal articles (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Bell, 1995; Berzoff, 2011; Campbell, 2008; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Graham et al., 2011; Harris, 1993; Hayashi & May, 2011; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lawless et al., 2006; Lynn & Parker, 2006; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; McDowell, 2004; Metzler, 2010; Razack & Jeffery, 2002), one annotated bibliography (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993) and numerous book chapters from *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, *The Handbook of Critical Race Theory In Education*, and *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, seven basic tenets were consistently referred to either directly or indirectly throughout the literature. These seven tenets were chosen to frame this research study: 1) racism is permanent (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Bell, 1995; Bell, 2000; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Campbell, 2008; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2000, 2012; Dixson & Lynn, 2013; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Lawless et al., 2006; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Matsuda et al., 1993; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009); 2) interest convergence (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2000, 2012; Ford &
Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Graham et al., 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Metzler, 2010; Oliva, Perez, & Parker, 2013; Yosso et al., 2009); 3) race is a social construction (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; McDowell & Jeris, 2004); 4) property value of whiteness (Bell, 1995; Bell, 2000; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2012; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McDowell & Jeris, 2004); 5) intersectionality (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2012; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; Solórzano, 2013); 6) unique voice of color and counter-narrative (Bell, 1995; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2000, 2012; Graham et al., 2011; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Matsuda et al., 1993; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001; Yosso et al., 2009); and 7) critique of liberalism (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Bell, 1995; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, 2000, 2012; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Gotanda, 2000; Graham et al., 2011; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Matsuda et al., 1993; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; Metzler, 2010; Oliva et al., 2013; Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Yosso et al., 2009). These tenets will be further explicated in the subsequent section and various aspects of these tenets will then be revisited and applied to the research questions and in analysis where appropriate.

**Racism Is Permanent and Endemic To US Life**

The first tenet of CRT is that racism is pervasive in U.S. society (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 2012; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013). It is not an aberration, but rather a customary and expected proceeding for People of Color in the United States (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Brown & Jackson,
2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Unlike the metanarrative that racism is a deviant behavior performed by individuals, CRT asserts that racism is so deeply embedded in the U.S. social imaginary that it permeates all political, legal and social structures and practices (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Lynn & Parker, 2006). In fact, CRT theorists assert that racism is so ingrained in the social fabric and legal structure of which the U.S. was built that it is almost invisible or unrecognizable, making it even more difficult to eradicate (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Lynn & Parker, 2006).

**Interest Convergence**

The term “interest convergence” was coined by Derrick Bell (1980) in his 1980 article entitled “Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma.” Interest convergence maintains that, “[t]he interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 523) and even when these interests converge, whites ensure that they reap more benefits from the gains than People of Color (Oliva et al., 2013). Bell contends that any work toward racial justice is not sought by the white dominant group out of altruism and, therefore, those working for racial justice must work to demonstrate how proposed changes benefit the white dominant group in order to gain support and progress toward racial equality (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

**Race is a Social Construction**

The third tenet of CRT included in this dissertation, race is a social construction, identifies race as a plastic concept, based on categories invented by society rather than science (i.e., genetics or biology) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Delgado & Stefancic (2012) explain:
The “social construction” thesis holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates or retires when convenient. People with common origins share certain physical traits, of course, such as skin color, physique and hair texture. But these constitute only an extremely small portion of their genetic endowment, are dwarfed by that which we have in common, and have little or nothing to do with distinctly human, higher-order traits such as personality, intelligence and moral behavior. That society frequently chooses to ignore these scientific truths, creates races and endows them with pseudo-permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory. (pp. 8-9)

Nevertheless, critical race theorists do not deny the real social, political and economic implications race has on the lives of both the privileged and oppressed. Although race itself is acknowledged as a social construction, Critical Race theorists also recognize the real and tangible implications of race and racism in the United States (Abrams & Moio, 2009; McDowell & Jeris, 2004). The effects of racism are apparent through the history of European colonization and genocide, slavery, overt racist laws (e.g., Jim Crow laws), more subtle forms of racism (e.g., meritocracy and color blindness) found in contemporary law and social practice, and continued economic oppression (McDowell & Jeris, 2004).

**Property Value of Whiteness**

In her article entitled, “Whiteness as Property,” Cheryl Harris (1993) introduced the concept of the “property value of whiteness” and described how the seemingly intangible concept of whiteness has been constructed into a tangible commodity with significant value. Harris contends that the white dominant group not only defines racial identities, but also that the law has been and continues to be written and manipulated to benefit whites while marginalizing all others. By meticulously tracing U.S. law, beginning with the 1823, *Johnson and Graham’s Lessee v. Mc’Intosh* court decision that...
established whiteness as a prerequisite to property ownership through the Affirmative Action Court cases in the 1970s and '80s, Harris (1993) established how “the concept of whiteness is built on both exclusion and racial subjugation” (p. 1737) (i.e., through the domination of blacks in the form of slave labor and Native Americans in the form of the appropriation of land). Likewise, Harris demonstrated that even though race has been defined differently in the law and society over time, what has been and continues to be constant is the racial group that has the power to define race and racial categories. That is, whites and white-controlled institutions have continued to hold the power and define race in such a way that maintains the status quo (i.e., whites benefit at the expense of all others).

**Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is the term often credited to Kimberle Crenshaw (Anderson & McCormack, 2010) that describes the unique interplay between overlapping and potentially conflicting identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). Intersectionality acknowledges that social categories or identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) are not distinct elements, but rather interconnected and mutually reinforcing components that are continuously interacting within the oppressive system of the United States (Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Caldwell, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). In essence, the concept of intersectionality posits that a person is composed of multiple identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that are either privileged or marginalized in any given social situation. Each unique combination of identities causes an individual to experience the world (and every social interaction) differently. Basically, no two people are alike and although people might
share multiple social identities, they also have disparate life experiences and identities that cause them to experience the world differently. In effect, intersectionality supports anti-essentialism, the idea that no two people are the same or experience the world in the same way (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). Delgado and Stefancic (1993) explain:

No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity. A white feminist may also be Jewish or working class or a single mother. An African American activist may be male or female, gay or straight. A Latino may be a Democrat, a Republican, or even a black—perhaps because that person’s family hails from the Caribbean. An Asian may be a recently arrived Hmong of rural background and unfamiliar with mercantile life or a fourth-generation Chinese with a father who is a university professor and a mother who operates a business. Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances. (p. 10)

**Unique Voice of Color and Counter-Narrative**

CRT scholarship is exceptional in that CRT theorists believe in collective wisdom and therefore strive to include and empower voices and perspectives that have traditionally been excluded (Bell, 1995). In a way, this tenet is the anti-thesis of intersectionality and anti-essentialism as it acknowledges the similarities within the larger group experience of oppressed persons and empowers scholars to give voice to the shared experiences of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). Delgado and Stefancic (1993) explain that

the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts’ matters that the whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. (p. 10)

The ability to have a unified voice is an important aspect of CRT and its social justice aims. It is true that one voice does not does allow for a perfect reflection of the unique experiences of each group that is subordinated through the oppressive system in the
United States (e.g., African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, etc.). Even so, the combination of shared experiences into one voice enables the entire group of oppressed peoples of color to benefit as there is greater power and ability to affect change in larger numbers (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993).

CRT scholarship is also “characterized by frequent use of the first person, storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law and the unapologetic use of creativity” (Bell, 1995, p. 899). This is not only a stylistic choice but a conscience political statement aimed at revealing the self-serving nature of the carefully constructed metanarrative surrounding race set by the white dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). This type of “oppositional scholarship” challenges the white Euro-American standard that is set as the norm to which all others are compared (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 260). It also undermines the assertion that the law and legal discourse and scholarship are neutral and unbiased in their application (Brown & Jackson, 2013). CRT scholarship demonstrates how racism is an ever-present reality for People of Color, found in laws, policies, practices, discourse, research and scholarship (Brown & Jackson, 2013). By grounding its conceptual framework in the experiences of People of Color through the use of storytelling and narrative knowledge, CRT challenges the social construction of race that has set the lack of color or whiteness as the standard (Gray, Plath, & Webb, 2009; Lynn & Parker, 2006).

**Critique of Liberalism**

Classical-liberalism posits that formal equal opportunity law and policy (i.e., all civil rights policy and equal opportunity law since the historic Brown v. Board of Education case in 1954) is functional and ensures that people of all races and ethnicities
are treated equally in the eyes of the law (Brooks & Newborn, 1994). In other words, liberals stand behind the conceptual ideology of a color-blind legal system (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Critical Race scholars are displeased with this method of addressing the racial situation in the United States and subsequently critique it heavily (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Brooks & Newborn, 1994; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). CRT scholars assert that civil rights policy and equal opportunity law do not accomplish enough as they only address the most overt forms of racism and not the more subtle forms that permeate all aspects of U.S. society (Brooks & Newborn, 1994). Critical Race scholarship is audacious in that it “dares to treat race as central to the law and policy of the United States, it dares to look beyond the popular belief that getting rid of racism means simply getting rid of ignorance, or encouraging everyone to “get along” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. xxiii).

**Critical Race Theory and Latino/a Critical Race Theory**

Given the dynamic and multi-disciplinary nature of CRT, it is not surprising that scholars have critiqued and expanded upon it so that is can be more easily applied within various disciplines and to the similar struggles of race and racism and other forms of oppression endured by minorities or oppressed populations. For example, although CRT’s initial focus was centered on issues affecting black and African American peoples in the United States, scholars have begun applying the tenets of CRT to other minority populations and expanding the central tenets of CRT where necessary (i.e., FemCrit, LatCrit, TribalCrit, AsianCrit, etc.). These iterations of CRT do not conflict with CRT’s basic tenets, but instead build off the tenets, applying them to oppressed groups other than the African American community. For example, Latino Critical Race Theory or
LatCrit has been described as a “parallel movement” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. xviii) or “close cousin” to CRT (Valdes, 1996, p. 26), complementing CRT by centering Latino perspectives and addressing issues and creating knowledge that is not generally addressed in CRT scholarship (i.e., immigration, citizenship and language rights) (Bernal, 2002; Portillos & González, 2007). Essentially, LatCrit is the application of CRT to the unique experiences of Latinos. The present study is therefore largely guided by a Critical Race framework, but it utilizes LatCrit to supplement CRT to more effectively highlight the Latino experience where needed. For instance, issues such as the documentation status of participants and their family members, U.S. immigration policies and practices and their subsequent impact on individuals and families will be directly addressed in this dissertation.

**CRT as a Theoretical Framework for this Study**

When CRT is utilized in a research study, it is necessary for power, privilege and oppression to play a prominent role in the investigation of the research topic (Lawless et al., 2006). Issues regarding race and racism are considered in every aspect of the research process – the design, selection of methods, analysis of the data, interpretation, presentation of the findings and recommendations (Graham et al., 2011). CRT is critical of the use of gold standard of quantitative research as it anchors the standard in whiteness. Although CRT does not supply specific methods for research, CRT can be used as an interpretive framework for studies grounded in social justice (McDowell, 2004). A brief outline of how CRT is applied in the present research study follows.
Social Justice Aims

CRT contends that part of what makes the oppressive system in the United States so difficult to dismantle are the existing systemic forces and macro-level factors that maintain the status quo (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). CRT research therefore aims to target these oppressive structural forces and eliminate them (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Pursuant to this aim, the research intends to expose how macro-level factors (anti-immigrant and anti-Latino policy and practices) impact Latinos and those living in mixed-citizenship status families. The hope is that this research will 1) expose a need for future research, interventions and policy reform; 2) reveal strategies or protective factors to the negative outcomes stemming from the current anti-immigrant state; and 3) provide evidence to support the dismantling of the anti-immigrant system (i.e., repealing laws that target and negatively impact immigrants, those living in immigrant families and Latinos).

CRT and its Impact on the Research Design and Methods Selection

As previously stated, CRT scholarship strives to include the voices of those who have been pushed to the margins and empower voices and perspectives that have traditionally been excluded (Bell, 1995). Consequently, a mixed methods research study that gives equal priority to both the quantitative and qualitative components was selected to provide supporting evidence for this dissertation. From a CRT perspective, the qualitative interviews are highly important in that they add the necessary context to the quantitative findings, while providing space for some who have been pushed to the margins to share their stories. This supplies a counter story to the dominant narrative where Latino immigration and immigrants are often painted in a negative light. CRT promotes the value of narrative because unlike other forms of data collection, narrative
grounds the topic of interest to a specific place and moment shared from the vantage point of the person who experienced it (Graham et al., 2011). This allows for a dense and detailed description from the storyteller where the intersections of race, class, sex, sexual orientation, language, national origin, etc. can be interrogated to give meaning to each multi-layered experience (Graham et al., 2011). A more detailed description of the various ways CRT influenced each step in the research process will be addressed in the methods section.

**Final Note on the use of Critical Race Theory in this Dissertation**

Critical Race Theory is a relevant theoretical framework for this social work dissertation that investigates the emotional well-being of Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families. It encourages the problem to be placed in social, political and historical context while considering issues of power, privilege, racism and other forms of oppression. CRT’s social justice agenda requires that a researcher not only examine a problem, but also that the research culminates with a call to action for the dismantling of the systemic forces that preserve our oppressive system and subsequently cause or sustain societal ills. This ethical stance mirrors that of the social work profession and its commitment to both empower those who are marginalized and actively combat discrimination and oppression on micro, mezzo and macro levels (National Association of Social Workers, 2014).
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This chapter starts by orienting the development of the present research study. It includes a brief discussion of relevant literature on mixed methods research approaches. It then provides a description of the present study’s design, including a more in-depth discussion of Critical Race Theory and its influence on the research design. Lastly, it includes a description of the data sources (sample recruitment procedures, instrument design and administration, and demographic information) and methods of data analysis.

Development of the Present Research Study

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) share a helpful chart that outlines four levels to develop a research study. They suggest that a researcher begin with a paradigm worldview that addresses the researcher’s philosophical assumptions regarding knowledge creation (i.e., epistemology and ontology). These assumptions guide the researcher’s choice of a theoretical lens from which a research design or methodology is chosen. The study’s design in turn informs the choice in methods for data collection. The chart created by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) is adapted to reflect the present study (see Figure 1).
Figure 1. Levels of research development. Adapted from Creswell, Plano, & Clark (2011, p. 39).

Epistemology and Ontology of Mixed Methods

Ontology considers “the nature of reality” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 42), methodology is “the science of finding out” and epistemology is “the science of knowing” (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 5). The search for knowledge and understanding and debates as to how to uncover truths and reality can be traced to ancient Western philosophy and continues today (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Johnson et al., (2007) suggest that mixed methods research can be placed somewhere between Plato’s quest for one universal truth (quantitative research) and the Sophists search to uncover multiple truths (qualitative research) as mixed methods research attempts “to respect fully the wisdom of both of these viewpoints while also seeking a workable middle solution for many (research) problems of interest” (p. 113).

Worldviews for Mixed Methods Research

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) contend that there are four worldviews that orient mixed methods research: 1) post positivism, 2) constructivism, 3) participatory (also known as the transformative paradigm) and 4) pragmatism. Post positivism most often informs quantitative approaches to research. This worldview emphasizes
determination, reductionism, empirical observation and measurement, and theory verification. Constructivism is more often associated with qualitative research. It is characterized by the understanding and meaning of multiple participants’ views, social and historical construction and theory generation. A participatory world view or transformative paradigm is also typically (but not always) associated with qualitative approaches. It emphasizes political concerns, is collaborative in nature and has social justice aims. Pragmatism is most often utilized in mixed methods research. It is problem centered, emphasizes the consequences of research, is pluralistic and is oriented in real-world practice. These worldviews can be used independently or in combination to inform a mixed methods research project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

**Project worldview.** This dissertation utilizes participatory (transformative) and pragmatic worldviews. Johnson et al., (2007) explain that

the primary philosophy of mixed research is that of pragmatism. Mixed methods research is, generally speaking, an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research). (p. 113)

The participatory worldview’s emphasis on political concerns and social justice are extremely important in the field of social work and its social justice aims. This research is grounded in the belief that any reconstitution of knowledge in the field of social work must seek to fully understand the problems facing our clients so that as practitioners we can more effectively develop interventions to ameliorate the identified problem(s) (Kirk & Reid, 2002).
**Idiographic and Nomothetic Models of Explanation**

Quantitative and qualitative researchers have divergent viewpoints in terms of their models of explanations and goals for the production of knowledge. Qualitative researchers focus on gaining a greater “depth of understanding, attempt to subjectively tap the deeper meaning of human experience, and are intended to generate theoretically rich observations” (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 48). This is often associated with the idiographic model of explanation, which aims “to explain through the enumeration of the many and perhaps unique considerations that lie behind a given action” (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 48). Quantitative methodology, on the other hand, emphasizes “the production of precise and generalizable statistical findings and [is] generally more appropriate to nomethetic aims” (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 44), which seek only a “partial understanding of a general phenomenon using relatively few variables” (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 43).

For years, these diverging viewpoints created great conflict between quantitative and qualitative purists (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). However, it is no longer necessary for researchers to take a binary position when it comes to research methodology. A third paradigm, the mixed methods paradigm, offers the ability for researchers to integrate both idiographic and nomethetic models of explanation to answer a research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson et al., 2007; Rubin & Babbie, 2001; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

**Mixed Methods Approach**

Over the past 30 years, there has been increased interest in using mixed methods approaches to enhance the effectiveness of researchers’ ability to fully respond to their
research question(s) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson et al., 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). One might think that the increased interest in this third research paradigm would have ended methodological debates once and for all. However, as the mixed methods model was being developed in the 1970s and 1980s and the interest in and utilization of mixed methods surged through the 1990s, purists questioned whether quantitative and qualitative data could be combined given their fundamental philosophical differences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Although the resistance to combining quantitative and qualitative methods has since assuaged, a new debate has begun. This new point of tension cuts to the very core of mixed methods research, interrogating the meaning of mixed methods and what should and should not be considered a mixed methods research project (Johnson et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

**Definition of Mixed Methods**

Researchers continue to have ongoing discussion regarding the “concepts, methods, and standards of quality” of mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 3), unable to agree on an exact definition of what mixed methods research is, how it should be conducted (i.e., the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study, including when and how to integrate each strand), and whether or not a study should be framed by one or multiple world views and/or philosophies (Johnson et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Given the numerous inconsistencies in the ever evolving definition of mixed methods research, for the purpose of the present study, the definition as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) will be utilized. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recognize six unique
components of mixed methods research: (1) rigorous data collection and analysis in both quantitative and qualitative data; (2) the integration of quantitative and qualitative data (through concurrent, sequential or embedded designs); (3) equal emphasis (or priority) is given to both the qualitative and quantitative data or just one form of data (quantitative or qualitative); (4) methods can be used in multiple stages of a study or in a single study; (5) the procedures are framed within a larger theoretical lens or philosophical worldview; and (6) the research designs direct the plan for conducting the research.

Types of Mixed Methods Designs

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) outline five types of mixed methods research studies: (1) the convergent parallel design (or convergent design), (2) the explanatory sequential design, (3) the exploratory sequential design, (d) the embedded design, (4) the transformative design and (5) the multiphase design (for a complete description of each, see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, pp. 56-59). In the present study, a combination of a transformative and convergent parallel mixed methods designs was utilized. A more in-depth description of this study’s design is described below.

Justification for a Mixed Methods Design in the Present Study

Mixed methods is not appropriate for every research study. For example, a researcher might select a strictly qualitative methodology if interested in the exploration of a new or emerging substantive area, in having the voices of the participants take center stage, and/or in demonstrating multiple perspectives or the complexity of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Other times, a purely quantitative methodology is most appropriate. For instance, a researcher might select quantitative research methods when trying to understand the relationship between a few variables, compare groups or
outcomes to one another and/or want the end product to be generalizable knowledge (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The reality is that qualitative and quantitative research methods both have their place and provide different frames of reference and perspectives of a problem. However, these methodologies also have their limitations. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) explain:

When researchers study a few individuals qualitatively, the ability to generalize the results may be lost. When researchers quantitatively examine many individuals, the understanding of any one individual is diminished. Hence, the limitations of one method can be offset by the strengths of the other method, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself. (p. 8)

The worldview (i.e., transformative and pragmatism) and theoretical grounding (i.e., Critical Race Theory) of the present study coupled by the complexity of the research problem “calls for answers beyond simple numbers in a quantitative sense or words in a qualitative sense” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 21). Therefore, a transformative convergent parallel mixed methods approach was selected (rather than a purely quantitative or qualitative design) to provide a more complete analysis of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Project Design

This mixed methods study addresses the well-being of Latinos in mixed status families. To do this, the present study employs a transformative convergent parallel design, placing the convergent parallel design within the framework of a transformative design that utilizes Critical Race Theory (see Figure 2). One of the two worldviews guiding this study is the transformative paradigm that aims to advance “the needs of underrepresented or marginalized populations” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 96).
This transformative worldview guided the choice of Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework for this dissertation. CRT demands that power, privilege and oppression play a prominent role in the investigation of the research topic (Lawless et al., 2006), that the research should aim to target structural forces that maintain the oppressive system (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010) and that research conclude with a call for action and outline specific recommendations or steps to inspire action (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Graham et al., 2011). The transformative design fits the standards set within the CRT framework. The purpose of a transformative design “is to conduct research that is change oriented and seeks to advance social justice causes by identifying power imbalances and empowering individuals and/or communities” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 96). It includes taking a stance, sensitivity to the target population of the study and making recommendations for change to ameliorate the problem based on the findings of the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). When using a transformative design, it is not uncommon to also choose to utilize procedures from other designs (e.g., concurrent parallel design) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the present study, the overarching framework is guided by the transformative design, while the specific procedures for data collection are drawn from the concurrent parallel design.

In a convergent parallel research design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The choice of a convergent parallel design is often driven from a pragmatist worldview, the second worldview that guides the present study. The purpose of the convergent parallel design is to synthesize both the quantitative and qualitative results to allow for greater insight into the substantive area than would be obtained by only
collecting and analyzing one type of data (either quantitative or qualitative data). This enables the ability to more fully uncover the complexities and nuances of the experiences of Latinos living in mixed status families (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2003). In the next section, procedures specific to the transformative and concurrent parallel designs are outlined.

![Diagram of Critical Race Framework]

*Figure 2. Transformative convergent parallel design utilizing a CRT framework.*

**Procedures of Transformative Design**

The transformative design is utilized as an overarching framework to guide the methodological procedures for data collection of the convergent parallel design. It requires that researchers consider the following issues throughout the data collection and analysis process as outlined by Mertens (2003):

a) Consideration of how the data collection process and outcomes will benefit the community being studied;

b) credibility of the research findings to that community;
c) the appropriateness of communication methods, and resources to support and willingness to engage in effective communication methods;

d) knowledge about response tendencies within the community and sensitivity to culturally appropriate ways to ask questions; and tying the collection of data to transformation either by influencing the design of the treatment intervention or by providing avenues for participation in the social change process. (p. 151)

**Procedures of a Convergent Parallel Design**

There are four steps within the convergent design: 1) Quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, but separately. 2) The quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed separately. 3) The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis are merged. 4) The results are interpreted together (e.g., results are compared to determine a) where the quantitative and qualitative results converge and diverge, b) how the quantitative results give meaning to the qualitative results and vice versus and c) how together both the quantitative and qualitative analysis relate and give a greater depth of understanding to the substantive area being researched) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

**Influence of CRT on Methodological Approaches and Procedures**

As previously stated, although CRT does not supply specific methods for research, CRT is used as an interpretive framework for the present study and its aim to include the voices of those that have traditionally been excluded (Bell, 1995; McDowell & Jeris, 2004; McDowell, 2004). It also provides the necessary critical lens through which the research question and subsequent answers can be understood. A more detailed description of the various ways CRT influenced each step in the research process is addressed below.
**Design and methods selection.** When CRT is utilized in a research study, power, privilege and oppression must play a prominent role in the investigation of the research topic (Lawless et al., 2006). To do this, Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010) suggest that a CRT research study begin by asking, “How does racialization contribute to the problem at hand?” (p. 1391). According to Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010), the term, racialization describes social stratification in which socially constructed racial categories are the bases for ordering society. The primacy of racialization has two connotations…It connotes racialization’s foundational contribution to inequities. It also names critical race scholarship’s central focus: understanding how racialization influences (1) observed outcomes, (2) knowledge production, and (3) the field’s impact on the broader society. (p. 1394)

For the present research study, questions specific to racialization were asked not only prior to designing the study, but also throughout the study and when the quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted.

**Use of narrative.** Narrative can take place in a written or oral format (Graham et al., 2011). In either instance, the researcher takes on the role of a facilitator. In contrast to an interview, narrative gives participants the opportunity to reflect on the question(s) prior to meeting with the researcher so that the participant has the appropriate time to develop his or her response(s) (Graham et al., 2011). In addition, the researcher opts to prompt the participants sparingly, giving them the space to elaborate on their response without interruption. The qualitative interview portion of this research project followed this procedure. Thus, it will be more clearly detailed in the Methods section of this paper.

**Analysis and interpretation of data.** CRT posits that one’s experience cannot be understood in isolation, but instead must be placed within cultural and historical context (Graham et al., 2011). This too is true when analyzing and interpreting data. Both cultural
and historical context are needed to deconstruct and understand the data (quantitative and qualitative). Graham et al. (2011) explain:

> The lived experiences of subjects as self-reported and measured are sensitive to the implications of history. The past offers a way to contextualize ethnic minorities’ current experiences of race and racism in their lives. The perspectives of subjects must inform data interpretation and meaning designation. (p. 88)

Both culture and historical context were considered in the analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

**Presentation of findings and the researcher’s social location.** Similar to the feminist position, Critical Race theorists reject the claims of neutrality found in most scholarly research, asserting that no researcher or research is neutral (Gillies & Alldred, 2002; Graham et al., 2011; Lawless et al., 2006). CRT theorists argue that although scholars might appear to be objective through the application of a detached writing style (i.e., writing in the third person, devoid of empathy and feeling, etc.), the research is always viewed from the researcher’s lens (i.e., lived experiences, values, beliefs, etc.) and no matter how hard the researcher works to bracket his/her own judgments, eliminate all bias and view the research from a perspectiveless position, it is an impossible feat (Graham et al., 2011; Lawless et al., 2006). All research, including the way theory and methodology are understood and applied, is shaped through the lens of the researcher (Lawless et al., 2006). CRT scholars strive for transparency regarding their social location and acknowledge their position and that an unbiased position can never be realized (Lawless et al., 2006).

In spite of working to be transparent about my social location in my dissertation (both in my writing and in my interactions with key gatekeepers and participants), I
acknowledge it is impossible to be completely transparent (Lawless et al., 2006). I have worked diligently to increase my awareness surrounding my position and positionality (Sanchez, 2006) and to create a level of transparency regarding my social location. But I must also acknowledge that my privileged identities work as blinders, and although I have been continuously working toward increased self-awareness and transparency in my research, personal life and professional life, I have not always been successful.

**Discussion and recommendations.** CRT research generally concludes with a call for action and outlines specific recommendations or steps to inspire action (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Graham et al., 2011). It is my hope that this research will help to “illuminate the layered meanings of race,” and the U.S. citizenship and immigration status of individuals and their family members (Pérez-Huber, 2008, p. 91) and “expose and disrupt oppressive conditions” within immigration institutions in the U.S. (Pérez-Huber, 2010, p. 159). The discussion and recommendations sections will more explicitly outline next steps for research and toward social justice.

**Internal Review Board (IRB) Approval Process**

Prior to beginning this research project, the various components of this dissertation were approved by the University of Denver Internal Review Board. Due to the complexity of the substantive area and the many ethical and safety considerations to protect participants, this process was rigorous, requiring over five iterations. Initially, the population of study for this dissertation was Latino high school youth. Per the University of Denver IRB’s recommendations, to limit the potential risk to adolescent youths, the application was reduced to a web-based survey instead of a mixed methods methodology, including qualitative interviews.
Part of the IRB application process necessitated written consent from high school principals to demonstrate support for data collection in their school. Initially (spring and fall of 2013), two high school principals agreed to support the research project and allow their student body to participate during school hours. As the University of Denver IRB process extended for nearly the entire 2013-14 academic year, data collection needed to be postponed until the 2014-15 academic year. Unfortunately, one of the high school principals who had agreed to support data collection made the decision to leave her principal position for the 2014-15 academic year (when data collection was rescheduled to begin). Although the new administration was approached for support, ultimately, they decided not to move forward with data collection at their school. As this school was the larger of the two (nearly 500 students versus 200 students at the smaller high school), this significantly reduced the potential sample size. Although the research moved forward with collecting quantitative data at the smaller high school, after conferencing with my dissertation chair, I decided to pursue data collection from an adult sample. This decision allowed me to continue with the mixed methods research approach and to increase the sample size of the quantitative portion of the study. Therefore, a second IRB application was submitted for the new target population (adults). Per the recommendation of the IRB, this application was submitted in two parts: 1) the quantitative, anonymous web-based survey application and 2) the qualitative, interview application.

The University of Denver IRB approval for the high school sample was received on May 13, 2014 (#499935-5). The University of Denver IRB approval for the web-based survey portion for the adult sample was received on May 13, 2014 (#602949-2) and for the interview portion on July 24, 2014 (#567833-3).
Additional IRB Approval for the High School Sample

Research in the school district in which this study was located required IRB school district approval. The research project was approved by the school district (name of the district was omitted to protect confidentiality) prior to beginning the study. Approval was received on July 7, 2014.

Data Sources and Instrumentation

Overview of Quantitative and Qualitative Samples

As previously stated, two separate samples (high school students and adults) were used for the quantitative portion of the study design. The qualitative sample was then drawn from the adult quantitative sample (i.e., people who contacted me through the survey link or directly via telephone or email). The subsections below outline each sample for the quantitative portions and qualitative portion of this study.

Quantitative High School Sample.

Sampling and recruitment. The target population for this portion of the study was public high school students (age 15-19) in metro Denver. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose the high school (i.e., school with large Latino population). A parental consent form requiring a parent’s or guardian’s signature was distributed to all students at the participating high school at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year (during registration and by the homeroom classroom teacher). Students had to submit a signed parental consent form to participate.

All students who submitted the signed consent form (either declining or giving consent) were put in random drawing to receive $5-$10 gift cards. Fifty of a potential 200 students were eligible to receive a gift card. Students who were absent on the three days
researchers passed out the gift cards did not receive them. No incentives or compensation for time were given to students for taking the web-based anonymous survey. Only students who were able to take the survey in English or Spanish were able to participate in the study as the survey was not translated into additional languages.

**Instrument design.** A web-based survey (utilizing qualtrics) was administered. The survey first asked if the participant would like to proceed in English or Spanish. Once a language was selected, the survey itself began with a participant’s rights (i.e., student assent/consent form). The students had to acknowledge they had read this and check “yes” to continue with the survey or check “no” to discontinue the survey. This ensured that the students were aware of their rights (i.e., that they did not need to continue the survey or could stop the survey at any time) and also ensured that participants were aware that their responses were anonymous (i.e., not connected to an electronic signature or any identifying information). The survey was made available to participants in English and Spanish, had less than 40 questions and took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

**Measures.** Within the demographics section of the survey, respondents were asked about the documentation and citizenship status of their family members. There were five questions related to substance abuse, one question related to stress, and one question related to discrimination. Depression was measured by using a four-item abbreviated version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D). The choice to limit the CES-D to just four questions was made to reduce survey fatigue. The Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD-7), which assesses levels of anxiety, was also utilized. The Likert scale of the GAD-7 was adapted to match the
CES-D for consistency purposes and to minimize any confusion of the respondents; items on the CES-D and GAD-7 were rated from 0 to 3 [0 = rarely (zero days a week), 1 = some of the time (one or two days a week), 2 = occasionally (three or four days a week), and 3 = often (five to seven days a week)]. Quantitative questions regarding substance use and stress also limited responses to the same 4-point Likert scale. The question regarding perceived discrimination was dichotomous (i.e., required a yes or no response) and also included a follow-up question for participants who responded affirmatively to the question. The survey concluded with a short open-ended question section (see Appendix A for complete survey).

**Instrument administration.** Eighty students enrolled at the high school submitted signed parental consent forms, allowing students to participate in the study. Data collection took place over a period of three school days (October 8, 9 and 15, 2014). Fifty-eight students were present and eligible to participate in the study on at least one of the days the survey was administered. One of these students declined to participate in the study.

Fifty-seven students participated in the study (responded to the survey). All surveys were administered electronically (using Qualtrics) in the school’s computer lab. To participate in the survey, students who had received parental permission clicked on a generic link provided on the school computer. The survey began with a consent/assent requiring a yes or no response (versus an electronic signature). This allowed for the survey responses to be anonymous.

Prior to the students entering the room, I and/or the graduate research assistant ensured that the computers had the appropriate dividers so that students were unable to
see other computer screens (i.e., computer screens other than their own). I and/or a graduate research assistant also actively monitored the administration of the survey (i.e., walked around the classroom to answer questions and ensure that students were not attempting to look at other computers or talk to each other while the survey was in progress).

The survey was self-administered by the students. I and/or the graduate research assistant provided no additional support to the students other than the logistical aspect of the survey (providing the link and being available to answer a question if a student did not understand the meaning of a word or question).

**High school sample demographics.** Fifty-seven students responded to the high school survey. As two of these students did not respond to the anxiety and depression questions on the survey, they were excluded from analysis, bringing the sample size to fifty-five (n = 55). The participants were asked to self-identify their ethnicity. The majority (87%, n = 48) of participants were of Latino descent. The remaining participants identified as White, non-Hispanic (11%, n = 6), American Indian or Alaska Native (7%, n = 4) and/or Black or African American (2%, n = 1). The sample was evenly split in terms of gender. Twenty-seven respondents (49%) identified as female, and 27 (51%) identified as male (one student did not respond when asked about gender). This sample ranged in age from 15 to 19 years old, with an average age of 16.5 and a median age of 17 years old (see Figure 3).
Figure 3. Age distribution of the high school sample, overlaid with normal distribution curve.

Nearly three-quarters (73%, n = 40) of participants reported speaking a language in addition to English. Although not all participants shared what additional language they speak, of those who responded (n = 37), almost all (97%, n = 36) reported that they speak Spanish. The majority of participants (84%, n = 46) reported being born in the United States, while just under one-fifth (16%, n = 9) of participants reported being born outside the U.S. (seven in Mexico and two in El Salvador). Seven participants (13%) reported being unauthorized and one was unsure of documentation status.
Participants were also asked the immigrant and documentation status of family members. Nearly two-thirds of the entire sample (64%, n = 35) and nearly three-quarters of Latino students (73%, n = 35) reported having an immigrant parent. Of the Latino students with at least one immigrant parent, the majority (86%, n = 30) were of Mexican descent. Nearly half (44%, n = 24) of participants reported having at least one unauthorized nuclear family member (parent, sibling or self). Twenty-one participants (38% of the entire sample and 44% of the Latino sample) reported having at least one unauthorized immigrant parent (i.e., father, mother or step-parent) at the time of the survey (see Figure 4). This does not include at least one student who had the experience of both unauthorized parents being deported and not returning to the U.S., rendering the parents no longer unauthorized immigrants in the United States. One fifth (21%, n = 10) of the Latino participants (n = 48) reported that at least one parent had experienced immigrant detention and just over one fifth (23%, n = 11) reported the deportation of at least one parent.
Quantitative Adult Sample

Sampling and recruitment. The target population was adults age 18+ who attended a two-year or four-year college or university or participated in university programs or seminar courses. Various college organizations and college student affinity groups were invited to participate in the survey. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the following: Latino Student Associations at colleges and universities; multicultural groups and organizations at community colleges, colleges and universities; Inclusive Excellence programs; Centers for Multicultural Excellence; Greek life; and international programs.

Key gatekeepers (i.e., organization members or leaders, community contacts, etc.) were contacted to connect to the organization/association/program leadership, and/or the organization/association/program leadership was contacted directly and shared...
information about the study. I asked if the leader (i.e., organization president or other officer) or member would be interested in and/or willing to share information about my dissertation with their members. If the organization was local (i.e., in the metro Denver area), I offered to attend one of the organization meetings to share information about the study and personally invite members to participate. Participants were also able to forward the survey to peers that might be interested in participating in the survey. No incentives or compensation for time were given to individuals who participated in the survey. The survey and consent forms were provided to potential participants in both English and Spanish via a generic link, limiting participants to those who could read and respond in English or Spanish.

**Recruitment procedures.** Data collection took place from October 20, 2014, to May 1, 2015. The organization leader(s) and/or member(s) contacted were asked to forward an email invitation to participate in the survey to the members and alumni of their organization. To participate in the survey, individuals needed to click on a generic link. The consent form included in the survey did not require a name or electronic signature. Instead, it simply requested a yes or no response. This allowed for the survey responses to be anonymous. In addition, participants needed to check a box indicating they were 18 years of age or older to continue onto the survey.

Given the recruitment strategy, it was anticipated that participants would be over the age of 18. Even so, it was made clear in all correspondence with group members and/or leadership (via phone, in person, email) that participants must be 18 years of age or older. However, it was possible for participants to forward the survey to an individual who was under 18. Although this was not the target population, because the link was
forwarded to various potential participants (i.e., snowball), I was not able to control who actually took the survey. To hinder minors from taking the survey, participants needed to check a box indicating they were 18 years of age or older to continue onto the survey. While this was a safeguard and deterrent, it was possible for someone who was younger than 18 years of age to check the box saying that they are 18 or older and take the survey. Other safeguards that were put into place to minimize risk to the participants are that the survey responses were anonymous and contact information for national resource and mental health support lines were included in the anonymous consent form that preceded the survey.

**Instrument design.** A web-based survey (utilizing Qualtrics) was used. As previously stated, all potential participants received an email invitation (forwarded from their campus organization leader, member or colleague) that included a generic link to access the survey. The survey began with a participant’s rights form (i.e., consent form); the participants needed to acknowledge they had read this and check “yes” to continue with the survey or check “no” to discontinue the survey (i.e., not take the survey). This ensured that the potential participants were aware of their rights (i.e., that they did not need to continue the survey or could stop the survey at any time) and also ensured that their responses were anonymous (i.e., not connected to an electronic signature or any identifying information). The survey was made available to participants in English and Spanish, was less than 40 questions and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. This survey was very similar to the survey taken by high school students. However, some differences existed. For instance, this survey included a question about trauma history
that was excluded from the high school survey per the DU IRB’s requirement. This
survey also included some questions specific to college enrollment.

**Measures.** As previously stated, the adult survey replicated the survey that was
given to the high school sample. Other than a few demographic questions specific to
adults (e.g., What is your highest grade completed? Are you currently enrolled in
college?) and the omission of demographic questions specific to high school students
(e.g., What grade are you in? During the past 12 months, how would you describe the
grades you mostly received in school? ), one distinguishing component was the addition
of a trauma question at the end of the survey.

Similar to the survey administered to high school students, within the
demographics section of the adult survey, respondents were asked about the
documentation and citizenship status of their family members. There were five questions
related to substance abuse, one question related to stress and one question related to
discrimination. Depression was measured by using a four-item abbreviated version of the
Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D). The choice to limit the
CES-D to just four questions was made to reduce survey fatigue. The Generalized
Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD-7), which assesses levels of anxiety, was also
utilized. The Likert scale of the GAD-7 was adapted to match the CES-D for consistency
purposes and to minimize any confusion of the respondents; items on the CES-D and
GAD-7 were rated from 0 to 3 [0 = rarely (zero days a week), 1 = some of the time (one
or two days a week), 2 = occasionally (three or four days a week) and 3 = often (five to
seven days a week)]. Quantitative questions regarding substance use and stress also
limited responses to the same 4-point Likert scale. The trauma question was found toward
the end of the survey. It listed traumatic events and asked that participants mark the boxes that describe things they had lived through or seen. The survey concluded with a short open-ended question section (see Appendix B for complete survey).

**Instrument administration.** All quantitative surveys were administered electronically (using qualtrics) through a generic link provided in the email invitation. The survey was self-administered by each participant on his or her own time using his or her personal computer or electronic device. This allowed for the survey to remain anonymous.

**Quantitative adult sample demographics.** Two hundred two (n = 202) people began the survey or at a minimum opened the link to the survey. However, just 159 (n = 159) adult participants completed the web-based survey and answered the anxiety and depression questions. The survey dropout rate was 21%.

The largest number of participants were Latino (57%, n = 91) and white, non-Hispanic (37%, n = 58). The remaining participants identified as Asian or Asian American (4%, n = 7), black or African American (3%, n = 5), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (1%, n = 2) and American Indian or Alaska Native (1%, n = 1). This sample ranged in age from 18 to 65, with an average age of 27.7 and a median age of 25 years old (see Figure 5). At the time of the survey, two-thirds (66%, n = 105) of participants were enrolled in a higher education program, either an undergraduate or graduate program. The largest number of participants (84%, n = 133) identified as female.
Figure 5. Age distribution of the adult survey sample, overlaid with normal distribution curve.

The majority (56%, n =89) of participants were born to at least one immigrant parent. Although not all the participants indicated their parents’ country of birth, the majority of participants born to immigrant families indicated that they were of Mexican descent (72%, n =64). Nearly two-thirds (64%, n = 101) of participants spoke more than one language, most of whom were bilingual in English and Spanish (83%, n =84). The percentage of bilingual participants was higher when looking specifically at the Latino participants (85%, n = 77).
Over three-quarters (80.5%, n = 128) of participants were U.S. citizens. Of the immigrant participants (19.5%, n = 31), over half were born in Mexico (54%, n = 17). The remaining participants were born in other parts of Latin America (23%, n = 7), Asia, Europe, Saudi Arabia or did not indicate a place of birth. Eleven participants (7%) indicated that they were unauthorized immigrants at the time of the survey; all 11 unauthorized immigrants were of Latino decent.

