

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

*Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad* [Older Mexican Adults]: Exploring Subjective Experiences of  
Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology

by

Veronica Franco

Committee in charge:

Professor Melissa L. Morgan, Chair

Professor Miya Barnett

Dr. Heidi Zetzer, Lecturer

September 2023

The dissertation of Veronica Franco is approved.

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Miya Barnett

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Heidi Zetzer

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Melissa L. Morgan, Committee Chair

June 2023

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by

Veronica Franco

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Desde chica soñé ser doctora, siempre supe que quería ayudar a los demás. Aunque yo soñaba ser doctora médica, mi llamado fue diferente. Siento mucho honor de que mi doctorado en psicología me va a permitir ayudar y apoyar a mi comunidad. ¡Qué alegría siento de ver convertir mi sueño en realidad!

Quiero empezar a expresar mi amor y gratitud a mi familia, es por cada uno de ustedes que estoy donde estoy. This dissertation and the earning of a doctorate degree is because of the immense support of my family, friends, mentors, and community.

Empezaré con mi agradecimiento a mis padres, ustedes han sido la base de mis logros, es por su trabajo, sacrificios, enseñanzas, y apoyo que he tenido el privilegio de llegar a ser doctora. ¡Los quiero mucho! Ama y apá, esta tesis y doctorado es en su honor. Ustedes me han enseñado que la sabiduría, el conocimiento, y la inteligencia va más allá de un libro o artículo. Lo que ustedes me han enseñado y lo que he aprendido sobre mi comunidad va mucho más allá de lo que un libro o título me podría enseñar.

To my brothers – Meño, Luis, and Carlos, thank you for all your support through this past decade. Words will never amount to the major role you have each played in my academic journey, from picking me up from undergrad, to supporting me financially, to always offering a listening ear. It is because of the path that you have all helped pave that I have been able to nerd out and experience this academic world. While the youngest in the family, this degree reflects our collective efforts, I stand here because of you and our parents. Your love, humility, and care for me is one that I will always cherish. Thank you, for always having my back and for supporting me.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mary and Edith, my sister in laws. You have been inspirational women in my life, thank you for your care and support! I am fortunate to have met you both during my teenage years, and to have experienced the support from you each along the way. I will never forget that you have been one of the first people I would call when I was stressed and overwhelmed. Mary, gracias por siempre contestar mis llamadas, y dejarme desahogarme. Edith, you were the one who took me to my first college orientation, the first to see the worry and fear in my eyes. Leaving home was scary, and I am thankful for your guidance! I am forever grateful for your support. Thank you both for always picking up my calls during a time of panic and stress and for always reminding me I am not alone.

A special thanks to my advisor and mentor, Melissa L. Morgan., 5 years ago, the idea of earning my doctorate degree felt daunting. As a first-generation and low-income student at times it felt like there were many barriers that were against me. I appreciate your support and guidance along the way. For connecting me to resources, reminding me of my strengths, and for helping me develop into a strong researcher. I have developed a keen interest in qualitative methodologies and have felt extremely supported by your guidance. Thank you so much for helping me through this dissertation process and for reminding me along the way the importance and value of my topic. Thank you to my committee members, Miya Barnett

and Heidi Zetzer; I have felt extremely supported by you both during qualitative exams and dissertation.

I would also like to thank my best friend, Griselda! You have been my rock, number one supporter, and advocate. ¡Eres mi hermana y te quiero un chingo! Thank you for always checking-in on me and for reminding me of my power, you have always been my hype person. We did it amiga, soy doctora y tú has sido parte de este logro.

To my mentors and supervisors, you have played a pivotal role. This first-generation Latina from Huntington Park, Ca has had the privilege to earn a doctorate degree because of the mentorship, care, and love you have extended. Thank you to Ms. Miranda, Gladys, Dr. Castellanos, Dr. Ortega, Dr. Gloria, Dr. Morgan, Dr. Maynard, Dr. Cordero, Dr. Montojo, Dr. Hernandez, Dr. Davis, and Dr. Cherian – you have all been a source of guidance and strength in my journey. It goes without saying that mentorship and representation of women of color have profound impacts! I am forever grateful to the universe for the lineage of powerful mentorship I have received from strong and powerful women of color! May we continue to pave the path forward!

Thank you to all my friends and academic family – Karen, Kristina, Maritza, Ana Carina, ... and so many more! Thank you for all the support and words of affirmation, may we continue to shift the field and continue to engage in the liberation of all people.

To Nico, Emily, Melany, Sarahy, Luisito, Gabino, Javier, Panchito, and Olivia – thank you for being you and brightening my day! I am blessed to be your Tia Vero, without you knowing you have been a source of joy, inspiration, and motivation. ¡Los amo, amores! While I might be the first Dra. Franco in the family, I know I will not be the last.

Este título no es solo mío sino de mi familia, estaré eternamente agradecida con ustedes y nuestros antepasados. Es por ellos y todos ustedes que estoy aquí. ¡Este doctorado en psicología es nuestro!

VITA OF VERONICA FRANCO, M.S.

University of California, Santa Barbara  
June 2023

**EDUCATION**

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**University of California, Santa Barbara**                      **Doctor of Philosophy, Counseling,  
Clinical, & School Psychology**  
**Expected Graduation Date: June 2023**

*Advisor: Melissa L. Morgan, Ph.D.*

*American Psychological Association Minority Fellow 2020 – 2022*

*Dissertation: Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad: Exploring Subjective Experiences of  
Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture*

**University of Wisconsin – Madison**                      **Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology,  
June 2018**

*Advisor: Alberta M. Gloria, Ph.D.*

**University of California, Irvine**                      **Bachelor of Arts in Sociology & Education,  
June 2016**

*Dean Honor List & Order of Merit*

**University of California, Davis**                      **Study Abroad in Cusco, Peru,  
June 2014 – August 2014**

*History of the Andean Region Program*

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Pre-Doctoral Intern**    **August 2022 – Present**  
**UCLA Counseling & Psychological Services**                      **40 hours per week**

*University of California, Los Angeles*

*Individual Supervisors: Ancy Cherian, Ph.D. & Ellie Hernandez, Ph.D.*

*Training Director: Tanya Brown, Ph.D.*

- Provide brief short-term psychotherapy services to UCLA students (i.e., undergraduate, graduate & students enrolled in professional school) exhibiting a variety of psychological concerns across the spectrum of acuity
- Receive weekly individual supervision & group supervision, averaging 4 hours of supervision per week
- Conduct crisis & risk assessments, as well as conduct brief-screening and triage appointments
- Co-facilitate quarterly identity specific & wellness skills groups
- Supervise doctoral practicum student & receive weekly supervision of supervision
- Conduct outreach to campus community partners by way of workshop development & presentation

- Participate in the ADHD clinic, conduct ADHD assessments, & receive weekly ADHD supervision
- Participate in multiple sub-committees within clinic to help promote equitable, social justice, & culturally responsive treatment (i.e., Anti-racism committee, Undocumented Student Program)
- Participate in didactic seminars focused theory, intervention, and multiculturalism (i.e., Multicultural Seminar, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Brief Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Feminist Psychology, Eating Disorders, Substance-use Disorders)
- Specializations: Identity development, culture & diversity, BIPOC & minoritized communities (e.g., Spanish-speaking communities, 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students, immigration impacted student, low-income students, transfer students, graduate students)

**Graduate Student Clinician** **September 2021 – June 2022**  
**Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)** **4 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

*Supervisor: Miya L. Barnett, Ph.D.*

- Provided weekly therapy for families enrolled in PCIT treatment
- Provided bilingual treatment for Spanish & English-speaking families
- Participated in weekly group supervision & received weekly training informed by the PCIT International Training Guidelines

**Graduate Student Clinician** **January 2020 – February 2022**  
**Mind & Behavior Assessment Clinic (MBAC)** **4 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

*Supervisor: Miriam Thompson, Ph.D.*

- Administered comprehensive neuropsychological assessments to children & adults which consist of clinical interview, multiple batteries, report writing, & feedback session
- Received weekly group supervision & individual supervision for all assigned cases

**Graduate Mental Health Peer** **September 2019 – June 2022**  
**UCSB Mental Health Peer Program** **12 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

*Supervisor: Gladys Manrique Koscak, M.S.*

- Created targeted programming, presentations, workshops, wellness articles, for graduate students
- Aided in developing relationships with different graduate programs & departments to provide information, resources, & outreach to graduate students
- Helped facilitate support group for undocumented students
- Provided peer drop-in services, & coordinated the School Anxiety Program

**Clinical Practicum Clinician** **September 2019 – June 2021**  
**Academic & Staff Assistance Program** **18 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

*Supervisors: Pati Montojo, Ph.D. & Melissa Cordero, Psy.D.*

- Provided English & Spanish short-term psychotherapy services (individual, couples, & family) to staff, employees, & post-docs of UC Santa Barbara
- Created programming & co-facilitated support groups & group therapy
- Facilitated wellness & work violence presentations to university staff
- Assisted with case-management of cases & helped provide community referrals
- Received weekly individual supervision & attend weekly consultation with psychologists

**Clinical Practicum Clinician**

**September 2018 – June 2019**

**Hosford Counseling & Psychological Services Clinic**

**12 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

*Supervisor: Miya L. Barnett, Ph.D. & Emily Maynard, Ph.D.*

- Provided English & Spanish individual, couples, & family counseling services to community members
- Recorded, documented, conceptualized, & wrote case notes of all clients
- Presented cases during case consult meetings meeting with the clinical staff
- Received weekly group supervision in English & weekly Spanish group supervision