Participants were asked the documentation status of family members. Twenty-three participants (15% of the entire sample or 25% of Latino participants) reported having at least one unauthorized nuclear family member (parent, spouse, sibling or self). About one-tenth (11%, n = 18) of participants, or 20% of Latino participants, had an unauthorized parent or spouse (see Figure 6). Thirteen participants (8% of the entire sample), or 14% of Latino participants, experienced the detention of a parent or spouse by ICE, five of which resulted in deportation. In addition, four of the Latino participants (4%) had an unauthorized sibling.
Figure 6. Ethnicity and immigrant status of nuclear family members of the high school sample.

**Combined quantitative (high school and adult) sample demographics.** The combined high school and adult samples included 214 (n = 214) participants. The largest number of participants were Latino (65%, n = 139) and white, non-Hispanic (29%, n = 62). The remaining participants (6%, n = 13) were Non-Latino Persons of Color (Asian or Asian American, black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native). This sample ranged in age from 15 to 65 years old, with an average age of 24.82 and a median age of 21 years old (see Figure 7). About a quarter (26%, n = 55) of participants were in high school, and nearly half (49%, n = 105)
of participants were enrolled in a higher education program, either an undergraduate or graduate program. Three-quarters (75%, n = 160) of participants identified as female.

![Age Distribution](image)

*Figure 7. Age distribution of the survey sample, overlaid with normal distribution curve.*

Over three-quarters (81%, n = 174) of participants were native-born U.S. citizens and 19% (n = 40) were immigrants. Eighteen participants (8%) indicated that they were unauthorized immigrants at the time of the survey. Two participants (1%) indicated that they were unsure of their immigration status. All 18 unauthorized immigrants were of Latino decent.
The majority (59%, n =126) of participants were born to at least one immigrant parent. Although not all the participants indicated their parents’ country of birth, the majority of participants born to immigrant families indicated that they were of Mexican descent (75%, n =94). Two-thirds (66%, n = 141) of participants were bilingual. The percentage of bilingual participants was higher when looking specifically at the Latino participants (83%, n = 115).

Participants were asked about ethnicity and the documentation status of family members. A quarter (25%, n = 54) of participants were born to white U.S. native families (both parents and participants not immigrants). A smaller percentage of Latinos were born to U.S. native families (11%, n = 24). About a third (32%, n = 68) of participants were born to Latino immigrant families (at least one parent, the participants or the participant’s spouse or partner was an authorized immigrant). One-fifth (22%, n = 47) of participants were Latinos in mixed status nuclear families (at least one unauthorized member of the nuclear family, including self, spouse, parent or sibling). Seven participants (3%) were non-Latino Persons of Color born into U.S. native families. Six participants (3%) were non-Latino Persons of Color born to immigrant families, and eight participants (4%) were white people born to immigrant families (see Figure 8).

Forty-seven participants (22%), all of whom were Latino, reported having at least one unauthorized nuclear family member (parent, spouse, sibling or self). About one-fifth (18%, n = 39) of participants, or 28% of Latino participants, had an unauthorized parent (n = 37) or spouse (n =2). Twenty-three participants (11%) experienced the detention of a parent or spouse by ICE, and 16 participants (7%) experienced the deportation of a parent or spouse.
Figure 8. Ethnicity and immigrant status of nuclear family members of the high school sample.

Qualitative Adult Sample Interview Population

**Sampling and recruitment.** The target population for the qualitative portion of this study was adult Latinos (including those living in mixed status families and not living in mixed status families). The maximum number of participants for inclusion was 24 – 12 Latinos in mixed status families and 12 Latinos not living in mixed status families (immigrant or U.S. citizen families). Ultimately, a total of 20 interviews were completed (eight with participants in mixed status families (undocumented parent or sibling) and 12 with Latinos in documented immigrant and U.S. citizen families (four of
whom had an undocumented family member in their extended family – aunt, uncle, cousin or grandparent).

**Recruitment procedures.** Potential participants for the qualitative portion of this mixed methods study was drawn from the quantitative study adult participants (non-high school students) who indicated interest in participating in the qualitative interview (either by calling me directly or sharing their contact information through the link at the end of the quantitative survey).

The anonymous consent form included in the adult quantitative survey included the following statement:

In addition to this survey, I will be completing confidential telephone or in person interviews to better understand feelings of anxiety and depression and how they relate to the immigration and citizenship status of family members. If you would like to participate, please call me directly at XXX-XXX-XXX or email me at xxxxxx@du.edu. If you would prefer that I contact you directly, I will also provide a link where you can share your name and contact information at the end of the survey. This link will not be connected to your responses to ensure anonymity.

This allowed individuals interested in participating in an interview to contact me directly to schedule the interview.

In addition, at the end of the survey, participants were able to indicate interest in participating in future research (the qualitative research portion of this dissertation) by selecting YES to the following question:
In order to better understand how feelings of anxiety and depression relate to the citizenship and immigration status of family members, I am scheduling confidential follow-up interviews via telephone, Skype or in-person (in-person only if you live in the Denver metro area). You will receive a $25 gift card for your participation. Would you like to participate in a follow-up interview?

If a participant selected “Yes,” he or she was taken to a separate survey (that was not connected to the responses of the quantitative survey). This survey indicated that there were two ways to participate in the follow-up study: 1) to call or email me directly or 2) to share their first name and telephone number and/or email in the space provided so that I could contact potential participants directly to schedule the interview.

Upon being contacted by the participant to participate in the qualitative interview or contacting a potential participant who has expressed interest in participating in the interview, I verified that the participant met the inclusion criteria (i.e., is 18 years old or older and is Latino). I did not ask for identification, but instead relied on the participant’s verbal confirmation that he or she was 18 or older.

As previously described, potential participants for the interview were able to contact me directly or share their contact information so that they could be contacted by me. During the phone or email correspondence, I shared more information about the interview, verified that it would be acceptable to audio record the interview, answered any questions the potential participant had, and reviewed the participant’s rights (included in the consent) with the participant (i.e., do not have to answer all the questions, will still receive the $25 gift card if decide to not answer questions or end the interview early, etc.). At this time, the participant scheduled a time to either complete the
interview on the telephone or meet me in person for the interview. The participant was able to select the location of the interview (i.e., a confidential place in the community, Skype or telephone).

**Instrument design.** Prior to beginning each interview, the participants completed a short demographic survey (see Appendix C) that included demographic questions regarding age, gender and the documentation status of family members. It also included the anxiety and depression questions from the original quantitative electronic survey. Participants who met with me in-person completed the demographic survey by hand. Participants who met via telephone or Skype were asked the demographic questions verbally and then I transcribed their responses onto the demographic survey form.

A basic protocol was used for each interview (see Appendix D). Per the CRT protocol outlined at the beginning of the methods section, the topic, research question, specific interview questions and verbal consent form were shared with the participants prior to the scheduled interview. This allowed them to reflect on the questions and think about their responses in advance. When it came time for the interview itself, I asked open-ended questions (following the interview protocol) and allowed participants to speak at length, with minimal prompting.

**Instrument administration.** The qualitative interviews were completed between October 25, 2014, and April 6, 2015. Twenty interviews were conducted. The location and mode of interview was of the participant’s choosing. Five interviews were completed in-person at a location chosen by the participant (on a local college campus, school or home of the participant). Three took place over Skype. Eleven took place over the
telephone. One interview began via Skype, but due to poor audio as a result of Skype or Internet connectivity issues, the interview was concluded over the telephone.

The participants were all offered a $25 gift card to reimburse them for their time. At the in-person interviews, I handed the participant the gift card before the interview began. When the interview was completed over the telephone or Skype, the participant had the opportunity to share their address so the gift card could be mailed. If the participant decided to share his or her contact information, I wrote the contact information on an envelope and then mailed the gift card out the same day. This ensured that I did not retain any contact information that might link a participant to the study. If the participant did not want to share his or her contact information, I was not able to send the gift card. Ultimately, it was the participant’s choice.

All 20 interviews were audio-recorded (this was not mandatory, but requested so that I could capture all that was said. Ultimately, the participant was able to choose to be audio-recorded). All participants were given the option to complete the interview in English or Spanish. All 20 interviews were completed in English, the desired language of each participant.

The participants were not asked to sign a consent form prior to beginning the interview. This protected the participant’s identity. Instead, the participant and I reviewed the consent form (i.e., the participant read the consent form and I highlighted important aspects verbally) and the participant gave oral consent (including oral consent to be audio recorded). Part of the consent form included sharing a national telephone number for support. One number shared was a referral line that can provide the contact information for physical and emotional resources. The second number was a national suicide hotline.
that could provide immediate emotional support to callers. If the interview was in-person, the participant received a hard copy of the consent form and resources. If the interview took place over the phone, the participant had received a copy of the consent form via email prior to the scheduled interview but was not given an additional hard copy.

After reviewing the consent form, the participants were asked applicable questions from the interview protocol. I took notes during the interview when appropriate and also wrote separate field notes directly after the interview, describing other observations made during the interview and important highlights from the interviews.

The complete interviews lasted approximately one hour. This includes the conversations and demographic surveys prior to turning on the audio recorder. The audio-recorded portion of the interviews (responding to the questions on the interview protocol) lasted anywhere from 16 minutes to one hour and 17 minutes, with an average time of 33.5 minutes, and a median time of 27 minutes. It is also important to note that, in general, participants living in mixed status families spoke at much greater length compared with the counterparts without unauthorized family members. In addition, some logistical issues shortened a few of the interviews. For instance, one participant became sick and vomited during the interview. There was also great difficulty hearing via Skype or telephone during a couple of the interviews. This might have impacted the flow of conversation.

**Qualitative adult interview sample demographics.** All 20 participants from the qualitative interviews were of Latino descent and bilingual in English and Spanish. Over half (65%, n = 13) of participants were of Mexican descent (one of whom described herself as half Mexican and half Salvadorian). The remaining participants were
descendants of Peru, Brazil, Honduras, Cuba, Columbia or Puerto Rico. This sample ranged in age from 18 to 53 years old, with an average age of 27.5 and a median age of 26.5 years old (see Figure 9). The largest number of participants (75%, n = 15) identified as female.

![Age Distribution of Qualitative Sample](image)

*Figure 9. Age distribution of qualitative sample, overlaid with normal distribution curve.*

Participants were asked their highest grade completed. Over a quarter (30%, n = 6) had graduated high school and had at least some college, over half (55%, n = 11) had a minimum of bachelor’s degree, and three (15%) had a graduate degree. At the time of the
interviews, two-thirds (70%, n = 14) of participants were students, enrolled in either an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral program.

Two-thirds (70%, n = 14) of participants were U.S. citizens. Half of the participants (50%, n = 10) were born in the continental U.S. (i.e., California, Illinois, Virginia, Colorado and Texas). One participant was born outside the continental U.S. (i.e., Puerto Rico) and the other nine were born outside the United States (six in Mexico and three in other countries in Latin America). Three participants (15%) had DACA status and one (5%) had a student visa. No participants reported being unauthorized at the time of the interview (see Figure 10).

![Citizenship and Immigrant Status of Interview Participants (n = 20)](image)

*Figure 10.* United States citizenship and immigrant status of participants.
Participants were also asked the documentation status of family members. Over half (55%, n = 11) of participants reported living in an immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but no unauthorized nuclear family members). Just one participant was born into a U.S. native family (both parents born in the U.S.). Nearly half (40%, n = 8) of participants reported having at least one unauthorized parent (see Figure 11). Four of these participants also experienced the detention of a parent by ICE, three of which resulted in deportation. In addition, three of the eight participants with an unauthorized parent also had an unauthorized sibling. Another of these participants had not only an unauthorized parent, but also an unauthorized extended family member or spouse.

![Ethnicity and Immigrant Status of Family Members](image)

**Figure 11.** Ethnicity and immigrant status of nuclear family members of the adult interview sample.
Sample Comparisons

In this section, sub-samples within the quantitative data collected (e.g., Latino high school survey participants, Latino adult survey participants, white adult survey participants) and the sample from the qualitative data (e.g., Latino adult interview participants) are compared to underscore similarities and differences between each group. As displayed in Table 1, the high school sample was more evenly distributed across gender compared with the adult samples. Other than the younger age demographics of the high school sample compared with the adult samples, there were not major differences between the adult samples in terms of age range or average age of participants. Similarly, the levels of education of the adult samples was similar (85%-95% with at least some college and 66%-70% currently enrolled in higher education).

The greatest difference between groups was specific to the level of bilingualism and U.S. nativity of participants and their family members. All three of the Latino samples tended to have higher levels of bilingualism (79%, 89% and 100% for the Latino high school, Latino adult survey and Latino adult interview samples, respectively) compared with the white survey sample (31%). Conversely, the white sample had higher levels of U.S. nativity (93%) compared with their Latino high school, adult survey and adult interview counterparts (81%, 74% and 50%, respectively). This trend was even more pronounced when looking at the immigrant status of participants parents. Eighty-six percent of white adult survey participants and their parents were U.S. born, compared with just 19% of the Latino high school survey participants, 16% of the Latino adult survey participants and 5% of the Latino adult interview participants.
Another area of difference between groups was specific to the mixed-citizenship status of the nuclear family of participants. No white adult survey participants (n = 0) lived in mixed status families, compared with half (50%, n = 42) of Latino high school participants, a quarter (25%, n = 23) of Latino adult survey participants and two-fifths (40%, n = 8) of Latino adult interview participants. This trend was replicated when looking at the detention and deportation experiences of each group. No white adult survey participants had experience with the detention or deportation of a parent or spouse, compared with 21% (n = 10) and 23% (n = 11), respectively, for the Latino high school group, 14% (n = 13) and 5% (n = 5) for the Latino adult survey group, and 20% (n = 4) and 15% (n = 3) for the Latino interview group.
Table 1

*Comparison across Samples (High School vs. Adult, Ethnicity and Interview/Survey)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Combined HS and Adult Survey Sample (n = 214)</th>
<th>Latino HS Survey Sample (n = 48)</th>
<th>Latino Adult Survey Sample (n = 91)</th>
<th>White Adult Survey Sample (n = 58)</th>
<th>Latino Adult Interview Sample (n = 20)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>75%, n = 160</td>
<td>Female: 48%, n = 23</td>
<td>Female: 77%, n = 70</td>
<td>Female: 93%, n = 54</td>
<td>Female: 75%, n = 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25%, n = 53</td>
<td>Male: 50%, n = 24</td>
<td>Male: 23%, n = 21</td>
<td>Male: 7%, n = 4</td>
<td>Male: 25%, n = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range: 15-65</td>
<td></td>
<td>Age range: 15-19</td>
<td>Age range: 18-65</td>
<td>Age range: 18-58</td>
<td>Age range: 18-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age: 24.82</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean age: 16.63</td>
<td>Mean age: 27.07</td>
<td>Mean age: 28.63</td>
<td>Mean age: 27.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age: 21.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Median age: 17.00</td>
<td>Median age: 24.00</td>
<td>Median age: 26.00</td>
<td>Median age: 26.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In high school (26%, n = 55)</td>
<td>In high school: 100% (n = 48)</td>
<td>At least some college: 85%, n = 77</td>
<td>At least some college: 86%, n = 50</td>
<td>At least some college: 100%, n = 20</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school: 70%, n = 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled in higher education: 49%, n = 105</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school: 66%, n = 60</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school: 67%, n = 39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingualism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(speak a language other than English)</td>
<td>66%, n = 141</td>
<td>9%, n = 38</td>
<td>85%, n = 77</td>
<td>31%, n = 18</td>
<td>100%, n = 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### U.S. citizenship & Immigrant Status of Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Type</th>
<th>U.S. Citizen – native born:</th>
<th>Immigrant:</th>
<th>Unauthorized immigrant:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined HS and Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>81%, n = 174</td>
<td>19%, n = 40.</td>
<td>8%, n = 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino HS Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen – native born:</td>
<td>81%, n = 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant: 19%, n = 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unauthorized immigrant: 15%</td>
<td>n = 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen – native born:</td>
<td>74%, n = 67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant: 26%, n = 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unauthorized immigrant: 12%</td>
<td>n = 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen – native born:</td>
<td>93%, n = 54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant: 7%, n = 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unauthorized immigrant: 0%, n = 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Adult Interview Sample</td>
<td>U.S. Citizen – native born:</td>
<td>50%, n = 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant: 50%, n = 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unauthorized immigrant: 0%, n = 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ethnic and Immigrant Documentation Status of Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Type</th>
<th>U.S. native family (both parents and self not immigrants):</th>
<th>Immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but not unauthorized):</th>
<th>Mixed status family (at least one undocumented nuclear family member):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined HS and Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>41%, n = 88</td>
<td>43%, n = 91</td>
<td>22%, n = 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino HS Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. native family (both parents and self not immigrants):</td>
<td>19%, n = 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but not unauthorized):</td>
<td>33% (n = 16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed status family (at least one undocumented nuclear family member):</td>
<td>50% (n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. native family (both parents and self not immigrants):</td>
<td>16%, n = 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but not unauthorized):</td>
<td>67%, n = 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed status family (at least one undocumented nuclear family member):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Adult Survey Sample</td>
<td>U.S. native family (both parents and self not immigrants):</td>
<td>86%, n = 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but not unauthorized):</td>
<td>14%, n = 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed status family (at least one undocumented nuclear family member, including spouse):</td>
<td>40%, n = 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Adult Interview Sample</td>
<td>U.S. native family (both parents and self not immigrants):</td>
<td>5%, n = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant family (at least one parent an immigrant, but not unauthorized):</td>
<td>55%, n = 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed status family (at least one undocumented nuclear family member, including spouse):</td>
<td>40%, n = 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age and Employment Status</td>
<td>Combined HS and Adult Survey Sample ((n = 214))</td>
<td>Latino HS Survey Sample ((n = 48))</td>
<td>Latino Adult Survey Sample ((n = 91))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic and Immigrant Documentation Status of Family Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>At least one unauthorized parent: 44%, (n = 21)</td>
<td>At least one unauthorized parent: 25%, (n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant or sibling(s) are unauthorized, but no parents (6%, (n = 3) )</td>
<td>Participant is unauthorized, but no parents (7%, (n = 6) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience with immigrant deportation of Parents/Spouse</strong></td>
<td>Parental detention: 11%, (n = 23)</td>
<td>Parental detention: 21%, (n = 10)</td>
<td>Parental detention: 14%, (n = 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental deportation: 7%, (n = 16)</td>
<td>Parental deportation: 23%, (n = 11)</td>
<td>Parental deportation: 5%, (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review of Research Aims, Questions, and Hypotheses

The overarching research aim of this dissertation was to understand how living in a mixed-citizenship status family impacts the social-emotional well-being (e.g., levels of anxiety and depression) of Latinos. Two research questions were developed to address this goal:

- Research question 1: How does living in a mixed-citizenship status family impact Latinos?
- Research question 2: In which ways does the citizenship status of family members impact anxiety and depression levels of Latinos?

Considering the research questions and potential relationships between key variables, four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, test these relationships and ultimately answer the research questions:

- H0: Mixed status and U.S.-born families have the same experience of emotional well-being (i.e., depression and anxiety).
- H1: Latinos in mixed status nuclear families have higher levels of depression and anxiety compared with their counterparts in U.S. citizen families.
- H2: Latinos in mixed status families have higher levels of depression and anxiety than their counterparts in authorized immigrant families.
- H3: Latinos (U.S.-born, immigrant and/or mixed status) experience higher levels of depression and anxiety than those in U.S.-born (non-immigrant) families of color or white families.
- H4: Latinos in mixed status families have higher levels of depression and anxiety than U.S.-born (non-immigrant) Persons of Color.
In addition, the choice of Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework for this study necessitates that power, privilege, and oppression play a prominent role in the investigation of the research topic (Lawless et al., 2006). Therefore, in addition to the two research questions and the hypotheses, the need to understand how racialization contributes to the two research questions also played a role in the choice of variables included in the data analysis for this dissertation.

Racialization is an important component to frame this study so that potential outcomes are not attributed to racial deficits, but instead the impact of structural racism on ethnic/racial groups (in this case, the Latino community) (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). In isolating the ethnic/racial and citizenship/immigrant status independent variables, the intention is not to suggest or identify risk factors within the Latino population, but instead to assess risk for the structural racism and nativism within immigration law, policy and practice.

In light of the small number of non-Hispanic People of Color in the sample, H4 could not be addressed through data analysis and H3 could only be partially addressed. Therefore, the methods of data analysis were limited to the variables described in H1, H2 and H3.

**Methods of Data Analysis: Quantitative**

Both research questions were addressed using the quantitative data (including the high school and adult samples). Given the small number of non-Hispanic People of Color, the sample was limited to participants who identified as Latino or white, non-Hispanic (n = 201). The variables for inclusion in the analysis were driven by the research questions and limited to the independent and dependent variables germane to the
research questions, the applicable hypotheses and the CRT framework (i.e., the variable that addresses racialization – question on perceived discrimination). Although the survey addressed potential covariates (e.g., substance use, trauma, etc.), considering the small sample, for the purposes of this dissertation, these variables were not included in the data analysis.

**Measures.**

**Independent variables.** Two types of socio-demographic variables were included to answer the two research questions: 1. Ethnicity (e.g., white, Non-Hispanic and Latino) and 2. Family mixed-citizenship status (e.g., a. U.S. native family — both of the participants’ parents are U.S. natives, b. immigrant family — at least one of the participants’ parents is an immigrant and there are no unauthorized nuclear family members, and c. mixed status family — the participant has at least one unauthorized parent or spouse in the nuclear family). These two variables were combined and further collapsed to create three additional variables for the purpose of analysis and group comparison. The ethnicity variable and the three new variables that were utilized in data analysis are operationalized below.

**IV 1: Ethnicity.** This variable includes the following two groups: Latinos and white, Non-Hispanics.

*Recoding of the ethnicity variable.* In the demographic portion of the survey, participants were asked, “How do you describe yourself? Mark all that apply.” They were given the following options 1) American Indian or Alaska Native; 2) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 3) Asian or Asian American; 4) black or African American; 5) Hispanic or Latino/Latina; 6) white or Caucasian (non-Hispanic); and 7) Other (fill in). In order to
limit the group to the Latino and white, non-Hispanic categories, I first reviewed the participants who selected the “Other” category and re-categorized their responses into the first six racial/ethnic categories. Just four participants selected the “Other” option. The participant who identified as European also indicated his or her place of birth was Greece. Therefore, he or she was re-coded into the white, non-Hispanic category. The three participants who identified as Chicana/o, Mexican-American, and white & Hispanic mix were recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/Latina” category.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the participants who selected only the “white, non-Hispanic” ethnic/racial category were defined as “white.” Therefore, any participants who identified as both “white, non-Hispanic” and another racial/ethnic category were reduced from the “white, non-Hispanic” ethnic group. Also for the purposes of this dissertation, any participant who identified as “Hispanic or Latino/a,” no matter the number of other racial/ethnic categories selected, was included in the “Hispanic or Latino/a” ethnic group.

Fourteen participants identified as two or more racial/ethnic categories. These participants were reduced into just one racial/ethnic category when possible for the purposes of data analysis. Of the participants who identified as two or more racial/ethnic categories, five identified as both “white, non-Hispanic” and “Hispanic or Latino/a.” These participants were recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/a” group. Two participants identified as both “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” and “white, non-Hispanic.” These participants were recoded into the “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” group. One participant identified as both “Hispanic or Latino/a” and “black/African American.” This participant was recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/a group.” One participant
identified as “Asian or Asian American,” “Hispanic or Latino/a,” and “white, Non-Hispanic.” This participant was recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/a” group. Two participants identified as both “American Indian or Alaska Native” and “Hispanic or Latino/a.” These participants were recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/a” group. One participant identified as both “white, non-Hispanic” and “American Indian or Alaska Native.” This participant was recoded into the “American Indian or Alaska Native” group. One participant identified as both “Hispanic or Latino/a,” “Asian or Asian American” and “Other, Brasileña.” This participant was recoded into the “Hispanic or Latino/a” group. One participant identified as both “American Indian or Alaska Native” and “black/African American.” This participant was not recoded as he or she did not identify as “white, non-Hispanic” or “Hispanic or Latino/a.”

When the ethnicity variable was utilized during the analysis of the data, the select cases option was utilized to limit the sample to Hispanic or Latino/a participants and white, non-Hispanic participants.

**IV 2: Family nativity.** This variable includes the following three groups: white native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent, including authorized and unauthorized immigrants).

**Recoding of the family mixed-citizenship status variable.** This new variable was created by utilizing the existing IV 3 variable, “family mixed-citizenship status.” The first two value labels, “white native-born U.S. citizen family” and “Latino native-born U.S. citizen family,” remained the same. The second two value labels, “authorized Latino immigrant family” and no unauthorized nuclear family
members)” and “Latino mixed status family (at least one unauthorized immigrant parent or spouse and a nuclear family member with another status (of authorized or U.S. citizen),” were then merged into a new value label named “Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent, including authorized and unauthorized immigrants).” This reduced the four existing groups (or value labels) within the ethnicity and nativity variable (IV 3) to three groups (or value labels) under the family nativity variable (IV 2).

**IV 3: Family mixed-citizenship status.** This variable includes the following four groups: white native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino native-born U.S. citizen family, authorized Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent and no unauthorized nuclear family members) and Latino mixed status family (at least one unauthorized immigrant parent or spouse and a nuclear family member with another status (authorized or U.S. citizen).

This new variable was created by first using the select cases option and limiting the sample to the participants who identified as either “Hispanic or Latino/a” or “white, non-Hispanic” (based on the recoded ethnicity variable). Next, a new variable was created named “white or Latino.” The participants were then recoded as either Latino or white. Next, the Ethnicity and nativity variable was created. This variable contained the four value labels for the family mixed-citizenship status variable. To determine which participants belonged in each category, I first used the select case tool and selected only the cases (i.e., participants) that indicated that both parents (mother and father) were born in the United States. I again used the select case tool to further limit the sample to either the “Latino/a” and then the “white” ethnic category and then put the participants in the appropriate group, either “white native-born U.S. citizen family” or “Latino native-born
U.S. citizen family.” The remaining participants were put into either the “authorized Latino immigrant family” or the “Latino mixed status family.” To do this, I reviewed each remaining case and categorized the participants who had indicated that they had an unauthorized mother, father, stepfather, spouse, brother or sister and put them into the “Latino mixed status family” category. I then verified that each of these participants had an unauthorized mother, father, stepfather, and/or spouse (which they all did). Finally, the remaining participants were put into the “authorized Latino immigrant family.” I then reviewed the data view field in SPSS to verify that none of these participants had indicated himself or herself or a mother, father, stepfather, spouse, brother or sister were unauthorized.

IV 4: Latino only. This variable includes the following three groups: Latino U.S. native-born citizen family (both parents of the participant were born in the U.S.), Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent and no unauthorized nuclear family members) and Latino mixed status family (participant has at least one unauthorized parent or spouse in their nuclear family).

This new variable was created by first using the select cases option and limiting the sample to the participants who identified as “Hispanic or Latino/a.” Next, the Ethnicity and nativity variable was transformed into the new variable, Latino only. The four value labels within the original Ethnicity and nativity variable were then reduced to just three (therefore excluding the white ethnic group). The new Latino only variable was limited to the following three groups: 1) Latino native-born U.S. citizen family (both of the participant’s parents were born in the U.S.), 2) authorized Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent and no unauthorized parents or nuclear family members), and
3) Latino mixed status family (at least one unauthorized immigrant parent or spouse and a nuclear family member with another status (authorized or U.S. citizen).

**Dependent variables.** Three dependent variables were used in the data analysis for this dissertation: depression, anxiety and perceived discrimination.

**DV 1: Anxiety.** The first dependent variable of interest was anxiety. An adapted version of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD-7) was used to determine the level of anxiety of students with the following rating scale: Rarely = 0, Some of the Time = 1, Occasionally = 2 and Often = 3. Participants were asked “How often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?” 1) I felt nervous, anxious or on edge; 2) I was not able to stop or control worrying; 3) I worried too much about different things; 4) I had trouble relaxing; 5) I became so restless that it was hard to sit still; 6) I became easily annoyed or irritated; 7) I felt afraid as if something awful might happen.

A composite score was created for each participant using a sum of his or her ratings for all seven items of the GAD-7, with a minimum score of 0 and a total possible score of 21. Standardized cutoff points for the GAD-7 are: a score of 0-7 indicates no provisional diagnosis of anxiety disorder and a score of 8 or more indicates a provisional diagnosis of probable anxiety disorder. It is important to note that for this survey, the anxiety scale was adapted to be consistent with that of the CES-D (making it more sensitive and likely to indicate higher levels of anxiety). In addition, as symptomology rather than diagnosis was the purpose of these questions, a cut point (aimed at separating participants who might qualify for a provisional diagnosis of anxiety disorder) was not set for the purposes of analysis.
**DV 2: Depression.** The second dependent variable of interest was depression. Depression was measured by using a four-item abbreviated version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D), with the following rating scale: Rarely = 0, Some of the Time = 1, Occasionally = 2 and Often = 3. Participants were asked, “How often have you felt this way during the past two weeks? 1) I felt sad. 2) I could not “get going.” 3) I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor. 4) I felt depressed. A composite score was created for each participant using a sum of his or her ratings for all four items of the abbreviated CES-D scale, with a minimum score of 0 and a total possible score of 12.

**DV 3: Perceived discrimination.** The third dependent variable of interest was perceived discrimination. Perceived discrimination is a dichotomous variable. Participants were asked “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” Yes or No. Participants who responded positively (i.e., indicating “yes”) were also asked the following text response question, “What was the main reason you felt discriminated against?” To analyze participants’ responses to these open-ended questions, the sample was split into four groups: 1) Latino participants in U.S. citizen families (born to U.S. native-born parents), 2) Latino participants with at least one immigrant parent but no unauthorized nuclear family members, 3) Latino participants with at least one unauthorized nuclear family member (mixed status students) and 4) white participants in U.S. citizen families (born to U.S. native parents).

**Statistical analysis.** The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22, was used to test the hypotheses of interest for the two research questions.
**Chi-square.** A chi-square analysis was conducted to test differences in the Dependent Variable, perceived discrimination (DV 3) and the Independent Variable, ethnicity (IV 1). The chi-square analysis was the selected method of analysis as both the DV, perceived discrimination, and the IV, ethnicity, are discrete variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

**T-test.** A t-test was conducted to individually test mean differences between the Dependent Variables, anxiety (DV 1) and depression (DV 2) and the Independent Variable, ethnicity (IV 1) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

**One-way ANOVA.** To compare mean differences in anxiety and depression, a One-way ANOVA was the method selected for data analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Three Independent Variables [family nativity (IV 2); family mixed-citizenship status (IV 3); Latino only (IV 4)] were tested in separate ANOVA tests to determine mean differences in anxiety and depression.

**Methods of Data Analysis: Qualitative**
A grounded theory approach was utilized to analyze the qualitative data. The intent of grounded theory is to generate theory through a constant comparative method (Patton, 2002). This was achieved through systematic analysis of the qualitative data, working from an inductive, bottom up approach so that ideas and eventually a theoretical framework emerged from the data itself rather than preconceived ideas (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Saldaña, 2009). Atlas-ti 6 was utilized for data management.

Although grounded theory was utilized, I am not devoid of my own thoughts, values or preconceived ideas. Given that I bring with me my own bias or lens no matter how hard I try to bracket these thoughts or ideas, it was also necessary for me to actively
look for the tenets of Critical Race Theory, specifically ideas regarding racialization, so that they would not be unintentionally overlooked due to my status as a white woman and outsider completing research within the Latino community. Therefore, prior to completing the initial and second cycle coding. I completed a pre-coding cycle (Saldaña, 2009), reading through each of the 20 transcripts and coding based on the tenets of Critical Race Theory. This brought my attention to various tenets of CRT that emerged in the transcripts. It also heightened my awareness of how racialization contributes to the research problem as I moved forward with the next two cycles of coding.

Initial coding was utilized for the first cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2009). Initial coding entails the separation of data into distinct parts (Saldaña, 2009). This is an important step in grounded theory as it supports the inductive process, leaving the researcher open to “all possible theoretical directions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46) and “analytic leads for further exploration” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 81). To do this, I isolated the quotations related to the interview and research questions. This enabled me to better familiarize myself with the data through the actual words of the participants. In addition, throughout this first cycle of coding, I took extensive memos (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Saldaña, 2009) as the same ideas and phrases were repeated throughout the transcripts. Memo writing about the way that the quotations seemed to relate allowed for potential themes and theory to begin to emerge (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Saldaña, 2009).

After isolating the quotations related to the interview and research questions for all 20 transcripts, I began the second cycle of coding. Pattern coding was utilized in this cycle (Saldaña, 2009). Pattern coding entails the reduction of the data to its core significance so that the quotes can be grouped together based on common themes or
relationships (Saldaña, 2009). To inductively reduce the quotations to the core meaning, I analyzed each quote by asking myself, “What is this participant really telling me or trying to say?” I then coded the quote accordingly. Throughout this second cycle of coding, I continued to write memos to support the elevation of the data to a conceptual or theoretical level (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Throughout the second cycle of coding, I used the network manager to sort and group the quotations by higher-ordered themes to uncover the various elements, dimensions and themes and how each related to one another (Saldaña, 2009). Coding this way supported the grounded theory process for identifying underlying patterns and relationships of the data (Glaser & Holton, 2004). It allowed for the most salient themes and elements of the data to emerge, uncovering the core themes or central phenomena for each interview question and the two larger research questions posed by this dissertation (Glaser & Holton, 2004). This process ultimately generated a theoretical framework that was true to the participants’ voices and experiences.

**Member checking.** In order to increase credibility, I individually presented the preliminary qualitative findings to two community members, including one key participant (in a mixed status family) and the Latina graduate level researcher who had transcribed the interviews and was familiar with each participant’s narrative (Patton, 2002). These two individuals independently reviewed the codes, themes and core phenomena for the two research questions, comparing the findings, codes and isolated quotations from the transcripts. In addition, they reviewed and interpreted the qualitative results for both research questions with a CRT lens to identify how racialization contributed to the problem [impact of mixed-citizenship status on Latinos and how the
citizenship status of family members impacted anxiety and depression levels of Latinos].
Following the suggestion of Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010), they asked themselves, “How does racialization contribute to the problem at hand?” (p. 1391). Given my status as a white researcher, and the barriers this privileged racial identity presents in my ability to identify racial implications described in the data, it was imperative to have participants from within the Latino community give feedback specific to racialization.

The feedback from the key participant and Latina graduate level researcher enabled me to ensure that they not only related to the findings, but also felt that the findings presented an accurate portrayal of their own and their community members’ experiences (Patton, 2002). The process of theoretical elaboration coupled with participant and community member feedback increased the trustworthiness of the codes and findings, solidified the emerging theoretical framework, and uncovered a greater depth of dimension within the emerging theoretical framework as well as insights for future research (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

**Merging of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

Following the individual analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, the results were merged and interpreted together. In comparing the quantitative and qualitative results, I examined a) where the quantitative and qualitative results converge and diverge, b) how the quantitative results give meaning to the qualitative results and vice versa and c) how together both the quantitative and qualitative analysis relate and give a greater depth of understanding to the three research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition, adhering to the theoretical framework, the following question was applied to the merged data for the purposes of interpretation: “How does
racialization contribute to the problem at hand [the impact of mixed-citizenship status on Latinos and how the citizenship status of family members impact anxiety and depression levels of Latinos]?” (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010, p. 1391).
CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter comprises four subsections. In the first subsection, the four independent variables and two dependent variables are reviewed. In the second subsection, the quantitative results for Dependent Variable 1 (anxiety) and the four corresponding independent variables are described. Next, the results for Dependent Variable 2 (depression) and the four corresponding independent variables are described. Lastly, the results for Dependent Variable 3 (perceived discrimination) and the four corresponding independent variables are described. Each of these subsections includes relevant descriptive statistics not already discussed in the methods section.

Independent Variables

Two types of socio-demographic variables were included to answer the two research questions: 1. Ethnicity (e.g., white, non-Hispanic and Latino) and 2. Family mixed-citizenship status (e.g., (a) U.S. native family — both of the participants’ parents are U.S. natives; (b) immigrant family — at least one of the participants’ parents is an immigrant and there are no unauthorized nuclear family members; and (c) mixed status family — the participant has at least one unauthorized parent or spouse in the nuclear family). These two variables were combined and further collapsed to create three additional variables for the purpose of analysis and group comparison. The ethnicity variable and the three new variables yielded a total of four independent variables. The
four independent variables: 1. ethnicity, 2. family nativity, 3. family mixed-citizenship status, and 4. Latino only, are briefly described in this section.

Independent Variable (IV) 1, ethnicity, includes the following two groups: Latinos and white, non-Hispanics. IV 2, family nativity, includes the following three groups: white native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent, including authorized and unauthorized immigrants).

IV 3, family mixed-citizenship status, includes the following four groups: white native-born U.S. citizen family, Latino native-born U.S. citizen family, authorized Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent and no unauthorized nuclear family members) and Latino mixed status family (at least one unauthorized immigrant parent or spouse and a nuclear family member with another status (authorized or U.S. citizen).

IV 4, Latino only, includes the following three groups: Latino U.S. native-born citizen family (both parents of the participant were born in the U.S.), Latino immigrant family (at least one immigrant parent and no unauthorized nuclear family members) and Latino mixed status family (participant has at least one unauthorized parent or spouse in his/her nuclear family).

**Dependent Variables**

Three dependent variables were used in the data analysis for this dissertation: anxiety, depression and perceived discrimination. For both the anxiety and depression dependent variables, a composite score was created for each participant using a sum of his or her response ratings of the survey questions for each area: anxiety or depression. The third dependent variable of interest was perceived discrimination, a dichotomous
variable. Participants were given the option to respond affirmatively, “yes,” or negatively, “no,” to the question, “Have you ever felt discriminated against?”

**Dependent Variable 1: Anxiety**

**IV 1: Ethnicity.** An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean anxiety scores of white, non-Hispanic participants (n = 62) and Latino participants (n = 137). (Please note that the entire Latino sample included 139 participants, however two participants did not answer the anxiety questions, bringing the total number of Latino participants to 137). Levene’s test for equality of variances returned a p value of .783, so equal variances were assumed. Results indicated no statistically significant differences between the white, non-Hispanic participants (M=5.92, SD = 4.51) and the Latino participants (M = 6.09, SD = 4.75), t(197) = -.245, p = .807.

**IV 2: Family nativity.** The mean anxiety score for white U.S. native family participants (n = 54) was 6.02 (SD = 4.61), for U.S.-native family Latinos (n = 24) was 5.50 (SD = 4.18), and Latino immigrant family participants (including mixed status families) (n = 113) was 6.22 (SD = 4.87). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean anxiety scores by family nativity. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the p<.05 level, F(2, 188) = .236, p = .790.

**IV 3: Family mixed-citizenship status.** The mean anxiety score for white U.S. native family participants (n = 54) was 6.02 (SD = 4.61), for U.S.-native family Latino participants (n = 24) was 5.50 (SD = 4.18), for Latino immigrant family participants (excluding mixed status families) (n = 67) was 6.25 (SD = 4.53), and for mixed status family Latino participants (n = 46) was 6.17 (SD=5.39). A one-way ANOVA was
conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean anxiety scores by family mixed-citizenship status. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the p<.05 level F(3, 187) = .159, p = .924.

**IV 4: Latino only.** The mean anxiety score for the U.S.-native family Latinos (n = 24) was 5.50 (SD = 4.18), for Latino immigrant family participants (excluding mixed status families) (n = 67) was 6.25 (SD = 4.53), and for the mixed status family Latinos (n = 46) was 6.17 (SD = 5.39). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean anxiety scores for the Latino only variable. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the p<.05 level, F(2, 134) = .229, p = .796.

**Dependent Variable 2: Depression**

**IV 1: Ethnicity.** An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean depression scores of white, non-Hispanic participants (n = 62) and Latino participants (n = 139). Levene’s test for equality of variances returned a p value of .358, so equal variances were assumed. There were no statistically significant differences between the white, non-Hispanic participants (M=3.02, SD = 2.78) and the Latino participants (M = 2.58, SD = 2.66), F(199) = 1.071, p = .286.

**IV 2: Family nativity.** The mean depression score for the white U.S. native family participants (n = 54) was 3.17 (SD = 2.79), for the U.S.-native family Latinos (n = 24) was 2.04 (SD = 2.29), and for the Latino immigrant family participants (including mixed status families) (n = 115) was 2.69 (SD = 2.72). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean depression scores
by family nativity. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the $p<.05$ level, $F(2, 190) = 1.508, p = .224$.

**IV 3: Family mixed-citizenship status.** The mean depression score for the white U.S. native family participants ($n = 54$) was 3.17 (SD = 2.79), for U.S.-native family Latinos ($n = 24$) was 2.04 (SD = 2.29), for Latino immigrant family participants (excluding mixed status families) ($n = 68$) was 2.47 (SD = 2.37), and for mixed status family Latinos ($n = 47$) was 3.00 (SD=3.16). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean depression scores by family mixed-citizenship status. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the $p<.05$ level, $F(3, 189) = 1.364, p = .255$.

**IV 4: Latino only.** The mean depression score for the U.S.-native family Latinos ($n = 24$) was 2.04 (SD = 2.29), for Latino immigrant family participants (excluding mixed status families) ($n = 68$) was 2.47 (SD = 2.37), and for the mixed status family Latinos ($n = 47$) was 3.00 (SD = 3.16). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in mean depression scores for the Latino only variable. Results indicated no statistically significant difference at the $p<.05$ level, $F(2, 136) = 1.14, p = .322$.