**Clinical Practicum Clinician**

**August 2017 – May 2018**

**University Mental Health Services**

**20 hours per week**

*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

*Supervisors: Samuel Lustgarten, Ph.D.*

- Provided individual counseling services to UW-Madison undergraduate & graduate college students
- Co-facilitated interpersonal process groups, received group supervision, & wrote weekly process notes
- Recorded, documented, & wrote case notes of all clients
- Received weekly individual & group supervision; presented case conceptualizations twice a semester

**Student Clinician, Counseling-Like Experience**

**January 2017 – May 2017**

**Psychology Training Clinic**

**5 hours per week**

*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

*Supervisors: Elaina, Meier, Ph.D.*

- Wrote & maintained documentation for each volunteer client (i.e., intake, progress notes for counseling session(s), conceptualization notes, & termination summary)
- Provided counseling to volunteer clients through interpersonal process theory
- Observed by supervisor & provided in-the-moment feedback

**Clinic Volunteer**

**September 2016 – December 2016**

**Counseling Psychology Training Clinic**

**5 hours per week**

*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

*Supervisor: Stephanie R. Graham, Ph.D.*



- Served as the clinic’s receptionist; checked-in clients, informed clinicians of client arrivals, helped schedule clients, provided community referrals
- Observed live counseling sessions that accentuated counseling techniques & strategies
- Actively participated during group staffing for clinic trainees by offering insight & feedback

**Student Life Coach**

**October 2014 – June 2016**

**Life Coach, Creating Options & Conquering Hurdles**

**10 hours per week**

*University of California, Irvine, Counseling Center*

*Supervisor: Jessica Ortega, Ph.D.*

- Provided one-on-one consultations to students on their academic journey; provided academic resources, connected them to mental health services, & met with them once a week for about 8 to 10 weeks
- Assisted students with goal setting, time-management, & study skills
- Completed weekly client-notes & participated in bi-weekly supervision

**CONSULTATION**

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**Research Associate**

**March 2022 – Present**

**Health & Inclusivity, LLC**

**By contract**

*Supervisor: Gina Vanegas, Ph.D.*

- Serve as qualitative research consultant on qualitative projects for organizations interested in creating equitable & inclusive work environments
- Provide DEI recommendations grounded on qualitative assessment of needs, research, social justice, & culturally affirming frameworks
- Support organizations in the development of training & programming that address their most pressing challenges & helps them meet their vision & goals

**PUBLICATIONS**

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- Castellanos, J., White, J. L., **Franco, V.**, & Associates. (2022). Riding the academic freedom train: A culturally responsive, multigenerational model. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Castellanos, J., Adames, H.Y., Chavez-Dueñas., N.Y., & **Franco, V.** (2022). A radical shift: Shaping the next generation of BIPOC scholar activists. In Palmer., B. & Medina., C. (Eds.). Practical Social Justice: Diversity, equity, & inclusion strategies based on the insights of Dr. Joseph L. White. Routledge.
- Flores, I., Sharma., H., **Franco, V.**, Valadez, A.M., & Cerezo, A. (2022). Amidst the Chaos: Developing a Counseling Psychologist Identity during Ongoing Social Unrest. Manuscript accepted for publication.
- Morgan, M.L., **Franco, V.**, Felix. E., & Ramirez, N. (2022). Resilience in holocaust survivors: Lessons learned from those who survived genocide. Manuscript accepted for publication.
- Gloria, A. M., Castellanos, J., Dueñas, M., & **Franco, V.** (2019). Academic family & educational *compadrazco*: Implementing cultural values to create educational relationships for informal learning & persistence for Latin@ undergraduates. In J.

Calvo de Mora & K. J. Kennedy (Eds.), *Schools & Informal Learning in a Knowledge-Based World* (pp. 119-135). New York: Routledge.

## PRESENTATIONS

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- Hubert, E., Ramirez, N., Felix, E., **Franco, V.**, & Morgan, M.L. (2021). Exploring the Relationship of Spirituality & Meaning Making to Thriving Among Latinx Undergraduates. *American Psychological Association Convention*. Poster presentation. Virtual.
- Franco, V.**, Quezada, M., De Leon, S., Castellanos, J., & Gloria, A.M. (2021). The Influence of Mother-Daughter Relationships on Latina Undergraduates' Persistence. *American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Annual Conference*. Presentation. Online Conference.
- Franco, V.**, Diaz, A., Castellanos, J. & Gloria, A. M. (2020). Psychosociocultural Factors Influencing Latina Undergraduates' Academic Honesty Behaviors: A Qualitative Study. *American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Annual Conference*. Poster Presentation. Costa Mesa, CA.
- Franco, V.**, Dueñas, M., Gloria, A. M., & Castellanos, J. (2020). *Cultivando familia en la escuela*: Graduate students' narratives on creating academic families. *American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Annual Conference*. Round Table. Costa Mesa, CA.
- Felix, E.N., Ramirez, N.M., Morgan L. M., & **Franco, V.** (2020). Resilience in the Latinx Community: Working Collaboratively for Social Justice & Equity. *National Latina/o Psychological Association Conference*. Symposium. Online Conference.
- Sharma, H., Valadez, A.M., Flores, I., **Franco, V.**, & Cerezo, A. (2019). Developing a Mental Health Professional Identity in the "Time of Trump." *Asian American Psychological Association*. Poster Presentation. San Diego, CA.
- Morgan Consoli, M.L., Felix, E., **Franco, V.**, Sánchez, & A., Hufana, A. (2019). Steps to Developing a CBPR Collaboration: Resilience Among Latinx Youth. *Inter-American Congress of Psychology*. Symposium. Havana, Cuba.
- Morgan-Consoli, M.L., Hufana, A., **Franco, V.**, Felix, E., & Sánchez, A. (2019). "It's Just a Part of My Life:" Stories of Resilience in Holocaust Survivors. *American Psychological Association Convention*. Poster presentation. Chicago, IL.
- Lovell, J., Castellanos, J., Nadal, K., & **Franco, V.** (2018). Shaping Racial Ethnic Minority Student Scholarship: Effective Models for Writing & Publication. Panel at the *American Psychological Association Convention*. Division 45. San Francisco, CA.
- Castellanos, J., White, J.L., & **Franco, V.** (2018). Latinx student scholarship development: A mentorship research model. *American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Annual Conference*. Presentation. Costa Mesa, CA.
- Franco, V.**, Gloria, A. M., & Castellanos, J. (2017). Latinx college students' persistence: The development & validation of an emic scale. *American Psychological Association Convention*. Poster presentation. Washington, DC.
- Franco, V.**, Castellanos, J., & Gloria, A. M. (2016). Validating an "academic family" measure with Latina/o undergraduates. *American Psychological Association Convention*. Poster presentation. Denver, CO.

- Franco, V., & Castellanos, J. (2016).** Latina/o college students' persistence: The development & validation of an emic scale. *Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Symposium*. Poster presentation. University of California, Irvine, CA.
- Franco, V., Fernandez, S., De Leon, S., Castellanos, J., & Gloria, A.M. (2016).** The role of family for Latina/o undergraduate experiences & academic persistence: Practical strategies from a PSC perspective. *American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Annual Conference*. Presentation. Costa Mesa, CA.
- Franco, V., Gloria, A. M., & Castellanos, J. (2015).** *Alianza familiar*: Validation of the "academic family" measure with Latina/o undergraduates. *SERP Student Annual Research Presentation. Poster presentation*. University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Franco, V., & Castellanos, J. (2014).** Undocumented Latina/o students' perspectives on mentorship: A psychosociocultural perspective. *National Latina/o Psychological Association Biennial Conference*. Poster presentation. Albuquerque, NM.
- Franco, V., & Castellanos, J. (2014).** Undocumented Latina/o students' persistence & the role of mentorship: A psychosociocultural perspective. *Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Symposium*. Poster presentation. University of California, Irvine, CA.

## **LEADERSHIP & SERVICE EXPERIENCE**

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- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Graduate Mentor</b>   | <b>October 2021 – June 2022</b> |
| <b>Graduate Scholars Program</b>   | <b>6 hours a month</b>          |
| <i>University of California, Santa Barbara</i>   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported first- &amp; second-year doctoral students from diverse backgrounds &amp; intersectional identities</li> <li>• Connected students to campus resources, professional development opportunities, &amp; networking events across campus</li> <li>• Met monthly with mentoring family to facilitate a sense of community, support, &amp; share resources</li> </ul>   |                                 |
| <b>Coordinator</b>   | <b>October 2018 – June 2021</b> |
| <b>Santa Barbara Wellness Program</b>  | <b>5 hours per week</b>         |
| <i>Santa Barbara, California</i>   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected with community partners, facilitated wellness workshops in English &amp; Spanish, coordinated wellness trainings, &amp; created seasonal newsletters</li> <li>• Fostered &amp; maintained community partnerships by providing wellness workshops as an effort to contribute to the wellbeing of children, adults, &amp; families with a specific focus on the Latinx community</li> <li>• Presented wellness curriculum based on qualitative &amp; quantitative wellness research in the community</li> </ul> |                                 |
| <b>Graduate Mentor</b>   | <b>October 2019 – June 2020</b> |
| <b>Department of Psychological &amp; Brain Sciences</b>  | <b>2 hours per week</b>         |
| <i>University of California, Santa Barbara</i>   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentored two undergraduate students &amp; provided them with resources &amp; opportunities for applying to graduate school</li> </ul>   |                                 |

- Supported them & in their graduate school application process; reviewed their materials
- Connected them with campus resources & other graduate students

**Graduate Mentor** **July 2019 – August 2019**  
**Academic Research Consortium Mentor** **4 hours per week**  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Mentored undergraduate visiting scholar who completed an 8-week intensive summer research experience
- Met weekly with scholar & oversaw development & analysis of research study
- Supported scholar in her graduate school application process & connected her with graduate students; facilitated conversations around future career goals

**Co-Leader** **August 2017 – June 2018**  
**ANDALE Research Team** **3 hours per week**  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

- Co-led research team of graduate & undergraduate students addressing research on educational issues in Latinx populations & provided support in research projects
- Mentored & supported undergraduate students in research & professional development
- Ensured research team met research goals & promoted available resources

**Diversity Facilitator** **September 2016 – May 2018**  
**Diversity Dialogues** **12 Dialogues/ 1.5 hour per sessions**  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

- Co-facilitated 90-minute dialogue intended to help college students engage in discussions about diversity, race, privilege, & campus climate
- Established group expectations & rules for students to share their experiences, as well as facilitated difficult dialogue among students

**Facilitator** **September 2013 – June 2014**  
**R.E.A.C.H. (Reaffirming Ethnic Awareness & Community Harmony)** **5 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, Cross Cultural Center*

- Completed a 30-week training course on cultural awareness & multiculturalism
- Facilitated workshops & presentations throughout campus to help create safe zones for students to discuss issues of diversity
- Encouraged students to challenge themselves & think critically about topics such as racism, classism, & sexism

**President | Cultural Chair | Member** **May 2013 – June 2016**  
**Phi Lambda Rho, Chicana/Latina Based Sorority** **9 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine*

- Gained leadership skills in group management, facilitation, budgeting, & event planning
- Mentored new members & motivated students to succeed academically & develop as campus & community leaders
- Participated in community service projects & cultural events on campus

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Teaching Assistant** **August 2021 – September 2021**  
**Course: Pedagogy in Applied Psychology** **8 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Held weekly discussion sections & presented on the course materials covered (e.g., choosing a research topic, literature review, methods, analysis)
- Helped students prepare for upcoming assignments & held weekly office hours
- Provided students with feedback & support at they developed their research proposal
- Performed administrative tasks such as grading, record-keeping, & responding to email

**Teaching Assistant** **July 2020 – August 2020**  
**Course: Introduction to Educational & Vocational Guidance** **8 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Facilitated weekly conversations around skills, values, & provided career guidance
- Provided students feedback & discussed student career goals, trajectories, & next steps
- Performed administrative tasks such as grading, record-keeping, & responding to email

**Teaching Assistant** **January 2020 – April 2020**  
**Course: Introduction to Helping Skills** **10 hours per week**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Led weekly class discussions & facilitated conversations around helping skills
- Provided feedback to facilitate students writing & critical thinking skills
- Performed administrative tasks such as grading, record-keeping, & responding to email

**Teaching Assistant** **August 2017 – May 2018**  
**Course: Coming to Terms with Cultural Diversity** **13 hours per week**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

- Facilitated conversations around intersectionality of social locations
- Provided feedback to facilitate students writing & critical thinking skills
- Increased student's self-awareness about diversity & multicultural considerations
- Performed administrative tasks such as grading, record-keeping, & responding to email
- Assisted instructors in increase learning experience via an online platform course for students

**Teaching Assistant** **September 2015 – June 2016**  
**Creating Options & Conquering Hurdles (C.O.A.C.H.)** **5 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, Counseling Center*

- Supported Dr. Jessica Ortega in facilitating the C.O.A.C.H. class for incoming C.O.A.C.H. cohort
- Consulted with Dr. Jessica Ortega in how to best support the C.O.A.C.H. cohort
- Mentored & supported current C.O.A.C.H. facilitators as they supported UC Irvine students

**Teaching Assistant** **January 2016 – March 2016**  
**Course: Chicano/Latino Families** **9 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, School of Social Sciences*

- Functioned as a liaison between professor & students by providing weekly handouts
- Organized, proctored, & graded class assignments & tests for an undergraduate core course
- Revised course handouts, PowerPoint lectures, & assignments

**Teaching Assistant** **August 2013 – June 2016**  
**Children Care Center** **16 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine*

- Integrated academic curriculum in children's daily school activities (ages 2-5 years)
- Facilitated & led activities with children through the pedagogy of play
- Assisted children in adapting to schedule & activities

**Student Assistant** **April 2015 – June 2015**  
**Course: Comparing Cultures** **13 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, School of Social*

- Facilitated, organized, & graded class assignments & tests
- Assisted students with course work & upcoming assignments during weekly office hours

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## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Researcher** **June 2021 – Present**  
**Advisor: Melissa L. Morgan, Ph.D.**  
*Dissertation: Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad: Exploring Subjective Experiences of Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture*  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Conceptualized dissertation seeking to explore how cultural practices inform the subjective experience of aging & *bienestar* (wellbeing) on *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* (people of Mexican descent in their third & final cycle of life)
- Will conduct a qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

- Will develop interview guide, obtain IRB approval, conduct interviews, & analyze data

**Graduate Students Researcher** **September 2019 – September 2021**  
**Advisor: Melissa L. Morgan, Ph.D.** **6 hours per week**  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Attended weekly research team meetings & provided research project updates
- Participated in community-based research through collaboration of community partners around thriving, resilience, cultural values, & its effect on Latinx mental health
- Engaged in discussion with research team around conceptualization of research & methodologies

**2<sup>nd</sup> Year Research Project** **September 2018 – November 2020**  
**Advisor: Melissa L. Morgan, Ph.D.** **6 hours per week**  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*

- Conceptualized a qualitative study exploring the role of cultural values & wellness among Latinx emergent adults using a grounded theory approach
- Interviewed nine participants, transcribed, & analyzed data
- Presented findings at the CCSP department third year research festival

**Researcher, ANDALE** **September 2016 – May 2018**  
**Advisor: Alberta M. Gloria, Ph.D.** **3 hours per week**  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

- Engaged in research conversations with group peers during research meetings
- Analyzed research examining Latinx undergraduate psychological processes
- Co-wrote book chapter on creating academic families in higher education

**Researcher, MX Research Team** **June 2017 – August 2017**  
**Doctoral Candidate: Alyssa Ramirez Stege** **8 hours per week**  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

- Analyzed & coded qualitative research on how Mexican psychiatrists, patients, & patients' family members made sense of mental illness (i.e., definition, cause, treatment expectations)
- Learned culturally grounded assessment using the Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI)
- Gained thematic analysis methodology skills & learned to conduct research in Spanish

**Undergraduate Researcher, Undergraduate Thesis** **September 2015 – June 2016**  
**Advisor: Jeanett Castellanos, Ph.D.** **10 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, Social Science Honors*

- Formulated quantitative study measuring Latinx academic persistence
- Co-developed academic persistence measure, survey protocol, & run statistical analysis
- Developed honors thesis manuscript & presented findings

**Research Assistant** **January 2014 – June 2016**  
**Advisor: Jeanett Castellanos, Ph.D.** **10 hours per week**  
*University of California, Irvine, Social Sciences Directed Group Study*

- Learned the fundamentals of conducting qualitative & quantitative research
- Conceptualized study examining undocumented students' perspectives on mentorship
- Created interview guide, obtained IRB approval, conducted interviews, & analyzed data

**Researcher** **June 2015 – August 2015**  
**Advisor: Alberta M. Gloria, Ph.D.** **7 weeks**  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

- Completed statistical analysis that examined the reliability, validity, & mediator effect of an emic-developed construct (Academic Family Scale)
- Developed manuscript for future presentation & publication

## **COMMITTEES & TRAININGS**

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**Anti-Racism Committee (ARC), Committee Member** **October 2022 – Present**  
**UCLA Counseling & Psychological Services**  
*University of California, Los Angeles*  
Sub-committee composed of a small multidisciplinary group of CAPS staff who are dedicated towards helping provide programming to the larger staff around decolonial practices & anti-racism related practices in psychology.

**Undocumented Student Program (USP), Committee Member** **October 2022 – Present**  
**UCLA Counseling & Psychological Services**  
*University of California, Los Angeles*  
Composed of a group of CAPS clinicians dedicated towards serving students who are immigration-impacted. USP members provide clinical care and work collaboratively with campus entities who serve, & support immigration-impacted students.

**Graduate Student Committee Member** **October 2019 – May 2020**  
**Clinical, Counseling, & School Psychology Program Faculty Search Committee**  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*  
Search committee led the search for a Lecturer with expertise in psychological assessment of diverse populations including the Latinx populations. Committee consisted of three faculty members & one graduate student. Committee reviewed all application & helped conduct interviews.

**Committee Member** **October 2018 – June 2019**  
**Associated Student Committee – Wellness Committee Clinical, Counseling, & School Psychology Program**  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*



Developed & created programing for graduate students in the Clinical, Counseling, & School Psychology Program.

**Suicide: Assessment & Intervention**

**January 19, 2019**

**Presenter: Kjell Rudestam, Ph.D., A.B.P.P.**

*Santa Barbara, CA*

The seminar addressed a vexing & challenging social issue, the loss of life through suicide. Dr. Rudestam covered several different approaches to assessing suicide risk & interviewing & treating suicidal patients.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual John Martins Clinical Workshop**

**March 5, 2018**

**Presenter: Pratusha Tummala-Narra, Ph.D.**

*University of Wisconsin- Presenter: Pratusha Tummala-Narra, Ph.D.*

Attended workshop on culturally informed psychoanalytic theory & practice in a contemporary context.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual John Martins Clinical Workshop**

**April 28, 2017**

**Presenter: Terri Moyers, Ph.D.**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Attended workshop on Motivational Interviewing (MI), a client-centered & directive clinical method. Dr. Moyers offered a didactic lecture, where we observed videotaped examples of MI & engaged in group learning exercises.