**Dependent Variable 3: Perceived Discrimination**

The third dependent variable of interest was perceived discrimination, a dichotomous variable. Participants were given the option to respond affirmatively, “yes,” or negatively, “no,” to the question, “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” All participants who answered affirmatively were given the opportunity to describe the main reason they felt discriminated against in an open ended format. These responses are
discussed at the end of the chapter. In addition, the full table of responses is included in Appendix E.

**IV 1: Ethnicity.** When asked “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” 114 white or Latino respondents (57%, n = 114) of the 200 participants who responded to the question (100%, n = 200) said “yes,” they have felt discriminated against. Eighty-six (43%) said “no,” they have not felt discriminated against. Of the 114 participants who responded affirmatively to this question (indicating that they have experienced discrimination), 61% of the Latino participants reported that they had been discriminated against compared with 48% of the white respondents.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between ethnicity (identifying as white, non-Hispanic or Latino) and perceived discrimination. The chi-square analysis by ethnicity indicated no statistically significant relationship between these variables χ² (1, N = 200) = 2.72, p = .099.

Please note that in the following two sections, the sample size is slightly lower (n = 111). When investigating differences based on both ethnicity and family mixed-citizenship status for IV 2 and IV 3, three of the white participants were excluded from analysis as they did not meet the inclusion criteria (e.g., they had at least one immigrant parent and the inclusion criteria was for the participant to be white and both parents and the participant born in the U.S.).

**IV 2: Family nativity.** When asked, “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” 111 white or Latino respondents (58%) included in this analysis said “yes,” they have felt discriminated against. Eighty-two (42%) said “no,” they have not felt discriminated against. As previously stated, please note that three white respondents were excluded
from analysis as they were in immigrant families. This reduced the number of respondents included in the analysis from 114 to 111. Of the 111 participants who indicated that they have felt discriminated against, 67% of Latinos in U.S.-native families, 59% of Latinos in immigrant families and 50% of the whites in U.S.-native families responded affirmatively that they had been discriminated against.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between family nativity (whites in U.S. native families, Latinos in U.S. native families, and Latinos in immigrant families, including mixed status) and perceived discrimination. A chi-square analysis by family nativity indicated no statistically significant relation between these variables $\chi^2 (2, N = 193) = 2.193, p = .334$.

**IV 3: Family mixed-citizenship status.** As previously stated, when asked, “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” 111 white or Latino respondents (58%) included reported “yes,” they have felt discriminated against. Please note that similar to the analysis of IV 2, three white respondents were excluded from analysis as they were in immigrant families. Again, this reduced the number of respondents included in the analysis from 114 to 111. Eighty-two (42%) said “no,” they have not felt discriminated against. Of the 111 who indicated that they had been discriminated against, 67% of Latinos in U.S.-native families, 60% of Latinos in mixed status families, 59% of Latinos in immigrant family (excluding mixed status) respondents and 50% of whites in U.S.-native families responded affirmatively.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between ethnicity and nativity (whites, U.S.-native families, Latinos in U.S.-native families, Latinos in immigrant families, excluding mixed status, and Latinos in mixed
status families) and perceived discrimination. A chi-square analysis by ethnicity indicated no statistically significant relation between these variables $\chi^2 (3, N = 193) = 2.20, p = .532$.

**IV 4: Latino only.** The sample was further limited to only Latino respondents ($n = 139$). When asked, “Have you ever felt discriminated against?” 84 Latino respondents (60%, $n = 139$) said “yes,” they have felt discriminated against. Fifty-five Latino respondents (40%) said “no,” they have not felt discriminated against. Of the 84 Latino respondents who indicated they have felt discriminated against, 67% of Latinos in U.S. native families, 59% of Latinos in immigrant families (excluding mixed status) and 60% of Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families responded affirmatively.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the Latino only variable (Latinos in U.S.-native families, Latinos in immigrant families, excluding mixed status, and Latinos in mixed status families) and perceived discrimination. The chi-square analysis indicated no statistically significant relationship between these variables $\chi^2 (2, N = 139) = .478, p = .787$.

**Short-answer Response To Perceived Discrimination**

Although no statistically significant results were found in the quantitative analysis for all four independent variables, the responses to the short answer follow-up question on the survey indicated differences in the reasons for feeling discriminated against by ethnicity and nativity group (see Appendix E for the complete table of topic responses and the correlating sample responses).

When participants were asked, “What was the main reason you felt you were discriminated against? Please be as specific as possible,” their responses varied. For
example, over half of the white, non-Hispanic U.S. native family respondents (58%, n = 24) indicated that they felt discriminated against due to gender discrimination, compared with just under half (43%, n = 14) of Latinos in U.S. native families, just two of Latinos in immigrant families (5%, n = 38) and one Latino in a mixed status family (4%, n = 25) (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Perceived Discrimination Due to Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Topics</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic U.S. Native family respondents (n = 24)</th>
<th>Latino U.S. Native family respondents (n = 14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a female engineer.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender (woman, rather than female, which is sex).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For being female and in college.</td>
<td></td>
<td>As a female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General discrimination for gender and sex.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I am a woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt discriminated against because I am a woman.</td>
<td>14 (58%)</td>
<td>Mostly for being female in the workplace environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am constantly discriminated against by men who feel that women are inferior.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latino immigrant family respondents (all authorized) (n = 38)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Latino mixed status family respondents (n = 25)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer discrimination based on gender.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Because [I'm] a Hispanic woman in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a female minority in engineering.</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This difference does not signify that Latinos in immigrant families are discriminated against less based on gender compared with their white and U.S. native family Latino counterparts. Instead, it highlights the varying intersections of identities and how given one’s social location, position and positionality within the current racist
nativist political and social climate of the U.S., one or more identities might be subject to higher levels of discrimination (Sanchez, 2006). For the white participants, their racial/ethnic privilege caused gender discrimination to rise to the top of their list. However, for Latinos, although they might endure similar levels of gender discrimination, given the current anti-immigrant political and social climate, they tended to highlight discrimination based on race/ethnicity and the related components (e.g., skin color, language, nationality, etc.).

It is therefore not surprising that perceived discrimination specific to race/ethnicity varied by ethnicity and nativity. Nearly one-fifth of white, non-Hispanic respondents in U.S. native families (17%, n = 24) felt they had been discriminated against based on their race/ethnicity, compared with over three-quarters (86%, n = 14) of Latinos in U.S. native families, two-thirds (66%, n = 38) of Latinos in immigrant families, and more than half of Latinos in mixed status families (52%, n = 25). What was most telling was not the numeric differences based on themes, but the actual language used within the responses (see Table 3).
Table 3.

Perceived Discrimination Responses Due to Race, Ethnicity or Skin Color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Topics</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic U.S. Native family respondents (n = 24)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Latino U.S. Native family respondents (n = 14)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race, Ethnicity, or Skin Color</strong></td>
<td>I have had a few students state that I discriminate against them because I am white, and that is simply not the case. I have also had a few fellow students say that because I am white I got everything handed to me, which is also not true. The color of my skin. Because I’m a white, middle-class, sorority girl, people assume I’m dumb and/or live off of my “daddy’s money,” which is not the case. I work 30 hours a week so that I can pay for my car, my cell phone, my apartment, my food, my cat, AND my sorority, all while maintaining a 3.0 GPA. <strong>White.</strong></td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>I am a person of color. I am Mexican American. I am not white. I felt I was discriminated because most jobs will only hire a certain race. Mostly by my last name. People usually judge me off of my skin color but once they find out that I’m Latina they have a whole different idea about me. My “white” neighbor reported me to police because of our dog. Both animal control officers and police came to my house and found no reason at all for her to report me. I think she just doesn’t like Hispanics. When some people found out that I have received scholarships reflecting my ethnic heritage, they thought I was less qualified and somehow a “charity case” in pursuit of equality. <strong>Disempowering.</strong></td>
<td>12 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Topics</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race, ethnicity or skin color</strong></td>
<td>For being Latina and speaking Spanish. In college a student called me a spick, we played on the same team and he started to make racial comments. I have definitely experienced racial profiling. Also, people making ignorant comments about my community and beliefs. Looked down upon as inferior due to my race. My nationality. Being Hispanic. Accused of a crime I didn’t commit.</td>
<td>25 (66%)</td>
<td>Considered not to be American because of my skin color. Having the brown color skin and when I didn’t say anything people just assumed I didn’t speak English. I was 17 and since I’m of color, people (white) stared at me like I did not belong at that mall to shop. People have called me a beaver. When I was 13, I was walking by a high school on my way to my middle school. A cop car slowly slowed down and asked for my ID and had actually assumed I was up to no good. There was another student that had walked in front of me and he was white. The cop only asked me for my ID.</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses of the white, non-Hispanic participants in U.S. native families in terms of perceived discrimination based on race/ethnicity tell the story of racial/ethnic privilege. For instance, one white, non-Hispanic participant responded:

I have had a few students state that I discriminate against them because I am white, and that is simply not the case. I have also had a few fellow students say that because I am white I got everything handed to me, which is also not true.
This participant interprets the commentary from Students of Color (i.e., that they felt discriminated against by this respondent) as harmful and even discriminatory. In addition, this participant misconstrues comments highlighting her racial/ethnic privilege made by her counterparts as a form of discrimination.

Similarly, another white, non-Hispanic participant stated that she felt discriminated against because of her privileged statuses. She stated that the main reason she felt discriminated against was the following:

Because I’m a white, middle-class, sorority girl, people assume I’m dumb and/or live off of my “daddy’s money which is not the case. I work 30 hours a week so that I can pay for my car, my cell phone, my apartment, my food, my cat, AND my sorority, all while maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

This participant perceives the assumption that her father maintains her lifestyle given her ethnic and class privileged statuses as discrimination. It appears the need for this participant to “work,” to pay for her living expenses while in college is considered a hardship or burden and in conflict with the belief or value that as a white, middle class U.S. citizen, she should not have to. Like many people with race and class privilege, this participant appears to lack the awareness that her Latino and/or lower-income counterparts do not reap the same unearned benefits of privileged ethnic and/or class status.

The responses of the Latinos in U.S. native families tell a different story – one of disempowerment, not feeling accepted and/or being pushed to the margins. One participant shared that his ex-partner’s “father didn’t approve of my ethnicity.” Similarly, another participant reported that her neighbor “just doesn’t like Hispanics.” Other
participants discussed feeling disempowered as a result of the views of scholarships. A participant wrote, “Many students felt I got financial support BECAUSE of my ethnic background. That’s insulting to me because I have worked hard and performed well to achieve.”

The responses of Latinos in immigrant families provide more specific examples of macroaggressions and discriminatory acts that they have endured based on their racial/ethnic identity. Participants described being “look[ed] down [on] just for being Mexican” and “looked down upon as inferior due to my race.” These participants experienced various forms of verbal and non-verbal abuse specific to their racial or ethnic identities. One participant described “brown people comments” being made. Another participant stated that “people give looks of disgust…because of what color my skin is.” Discriminatory experiences sustained by Latino participants in immigrant families also included racial profiling and unfair criminal accusations. One participant reported being “suspected of stealing” and others described experiencing “racial profiling” or “being Hispanic [and] accused of a crime I didn’t commit.” Participants in Latino immigrant families also described being discriminated against based on their immigrant status (8%, n = 38). Although this was coded differently, these responses also describe discrimination endured based on their ethnic identity. A participant wrote, “I was at a mall and my friends and I sat next to a couple of white people, they got up right away and said, ‘I can’t believe they let people like this into our country.’”

The responses of Latino participants in mixed status families further illustrate the intersections of ethnicity and immigrant status. In addition to perceived discrimination based on race/ethnicity, one-fifth of respondents felt discriminated against due to their
immigrant status (20%, n = 5). Although this was coded separately (immigrant status versus race/ethnicity), the two are closely related. Participants described assumptions made about them due to their skin color. One participant reported being “considered not to be American because of my skin color.” Another participant reported that due to his/her brown skin color “when I didn’t say anything people just assumed I did not speak English.” Similar to their Latino counterparts in immigrant families (without unauthorized family members), Latino participants in mixed status families also sustained verbal and non-verbal racial attacks, ranging from being called a “beaner,” to being “stared at [by white people],” to being told by a customer while speaking Spanish that “I was in [the] U.S., not Mexico.” One participant described the impact this had on education. The participant stated that “people would give up on me because I looked like I didn’t care.” Also similar to their Latino counterparts in immigrant families, Latino participants in mixed status families described racial profiling. This included being “followed around a store” and as a middle school student, one participant experienced a police officer target him. The participant stated that the police car slowed “down and asked for my ID and had actually assumed I was up to no good. There was another student that had walked in front of me and he was white. The cop had only asked me for my ID.”

These varied descriptions of perceived discrimination emphasize the different racialized experiences of groups based on their ethnicity and nativity. Although some white, non-Hispanic students felt they had been discriminated against due to their race, their descriptions of perceived discrimination highlighted a lack of awareness regarding their privileged racial/ethnic status and what constitutes discrimination. Latinos on the
other hand, described a variety of discriminatory experiences. The covertly and overtly discriminatory experiences bring attention to the structures of oppression in the current U.S. system. Latinos encountered discrimination by law enforcement officers, schools, customers, peers/colleagues and strangers.
CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter is organized according to the two research questions of this dissertation: 1) How does living in a mixed status family impact Latinos? 2) In which ways does the citizenship status of family members impact anxiety and depression levels of Latinos? This chapter begins with a brief synopsis of the participants stories. Then the qualitative results for each research question will be presented.

Synopsis of Participants Stories

Each of the 20 participants had unique experiences related to each of the research questions. A synopsis of each of their stories is detailed to provide a greater context for understanding the qualitative findings for each research question.

Hector

Hector is a 23-year-old male. He is a native-born U.S. citizen. His parents emigrated from Honduras to the United States before he was born. His father returned to the U.S. after receiving amnesty during the Reagan administration. Although initially his mother did not have authorized immigrant status in the U.S., she gained legal permanent immigrant status when Hector was very young. Since Hector has no memories of living in a mixed status family, he does not relate to the experience. Hector has an uncle who was an unauthorized immigrant in the U.S. and was detained and deported. Hector grew up with his parents and his two siblings. He does not know his extended family well as
they live in Honduras; he can only see them when he returns to visit once a year. Hector has a bachelor’s degree and is currently pursuing his master’s degree.

**Monica**

Monica is a 29-year-old Brazilian female. She is a recent immigrant to the United States and has a student visa. She grew up and spent most her life in Brazil. She has an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree. She recently moved to the United States on a student visa to pursue her Ph.D.

**Margarita**

Margarita is a 30-year-old female of Mexican descent. She is a naturalized U.S. citizen. Margarita lived a bicultural life and has lived on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. She was born in a border town in the U.S., lived in a border town in Mexico until she was 8, and then lived in the U.S. for two years before returning to live in Mexico. Although she lived in Mexico for most of her life, Margarita was schooled in the United States. She said that in the Mexican border town where she grew up, it was common for people to live in Mexico and attend school in the United States.

Margarita’s father was born in Mexico and her mother was born in the United States. They both currently live in Mexico. In addition, the majority of her family lives in Mexico. Margarita said her uncle was unauthorized and lived in the U.S. when she was a teenager, but she feels that it does not affect her much because it was so long ago. She said that when her uncle was living in the U.S., his status affected her father the most because he would worry about him. She said her uncle is no longer an unauthorized immigrant, not because he gained authorized immigrant status, but because he returned to Mexico to live. Margarita said that in the U.S. border town where she grew up (and was
educated), it was about 80% Latino (mostly Mexican descent). She is currently married and lives with her husband in the United States. She has a bachelor’s degree and is currently pursuing a graduate degree.

**Nancy**

Nancy is a 29-year-old female. Nancy is a naturalized U.S. citizen. She was born and raised in Colombia. She and her mother moved to the United States when Nancy was a teenager after being granted political asylum. She has one brother who initially remained in Colombia but eventually joined them in the United States. Her father remains in Colombia. She has a bachelor’s degree and is currently pursuing a graduate degree.

**Aurelio**

Aurelio is a 21-year-old male. He is a native-born U.S. citizen. He grew up in South Texas and moved to the Midwest for college when he was 18. His siblings and his father are U.S. citizens. His mom is a permanent legal immigrant (she tried to gain U.S. citizenship but did not pass the exam). Aurelio said he is unaware of the circumstances of his parents immigrating to the United States. He said that they have been living in the U.S. for about 35 years. He said that although nobody in his family is an unauthorized immigrant, growing up in South Texas, he saw how unauthorized immigrant status impacted families. He also said that although he cannot directly relate to their experiences, he can imagine what it must be like to have an unauthorized family member. Aurelio is currently finishing his senior year in college.

**Lucia**

Lucia is a 26-year-old female. She is currently protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. She emigrated from Mexico to the U.S. at age 4
or 5 without legal documents. She lived most of her life in the U.S. as an unauthorized immigrant, but she did not become aware of her status until she was a sophomore in high school and thinking about the college application process. She received temporary protection through DACA approximately two years ago. At the time of the interview, her brother was in the process of applying for DACA protection. Her mom is an unauthorized immigrant. Lucia is currently taking college courses and pursuing her bachelor’s degree.

**Diana**

Diana is a 29-year-old female. Diana is a naturalized U.S. citizen. She grew up in Mexico with her siblings and her mother. When she was a child, her father worked in the U.S. and requested visas for his family. It took approximately 10 years before they received them. Her mom and siblings moved to the U.S. when Diana was 15. Diana remained in Mexico to finish high school and moved to the U.S. to be with her family when she was 17. Although she had already completed high school in Mexico prior to moving to the U.S., because she did not speak English, she re-enrolled in high school to repeat her senior year and learn English.

Upon her arrival to the U.S., her family lived in a small, predominately white town where they were the only Mexican family. She said she and her family were treated like outsiders. After finishing high school, she went on to a community college. After two years, she transferred to a four-year university. She received both her bachelor’s degree and graduate degree. Diana is working toward her Ph.D.

Although Diana’s nuclear family all have the necessary visas to live in the U.S., her extended family members live in a mixed status family. More specifically, her
maternal aunt and her husband (Diana’s uncle) are unauthorized and their children are U.S. citizens.

**Yadira and Maribel**

Yadira and Maribel are sisters. Yadira is 27 years old and Maribel is 25. Both are naturalized U.S. citizens. They were born and raised in Mexico, close to the U.S.-Mexico border, and came to the U.S. every two weeks for most of their lives until they moved to the U.S. with their family when they were teenagers. Growing up in Mexico, their father owned property and raised cows. The family was successful and was able to have regular visits to the U.S., travel, etc. As their father was a U.S. citizen, the family made the decision to move to the U.S. when Yadira was old enough for high school to take advantage of the better education system in the United States. Prior to the move to the U.S., Yadira’s and Maribel’s parents and their friends went to the U.S. to shop for an upcoming vacation. When they crossed the border back to Mexico, their mom was pulled aside, interrogated by a U.S. border patrol official and forced to sign a document stating that she had been illegally living in the U.S. and utilizing government funds for her children (this was not true). At that point, their mother had her visa taken from her and was deported. Following this incident, their mom was devastated and stayed in bed for days. The family was told that Yadira’s mom had to wait one year to reapply for her visa. Therefore, the family did not move to the U.S. for Yadira’s freshman year of high school as previously planned. Instead, they waited the year so that her mother could renew her visa. After the year passed, the girls’ mom went to renew her visa, but she was told she had a 99-year ban from the United States and could not receive a visa. At that point, the family made the decision to continue with their plan to move to the United States. The
girls’ mom therefore crossed the border without the necessary visa, instead of moving to the U.S. with her visa and applying for permanent legal immigrant status through her U.S. citizen husband as the family had previously planned. Yadira’s and Maribel’s mother has been living as an unauthorized immigrant in the U.S. ever since. Although their parents continue to live in South Texas, their father frequently travels between Mexico and the U.S. for business. Yadira’s and Maribel’s mom is confined to South Texas because she is too afraid to cross check points and cannot return to Mexico as she does not have the necessary visa to travel back and forth.

Ricardo

Ricardo is a 42-year-old male. He is a U.S. citizen. Ricardo was born and raised in Puerto Rico and moved to South Florida when he was in high school. His family moved for a better job opportunity for his father. He grew up economically privileged (e.g., Ricardo said his father was a 1 percenter). Ricardo sees his experience as very different than other Latino immigrants, particularly because he never had to think about or deal with issues with documentation. He has an undergraduate degree and some additional higher education.

Julieta

Julieta is a 28-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen and was raised in the United States (Rocky mountain area). Her mother was born in Havana, Cuba, and moved to the U.S. during the Cuban revolution under political asylum when she was two years old (1.5 generation immigrant). Julieta’s mother is a legal permanent resident. Her family has always had authorized immigrant status and are now either all U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.
Julieta was raised by her mother and knows little about her father other than he is of Mexican American descent (her father’s family has lived in the U.S. for generations). She noted that although Cuban, her maternal side of the family is white and appears to be of European descent. She said her mom grew up completely bilingual (English and Spanish). Julieta has an undergraduate and graduate degree. She is currently studying to receive her Ph.D.

Isabel

Isabel is a 19-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen. She was born and raised in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States. Her mother and father are unauthorized immigrants, and she and her sister are U.S. citizens. Her extended family, including her grandparents, aunts and uncles, live in Mexico. She has one cousin who is an unauthorized immigrant and currently living in the United States. Another cousin was an unauthorized immigrant but was detained and deported a few years ago. Isabel is currently a junior in college.

Helena

Helena is a 20-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen. Her mother, Rosa, is a Peruvian immigrant and naturalized citizen. Her father is a white U.S. citizen. Her mom’s entire family still lives in Peru. Helena reports no issues or concerns in regards to immigration policy. However, she has been working on how to negotiate being “half Peruvian and half American.” She said since she is lighter skinned, she does not necessarily look Latina, but she grew up speaking Spanish at home. She is currently in college working toward her bachelor’s degree.
**Rosa**

Rosa is a 53-year-old female. She is a naturalized U.S. citizen. She was born and raised in Lima, Peru. She married her white, U.S. citizen husband and then moved to the United States when she was 29. She has two children. Helena is her daughter. The rest of her family (e.g., parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) all still live in Lima. She has a bachelor’s degree.

**Gilda**

Gilda is an 18-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen. Both her parents are unauthorized Mexican immigrants, and she and her brother are U.S. citizens. Prior to Gilda being born, her mom was detained when she was working in a factory and subsequently deported. She almost immediately moved back to the United States. Gilda is currently a freshman in college.

**Magda**

Magda is a 29-year-old female. She was born and raised in the United States (in the West). Both of her parents emigrated from Mexico to the United States and are currently U.S. citizens. Magda’s stepfather is an unauthorized immigrant. Magda’s husband (now ex-husband) was an unauthorized immigrant. Magda’s husband left the United States to attend a scheduled appointment in Ciudad Juarez so that he could gain permanent legal status. At the meeting, he was not granted a pardon and legal immigrant status. Instead, he was told that he could not return to the United States. At the time, Magda had one child with him. So, Magda and her son traveled back and forth to visit her husband and ultimately moved to Mexico to keep the family together. While there, Magda became pregnant with her youngest son, who was born with disabilities. Magda
said that because her child had disabilities and her husband was never granted the necessary documents to return to the United States, they were forced to make the difficult decision for Magda to return to the U.S. with her two children so that the youngest could receive the services he needed (services not easily accessed in Mexico). In effect, Magda became a single mother and the sole provider for her family. Eventually, she and her husband divorced. Since he is in Mexico, he is unable to provide much financially to assist the family and can also not be physically present in the lives of his sons (now ages 10 and 7, respectively). Magda is currently a sophomore in college.

**Camila**

Camila is a 26-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen and grew up in the Midwest. Her father emigrated from Mexico. He was unauthorized but gained legal immigrant status when he married Camila’s mother, an authorized immigrant from El Salvador. Camila’s brother-in-law, uncle, and cousin are all unauthorized immigrants. Her uncle through marriage (married to her aunt) was unauthorized, detained and subsequently deported. The separation caused her aunt and uncle to get a divorce. Camila has a bachelor’s degree.

**Diego**

Diego is a 26-year-old male. He is currently protected under DACA status. He emigrated from Mexico to the U.S. when he was 4. Diego’s family has multiple statuses. His mother, father and older sister are unauthorized. Diego has DACA status and his two younger siblings are native-born U.S. citizens. He said he always knew that he was an unauthorized immigrant because his mom talked to him about this at a very young age and discussed the need to be extremely careful regarding his status. His mom told him to
only speak in English in front of others, to say he was born in the U.S. and that he was a U.S. citizen. Diego said that he felt that he was in the closet for two things – being an unauthorized immigrant and being gay. He said that when he finally came out for both, he felt free. He participated in the DREAMers movement in California. He tried to put himself through college, working and paying, but it was difficult. Diego gained protection through DACA, but he said the protections provided through DACA are limited. Diego stated that he can work and is protected from deportation, but he does not have other rights (e.g., to leave the country). In addition, he says that he does not know what will happen with his status in the future as his protection under DACA is temporary. Although Diego was forced to take some time off from college for financial reasons, he recently graduated and received his bachelor’s degree.

Dante

Dante is a 22-year-old male. He emigrated from Mexico to the U.S. when he was 7 and grew up in the South. He gained protected status through DACA, was able to finish his college degree and legally work in the United States. However, after he submitted his paperwork to renew his DACA status (as is required every two years), there was a delay in processing the paperwork. His work visa subsequently lapsed and he was let go from his job. For some time, he volunteered in hopes that his visa would come through, but after an extended wait, Dante had to make the decision to gain paid employment at a job that would not require a work visa (i.e., working as a waiter in a Mexican restaurant). Dante had previously moved out of state (no longer living with his parents) for his dream job. However, while waiting for his work visa to come through again, Dante made the decision to return to the South to live with his parents to save money. Dante’s family has
multiple statuses. His 21-year-old brother is currently protected under DACA. His two youngest siblings are native-born U.S. citizens. His mom is an unauthorized immigrant. His dad was an unauthorized immigrant, but after being detained about 1.5 years ago, he received a work visa.

Olivia

Olivia is a 28-year-old female. She is a native-born U.S. citizen. She grew up on the West coast. She has one native-born U.S. citizen brother who is 18. Her parents emigrated from Mexico to the United States and received permanent legal status through the 1986 immigration reform. Most of her extended family were unauthorized immigrants at one time, but they have since gained legal immigrant status through the application process or marriage. Currently, she has aunts, uncles and a cousin who are unauthorized immigrants.

One of Olivia’s unauthorized uncles was hurt and lost most of his fingers while on the job. His wife was also unauthorized, his eldest child was unauthorized (brought to the U.S. as an infant), and his second oldest is a native-born U.S. citizen. Because Olivia’s uncle was unauthorized when he lost his fingers on the job, he was not provided the same benefits as other employees (e.g., workers’ compensation). Due to his injury, he could not easily find work and it became too costly to live in the U.S., so he and his family moved back to Mexico. His third child was born in Mexico. Currently, his U.S. citizen daughter has moved to the United States. Olivia said that this has been a difficult transition for her as she grew up in Mexico. Conversely, her eldest cousin had difficulty transitioning to life in Mexico, as she grew up in the United States. Because the eldest cousin does not have documents, she cannot live in the U.S. legally and remains in Mexico.
Olivia is currently in the process of trying to sponsor one of her uncles so that he can gain legal permanent residency. She said that she is the only one in her family that makes enough money to sponsor a person. Olivia also reported that another uncle gained permanent residency after having to move back to Mexico for a year. She said that this process was difficult on his children as he had to be separated from them to regularize his status and was therefore not available as an emotional support for a year. Olivia has her bachelor’s degree and is currently enrolled in a graduate program.

**Results for Research Question One: How Does Living in a Mixed Status Family Impact Latinos?**

The juxtaposition of the privileges described by participants living in U.S. citizen or authorized immigrant families, and the barriers and restrictions described by participants living in mixed status families, best highlight the impact mixed-citizenship status has for families given the current social and political climate of the United States. Participants not living in mixed status families acknowledged that a large part of their privilege is not having to think about issues like working, driving, la migra (immigration), police, criminalization and racial implications. To the contrary, participants in mixed status families described the lasting tangible and intangible effects of mixed-citizenship status. This includes barriers to higher education, healthcare, employment, travel and the subsequent impact on important individual and family life events. Participants also spoke of living under the constant fear of exposure and threat of the detention or deportation of an unauthorized family member.

This theoretical framework provides a better understanding of how living in a mixed-citizenship status family impacts Latinos. The two main components of this
framework — 1) the privileges granted to participants in non-mixed status families and 2) the restrictions experienced by participants in mixed status families subsequent to the current social and political climate — are further explicated in the subsequent sections.

**Non-mixed Status Experience**

**Privileged identities.** Participants described the privileges that accompany authorized immigrant status and U.S. citizenship. These privileges are tangible, including increased educational opportunities, occupational opportunities and the ability to participate in the political process. These privileges are also intangible, encompassing feeling accepted, protected (e.g., increased levels of safety and security), and decreased levels of worry.

The intersections of privileged identities for participants in U.S. citizen and authorized immigrant families provided opportunities and protected participants from many of the difficulties faced by people in mixed status families. For Ricardo, his economic and U.S. citizenship privilege provided many opportunities not readily available to immigrants in mixed status families. Ricardo was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He and his family moved from Puerto Rico to South Florida when he was in his teens. Not technically immigrants, Ricardo considers his family to be an immigrant family as they moved from Puerto Rico to the continental United States. Although Ricardo identifies as an immigrant, the U.S. citizenship privilege that accompanies his family’s Puerto Rican identity enabled his father to work legally in the United States. Ricardo acknowledged that when he tells people he grew up in an immigrant household, they often make the assumption that it was difficult, yet this is not his lived experience.
Ricardo described his first three years in the United States as “almost idyllic.” Although wealthy in Puerto Rico, Ricardo’s family lived an even more economically privileged life in the United States when they moved to South Florida for a better work opportunity for his father. Ricardo explained, “I guess you could say my father was a bona fide 1 percenter…they’d [people would] be surprised with how I lived when I first moved to the United States…it’s a different life all together.” It was not until his parents went through a financial crisis that he acknowledged having struggles. Even so, Ricardo stated that he does not relate to the mixed status experience or the experience of lower-income immigrants. He highlighted the fact that his family “did not have to worry about immigration knocking at our door… [and] didn’t have to worry about not having enough money to keep a roof over our heads.”

Rosa, a first-generation immigrant of Peruvian descent, also discussed the impact of intersecting privileged identities. Rosa specifically addressed the privilege associated with living in an authorized immigrant or U.S. citizen family. For her, U.S. citizenship signifies total acceptance as part of the country. However, she also indicated that when this privilege intersects with the privilege of higher educational attainment, she is further insulated. She stated:

Being an immigrant family, I think that if you have all your papers in order, you have all the benefits and I think it’s probably more relaxed, especially if the immigrant family has higher education. I think they’re in good shape. And being in a U.S. citizen family, I think there’s almost no anxiety of anything happening, because you have all the privilege. You are an American citizen and you’re…you are part of the country.
In Julieta’s case, the intersecting privileged identities of her family protected them from many of the negative experiences endured by those in mixed status families. As a U.S. citizen born into an authorized immigrant family of Cuban decent on her maternal side, Julieta acknowledged that her family did not have legal problems as they were protected by legal permanent resident and U.S. citizenship statuses. She said, “as far as legal wise, we never…we never had issues when it came to that.”

Although Julieta identified the privileged identities within her family, she also described the differing privileges between her mother, a 1.5 generation legal permanent resident, and her uncle, who is a native born U.S. citizen. For instance, Julieta acknowledged that her mother cannot participate fully in the political process in the U.S. as that she does not have the right to vote. She also entertained the idea that different statuses of her uncle and mother, legal permanent resident and native-born U.S. citizen, might have impacted their academic trajectory. She said:

I don’t know if that’s impacted their educational trajectory very much, but all I know is that for my uncle, being an American born citizen, it was much easier for him to navigate the educational system. And he went straight through and became a medical doctor. So…I just…when I compare his experience to the rest of my aunts and uncles and my mother, I see how they had to work a little bit harder. I don’t know if that is due to status. It could also be cultural. They could’ve experienced a lot of cultural shock, or just trying to assimilate. So they experienced a lot of things, but my uncle didn’t have to go through that. I think he had it, probably, he had it probably the easiest.
Lucia, a 1.5 generation participant who lives in a mixed status family (she has DACA status and her mother is an unauthorized immigrant), recognized that for her, the status of her nuclear family and her extended family (i.e., mixed status versus legal resident and U.S. citizen) created a divide. Lucia described feeling that her extended family with legal status perceived themselves as superior to her nuclear family with unauthorized members. She explained:

When we lived in an undocumented family, in a tree of other family members that were U.S. citizens or some sort of legal resident…it felt like they were better than us. Not sure what to do to describe that. But, I felt in a way, even though family members came to my mom’s house, just to be with the family, it felt like we’re better than you. I had that little vibe. And it felt very sad that you could see that among family members.

Lucia also acknowledged that she feels that as her extended family can take full advantage of the privilege that their authorized or U.S. citizen status provides, they lack an understanding and therefore being insensitive to the experience of her mixed status nuclear family.

Both Julieta’s and Lucia’s experiences segue nicely into the other U.S. citizen privileges described by participants. Diego, who lives in a mixed status family and has two U.S. citizen siblings, recognized that compared with his experiences and the experiences of his parents, his U.S. citizen siblings will not have to go through as many struggles, particularly when it comes to educational and occupational attainment. Diego shared, “my youngest siblings are citizens, so they’re still in high school, but I know that they’re going to have better opportunities than I had.” Diego’s unauthorized immigrant
status in high school caused him to face additional educational barriers compared with his U.S. citizen and authorized immigrant counterparts, especially when transitioning to higher education. As U.S. citizens, this is an experience his siblings will not have to face. Additionally, as unauthorized immigrants, his parents are/were limited in their occupational opportunities. Although Diego’s siblings might face other barriers due to their ethnicity, economic status, etc., their U.S. citizenship status secures that they will always be able to legally work in the United States.

Rosa, having lived as both a legal permanent resident and a U.S. citizen, has personal experience in witnessing increased assurance and stability upon becoming a U.S. citizen. She shared:

I remember when I was having my green card and versus, being an American citizen now. I think that when you are having your green card you’re still like a…you don’t feel 100 percent part of this country. Versus when you have your citizenship, you feel like you have all the privilege. And it’s just a different feeling. So if I have to compare both, definitely having the citizenship makes you feel more stable. Stability, because you know that there are rules when you have the green card. For example, and I don’t remember exactly what were those rules, but if something goes wrong, if you do something wrong, they can still take away the green card and kick you out. But when you’re a citizen, they cannot do that.

These tangible and intangible privileges are just a few of the privileges participants described that are associated with authorized immigrant status and U.S. citizenship status. Participants also underscored a key component of any privileged identity – privilege often signifies that people do not have to think about his or her own
privilege and/or lack awareness that their life is substantially different than their counterparts that do not have the same privileged identities.

**Unawareness of privilege.** A large part of privilege is taking for granted some basic rights or daily activities (e.g., working or driving) and not having to think about issues like “la migra,” police, being criminalized and the racial implications. Participants recognized this privilege as being a consequence of authorized or U.S. citizen family status.

Working and driving. Diana contrasted the experience of her authorized immigrant family to that of her extended mixed status family members. In doing so, she revealed how privilege is manifested in seemingly mundane activities like working or driving. These activities are second nature to her and her nuclear family, but they are the cause of constant worry for her extended, mixed status family members. Diana said:

So in my family, if we can see both immediate and extended members … [in] my immediate family, everybody’s either a citizen or has a permanent residency in the U.S. … So we don’t worry about not being able to work or not being able to drive. So, that’s not something really that we think of on a regular basis. We are more worried about making ends meet, rather than not being able to because we don’t have a job. But as long as we have jobs, then we just need to work hard and pay what we need to pay and make it through.

Diana’s story calls attention to the reality that although her family encounters difficulties subsequent to their immigrant or lower-economic statuses, their authorized immigrant and U.S. citizen status protects them in ways that their unauthorized family members are not.
Ricardo, having moved from a region of the U.S. without a large Mexican immigrant community (i.e., South Florida) to a region with a large Mexican immigrant community (i.e., Rocky Mountain region), has discovered differences in the perception of the police based on ethnic identity and immigration status. This realization is most apparent for Ricardo in terms of driving. He explained that he perceives a heightened level of fear within the Mexican immigrant community, particularly the fear of getting pulled over by police while driving. This is an experience that Ricardo does not identify with. He stated that he enjoys driving fast, is not afraid of the police and when he has received a speeding ticket, he accepts it without concern. In his case, Ricardo’s economic and U.S. citizenship status protects him from the fear that unauthorized immigrants feel when they are pulled over or cited for a traffic violation. Ricardo said:

Every time that I drive through the Mexican neighborhoods, I see that they are driving below the speed limit. So I tend to think that they are, afraid of being pulled over by the cops. It has to be. Just because they all drive so slow. It’s like, what are they afraid. I mean, what are they accustomed to or afraid of? Do they realize that there is a speed limit sign? Or, I guess what I’m trying to say that is somehow they have some fears. They are afraid of being just picked up by the cops just for whatever. I don’t live like that. I don’t associate [with] that. I did get pulled over here for driving 15 miles over the speed limit and I got a ticket for it. Fine. Whatever. I paid a fine and I moved on.

The fear that Ricardo has identified for Mexican and/or unauthorized immigrants when driving is related to the increased likelihood for unauthorized immigrants to be
discovered by immigration officers, detained and/or deported if they are pulled over for a moving violation.

**La migra, police, and criminalization.** In contrasting the experience of her nuclear, authorized immigrant family members to that of her mixed status extended family members, Diana exposed how although legal permanent resident status does not provide the full protection of U.S. citizenship status, this status allows her family to be exempt from thinking about or worrying about immigration officers detaining or deporting them. Diana said, “I don’t think that my parents ever think about, well…like, la migra, how we call it, is going to come and take us away. Or we’re going to be separated or anything.” This lies in stark contrast to the experience of her extended family members that live in a mixed status family. Diana shared:

They’re always thinking about those things, yes. And they experience different emotions than we do. They just seem always worried about things. Worried more than normal. … Whereas, we worry about paying bills on time and not accruing a lot of debt. But they worry about staying here. Which we don’t.

For Diana’s extended family members in mixed status families, the simple act of being able to remain in the United States is a concern. This is not something that her authorized immigrant nuclear family has ever had to think about.

Julieta, born to a legal permanent resident mother of Cuban descent and a U.S. born Mexican American father, acknowledged that her family’s protected statuses insulate her from having to confront issues with immigration or feeling targeted by immigration policy or the media’s portrayal of immigrants. Julieta explained:
We would never live in fear because we were documented and we were accepted in the country. So Cubans, like I said, were refugees, so it’s a different situation than being Mexican and having to come across the border and then being criminalized and constantly living in fear on top of being criminalized and feeling like you’ve done something wrong, just because that’s what immigration, kind of, labeled you as or media.

Julieta describes an awareness of the role immigration policy and media play in the criminalization and perpetuation of the Latino threat narrative (Chavez, 2008) and the role this plays in her experience compared to the experience of Mexican immigrants.

**Racial implications.** Participants described the ways that skin phenotype, presumed racial or ethnic identification and country of origin impacted their experiences. Most often, respondents described how a lighter skin color or not being identified as Mexican protected them from overt forms of racism or discrimination. For example, Rosa, having married a white male U.S. citizen and moving to the United States as an authorized immigrant prior to gaining U.S. citizenship, remarked that she never experienced feeling unwelcome or racism. She stated, “First of all, I always felt very welcome here in the U.S. I never experienced racism.”

Yadira said that she is racially ambiguous. She has a lighter skin phenotype and although she has an accent, people, particularly white people, do not typically initially identify her as Mexican. Yadira said, “I have an accent, but sometimes people don’t know that I’m Hispanic. So even if we were to meet someone…I’ve heard people ask me if I speak Spanish. I guess it’s just more cosmopolitan, in a sense. It’s ambiguous.” This
misidentification has protected Yadira from some overt forms of racism or discriminatory practices.

Julieta explicitly stated how lighter skin phenotype, country of origin and legal immigrant status play a role in the privileged experience of some immigrant families, explaining that Cubans are accepted and Mexicans criminalized in U.S. American culture. She said:

Colorism plays a role here in my family, we didn’t have any issues. You know, legalized…since we were refugees, I think that, you know, we had no issues. We grew up in the United States. We didn’t live in fear of what our status was at the time.

She contrasted this personal experience with that of her best friend, who has a darker skin phenotype and is of Mexican descent. Her friend’s family members were impacted by the negative response to their darker skin color, limited English language ability and the unauthorized immigrant status of some family members. Julieta explained:

Her family is a mixed status family. They are Mexican. They come from Mexico and they’re visibly, skin color wise, a lot darker than my family. And when I say my family, I’m referring to my mom’s side of the family because they are Cuban. So my mom would be easily mistaken for a white woman, because they’re Cuban and Turkish, so they’re very much European looking. So a very different experience for them, versus my friend’s family, who physical appearance wise, they were darker skin tone, they were shorter. So, it was just…it was interesting to see. Oh, and her mother didn’t speak English very well. So, it was interesting to experience those two experiences because it was very different to see how her
mother was treated, versus the way my mother was treated. I mean, my mother was, she was kind of, she never had to face the criticism, or the discrimination that I would see that my best friend’s mother would have to face, because she didn’t speak very good English. Or, because people would see her and automatically write her off for those reasons.

These examples are ways in which participants examine the meaning of race and ethnicity and how skin phenotype, presumed racial or ethnic identification and country of origin impact their experiences. Although each of these participants has varying immigration statuses within their families, the treatment they received based on their lighter skin tone has been a protective factor against the racist U.S. society.