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**FELLOWSHIPS**

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**Ray E. Hosford Memorial Fellowship**

**June 2021 – June 2022**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

Awarded funds intended to support the proposed dissertation: *Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad: Exploring Subjective Experiences of Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture.*

**APA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP)**

**March 2020 – August 2022**

*American Psychological Association*

Awarded the APA Minority Fellowship Program Doctoral Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (MHSAS); awarded to students who demonstrate commitment to working with underserved communities. The fellowship comes with a commitment to complete substance abuse trainings over course of fellowship.

**UCSB - CNCSP First-Year Fellowship**

**September 2018 – June 2019**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

Awarded a one-year fellowship through the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, Department of Counseling, Clinical & School Psychology at the UC Santa Barbara.

**One - Year University Fellowship**

**October 2016 – May 2017**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Awarded a one-year fellowship through the Graduate School & the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research & Graduate Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with funding from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

**Summer Education Research Program (SERP) Fellow**                      **June 2014 – August 2015**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Completed eight-week training concentrating on research writing, structuring literature reviews, & statistical analysis.

**Educational Enhancement Scholarship**    **May 2014**

*University of California, Irvine*

Received the School of Social Science Scholarship to help fund a research presentation at the National Latina/o Psychological Association Biennial Conference.

**Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program**    **January 2014 – May 2014**

*University of California, Irvine*

Awarded fellowship for conducting a qualitative research & presenting at the annual undergraduate research symposium.

**AWARDS**

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**Ray E. Hosford Award for Excellence in Clinical Dedication**    **May 2020**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

Awarded the Ray E. Hosford Award for Excellence in Clinical Dedication for demonstrating excellence in helping build a positive sense of community, active involvement in the well-being of clinical peers, & dedication helping others through clinical work.

**American Psychological Association 2016 Convention**    **August 2016**

*Denver, Colorado*

Received Division 45 Student Poster Award for presenting on the Validation of an “Academic Family” Measure with Latina/o Undergraduates.

**Dynamic Womyn of UCI 2015 Recipient**    **May 2015**

*University of California, Irvine*

Awarded the Dynamic Womyn Academic Award for demonstrating commitment to creating spaces on campus for womyn in academia.

## ABSTRACT

*Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad* [Older Mexican Adults]: Exploring Subjective Experiences of Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture

By

Veronica Franco

Aging is a normal process that is part of life and is informed by a complex interaction between social, cultural, economic, and other factors (e.g., biological, physiological, psychological, Lindland et al., 2015). In the U.S., Latinx communities represent the fastest growing older population. It is suggested that an individual's subjective experience of aging and awareness around their aging processes informs their overall wellbeing. A growing body of literature indicates older Latinx are active members in their family networks and many view aging as a positive experience despite declines in health (Alfaro et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2021). Among Latinx communities *bienestar* [wellbeing] is informed by balance and harmony with the self, harmonious relationships with family, and balance with physical and spiritual environments (Izquierdo, 2005; Willetto, 2012). The purpose of this study was to expand the literature on aging and wellbeing among *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals] by exploring how culture informs the subjective experience of aging and *bienestar*. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted among Spanish-speaking *Mexicanos nacidos en México* [Mexican-born] who were over the age of 65 years, have over 40 years of living in the U.S., and reside in Southern California. Participants were also asked to share a photo that was representative of their lived experiences as *Mexicanos*. Data was analyzed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2021). Six overall

themes emerged, including (1) *Vivencias de su Crianza en México* [Experiences from their Upbringings in Mexico], (2) *Experiencias Inmigrando a los Estados Unidos* [Experiences Immigrating to the U.S.], (3) *La Esencia de la Familia* [The Essence of Family], (4) *Agradecimiento por la Vida* [Gratitude for Life], (5) *Prácticas que Informan su Bienestar* [Practices that Inform their Wellbeing], and (6) *Transiciones de la Vida* [Life Transitions]. Central to their subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing were their cultural values and practices within the context of recalling their personal histories and their current relationships with God, family, and friends. Limitations, future research, and implications for *Mexicanos nacidos en México* are discussed.

*Keywords:* *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican adults], subjective aging, subjective wellbeing, culture

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The <sup>1</sup>Latinx population is represented by a large and ethnically diverse group of people from various regions of Latin America including the Caribbean (e.g., Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti), South America (e.g., Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia), North and Central American countries (e.g., Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama). In the U.S., Hispanic individuals constitute 18% of the total population and people of Mexican origin account for slightly over 60% of the nation’s overall Hispanic population (Pew Research Center, 2020). In 2019, about 9% of the Hispanic population were 65 years and older and it is projected that by 2060, about 21% of the Hispanic population will be 65 and older. In 2019, about 60% of all older Hispanics lived in three states – California, Texas, and Florida. Within the U.S., Hispanics are the fastest growing older population (Administration for Community Living, 2020; Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2020).

With a growing older population in the U.S., there is a need to shift the narrative around aging. For most in the U.S., aging is often regarded as a process of deterioration, dependency, family separation, and difficulties with technology (Dionigi, 2015; Lindland et al., 2015); a striking gap when compared to scholars’ and older adults’ views on aging. Evidence indicates that negative stereotypes foster misconceptions of aging despite a growing body of psychological research supporting positive views of aging (Dionigi, 2015; Levy 2009a, 2009b; Levy, 2017). In a report titled “Gauging Aging: Mapping Gaps Between

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Latinx” is used to refer to people of Latin American descent, which encompasses many different countries and nationalities. The authors use the gender-neutral term, Latinx, unless different terms (i.e., Latina/o, Hispanic) were used in original source articles.

Expert and Public Understanding of Aging in America,” Lindland et al. (2015), found a significant gap between social science experts’ views on aging and the public’s view.

Notable misconceptions about the narrative on aging among the public included 1) growing old involves primarily loss and decline; 2) changes that occur with aging are outside of a person’s control; and 3) age-related losses are permanent and irreversible. Having an unfavorable view on aging can increase negative attitudes towards older individuals (Kang & Kim, 2022). Negative attitudes towards older adults may contribute to ageism (i.e., stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory actions based on age; Iversen et al., 2009).

Scholars emphasize aging is a normal process across the life cycle that is distinct from disease and decline but rather “grounded in, and shaped by, the complex interaction between social, cultural, economic, and other factors that comprise context” (Lindland et al., 2015; p.

5). Among older adults, perceptions of aging differ across racial and ethnic minorities.

Menkin et al. (2017) identified differences in age expectations among racial/ethnic older adults from Korean, Chinese, Latino, and African American backgrounds living in the U.S.

Their findings indicate African American and Latino participants expected less age-related functional decline than Korean and Chinese Americans. The discrepancy around perceptions of aging among the public, scholars, and older adults highlights a need to explore older adults’ subjective experiences of aging (i.e., the way people perceive their own aging process).

### **Subjective Aging**

Subjective aging refers to the idea that individuals reflect on their own development and make meaning of their aging as they move through the lifespan (Diehl et al., 2015).

According to Ryff (1989), an individual’s subjective aging experience and awareness of their



aging processes are fundamental to informing their overall wellbeing. Scholars suggest perceptions of aging derive from interactions and expectations of socially constructed and culturally informed meanings (Aponte Daza, 2015; Fry, 1990; Nobles et al., 2013; Ryff, 1989). In considering an individual's subjective experience of aging, historical, social, cultural, and environmental factors must be considered, as an individual's experience is best understood through their sociocultural world (Aponte Daza, 2015; Fung, 2013; Garcia, 2007; Maldonado, 1985). Individuals who report subjective health, higher income, higher educational level, and a stronger sense of hope tend to perceive aging as a process of growth and transformation rather than decline (Romo et al., 2013; Sarkisian et al., 2006; Steverink et al., 2001). Further studies indicate factors such as social networks, family, religion, and health positively inform older adults' subjective experience of aging (Beyene et al., 2002; Hilton et al., 2012; Reyes Uribe 2015). To date, limited studies have explored how cultural practices inform subjective experiences of aging.

Subjective well-being refers to how individuals experience and evaluate their lives around various domains and activities in their lives. In (1998), Keyes argued wellbeing extends beyond positive functioning and includes social experiences and proposed five social dimensions of wellbeing 1) social coherence, 2) social actualization, 3) social integration, 4) social acceptance, and 5) social contribution. Keyes (1998, 2002), proposed people function well when they feel they belong and are part of society. Social wellbeing is considered a multidimensional model encompassing aspects of life that expand beyond happiness. Within the five dimensions of social well-being, strengths and challenges individual's face are considered. However, scholars suggest the exclusion of culture in the conceptualization of wellbeing limits our understanding as how an individual perceives aging, and how their own

wellbeing is in direct relation to their cultural lens (Diener et al., 2000; Hernandez et al., 2016; Nobles et al., 2013). In addition, a growing body of literature reports the aging process among older adults encompasses a meaning making process rooted in cultural underpinnings (Diehl et al., 2015; Fung, 2013; Westerhof et al., 2015).

In Latinx communities *bienestar* [wellbeing] is described as having harmony with the self, others (e.g., family, social networks, higher power), and nature (Izquierdo, 2005; Willetto, 2010). Central values of *bienestar* include having a strong human-relation orientation, centrality of the family, and regard for a higher power (Rojas & García Vega, 2017). In Latinx cultures *personas en la tercera edad*<sup>2</sup> (older people) play a significant role in their families and communities as they serve as models of cultural teachings (Lou et al., 2012; Tienda & Angel, 1982). Older Latinx are active members in their family networks and many view aging as a positive experience despite declines in health (Alfaro et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2021). In a qualitative study examining perceptions of aging among older Latinos, they described aging as a normal process of life and identified social support, fulfilled cultural expectations, and having strong faith in God influenced their perception of aging (Beyene et al., 2002). However, while some studies have explored wellbeing among Latinx communities (Beyene et al., 2002; Hernandez et al., 2016; Rojas & García Vega, 2017), limited research has explored subjective experiences of aging among ethnic specific communities.

### **Aging in the U.S.**

Aging is a normal trajectory that is part of life and is informed by biological, physiological, environmental, psychological, behavioral, and social factors (National Institute

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<sup>2</sup> The term *personas en la tercera edad* refers to older Latinx. Older adults traditionally have been considered to be 65 years and older. *Personas en la tercera edad* translates to older people.

on Aging, 2020). Quintero and Torrijos (1995) refer to aging as the dynamic, ongoing, gradual, and irreversible process where factors such as biological, psychological, and social factors interact with each other. In contrast to the public's view on aging, emerging research among minoritized communities indicate many older adults report feeling younger than they are and perceive their aging experience as positive despite physical changes and health complications (Alfaro et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2021).

The research on aging has historically focused on paradigms of the life course or life span perspective (e.g., frameworks that address patterns of change over time that inform the process of aging; Fuller-Iglesias et al., 2010). While such perspectives have provided an expansive understanding of how we understand aging, it is suggested the integration of culture within such perspectives can better inform how we understand subjective experiences of aging among older adults (Fung, 2013; Heine et al., 2006; Stevens & Westerhof, 2006). Specifically, how cultural teachings on aging inform perceptions and attitudes of aging (Diehl et al., 2015; Fung, 2013).

Studies have connected cultural values such as *familismo* [familism], *respeto* [respect], religion and spirituality to wellbeing and quality of life (Hernandez et al., 2016; Hilton et al., 2012; Rojas & García Vega, 2017; Reyes Uribe, 2015). Latinx culture has been linked to wellbeing (Ayón et al., 2010; Diaz & Bui, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2007), resilience (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Morgan Consoli et al., 2011; Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013; Morgan Consoli et al., 2015), including protective factors around mental health outcomes (Adames & Chaves-Dueñas, 2016; Germán, et al., 2009).

In addition, literature on positive, subjective experiences of aging has been connected to older adults' wellbeing and quality of life (Alfaro et al., 2019). While there is existing

psychological research on subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among older minoritized individuals, much of the research has focused on understanding these perceptions through western frameworks. Aging among western frameworks have emphasized a focus on the individual and tend to hold negative views (Löckenhoff et al., 2015). However, some scholars argue that individuals experience aging within a cultural framework. Aging attitudes can be understood through a system of ideas, beliefs, values, and customs that relate to aging (Löckenhoff et al., 2015). Limited studies have explored how specific cultural practices inform subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among older adults.

Recent studies with older Latinx individuals reveal culture is an integral part of how they define and understand their own wellbeing (e.g., Hernandez et al., 2016; Rojas & García Vega, 2017). One such exploration of cultural practices could be the exploration of words, memories, and events that modeled culture. These cultural practices may offer an opportunity to better understand how cultural frameworks inform older adults, meaning making experiences of aging and wellbeing.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Historically, research has been conducted among Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic (WEIRD) populations, misrepresenting much of the current U.S. population. Research among older racial and ethnic minoritized communities has been underrepresented despite a growing change in our current population (Milani et al., 2021). Recruiting and examining diverse populations for research through a culturally responsive lens is needed to better inform how to support the psychological health of older adults and help reduce health disparities among older minoritized groups.

As Latinx cultures place value, respect, and honor on their elders, it may be that the subjective experience of wellbeing and aging among older Latinx may be interconnected with their cultural backgrounds. Understanding the subjective experience of *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals] through a cultural lens can help provide valuable insight into how older *Mexicanos* [Mexican] adapt to changes that come with age, the role cultural frameworks play in meaning making processes, and the ways they understand and perceive their wellbeing.

### **Research Questions**

The proposed study sought to explore the following research questions:

- (1) How does culture inform *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals] views on aging?
- (2) How do cultural practices inform *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals] subjective aging and wellbeing?

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter provides an account of the current literature related to aging among older minoritized adults with a particular focus on sociocultural factors, Latinx culture, and subjective aging and well-being. An overview of aging among minoritized adults is provided and sociocultural factors such as immigration paradox, acculturation, language, SES, and education are discussed. Following, an emphasis on Latinx culture and aging among Mexican adults is explored. The role of cultural values and practices are highlighted among Mexican communities. The final sections of the chapter provide a synthesis of the literature on the subjective experience of aging and wellbeing among older adults. Distinctions between the construct of wellbeing and *bienestar* [wellbeing] among Latinx communities is explored.

#### **Aging Among Minoritized Adults**

Across the nation, it is projected older adults will make up over 21% of the U.S. population; and by 2060 about one in four individuals in the U.S. will be over 65 and older (United States Census Bureau). In 2020, 24% of individuals ages 65 and older were members of a racial or ethnic minority groups – 9% were African American, 5% Asian American, 0.6% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.8% of individuals ages 65 and older identified as being of two or more races (Administration for Community Living, 2021). Particularly, individuals of Hispanic origin (who may be of any race) represented 9% of the older population, making older Hispanics the fastest growing population in the U.S. (Administration for Community Living, 2021; Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2020). With a significant shift in age

trends, it is anticipated greater demands for healthcare access and behavioral health will be warranted (United States Census Bureau).

In examining the current research among older adults, health disparities among ethnic minority populations are significantly higher across physical and behavioral health outcomes (Boen, 2019; Ferraro et al., 2017; Forrester et al., 2020). Across studies it is reported that minoritized older adults experience a higher accumulation of health disadvantages (i.e., health differences that are linked with economic, social, environmental disadvantages) compared to their White counterparts (Boen, 2019). Aging and quality of life are informed by factors such as stress, access to resources, and lifestyle factors, however, health disparities also inform such outcomes (Ferraro et al., 2017; Forrester et al., 2020). Research suggests that minoritized older adults are at higher risk for chronic illness (Beyene et al., 2002), poor nutrition, and alcohol use (Lara et al., 2005). Experiences of discrimination are also a notable stressor that impacts the health of Black and Hispanic adults (Everson-Rose et al., 2015) as well as immigrants (Schunck et al., 2015). Particularly, Latinx older adults are at higher risk of chronic illness (Beyene et al., 2002), diabetes, dementia (Mehta & Yeo, 2017), depression (Areán et al., 2005; Chavez-Korell et al., 2012; Falcon & Tucker, 2000; Gonzalez et al., 2001), and anxiety (Negroni-Rodriguez & Bok, 2004; Yan et al., 2011).

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected older Black and Latinx adults with higher infection and mortality rates. In a theoretically informed article by Garcia et al. (2021) structural racism was a fundamental cause for existing racial and ethnic inequalities in health outcomes. They emphasize structural racism harms the health of minoritized communities through several mechanisms, including the constraints of opportunities that prevent risks and access to obtaining health-promoting (e.g., health care),

socioeconomic (e.g., education, occupation, income, wealth) and flexible resources (e.g., power, prestige, freedom, neighborhood context; Garcia et al., 2020). This aligns with consistent findings that demonstrate older adults from minoritized and disadvantaged identities are at higher risk of negative health outcomes due to disadvantages and disparities they face (Ferraro et al., 2017; Forrester et al., 2020).

### **Sociocultural Factors**

Evidence across research demonstrate that being of a minoritized status has direct implications among various dimensions of living for older adults. Specifically, the influence of sociocultural factors on aging outcomes underscores the unique experience that minoritized older adults encounter (e.g., Bzostek, 2007; Du & Xu, 2016; Min et al., 2014; Shetterly et al., 1996). For example, consistent findings demonstrate that older adults from minoritized and disadvantaged identities are at higher risk of negative health outcomes and mortality. Educational level, race and ethnicity, and income are predictors of older adult's health outcomes (Clark & Boyd, 2017; Cox, 2018; Hill et al., 2015; Manly et al., 2005; Park et al., 2018). As the literature on aging continues to expand and older adults in the U.S. become more diverse, it is important for research to also expand their understanding of how sociocultural factors interact and inform subjective experiences of aging among older adults of various communities.

Early work from scholars (e.g., Kohli & Meyer, 1986; Maldonado, 1985) offer an understanding of the limitations that arise by viewing aging as a homogenous process occurring among all older adults. Maldonado (1985) proposed accounting for racial and ethnic specific experiences of aging is a vital component in serving older adults. Kohli & Meyer (1986) suggested that in viewing aging through an *institutionalized* (i.e., how life



course is structured) and *standardized process* (i.e., normative pattern that occurs in life-course) dismissed individuals' subjective experience of aging based on their social locations, inequalities, access, and resources. They propose that "in dealing with questions of the life course, it is not sufficient to speak of 'context' or 'environment' as an aggregate of variables or factors" (Kohli & Meyer, 1986; p. 146). Instead, they recommend the need for conceptualizing aging through a more nuanced approach that informs the dimensions of life based on power, privilege, and oppression.