**Mixed Status Experience**

The political and social response to immigration, particularly targeting unauthorized immigrants, greatly impacts the experience of those living in mixed status families. The current political and social climate creates a restrictive environment that impacts not only the unauthorized immigrant, but also authorized or U.S. citizen family members. The many restrictions faced by unauthorized immigrants subsequent to their immigration status are the impetus for many of educational, health, work and family struggles.

The following section will begin by depicting the various restrictions faced by participants in mixed status families. These restrictions include barriers to education, healthcare, job opportunities and travel. The impact of these barriers and the current U.S. response to immigration will also be addressed. More specifically, this section will describe participants’ fears surrounding driving, exposing the unauthorized status of
family members and the potential detention and/or deportation of an unauthorized family member. It will also recount the increased levels of responsibility, financial stress and emotional stress that accompany having an unauthorized family member. This section will conclude with a brief discussion of the resiliency of the participants.

**Restrictions for education, healthcare, job opportunities and travel.**

Participants described how unauthorized immigrant status has incredible implications for education, health and job opportunities. In addition, participants described how the mixed-citizenship status of a family impacts their ability to travel, subsequently impacting cultural rites of passage and family life events.

**Barriers to education.** Participants called attention to various factors impacting unauthorized immigrants’ ability to access higher education. These factors include limited financial aid support, inability to attend some institutions of higher education and lack of knowledge about the educational system in the United States. For instance, Hector, a U.S. citizen, noticed that unauthorized immigrants are often held back from higher education due to their status and the lack of financial aid support. He stated:

I think it was just financial aid, the lack of aid for undocumented students. I remember when I was a senior in high school that was a big deal, because I asked one of my friends where she was going and she said she wasn’t planning on going to college because she couldn’t get any help. So that’s one thing that stands out to me.

Various participants confirmed this. For example, Dante described always knowing that he was unauthorized, but that the implications of his status did not become understood until he was in high school. He shared that when in high school, he realized
that not only were scholarships very limited for unauthorized students, but that in his state, some of the major universities would not even accept unauthorized students. Dante explained:

The top four public universities in [my state] banned undocumented students from even being able to be accepted…regardless of how much they were paying tuition. You cannot apply, and if you are able to apply and be accepted to any other public university, of course, you cannot receive any state or federal aid.

**Barriers to healthcare and other resources.** Participants described how unauthorized immigration status can impede a person’s access to healthcare and other resources. Although Julieta does not live in a mixed status family, she discussed the inaccessibility of healthcare for unauthorized immigrants. She explained that limited healthcare services, coupled by the fear of seeking treatment, causes many unauthorized immigrants to choose to take their own curative measures instead of seeking a physician’s care. Julieta stated, “When they would be sick, almost having to cure yourself in your own home, because you’re afraid to go to the doctor.”

Lucia explained that being lower income and an unauthorized immigrant prevents her mother from accessing medical insurance through income qualified healthcare provided by the government. This has created a major barrier for her mother to receive the medical attention she needs, including regular primary care visits. Lucia said:

So, because of her undocumented she cannot, she doesn’t have access to Medicaid, Medicare, or any of the health programs that are out there for people who are legal here in the U.S. So she has been sick recently, and she hasn’t been
able to go to a doctor, because it’s really expensive, and we don’t have the way to pay that.

For Lucia, her mother’s inability to access healthcare is both “frustrating” and “heartbreaking,” especially as her mother is ill and has not been able to go to the doctor to get her medical needs met.

The barriers to services described by participants were not limited to healthcare. Diana described how her aunt’s unauthorized status has hindered her from receiving any form of federal aid even though the family would meet the income requirements. She shared:

So they don’t get any of that. They miss out on a lot of…like, there are some services that they could access that is not tied to federal aid. But they could get food from a food pantry and not have to fill out anything. But they don’t ever do any of that. They work really hard and they just try to be good people.

Diana also described feeling frustrated that her hard-working family members are unable to access the necessary support available to meet their basic needs. Participants clearly indicated that the eligibility requirements to qualify for public services and aid limited the access to basic health, housing and food resources for the unauthorized family members and their families.

**Barriers to employment.** Good paying jobs and stable employment can be difficult for unauthorized immigrants to find. Although Olivia’s nuclear family is comprised of authorized immigrants or U.S. citizens, she has the experience of witnessing her extended family members endure various hardships due to their unauthorized status, particularly when it came to employment. In order to work, her aunts
and uncles had to tolerate unfair wages and treatment as unauthorized immigrants. She explained:

So, as I was growing up, a majority of my family didn’t, well my immediate family became permanent residents in the 1986 amnesty, but a majority of my uncles and aunts did not become [residents], so they were undocumented, and so seeing their hardships trying to find employment opportunities, getting fired because [of] the social security administration, there was no match with their social that they provided, working under the table and getting paid way below what even the national average is, having to deal with horrible supervisors that were taking advantage.

Camila indicated that her extended family members had similar experiences. However, what was most concerning to Camila was the fear that her family members would be caught working without the proper documents. She said she hopes “that they don’t get caught working without a social security number. I know that’s another big thing or getting fined, as well. They’re struggling to make a living.”

Dante also discussed how the unauthorized immigrant status of his parents impacted their ability to find work and limited them to low-paying, labor-intensive jobs. He stated:

My parents having to work the types of jobs that they work because they don’t have papers, was another issue. . .[They] have had to take on jobs where in Mexico they wouldn’t have — to clean houses or work in construction, things of that nature.
The types of jobs available to his parents impacted his family’s financial well-being. Likewise, the unauthorized immigrant status of Gilda’s father prohibited him from taking advantage of numerous occupational opportunities. Gilda said:

And it’s…those papers…my dad has been offered so many good income jobs, but just the fact that he doesn’t have the papers, and it kind of gets in the way of a totally different lifestyle that my parents and I could have had if they were documented. … I would describe it as really restricting because, personally, I have to see my parents work such hard labor jobs just because they don’t have documents. And I know their kids will have a lot more, but it’s just that barrier of not having papers.

Maribel explained that prior to moving to the United States (and her mother becoming an unauthorized immigrant), her mother was happy, independent, worked and was emotionally stable. However, when she came to the U.S. without authorization for the benefit of her family, her documentation status caused her to lose everything. She became afraid all the time, unable to work or travel, and became emotionally unstable due to these compounding issues. Maribel recounted:

I think life as a family was a little better [in Mexico]. We had more freedom to do different things. And I think that was good for all of us, for her. And I think now she just, she can’t do anything…Before she had what you would call a life. She had work. She was independent. And then, she lost everything.

In addition to the emotional toll the unauthorized immigrant status had on her mother, Maribel described how her mother’s inability to work in the U.S. had a financial impact on the family. She shared:
To start with, I think there’s some economic problems in my family. My parents were having problems, but as a family it affects every one of us. So it’s just the fact that my mom can’t get a job. I think that’s a big part of the problem of being, not being a legal immigrant.

Similarly, Isabel described how her mother’s unauthorized status made it difficult for her to work. Instead of her family having a two-parent income, her father was the sole financial provider and primary bread winner. This made it hard for the family to make ends meet and provide financial support so that Isabel could attend college. Isabel stated:

Also, with a job, it’s really hard for just one person to work. And especially because my dad works in construction. So it’s really hard to pay college tuition, and bills, and everything I have to get paid by only one person. So my mom is not able to provide that financial support that we could have if she did have documents.

Diego also described how the unauthorized immigrant status of his parents seriously limited their ability to gain stable and good paying employment. His father works as a gardener and his mother takes on any job she can to make ends meet. He stated:

Well, both of us [parents and me] being undocumented…I guess just them being able to support me as I was in college. They did whatever they could to help me get through college even though they were very low income because they’re immigrants. So, my dad is a gardener. My mom does all kinds of jobs to make money. She cooks, she cleans, she does everything to try to make money. So, you know we, I couldn’t pay for college all the time, and they tried to help me. I don’t
know how they did it, but somehow they always made sure that I always had what
I needed to a certain extent. And it was very difficult on them and on me because
there were times, like the time that I dropped out, that just both of us couldn’t do
anything. It was too expensive. So it does, it affected me and them in that way
that I just had to stop my life for a while because they couldn’t afford to help me
and I didn’t qualify for some financial aid.

The participants’ narratives indicated that there are limited job opportunities for
unauthorized immigrants. This not only caused them job insecurity, but it also often
forced them to accept low-paying or labor-intensive jobs so that they could make ends
meet. For some, their unauthorized immigrant status caused them to rely on an authorized
or U.S. citizen partner to work, which limited the household income, negatively
impacting the entire family.

**Restricted travel.** Participants described how having an unauthorized immigrant
family member impacts the family’s ability to travel. For many participants, this signifies
losing the opportunity to be together for family events both big and small. For some, this
represents the interruption of leisure activities (e.g., family members are not able to
attend sporting events or take family vacation together). For others, it implies an even
greater loss — the loss of an ability to be together during major life events and
transitions, the interruption of cultural rites of passage and an inability to be able to
support one another during times of joy and sadness.

Dante explained that his parents’ unauthorized statuses have prevented the family
from traveling to Mexico together. Consequently, his younger U.S. citizen siblings have
yet to meet their grandparents. Dante stated:
For my siblings, my younger brother, who’s 15, and my sister, who’s 13, have never met their grandparents, any extended family who lives in Mexico. Where for most people it’s natural to go to grandmas or grandpas. They have never met them because the whole family cannot go and now they’re a little bit older and can travel alone, but my mom would…my dad would be scared…afraid to send them on their own to Mexico to meet and spend time with them. So that’s how it affects them.

Similarly, Isabel described being unable to travel to Mexico or the southern U.S. because of check points. She stated:

We haven’t been able to go to, like, southern…southern parts of the U.S., just because we have the retaining places where you stop by and they ask for documents. So we haven’t been able to go visit my uncle down in New Mexico for that reason. We haven’t been able to go visit family members, because it’s always scary to think that you might get stopped and asked for documents. And having my mom being undocumented, like, what could happen? So a lot of…also, traveling to Mexico, like I mentioned before.

Diego described his parents being unable to travel freely and being unwilling to take the risk to fly. He stated:

It affects me…well, like my mom, even though she could travel within the United States, because all you need is a passport, she is hesitant about flying over to visit me because she’s afraid that she might get stopped by immigration at the airport. I mean, I took the risk a lot of times when I was undocumented. I would travel within the United States, but there was always that risk. It’s a tiny risk, which my
parents are less willing to take that risk to come and visit me. So it does affect, because I only see them whenever I go back to California, and I don’t know when that’s going to be. And I think if there were no fear, they would come and visit me, so it affects us in that way. That they’re not able to travel freely all over the country and I live very far away from them.

Yadira explained that as younger adults living in Mexico, her parents were able to travel and take vacations anywhere they wanted. However, after moving to the United States and because of her mother’s unauthorized immigrant status, her parents can no longer do this. Yadira stated:

And that’s what pains me so much that they’re very…their group of friends that they have been with for like 20 years. And they, we used to vacation together and, of course, they [parent’s friends] keep doing it. But my parents don’t. And they [parent’s friends] come skiing here, and stuff like that. And my mom’s like, those are my friends.

Yadira also explained how her mother’s inability to travel impacts Yadira directly as she lives in another state than her parents. She shared that although her mother’s friends can visit her, her mother is not able to. She stated, “I live here. And her [my Mom’s] friends are vacationing here and she can’t come.” In addition, Yadira described how her mother’s unauthorized status makes it hard for the family to see each other. “So her being undocumented is just separating. It’s hard on the whole family. It makes it harder for everyone to see each other.”

Yadira, also discussed implications living in a mixed status family has on travel and vacation. Yadira stated:
Vacation as a family. I mean, we had plans for that. For years to come, or my parents did… and I still lived with them and I had gotten my first job and it was amazing… so everything was great and I had that and I guess I had gotten used to the fact that, okay, there’s no more family vacations. So I had just started… you know, I worked my butt off so I could pay for my own so I could go anytime I wanted. Anywhere I wanted.

Yadira equated barriers to travel and mobility to barriers to family unity. She stated:

Mobility. Unity. I think just, the fact that you have opportunities to vacation as a family. Or, I would love, I haven’t lived with my parents for a while, and I would love for my mom to see where I live and she has never done that. She can’t. Or my sisters… my sister lives [out of the country] with her boyfriend and my mom can’t visit her because she’s undocumented. If she got out of the States, how is she ever going to go back to her house? … She can’t [visit me in another state] either because … she can’t cross the cross check that’s halfway… or where the northern or southern border of Texas is… It’s like the gate of… checkpoint. She can’t.

Due to the numerous checkpoints within South Texas, Yadira explains that her mother is not just limited to the state of Texas, but to the Rio Grande Valley.

Like her sister, Maribel also described how her mother’s unauthorized immigrant status makes it impossible for them to travel as a family, which becomes a barrier to family time together. She stated:

And, also, I think, you know, just very simple things. Maybe like going on a trip together. You know, going out of the city. That’s something that’s not possible for
us. …Yeah. It’s just…you’re…when you have an immigrant in your family, you can’t do…you can’t be together all the time. If you have family out of the country, you can’t be together. That person has to stay there.

Maribel lives outside the U.S., and the only way for her to see her mother is for Maribel to return to her hometown. She stated:

I’m living out of the States, if I want my mom to visit, it’s just something that’s out of the way. So if I don’t go and visit, there’s no way for me to see my mom.

So, that’s difficult for me.

Maribel also explained that her father often travels back to Mexico for work. Although her mother would like to accompany him, she is not able to because of her unauthorized immigrant status. Instead, her mother has to stay behind in South Texas, alone. This has become more isolating and lonely as her children are now grown adults and have moved out of the house. Maribel said:

She’s afraid. She can’t work. You know, she can’t travel with my dad when he had to go to Mexico to work. She had to stay, you know, in town that was new to her. So I think that made her a little bit unstable.

Diego also described his experience as a child as limiting in terms of travel. He shared that his parents were not able to take him and his siblings different places and that they feared traveling and therefore remained in their town. For Diego’s younger U.S. citizen siblings, his parents continue to be limited in their ability to travel. This causes his parents to miss sporting events and count on others to get their children to important competitions. Diego stated:
My parents, for example, they’ve been limited to just Los Angeles. They don’t really ever go outside of L.A. I don’t think they ever have left Los Angeles because they fear that if they travel to other cities they might get stopped and who knows what’s going to happen. … My youngest siblings…they’re in high school. They don’t have a car. They have to…whenever my sister has a competition, because she’s in sports, whenever she does competitions outside of the city, my parents don’t really go to it. So it does affect, I think, the children a lot more just seeing that their parents don’t do a lot of the things that other parents would do. Mostly because of their immigrant status.

Participants also discussed the major restrictions international travel presents for their unauthorized family members. Diego discussed his father not being able to bury his parents after they passed away. Also, due to Diego’s unauthorized immigrant status, he was unable to travel to Mexico and not only missed the opportunity to attend his grandparents’ funerals, but also the opportunity to really get to know them and spend time with them prior to their deaths. Diego recounted:

So just knowing that they can’t visit their parents…my father, whose parents passed away, just seeing him not being able to go and bury their parents, or his parents, was really tough for the whole family. Even though I never really knew my grandparents, it was tough for the family.

Camila described having to consider family status prior to deciding on a vacation and that during those discussions, traveling to Mexico as a larger family (including extended family with unauthorized immigrant members) is never an option. She stated, “It’s always taken into consideration [for] family trips. For example, not everyone can go
to Mexico.” Camila also shared that her brother-in-law and uncle are unable to travel outside of the country due to their unauthorized statuses. This limits the family’s ability to be together. She described the need to be extra careful, not just in traveling, but in deciding who will take or pick up a family member from an airport. Her family fears the increased security around airports and what might happen if a police officer or agent checks an unauthorized family member’s identification and realizes he is unauthorized. Camila stated:

Being in a mixed family, for example, when we want to go to Mexico, my brother-in-law can’t go because he doesn’t have it [papers or authorized status]. Or, as one of my uncles three years ago got his residency, it’s still not the same cause my other uncle can’t go to Mexico and, for example, if my parents have to get picked up at the airport, my uncle can’t go, just because it’s a risk for him. So it’s just trying to find someone who is a citizen to be able to go pick them up. So there’s definitely restrictions on opportunities and things that we want to do, and we have to take everyone in consideration.

Hector explained that only his nuclear family is currently in the United States. Without the proper visas to travel, his extended family cannot visit him (his uncle was living in the U.S. as an unauthorized immigrant but has since returned to Honduras). He shared that he sees how his friends have huge families, but for him, he only knows his nuclear family and has missed the experience of seeing his extended family regularly as the only way they could visit him in the U.S. is to come without the necessary visas, which will put them in risk. Hector stated:
I think the biggest things is my inability to really see family or ever have a family because [they are] not really welcome to go in and out, unless you’re coming in illegally. I think that’s the biggest part. Not being able to see family and really only knowing my immediate family. You see everybody else…all my friends and neighbors have these huge families and then all I really know is my mom, my dad and my brothers.

Dante also described his parents’ unauthorized status preventing them from returning to their homeland. He stated, “They can’t visit their family, their country, the place where they grew up. So that’s how it’s impacted them.” Participants overwhelmingly described how the travel restrictions placed on unauthorized immigrants separates the family. Not only were families unable to be together during important life transitions, but the inability to travel limited families’ ability to get to know one another, to build relationships and to act as a family unit.

**Missing cultural rites of passage.** For some immigrants, living in a mixed status family has caused them to miss important developmental or cultural rites of passage. For Dante, although he was aware of his unauthorized status from a very young age, it was not until high school that he truly began to feel the impact of his status. He described being unable to participate in many of the rights of passage that are the norm in the United States. For instance, he was not able to receive his learner’s permit or driver’s license. Compounding this experience was the pressure he felt to come up with excuses to his friends about why he was not participating in certain activities or opportunities that presented themselves to his age cohort. Dante explained:
Oh, I knew the whole time [that I was unauthorized] because they [my parents] made me aware of it. And also I guess I was always very curious and inquisitive about everything so I just…I knew the whole time…but it didn’t hit. I didn’t even realize the implications of it until I went into high school and I realized, they, my friends, are starting to get their learner’s permits and their driver’s licenses and I can’t, and I have to come up with an excuse why I’m still riding the bus as a teenager, a senior in high school. And things of that nature. Or when they would say, oh, have you visited your family in Mexico? And I’m like, no, I haven’t.

And, things of that nature.

In Isabel’s case, the majority of her family lives in Mexico, but as her parents are unauthorized, Isabel’s nuclear family were not able to travel to Mexico together and have her quinceañera. She stated:

A lot of things that are important to our culture, we haven’t been able to do, like the quinceañera, which is…it’s not a big deal, but it’s still kind of like, a tradition, and we weren’t able to do that either.

Isabel explained that since the majority of her family lives in Mexico, it did not make sense for her family to have a quinceañera in the United States. Since her family could not travel to Mexico due to the unauthorized immigration status of some members, she missed out on this important cultural rite of passage.

Similarly, Yadira explained that she feels her family is missing out on normal family events, like her mother helping her daughters to move when they left their state for their careers and relationships. Yadira stated:
It’s sad. It’s just, it’s sad. It makes me feel sad and it makes me feel sad for all the things that we’re missing out on as a family. For her. For events. Important life events like deaths and marriages, and births. And for, just like, normal, like…oh mom, come visit me. Or, I’m going to move. Mom, why don’t you help me move?

Yadira also described how the unauthorized status of her mother impacts her and her siblings’ ability to live their lives freely and openly. Yadira said she and her siblings constantly have to think about their mother’s unauthorized status and its implications when making life decisions. Their ability to make large decisions in the moment are hindered by the realities of their mother’s status. Yadira explained:

And just opportunities for life events to happen freely. Where you want them to happen. I know ideally my sister would love to get married [out of the country]. But if she does, mom can’t come to the wedding. So she can’t. And…my boyfriend’s parents want to meet my parents and vice versa, but they can’t unless they go to Texas or the Valley, not even Texas. … And it’s always uncomfortable…there’s so many…misconceptions or prejudices that goes with that…my boyfriend’s like, well, it’s a very, you know, unique situation. I don’t know if you want to tell them [his parents]. I’m like, God. They’re going to think that my mom’s like, a criminal or that she, I don’t know. Like, why would she cross illegally? …What would they think? I was scared of the question, well, are you a citizen? And they’re going to be like, oh, maybe she’s dating my son to become a citizen. I don’t know! People think those things.
Maribel, Yadira’s sister, also described that in times of family crisis, like when there is a death in the family, her mom’s status prevents the entire family from coming together to mourn. She stated:

What else? Also, when we’ve had losses in the family. You know, my mother hasn’t been able to be there with everyone because she can’t travel to Mexico. So, I think that was also difficult for everyone — not to have your mother there when you lose someone. I think that’s also a problem.

The restrictions placed on unauthorized immigrants caused participants to miss out on various life events. Even when participants were aware of the unauthorized status of themselves or family members, it was often not until a major life transition or event (e.g., turning 15 or 16, death in the family, etc.) that the real implications of the unauthorized status was truly felt and understood.

**Impact on the family.** Participants described how living in a mixed status family impacts the entire family on different levels. They described a fear of driving, fear of exposing the unauthorized status of a family member and fear of the detention and/or deportation of an unauthorized family member. Participants also discussed the increased levels of responsibility, financial stress and emotional stress that accompany having an unauthorized family member.

**Fear of driving.** The fear of driving or repercussions of unauthorized status being discovered after getting pulled over for a driving infraction was one of the fears discussed by participants. For many participants, this fear was related to racial profiling and discrimination. Participants’ experiences expose how the incidents of racial
discrimination (e.g., racial profiling) combined with unauthorized immigrant status can place unauthorized immigrants in increased jeopardy of detention or deportation.

Camila described feeling worried that an unauthorized family member or friend will get pulled over while driving and the implications this will have for them. She stated:

It worries me when we’re going to go out driving and if they didn’t have the license. It just stresses that cops are going to pull us over. That the person driving is OK. That we don’t get asked questions, as racial profiling exists a lot. It does cause stress and worry and you don’t want to…if you need a ride and you know that your friend doesn’t have his license, it’s just like, oh, maybe I shouldn’t, or it’s worrisome and all that. That they’ll be OK and they won’t get in trouble with the law.

Camila also described the guilt she would feel if an unauthorized family member was driving her and was pulled over. She shared:

If I need my uncle to pick me up, again, I have to think, like, oh, I hope he gets there OK, cause let’s just say he gets pulled over on his way to pick me up. Then I would blame it on myself. I should have never asked him to pick me up.

Dante shared that his brother has experienced racial profiling and has been pulled over for being darker skinned. In Dante’s brother’s case, he was lucky he had been able to receive temporary protection from deportation through deferred action for childhood arrivals and was therefore protected from detention and deportation when he was pulled over. Dante shared:

For [my brother], who’s 21, he also had to take on a lot of responsibility. Not as much as me, because he was the younger one out of us two, but he’s also had
times when he’s been pulled over and because, I would say, because of his skin color as well, he’s been asked for license and things like that until he got his license through the deferred action program. But yeah. That’s…I think that’s also affecting them.

Although not in a mixed status family, Nancy has the experience of fearing driving through her previous relationship with an unauthorized immigrant. She witnessed first-hand the impact that his unauthorized immigrant status had on their ability to travel, particularly when driving. Nancy said:

From getting a job to just having a vacation. So, let’s go to Orlando, or let’s go to the Bahamas, or let’s drive out to Tallahassee, or whatever it was. But you’re afraid that you’re going to be in a car, and if something happens, you’re going to be pulled over. And even though it wasn’t your fault, you again have to talk to an officer. And that simply freaks you out. Even if they’re not going to ask questions about your immigration status. Just knowing that you will have to see and speak to one of them, it’s very hard. As strong as he was, it was very hard for him. He got a ticket. We were driving to…on…one of his odd jobs. Side jobs, I guess. And he got a ticket. And I could see how hard it was for him — how afraid he was. And he was trying to be strong and portray himself as nothing’s going on. I have nothing to hide. But I could see because I knew him. And I hoped that the officer didn’t notice anything. And when we got to his house, he lives with his mom, she’s like, oh, it’s just a ticket; it’s not a problem. And I could see the conflict of, well, she has papers. She doesn’t have to be afraid about that anymore, but I don’t [have papers].
Diana also discussed the link between driving, the fear of exposure and how this weighs on her unauthorized aunt, who does not have a driver’s license. She said:

Yeah, they’re very scared of doing things that may expose them. My aunt got a license. I don’t know how she got it, but she has a license. I don’t know if Illinois is maybe is giving driver’s licenses to undocumented residents. I don’t know, but she has a license and she drives. But my other aunt doesn’t have one, so she’s always very careful and driving under the radar because she has to go to work. She has to pay taxes and bills and everything, like everybody else. She just doesn’t have the same peace of mind.

Fear of being pulled over and found out as an unauthorized immigrant prevents many unauthorized immigrants from driving. Isabel explains that prior to receiving her driver’s license, she had to rely on her father or friends to drive her since her mother did not drive because of her unauthorized immigrant status. This made transportation difficult, especially as her father was the primary breadwinner and busy working. Isabel stated:

Basically, before I started driving, it was really hard to just rely on my dad for that reason, because she [my mom] is really scared to drive without documents, because it’s always that fear that she might get stopped and asked for documents. So I was always relying on my dad, and if he wasn’t able to, then we weren’t able to. So it was always relying on someone else.

Without driver’s licenses, unauthorized immigrants’ ability to drive is restricted. Diego explained that unauthorized status doesn’t just limit his family’s ability to travel for vacation outside their city, but it also limits their ability to travel within their own city. He described driving without a driver’s license as a risk. As he and his sister were
unauthorized immigrants as teenagers, his parents never wanted them to drive and preferred that they stayed home where they knew they were safe. Diego described driving only when he or his sister needed to versus driving for fun or because they turned 16 and could, which is typical for teenagers. Diego stated:

I mean, I think it might sound repetitive, but, I mean, just me and my older sister, and both my parents not being able to get a driver’s license for a long time. For many years after I turned 18, and my sister turned 18, there was always this…whenever we had to go out, when it wasn’t to school or work, my dad would always tell us, you shouldn’t be driving around because you might be stopped. So there was always that worry, and I’m pretty sure my younger siblings could hear it, so there was always that restriction. You need to stay home and only drive whenever you need to. But I think that’s the only thing I can think that just limited to what we can do after we turned 18. And we couldn’t get driver’s licenses, and my younger siblings, they depended a lot on us, the older siblings, and on my parents. So they were also affected in a way.

The inability to have a driver’s license coupled by the potential repercussions (e.g., detention and/or deportation) if pulled over by the police while driving made driving a potentially dangerous activity for unauthorized immigrants. The dangers associated with driving created a level of fear for both the unauthorized immigrants and their family members. For many, driving was a necessary evil rather than a relaxing leisure activity as it could ultimately lead to the exposure of a family member’s unauthorized immigrant status.
**Fear of exposure (secrets).** Participants described a need to protect their family by keeping their own or their family members’ unauthorized immigrant status a secret. Isabel shared that she doesn’t feel comfortable talking about it. She stated:

I try not to talk about it as much, and it’s not because I feel ashamed of it in any way. It’s just I don’t know if I should feel secure telling other people about it. Especially because right now. There’s a lot of deportations going on and stuff like that. And I don’t feel very comfortable telling them.

Isabel explains how disclosing the unauthorized status of a family member makes a person and their family vulnerable.

Isabel also described the difficulty of broaching the subject of her mixed status family with others. She described the need to balance her ability to be open, honest and vulnerable with others with the need to keep her family safe. She shared:

Or even just talking to people about it, it’s really hard to actually mention that your mom is undocumented, or that she doesn’t work because she can’t get a job, or that she doesn’t drive because she doesn’t have a license. So it’s just different. The opportunities, and the things that you’re able to do and experience when someone is undocumented.

For many, sharing the delicate information about a family member’s immigration status necessitates a level of trust to ensure that they or their family members are not put in jeopardy. Isabel stated that she doesn’t volunteer information about her family’s immigration status and is careful who she tells, especially if she doesn’t feel secure about it. She realizes that telling the wrong person about her mother’s status would put her mother and her family in jeopardy. Isabel stated, “I don’t tell everybody. I have kept [it a
secret] sometimes, if someone asks and I don’t feel…not secureness, I will not mention it. So I’ll just say, oh yeah, both of my parents are documented.”

Magda also described an insecurity regarding authorization status that weighs on the peace of mind of unauthorized immigrants and their family members. She said:

Well it’s definitely different, because you have to worry about…you have to…you don’t have stability, really…It’s always on the back of your mind.

You’re always thinking. You know? You can’t really be…you don’t really feel safe, I guess you can say.

Magda described feeling hypervigilant and exposed as a member of a mixed status family. She said, “You’re exposed to more…[to] judgments, I guess, you can say. You don’t feel like you fit in.”

Although Julieta was not part of a mixed status family, her best friend was, so she is empathic to the plight of those living in mixed status families and imagines what it must be like. She said, “I would imagine mixed families, or undocumented families, that they live in constant fear…and it’s a well-kept secret and they always tried to think about…. I mean, it strongly impacts their life.”

For Dante, his mom explicitly told him from a young age that he was unauthorized and he was not to tell anybody this secret. This created a fear of his status or that of his family members becoming known. He said, “Just the fear…sometimes in middle school, and throughout high school, I didn’t…I was afraid to tell others about my status, and my family’s status.” The vulnerability a mixed status family is put in after the unauthorized status of a family member is disclosed necessitates a high level of trust and security that the secret will be kept. Participants described needing to balance this reality
with wanting to be open and honest about their lives. For some participants, they were willing to share their family member’s unauthorized immigrant status with confidants. However, for others like Dante, his and his family member’s unauthorized status was a well-kept secret for years.

**Fear of detention and deportation.** Like Nancy, Aurelio is empathic to the situation of people living in mixed status families. Although he has never had to experience this, there was a moment that he thought his mother might lose her legal permanent resident status in the United States. Although brief, this moment gave Aurelio some insight into what it might be like to live in a mixed status family. Aurelio explained that his mother received a letter from U.S. immigration services and was afraid to open it. She thought it might say that she would have to return to Mexico. Aurelio’s mother shared her fear with her son, and he said for a brief moment, he believed it was possible. After he opened the letter, he confirmed that everything was fine and her legal status was not in jeopardy. He explained:

> But in those 10 seconds it…for like a minute, because I started thinking of my mom being deported and me not being able to see her every day and then, her living in Mexico, having to work and being poor in Mexico. For those 10 seconds that the world just stopped and it was very scary. And. … I can’t even imagine what people who actually face that…their stress levels must be very high because every day…it’s kind of sad, but I just can’t imagine the stress.

For Diana, although her nuclear family is not directly impacted, she still has to think about the implications of her aunt being deported. She said:
I would imagine my aunt that has the four children, if she’s ever taken away, all the children were born here. So what’s going to happen to them? And she worries about that and she has asked at least one time that if she’s ever deported, that she would want us to take the kids. Which we may or may not be able to because it’s….my mom is really sick and she…I don’t know. I don’t know how we would organize to make that happen. Rearrange things. But that’s something that is in her mind. That it can happen. Because it can happen and they’re not eligible for the new legislation for childhood arrivals. They didn’t come here as a child. They came here as adults.

Although Diana and her nuclear family do not live with the constant threat of detention and deportation, if her aunt is deported, her family would be immediately impacted as they would have to provide support to the children left behind.

Rather than imagining what it would be like if a parent was in jeopardy of being deported, Maribel lives with this constant fear as her mother is an unauthorized immigrant. She contrasts her experience to that of families that are not mixed status. She said:

Just to start with…no one has to worry about if your family member is going to get caught. You don’t have to worry about if someone’s going to come through a door and take them away. Or if they’re going to stop this person in the street, then just take it away. So it just, to start with, they don’t have that stress factor.

This is very telling of Maribel’s experience. If her mother was not unauthorized, she would not have to live with the stress and constant worry about her mother being stopped in the street, detained and deported.
Dante lives with the constant threat that his parents might be deported. He described how the deportation of his parents would be a life-changing experience for him and his siblings. He stated:

If my parents were to get detained and be deported, that would have a tremendous impact in my life because I’m not quite sure what the family dynamic would be after that had been happening. Would my younger brother and sister go to Mexico? Would they try to come back again as undocumented immigrants? Would I have to take on responsibility for them? It’s just uncertainty.

Dante also contrasted his parents’, brother’s and his own experience of being unauthorized to that of his younger, U.S. citizen siblings. He stated:

Well, my younger brother who is 15 right now, and my younger sister, who is 13, are citizens. They were born in this country. So they don’t have to worry about being deported. My mother and father don’t have documents. So for a long time my younger brother, who is 21 right now, and myself, also didn’t have anything at all. And we were at risk of being deported until deferred action came along. So that just made it very difficult for us to do many things. I already mentioned going to college, but also just the risk of just driving and being pulled over, and getting taken to a detention center, down to a detention center after that. Yeah. It was hard.

The threat of detention and deportation was a constant in Dante’s life prior to his receiving protection through deferred action. This real threat made activities like driving a nerve-racking experience instead of an exhilarating rite of passage as it is for so many teenagers in the United States.
Magda described worrying as her stepfather, the father of her younger brothers, is unauthorized. She stated:

I really didn’t pay much attention to it [unauthorized status of stepfather] until I got older, I feel. And now it has affected me because I worry…I have younger brothers that he raised. … I just worry about them. You know?

This worry was not unique to Magda, but it was also felt by her mother and brothers. Magda reported that her brothers and mother worry that any day, their life can change.

Magda stated:

Oh, my brothers do worry. How my family, how they’ve been affected? My mom worries. She feels like she…she’s not secure. On any day, her life can change. My brothers worry as well. They go to school here. They’ve lived here. They were born here. So they feel like their lives can change, you know, any day.

In addition to the constant worry, Magda’s mother deals with anxiety and stress regarding the possible deportation of her husband. She stated, “She [mom] stresses out thinking about what could happen if he gets deported.”

**Added responsibility.** Participants in mixed status families described having additional responsibilities compared with their counterparts in non-mixed status families. For Dante, upon receiving protected status through DACA, he took on additional responsibility to support his parents, who were still unauthorized. He explained:

In Georgia, you need to have a car to get places so, where before they would have to figure out an alternative way to, for example, get insurance on their cars, or get the tag, register the vehicles…when I got deferred action, they put it under my name so that they wouldn’t have to go through loopholes…and pay extra money
to be able to register a car or get insurance on their cars. Things like that. If I was ever…if they ever need to get somewhere and I was able to drive them, then I would be the one to drive them because I had a license. For the most part, that’s how it’s impacted the family.

Dante also described taking on other responsibilities for his parents, not necessarily because they were unauthorized, but because they were immigrants. He explained:

…I’m sure this happens with most immigrant families…and I am the oldest of the siblings. I had to take on many responsibilities as well. Take care of the younger ones. I had to go to, you know, the clinic, you know, the doctor with my mom, translating. Or I would go to the bank. Fill out an application for a reduced lunch, or fill out any kind of applications, Medicaid, things of that nature. Parent teacher conferences, they didn’t have a translator, so I had to translate. Anything like that as well was…it helped me, but it was something that most 10-year-olds don’t have to do unless you’re an immigrant…living in an immigrant family.

Another responsibility that authorized immigrants or U.S. citizens with unauthorized family members take on is the sponsoring of family members so that they can gain authorized immigrant status. In Olivia’s case, she is beginning the process of sponsoring her uncle so that he can become a legal permanent resident. For her, the responsibility is anxiety provoking. She stated:

I think because I am a sponsor currently for someone that is trying to become a permanent resident, it just causes me a little bit of anxiety, to the fears I have because there is so many stories of fraud and identity theft, and people, their money just getting stolen to start these processes. And then, some of these, I have
relatives that have been working for the last 10 years to become permanent residents, so I don’t know personally if me being a sponsor is something that is going to happen in the next year, two years, decade, so that is just another thing that I think about when thinking about my undocumented family members.

Olivia made the choice to sponsor her uncle so that he could gain authorized immigrant status in the United States. Sponsorship of an immigrant is a long process that includes submitting paperwork, attending meetings and taking on financial responsibility for another person. This is a unique responsibility for those living in mixed status families.

**Financial stress.** Although Olivia does not have any unauthorized nuclear family members, her extended family includes unauthorized immigrants. She describes the financial stress associated with gaining permanent legal status, especially when unauthorized family members work low-paying jobs or are working under the table. She stated:

Well, I think the way it has been impacted is that a lot of them have become permanent residents or citizens in the last five to 10 years, and so I know that a lot of them have had to work really hard to just pool the money that they need to become a U.S. citizen, to pay to become a permanent resident. And when you are working, minimum wage if that, because some of them were working under the table, it takes years to accumulate the amount of money that you need to become a permanent resident or a U.S. citizen, which is a struggle for any family that has to support family, food, housing, and on top of that, trying to become legal in this country. So, I definitely would see that impact. And then you know, family members asking all of us to donate money that would eventually get repaid back
to those lenders in our family to try to pool the money to help that family
member.

Magda felt both the financial and emotional impact of her husband’s deportation. The moment she realized he would not be allowed to return to the U.S. to reunite with her and their child, she described in immediate increase of responsibility as she became the sole provider and caregiver for her child. Although immediately following her husband’s deportation, Magda and her son moved to Mexico to be with him, when their second child was born with a disability, Magda and her husband had to make the difficult decision for Magda to return to the U.S. with her two children, leaving her husband behind. She stated:

We lived out there [Mexico] and my youngest was born, but he was born with a disability, so there’s lots more services offered here [in the United States]. We had…I decided I had to stay and just, I did a lot of traveling back and forth but, you know, it’s hard having to be the sole provider, and to take care of them, and have enough money to travel all the time.

The strain was so great that eventually Magda and her husband got a divorce. She stated, “It impacted me in that I’m alone.”

The added responsibilities of having an unauthorized immigrant as a family member weighed heavily on both the unauthorized immigrant and their authorized immigrant or U.S. citizen family members. The participants described how these additional responsibilities and the stress associated with them take an emotional toll.

**Emotional toll.** Participants’ narratives detailed the emotional toll of having an unauthorized status or a family member with an unauthorized status. In Magda’s case,
she was not the only family member to be impacted by her ex-husband’s deportation. Magda explained that since her ex-husband is unable to travel to the U.S., he no longer has a close relationship with his children. This has had a negative social-emotional impact on her eldest son, so much so that she has had to seek counseling services for him. She stated:

Well, it affected them [our children] a lot. I had to put my oldest in therapy because, you know, it was hard for him to understand the whole situation of why he [his father] wasn’t around. And I feel that whole situation led to our separation, cause we could only do so much after my second was born and he was born with a disability. I knew I had to stay here [in the U.S.]. There’s more services out here for him and so I had to stay out here for my son and that, you know, that affected our relationship, and that affected their relationship because they have no relationship with their dad, really, cause…he’s in a different country and I’m left here alone. So it’s not like I have tons of money to send them.

In the case of Yadira and Maribel, both they and their parents were emotionally impacted by the detention of their mother. The story of Yadira and Maribel is unique compared with the other participants in this study. When they lived in Mexico, Yadira’s and Maribel’s family came to the U.S. to go shopping regularly. On one of the shopping trips, their mother was unfairly accused by a border patrol agent of living in the United States and using public benefits. After being interrogated by the agent, their mother unknowingly signed a form admitting guilt to this offense and was subsequently labeled as a criminal and received a lifetime sentence (i.e., cannot return to the U.S. for 99 years). Yadira and Maribel described what it was like to see their mother have a near nervous
breakdown following her interaction with the U.S. border patrol agent when her visa was taken away. Maribel stated:

Me, I didn’t… I wasn’t affected so much at the time. I do remember my mom coming in. You know, they were going to go on a trip. They were going to be gone for about a week and I remember them coming back, I think, that same day. And I just saw my mom in this state of shock. She couldn’t really talk. She was very anxious. She was shaking and she talked to us about this, and I also remember her being very angry at the person who sent her to detention, because she had... the only thing she did was try to go into the immigration office to get a permit — a travel permit. And then all of a sudden she was just taken there and she was just being questioned. They took all her personal items away. They wouldn’t let her out of that office. They wouldn’t let her talk to my father. So, I remember her being... I guess she kind of had a nervous breakdown.

Maribel described feeling powerless and angry at the government for the treatment of her mother and its impact on the family. She said:

… I don’t think some of their [the government’s] policies are fair at all. And it angers me to see how they treat people. I think it’s a very inhumane way to deal with immigrants. I think it just made me be angry at how the government can have people who are, you know, not prepared to handle immigrants at all. And people who are... and to have people working for them who are discriminating [against] others for no reason whatsoever. So, I don’t see how they can have that kind of people working in government.
Her sister, Yadira, echoed these statements and said that she feels sad, angry and bitter. Yadira also stated that her mother feels a great sense of shame regarding her unauthorized status and does not share it with her friends. She recounted:

It must have been really annoying and bizarre for her friends. And she wouldn’t tell them why. She would…she’s…she’s embarrassed. So even that, I thought to myself, well, if it was me, I would be like, hey, I don’t have any documents, if you want to see me, come pick me up. But she would try to keep this, dignity of not telling them. Like, it’s not your fault. It’s not…it’s not anything to be ashamed of. But she doesn’t feel like that. And I…that’s totally…I didn’t go through the experience.

Yadira described how her mom’s status has made her mom fearful, panicky and isolated. It has impacted her relationship with her friends and it is painful for Yadira to see her mom go through this emotional struggle. Yadira shared:

It’s been sad. There was period of time where she got panicky because she heard that cops were starting to pull over people for simple tickets. Like traffic tickets and then if they didn’t have documents, they would deport them. She wouldn’t get out of the house. She just went into this mental state that was insane. And then it wasn’t just about that, it was about everything. And we had to drive her everywhere or get things for her everywhere — even her social life. She’s always been like, oh yeah; I’m out with my friends. It started to suffer. … She started to become alienated from her friends because she would be so panicky all the time. I think it was a combination of the fact that she wasn’t moving or going to their places as much, or participating in the social circle because she didn’t want to
drive. … And also the fact that she was just panicky about everything. It must have been really annoying and bizarre for her friends. … It’s painful. And sometimes, it’s really frustrating. I want to get her out of that state, mental state. But, then I’m like, it’s not my right. It’s her own experience. Maybe I should just be compassionate and understanding.