Latinx older adults' face multiple health barriers related to numerous sociocultural factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, educational level, language, limited health care access, acculturation; Lum & Vanderaa, 2010; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Torres, 2010). Maldonado (1985) argued that in understanding the experience of Hispanic older adults' research must account for a history of colonization and survival that many Hispanics who immigrated to the U.S. experienced. While these suggestions were made almost 40 years ago, Maldonado's (1985) and Kohli & Meyer's (1986) work continues to be of relevance, particularly in thinking of how sociocultural factors inform experiences of aging. As literature seeks to understand the experience of older adults, scholars argue for the need to understand how individuals' prevalence of health and mental health may differ within Latinx communities (Jimenez et al., 2020). Historically, Latinx populations have been grouped and assumed to be a homogenous and monolithic group. However, scholars underscore the need for accounting for within group differences across Latinx communities (Taylor, 2020). Acknowledging within group difference supports the expansion of existing frameworks of aging to account for more nuanced perspectives of understanding the psychological, environmental, and sociocultural factors (e.g., resilience, culture, religion, gender, acculturation) that inform the

processes of aging across communities (Jimenez et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2015; Rosenberg et al., 2018; Zittoun & Baucal, 2021). Examining within group differences also helps mitigate against stereotypes of what aging looks like for racial and ethnic groups (Taylor, 2020).

*Immigration Paradox.* The immigrant paradox suggests that foreign-born individuals have better health and mental health outcomes than the U.S. – born population (Alcantára et al., 2017). Much of the research on the immigration paradox has generally focused on Latino and Asian ethnic populations (Teruya & Bazargan-Hejazi, 2013). Research demonstrates that among certain health outcomes, individuals who are non-native-born in the U.S. and who are less acculturated report better outcomes than those who are more acculturated or native-born individuals (Ali et al., 2004; Alvarez et al., 2007). Specifically, among Hispanics, the Hispanic Paradox has particularly focused on immigrants from Mexico who report lower socioeconomic status (SES) and exhibit better than expected health and mortality outcomes (Gonzalez et al., 2009). The Hispanic Paradox has been reflected in significantly lower rates of mood, anxiety, and substance disorders for Mexican American immigrants when compared with their U.S. – born counterparts (Vega, 2004). Alegria et al. (2007) found recent immigrants reported lower rates of depression compared to immigrants who resided in the U.S. for 10 or more years. Latinos in the U.S. also experience lower mortality rates from cardiovascular disease (e.g., conditions of the heart and/or circulatory system) than their non-Hispanic White counterparts despite having a higher risk-factor profile (e.g., Ruiz & Ransford; 2012; Sorlie et al., 2010). Research on the Hispanic Paradox corroborates that sociocultural protection (e.g., places in which people live, social interactions in neighborhoods) may buffer against negative health outcomes (Cagney et al., 2007; Eschbach et al., 2004; Lee, & Ferraro, 2007).

*Acculturation.* Acculturation is the process of assimilation, adjustment, and/or integration of a racial or ethnic group into a new culture (Berry, 2003). Acculturation is a multi-systemic process that describes numerous changes that occur at individual and societal levels when two cultures intersect (Capielo Rosario et al., 2019). It is suggested that the process of acculturation is informed and influenced by contextual (e.g., economic resources, neighborhood characteristics) and individual factors (e.g., values, attitudes, and behaviors; Kosic, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Research indicates acculturation is a predictor of health outcomes and aging among immigrant populations living in the U.S. Higher levels of acculturation among Latinx adults has been associated with depression. Farley et al. (2005) found higher rates of acculturation may elevate risk for depression in Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, due to a shift in coping styles, such as increased use of substances or self-distraction, lower use of religious practices, and loss of positive reframing. Similarly, Cobb et al. (2017), found higher acculturation among Latina/os adults was associated with depression in a sample of 122 undocumented Latina/os adults in the southern U.S. Further, in a national epidemiological study assessing for mental health, depression rates were 30% higher in more acculturated U.S. – born Latinos than among foreign-born Latinos who were less acculturated (Alegria et al., 2008). These findings are consistent with prior research examining the association between levels of acculturation (Chiriboga et al., 2007), SES, and educational level (Bzostel et al., 2007). Particularly, research highlights risk factors such as lack of English proficiency, lower educational level, acculturation stress, and legal status, affect older adults' experiences in the U.S. (Min et al., 2014; Mui & Kang, 2006; Torres, 2010). Lum & Vanderaa (2010) investigated the association of immigrant status among older individuals with their physical

and mental health outcomes with a focus on the interactive effects of immigrant status, education, acculturation, race, and ethnicity. They found older adult immigrants reported higher levels of depression and more difficulties in instrumental activities of daily living (i.e., meals, grocery, phone, medicine, money) than non-immigrant older adults.

*Language.* Language barriers have also been associated with poor mental health access and experiences of lower quality of care among minoritized older adults (e.g., Benjamins, 2004; Lum & Vanderaa, 2010; Ng et al., 2011; Ponce et al., 2006; Sarkisian et al., 2006). Ponce et al. (2006) examined whether differences in health care access and health satisfaction varied among older adults with limited English proficiency and those who spoke proficient English. Using a representative population sample in California, findings revealed limited-English proficient older adults reported higher risk than proficient English speakers in 3 of the 4 measures of access to care and health status. Limited-English proficient older adults also had significantly worse access to care and health status and experienced delays in care than proficient English older adults. Similarly, Kim et al. (2011) examined the effect of limited English proficiency on mental health service use among immigrant adults with psychiatric disorders. Findings demonstrated limited English proficiency significantly decreased mental health service use among Latino immigrants. Their findings also indicated limited English proficiency was a barrier to mental health service use among Latino immigrants with psychiatric disorders (i.e., determined mood, anxiety, and substance use disorder). Relatedly, Rodriguez et al. (2021) explored disparities in telehealth use among California patients with limited English proficiency. Findings revealed lower rates of telehealth use compared to proficient English speakers. Patients with limited English proficiency were more likely to be older, female, less educated, lower SES, uninsured, and

Medicaid recipients. Mizoguchi et al. (2019) also found older adult immigrants tend to vary in English proficiency and tend to have less education than younger immigrants informing their prevalence of being homeowners, living in poverty, and having access to healthcare.

*Socioeconomic status.* SES has been correlated with greater declined in physical health, mental health, quality of life, and limited access to health care (e.g., DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014; Haan et al., 2011; Haas & Rohlfen, 2009; Park et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Haan et al. (2011) examined the effects of lifetime SES trajectory and cumulative disadvantage from childhood through adulthood on cognitive performance among older Mexican Americans. Early and midlife SES informed effects on cognitive functioning as older adults. Within the study, those with low SES over their life course experienced greater declines in their cognitive performance than those with higher SES. These findings are consistent with other studies exploring the relationship between SES and health disparities (Eugenia Alvarado et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2018). In a study by Torres et al. (2018) they examined the association between childhood and adult SES and late-life health trajectories for older adults in Mexico. Robust associations between lifetime SES disadvantage and poorer self-rated health and depressive symptoms in late life were found. Similarly, Eugenia Alvarado et al. (2007) found low SES accounted for depressive symptoms among urban older adults of Latin America and the Caribbean.

*Education.* Educational attainment has also been associated with disadvantaged patterns of disability and physical functioning among Hispanic older adults (Hummer & Hayward, 2015). Sarkisian et al. (2006) examined the expectation of aging in various domains (e.g., general health, expectations of cognitive functioning, and expectations of mental health) among non-Latino White, African American, and Latino older adults.

Findings revealed older adults who reported low age-expectations were more likely to endorse inactive lifestyles and less likely to seek health services for age related conditions (Sarkisian et al., 2006). Non-Latino White and African American participants had similar expectations of functional decline with age, while Latino participants expected greater decline, however, when adjusting for education, age-expectations were not significantly different across groups. These findings were similar to a recent study by Menkin et al. (2017), who examined age expectations among minoritized older adults and found differences among African American and Latino participants. However, once education differences were accounted for, African American and Latino participants' age-expectations no longer differed (Menkin et al., 2017). Having no or little formal education can yield low-age expectations among participants from all racial groups (Menkin et al., 2017).

### ***La Cultura Latinx y Adultos Mayores* [Latinx Culture and Older Adults]**

The Latinx population in the U.S. is a diverse group across a range of dimensions (e.g., generation, country of origin, immigration journey, SES, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation; Delgado et al., 2018). Across various Latinx ethnic groups there is a wide range of differences and overarching similarities. The literature describes Latinx culture as a multigenerational structure guided by collectivistic values, traditions, and family-oriented connections (Adames & Chaves-Dueñas, 2016; Diaz-Guerrero & Szalay, 2013; Falicov, 2013). Values are a mechanism by which culture is transmitted from generation to generation and across communities. Cultural values and practices among Latinx communities have been recognized as a protective factor across education, wellbeing, mental health, and resilience.

Across disciplines, it is indicated Latinx communities in the U.S. have found ways to culturally engage, affirm, and empower their communities through poetry, music, art,

*testimonios, dichos*, and forms of expressive culture (Otero et al., 2017). Otero et al. (2017) define *poder y cultura* [power and culture] as referring to “the enactment, performance, or use of culture as a way to reclaim space, time, humanity, and the right to live” (p.6). They suggest across Latinx communities in the U.S. they have created a rich history of cultural practices that have informed music, food, religious practices, dress and style, literature, technology, visual art, and theory (Otero et al., 2017).

*Collectivism and Familismo [familism]*. Culture among Latinx communities is understood through their belief system of the individual, their family, and their social networks (Gonzalez et al., 2016). Latinx culture is characterized by paradigms of collectivism and *familismo* (Barrio 2000; Ingoldsby, 1991; Vega 1990). Collectivism is a process in which most Latinx are socialized to value interdependence and harmonious collaborative relationships; “one’s worth is based on one’s contribution to the group’s wellbeing and advancement” (Adames & Chaves-Dueñas, 2016, p. 178). *Familismo* is described as family-oriented systems that place a strong emphasis on familial ideals and encompasses a broad network of support that extends beyond the nuclear family (Ingoldsby, 1991). Santiago-Rivera (2002), described *familismo* as, “*La familia es el corazón y espíritu de la cultura Latina* [The family is the heart and soul of Latino culture; p. 19].”

Cultural values documented among Mexican culture include collectivism, *familismo*, *dichos*, religiosity, spirituality, and *respeto* (Morgan Consoli, & Llamas, 2013; Gonzales et al., 2008; Knight et al., 2010). Particularly, in Mexican culture, intergenerational family closeness is thought to inform values of collectivism and unity (Adames & Chaves-Dueñas, 2016; Reyes Uribe, 2015). Cultural practices in Mexican communities include *Dia de los*

*Muertos, Danzas, El Mariachi, La Charrería, Día de Reyes, Posadas, Fiestas de comunidades, Semana Santa, El día de la Virgen de Guadalupe* (Gobierno de México).

*Religion.* Religion is a well-documented cultural value across Latinx ethnic groups, including la *comunidad Mexicana* [Mexican community]. Religious practices occupy an important role in the health practices of Latinos (Lujan & Campbell, 2006; Guarnaccia et al., 1992). Individual prayer and faith are part of a system of healing and prayer for Latinx. Scholars indicate that religion can help aid the stress-coping process of migration, as well as facilitate the preservation of cultural values and ethnic identity (Moreno et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020). Ransford et al. (2010) found prayer is viewed as a fundamental practice that aids in the health of Latino immigrants. In addition, several studies have discussed the importance of religion in adjusting to aging (Beyene et al., 2002; Hilton et al., 2012; Laditka et al., 2009; Romo et al., 2013). Reyes-Ortiz et al. (2008) found Mexican Americans who reported frequent service attendance had fewer depressive symptoms than infrequent service attendance by Mexican Americans. Monserud and Markides (2017) found that although older Mexican American widows / widowers reported higher levels of depressive symptoms during the onset of their transition to becoming widowed, those who attended church more frequently experienced fewer increases in depressive symptoms in widowhood. Further, Aranda (2008) found that respondents who attended religious services more frequently were less likely to report depression among a sample of Latinos aged 50 and older.

*Dichos [sayings].* A well-documented cultural practice includes the use of *dichos* (Cabo, 1985; Sotomayor, 1973; Zuñiga, 1992). *Dichos*, also known as *refranes*, are cultural proverbs, metaphors, sayings, or idioms that describe values, beliefs, and attitudes (Zuñiga, 1992). Zuñiga (1992) proposed *dichos* are spontaneous, brief, and profound that inform



attitudes, moral values, and social behaviors among Latino culture. The use of *dichos* offer a glimpse of the value, purpose, worldview, and meaning individuals attribute to life. It may be that among older adults of Mexican heritage, many have an accumulation of *dichos* that are often referenced in day-to-day conversations or when they hope to make a point, teach, or model to others (Sotomayor, 1973). Flores-Huerta (2016) described *dichos* as “*verdaderos instrumentos colectivos que la humanidad ha forjado a través de los siglos para almacenar y compartir conocimientos sobre la vida diaria* [true collective instruments that humanity has forged through the centuries to store and share knowledge about daily life; p. 21].”

*Adultos mayores [older adults]*. Among Spanish speaking communities, *adultos mayores* are also referred to as *personas en la tercera edad* [older people]. *La tercera edad* is described as a time where older adults engage in a process of rest, reflection, and opportunities (American Psychological Association, 2010). In Latinx cultures *adultos mayores* are the center of the family unit and are regarded with great respect and wisdom (Gonzales et al., 2016). *Adultos mayores* embody a high, secure, and well-respected role within the family (Beyene et al., 2002; Paz & Applewhite 1988; Sotomayor 1992). Within Latinx families it is common to grow up living in a multigenerational home (Marquez-Velarde, 2020; Martinez & Rhodes, 2020), where *adultos mayores* play a vital role in the upbringing of younger generations and serve as teachers and models. As *adultos mayores* age, they become agents of cultural knowledge among their families, community, and environment (Tienda & Angel, 1982; Lou et al., 2012).

As culture plays an integral role in informing the socialization process for individuals, it is suggested culture can also inform views of aging across communities. Research studies suggest family members serve as unconditional support systems for older adults' physical and

mental health and often are the bridge between the older adult and care service systems (Gonzalez et al., 2016; Min & Barrio, 2009). *Adultos mayores* have identified neighbors, friends, and community members as being part of their family (Ruiz & Ransford, 2012). Studies have also found that among older Mexican adults the need to feel a sense of connection serves as an important aspect in their own understanding of life satisfaction as they age (Reyes Uribe, 2015).

Further, Ruiz & Ransford (2012), indicate that as Latinos age they begin to view family as constantly evolving and transcending beyond nuclear and extended family. Waite & Das (2010) hypothesized that as shifts in patterns occur over the course of life, stronger connection across various social aspects emerges for older adults. Galvis Palacios et al. (2018) examined patterns of care in Colombia among older adults with a disability and poverty. Findings revealed older adults find ways to look forward to life despite feelings of sadness. Notably, gratitude towards family members who take care of them was referenced across participants, “*El contar con alguien que los cuide les genera alivio* [Having someone to take care of me gives me relief] (Galvis Palacios et al., 2018).” These findings demonstrate how patterns of care among older adults is informed by the values, norms, and beliefs shared by ethnic groups. Generosity and gratitude may be factors that inform positive attitudes of aging among older adults (Galvis Palacios et al., 2018). Studies have found that among older Mexican adults the need to feel a sense of connection serves as an important aspect in their own understanding of life satisfaction as they age (Reyes Uribe, 2015). Such findings underscore the importance of connection and social relationships, they also highlight individuals’ ability to adapt as shifts occur in age (e.g., become more socially involved in their communities and families).

In Mexico, the aging process is conceptualized as '*la vejez*,' "*La vejez es una etapa de vida que comienza a los 60 años y es considerada la última etapa de vida y forma parte del envejecimiento* [Old age is a stage of life that begins at age 60 and is considered the last stage of life and is part of aging] (Instituto Nacional de las Personas Adultos Mayores, 2019)." Within Mexican culture, *adultos mayores* are seen as representatives of ancestral knowledge and guidance (Gobierno De México, 2017). Literature demonstrates *adultos mayores* often serve as the teachers and holders of knowledge that pass down and maintain cultural traditions, practices, and rituals (Rodriquez et al., 2014). It is suggested that during Pre-Hispanic Mexico older adults' advice was strongly considered in decision making processes, "*sus consejos se tomaban en cuenta para organizar la familia, para tomar decisiones de guerra* [Their advice was taken into account to organize the family, to make war decisions] (Gobierno De México, 2017)."

Across disciplines cultural practices and values represent a history of wisdom and knowledge that often inform and guide the present generation. However, little is known about how they might be part of the cultural supports used to inform older adults' subjective experience of aging and wellbeing. By exploring how current *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican adults] integrate cultural practices and values in their day-to-day life we can better understand what supports their aging process and their subjective experiences.

### **Subjective Experiences of Aging**

Perceptions of aging influence beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and expectations towards the older adult population (Lindland et al., 2015; Pasupathi & Löckenhoff, 2002). These perceptions of aging have a direct impact on older adults' wellbeing and subjective experiences of aging (Levy, 2003; Levy & Myers, 2004). Subjective aging refers to an

adult's understanding of their own aging process (Kastenbaum et al., 1972). The concept of subjective aging has long been a topic of inquiry in lifespan psychology and social gerontology (e.g., Kastenbaum et al., 1972; Montepare, 2009; Settersten, 1999, 2007). Kastenbaum et al. (1972) proposed subjective aging refers to how old a person looks (i.e., appearance of age) or how old a person feels (i.e., social-emotional). Scholars claim subjective aging provides a holistic understanding of how we view aging by integrating the direct experiences of how adults feel in relation to their age. Subjective aging serves as a predictor of health outcomes (Wurm et al., 2007) and positive associations have been found with adults' functional ability (Levy et al., 2012; Wurm et al., 2007), subjective well-being (Kleinspehn-Ammerlahn et al., 2008; Westerhof & Barrett, 2005), and preventative health behaviors (Levy & Myers, 2004).

While older adults may experience health complications, research indicates factors such as acceptance, social, and family support aid in positive subjective experiences of aging (Choi et al., 2021; Romo et al., 2013). Romo et al. (2013), examined successful aging among a sample of minoritized older adults (i.e., African American, White, Chinese, Latino), with late-life disabilities. While some participants reported experiencing health complications and limitations in their physical functioning, most participants reported they felt they had successfully aged. Specifically, they found the majority of participants spoke about the importance of acceptance (e.g., learning to adapt and integrate coping strategies as they age). In a similar study, Roberts et al. (2015), explored how older adults from various ethnic racial groups (i.e., Latino, African American, White) living in the U.S. experience aging. Across groups loss was a component described as being part of the aging process. African American and White participants described aging through a deficit lens (e.g., aging as a progression

toward death, time of loss), while Latino participants described aging as a “process across the life span marked by natural transitions that manifest as changing, but nevertheless valued” (Roberts et al., 2015; p. 4). Choi et al. (2021), examined felt age and self-reported reasons of felt age among low-income Hispanic and Black older adults. Over half of the participants felt younger than their current age and both Hispanic and Black participants reported their ability to perform daily living activities informed their felt age in addition to their sense of good health. Participants reported that being active, in good health, positive attitude, independence, interpersonal relationships, family, community, and faith informed their perceptions of feeling younger. These findings are consistent with previous research revealing that while individuals experience health complications, it does not define their perceptions of successful aging (Choi et al., 2021; Hilton et al., 2012; Romo et al., 2013).