In addition to feeling empathy and sympathy for her mother, Yadira is angry at the immigration process and particularly the immigration officer who changed the life of her mom and her family.

In Yadira’s mother’s case, she was forced to sign a document that she did not understand, stating that she had been living illegally in the U.S. and receiving government support, even though this was not true. This forced admission of guilt caused Yadira’s mom to lose her visa. Thus, when it was time for her family to move to the U.S., Yadira’s mom crossed without the proper immigrant visa. So, instead gaining legal permanent status through her U.S. citizen husband after moving to the United States, she is frozen in a state of limbo as an unauthorized immigrant. Yadira shared her thoughts about the immigration official that was the catalyst for this unfortunate series of events:

It pisses me off, to be totally honest. That anyone can go ahead and just destroy someone’s life like that. Just because they weren’t in a good mood or because they have their own cultural identity troubles and frustrations and they take it out on people like us who don’t have them. And they’re in a place of authority.

Yadira also explained that her mom’s status prevented her from helping Yadira move out of state, decorate her new home, visit her and do a lot of things that most mothers do for their daughters. She explained that sometimes she just wants her mother with her, but no
matter how much her mother wants to help Yadira with such things, she cannot come to visit her because of her unauthorized immigrant status. Yadira shared:

But it’s like, sometimes you want your mom! — to help you move or choose a place. Hey mom, I’m going to move. Check out some places with me. Nope. Or the family meeting, you know? Why don’t you come to [Rocky Mountain Region] for….they would do it.

Yadira described her family as close, but if her mother had authorized immigrant status, it would draw them even closer. Yadira shared:

[Int my Mom had papers] Woooo! My mom would be here all the time. It would be annoying (laughter). But she would probably draw us closer together. She’d be the one to organize the family vacations, either [out of the country] to see my sister or here, or God knows where. Just, we would enjoy more experiences together and we would definitely see each other often. I am telling you, if she could, she would be here at least every couple of months (laugher) and we would do things together. You know, like, be with my other sister’s boyfriend’s family or with mine or, like this coming winter, I’m sure she would make them all come. And she would come, too.

Yadira’s sister, Maribel, also recognized the emotional toll her mom’s unauthorized status has taken on her mother and the entire family. She explained that her mom’s status has caused her to live in a constant state of stress, which causes conflict within the family. Since becoming unauthorized, she has become unnerved, emotionally unstable and snaps. Maribel stated:
She was always very…what would you call it? Very unnerved. You know? Sometimes we wouldn’t even…you know, we would be doing very normal things and she would just, like, snap. So I think emotionally she wasn’t stable. And we didn’t…yeah. I think…and I think that was all, like, a result of her situation. You know? She’s there illegally.

Maribel also described how all this impacts her. She stated:

Sometimes I have anxiety because, since I’m not there to see how things are going, I don’t know exactly how it is. But since I’m not there, I kind of forget about it. So I guess the level of…my level of stress is less.

Maribel also said that she feels powerless. Although she is a U.S. citizen (as are her siblings and her father), she is unable to remedy her mother’s situation. Maribel explained that she is a U.S. citizen, works and follows the law, but still, she feels like she is doing something wrong given her mother’s unauthorized status. She explained that she can’t fix her mother’s papers, but she also will not report her, so she feels like she is breaking the law. Maribel shared:

Just having your mother be an illegal immigrant. It’s like you’re already breaking the law, because you’re not reporting that person and you’re supporting that person and…you think, okay, you know, she’s my mother so I can maybe fix her status, but we’ve tried many times to see a lawyer and see if we can get her a residency permit or to have her legally in the States, and it’s always no. So you think, okay, I’m powerless. I can’t do anything about it. You know, even if I’m doing things the right way. I’m working. I’m studying. I’m here legally. You’re
not breaking any law, but still you feel like you’re supporting someone who is
breaking the law.

Maribel also reported feeling personally slighted and unprotected by her own
government. She explained:

I think growing up, I didn’t really think about it. Now that I’m in my 20s…it’s
frustrating. I just find it very unfair from the government that they don’t…to me it
just doesn’t make any sense. So the same thing — powerless. And to me it’s just
too rude. I don’t know what else to say. It doesn’t make any sense for the
government not to want to fix the status of an immigrant when the whole family,
her full, whole family is American.

Lucia vividly described how her mom’s unauthorized status impacts her. Lucia
called it frightening, infuriating, terrifying, and that it has left her simply heart broken.

She stated:

So every time I go back home it’s nice seeing her again. It’s nice seeing where I
came from. In the sense of a human being, this little bean-shaped human being
growing and then, being able to talk to her and looking back into those. … Going
back and seeing her…my mother’s tired, worried eyes and not being able to help
her, it breaks my heart. Not being able to provide and then she, my mother, where
she has no status. It’s frightening…. It’s more infuriating that you can’t do
anything. Like, you just want to break your own status to be at her level and tell
her that it’s going to be okay. But you can’t. … So…next thing you have to do is
lie to her, making sure that you play it off that everything is going to be okay. But
truly, you don’t know. And you’re terrified because what if the next time I do come and see her she’s not there?

Lucia described moving a few hours away from her mother as a time where she gained independence, but also space from all the pressure of stress of her mother’s unauthorized status. For Lucia, her mother is a constant reminder of the stress and the constant threat of the potential of permanent separation if her mother is deported. By moving away, Lucia doesn’t physically see her mother every day and can distract herself or forget about the reality of her mother’s situation. Lucia described it as a weight that has been lifted when she is able to forget about her mother’s circumstances, but that the weight immediately returns when she thinks about it, speaks with her mother or visits. Lucia shared:

I…in the beginning it felt like I had less to worry about because I don’t see her very often. I don’t talk to her very often. So when I do talk to her, I feel like that weight comes back because I get…I have questions. I have concerns. I…you know, is my brother doing things right? Is he meeting her expectations? Her needs? And…and then I get myself so wrapped up that…that I’m like…I have to smack myself and say, like, hey, she’s fine. She knows what she’s doing. I’m not…I can’t do this. I have to live my own life. I have to…pushing my own ideas and beliefs. And…and, yeah, it has changed. I’ve gained independence. I’ve gained freedom. I’ve gained the ability to decide for myself. And that was a big thing for me.

Participants described having to leave the U.S. as one of the penalties unauthorized immigrants face if they would like to regularize their status. As previously described, for Magda and her husband, this penalty did not enable her husband to
regularize his status. Instead, when he went to Ciudad. Juarez for his meeting, he was told he could never return to the U.S. Luckily, this was not the outcome for Olivia. Similar to Magda’s husband, Olivia’s uncle was requested to attend a meeting in Ciudad. Juarez. After serving a one year penalty living in Mexico, he was ultimately granted legal permanent resident status and able to return to the U.S. and reunite with his family. She explained:

Actually, I have an uncle that just became a U.S. citizen, but part of the thing is he had to leave the country. So, he had to live in another country that he hadn’t lived in for 20, almost 30 years, leave his five children and his wife behind, so he could just become a permanent resident. It’s kind of like the penalty for living in the United States. And so that was, helping his family while he was gone and just checking up on them while he was gone, and he was gone for about a year.

Although the outcome was ideal, the year penalty of forced separation from his family in the United States was not without its difficulties. Olivia explained that although this did not have a major financial impact on the family, it did impact them in terms of having a father figure and emotional support not physically present in their lives. Olivia stated:

His wife is a U.S. citizen and she is the main breadwinner and so, I think how it affected them was more of the family dynamic of not having that father figure that has been there throughout their entire lives. And so, he has four daughters and a son and knowing that their father was not there if they needed, especially because some of them are going to college, they have paperwork and things they have to do and he is not there and so, I know for them it was a little bit stressful trying to figure out, oh man, we need to figure out a time to call dad, and there is not a lot
of phone access or internet access where my uncle lives so, communicating once a week, once every two weeks, just so they could figure out information that they needed for school, and things like that here in the U.S.

Other participants described how the U.S. citizenship or authorized status of some family members and the unauthorized status of other family members can be a point of contention and drive a wedge between family members. For Diana, the authorized status of her nuclear family, and the mixed status of the extended family, has caused tension and conflict. She disclosed that it has caused arguments between her mother and her aunt. Diana explained that her aunt feels that her mom does not understand her situation. This has caused her to feel a lot of stress and has subsequently caused arguments and tension within the family. Diana stated:

The dynamic of my immediate family to the dynamic of my extended family, which I get to see maybe once a year, it’s very different. … I remember one particular time in which my sister and myself and my mother visited my mom’s sisters…and they are all undocumented. There are two of them, one is single woman, never got married, shares the home with a mother of four, who is married, now is married to a man that is also undocumented. So there are like 10 people living in a mobile home in a mobile park in a really tiny town in Illinois. I don’t remember how this incidence started, but…my…I know that we were in a car with one of my aunts and my mom and my sister and myself and we were waiting for my cousins to come out from school. We were picking them up from school. And…somehow…I don’t know what started the argument, but it ended up…like, it escalated and my aunt screamed and she, yelled at my mom and said,
well because you have documents you don’t have to worry. You don’t know what it is like to not have them and you don’t know how life is here. And you are pretty much set. And so…you can’t understand how we feel and what we have to deal with every day. And that’s true. We don’t know. I mean, they tell us, but we…it’s impossible for us to relate, like, at a level where they feel like, Oh yeah, you get what we’re going through.

Diana’s aunt feels isolated and alone in her constant state of worry. Although Diana and her family can be empathic and imagine her experience, Diana’s aunt carries the burden of her unauthorized status and the implications it has for her family.

Similar to Diana, Nancy has never experienced being unauthorized or living in a mixed status family. However, she had an experience that caused her to really think about the significance of unauthorized status. Just before Nancy’s 18th birthday, she thought she might lose her legal status in the United States. This caused her to think about what life as an unauthorized immigrant would mean for her and her future. She explained that as an authorized immigrant, she knew that she would be able to be successful and follow her dreams. However, as an unauthorized immigrant, she knew that she would face barriers to her educational and occupational aspirations. For her, this was not acceptable. Nancy said:

I would potentially lose it [my authorized immigrant status] and that meant finding a way to get it back, because being legal…being able to realize your dreams in whatever way you want to is essential. So, you cannot be prevented from going to school or having the job that you want because you’re undocumented. Simply…that’s simply not having a life. So, unless you have no
other options, and in our case we did, simply move. We could hide in Colombia, but at least in Colombia I could do something. I wasn’t illegal. I wasn’t a criminal. Or we could move to a third country. Not that…we never go to that point, but…but we knew it was there. We could try. At least we could try.

For Nancy, being unauthorized and having her dreams and aspirations blocked by the structural barriers that confront unauthorized immigrants is akin to not having a life.

These participants’ stories document the various ways the unauthorized status of a family member impacts the entire family. For some, it caused a physical separation. For others, the stress of it has taken a great emotional toll. In some cases, it has even been a point of contention and driven a wedge or created an emotional barrier between family members.

**Resiliency.** It is clear through the participants’ testimonies that the political and social response to unauthorized immigrant status negatively impacts families and the community. Even so, these barriers also allow for the strength and resiliency of Latino mixed status families to surface. Although no specific question regarding strength or resiliency was asked in the interview with participants, in the analysis of the data, an incredible resiliency of mixed status families was uncovered. For example, even though Dante described living in a mixed status family as more challenging than a U.S. citizen family, he also highlighted the benefits of his experience. He stated:

It’s been challenging. It’s been. … I would say it’s not been as easy as living in a family where everybody isn’t a citizen or legal resident, but I think that it’s also been beneficial for us and…for myself, specifically, because I don’t let things just stop me and I fight for the things that I want in life. And I don’t give up easily
because I know nothing comes easily in life. So, it’s just growing up like that, in a mixed family, has helped me with determination and just will power to face obstacles and get through. I wouldn’t change it.

Dante has learned to persevere in even the most difficult situations. He is aware of the obstacles that exist in the world, yet he will not let them deter him.

Olivia described how having unauthorized extended family members has motivated her to increase her social consciousness and gain a greater awareness and understanding laws and legislation. She stated:

Well, I think you are a lot more aware of what is happening in the country versus a lot of other individuals that don’t have to worry about that. So, for example, I don’t rely on English media to tell me what is happening when it comes to immigration because what they cover is so brief and not really, it is like they fluff over it, they don’t really want to cause a stir versus if you watch Spanish media and read Spanish newspapers, things like that, there is a whole lot more that is being covered, here is the new legislation, here is the new laws, who is running for the 2016 presidential campaign, like that. Latinos pay attention to that and I do as well because I have family members that are undocumented versus individuals, other families, friends of mine that I know don’t have to worry about that, they just don’t even pay attention to that discourse, I guess.

Through her experience, Olivia increased her self-efficacy. She learned the importance of educating herself, getting involved and advocating for herself and her family to make a positive change.
For Gilda, living in a mixed status family motivated her to do well and set an example for her younger brothers, especially when it comes to educational attainment. She shared:

It’s kind of that pressure to use my papers to do something…a lot is expected of me. Like I said, I’m the first child, and I’m the oldest and all of that. And it’s just…there’s a pressure to do extremely well. If I get my parents out of the lifestyle we’re in now and to show my brothers that we have to go to college and we have to get an education.

Gilda did not allow for financial or other barriers to stop her as she moved forward through the education pipeline. She graduated high school and, at 18 years of age, entered college and is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree. Although she indicated that this pressure is stressful, she demonstrates great determination as she perseveres, pushing through the difficulties to reach her dreams.

Lucia grew up in the U.S. as an unauthorized immigrant. Although she felt disempowered after realizing the significance of her unauthorized immigrant status and its impact on her ability to access her educational and occupational aspirations, after winning an award in high school (gaining an ambassador position as an unauthorized student), Lucia described feeling an increased will to fight for the freedom of unauthorized immigrants. She shared:

It gave me a will to…to be more…like, hey, there’s more of us in the shadows and that’s not okay. We need to make sure that this government…we need to make sure that our rights as human beings are not being demolished, that I’m not being oppressed. And we need to stand up and we need to…we need to fight for
what’s rightfully ours, which is a freedom — a freedom to be happy — a freedom to pursue whatever life we want to pursue. Regarding our sexual orientation, regarding our ethnicity, regarding our color of our skin. We’re here. And we need to pursue things. We need to get up and be standing up and fight, and not let our people be oppressed. And not be taken advantage of. And not living in fear. And not living in shadows, where that’s where they want to keep us.

Even with the many barriers the racist nativist structures of the United States present for unauthorized immigrants and their families, the participants’ stories reveal an ability to persevere through the most difficult of circumstances. Participants described not only being dedicated to themselves and their families, but to the larger Latino and U.S. community. Participants described increased levels of social consciousness and awareness, whether that be involvement in the community or pushing one’s self to excel in education or improve one’s family situation. Participants also consistently described ways that they confronted the problems and barriers they faced subsequent to the unauthorized immigrant status of themselves or a family member.

The juxtaposition of privilege and restrictions related to the immigration status of family members (non-mixed status versus mixed status families) constitutes the theoretical framework that provides a better understanding of how living in a mixed-citizenship status family impacts Latinos. The two components of the framework — 1) the privileges granted to participants in non-mixed status families and 2) the restrictions experienced by mixed status families — clearly demonstrate the impact mixed-citizenship status has for families given the current social and political climate of the United States. For many participants, the privileges obtained due to their U.S. citizen or
authorized immigrant statuses add a layer of protection from having to worry about issues like the ability to legally work or drive in the U.S. and living with a constant fear of immigrant detention or deportation. On the other hand, participants in mixed status families consistently described confronting barriers to higher education, healthcare, employment and travel. For many, the unauthorized immigrant status of a family member signified a constant fear of exposure and threat of detention or deportation. Participants’ descriptions detailed how these barriers and the potential of detention or deportation of an unauthorized family member impacted their lives both directly and indirectly. Although participants often described the hardships they faced given the current immigration policies and practices, they also highlighted many of the strengths and resiliency that surfaced as their families were faced with the numerous barriers, restrictions and threats because of a family member’s unauthorized immigrant status.

**Results for Research Question Two: In Which Ways Does the Citizenship Status of Family Members Impact Anxiety and Depression Levels of Latinos?**

An overarching level of uncertainty in various aspects of the lives of participants relating to the citizenship status of participants or their family members contributed to feeling anxiety or depression to varying degrees. For some participants, uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity of stability and support exacerbated underlying issues related to anxiety, depression or physical health symptoms. Several participants experienced uncertainty or increased stress when arriving to a new country (e.g., the U.S. or abroad), as a result of communication difficulties and/or culture shock. Other types of ambiguity and uncertainty ranged from participants not knowing if they would be able to enter college or pay for college, not knowing or understanding the college application
process or educational system in the U.S., not knowing if they would be able to gain legal immigrant status for themselves or their family members, and the constant possibility of the detention and/or deportation of unauthorized family members.

Qualitative analysis revealed that uncertainty stemmed from three main areas: 1) worries related to issues in their country of origin or the difficulties throughout the transition from their country of origin to the U.S.; 2) barriers to education; and 3) issues regarding immigration status, including the possibility of detention and/or deportation. These concepts constitute the theoretical framework that provides a better understanding for how the citizenship status of family members, particularly the uncertainty surrounding the experience of Latinos with unauthorized family members or those in jeopardy of becoming unauthorized, uniquely impacts anxiety and depression. Although related, these three areas will be further explicated in the three subsections below.

Worries related to issues in their country of origin or the difficulties throughout the transition from their country of origin to the United States. Moving to the United States can be a difficult transition, especially for children and adolescents. Participants described how leaving their country of origin, a familiar lifestyle, and their family and friends can trigger feelings of anxiety, sadness and/or depression. In addition, participants described how, upon leaving their country of origin in search of a better life in the U.S. (e.g., educational opportunities, improved physical or financial security, etc.), immigrant families were not able to leave all the difficulties they faced in their homeland behind them. Some participants described worry or concern for family members in their country of origin, other participants expressed concern regarding business and/or property in their country of origin, and others recounted concern regarding the political environment in
their country of origin and how evolving changes and political elections might impact the social and economic well-being of family both in their country of origin and in the United States.

**Anxiety**

Although living in the United States, some participants and their families found that they are not immune to the terror and violence that is happening in parts of Mexico. The anxiety associated with this was particularly acute when participants had family members living in Mexico or that need to travel to Mexico for work. Yadira in particular described how the reach of the failed war on drugs and the subsequent escalation of the cartels’ control at the U.S./Mexico border can be felt by Mexican immigrants and their families living in the United States. She described the violence in Mexico as “like, the apocalypse…I mean, if you watch the Hunger Games, in the little towns, that’s it.” She explained that although her family lives in the United States, her father maintains businesses in Mexico and needs to travel there to earn a living. In her town, ranchers have been kidnapped and killed or have had their land stolen by members of the cartel. She explained, “They took one of my dad’s ranches. They just took it and…I remember going to that house, which my dad built with so much love…they kidnapped my dad twice.”

The emotional toll of such experiences is tremendous. Yadira reported feeling “bitter, sometimes…angry.” She also described a fear and anxiety, not only when her father is in Mexico for work, but also because of her parents’ current financial situation that has been impacted by her mother’s inability to work as a result of her unauthorized immigrant status in the U.S. and because her father’s business in Mexico has been harmed and land
illegally confiscated by the cartel. She said, “Good Lord, why are my parents in this situation? Like, why? He’s worked so hard!”

Immigrant participants also indicated an awareness of the political issues within their country of origin. One participant in particular, Monica, felt an ongoing anxiety and concern regarding recent elections in her country of origin and the implications the change of the political party in power would mean for her family and their financial stability. Monica said she felt extremely anxious due to the recent elections in Brazil as she awaited the announcement of the [results of the] elections. She reported that the election has caused financial instability as the dollar has gotten stronger compared with the Real (currency in Brazil) and that this might affect her ability to pay for her education as she is only receiving a partial scholarship. For Monica, this uncertainty brings high levels of anxiety. She explained:

Maybe it seems like the dollar will raise. And the more it raises, the less chances I have to be able to pay for school. So I’m actually very happy that she [the candidate] won. But I am very worried, too. And I will probably be worried for the next, well, the years that I am able to study here. Actually, I know that I will be worried in the next [few] years. Always worried if I will be able to pay, but I think it was intensified in the last weeks, it was pretty much intensified by this...uncertainty.

These examples are ways in which participants’ levels of anxiety are impacted by insecurity in their countries of origin even though they live in the United States. Although geographically distant from the problems, the issues in their country of origin are personal and have a real impact on their lives in the United States.
Depression

Isolation, whether a result of losing a support system upon moving to the United States, being confronted by anti-immigrant sentiment or being forced to take on new responsibilities (e.g., translating for parents), contributed to feelings of sadness or depression for multiple participants. Maribel moved from a large house in Mexico, in a community where she had many friends, was popular and accepted, to a relatively tiny apartment in the United States, at a school where she was not accepted and faced prejudice due to her immigrant status. She explained:

You’re seen…as…a wetback…I once got called a beamer and they told me to go back to Matamoros, which I wasn’t even familiar with. So these were things that…affected me…not being accepted in the…social circle. It was hard for me knowing I had no friends.

For Diana, coming to the United States was a necessary evil for her to be able to succeed. She described feeling sad, lonely and overwhelmed as she moved from Mexico to the United States to join her family after graduating high school in Mexico at 17 years of age. Although she had already graduated high school in Mexico, she re-entered high school in the United States and completed her senior year a second time so she could learn English. She did all of this without any security that she would be able to attend college. Diana shared:

I feel like I was lonely, I was sad. I was…overwhelmed with all the new changes and everything that I have to go through in order to make it, to succeed. And at that time, I wasn’t even sure if I was going to go to college.
Nancy also came to the United States as a teenager. She described her initial years in the United States as very difficult. She felt depressed and wore black from head to toe. She recounted that the stress of transitioning to a new culture was exacerbated by the added pressures of having to support her mother through the language barrier. She explained:

She [Mom] doesn’t really speak English…she didn’t at the time — at all — and even though we were in South Florida, we lived in an area that required English, so I was feeling, I was feeling very sad, confused and angry and I started acting out.

These examples are ways in which participants’ levels of sadness and depression are impacted subsequent to a move to the United States. Although the move itself is often difficult, the loss of social support, increased responsibilities and the uncertainty that accompanies this transition can all impact an immigrant’s emotional state.

**Barriers to Education**

Numerous participants born into immigrant families expressed that they did not have the desired educational guidance from their parents, particularly when it came to making the transition from high school to higher education. This is not because parents did not provide them with emotional support (participants overwhelming said they felt solidarity and support from their families to pursue their goals and educational aspirations), but because many of the participants’ parents lacked the educational background and/or understanding of the U.S. education system to guide their children through the college interview and application process.
Other participants negotiated a cultural divide as 1.5 or second-generation immigrants compared with their first-generation immigrant parents. This cultural difference was particularly evident regarding higher education and the participants’ and their parents’ views toward higher education. Participants indicated differences between themselves and their parents, whether that be parents wanting their children to follow a more traditional route of starting a family rather than pursue higher education or even when parents wholeheartedly supported their children’s goal of higher education. Not all parents had the capacity to provide the desired support to their children as they did not have U.S. university educational experience and/or understand the struggles students go through (e.g., the stress of academic studies of participants versus the stress of labor-intensive jobs occupied by their parents).

Another kind of cultural divide was faced by participants within the school system. Some immigrants entered schools where they were the only students of color, where there was no English language acquisitions support structure in place and/or where they faced anti-immigrant sentiment from their peers. Participants described how all of these experiences contributed to feelings of anxiety and/or depression.

**Anxiety.** Participants described a need to “do [school] independently,” which caused anxiety; this was unique to the participants in immigrant or mixed status families. This concept encompasses the need to navigate the college application process and school independently or to finance higher education independently. Hector explained that he did not have a support system when it came to education, including the college and graduate school application process. For Hector, his parents and brothers did not have the educational background needed to help him navigate the U.S. education system.
Consequently, Hector was forced to decode the education pipeline on his own, which caused a lot of uncertainty and subsequent anxiety. Hector explained:

When it comes to education, I’ve always been by myself and I’ve always been the one pushing myself, so it is very stressful to have to do all of that stuff yourself, and applying for college, and getting people to write you letters. It’s really all on you to do that. Same thing for graduate school.

Similarly, Isabel did not know how to commence the college application process and her parents were unable to assist her as they were not familiar with the school system in the United States. Although Isabel initially sought out information on her own by going to the counselor's office and filling out applications, a mentor became instrumental in encouraging her and supporting her through the process. Isabel explained:

Just the whole process because I know…for me, it was really hard to even think about, like, what was I going to do? Or how the whole college process works. And so, I think a lot of people go through that. And especially undocumented families who don’t know much about the school system here in the United States.

On an emotional level, Gilda shared that just as she doesn't understand her parents’ struggle for labor they don't understand her struggle for education. This makes it hard for them to provide the desired emotional support or understanding she would like. She stated,

I feel like all of the stress comes from school. Just because I’ve made it this far and I just have the pressure to keep going, and my parents…although I don’t understand my parents’ struggle for labor, they don’t understand my struggle for school. They’re not going to understand what it’s like to stay up and pull an all-
nighter just to write a paper. They’re not...they don’t get that. They don’t understand that. And it’s kind of hard to explain it to them, because to them it’s just, like, it’s school. Like, you learn and you do and that’s it. But it’s just so much more than that. And I’m never going to be able to tell them through words what it actually feels like.

Like multiple participants, Margarita noted that she had to pay for college independently. This charge was in addition to the responsibility she felt to financially support her family where she could. Margarita said:

So my parents, you know, I was on my own for college. And it’s not because they didn’t want to help me, it’s because they couldn’t help me. I had to carry that burden on my own. Even now in grad school, I’m paying cash for it. Having those sort of family responsibilities...when I was in college, I was living at home. I was living with my parents...and I was also working nearly full time...not only cause I had to pay for my own school, but I also had to pay for my car and my gas and all of that kind of thing...and whatever was left over, you know, I would try to help my mom with the cable bill, the Internet bill or whatever it was. So, also kind of having that sort of family responsibility. Even now, I have savings for a rainy day that’s kind of reserved. If my family were to have an emergency situation. So having that kind of thing and then also overcoming a lot of educational sort of challenges.

Participants also described the impact that limited scholarships for unauthorized students have on their anxiety level. Dante explained:
You cannot receive any state or federal aid. Private universities are extremely expensive and most scholarships, the prerequisite is to be either resident or a permanent…a citizen of the United States….so I had applied to several scholarships that I knew did not require that, but I wasn’t hearing back from any of them and I felt extremely anxious because I knew that I had tried really hard in high school and I had the grades and I had all the extra-curricular activities, but just because I did not have a document to say that I was legal in this country, I might not be able to go to college.

Of course, the college application process and transition to high school is a stressful time for all students, regardless of their documentation status. Helena, a U.S. citizen, described having panic attacks her senior year of high school. Similarly, Diana, a naturalized U.S. citizen who immigrated to the U.S. at 17, said that she dealt with anxiety ever since she began college. However, the issues facing unauthorized students create an extra layer of anxiety not experienced by their legal resident or U.S. citizen counterparts. Dante explained:

Because I am undocumented, I was really anxious my last few years in high school, especially my senior year in high school, when I wasn’t sure if I was going to be able to receive higher education, go to college…it was an extremely anxious period in my life.

These examples are ways in which participants in immigrant families met challenges like navigating the college application process, progressing through the education system and financing higher education independently or with limited support and resources. Unique to unauthorized participants was the additional challenge of
applying for college in states that limited their ability to be accepted to institutions of higher education based on their unauthorized status or having major restrictions set on available funding and scholarships to help pay for higher education. Although the majority of participants were successful in their educational endeavors (evidenced by the fact that 19 of the 20 participants had already graduated from or were currently enrolled in institutions of higher education), the road to academic success was often fraught with uncertainty and anxiety.

**Depression.** Participants described how legislation preventing immigrants, particularly unauthorized immigrants, from the ability to avail themselves to the opportunity of higher education contributed to feelings of depression. Even with the many financial and legislative barriers to higher education, many unauthorized youth attend college. Some are fortunate enough to receive one of the limited private scholarships available to unauthorized students; others might choose to go to a community college as a less expensive alternative to a four-year program and still others do all that they can to pay for a four-year university. As is the case of various participants in this study, instead of living on campus or sharing an apartment with other students, students in immigrant families, particularly unauthorized immigrants, might live at home with their families, work full time and carry a full course load. As an unauthorized youth, Diego showed great perseverance in doing all that he could to attend his dream school. Even so, he was forced to drop out after he was unable to make the payments for his course load. Diego explained:

> When I’ve been really depressed was probably when I had to drop out of [college], back in 2010, I believe. So I took a quarter off, but then I went back the
fall quarter. I would spend a lot of time alone because I did not live on campus. I had made friends my first quarter, but I couldn’t really keep up with them because I was commuting and I was working. So I would go to school, just do my work, and sometimes if I could I would stay there and study in the library, since it was closed late, but then I would go back home. So it was just commuting, studying, going to class and going to work. So I was alone. Also, I hadn’t paid for tuition, so I was not officially enrolled in classes. The professors were kind of just giving me the work and, you know, waiting for me to just pay and then so they could enroll me officially, but that never really happened. And there were times when I wouldn’t get an email or something, that there was an assignment due, or a test. I actually showed up to a class and it was a midterm taking place. So I just decided to drop out, because I couldn’t…at that point I realized that I wasn’t going to be able to pay it. You know? So I was just going to fail if I paid [for the classes], because I didn’t do all of the work for the first time. So I was really depressed, and that was the year that the Dream Act failed in Congress.

This cycle of commuting from home, working and studying became isolating. Diego was not able to stay connected to his social network for support, so when he was forced to drop out, he did not have additional supports in place, which contributed to his depression.

Although being forced to drop out of college for financial reasons triggered a depression, Diego maintained hope for the DREAM Act to pass, which would allow him to pay in-state tuition and potentially take out the necessary student loans to pay for higher education. When the DREAM Act failed, he shared that it took away his last hope
for higher education. He was uncertain of when the opportunities the DREAM Act represented would present themselves again. Diego explained:

At that point, I had no idea when…what other year we were going to have a chance to get something similar [to the DREAM Act]. … I disconnected myself from a lot of my friends and I was just working, so all of that made me just be really depressed.

Although Lucia does not explicitly say that she felt depressed, she described realizing that she was an unauthorized immigrant and its impact which caused her to feel “very discouraged…knowing that there was no hope for [her].” Lucia explained:

When I was in high school, I found out that I was undocumented. I believe I was a sophomore getting ready for the whole college thing, and we needed a social security [number]. And I didn’t have one. And when I found out I thought wait, what? What does this mean really? What does…what does this number mean? If I don’t have it, can I apply for it? Like, is it hard to get it? What does…what does it mean? You know? Like, does my future depend on these numbers? And then, coming from a family where other work is still labor, I felt like am I supposed to do that? Should I stop going to school? Like, is…just confusion. A lot of confusion. A lot of very unsure questions. A lot of unsure future opportunities.

Yeah. So I felt very confused, very misguided and very unsure.

This uncertainty and confusion caused her to start to skip classes and disengage from school. She said, “What’s the point of finishing high school if I’m destined to work in the fields?” This sense of hopelessness was a great barrier to her academic success.
Barriers to higher education are not limited to unauthorized youth or immigrants. U.S. citizens living in immigrant families also face pressures that might impact their path toward higher education. Olivia, a U.S. citizen born into an immigrant family, reported finding herself at an impasse with her mother when it came to cultural expectations. For Olivia, not knowing what she was going to do after high school caused depression. She felt pressure from her mom to be traditional and start a family, but she wanted to go to college. Her dad supported this endeavor, but she said it was a constant battle at home and started conflicts. Olivia explained, “I definitely dealt with depression a lot when I was in high school. I think a lot of it had to do with not knowing what I was going to do after high school.”

These examples demonstrate ways in which the impact of citizenship and immigrant status, particularly unauthorized immigrant status, on participants’ ability to participate in higher education affect their anxiety and depression levels. The participants have clearly demonstrated great perseverance and resilience on their road to higher education. Despite the many barriers set in their way, almost all the participants successfully navigated financial and legislative barriers and continue to move forward as they worked toward their educational and career goals.

Issues Regarding Immigration Status, Including the Possibility of Detention/Deportation

Participants described how the uncertainty, ambiguity and unpredictability of citizenship status, particularly unauthorized immigrant status, could and has impacted the emotional well-being of both themselves and their family members. More so than depression, participants articulated a constant worry, preoccupation or anxiety regarding
the unauthorized status of family members and the ramifications of this status given the current political and social climate in the United States.

**Anxiety.** Whether it be the threat of becoming unauthorized or the participant’s true unauthorized immigrant status, the unauthorized immigrant status itself was cause for anxiety. For some participants, the uncertainties of waiting for the U.S. government to make decisions regarding immigrant status brought on anxiety. For others, coming to terms with the realities of an unauthorized status and the anticipation of having to “come out” and its potential implications contributed to anxiety. In the case of Nancy, similar to her mother, Nancy went through uncertainty when she turned 18 and did not know if she would be granted continued legal status in the United States. She explained:

> Once you get your green card, you’re safe...sort of. But, you feel safe. Ours wasn’t coming in the mail...we were waiting for that card to come and it wouldn’t and it wouldn’t and it wouldn’t. And it was about a month before my 18th birthday and I was feeling anxious because I knew that once I turn 18, I was going to lose my status. It meant I had to leave or stay undocumented and I already knew what that meant. ... For me, it would definitely mean a new life. ... My mother had full status and she wasn’t going to lose it. I would potentially lose it and that meant finding a way to get it back, because being legal...being able to realize your dreams in whatever way you want to is essential. So, you cannot be prevented from going to school or having the job that you want because you’re undocumented...that’s simply not having a life.

Lucia, on the other hand, realized she was unauthorized in high school. The repercussions of what the unauthorized status meant for her changed the outlook she had
on her future and the possibilities of realizing her dreams. Although this negatively impacted her socially/emotionally, it was not until she had applied for an award with some pressure from a college recruiter that she experienced anxiety due to her status. Lucia explained that she had no intention or hope to win the award; she applied to appease the recruiter. As Lucia made it through the interview process, she felt a growing anxiety about what might happen if she were to win and would have to come out as an unauthorized immigrant. Lucia shared:

And so I get another letter saying, congratulations, you’re going on to round two of the interview. And it kind of hit me…this is serious…I’m stuck. I feel like I’m in a lie. That if they find out I’m undocumented, I am going to get in so much trouble….I was very anxious. I had anxiety…I was very…I was terrified.

For participants, feelings of worry or anxiety appeared to be at a higher level of acuity when it came to the actual or possible detainment and deportation of an unauthorized family member. Participants described many uncertainties regarding the detention or deportation of a loved one. For Isabel and her family, they experienced worry, a characteristic of anxiety, regarding the detainment and subsequent deportation of her cousin. Isabel shared that her cousin was detained and placed in immigrant detention for a week and a half. She said that this was a stressful time for the family because they had so many questions (e.g., What to do? Whom to ask?). Following her cousin’s detention, he was deported to Ciudad Juarez. Isabel explained that their family is not from Ciudad Juarez, is not familiar with the area, and did not know how to contact him, find him transportation or send him money once he was there. This entire experience was plagued with unknowns and uncertainties. Isabel stated, “And the whole process was just
really stressful on my family, because they did not know what to do, who to ask, or…or anything like that.” Isabel also described the financial toll her cousin’s deportation took on her family:

[I]t caused a lot of stress in my family, just because my grandma was really worried, and it was just, like, worriedness all around and he was a primary…provider for my family who is in Mexico…he was the one supporting my grandma, and he was also supporting my aunt, who has…she had a tumor, and so ever since then she hasn't…she has a sort of cerebral palsy in a way. He was a primary provider and it affected them financially, just because they don’t have the ways…in Mexico, they don’t pay you as much as they do here. So he is working in Mexico, but it’s really hard for them to sustain themselves financially.

Dante described a myriad of uncertainties related to the possibility of his parents being detained and/or deported. He also specifically stated that uncertainty is his greatest stress. He used the example of losing his DACA status:

My biggest source of stress is uncertainty…I like to know what’s going to happen in my life. When it’s…when things are out of my control and I, for example, when I…and I am going to use this example…When I lost my deferred action status, I was very stressed and it had nothing to do with anything that I did wrong, it just happened that way. And that brought uncertainty to my life and it brought stress to my life.

Olivia described how anxiety-provoking it can be for families to send a loved one back to their homeland to regularize their status (from unauthorized status to legal permanent resident status) per U.S. immigration policy. Olivia shared:
And then having to send a family member back before they become a permanent resident. You have no idea if their paperwork is going to go through, if the U.S. government is going to say, yes, you can come back as a U.S. citizen or permanent resident or if they are going to say, just kidding, no, we are not going to let you move forward, and then that family member is stuck in their native country even though they haven’t lived there in decades and have been a taxpayer for decades in the U.S., and so it just seems very unfair and stressful for that particular family.

Although in Olivia’s case, her uncle was successful in his attempt to regularize his status (he was granted a pardon and permanent legal resident status and able to return to the U.S. after having to live in Mexico for one year), her and her family’s apprehension and anxiety regarding the uncertainty of this process was founded. Olivia’s fears were a lived reality for another participant in the study.

In Magda’s case, she and her family were not as fortunate as Olivia. Magda reported that she and her husband were not worried when it was time for her husband to regularize his status. Magda explained that her family hired a lawyer to ensure that her husband could gain legal immigrant status in the United States. As was discussed, her husband left his family in the U.S. to attend what they thought was a routine meeting in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, so that he could be granted legal immigrant status in the United States. Unfortunately, the meeting did not go as planned and he was not granted legal immigrant status or allowed to return to his family (wife and child) in the United States. Magda explained:
That was not expected. We didn’t know. We had a lawyer, you know, he didn’t tell us anything…they didn’t mention that, that was the risk…so we were not prepared for it at all….that kind of shocked us and so I wasn’t expecting it.

Magda said the deportation of her husband caused great anxiety. This event created uncertainty regarding her family’s ability to stay together and their living situation (to remain in the U.S. or move to Mexico). After years of hardship (e.g., Magda traveling back and forth to Mexico, economic stress as she was the primary breadwinner, inconsistency in schooling for her child, etc.), the family ultimately was forced to permanently separate. As a family they decided that as U.S. citizens, Magda and her children would live in the United States and her husband (now ex-husband) would remain in Mexico.

For another participant, Gilda, although she has not experienced the detention or deportation of her parents, she described being acutely aware of this possibility. She said that this is such an everyday reality for her family that she has become desensitized to it (i.e., the constant threat of detention or deportation for her parents and the consequences subsequent to their deportation). She recounted:

They could be driving, and they could get pulled over for a light. And just because they look a little darker, and they might not just get a ticket, they might get caught up. Where are your papers? And then you have to live with that consequence here. Like, hey, I might get a call. My parents might be in the detention center. They might be deported. I have a little brother I have to take care of. It’s just…it’s all these things that…they’re kind of in more danger than I am.
Just because they don’t have those papers. And it’s…there’s a worry that’s always in the back of your head, but you kind of learn to live with that worry.

Gilda acknowledged that as unauthorized immigrants, her parents are in more danger than she is as a U.S. citizen. Nevertheless, the deportation of her parents would be a life-changing experience for her. Gilda is just 18 years old. She is currently working toward her bachelor’s degree. The deportation of her parents would likely mean the end (at least temporary end) of her academic career and the beginning of working lower skilled jobs to try to make ends meet, while she simultaneously takes care of her little brother.

When family members do not live in the same household as unauthorized family members, participants described how it can simultaneously decrease and increase anxiety. For instance, Lucia, who is currently protected by DACA status but has an unauthorized mother who no longer lives in the same city as her mother. Lucia described that although being apart and not seeing her mother every day enables her to momentarily forget about the unauthorized status of her mom and its implications, she also goes through bouts of anxiety as she is not near her mom to see how things are going. Lucia explained:

I still worry about it and, yes, sometimes I have anxiety because, since I’m not there to see how things are going, I don’t know exactly how it is. But, since I’m not there, I kind of forget about it.

Lucia described herself as being in the denial stage when it came to her mother, not only regarding her mother’s health, but also in terms of her unauthorized status and what that could mean. Lucia explained:
I really put myself in the denial stage…admitting when [I] went away, that could be, that can be, like health wise, she could pass away. Or the more, the more frightening part for me is she could be deported and that really hurts.

For Lucia, the uncertainty of potential deportation is more frightening than the finality of death. Detention and deportation mean a lifetime of uncertainty and the possibility of deportation forever separating her from her mother. With deportation would also come a lifetime of questions and uncertainties about her mother’s well-being in Mexico, questions about her safety, her ability to provide for herself, her health, etc. As a consequence of the uncertainty of Lucia’s temporary DACA status, leaving the country to visit her mother would put Lucia in jeopardy of not being able to return to the United States and the only life she knows.

It is also important to note that as Lucia was interviewed, she was told that the detention and deportation questions on the interview protocol were being skipped since she said she had not experienced them. She responded by saying, “Yeah, I have yet to feel impacted by that.” The qualifier, “yet,” is quite telling, demonstrating that Lucia is aware that she could be impacted by immigrant detention or deportation at any moment given her mother’s unauthorized immigrant status.

These examples demonstrate a level of uncertainty that rests around the current or potential status of family members. Even when a family feels that there is a level of certainty or decreased risk, when it comes to unauthorized immigrant status, nothing is ever definite. These participants’ experiences demonstrate how the unauthorized immigrant status of family members and the constant fear of detention or deportation associated with it can greatly impact emotional well-being, including levels of anxiety.
Depression. Although the citizenship status of family members specific to immigration status and the potential of detention or deportation did not generate as much conversation about depression, one participant described falling into a depression after losing the protection of DACA as a result of the slow processing time during his two-year renewal application. Dante grew up in the U.S. as an unauthorized immigrant. After feeling the implications of this status throughout his life, particularly as he struggled with trying to pay for higher education and being forced to drop out of school due to the financial implications of his unauthorized status (not qualifying for student loans or scholarships), DACA provided a way for Dante to finally achieve his goal of higher education. Through DACA, Dante was able to take out the necessary loans to finance his education, graduate with a degree and to become a teacher. Dante was achieving his goal and living his dream when the ambiguity surrounding DACA status and the uncertainty of the protections provided by DACA became his reality/nightmare. For good reason, Dante described his biggest source of stress as “uncertainty…when things are out of my control…when I lost my deferred action status…and that brought uncertainty to my life and it brought stress to my life.” Dante also described how losing the protection of his DACA status triggered a depression. He shared:

I have deferred action…well, I had deferred action, and every two years you have to submit an application. You basically have to reapply for it and I submitted my application but it wasn’t…it wasn’t accepted in time, and my work authorization was not approved in time…for me to keep working. My work permit expired and my DACA had not been approved yet. So I had the opportunity to volunteer at my school and still teach, but I couldn’t do that for a long time because I wasn’t
getting paid. So there came a point where I had to actually stop going to the work, or to school, as a volunteer, and I had to find a job as a waiter at a Mexican restaurant, because I knew they weren’t going to ask me for legitimate papers. And I had invested so much in what I was doing here in [name of state]. I had plans, and all of a sudden, I found myself without a job, with no money, with a lease on an apartment, paying loans…repaying loans, and it was terrible. I felt quite depressed for a long time.

This example demonstrates the instability temporary DACA status brings to the life of the immigrants who qualified and were brave enough to take advantage of the potential benefits of gaining its protection. DACA, a temporary protection, brings another layer of uncertainty to immigrants’ lives. Although able to work legally in the U.S., once an immigrant under DACA protection is able to achieve higher education, a degree and a dream job, falling out of the protection of DACA relegated him to an unauthorized-like status once again, where he could not legally work in the U.S. and was forced to find a low-paying job that does not require legal documents. For Dante, he was living his dream, having gained a degree in education and a teaching position, only to have his new life and job ripped from his fingertips. This fall was devastating, forcing him back into a life in the shadows and the grips of depression. Dante’s story again demonstrates that even when an immigrant feels a certain level of safety regarding a temporary status, when it comes to unauthorized immigrant status, nothing is ever definite. Without permanent legal status (or truly without U.S. citizenship status), an immigrant’s life and opportunities in the U.S. are hanging in the balance.
Participants’ varied experiences demonstrate how unauthorized immigrant status of family members and the constant fear of detention or deportation associated with it can greatly impact emotional well-being. In the case of Dante, when the occupational status a college education and legal working documents provided to him through DACA was lost, it created greater uncertainty for his future. This, coupled by the loss of his dream job after his work visa lapsed, caused him to become depressed. To a greater extent, participants articulated a constant worry, preoccupation or anxiety regarding the unauthorized status of themselves or family members and the ramifications unauthorized status can have. As was demonstrated in the participants’ stories, the unauthorized status of oneself or a family member signifies a lifetime of anxiety provoking experiences: looking over one’s shoulder, limited educational or financial opportunities, and the constant potential for the separation of family.

Each component of this theoretical framework demonstrates how the uncertainties, ambiguity and unpredictability of citizenship status, particularly unauthorized immigrant status, impact emotional well-being. For participants, this was most often connected to: 1) worries related to issues in their country of origin or the difficulties throughout the transition from their country of origin to the U.S.; 2) barriers to education; and 3) specific issues regarding immigration status, including the possibility of detention and/or deportation. The participants’ stories speak to the social-emotional consequences of the current immigration system, and the policies and practices regarding unauthorized immigration within this system.
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the convergent parallel design is to synthesize both the quantitative and qualitative results to allow for greater insight into the research problem than would be obtained by only collecting and analyzing one type of data (either quantitative or qualitative). Combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for the gaps of each individual method to be filled by the advantages of the other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2003). This approach more fully uncovers the complexities and nuances of the experiences of Latinos living in mixed-citizenship status families.

There are four steps within the convergent design: 1) Quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently but separately. 2) The quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed separately. 3) The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis are merged. 4) The results are interpreted together (e.g., results are compared to determine a) where the quantitative and qualitative results converge and diverge, b) how the quantitative results give meaning to the qualitative results and vice versus, and c) how together both the quantitative and qualitative analysis relate and give a greater depth of understanding to the substantive area being researched (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative findings are merged and interpreted together. This chapter begins with a description of how the quantitative and qualitative results diverge and converge. It then addresses how the quantitative and
qualitative results relate and give meaning to one another and add a greater depth of understanding to the research questions, specifically addressing how racialization contributes to the problem. The findings are then placed within the context of the literature, noting where the findings converge and diverge from the larger body of literature in this substantive area. Next, the limitations of the research study are described. This chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for practice, policy and future research.

**Divergence and Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Results**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods have divergent viewpoints in terms of their models of explanations and goals for the production of knowledge. The various viewpoints, strengths and limitations of each individual research approach were apparent upon merging the findings. For the present study, many of the areas of divergence of the quantitative and qualitative results were subsequent to the differences of each individual research method.

**Divergence**

The aim of quantitative research is to understand a few variables, emphasizing generalizability over a deep understanding of a research problem (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). As described in Chapter 5, the quantitative analysis of the three dependent variables — anxiety (DV 1), depression (DV 2) and perceived discrimination (DV 3) — indicated no statistically significant differences based on ethnicity alone (IV 1 ethnicity), ethnicity and nativity (IV 2 family nativity), ethnicity and immigrant status of family members (IV 3 family mixed-citizenship status) and the U.S. citizenship and immigrant status of family members for Latinos (IV4 Latino only).
Different than quantitative research that aims for generalizability, qualitative research focuses on gaining a greater depth of knowledge or understanding of a research problem or phenomena (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Relying merely on the quantitative strand of the present study, it would generally appear that ethnicity, U.S. nativity and the immigrant status of participants and their family members have little impact on levels of anxiety, depression and perceived discrimination. However, the qualitative findings from the present study tell a different story.

In terms of the first research question (How does living in a mixed status family impact Latinos?), the qualitative results highlight the unique challenges that Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families face subsequent to current immigration policies and practices. These unique challenges include limited support structures to guide students in immigrant families through the educational pipeline; barriers for unauthorized immigrants to receive in-state tuition or scholarships for higher education; racial profiling and the active policing of the immigrant community; the inability of unauthorized immigrants to legally work, putting them at risk for exploitation or unfair working environments; and barriers for unauthorized immigrants to travel both domestically and internationally. These qualitative findings demonstrate experiences unique to members of mixed-citizenship status Latino families, including how these experiences take an emotional toll on all members of mixed-citizenship status families, including authorized immigrant and U.S. citizen family members. These nuances are divergent from the quantitative findings that indicate no statistically significant differences between groups, failing to capture the gradation in the experiences of Latinos in mixed status families and their counterparts in immigrant (non-mixed status) families.
In answering the second research question (In which ways does the citizenship status of family members impact anxiety and depression levels of Latinos?), the qualitative findings again diverged from the quantitative findings that did not indicate statistically significant differences between groups. Unlike the quantitative results, the qualitative results revealed group differences and a deeper understanding of the elements that uniquely impact levels of anxiety and depression of Latinos in mixed status families.

Qualitative findings suggest that an overarching level of uncertainty unique to Latino participants in immigrant families contributes to feelings of anxiety or depression to varying degrees. This uncertainty stemmed from three main areas: 1) worries related to issues in their country of origin or the difficulties throughout the transition from their country of origin to the U.S., 2) barriers to education and 3) issues regarding immigration status, including the possibility of detention and/or deportation. These concepts constitute the theoretical framework that provides a better understanding of how the citizenship status of family members, particularly the uncertainty surrounding the experience of Latinos with unauthorized family members or those in jeopardy of becoming unauthorized, uniquely impacts anxiety and depression. This nuanced understanding of the experience of anxiety and depression within the Latino immigrant community was not captured in the quantitative findings. In fact, the limitations of quantitative research proved to be an impediment to the depth of understanding provided by the qualitative strand of this study.
Convergence

Upon merging the quantitative and qualitative strands of the present study, there was one main area of convergence. The merged quantitative and qualitative data gave a greater depth of understanding when examining levels of perceived discrimination.

Perceived discrimination. In terms of perceived discrimination, although no statistically significant results were found in the quantitative analysis for all four independent variables, the responses to the short answer follow-up question indicated differences in the reasons participants felt discriminated against when comparing groups based on their ethnicity and the immigrant status of family members (IV 3) (see the quantitative results section for specific results). The findings from the qualitative strand support the findings from the short answer follow-up question found in the quantitative strand of the present study. Qualitative results indicate similar experiences of racialization for all Latinos. However, the qualitative responses also reveal additional group differences when comparing the experience of Latinos in non-mixed status immigrant families and in mixed status immigrant families. The discussion of racialization is more thoroughly discussed in a subsequent subsection.

Discussion of How Quantitative and Qualitative Results Give Meaning to Each Other and a Greater Depth of Understanding to the Research Questions

The synthesizing of the quantitative and qualitative data gave a greater depth of understanding to the complexity of this substantive area. Most importantly, this mixed methods study demonstrates that quantitative data alone does not allow for the many nuances of the experiences of Latinos and Latino immigrants to emerge. The description of the points of divergence and convergence of the quantitative and qualitative data
demonstrates how the data and understanding of the research problem is better understood by combining both methods over simply reviewing the findings from either method on its own.

**No Statistically Significant Findings Emerged from the Quantitative Data**

Even so, the quantitative strand of the study allowed for a non-Latino comparison group (i.e., white counterparts) when the qualitative strand of the study did not. For the present study, the qualitative data gives a deeper understanding of the unique experience of the levels of depression and anxiety of participants in mixed status families. Specifically, it demonstrates that anxiety and depression do not present in the same way in every individual and that although the immigration status of family members plays a role in anxiety and depression, it is the structural barriers that accompany the immigration status of family members that most affect individuals. A limitation, however, is that the findings do not specifically compare the levels of depression and anxiety (which group has higher or lower levels of depression or anxiety) with non-Latino counterparts. In addition, although adding a great amount of depth of understanding to the problem, the qualitative strand of the study also does not allow for generalizable results. Although this is not an aim of qualitative research, it is a limitation that makes the mixed methods approach a stronger research design for the present research study.

As the quantitative findings did not indicate statistically significant differences between groups, the qualitative findings were paramount in providing an understanding of how mixed-citizenship status impacts Latinos and the various elements that uniquely impact levels of anxiety and depression. Even if the quantitative findings would have reached statistical significance, to understand how racialization impacts levels of anxiety
and depression, the qualitative strand of this study was needed to add a depth of understanding to this phenomenon.

**How does Racialization Contribute to the Problem?**

When reviewing the demographic makeup of the unauthorized immigrant population, it is impossible to ignore race as the majority of unauthorized immigrants are People of Color. Although the exact number of unauthorized immigrants by country of origin indicated in various reports from 2012-2015 vary slightly, the literature consistently indicates that most unauthorized immigrants are Immigrants of Color (Baker & Rytina, 2013; Krogstad & Passel, 2015; Passel, 2015; Zong & Batalova, 2015). In fact, approximately half of unauthorized immigrants are of Mexican descent (Baker & Rytina, 2013; Krogstad & Passel, 2015; Passel, 2015; Zong & Batalova, 2015). The other half of the unauthorized immigrant population hails from other countries in Latin America and Asia, most commonly from El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Honduras, China, the Philippines, Korea, the Dominican Republic and Columbia (Passel, 2015). Less than 5% of unauthorized immigrants hail from Europe, Canada or Oceania (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

The following subsections address how the quantitative and qualitative findings provide insight into how racialization impacts the lives of Latinos living in mixed status families. First, the quantitative results will be addressed, followed by the short answer responses to the question regarding perceived discrimination. This section will conclude by reviewing the findings from the qualitative strand of the study.
Quantitative Results Provided Little Understanding of Racialization

The quantitative strand of the research study gave little insight into how racialization impacts Latinos in mixed status families. In the quantitative data analysis, no statistically significant differences between groups based on ethnicity alone were found in terms of levels of anxiety, depression or perceived discrimination. This does not signify that differences do not exist, only that the survey was not able to capture possible differences. This is a limitation of the quantitative strand of the study.

Short-answer responses provided some understanding of the impact of racialization. Although not statistically significant, the responses to the short answer follow-up question regarding perceived discrimination from the quantitative strand suggest group differences based on ethnicity and immigrant status (IV 3) (see the quantitative results chapter for specific results). The analysis of the short answer responses revealed that gender discrimination was most salient for the white participants, but not the Latino participants. This is not to say that Latinas do not endure similar levels of gender discrimination only that, within the context of current anti-immigrant political and social climate, they tended to highlight discrimination based on race/ethnicity and the related components (e.g., skin color, language, nationality, etc.). In addition, it is hypothesized that the racial/ethnic privilege of the white participants protected them from other forms of discrimination, which is why gender discrimination was most noted.

One surprising finding was that participants from each cohort, including the white, non-Hispanic U.S. native family respondents, indicated that they felt they had been discriminated against based on their race/ethnicity. Even so, there were group differences in the respondents who indicated that they had been discriminated against based on their
race/ethnicity. Nearly one-fifth of white, non-Hispanic U.S. native family respondents (17%, n = 24) felt they had been discriminated against based on their race/ethnicity, compared with over three-quarters (86%, n = 14) of Latino U.S. native family respondents, two-thirds (66%, n = 38) of Latino immigrant family respondents and more than half of Latino mixed status family respondents (52%, n = 25). What was most telling was not the numeric differences based on themes, but the actual language used within the participants’ responses.

The responses of the white, non-Hispanic U.S. native family participants tell the story of racial/ethnic privilege. For instance, a white, non-Hispanic U.S. native family participant stated she felt discriminated against because of her privileged statuses (white ethnicity and middle-upper middle class upbringing). Like many people with race and class privilege, the white participants in this study appeared to lack the awareness that their Latino and/or lower-income counterparts do not reap the same unearned benefits of privileged ethnic and/or class status.

The responses of the Latino participants give an important point of comparison with the white participants. As a group, the experience of Latinos highlighted racial discrimination. However, when compared based on the U.S. citizen, immigrant (non-mixed status) and mixed status groupings, a more nuanced view of discrimination based on racism and nativism was highlighted. Latinos in U.S. native families described feeling disempowered and/or being pushed to the margins and not accepted within the dominant community. In addition, the responses of Latinos in immigrant families provided more specific examples of macroaggressions and discriminatory acts that they have endured based on their racial/ethnic identity. Participants in Latino immigrant families also
described being discriminated against based on their immigrant status (8%, n = 38). Although this was coded differently, these responses also detailed discrimination endured based on their ethnic identity. The responses of Latino participants in mixed status families further illustrate the intersections of ethnicity and immigrant status. In addition to perceived discrimination based on race/ethnicity, one-fifth of respondents felt discriminated against due to their immigrant status (20%, n = 5).

These short answer responses provide a point of comparison based on ethnicity (i.e., responses of both Latino and white participants), revealing how racialization and the structures of oppression present in the U.S. system differently impact individuals based on their ethnicity and nativity. Although some white, non-Hispanic participants felt they had been discriminated against due to their race, their descriptions of perceived discrimination highlighted a lack of awareness regarding their privileged racial/ethnic status and what constitutes discrimination. Latinos, on the other hand, described a variety of overt and covert discrimination by law enforcement officers, schools, customers, peers/colleagues and strangers. Although sharing similar experiences, there were also various differences based on the U.S. citizenship and immigration status of Latino participants and their family members.

Although the short answer responses provided important insight into participants’ differing experiences of perceived discrimination based on ethnicity, the qualitative interviews provided a much greater depth of understanding of how racialization impacts Latinos in mixed status families. The subsequent section highlights some of the most important findings from the qualitative strand of this study in terms of understanding how racialization impacts the problem.
Qualitative Data Provided the Greatest Insight into the Impact of Racialization

Although the findings from the qualitative strand of the study do not provide a point of comparison between white and Latino participants, the findings demonstrate support for the differences indicated in the short answer responses and also a much deeper understanding of how racialization differently impacts individuals based on their ethnicity and immigrant status (IV3 – family mixed-citizenship status) (for complete results, please refer to the qualitative results chapter). In the qualitative strand of this research study, participants described the ways that skin phenotype, presumed racial or ethnic identification, and country of origin impacted their experiences.

Skin phenotype and colorism. Respondents described how a lighter skin color or not being identified as Mexican protected them from overt forms of racism or discrimination. For example, Yadira, although born and raised in Mexico until high school, noted that she is racially ambiguous. She has a lighter skin phenotype and although she has an accent, people, particularly white people, do not typically initially identify her as Mexican. This misidentification has protected Yadira from some overt forms of racism or discriminatory practices.

Julieta, born to a legal permanent resident mother of Cuban descent and a U.S.-born Mexican American father, explicitly stated how lighter skin phenotype, country of origin and legal immigrant status play a role in the privileged experience of some immigrant families. She contrasted her experience to that of her best friend, who has a darker skin phenotype and is of Mexican descent. Her friend’s family members were impacted by community members’ response to their darker skin color, limited English language ability and the unauthorized immigrant status of some family members. Julieta
also acknowledged that her family’s protected statuses insulate her from having to confront issues with immigration or feeling targeted by immigration policy or the media’s portrayal of immigrants. She described an awareness of the role immigration policy and media play in the criminalization and perpetuation of the Latino threat narrative (Chavez, 2008) and the role this plays in her experience compared with the experience of Mexican immigrants.

These are just two of the many examples of ways that Latino participants interrogate the meaning of race and ethnicity and how skin phenotype, presumed racial or ethnic identification and country of origin impact their experiences. Although each of the 20 participants from the qualitative strand of the study have varying family statuses (U.S. citizen, immigrant (non-mixed status) and mixed status), the treatment some received based on their lighter skin tone was described as a protective factor against the racist U.S. society.

Overt racism and discriminatory practices. Apart from the description of how lighter or darker skin phenotype impacted participants and their family members’ experiences, participants described other ways that racialization impacted their lives. Participants’ experiences, particularly those in mixed status families, illustrate how their mere existence is flagged by discrimination, oppression and uncertainty. Although individual acts of discrimination like racial slurs and derogatory language were discussed by participants (e.g., being called a beaner), it was the various forms of structural oppression – racism and nativism – that have made the biggest impact on the lives of the participants in this study. In fact, when discussing the issues of racialization during member-checking, it became apparent that racialization is embedded throughout the
participants’ responses. In fact, almost everything that has to do with the anxiety and depression is related to racialization in some form. In the following subsections, some of the most salient examples of racialization will be highlighted. This includes a discussion of racial profiling, the impact of structural racism and oppression in the education system, structural racism and oppression on job opportunities, and other forms of structural oppression, including the deficits framework of immigrants.

**Racial profiling.** Just as one cannot split a person into pieces based on his or her individual characteristics and aspects of identity, racist and nativist acts are intertwined, making it impossible to separate the two when interrogating the experience of those living in mixed status families. Racial profiling is an example of this connection. The impact of racial profiling on those in mixed status families is connected to the unauthorized immigrant status of family members. For example, having a darker skin color increases the likelihood of someone getting pulled over or stopped due to racial profiling. When unauthorized immigrants are stopped by an officer due to racial profiling, they are forced to face the implications of their unauthorized immigration status. Racial profiling and being pulled over not only put an unauthorized immigrant in jeopardy of receiving a ticket for a traffic violation, but also of being taken to immigrant detention and subsequently deported. Conversely, if an unauthorized immigrant is white or passes as white, he or she would be a less likely target of racial profiling, potentially allowing them to drive with a lesser level of anxiety or fear of getting pulled over.

In addition to racial profiling, other structural barriers impact unauthorized immigrants when driving. In most states, unauthorized immigrants are not able to receive a driver’s license (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). The combination of
racist practices like racial profiling and racist-nativist practices like the inability for unauthorized immigrants to have a driver’s license and the detention and deportation of immigrants contributes to fear and anxiety when driving. Gilda specifically addressed this reality. She stated:

They [my parents] could be driving, and they could get pulled over for a light. And just because they look a little darker, and they might not just get a ticket, they might get caught up. Where are your papers? And then you have to live with that consequence.

Ricardo, a participant of Puerto Rican descent, described his observation that the Mexican immigrant community has a heightened level of fear, particularly the fear of getting pulled over by police while driving. He stated,

Every time that I drive through the Mexican neighborhoods, I see that they are driving below the speed limit. So I tend to think that they are afraid of being pulled over by the cops. … They are afraid of being just picked up by the cops just for whatever. I don’t live like that. I don’t associate [with] that. I did get pulled over here for driving 15 miles over the speed limit and I got a ticket for it. Fine. Whatever. I paid a fine and I moved on.

The fear that Ricardo has identified for Mexican and/or unauthorized immigrants when driving is related to the increased likelihood for unauthorized immigrants to be discovered by immigration officers, detained and/or deported if they are pulled over for a moving violation. As a Puerto Rican, Ricardo has a driver’s license and is protected from detention and deportation and therefore does not have the same level of fear of the police, getting pulled over and the life-changing implications of such an event. This is another
example of how the combination of the racist practice of racial profiling and the nativist practice of immigrant detention and deportation impact the level of fear and anxiety felt by Latino unauthorized immigrants and their family members.

These examples demonstrate the interconnectedness of racism and nativism. If a white person is driving and completes a minor traffic violation (e.g., does not come to a complete stop at a stop sign), he or she might get pulled over and might even receive a ticket. His or her consequence would be to pay for the ticket and perhaps receive points against his or her license, which might impact their insurance rates. However, if the driver is a Person of Color, there might be a greater likelihood that he/she would be treated unfairly and be verbally or otherwise abused. If this driver is Latino, there might be a greater likelihood for him or her to be asked for identification for the purposes of determining if they are U.S. citizens or immigrants. If this person is an unauthorized immigrant, he/she would run the chance of being arrested on the spot, put in immigrant detention and subsequently deported. Clearly, the repercussions of a minor traffic violation are disproportionate for white, U.S. citizens and a Latino unauthorized immigrants.

The experience and subsequent responses to a minor driving violation is not just limited to a potential negative interaction based on race and racism, but also the nativist response (i.e., detention and deportation) allowed by current immigration policies and practices. White U.S. citizens have unique privileges embedded in seemingly mundane activities (e.g., driving to work) that they generally do not have to think about. However, unauthorized Latino immigrants have to confront numerous hurdles when driving. They must first try to get a driver’s license (depending on their state, they might be able to
receive one or they might have to go without). They might have to pay higher insurance premiums if they are unable to receive a driver’s license. If driving to work, they might encounter racial profiling and have an increased likelihood of being pulled over. If pulled over, they might have a negative encounter or be mistreated based on their race or English language ability. Upon being asked for a driver’s license, if unable to produce one, they might be flagged as an unauthorized immigrant. If the police officer so chooses, under the law, the officer would have the right to arrest the driver who then might find himself or herself in an immigrant detention center, facing the possibility of deportation and separation from his or her family. These examples demonstrate how the seemingly mundane experience of driving is racialized.

Racial profiling is just one of the barriers to unauthorized immigrants and their families being able to travel freely within the United States and internationally. In contrast to Latinos’ experiences of racial profiling, the white community does not have to endure such indignities. For example, white unauthorized immigrants would be much less likely to be required to show identification or to be accused of being an unauthorized immigrant if they were not unable to produce a U.S. identification card or license upon an immigration or police officer’s request when traveling internally in the United States.

Participants’ testimonies reveal that racial profiling causes a level of insecurity – a need to constantly look over one’s shoulder and protect oneself and/or one’s livelihood (either occupational or educational). Upon reviewing the results section with a participant during member checking, the member check participant added some insight, sharing that the results demonstrate how
[T]his country [the U.S.] is at the same time attracted to and disgusted by skin color…they actually also do it to U.S. citizens of color… [but] the unauthorized status is such an opportunity for that [overt racist and discriminatory behavior]. You know? Such a good excuse, such an open door, and I think that the person that’s unauthorized feels that in every area, every moment of their lives, in every interaction with people.

**Structural racism and oppression in education.** Participants’ narratives depict multiple racialized experiences on their journey toward higher education. Most notable were the various examples of structural oppression during the college application process. For example, Lucia realized she was an unauthorized immigrant in high school. The repercussions of what the unauthorized status meant for her changed the outlook she had on her future and the possibilities of realizing her dreams. At a young age, Lucia had to reflect on her future and what it might hold given she was not a U.S. citizen and did not have a social security number. She asked herself, “Does my future depend on these numbers? Should I stop going to school?” This uncertainty and confusion caused her to start to skip classes and disengage from school. She explained her thought process: “What’s the point of finishing high school if I’m destined to work in the fields?” The repercussions of what the unauthorized status meant for her changed the outlook she had on her future and the possibilities of realizing her dreams.

Although this negatively impacted her socially and emotionally, it was not until she had applied for an award with some pressure from a college recruiter that she experienced anxiety due to her status. Lucia explained that she had no intention or hope to win the award, but simply applied to appease the recruiter. As Lucia made it through
the interview process, she felt a growing anxiety about what might happen if she were to win and would have to come out as an unauthorized immigrant. Lucia shared:

And so I get another letter saying, Congratulations, you’re going on to round two of the interview. And it kind of hit me…this is serious…I’m stuck. I feel like I’m in a lie. That if they find out I’m undocumented, I am going to get in so much trouble….I was very anxious. I had anxiety…I was very…I was terrified.

Lucia’s high school experience, including the process of applying for an award and gaining recognition for her achievement is racialized, marked and framed by her Mexican unauthorized immigrant status. The fear and internalized oppression Lucia felt regarding her unauthorized immigrant status impacted her so much so that she seriously considered dropping out of high school and did not even consider applying for the award until pushed by the college recruiter. Even after she had applied, the process did not bring on the healthy amount of anxiety expected, but instead she felt “terrified,” as she knew she would have to come out as an unauthorized immigrant if she won.

This example demonstrates how being uncomfortable acts as a barrier for Latino immigrants, increasing the likelihood that they will give up before they even get started. The sense of being uncomfortable felt by Latinos in not an accident, but an intentional form of exclusion. It is an example of racist nativism and structural oppression. Making unauthorized youth feel unwelcome or uncomfortable might increase the likelihood that they would consider dropping out of high school and decrease the likelihood that they would apply for the few awards, scholarships and higher education programs available to them.
This brings up another form of structural oppression described in the participant narratives: the restriction of available scholarships and financial aid, including student loans, to immigrants, especially unauthorized immigrants. Although the language of these policies and practices is race neutral, it disproportionately impacts Immigrants of Color, limiting their access to higher education. This demonstrates how such policies and practices are not only nativist, but also racist.

One of the most overt forms of discrimination was the exclusion of unauthorized immigrants from higher education described by Dante. He explained that in his home state, the policy for state schools did not just require unauthorized immigrants to pay out-of-state tuition as is true in some states, but his state actually refused admission to unauthorized immigrants. Again, although the language banning unauthorized students from admittance to the state colleges is race neutral, it disproportionately impacts Students of Color.

In Dante’s case, as a high school student, he studied, got good grades and did the necessary extracurricular activities to not only be accepted to universities, but also to receive scholarships. With so many barriers in place, Dante did not give up. He pulled himself up by his bootstraps and did whatever he could to be successful. Yet, when it was time to enter the university, he found himself banned from the public universities in his state. When member checking, the participant identified this incongruence and asked very important questions. The member check participant stated:

[Dante was] banned. Which to me is such an archaic concept. Banned from a university? Like in the days of segregation? Banned from a university, even if he
could pay. You can pay but you can’t come. They might as well just make
different bathrooms for us. That’s racialization to me.

Participants who had been unauthorized immigrants at one time described being
excluded from the educational process when trying to access higher education.
Unauthorized immigrants were significantly limited in the amount of scholarships and
financial aid available to them. Dante even described a state law that prohibited him from
applying and being accepted to the state universities. Upon member checking, the
member check participant stated that she had witnessed friends who were given
scholarships, but that the scholarships were cut prior to finishing their degree which
significantly impacted their ability to continue with higher education. Although some
might argue that race is not tied to scholarships, it is impossible to separate race and
immigrant status. The member check participant stated:

To me, the basis for giving scholarships is to fund the education of people who
are going to honestly acquire an education and then become productive citizens.
More than likely, if you want to go to college so bad that you ask for a
scholarship, and that you have to keep up those grades to sustain it, it’s because
you were really invested in education. You value education. You value
contributing to your society. … But of course, those people who are
undocumented, they’re trying to do this, but you tell them, no, you can’t. …
Because they’re undocumented. Because they’re immigrants. Because they’re
immigrants, it doesn’t matter that they want to be productive citizens and acquire
an education. I would say, it doesn’t matter because why? Because they’re People
of Color? Because they’re immigrants? They’re Immigrants of Color. So to me,
that’s what you’re saying. They’re unauthorized. … I don’t understand. And then more so, and I think it’s more evident when you’re like, oh, well, well, well. Let’s give it to everyone. Yeah, we’ll give it to you. And then the political climate changes, or there is more anti-immigrant [sentiment], which is really anti-minority sentiments, oh, let’s…no, no, no more funding.

This participant explained that one cannot ignore the fact that the majority of immigrants in this country are Immigrants of Color and, therefore, anti-immigrant or nativist sentiment can be equated to racist sentiment as well.

The participants’ narratives demonstrate how Latino unauthorized immigrants who have been raised the majority of their lives in the United States are denied access to higher education. These practices bring up very important questions when interrogating racialization and how it impacts the problem. As a researcher or scholar, one must ask, what is the university’s goal in limiting the accessibility of higher education? Given the disproportionate impact, it is hard to deny that racialization plays a role.

**Structural oppression impacting job opportunities.** Participants’ testimonies reveal how racialization impacts the job opportunities, job security and pay rates of unauthorized immigrants. For example, Olivia reported that her unauthorized immigrant aunts and uncles went through many hardships trying to find employment opportunities, getting fired because [of] the social security administration [not having a social security number]…working under the table and getting paid way below the national average, having to deal with horrible supervisors that were taking advantage.
Olivia also discussed how her parents were often relegated to positions in menial labor, having to “work such hard labor jobs just because they don’t have documents.” Olivia’s testimony demonstrates the difficulties unauthorized immigrants have in finding and keeping good paying jobs that match their abilities. Although qualified for better jobs, many unauthorized immigrants cannot be hired because they don’t have the required visas. This forces some with occupational capital to accept jobs below their skill level to earn a paycheck, even if it is for minimum wage or less than minimum wage.

For unauthorized immigrants, stable employment is often not a reality. This is a racialized experience and a form of structural racism. Currently, necessary systems to ensure that unauthorized immigrants have equal rights in the workplace as their U.S. citizen and authorized immigrant counterparts do not exist. In fact, the current structures ensure that unauthorized immigrants do not have the same rights and protections as their U.S. citizen counterparts. Even the basic structures in place meant to protect workers are damaged by the fear that other immigration policies and practices create for immigrants if they do take action on injustices in the workplace. Not knowing if pursuing legal action might ultimately lead to losing their job and/or their detention and deportation, many immigrants are paralyzed within the oppressive system that privileges the business and consumer over immigrant workers. These structural barriers lead to occupational or work scarcity – forcing unauthorized immigrants into difficult working conditions where they might take a job that does not match their qualifications, a job that lacks security, a job that is unsafe or physically demanding, or a job that does not offer equal or fair pay.

In Dante’s case, after an opening presented itself through DACA, he availed himself to the opportunity to take out student loans, complete his bachelor’s degree in
education and find a job that matched his qualifications at a pay rate that would allow him to be able to repay his student loans (loans he accrued when DACA made him eligible). Unfortunately, although Dante had invested so much of himself in attaining higher education, taking out student loans to receive his degree and moving across the country for his job, the structures of oppression once again reared their ugly head. When his DACA renewal paperwork was not processed in a timely fashion (there was a backlog of processing the paperwork), he was not able to continue his job or work legally in the United States. He found himself with no job, no income, a lease to pay for his apartment (since he moved across the country and no longer living with family) and the requirement to repay his student loans or face default.

This is a racialized experience – one unique to those who “benefited” from the opportunities of DACA. Dante had “made it” for all intents and purposes. He had a college degree. He was a teacher who was so passionate about education and teaching his students that when his DACA paperwork expired, he continued teaching at his school without pay as a volunteer as he waited for his paperwork. As an Immigrant of Color, he was forced into making the transition from living his dream (i.e., graduating college and working as a teacher) to having nothing (i.e., no job and no legal job opportunities). The structures in place removed him from his position as a “successful,” college-educated Latino, working an honorable job and giving back to the community, to a position where he was forced to break the law, to work without the proper documentation in a restaurant to pay the bills so that he would not default on his apartment or student loans. The system forced him from the position of a successful, law-abiding citizen to a criminalized position, forced into a life in the shadows, which impacted his emotional well-being (i.e.,
depression). This is a racialized experience. Not only was Dante’s road to higher education marked by his status as an unauthorized Mexican immigrant, his racialized status continues to impact his job opportunities and occupational trajectory.

**DACA and racialization.** DACA, although presented by politicians and media as a step toward immigration reform, upon reviewing the findings of this study, specifically the experiences of the participants who applied for DACA status in the qualitative strand of the study, it becomes apparent that DACA is racialized. Young immigrants who have grown up in the United States and were eligible for DACA, the majority of whom are of Mexican descent, are not granted the opportunity to become U.S. citizens (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). Instead, DACA gives them a temporary (two-year) protection from deportation and the ability to access higher education and work. Although currently able to renew their DACA status every two years, participants’ stories reveal that the process is not simple, particularly due to backlogs in processing. Even when following the deadlines set in place for renewal, immigrants have found themselves losing their ability to work while they wait for their paperwork to be processed. Although these young adults have lived the majority of their lives in the U.S., been education through the U.S. education system and often only vaguely remember their country of origin, they are not able to apply for U.S. citizenship or even permanent legal immigrant status.

As a matter of fact, DACA is a temporary fix for a small percentage (1.1 million) of the unauthorized immigrant population eligible for temporary protection from deportation through DACA (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). With no pathway toward U.S. citizenship or legal permanent resident status, a CRT perspective demands that one asks, Why? What message does DACA send to the young hardworking
immigrants who have been raised in the United States? The message is clear: Although raised in the U.S., you are not one of us. You cannot be a U.S. citizen. In fact, you cannot even have an opportunity to apply for U.S. citizenship. Your presence in the United States is not under your control. The U.S. government controls your bodies and your ability to love, work and attend institutions of higher education. You do not deserve the same rights as your U.S. citizen counterparts, people you were educated with, played with, attended birthday parties with, etc. DACA represents an opportunity for the government to continue to limit and police Immigrants of Color. In its current form, DACA status leaves immigrants hanging in the balance, without security or a clear vision as to what their future will hold in the United States.

Deportation. In terms of deportation, participants’ responses reveal the intentional exclusion of People of Color, based on documentation status. Although unauthorized immigrants have contributed to the system equally as their U.S. citizen and authorized Latino and white counterparts, under current U.S. law, lacking a visa allows for their deportation. The participants’ testimonies indicate that even when an unauthorized immigrant has lived the majority of their life in the United States, has U.S. citizen children, spouses and/or family members, and has been paying taxes (taxes that funds the educational and justice system), they are not protected from deportation. Unauthorized immigrants, no matter the contribution to the U.S., are consistently deported.

A critical race theoretical framework demands researchers and scholars ask why. Although no clear response can be found in this dissertation, within a CRT framework and taking into account the historical and contemporary racist-nativist laws, policies and
practices, one can theorize that immigrants are treated more as a commodity than people. They contribute to the system, paying taxes and filling labor needs, yet are discarded as they are not recognized by the dominant society as an integral part of the social fabric of the United States. Often, there is no consideration to the well-being of the unauthorized immigrant’s U.S. citizen children or their own well-being as they are thrust into a new culture (through deportation), returning to their country of origin that is no longer familiar and in some cases no longer recognizable, forced to leave their country (the U.S.) and the family members living in the United States.

The qualitative findings illustrate how the racist and discriminatory practice of immigrant detention and deportation that targets unauthorized immigrants clearly impacts the U.S. citizen children of unauthorized immigrants. For instance, Gilda, the daughter of unauthorized immigrants, described how the detention and deportation of her parents would impact her and her sibling. She indicated that at 18 years of age, she would become responsible for the care of her younger sibling. As a full-time university student, this would likely (permanently or at least temporarily) end her academic career. With little work experience and no college degree, she would likely be forced into taking lower-skilled jobs to support her brother. There are clear racial implications to this scenario. The current oppressive structures in place that impact unauthorized Immigrants of Color also impact their U.S. citizen children, creating barriers to and limiting possibilities for upward mobility.

**Other aspects of racialization to consider.** Numerous examples of structural oppression remained primarily unseen as I analyzed the qualitative data given my privileged position as a white, U.S. born citizen. This includes a deficits framework when
it comes to English language acquisition, internalized oppression and barriers to upward mobility for unauthorized immigrants and their families. During member checking, these forms of structural oppression were highlighted by the member check participant.

The deficits view of dual language learners was discussed during member checking. For example, Julieta spoke of the community’s negative response to her friend’s mother, an unauthorized Mexican immigrant who did not speak English well. The framing of not speaking English well is a deficits framework, demonstrating how U.S. society frames the language acquisition of a foreign-born person. A strengths-based or assets framework recognizes Julieta’s friend’s mother as an emerging bilingual who not only speaks her first language, Spanish, but also some English. Speaking Spanish and some English demonstrates much higher language ability compared with most native born U.S. citizens. Unfortunately, this is not the way the acquisition of the English language is viewed by the dominant monolingual English speaking society.

When people in the U.S. frame immigrants or children of immigrants as English language learners, they ignore the fact that these individuals speak another language and are in fact dual language learners and emerging bilinguals. This is unique in the United States. This is as strength and a skill that most U.S. natives lack. Framing the language abilities of immigrants in terms of English only is nativist. However, it is impossible to only look at this one aspect of Julieta’s friend’s mom’s identity. Julieta described her friend’s mother by saying that “she didn’t speak very good English.” That aspect of her identity, coupled with the fact that she was an indigenous looking Mexican immigrant of shorter stature and darker skin phenotype, “people would see her and automatically write her off for those reasons.” Although not discussed, I imagine that had Julieta’s friend’s
mom been a white woman of French descent, her language capabilities might have been framed differently. She might have been viewed as worldly versus being “written off.” This view demonstrates that the deficits-based framing of Julieta’s friend is not only nativist, but also racist.

This brings up another important issue in terms of racialization – internalized oppression. Although not highlighted in the findings, it is important to mention that when Julieta described her friend, she described a level of shame. Her friend did not want her own mother, an unauthorized Mexican immigrant who spoke Spanish and had limited English language ability, to accept an award on her behalf during their high school graduation. Instead, her friend asked Julieta’s mother to accept the award with her. Julieta explained that her mother, who came to the U.S. as a young child, appears to be white and European and is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. This is connected to internalized oppression. Julieta’s friend had received so many racist and nativist messages from her community that she internalized it, and as a result rejected her heritage and her mother.

In examining racialization and the impact on the experience of Latino immigrants, there are various barriers to upward mobility to consider. For instance, the member check participant highlighted a comment by Maribel where she stated, “It doesn’t make any sense for the government not to want to fix the status of an immigrant when the whole family, her full, whole family is American.” The counter narrative to this statement is that it does make sense and conforms to the racist nativist history of immigration policy in the United States. The inability of Maribel’s and Yadira’s mother to regularize her status or become a U.S. citizen is a clear example of racialization and the systematic subjugation
of People of Color. Maribel, her sisters and her father are U.S. citizens of Mexican
descent. Her mother is an unauthorized immigrant of Mexican descent. Not allowing her
mother the opportunity to regularize her status (gain permanent legal resident or U.S.
citizen status) impacts the entire family, relegating them to second class U.S. citizens
with substantial barriers in their way to reaching the “American Dream.” By not
regularizing the status of Maribel’s mother, she is not given the opportunity to
demonstrate that she can be a productive U.S. citizen. She cannot legally work and
financially contribute to her family. She cannot legally drive. She cannot travel freely
within the U.S. without fear of being detained by an immigration official. This impacts
the entire family, financially and emotionally. This is structural racism.

Another example of the effects of structural racism is Nancy’s perspective that
becoming an unauthorized immigrant in the United States is akin to not having a life.
Nancy recognizes that the structural barriers that unauthorized immigrants confront on a
daily basis would block her from reaching her life’s dreams and aspirations. When
discussing Nancy’s perspective, the member check participant commented that Nancy’s
statement underscores how the structural barriers “impede these [Unauthorized]
immigrants [from having] a dignified life.” This emphasizes how the historical and
contemporary racist-nativist policies and practices of the United States do not respect the
dignity of all and are in direct conflict with this core social work value. The member
check participant indicated that the findings suggest the following:

It doesn’t matter what they [immigrants] can contribute, what they actually
contribute. Whether its tax money, or volunteer work, or some different skills or
knowing a different language, it doesn’t matter. They’re still not going to get a
fair [chance]. They’re not going to get it with a reasonable effort. They are going to get it with blood, sweat and tears, and maybe never. Just maybe never.

Also of note was Lucia’s statement that based on her experience, she has an increased will to fight for the freedom of unauthorized immigrants. Although admirable, this begs the question, why should a person who was raised and educated in the United States, a free nation, have to fight for her and her counterparts’ freedom? If the U.S. is a democracy and a free country, why should anyone living in the U.S. have to fight for equal rights? Again, although this dissertation does not provide a complete explanation, the findings indicate that this is in part due to racialization. Immigrants are not equally protected under the law. Given the historical and contemporary racist and nativist immigration laws, policies and practices, Immigrants of Color are at a further disadvantage with less freedoms and protections compared with their white U.S. citizen counterparts.

Even Latino U.S. citizens of unauthorized parents are impacted by the policies that target immigrants. For instance, Magda explained that following the government’s decision to not let her husband return to the United States, their oldest son, a U.S. citizen, was seriously impacted, so much so that he had to seek counseling services. The member check participant explained that the current policies and practices of the U.S. government have forced this two-parent Latino household into a position that they meet the dominant society’s negative stereotype of a Latino family. The member check participant stated that dominant society will now view Magda’s son as a “troubled child” who had to seek counseling and lacks a father figure in his life. However, when analyzing the many factors involved in this situation, a more balanced view surfaces. The responsibility shifts
from a community deficits framework that places blame on Magda’s family to a CRT framework that identifies structural oppression as the culprit for the many stressful experiences Magda’s son had to endure that led them to seek counseling. Magda’s husband tried to follow the current policies and procedures to regularize his immigration status. He returned to Mexico so that he could have the necessary meeting at the U.S. consulate in Ciudad Juarez to regularize his status and return to the U.S. to be with his family, all of whom are U.S. citizens. He and his wife never imagined that he would not be granted a visa and that the family would be forever separated. The U.S. system forever changed the course of this family, breaking the family apart and causing a tremendous amount of stress and heartache for each family member, including the U.S. citizen wife and child.

In a similar vein, Dante described needing to take on additional responsibilities as a child of immigrants. He was clear to state that he does not attribute the additional responsibilities to being a child of an unauthorized immigrant, but simply a child of an immigrant. Although the number of children with immigrant parents is quite large at 17.4 million (25% of the child population), the U.S. lacks the appropriate support system to meet their needs (Zong & Batalova, 2015). This forces children, primarily Children of Color, into adult roles at an early age (e.g., to be translators at parent-teacher conferences, government buildings, doctor’s offices, etc.). These are racialized experiences because they are not responsibilities of every child in the U.S., only children of immigrants, most of whom are Children of Color. The additional responsibilities can bring on added stress, causing social-emotional or academic dysfunction that is then blamed on the family, even though the root cause is actually the racist-nativist system.
Racialization and the impact on U.S. citizen children of unauthorized immigrants. Participants described either how their own or their family member’s unauthorized immigrant status was cause for anxiety. When reviewing the demographic makeup of the unauthorized immigrant population, it is impossible to ignore race as the majority of unauthorized immigrants are People of Color. Although the exact number of unauthorized immigrants by country of origin indicated in various reports from 2012-2015 vary slightly, the literature consistently indicates that most unauthorized immigrants are Immigrants of Color (Baker & Rytina, 2013; Passel, 2015: Zong & Batalova, 2015). In fact, approximately half of unauthorized immigrants are of Mexican descent (Baker & Rytina, 2013; Passel, 2015: Zong & Batalova, 2015). The other half of the unauthorized immigrant population hails from other countries in Latin America and Asia, most commonly from El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Honduras, China, the Philippines, Korea, the Dominican Republic and Columbia (Passel, 2015). Less than 5% of unauthorized immigrants hail from Europe, Canada or Oceania (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Other Considerations in Terms of Racialization and the Lived Experience of Latino Immigrants.

Truly, almost every aspect of the qualitative findings can be traced to some form of racialization. Very basic rights often taken for granted by people living in industrialized, free nations like the United States include the ability to travel freely, get their basic medical needs meet, attend college, get a job, etc. These basic rights are not realities for unauthorized immigrants and, in some circumstances, their U.S. citizen children. When analyzing the current situation faced by those living in mixed status families and how their daily lives and future outcomes are impacted, the gravity of the
situation underscores the inhumanity. In fact, when discussing the results during member checking, the participant described the situation as “very heartbreaking; very inhumane.”

The political and social response to immigration is deeply connected to racialization and racist nativism. Historical and contemporary policies and practices target immigrants to meet the needs and demands of the dominant, white U.S. society at the expense of immigrants, particularly Immigrants of Color. When specifically analyzing the experience of unauthorized immigrants, current policies and practices do not allow for the upward mobility of unauthorized immigrants and their U.S. citizen family, but instead actively work to maintain the status quo.

Unauthorized immigrants are exploited by their employers, often not receiving the same protections and pay as their U.S. citizen or authorized immigrant counterparts. They have very limited access to health care, limited access to higher education, limited ability to travel and, in some states, are not granted the ability to apply for and receive a driver’s license or U.S. identification even if they have lived in the United States for the majority of their lives. The American Dream was never, and continues to not be, intended for Immigrants of Color or their families. Instead, this ideal was created for, and is most attainable by those privileged under the law – white, U.S. citizens.

Upon reviewing the testimonies of the participants, the incongruence of the U.S. narrative describing the United States as a free country, with liberty and justice for all, and the lived experience of unauthorized immigrants and their mixed status families is revealed. The participants’ narratives expose the realities of unauthorized immigrants and their family members who are not afforded the same freedoms as their white, U.S. citizen counterparts. These narratives expose the U.S. meta-narrative as a fraud, mere rhetoric.
and an imagined reality that sustains the oppressive system that subjugates People of Color to benefit the white, dominant society.

This highlights one of the core tenets of CRT – the permanence of racism. The meta-narrative describing the U.S. as a free country with liberty and justice for all blinds the white dominant society to their privileged status and their involvement in the subjugation of People of Color. It causes all those who believe it to be complicit in white supremacy and the systematic subjugation of People of Color. This sustains the U.S. system that exploits immigrants who provide the inexpensive goods and services to the U.S. consumer.

This perspective gives insight into the literature that indicates that immigrants often have better outcomes than their U.S.-born children and grandchildren (the immigrant paradox). Immigrants who have not grown up facing the structures of oppression in the United States come to the U.S. filled with hope for a better future for themselves and their children. However, their children and grandchildren grow up with the stress and strain of the oppressive system. Many children and grandchildren of immigrants realize early on that they do not have the same benefits and advantages as their white counterparts. They watch as their parents work long hours to provide the basic necessities for the family and then have to endure the many systemic barriers in place for their family to receive a fair and equal education, have equal access to health care and to travel without fear of racial profiling or the detention or deportation of a family member.

When reflecting on the reason why Immigrants of Color, specifically those living in mixed status families, have to endure such indignities, there is no defensible response. Much of the injustice within their lived experience can be attributed to racism, nativism
and/or racist nativism. In discussing the findings with a participant during member checking, she remarked:

We [dominant U.S. society] don’t want them [Latinos] to go to school. We don’t want to see them working with us. We want to see them putting up roofs. We don’t want to see them, but we want them to do it. Picking our veggies. The only way you’re going to do that is limiting education.

In the interview with Maribel, she explained that she felt like she had more freedom to do different things in her country or origin, Mexico. Her testimony revealed that given the dangerous environment in Mexico and other structural barriers in terms of education, as a U.S. citizen, she had more opportunities in the United States but less freedom – especially as her mother is an unauthorized immigrant. In discussing the findings and racialization during member checking, the member check participant stated that the qualitative findings suggest that the lives of the participants are plagued by racialization. She stated:

You’re not going to be free or as free. We’re going to make you as non-free as we can, so you feel so uncomfortable. So you know what your place is. That’s where I see the common theme of freedom. Undocumented status, or those limitations of freedom and mobility, that also cause family separations, and to me that’s…a common thread in immigrant families that leave other family members behind in their countries of origin, especially children, a constant pressure. A constant emotional toll that they are taking, that they carry with them, doesn’t let them live in peace, and it’s this pressure to get out. It’s a very valid one. The fear of the macroaggressions when you’re a mixed status family that stem directly from
racialization issues. The fear of rejection, or what are people going to say if they find out.

Although when reviewing a single narrative, it is more difficult to identify racialization, upon analyzing all 20 of the participants’ narratives, it is hard to deny the various forms of structural oppression – racism (and racist nativism). Racism is embedded throughout the participants’ stories in the examples of racial profiling, injustices in the education system and job opportunities, and other forms of structural oppression impacting a person’s daily life like driving and traveling restrictions, policies and practices that separate families and/or the societal deficits framework of immigrants.

**Findings Support in the Current Literature**

Current literature indicates that although there is substantial research that supports the immigrant and Hispanic immigrant paradox, ranging from birth outcomes for Latinas (Bender & Castro, 2000; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007) to literature specific to mental health (Alegría et al., 2007, 2008; Borges et al., 2008), both nativity and immigration status are important factors to consider when researching the quality of health care and the health status of Latinos (Kelaher & Jessop, 2002; Rodríguez et al., 2009). Unfortunately, there is a gap in the literature that disaggregates the data based on country of origin and immigrant documentation status. Even so, some research suggests that when Latinos are isolated based on immigrant status, country of origin, etc., the immigrant paradox does not always hold (Bender & Castro, 2000) and that differences exist when comparing mental health outcomes of unauthorized immigrants and their authorized and U.S.-born Latino counterparts (Coffman & Norton, 2010; Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). Specifically, emerging scholarship has indicated that unauthorized
immigrants tend to have poorer mental health outcomes compared with their authorized and U.S.-born Latino counterparts (Coffman & Norton, 2010; Perez & Fortuna, 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010) and that deportation concerns resulting from a new wave of anti-immigrant policies and practices put Latino immigrants at an increased risk for experiencing negative health and emotional states, immigrant stress, psychosocial stressors and below-standard health status (Arbona et al., 2010; Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2005; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

Although statistical significance was not reached in the quantitative strand of this study, the qualitative findings support literature that depicts the many challenges faced by immigrant families, including the constant threat and fear of immigrant detention and/or deportation that ultimately separates families, the limits placed on daily activities like driving (Massey, 2012) and the many limits placed on unauthorized immigrants in terms of accessing basic assistance like health care plans through Medicaid, basic food support through food support and cash assistance, and housing (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 80). Participants clearly articulated these barriers and the impact they have on both the unauthorized immigrants and their entire families, including U.S. citizens (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 for specific findings).

Findings Challenge Commonly Held Myths

This study contributes to the understanding of the experiences of Latinos living in mixed status families, considering the historical and contemporary racist-nativist social and political climate of the United States. The findings challenge the narrative that immigration to the United States is a problem (Chomsky, 2007). The findings also provide a counter-narrative, contradicting many of the basic myths described in Chapter 2.
that support the deficits framing of immigration. The five myths are: 1) Immigrants are taking over the U.S. (Khakoo, 2003) or the U.S. is being invaded by a foreign force (Chavez, 2008). 2) Latino immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). 3) Immigrants are a fiscal and/or economic burden to the United States (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey, 2005). 4) Immigrants are criminals and more prone to criminal activity, especially if they are not legally present in the United States (Chavez, 2008; Rumbaut, 2008). 5) The immigrant paradox (Teruya & Bazargan-Hejazi, 2013), specifically that immigrants are at a health advantage compared with their U.S. born counterparts. The following subsections briefly review each myth and describe how the present study’s findings support the challenges made to these myths.

**Myth 1.** Immigrants are taking over the U.S. (Khakoo, 2003) or the U.S. is being invaded by a foreign force (Chavez, 2008). As described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the literature does not support the threat narrative that portrays immigration in the United States in crisis terms, where immigrants are invading or overrunning the United States (Chavez, 2008; Khakoo, 2003). Even so, this myth continues to be a common and often unchecked narrative in U.S. political and social discourse.

The narratives from the qualitative strand of this study provide a counter-narrative, placing Latinos in the context of a savage and discriminatory system. It is not the immigrants or their families who are the threat, but the U.S. society that places numerous barriers meant to limit or block Latinos from the roads to success in the United States. Some of these barriers include limited support structures to guide students in immigrant families through the educational pipeline, barriers for unauthorized
immigrants to receive in-state tuition or scholarships for higher education, racial profiling and the active policing of the immigrant community, the inability of unauthorized immigrants to legally work, putting them at risk for exploitation or unfair working environments, and barriers for unauthorized immigrants to travel both internally and internationally.

Even with all these barriers in place, the participants’ narratives highlight the strengths and resiliency within themselves and their families. The families are not dangerous invaders, as often portrayed in U.S. media. They are hardworking individuals who persevere through the aforementioned barriers and have found success and continue to work hard throughout difficult circumstances. For example, even though Dante described living in a mixed status family as more challenging than a U.S. citizen family (subsequent to the current policies and practices that negatively impact his family’s ability to access basic services like healthcare, well-paying jobs and higher education), he also highlighted the benefits of his experience. He stated:

It’s been challenging. It’s been. … I would say it’s not been as easy as living in a family where everybody isn’t a citizen or legal resident, but I think that it’s also been beneficial for us and…for myself, specifically, because I don’t let things just stop me and I fight for the things that I want in life. And I don’t give up easily, because I know nothing comes easily in life. So…it’s just growing up like that, in a mixed family, has helped me with determination and just will power to face obstacles and get through. I wouldn’t change it.

Dante has learned to persevere in even the most difficult situations. He is aware of the obstacles that exist in the world, yet he will not let them deter him.
Similarly, Olivia described how having unauthorized extended family members has motivated her to gain a greater awareness and understanding of laws and legislation. She stated:

Well, I think you are a lot more aware of what is happening in the country versus a lot of other individual that don’t have to worry about that. So, for example, I don’t rely on English media to tell me what is happening when it comes to immigration because what they cover is so brief and not really, it is like they fluff over it, they don’t really want to cause a stir versus if you watch Spanish media and read Spanish newspapers, things like that, there is a whole lot more that is being covered, here is the new legislation, here is the new laws, who is running for the 2016 presidential campaign, like that. Latinos pay attention to that and I do as well because I have family members that are undocumented versus individuals, other families, friends of mine that I know don’t have to worry about that. They just don’t even pay attention to that discourse, I guess.

Through her experience, Olivia increased her self-efficacy. She learned the importance of educating herself, getting involved and advocating for herself and her family to make a positive change.

For Gilda, living in a mixed status family motivated her to do well and set an example for her younger brothers, especially when it comes to educational attainment.

She shared:

It’s kind of that pressure to use my papers to do something…a lot is expected of me. Like I said, I’m the first child, and I’m the oldest and all of that. And it’s just…there’s a pressure to do extremely well. If I get my parents out of the
lifestyle we’re in now and to show my brothers that we have to go to college and we have to get an education and…it’s really stressing.

Gilda did not allow for financial or other barriers to stop her as she moved forward through the education pipeline. She graduated high school and, at 18 years of age, entered the university and is currently pursuing her bachelor’s degree. Although she indicated that this pressure is stressful, she demonstrates great determination as she perseveres, pushing through the difficulties to reach her dreams.

Lucia grew up in the U.S. as an unauthorized immigrant. Although she felt disempowered after realizing the significance of her unauthorized immigrant status and its impact on her ability to access her educational and occupational aspirations, after winning an award in high school (gaining an ambassador position as an unauthorized student), Lucia described feeling an increased will to fight for the freedom of unauthorized immigrants. She shared:

It gave me a will to…to be more…like, hey, there’s more of us in the shadow and that’s not OK. We need to make sure that this government…that our rights as human beings are not being demolished, that I’m not being oppressed. And we need to stand up and we need to fight for what’s rightfully ours, which is a freedom. A freedom to be happy. A freedom to pursue whatever life we want to pursue. Regarding our sexual orientation, regarding our ethnicity, regarding our color of our skin. We’re here and we need to pursue things. We need to get up and be standing up and fight, and not let our people be oppressed, and not be taken advantage of, and not living in fear, and not living in shadows, where that’s where they want to keep us.
Even with the many barriers the racist nativist structures of the United States present for unauthorized immigrants and their families, the participants’ stories reveal an ability to persevere through the most difficult of circumstances. Participants described not only being dedicated to themselves and their families, but to the larger Latino and U.S. community. Participants described increased levels of social consciousness and awareness, whether that be involvement in the community or pushing one’s self to excel in education or improving one’s family situation. Participants consistently described ways that they confronted the problems and barriers they faced subsequent to the unauthorized immigrant status of themselves or a family member. These are not the attributes of dangerous invaders, but resilient individuals who are dedicated to their families and communities in the United States.

**Myth 2.** Latino immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). Findings from the present study, similar to the larger body of literature, contradict the common belief that immigrants do not integrate into society, as they are perceived to not learn English, marry within cultural enclaves and participate in mainstream U.S. society (Chavez, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Cole, 1994; Khakoo, 2003; Passel & Fix, 1994). For example, each of the 20 participants from the qualitative strand of this study not only speak English, but are bilingual in English and Spanish. One of the participants speaks four languages. In addition, participants described being aware of social and political issues in the U.S., and many described being actively involved in politics or social movements. These participants, 19 of 20 of whom are in immigrant families and half from mixed status
immigrant families, are not only integrated into U.S. society, but actively involved in education, their communities and the political issues.

Although the qualitative results contradict the myth that immigrants do not integrate into U.S. society, they also chronicle how the political and social response to immigration greatly impacts the experience of those living in mixed status families, creating barriers for Latino immigrants to integrate into U.S. society through an extremely restrictive environment that impacts not only the unauthorized immigrant, but also authorized or U.S. citizen family members. The many work, educational, and health restrictions faced by unauthorized immigrants subsequent to their immigration status are the impetus for much educational, health, occupational, and family struggles. Although the system provides many barriers to upward mobility and engagement in educational and occupational opportunities, the participants’ narratives chronicled how they are integrated and invested in U.S. society.

**Myth 3.** Immigrants are a fiscal and/or an economic burden to the United States (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996; Massey, 2005). Chapter 2 of this dissertation documented substantial literature addressing this myth and the misconception that immigrants and/or immigration negatively impact the U.S. economy, as they are perceived to not contribute through taxes, depress job opportunities and wages, and use welfare and public benefits at high rates. Although not addressed in the quantitative strand of this dissertation, the qualitative findings indicate that immigrants and their children want to work and provide for their families, however, there were significant structural barriers put in place that limited their ability to do so. This perspective is very important as it shifts the blame or responsibility from the immigrants to the structural
barriers that negatively impact immigrants’ ability for upward mobility and making sufficient income. In the case of the current research project, the findings indicated that barriers prohibit immigrant families from accessing healthcare; financial resources for higher education, including in-state tuition in some states; and finding legal work, which puts them at risk for exploitation or unfair working environments.

**Myth 4.** Immigrants are criminals and more prone to criminal activity (Chavez, 2008; Rumbaut, 2008). As described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the literature indicates that immigrants are less likely than their U.S.-born counterparts to commit crime (Butcher & Piehl, 1998; Khakoo, 2003; MacDonald et al., 2013; Nielsen & Martinez, 2011; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008). Although this study did not specifically address this myth, it did address the criminalization of immigrants. Despite the lower crime rates within the immigrant population, participants in mixed status families described living in fear of the police and immigration officers.

For example, in contrasting the experience of her nuclear, authorized immigrant family members to that of her mixed status extended family members, Diana exposed how although legal permanent resident status does not provide the full protection of U.S. citizenship status, this status allows her family to be exempt from thinking about or worrying about immigration officers detaining or deporting them. Diana said, “I don’t think that my parents ever think about, well…like, la migra, how we call it, is going to come and take us away. Or we’re going to be separated or anything.” This lies in stark contrast to the experience of her extended family members that live in a mixed status family. Diana shared:
They’re always thinking about those things, yes. And they…they experience different emotions than we do. Like, I…they just seem always worried about things. Worried more than normal. … Whereas, like, we worry about paying bills on time and not accruing a lot of debt. But they worry about staying here. Which we don’t.

For Diana’s extended family members in mixed status families, the simple act of being able to remain in the United States is a concern. This is not something that her authorized immigrant nuclear family has ever had to think about.

Julieta, born to a legal permanent resident mother of Cuban descent and a U.S.-born Mexican American father, acknowledged that her family’s protected statuses insulate her from having to confront issues with immigration or feeling targeted by immigration policy or the media’s portrayal of immigrants. Julieta explained:

- We would never live in fear because we were documented and we were accepted in the country. So Cubans, like I said, were refugees, so it’s a different situation than being Mexican and having to come across the border and then being criminalized, you know, and constantly living in fear on top of being criminalized and feeling like, you know, you’ve done something wrong, just because that’s what immigration, kind of, labeled you as or media.

Julieta described an awareness of the role immigration policy and media play in the criminalization and perpetuation of the Latino threat narrative (Chavez, 2008) and the role this plays in her experience compared with the experience of Mexican immigrants.

**Myth 5.** Immigrants are at an advantage compared with their U.S.-born counterparts, particularly when it comes to health (i.e., the immigrant paradox) (Teruya &
Bazargan-Hejazi, 2013). As described in the literature review, current literature indicates that generalizations of the entire immigrant community can lead to inaccurate information. Therefore, one must acknowledge the intersecting identities of immigrants (e.g., country of origin, ethnicity, acculturation, documentation/U.S. citizen status, etc.) and how current U.S. immigration policies and practices differently impact each group. The findings from this dissertation support the literature that demonstrates the differences within the Latino community specific to the nativity and immigrant status of the family. Additionally, results illustrate challenges unique to Latinos in mixed-citizenship status families subsequent to current immigration policies and practices such as limited support structures to guide students in immigrant families through the educational pipeline; barriers for unauthorized immigrants to receive in-state tuition or scholarships for higher education; racial profiling and the active policing of the immigrant community; the inability of unauthorized immigrants to legally work, putting them at risk for exploitation or unfair working environments; and barriers for unauthorized immigrants to travel both internally and internationally. These unique experiences take an emotional toll on all members of mixed-citizenship status families, including authorized immigrant and U.S. citizen family members.

**Limitations**

**Sample**

**Sample size.** One limitation is the small sample size (n = 214) of the quantitative strand of this mixed methods research study. It is important to note that the lack of statistically significant differences between groups does not necessarily signify that they
do not exist, only that potential significant differences might not have been captured by the quantitative strand of the present research study given the small sample size.

**Group differences.** Another limitation of the present study is connected to both the dataset and quantitative analysis. For the present study, two samples (e.g., a sample collected from adolescents at a high school and a sample of adults collected from a snowball sample from college campuses) were combined to increase the overall sample size. However, a chi square test for independence indicated that the sample status (adult or high school) and family status are not independent. For example, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the family mixed-citizenship status grouping variable (white U.S. native family, Latino U.S. native family, Latino immigrant family (not mixed status) and Latino mixed status family) and the adult or high school variable. The chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between these variables $\chi^2 (df = 3, N = 193) = 26.545$, $p = .000$. In addition, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the Latino only grouping variable (Latino U.S. native family, Latino immigrant family (not mixed status) and Latino mixed status family) and the adult or high school variable. The chi-square analysis also indicated a statistically significant relationship between these variables $\chi^2 (df = 2, N = 139) = 10.455$, $p = .005$. This interaction was not controlled for in the ANOVA analysis and might have impacted the results (i.e., non-significant results).

**Sampling Bias**

Another limitation of this study is sampling bias. For instance, the qualitative portion of the study included 20 participants who had at least some college education.
(100%). Over half (55%, n = 11) had a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, three of the 20 participants (15%) had a graduate degree, and 14 of 20 (70%) were currently enrolled in either an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral program at the time of the interviews. In contrast, when looking at the total Hispanic population in the United States, approximately 15% of the Hispanic population ages 18-24 do not complete high school (i.e., dropped out or are not enrolled) and, of those who graduated high school, 49% enroll in college (Lopez & Fry, 2013). In addition, 13% of Hispanics have a bachelor’s degree or higher (Ogunwole, Drewery, & Rios-Vargas, 2012). This demonstrates that the qualitative sample is more educated than the national average and, therefore, not representative of all Latinos in the United States.

Although the experiences of the participants are real and valid, there are many voices left out. When endeavoring to begin this dissertation, the original aim was to sample high school students, but complications of gaining parental consent of parents who may be unauthorized immigrants and high school administration turnover rates prohibited access to multiple high schools. This significantly limiting the sample size. Therefore, although able to collect data at a small high school, the target population for this dissertation was expanded to include college students. This has implications for the research as a high school sample is arguably more representative of the larger Latino population. Unfortunately, the sampling methodology for this study eliminated the opportunity for the most marginalized, those who do not have higher education experience and those who had dropped out of high school, to participate.
Little Diversity of Ethnicity

Another limitation is that the sample included little diversity in terms of ethnicity. The initial research project aimed to capture multiple comparison groups, including Latinos, African Americans and whites. Only 13 non-Latino Persons of Color (Asian or Asian American, black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native) completed the survey. This small number did not make a large enough comparison group and were subsequently excluded from analysis. The final sample included 139 Latinos and 62 white, non-Hispanics. However, the group sizes decreased further when separated based on ethnicity and family U.S. citizenship and immigrant status. The subgroups included 24 Latinos in U.S.-native families, 68 Latinos in immigrant families (not mixed status), 47 Latinos in mixed status families and 54 whites in U.S.-native families. The small size of these sub-groups made it inappropriate to use high level statistical analysis to better understand group similarities and differences.

Although adding a great amount of depth of understanding to the problem, the qualitative strand of the study did not allow for generalizable results. Although this is not the aim of qualitative research, it is quite certainly a limitation. In addition, the qualitative strand of the study did not include a non-Latino comparison group. Although the aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of how mixed-citizenship status impacts Latinos, it would have been beneficial to have had a non-Latino comparison group (e.g., white counterparts) to better understand the role of race/ethnicity and citizenship.
Member Checks

A final limitation of this study is specific to member checks. The member check in the present study provided great insight into the findings and was an integral part of understanding how racialization impacts the research problem. As a white researcher, it was a necessary step for validating the results and gaining a better depth of understanding of the results. Unfortunately, due to various restrictions, both financial and time, for this dissertation, only two people were included for the purposes of inter-rater reliability, member checks and reviewing the results. One was a Latina graduate student who had transcribed and read the transcripts. The other was a participant from a mixed status family. Their feedback was so important, that upon reflecting on the current research design, it became apparent that the inclusion of additional participants for the purposes of member checking (either as part of a focus group or additional individual interviews) would have likely provided an even greater depth of understanding of the substantive area.

Implications for Practice, Policy and Research.

This section includes implications for practice, policy and research. It begins with practice implications, highlighting general practice implications and implications specific to education (K-higher education). It then describes implications specific to policy, including immigration reform and the decriminalization of immigrants and immigration. This section concludes with recommendations for future research, addressing methodological implications, general implications within the substantive area, implications specific to education and implications for resiliency research.
General Practice Implications

The findings from this study have various practice implications in the field of social work. Most important are the implications for cultural responsive practice, documentation, self-awareness of the practitioner’s own bias and how their social location impacts their client’s view of them, relationship building and advocacy.

Culturally responsive practice. Although findings from the quantitative strand did not reach statistical significance, they are telling in that the patterns reveal differences between Latino participants in mixed status families and Latino participants in non-mixed status families. The most notable differences between groups existed in the reports of perceived discrimination, a topic discussed earlier in the discussion section. This finding has various practice implications. First, it highlights the importance for practitioners to be aware of the nuances between Latinos in U.S. native families, Latinos in immigrant families (non-mixed status) and Latino immigrants in mixed status families. For instance, the level of fear that impacts Latino clients might differ based on their family’s U.S citizenship and immigrant status. Differences described in the qualitative strand between Latinos in authorized immigrant families and mixed-citizenship status families emphasize the importance of not making generalizations about all Latinos. Instead, practitioners should be aware of how the client is differently impacted based on the family system and the various social and political pressures in the U.S. (e.g., racism, nativism, anti-immigrant policies and practices, etc.) that differently impact Latinos based on their family members’ country of origin, U.S. citizenship and immigration statuses.

The fear that permeates the lives of families touched by immigrant detention can greatly impact the psyche of all involved, particularly children. It is important for
practitioners to be cautious when trying to support families and children. A practitioner might feel pulled to make an individual, particularly an adolescent or young adult, feel safe and therefore tell them that everything will be okay, that they are safe, or that police officers and other officials are here to protect the community and will not hurt them. This messaging dismisses their lived experiences and might cause the client to become more guarded, not feel understood or diminish the trust that was already established in the social worker – client relationship.

**Documentation.** Another practice implication is that social workers should never document, write down or share information about the status of a client or their family members, even when releases of information are signed and when case notes or clinical notes are required. Once the documentation status of family members is in a client’s record, it has the potential of following them and putting unauthorized family members in jeopardy of detention or deportation, leading to the separation of family. Whether the documentation status of a client or family members is verbal or written, social workers should never share it.

**Self-awareness.** Practice implications regarding the findings specific to perceived discrimination highlight the importance for social work practitioners to increase awareness not only about their own biases, but also of their own social location and how they might be perceived by their clients. This is especially important if there are additional power dynamics present in the client-worker relationship (e.g., white practitioner and Latino client). Given the amount of discrimination (both racist and nativist) endured by Latinos, it is important that practitioners are sensitive to this and how it might impact the client-social worker relationship. These discriminatory experiences
might cause a compound trauma response, especially when coupled with an immigration
detention event of either oneself or a family member. It is imperative that social work
practitioners are aware of the many discriminatory experiences Latinos might face each
day. An empowerment perspective and supporting clients to build self-efficacy both in
the client-social worker relationship and in the work done together would be one way to
increase a client’s sense of control within the current racist and nativist system.

**Relationship building.** This brings up the importance of building rapport and
authentic relationships and creating an open non-judgmental space when working with
clients. Informed consent and reviewing confidentiality can play an important role in a
client feeling comfortable sharing information about the immigrant status of family
members. When clients feel safe (protected through confidentiality) and not at risk of
judgment, they are more likely to share their struggles, including issues with
immigration. It is also important for practitioners to be aware that, for many people,
sharing information about the unauthorized immigrant status of themselves or a family
member can have both a positive or negative impact. On the one hand, it allows them to
get additional support, whether that be emotional support or referral resources. On the
other hand, they also risk putting their families in jeopardy of detention or deportation by
“outing” themselves. Much care should be taken when discussing these topics with
clients.

**Advocacy.** Cultural responsiveness is paramount. This does not just entail
culturally grounded interventions and culturally responsive personal interactions between
clients and social workers that respond to the cultural and linguistic background of the
client. Cultural responsiveness also includes ethical practice and demands an awareness

regarding the current political and social context of immigration. This includes the responsibility to be aware of laws, policies and practices of a social worker’s agency of employment, local government, state government and federal government and how these laws, policies and practices might impact Latino clients based on their immigration statuses. If a social worker is unaware of cultural issues, current policies and practices, culturally grounded interventions and/or referral resources and community supports, it is his or her responsibility to seek out and receive adequate supervision from a licensed social worker or other knowledgeable professional who is an expert in the field.

Ethical practice does not stop at awareness, but it might mean rejecting and confronting unjust policies, practices and/or laws. At a macro level, NASW advocates for broad immigration reforms that “uphold and support equity and human rights while protecting national security” (National Association of Social Workers, 2007, p. 8). Social workers need to stay informed of international, national, state and local policies that impact immigrants and actively advocate and take action (i.e., vote) in ways that promote the dignity and worth of all human beings (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). This includes voting for policies and candidates that support both equity and human rights (National Association of Social Workers, 2007). In terms of advocacy, social workers should also remain involved in politics by writing letters to local, state and national representatives to promote human rights for all people. Social workers should also take an active presence when issues are brought to Capitol Hill, ensuring a presence that represents the social work core values. It is imperative that social workers are present in such situations to appropriately share a voice of moderation in the face of anti-immigrant rhetoric. This is a key component of cultural responsive practice as it is the
structures of oppression that most impact our clients. Simply addressing the presenting problem, but not the root cause (i.e., systematic oppression), will not lead to a more equitable environment for the client system.

**Critique of resiliency.** As previously stated, a limitation of the study was sampling bias. The qualitative sample included in this study has higher levels of education than the national average and is therefore not representative of all Latinos in the United States. This has practice implications as a sample of college educated Latinos could be considered a separate or unique population than their counterparts without college educations. Therefore, the resiliency factors that enabled participants to bridge the broken education pipeline, enabling them to enroll in and graduate from four-year programs and for some continue onto graduate programs might be unique. The practice implication is for social workers to keep resiliency in the context of the various areas of structural oppression addressed within this dissertation. Unknowingly, by focusing on resiliency, the responsibility of not succeeding might shift from one that acknowledges the role of structural oppression of outcomes and “success rates” to a community deficits perspective – blaming those targeted by racist and/or nativist laws, policies and practices (structural oppression) for not having the traits that lead to resiliency.

Often, social workers think of people from marginalized communities who have made it to higher education as being more resilient than their peers. This perspective might cause some to be critical of Latinos who have not been able to access higher education, blaming them for not working hard enough rather than the system that places numerous barriers blocking Latinos from accessing and successfully graduating from higher education (bachelor, graduate and doctoral programs). This was not the intention
of the resiliency section of the qualitative results. The aim was to honor the great achievements of the participants, but not to diminish those who have not reached similar levels of academic achievement. The reality is that Latinos, especially Latino immigrants, who are able to overcome the numerous systematic and structural barriers to achieving academic success in K-12 education and then successfully access and graduate from higher education demonstrate an incredible amount of strength surpassing that of most U.S. citizens (i.e., white U.S. citizens who do not have to endure a system that subjugates them based on the color of their skin).

Although it is important to acknowledge this resiliency and the factors leading to resiliency and positive outcomes, it needs to be made clear that accessing and graduating from higher education programs given the numerous barriers in place for Latinos is not an easy accomplishment. In fact, the current system ensures that a select few graduate from four-year colleges. Therefore, one must not mistakenly view academically successful Latinos and think that their success demonstrates that we live in an equitable society, that everyone has an equal chance to access and graduate from higher education, and that those who do not reach the same level of success are at fault. One must keep the resiliency findings in context and acknowledge the great feat it is for Latinos to graduate high school and four-year college programs within the oppressive educational system of the United States.

**Education Specific Practice Implications**

The various social work implications can be directly applied to the field of education. The adult quantitative sample included 139 Latinos, 115 (82%) of whom were born to at least one immigrant parent, including 47 in mixed status families (40% of the
Latino sample). When specifically looking at the high school quantitative sample, the percentage of Latino students born into immigrant families was slightly higher. In fact, 40 Latino high school students (88%) had at least one immigrant parent. Of these students, 21 (44% of the Latino high school sample) had at least one unauthorized immigrant parent. In addition, nearly a quarter of the Latino high school students (n =11, 23%) indicated that a parent had been deported. This suggests that not only had many high school students in this sample been separated by family members due to immigrant detention and deportation, but also that many students currently have family members in danger of detention and deportation based on their unauthorized immigration status.

This has numerous practice implications specific to the U.S. education system. This section will address the need for social emotional support to be offered on elementary, middle school, high school and college campuses. It will then address the need for the educational pipeline from kindergarten through college to be strengthened. It will specifically discuss the need for cultural competency/responsiveness and cultural humility training for K-12 and higher education educators, staff and student leaders. This section also addresses the need for social work professionals to advocate for policies and practices that support increasing the number of Latinos accessing and graduating from higher education programs and advocating against policies and practices that act as barriers.

**Social-emotional and other support offered on high school and college campuses.** The results from this study suggest that high schools and colleges with large Latino student bodies would benefit from in service trainings for families regarding their rights as immigrants (e.g., what to do if they are pulled over or asked to show
identification to a police officer, how to apply for legal immigrant status, new immigration bills, policies and practices and how they impact the community, etc.). This data also indicates that a significant portion of the high school participants has endured immigration-related trauma (e.g., family separation and/or fear of family separation) and might benefit from additional social-emotional support. This could take the form of receiving individual or group counseling services from a school social worker/psychologist/counselor or referrals to community support resources. In addition, high schools, particularly those serving large Latino immigrant populations, might benefit from having a school-based therapist from the community mental health center on site to make counseling services more accessible to students and families. These professionals should have a background in trauma-informed care and the impact of complex trauma to meet the needs of students who regularly endure trauma from racist and nativist macroaggressions, overt forms of racism and nativism, family separation subsequent to structural oppression (i.e., immigrant detention and deportation) and the continued threat of family separation. These services would also be beneficial to students at the college level, particularly colleges with large Latino populations. An important component of having these services would be ensuring that outreach regarding these services is done in a culturally responsive way to increase access to, and participation in, the available support.

**Strengthening the high school to higher education pipeline.** It is necessary to strengthen the high school to higher education pipeline. This recommendation comes directly from the qualitative findings that identify numerous barriers to Latino students, particularly those in immigrant families, accessing higher education. For example,
participants stated that they did not have the desired educational guidance from their families (often because immigrant parents were not familiar with the U.S. education system) or from the schools. In member checking, the participant expanded on the findings, stating that Latino high school students “don’t know what they don’t know,” meaning they aren’t aware of the educational opportunities, what questions to ask, who to go to for support, etc. In addition, the member check participant stated “in order to ask for help, they wouldn’t even know what to ask for help.” Given this reality, the appropriate structures need to be put into place to ensure that Latino students, particularly those in immigrant families, understand the U.S. education system, the various opportunities within the system, and how to best access and take advantage of the opportunities.

One way to do this would be to provide Latino students who have successfully entered higher education stipends or credit for mentoring high school Latino students, including providing education to families about the college application process, reviewing paperwork with students and families, giving advice regarding testing, extracurricular activities and other requirements. This type of service would not only empower and build self-efficacy for the Latino college students, but it would also provide a much needed service to Latino high school students and families. In addition, by having Latino college students who have successfully matriculated and entered a higher education program as the mentors versus a high school advisor (who likely would be a white woman given the demographics of teachers and social workers), Latino high school students would be able to more closely identify (ethnically and culturally) with their mentor. They would also be able to witness and talk with someone of a similar cultural
and ethnic background who has demonstrated academic success. The provision of Latino mentors would also increase the likelihood for Latino students to receive culturally relevant and responsive services.

**Increase funding for and advertise the presence of Latin college organizations.** Another method for strengthening the educational pipeline would be to increase the number of Latino student unions, support programs and other organizations on college campuses. These services and organization would provide a support network for students who are dealing with some of the unique stresses described in the qualitative findings. In addition, Latino campus organizations can connect Latino students and faculty for mentorship opportunities, to support academic and/or professional growth, research and scholarship. Such support can help Latino students feel more comfortable in primarily white institutions (PWIs).

Provide professors, staff and student leaders training on cultural competence, cultural humility and culturally responsive practices. Another necessary component of strengthening the educational pipeline is to ensure that professors, staff and student leaders all work toward cultural responsiveness. Universities should provide mandatory, ongoing professional development to develop culturally grounded practice and address cultural mismatches between the professors and students. The integration of culturally responsive lessons and teaching strategies should be part of the evaluative and tenure process. This would increase the likelihood that those who receive tenure are capable of meeting the needs of their Latino students.

**Advocacy for policies and practices that support increasing the number of Latinos in higher education and advocating against policies and practices that act as**
barriers. A final recommendation for strengthening the educational pipeline is the need for policies and practices that increase the number of Latinos attending and graduating from four-year universities. For example, participants in the qualitative interviews noted that in some states, unauthorized immigrants were not able to enroll in public universities. Other participants noted limited financial support in the form of scholarship, in-state tuition and student loans. Social workers must actively advocate against such policies. Another structural practice implication that might impact the graduation rates of Latino students (K-higher education) is to improve hiring practices so that elementary, middle, high school and college teachers, professors and staff match the ethnic/racial demographics of the United States.

Policy Recommendations

It is the job of “social workers [to] pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people” (National Association of Social Workers, 2008, p. 5). Findings from the present study indicate how mixed-citizenship status families are oppressed and made vulnerable due to the current structural barriers that limit their access to education, healthcare, travel and that constantly threaten the unity of their families. The present study highlights the historical and contemporary racist-nativist immigration policies and practices that plague the immigration system. Given the pervasive nature of racist nativism, recommendations for small changes to immigration policy would not be effective. Instead, it is necessary to have a complete overhaul of our immigration system, including changes that address historical and current oppressive systems and practices at the local, state and federal
levels. This recommendation aligns with those of the National Association of Social Workers (2007).

This type of comprehensive immigration reform should respect the dignity and worth of every person (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). In order to do this, current law and policies that lead to 1) unfair working conditions, 2) limit unauthorized immigrants access to equal and fair healthcare and education, 3) lead to increase injury and death at the U.S. border, 4) do not provide a clear path toward legal immigrant and U.S. citizenship status, and 5) separate families through immigrant detention, deportation and/or forcing unauthorized immigrants to return to their country of origin for extended periods of time in order to receive a pardon and the necessary visa to return to the U.S. would need to be replaced with policies that would protect individuals and families and ensure that all individuals in the United States, no matter their own or their parent’s immigration status, would have an equal opportunity for upward mobility. In order to do this, comprehensive reform would not just be specific to immigration, but also health care, education, social welfare and the criminal justice system.

**Decriminalization of immigrants and immigration.** An integral component of immigration reform is the decriminalization of immigrants and immigration. The CRT analysis of immigration policy included in this dissertation clearly demonstrates the role racism and nativism has played and continues to play in the creation of immigration policy and practice that criminalizes immigrants. Given the permanence of immigration in the United States, the institution of immigration needs to be accepted as part of the U.S. culture.
Social workers should play an active role in ensuring that immigration policies and practices facilitate positive outcomes for U.S. citizens and immigrants. Continuing to implement immigration policy and practice based on fear, racism, nativism and the advancement of white elite interests is detrimental to U.S. society. In order to break away from the United States’ long history of racism and nativism in immigration policy and practice, it is imperative to reframe the negative way immigrants are often framed by U.S. citizens, politicians and the media. For example, instead of labeling unauthorized immigrants as “illegals” and criminalizing their presence in the United States, one could argue that the U.S. is being provided an enormous service – low-pay, difficult labor that most U.S. citizens are unwilling to do. This re-frame flips the social construction of Latino immigrants on the margins as having abnormal or criminal lifestyles to a social construction that allows one to legitimize and view the strengths of the lifestyles of Persons of Color and immigrants (Chavez, 2008).

The contributions of Latino immigrants need to be recognized. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of Latino immigrants, social workers, media and politicians must focus on their positive contributions. Doing so would allow U.S. society to build on the strengths of new immigrants in order to improve U.S. society. Salazar et al. (2008) explain:

**Latinos enrich the United States of America.** The nation must not fail to capitalize on the vast economic, cultural, and political resources the Latino community offers, including: bilingual competency; multicultural perspectives; a rich cultural heritage; a historical legacy of achievement and resiliency; family values; child-centered views; community-centered approaches; respect for the
elderly; optimistic and appreciative attitudes; a strong faith; good will; transnational connections; and a robust work ethic. (p. 12)

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Findings from the current study have various implications for future research. This section includes methodological implications, general implications within this substantive area and education, and implications for research specific to resiliency.

**Methodological implications.** It is recommended that future research in this substantive area continue to be mixed methods in nature, including a quantitative and qualitative component so that both larger group differences and a greater depth of understanding of the similarities and differences between groups can be determined. Ideally, the quantitative component of such a study would include a larger sample size, and the qualitative component would include diverse perspectives reflecting the heterogeneity of the Latino population.

As previously stated, one of the limitations of the present study is that the high school and adult groups and the research variables appear to be dependent. As this was not controlled for in the ANOVA analysis in the present study, future research specific to this area of inquiry (i.e., same research questions) and dataset would be to run linear and binary regressions. In doing so, the same research questions could be addressed while controlling for the presence of two independent samples (i.e., high school and adult group) within the dataset. In addition, future research should explore the interaction of the potential cofounders with the research variables, including the immigrant and citizenship status of participants.
Another area for future research is to explore each age group (e.g., high school and college students) independently. Currently, there is very little research specific to high school students in this substantive area. It would be beneficial to explore the experiences of Latino high school students and college students separately to better understand how they are differently impacted by the immigrant and citizenship status of family members considering historical and contemporary immigration policies and practices.

Also previously noted, a limitation of the study was sampling bias. The majority of recruitment took place at colleges and snowball sampling from college students. This has implications for research as college students are more easily accessible for the purposes of recruitment than their counterparts who are no longer in school (i.e., those who dropped out or did not continue with school upon graduating high school). College students, most of whom are adults, are also more accessible for recruitment purposes than their high school counterparts as they do not need a parental consent to participate. Unfortunately, the sampling methodology for this study eliminated the opportunity for the most marginalized, those who do not have higher education experience and those who had dropped out of high school, to participate. Future research should aim to capture the voices of Latino high school students, Latinos who dropped out of high school and Latinos who did not go on to higher education. The inclusion of their voices would be more representative of the larger Latino population than college students alone.

Another important research implication for the qualitative component of any study by an outsider (a person who does not identify with the target population, in this case a white, U.S. native research completing a study of the Latino immigrant
community) is the importance of member checking, not only for the purposes of triangulation and inter-rater reliability of codes/coding, but also for the results. The member check in the present study provided great insight into the findings and was an integral part of understanding how racialization impacts the research problem. As a white, U.S. native researcher studying this substantive area, it is important to not only include member checks as part of the study, but also to include focus groups and/or individual interviews with multiple participants when reviewing the findings. This will not only allow for a deeper understanding of the substantive area, but it will also give the participants the opportunity to expand on their own ideas or the thoughts of their counterparts.

**Additional areas of focus for future research in this substantive area.** The present research study investigated the experience of Latinos in mixed status families. Although it is important to continue research in this line of inquiry, future research should also investigate how an individual’s own status (U.S. citizen, immigrant, unauthorized immigrant and DACA status immigrants) impact their emotional well-being. In addition, future research should also include the investigation of the impact of the current immigration policies and practices on the Latino community and larger U.S. community. This research could guide the direction of immigration reform.

**K-12 education.** Participants’ responses demonstrate the many deficiencies of the current educational system when it comes to serving the Latino community, especially the immigrant community, including U.S. citizens born to immigrant parents. Future research should investigate the state of education for Latinos, barriers to education, and also models and best practices to ensure that Latinos receive an equitable education (K-
higher education). This research could lead to changes in the current education system and more equitable practices.

**Higher education.** Our current immigration and education policy is flawed. Latinos, particularly those living in mixed status families and unauthorized immigrants, often receive a taste of education (completing high school and entering higher education programs) but are not always able to complete the meal (graduate with a college degree). Similar to U.S. citizens, unauthorized immigrants are legally able to access free K-12 education. However, unauthorized immigrants then face significant barriers to accessing and graduating from higher education programs.

Participants’ stories highlighted the gaps in the current educational infrastructure that do not meet the need for students of immigrants and effectively guide them through the educational pipeline to institutions of higher education. Further research regarding the gaps in the current educational system and the best supports to meet the needs of children of immigrants is recommended. This is important as one in four children are born into immigrant families (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

**Resiliency.** Although it was important to highlight the resiliency of the participants, it is also important to acknowledge that not all people faced with the many barriers described in this study are able to overcome them. This brings up two areas for future research. First, a study including similar participants to those included in the qualitative strand of the present study – Latinos in higher education. This would be an opportunity to ask more pointed questions regarding their resiliency, specific to how that resilience was built, both their and their families’ reactions to the many barriers put in their path and how they continued to move forward in the face of the many barriers.
A second area of future research is research focused on gaining better understanding of Latinos who are currently in high school, who dropped out of high school and adults who graduated high school but did not enter a higher education program. This type of study would capture the voices of Latinos who are not often included in research, those who have fallen through the cracks of the broken educational pipeline.

When member checking, there was discussion regarding the importance of acknowledging resilience, but also the importance of not ignoring the structural barriers that aim to make People of Color fail. The member check participant suggested:

I think maybe highlight the resiliency. This is a very nice piece, but also flip the coin and talk about the thing that these people [academically successful Latinos] have to do to build that resiliency. [The resiliency that ] was elicited by their circumstances, so that [resiliency] was their reaction. … They made those choices to keep going, to make an effort, to become more aware, to become more informed, to be more responsible, to take on additional responsibilities, because of XY and Z, because of their realities of the immigrations system [and] because of the fear of deportation of themselves or their family members. But for those very same reasons there will be and there are a lot of other young people that give up. They become so demoralized that they develop mental health issues. They become so demoralized that they just…they just go back to their country. It’s too much. And it is too much. It should be too much for any person at this age. It should be too much for a 10-year-old, for a high school kid. It is too much. It’s not fair. They [Latinos who graduate college] made something good, they got
something good out of it, but what they had to go through in order to do that, it’s not healthy, and it’s not fair.

The member check participant stated that Latinos, particularly those born to immigrant families, who are academically successful (enter higher education programs and graduate), face many structures of oppression and endure added pressure due to the lack of structural supports for immigrant families. The member check participant pointed out that the structures of oppression that academically successful Latinos have to go through are the same structures of oppression that cause their counterparts to drop out of high school and not enter or complete higher education.

Most often, the voices included in educational research are those of academically successful students. However, the voices of the most marginalized, those that have dropped out of high school, do not enroll in higher education or do not receive their college degree are often left out of research. It is imperative that these voices are included in future research. This would allow a new perspective and ideas about the supports necessary to ensure that all Latinos graduate from high school and have the opportunity for higher education if they so choose.
REFERENCES


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doi:10.1016/j.janxdis.2007.11.001


doi:10.1080/07399330500301846


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APPENDIX A: HIGH SCHOOL SURVEYS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Default Question Block

Would you like to take the survey in English or Spanish?
Te gustaría tomar la encuesta en Inglés o Español?

- [ ] English - Inglés
- [ ] Spanish - Español

Spanish

Está es una invitación para participar en una encuesta anónima que tarda una duración de aproximadamente 15 minutos. La encuesta no es obligatoria. Su participación es completamente voluntaria. No tienes que participar. Si no quieres participar, clave NO. También, si quieres participar tenia la opción de dejar en blanco cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar.

Las respuestas en esta encuesta son anónimas y no pide ningún dato que se pueda identificar al estudiante (por ejemplo, no pide el nombre, fecha de nacimiento, etc.). Eso es importante porque la encuesta tiene preguntas sobre ansiedad, depresión, experiencia de trauma y el estatus migratorio de cada miembro de la familia.

Además de la encuesta, estoy haciendo entrevistas para entender mejor los sentimientos de ansiedad, depresión, y como están relacionados con el estatus migratorio de miembros de la familia. Si te gustaría participar, puedes contactarme a mi número de teléfono XXX-XXXX-XXXX o por correo electrónico, FirstName.LastName@email.com.

Por favor conteste si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio o si quiere más información. Mi número de teléfono es XXX-XXXX-XXXX. Mi correo electrónico es FirstName.LastName@email.com.

Si usted tiene cualquier queja, puede contactarse con Firstname LastName, Director del Comité para la Protección de los Derechos de Sujetos que Participan en Proyectos de Investigación (IRB por sus siglas en inglés) de la Universidad de Denver. El número de teléfono es XXX-XXXX-XXXX. La dirección de correo electrónico es email@email.com. Usted también puede contactarse por carta a la Universidad de Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. El número de teléfono es XXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX. También pueden escribir a Address, Denver, CO.

Es posible que la encuesta lo haga pensar sobre cosas difíciles. Si usted necesita recursos o apoyo, Organization Name para pedir recursos al número de teléfono XXX-XXXX-XXXX o el Organization Name, 1-501-XXXX-XXXX.

Muchas gracias por contestar la encuesta.

Elija 'Sí' para empezar la encuesta. Elija 'NO' si no quiere hacer la encuesta.

- [ ] Sí
- [ ] No

¿Quiéntos años tienes?

Mi género es.

- [ ] Femenino
- [ ] Masculino

¿En qué grado escolar estás?

¿Cuál es tu raza o etnicidad?

- [ ] Indígena Amérindia o Nativa de Alaska
- [ ] Nativa de Hawái o las islas del Pacífico
- [ ] Asiótica
  

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Negra o Africana America
- [ ] Latina
- [ ] Blanca (no-Hispano)
- [ ] Otro

¿Naciste en Estados Unidos?
- [ ] Sí
- [ ] No

¿En qué ciudad y país naciste?

¿Cuántos años tenías cuando llegaste a Estados Unidos? (si no estás seguro/a, anota como "no se.")

¿Eres ciudadano de Estados Unidos? 
- [ ] Sí
- [ ] No
- [ ] No sé

¿Eres indocumentado/a (sin papeles)?
- [ ] Sí
- [ ] No
- [ ] No sé

¿Qué tipo de visa o documentos tienes? (Por ejemplo, visa turística, visa de estudiante, residencia permanente, etc.)

¿Hablas otra lengua que inglés?
- [ ] Sí
- [ ] No

¿Cuáles idiomas hablas?

¿En qué idioma hablas la mayoría del tiempo? (escoja una respuesta)
- [ ] Inglés
- [ ] otro idioma que no es inglés
- [ ] inglés y el otro idioma por igual
¿Cuál idioma hablas más en CASA?
- Inglés
- Otro idioma que no es inglés
- Inglés y el otro idioma por igual

¿Cuál idioma hablas más en LA ESCUELA?
- Inglés
- Otro idioma que no es inglés
- Inglés y el otro idioma por igual

Las siguientes preguntas son a cerca de los miembros de la familia. Por cada pregunta, marca los miembros de la familia que aplican.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madre</th>
<th>Padre</th>
<th>Padastro/a</th>
<th>Hermano (s)</th>
<th>Hermana (s)</th>
<th>Abuelo (s)</th>
<th>Abuela (s)</th>
<th>Tío (s)</th>
<th>Tía (s)</th>
<th>Primo (s)</th>
<th>Otro</th>
<th>compren de casa ?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¿En qué país nació tu padre?
- Estados Unidos
- Otro país
- No se

¿En qué país nació tu madre?
- Estados Unidos
- Otro país
- No se

¿Durante los últimos 12 meses, cuáles son las calificaciones que mayormente has recibido en la escuela?
- Casi todas As
- As y Bs
¿Alguna vez, te has sentido discriminando?
- Sí
- No

Porque piensas que te discriminan? Por favor, describe en detalle.

Abajo hay una lista de sentimientos que la gente tiene algunas veces. Por cada respuesta, cuantos veces te has sentido de esta manera durante los últimos dos semanas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentimiento</th>
<th>Ninguna vez (0 días a la semana)</th>
<th>Algunas o pocas veces (1 o 2 días en la semana)</th>
<th>Muchas veces (3 o 4 días en la semana)</th>
<th>La mayor parte o todo el tiempo (5 o 7 días en la semana)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí triste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tenía ganas de hacer nada</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No me sentía con ganas de correr – tenía mal aspecto</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí apenado/deprimido</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abajo hay una lista de sentimientos que la gente tiene algunas veces. Por cada respuesta, cuantos veces te has sentido de esta manera durante los últimos dos semanas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentimiento</th>
<th>Ninguna vez (0 días a la semana)</th>
<th>Algunas o pocas veces (1 o 2 días en la semana)</th>
<th>Muchas veces (3 o 4 días en la semana)</th>
<th>La mayor parte o todo el tiempo (5 o 7 días en la semana)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí nervioso, ansioso, note que se me ponen los nervios de paño.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sabía cómo parar o controlar mis preocupaciones.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me preocupaba demasiado sobre diferentes cosas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuve dificultad para relajarme.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuve tan inquieta que me resulta difícil parar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí fácilmente disgustado o irritable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí con miedo como si algo horrible pudiera pasar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me sentí extraviado/estresado.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Solo 3 preguntas más.

¿Qué es lo que más te causa estrés? ¿Cuál es tu estrés más grande? ¿Qué te causa nerviosismo, ansiedad, angustia o tensión?

¿Cómo te afectan las leyes y prácticas de inmigración en los Estados Unidos?

¿Si podrías recibir cualquier deseo, qué pedirías?

**English**

You are invited to complete an online survey. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey is not mandatory. If you choose to take the survey, you do not have to answer every question and can stop the survey at any time without penalty.

*Your responses to the survey are anonymous* (this means you will not be connected to your responses). This is important because the survey will ask questions about anxiety, depression, trauma experience, and the immigration and citizenship status of your family members.

In addition to this survey, I will be completing confidential telephone or in person interviews to better understand feelings of anxiety and depression and how they relate to the immigration and citizenship status of family members. If you would like to participate, please call me directly at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email me at FirstName.LastName@email.com.

Also, if you have any questions about the study, or if you would like more information, please feel free to call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email me at FirstName.LastName@email.com.

If you have any concerns or complaints, you can contact FirstName LastName, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at XXX-XXX-XXXX, or email@email.com, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at XXX-XXX-XXXX or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Address, Denver, CO.

Finally, it is possible that this survey might bring up upsetting memories. If so, you can call the Organization Name support line XXX-XXX-XXXX for referral information or the Organization Name: 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey.

Please check YES to continue to the Survey. Check NO if you do not want to participate.

- Yes
- No
How old are you? (FILL IN)

My gender is
- Male
- Female

What grade are you in?

How do you describe yourself? (Mark All That Apply.)
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina
- White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
- Other (fill in)

Were you born in the U.S.?
- Yes
- No

In what city and country were you born? (FILL IN)

About how old were you when you came to the U.S.? (If you don’t know, make your best guess or write, “I don’t know” (FILL IN)

Are you a U.S. citizen?
- Yes
- No
- I don’t know

Are you undocumented (don’t have papers)?
- Yes
- No
- I don’t know
What type of visa or documents do you have? (for example, deferred action, student visa, permanent resident, etc.)

Do you speak a language other than English?

☐ Yes
☐ No

What languages do you speak? (FILL IN)

In what language do YOU prefer to speak most of the time? (Mark one response)

☐ English
☐ Language other than English (write what language in the space provided)
☐ I prefer to speak both languages

What is the language you use most often AT HOME?

☐ English
☐ Language other than English (write what language in the space provided)
☐ I prefer to speak both languages

What is the language you use most often AT SCHOOL?

☐ English
☐ Language other than English (write what language in the space provided)
☐ I prefer to speak both languages

The following questions are about your family members. For each question, check all the family members that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mom</th>
<th>Dad</th>
<th>Step-parent(s)</th>
<th>Brother(s)</th>
<th>Sister(s)</th>
<th>Grandmother(s)</th>
<th>Grandfather(s)</th>
<th>Aunt(s)</th>
<th>Uncle(s)</th>
<th>Cousin(s)</th>
<th>Spouse(s) (i.e., husband, wife, partner)</th>
<th>Other (i.e., friend, roommate, etc.)</th>
<th>Myself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who lives with you?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is a US Citizen?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is undocumented (no papers)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has been detained by Immigration Enforcement (gone to ICE)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has been deported?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what country was your father born?
- United States
- Other Country (fill in blank)
- I don't know

In what country was your mother born?
- United States
- Other Country (fill in blank)
- I don't know

During the past 12 months, how would you describe the grades you mostly received in school?
- Mostly As
- As and Bs
- Mostly Bs
- Bs and Cs
- Mostly Cs
- C's and D's
- Mostly D's
- Mostly F's

Have you ever felt discriminated against?
- Yes
- No

What was the main reason you felt you were discriminated against? Please be as specific as possible.

Below is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt sad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not get &quot;going&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt depressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Below is a list of substances that people sometimes use. For each answer, how often have you have you used the substance during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance Description</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you smoke cigarettes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarettes, or little cigars?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip, such as Redman, Levi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett, Breez, Skoal Bandits, or Copenhagen?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many times did you use marijuana?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just 3 more questions to go :)  

What stresses you out the most? What is your biggest stress? (FILL IN)

How are you affected my U.S. immigration policy and practices?

If you could have one wish...what would it be? (FILL IN)
APPENDIX B: ADULT SURVEYS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Default Question Block

Would you like to take the survey in English or Spanish?
Te gustaría tomar la encuesta en Ingles o Español?

- English - Ingles
- Español - Spanish

Spanish

Esta es una invitación para participar en una encuesta anónima que tendrá una duración de aproximadamente 15 minutos. La encuesta no es obligatoria. Su participación es completamente voluntaaria. No tienes que participar. Si no quieres participar, clicke en "NO". También, si quieres participar tendrás la opción de dejar en blanco cualquier pregunta que no quieras contestar.

Sus respuestas de esta encuesta son anónimas y no pide ningún dato que su pueda identificar el estudiante (por ejemplo, no pide el nombre, fecha de nacimiento, etc.). Es importante porque la encuesta tiene preguntas sobre ansiedad, depresión, experiencias de trauma y el estatus migratorio de cada miembro de la familia.

Además de la encuesta, estoy haciendo entrevistas para entender mejor los sentimientos de ansiedad, depresión, y cómo están relacionados con el estatus migratorio de miembros de la familia. Si te gustaría participar, puedes contactarme a mi número de teléfono (XXX)-XXX-XXXX o por correo electronico, FirstName.LastName@email.

Por favor contáctame si tienes alguna pregunta sobre el estudio o si quiere más información. Mi número de teléfono es XXX-XXX-XXX. Mi correo electrónico es FirstName.LastName@email.

Si usted tiene cualquier queja, puede contactarse con FirstName LastName, Director del Comité para la Protección de los Derechos de Sujetos que Participan en Proyectos de Investigación (o IRB por sus siglas en Ingles) de la Universidad de Denver. El número de teléfono es XXX-XXX-XXXX. La dirección de correo electrónico es email@email. También puede contactarse por carta a la Universidad de Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. El número de teléfono es XXX-XXX-XXXX. También puede escribir a Address, Denver, CO.

Es posible que la encuesta le haga pensar sobre cosas difíciles. Si usted necesita recursos o apoya, Organization Name puede ofrecerle recursos. Nombre de la Organización, 1-800-XXX-XXX.

Muchas gracias por contestar la encuesta.

escape 'Sí' para empezar la encuesta. Escape 'NO' si no quieres hacer la encuesta.

- Sí
- No

¿Tienes 18 años o más?

- Sí
- No

¿Cuántos años tienes?

[Datebox]

Mi género es

- Femenino
- Masculino

¿En qué estado vives?

[Datebox]

¿Hasta cuál grado llegaste en la escuela?

¿Estás estudiando en la Universidad ahora?
- Sí
- No

¿En qué grado estás? Por ejemplo, primer año de la universidad, estudiante de maestría, doctorado, etc.: 

¿Cuál es tu raza o etnicidad?
- Indio Americano o Nativo de Asia
- Nativo de Hawái o las islas del Pacífico
- Asiático
- Negra o Africana Americana
- Hispana o Latina
- Blanca (no-Hispánica)
- Otra

¿Naciste en Estados Unidos?
- Sí
- No

¿En qué ciudad y país naciste?

¿Cuántos años tenías cuando llegaste a Estados Unidos? (si no estás seguro, diga o escriba "no sé.")

¿Eres ciudadano de Estados Unidos?
- Sí
- No
- No sé

¿Eres indocumentado/a (sin papeles)?
- Sí
- No
- No sé

¿Qué tipo de visa o documentos tienes? (Por ejemplo, asilo diferida, visa de estudiante, residente permanente, etc.)
¿Hablas otro idioma que inglés?
- Sí
- No

¿Cuáles idiomas hablas?

¿En qué idioma hablas la mayoría del tiempo? (escoja una respuesta)
- Inglés
- Otro idioma que no es inglés
- Inglés y el otro idioma por igual

¿Cuál idioma hablas más en CASA?
- Inglés
- Otro idioma que no es inglés
- Inglés y el otro idioma por igual

Las siguientes preguntas son a cerca de los miembros de la familia. Por cada pregunta, marque los miembros de la familia que aplica.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madre</th>
<th>Padre</th>
<th>Padreastrodo</th>
<th>Hermano (n)</th>
<th>Hermana (n)</th>
<th>Abuela(s)</th>
<th>Abuelo(s)</th>
<th>Tia(s)</th>
<th>Tio(s)</th>
<th>Primos(s)</th>
<th>Pareja / esposa</th>
<th>Hijo(s)</th>
<th>Hija(s)</th>
<th>Otro: compañero/a de casa, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¿En qué país nació tu padre?
- Estados Unidos
- Otro país
- No se

¿En qué país vive tu padre AHORA?
1/15/2018

¿En qué país nació tu madre?

- Estados Unidos
- Otro país
- No sé

¿En qué país vive tu madre AHORA?

- Estados Unidos
- Otro país
- No sé

¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminado?

- Sí
- No

Por qué piensas que te discriminan? Describe en detalle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentimiento</th>
<th>Ninguna vez (0 días a la semana)</th>
<th>Algunas o pocas veces (1 o 2 días en la semana)</th>
<th>Muchas veces (3 o 4 días en la semana)</th>
<th>La mayor parte o todo el tiempo (5 o 7 días en la semana)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentirse triste</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tener ganas de hacer nada</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No me sentía con ganas de comer — tengo mal apetito</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentirme débil o depresivo</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentimiento</th>
<th>Ninguna vez (0 días a la semana)</th>
<th>Algunas o pocas veces (1 o 2 días en la semana)</th>
<th>Muchas veces (3 o 4 días en la semana)</th>
<th>La mayor parte o todo el tiempo (5 o 7 días en la semana)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me siento nervioso, ansioso, no sé qué me pone los nervios de punta</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No soy capaz de parar o controlar mis preocupaciones</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me preocupo demasiado sobre diferentes cosas</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teneo dificultad para relajarme</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estoy tan inquieto que me resulta difícil parar</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4/11
Abajo es una lista de sustancias que la gente a veces usa. ¿Por cada respuesta, cuantas veces ha usado la sustancia durante las últimas dos semanas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¿Cuántos días fumaste cigarrillos?</th>
<th>Ninguna vez (0 días a la semana)</th>
<th>Algunas o pocas veces (1 a 2 días en la semana)</th>
<th>Muchas veces (3 a 4 días en la semana)</th>
<th>La mayor parte o todo el tiempo (5 a 7 días en la semana)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuántos días fumaste puros o puros?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuántos días masticaste tabaco (por ejemplo, Red-man, Lemi Garrett, Breech, Brand Bean, or Copenhagen)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuántos días tomaste al menos una bebida alcohólica?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuántos días probaste marihuana?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abajo hay una lista de cosas que algunas veces le ocurren a la gente. Por favor, marca las opciones que describen las cosas que te han pasado a ti.

- Desastres naturales (por ejemplo, inundación, huracán, tornado, terremoto)
- Un encendido o explosión
- Un accidente automovilístico (por ejemplo, coche, camión, camioneta, o barco; accidente en tren o en avión)
- Algun accidente grave en la escuela, casa o mientras estás jugando
- He estado cerca de químicos peligrosos, fuego de gas, o radiación; estado enfermo por enfermedamiento
- He sido atestado, preso, golpeado, moribundo, o ahogado.
- He sido atacado con un arma (por ejemplo, cuchillos, bândol, navaja, pistola, o bomba), o sido amenazado que traten de huyendo con una arma (pero al final no pasa nada o no hace huyendo)
- Alguien tocó tu cuerpo de la manera que tu no querías que tocado y le obligado a tocar el cuerpo de alguien más; alguien decidiendo o tratando de tocar tu cuerpo (pero al final nunca te tocaron)
- He sido en 'Foster Care' (el gobierno te quito de la casa de tus padres o la casa con quien viviste)
- He vivido en un área donde hay palos en las calles o hay guerra.
- No he tenido suficiente comida, agua, ropa; no tendido hambriento; estado solo por muchas días sin nadie que te quede
- He estado cerca de gente que va a morir; gente que esta hambrienta; o gente que no tiene hogar; estás cerca de niños sin ningún adulto que quede de ellos.
- He estado obligado estar en algún lugar donde te volvés (encontrado, robado)
- Enfermedad o herida que podría acabar con la vida.
- He estado cerca de muertos violentos o cuerpos muertos.
- He muerto alguien cercano a ti.
- He huido alguien gravemente a propósito o por accidente.
- Alguin otro evento grave o peligroso que sentiste que tu vida estaba en peligro

Solo 3 preguntas más.

¿Qué es lo que más te causa estrés? ¿Cuál es tu estrés más grande? ¿Qué te causa nerviosismo, ansiedad, angustia o tensión? Por favor, explica en detalle.

¿Cómo te afectan las leyes y prácticas de inmigración en Los Estados Unidos? Por favor, explica en detalle.

¿Podrías recibir algunos deseos para tu familia, qué pedirías?

Con el fin de comprender mejor cómo los sentimientos de ansiedad y depresión se relacionan con el estado de ciudadanía e inmigración de los miembros de la familia estoy haciendo entrevistas confidenciales por teléfono, Skype o en persona (en persona solo si el usted vive en el área metropolitana de Denver). Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de $25 por su participación.

¿Te gustaría participar en una entrevista?

☐ Sí
☐ No

English

You are invited to complete an online survey. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey is not mandatory. If you choose to take the survey, you do not have to answer every question and can stop the survey at any time without penalty.

Your responses to the survey are anonymous (this means you will not be connected to your responses). This is important because the survey will ask questions about anxiety, depression, trauma experience, and the immigration and citizenship status of your family members.

In addition to this survey, I will be completing confidential telephone or in person interviews to better understand feelings of anxiety and depression and how they relate to the immigration and citizenship status of family members. If you would like to participate, please call me directly at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email me at FirstName.LastName@email.

Also, if you have any questions about the study, or if you would like more information, please feel free to call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email me at FirstName.LastName@email.

If you have any concerns or complaints, you can contact FirstName LastName, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at XXX-XXX-XXXX, or email@email. Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at XXX-XXX-XXXX or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Adkins, Denver, CO.

Finally, it is possible that this survey might bring up upsetting memories. If so, you can call the Organization Name support line XXX-XXX-XXXX for referral information or the Organization Name: 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey.

Please check YES to continue to the Survey. Check NO if you do not want to participate.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Are you 18 or older?

☐ Yes
☐ No

How old are you? (FILL IN)
My gender is
☐ Male
☐ Female

What state do you currently live in? (FILL IN)

What is your highest grade completed?

Are you currently enrolled in college?
☐ Yes
☐ No

What grade are you currently in? For example, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate school, etc.

How do you describe yourself? (Mark All That Apply.)
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
☐ Asian or Asian American
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic or Latino/Latina
☐ White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
☐ Other (fill in)

Were you born in the U.S.?
☐ Yes
☐ No

In what city and country were you born? (FILL IN)

About how old were you when you came to the U.S.? (If you don't know, make your best guess or write, "I don't know" (FILL IN)

Are you a U.S. citizen?
☐ Yes
Are you undocumented (don’t have papers)?
- Yes
- No
- I don’t know

What type of visa or papers do you have? (for example, deferred action, student visa, permanent resident, etc)

Do you speak a language other than English?
- Yes
- No

What languages do you speak? (fill in)

In what language do you prefer to speak most of the time? (Mark one response)
- English
- Language other than English
- I prefer to speak both languages

What is the language you use most often at home?
- English
- Language other than English
- I prefer to speak both languages

The following questions are about your family members. For each question, check all family members that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mom</th>
<th>Dad</th>
<th>Step-parent</th>
<th>Brother</th>
<th>Sister</th>
<th>Grand-mother</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
<th>Aunt</th>
<th>Uncle</th>
<th>Cousin</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
<th>Other (i.e., roommate, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who lives with you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is a U.S. Citizen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is undocumented (no papers)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who has been detained by immigration enforcement (gave ICE)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who has been deported?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what country was your father born?
- United States
- Other Country
- I don't know

In what country does your father live today?
- United States
- Other Country
- I don't know

In what country was your mother born?
- United States
- Other Country
- I don't know

In what country does your mother live today?
- United States
- Other Country
- I don't know

Have you ever felt discriminated against?
- Yes
- No

What was the main reason you felt you were discriminated against? Please be as specific as possible.

Below is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt sad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not get &quot;going&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt depressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt sad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not get &quot;going&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt depressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Below is a list of substances that people sometimes use. For each answer, how often have you have you used the substance during the past 2 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substances</th>
<th>Rarely (0 days a week)</th>
<th>Some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)</th>
<th>Most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you smoke cigarettes?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarettes, or little cigars?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip, such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal Bandits, or Copenhagen?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On how many times did you use marijuana?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listed below are things that sometimes happen to people. Please mark the boxes that describe things you have lived through or seen (MARK ALL THAT APPLY).

- [ ] Disaster (for example, a flood, hurricane, tornado, or earthquake).
- [ ] Riot or explosion
- [ ] Vehicle accident (for example, car, bus, truck, or boat accident; train wreck or plane crash)
- [ ] Bad accident at school, home, or while playing
- [ ] Being near dangerous chemicals, leaking gas, or radiation; being made sick from poison
- [ ] Being slapped, kicked, hit, bit, attacked, or beaten up
- [ ] Being attacked with a weapon (for example, belt, bottles, knife, gun, or bomb) or being told you would be hurt with a weapon (but weren’t hurt after all)
- [ ] Someone touching your body in a way you didn’t want to be touched: being made to touch someone’s body; someone saying or trying to touch your body (but the touching never happened)
- [ ] Being in foster care (removed from your parent or guardian’s home by child welfare)
- [ ] Living in an area where there was fighting in the streets or a war going on.
- [ ] Not having enough food, water, clothing; not having a home; being left alone for many days without good or anyone to take care of you
- [ ] Being near dying, hungry, or homeless people; being around kids without any adults to take care of them.
- [ ] Being forced to stay somewhere against your wishes (kidnapping, being stolen)

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/cfss/surveyprintpreview/1011

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Only 5 more questions to go.

What stresses you out the most? What is your biggest stress? Please explain in detail. (FILL IN)

How are you affected by U.S. immigration policy and practices? Please explain in detail.

If you could have one wish for your family...what would it be? (FILL IN)

In order to better understand how feelings of anxiety and depression relate to the citizenship and immigration status of family members I am scheduling confidential follow up interviews via telephone, Skype or in person (in person only if you live in the Denver Metro area). You will receive a $25 gift card for your participation in the interview.

To participate in the follow up interview, you must be 18+ and Latina/o.

Would you like to participate in a follow up interview?

☐ Yes
☐ No
APPENDIX C: SHORT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY FROM THE QUALITATIVE STRAND

1. How old are you? (FILL IN)

2. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

   In what state do you live?

3. What is your highest level of education? (FILL IN)

   Are you studying now? What grade?

4. How do you describe yourself? (Mark All That Apply.)
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - Asian or Asian American
   - Black or African American
   - Hispanic or Latino/Latina
   - White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   - Other (FILL IN): _____ _________

5. Were you born in the U.S.?
   - Yes
   - No

   (If you were born in a foreign country) Where were you born.? (FILL IN)

6. (If you were born in a foreign country) How old were you when you came to the U.S.? (FILL IN)

7. Are you a U.S. citizen?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know
8. (If not) Are you undocumented (sin papeles)?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mom</th>
<th>Dad</th>
<th>Step-parent(s)</th>
<th>Brother(s)</th>
<th>Sister(s)</th>
<th>Grandmother(s)</th>
<th>Grandfather(s)</th>
<th>Aunt(s)</th>
<th>Uncle(s)</th>
<th>Cousin(s)</th>
<th>Other (fill in)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who lives with you?</td>
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<td>friend, partner, spouse, etc.</td>
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<td>Who is a US Citizen?</td>
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<td>Who is undocumented (no papers)?</td>
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<td>Who has been detained by immigration enforcement (go to ICE)?</td>
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<td>Who has been deported?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Below is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past 2 weeks?

18. I felt sad
   - rarely (0 days a week)
   - some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   - occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   - most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

19. I could not get “going”
   - rarely (0 days a week)
   - some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   - occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   - most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

20. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor
   - rarely (0 days a week)
   - some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   - occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   - most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

21. I felt depressed
   - rarely (0 days a week)
   - some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   - occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   - most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

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22. I felt nervous, anxious or on edge
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

23. I was not able to stop or control worrying
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

24. I worried too much about different things
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

25. I had trouble relaxing
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

26. I became so restless that it was hard to sit still
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

27. I became easily annoyed or irritated
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)

28. I felt afraid as if something awful might happen
   • rarely (0 days a week)
   • some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   • occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   • most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)
30. I felt stressed
   - rarely (0 days a week)
   - some of the time (1 or 2 days a week)
   - occasionally (3 or 4 days a week)
   - most of the time (5 to 7 days a week)
APPENDIX D: PROTOCOL FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

The qualitative interview will begin by asking basic demographic questions (found in the quantitative survey) and will also include the anxiety and depression questions from the quantitative survey.

The following is a basic protocol for the Interviews:

Questions for all participants (regardless of demographic responses):

1) What are the three most significant events of your life? How did each event impact you?
2) Describe a time in your life that you dealt with depression. What helped or helps you to get through it?
3) Describe a time in your life that you dealt with anxiety. What helped or helps you to get through it?
4) Can you describe the ways that living in a mixed status family is different than living in an immigrant family or a U.S. citizen family?

Only for those participants who are undocumented or have undocumented family members.

1) In which ways does being undocumented or having an undocumented family member affect you?
2) What has it been like to live in a mixed status family?
3) Has your family been impacted due to the undocumented status of yourself or your family member? If so how?

Only for those participants who have a family member that has been detained in immigrant detention

1) In which ways has immigrant detention affected you and your family?
2) How has your family member’s detention affected you and your family?
3) If the detention resulted in deportation, can you describe the effects of the experience of deportation for you and your family?

More questions for all participants (no matter demographic information):

1) What is your biggest source of stress? Can you describe a recent time when you were very stressed?
2) If you could have one wish for your family, what would it be?

As you know the aim of the research I am doing to better understand people’s experience that is in your situations. Is there anything you would want to make sure that I write about or tell people that read this research that I haven’t covered?

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APPENDIX E: COMPLETE TABLE OF SHORT ANSWER RESPONSE QUESTIONS
TO THE PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION SURVEY QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Topics</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic US Native Family Respondents (n = 24)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Latino US Native Family Respondents (n = 14)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Being a female engineer. For being female and in college. General discrimination for gender and sex. I felt discriminated against because I am a woman. I am constantly discriminated against by men who feel that women are inferior.</td>
<td>14 (58%)</td>
<td>Gender (woman, rather than female which is sex). As a female. I am a woman. Mostly for being female in the workplace environment. Gender.</td>
<td>6 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>I am gay. I have felt discriminated against many times for identifying as a lesbian. Sexual orientation.</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, Ethnicity or Skin Color</td>
<td>I have had a few students state that I discriminate against them because I am white, and that is simply not the case. I have also had a few fellow students say that because I am white I got everything handed to me, which is also not true. The color of my skin.</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>I am a person of color. I am Mexican American. I am not white. I felt I was discriminated because most jobs will only hire a certain race. Mostly by my last name. People usually judge me off of my skin color but once they find out that I’m Latina they have a</td>
<td>12 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Topics</td>
<td>White, non-Hispanic US Native Family Respondents (n = 24)</td>
<td>Latino US Native Family Respondents (n = 14)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race, Ethnicity or Skin Color</strong></td>
<td>Because I’m a white, middle-class, sorority girl, people assume I’m dumb and/or live off of my “daddy’s money” which is not the case. I work 30 hours a week so that I can pay for my car, my cell phone, my apartment, my food, my cat, AND my sorority, all while maintaining a 3.0 GPA.</td>
<td></td>
<td>whole different idea about me.</td>
<td>My “white” neighbor reported me to police because of our dog. Both animal control officers and police came to my house and found no reason at all for her to report me. I think she just doesn’t like Hispanics. When some people found out that I have received scholarships reflecting my ethnic heritage, they thought I was less qualified and somehow a “charity case” in pursuit of equality. Disempowering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrant Status</strong></td>
<td>I am an immigrant in the UK. I am often asked “how” I am able to live here. In other countries, because I am from the U.S.</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Status</strong></td>
<td>My class status</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td>Religion. Jewish.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>When younger, many students felt I got financial support BECAUSE of my ethnic background. That’s insulting to me, because I have worked hard and performed well to achieve. Now, when I returned to</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Topics</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>School after raising my kids, I feel discriminated again because of my age.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not as much about ethnicity, although I do think some people may think I took so long to finish advanced schooling because of my ethnic background. Forget and forgive, I say.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-racial Relationship</strong></td>
<td>Being with someone who was not white. When I was in an inter-racial relationship.</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weight/Body Type</strong></td>
<td>Weight.</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weight.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overweight.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Everyone is discriminated against sometime.</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Everyone is discriminated against sometime.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With my personality, a lot of people are surprised when they learn that I love math and science. I’m not just some ditzy klutz. Mental health.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Topics</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Sample Responses</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Employer discrimination based on gender. Being a female minority in engineering.</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>Because [I’m] a Hispanic woman in college.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Catholic beliefs.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race, Ethnicity or Skin Color</strong></td>
<td>For being Latina and speaking Spanish. In college a student called me a spick, we played on the same team and he started to make racial comments. I have definitely experienced racial profiling. Also, people making ignorant comments about my community and beliefs. Looked down upon as inferior due to my race. My nationality. Being Hispanic Accused of a crime I didn’t commit.</td>
<td>25 (66%)</td>
<td>Considered not to be American because of my skin color. Having the brown color skin and when I didn’t say anything people just assumed I didn’t speak English. I was 17 and since I’m of color, people (white) stared at me like I did not belong at that mall to shop. People have called me a beamer. When I was 13, I was walking by a high school on my way to my middle school. A cop car slowly slowed down and asked for my ID and had actually assumed I was up to no good. There was another student that had walked in front of me and he was white. The cop only asked me for my ID.</td>
<td>13 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrant Status</strong></td>
<td>I was at a mall and my friends and I sat next to a couple of white people, they got up right away and said, “I”</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
<td>Being an undocumented student in college I felt discriminated [against] in many</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Latino immigrant family respondents (all authorized) \((n = 38)\) | Latino mixed status family respondents (\(n = 25)\)
--- | ---
**Response Topics** | **Sample Responses** | **Frequency** | **Sample Responses** | **Frequency**

**Immigrant Status** | can’t believe they let people like this into our country.” | different ways, but most importantly being excluded from financial aid opportunities and in state tuition in the state I had lived for years. | Being undocumented. By having family that wasn’t born in the United States.
My citizenship. Not being a citizen has made me feel discriminated against many times, people often make assumptions about my legal status. I have experienced this in educational and professional settings.

**Economic Status** | Socioeconomic status. Working class. | 2 (5%) | 0

**Religion** | Agnostic. | 1 (3%) | Catholic beliefs. 1 (4%)

**Age** | 0 | 0

**Inter-racial Relationship** | 0 | 0

**Weight/body Type** | Body type. | 1 (3%) | 0

**Language** | Speaking Spanish. Talking Spanish. While speaking. Spanish in public establishments. Speaking Spanish. | 4 (11%) | I did not speak English very well. When I was working and I spoke Spanish, the customer told me I was in the U.S. not in Mexico. 2 (8%)

**Other** | Too many to name. Being treated differently by authority figures, mostly (police, teachers, etc.). Various reasons. Exclusions, profiling, etc. Verbal remarks. Por la forma en que se me trata en lugares 381úes y durante la 381úes de | 5 (13%) | Because I was followed around a store. By the way I dressed. I am Hispanic, plus I have a “secretarial” position which makes me be seen as “low.” Porque me gritaba. Questions, comments, attitudes, demeanor. They would always think negative about | 7 (28%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Topics</th>
<th>Sample Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Sample Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>empleo.</td>
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<td>me and tell me I wouldn’t go nowhere in life.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People thinking I was housekeeping.</td>
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<td>When people would give up on me because I “looked like I didn’t care.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>