The research on subjective aging helps expand our understanding of aging and provides insight around how various minoritized groups experience aging. While extant literature highlights disparities and negative subjective experiences in aging among minoritized older adults; there is research that suggests that despite physical, cognitive, and mental impacts of aging, many older adults are still able to find meaning, enjoyment, and purpose in life. Specifically, among more collectivist cultures aging is described as ongoing transitions occurring in life. For example, in a study by Hilton et al. (2012), they conducted a study examining perceptions of successful aging of older Latinos living in the U.S. Participants reported aging was a normal process of life and were likely to focus on being part of their family and communities. Some themes associated with successful aging included good health, independence, staying active and involved, family and relationships, accepting the aging process, spirituality, and transcendence (Hilton et al., 2012). For Mexican

immigrant older adults, maintaining a positive sense of self is informed by their connection to family, faith, and their social support (Beyene et al., 2002). Additionally, emergent literature supports Latinx older adults focus on maintaining a positive outlook on life, enjoying the present moment, having a sense of community, strong spirituality, and strong sense of family (Beyene et al., 2002; Hilton et al., 2012; Reyes Uribe, 2015).

### **Subjective Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is a multifaceted concept. It refers to how individuals perceive their quality of life (e.g., Diener, 2012; Dodge et al., 2012; Hernandez et al., 2016; Joshanloo, 2014; Ryff, 2014). Within the literature, two aspects that inform the construct of wellbeing include hedonic wellbeing (feelings of happiness, sadness) and eudemonic wellbeing (sense of purpose and meaning in life). Two well-known frameworks include psychological wellbeing and subjective wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing encompasses aspects of positive functioning (e.g., autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, self-acceptance; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008); while subjective wellbeing is encompassed by "How and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both cognitive judgments and affective reactions" (Diener, 2009; p.11). These two aspects of wellbeing are regarded as frameworks evaluating various domains of being well (Hernandez et al., 2016; Huta & Waterman, 2014).

Keyes (1998) further proposed the extension of wellbeing beyond individual characteristics. He argued wellbeing went beyond positive functioning and proposed five social dimensions of wellbeing 1) social coherence, 2) social actualization, 3) social integration, 4) social acceptance, and 5) social contribution. Keyes (2002), suggested people function well when they feel they belong and are part of society. Social wellbeing highlights

the importance for individuals to have a sense of belonging and feel a part of society. Among older adults' loneliness is a risk factor impacting adults' social and mental wellbeing, in addition to their physical health (Sorkin et al., 2002). Literature indicates loneliness is negatively associated with quality of life (Liu & Guo, 2007) and subjective wellbeing among older adults (Windle & Wood, 2004)

It is suggested that for older adults, wellbeing is informed by factors such as social relationships, physical and psychological health, activities, home and neighborhood, mobility, finances, religion, autonomy, and independence (Bowling, 2007; Fry & Ikels, 2011). Studies indicate that as individuals age their wellbeing does not decline, but rather in some cases increases, despite evident changes and challenges that come with age (Carsten, 1998; Carstensen et al., 2003; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). These studies report that as adults age, they gather emotional wisdom that strengthens their ability to engage in more emotionally satisfying events and friendships, bolstering their overall sense of wellbeing (Carstensen et al., 2003; Hicks et al., 2012). This sense of wisdom is described by the socio-emotional selectivity theory which suggests that as individuals' age preoccupation with the future becomes less prominent –allowing for attention to current feelings, relationships, and present interactions (Hicks et al., 2012). Similarly, Carstensen et al. (2003), reported that as shifts occur in life, individuals are better able to regulate their experiences and emotions as they become older and find meaning in social relationships and networks, ultimately informing their quality of life.

Overall, the construct of wellbeing has been associated with greater physical health and may serve as a protective factor for health by helping to reduce the risk of chronic physical illness and promoting longevity (Steptoe et al., 2015). While all aspects of wellbeing

provide frameworks for understanding factors of wellbeing, they lack the integration of cultural considerations (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Scholars have criticized the construct of wellbeing for its individualistic and “culture-free stance” (e.g., Joshanloo, 2013; p. 475; Lu & Gilmour, 2006; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). Some scholars suggest that among collectivist cultures wellbeing is informed by family and community. Research indicates wellbeing outcomes for Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans living in the United States are influenced not only by factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, and age but by culture and acculturation (Cuellar et al., 2004).

*Bienestar [Wellbeing]*. The construct of wellbeing is one that is evolving and unresolved, particularly among cross-cultural samples (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Among Latin American cultures “people are valued not for what they have but for what they are” (Rojas & Garcia Vega, 2017; p. 8), a perspective that is different from western ideology. *Bienestar* consists of balance and harmony with self, harmonious relationships with family, and balance with physical and spiritual environments (Izquierdo, 2005; Willeto, 2012). While *bienestar* encompasses facets of wellbeing, it transcends western notions of wellbeing by moving away from individual perspectives of being well to collectivistic views of living well. Quality of life through the lens of *bienestar* is understood through the intersection of nature, spiritual and social reality. Gudynas (2011) proposed the concept of *bienestar* moves beyond hierarchies of living well and presents the importance of harmonious living, good life, and a path to virtuous life, overall merging into the principles of *bienestar* of “unity, equality, dignity, freedom, solidarity, reciprocity, social equity, social justice, and responsibility” (p. 443). Similarly, Peredo (2019), suggested one’s quality of life “consists in finding a balance that combines these realities into an integrated whole” (p. 163).



For Latinx older adults' factors such as family relationships, religion, and sense of fulfillment inform their subjective wellbeing (Rojas & Garcia Vega, 2017; Medina & Negroni, 2014). Hernandez et al. (2016) examined how Hispanics conceptualize wellbeing and identified aspects that increase wellbeing among a church-based sample. Findings revealed factors such as personal choice, acceptance, self-love, faith, personal health, harmonious familial relationships, open communication, thriving family members, acts of kindness, and satisfaction with material resources informed their wellbeing (Hernandez et al., 2016). These findings are similar to previous studies demonstrating Latinx living in Western countries prefer to remain within their familiar environments (Gonzalez et al., 2016; Min & Barrio, 2009), and factors such as religion and spirituality play an important role in older adults' wellbeing and sense of purpose (Krakauer et al. 2002; Negroni 2007; Phipps et al. 2003). In addition, staying in their homes and near their social networks have been identified as predictors of older adults' quality of life (Bowling et al., 2003; Waite & Das, 2010).

## **Summary**

Aging involves a dynamic process that is informed by various factors and aspects of life. Notable factors informing aging processes include immigration paradox, acculturation, language, SES, and education (e.g., Bzostek, 2007; Du & Xu, 2016; Min et al., 2014; Shetterly et al., 1996). However, despite evident disparities, the research also supports minoritized older adults report feeling younger than their actual age and report fulfillment and meaning in life (Hilton et al., 2012; Romo et al., 2013). Among Latinx communities' *adultos mayores* are viewed with a high regard and are respected by younger individuals (Beyene et al., 2002). *Adultos mayores* view aging as a normative process that is part of life and often find meaning through their cultures. As Latinx older adults age, it is evident that

family, social networks, religion and spirituality, and connection become important factors informing older adults' quality of life. Thus, while among the general population there is stigma around aging and presumptions of aging involving suffering, it may be that among many minoritized older adults, the aging process also involves acquired wisdom, joy, and meaning.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This chapter discusses the methodology for the qualitative exploration of the subjective experiences of aging and *bienestar* [wellbeing] among older *Mexicanos* [Mexican individuals] living in the U.S. Specifically, the study's aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of how cultural practices inform subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals]. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2021) mixed data methods of individual, semi-structured interviews, and photo elicitation were used to gather an understanding of participants' subjective experience of aging and *bienestar* through a focus on cultural practices. Key elements of IPA include the centrality of participant voices, a focus on lived experience, and meaning making about the phenomena of interest—all of which made IPA a good methodological fit for this study as it aims at gathering an in-depth insight into the phenomenon of how culture informs meaning making processes around aging and wellbeing.

#### **Research Design**

Qualitative research is an approach to inquiry that addresses the meaning that individuals and/or groups ascribe to a phenomenon. Qualitative research is emic and idiographic – it is characterized by themes that emerge from participant's experience and knowledge is produced for one or a few individuals (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) described qualitative research as “an interactive process shaped by the researcher's personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the settings” (p. 4). By nature, qualitative research is a scientific inquiry designed to describe and interpret the experience of a participant or a few participants in a

naturalistic setting with a specific goal of capturing the participant's experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

*Philosophical Assumptions of Qualitative Research.* Huff (2009) suggests the philosophy in research informs the direction, goals, and outcomes of a research study. How one formulates their research questions is shaped by the researcher's assumptions that influence how one seeks to answer the question. The philosophy of qualitative research is guided by four philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The ontological refers to the nature and characteristic of reality. Qualitative research is rooted in the belief that multiple realities exist and is influenced by the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm (Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). The epistemological refers to assumptions about knowledge, what counts as knowledge, and ways in which knowledge is exchanged and learned. Qualitative research views knowledge being acquired through the subjective experiences of people and their experiences are seen as real, valued, and important (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The axiological refers to the role of values within qualitative research, the researcher positions themselves within the research by naming their identities, values, biases, and engaging in reflexivity. Reflexivity describes the researcher's worldview and the position they have adopted in relation to the research (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Reflexivity is the process by which the researcher is transparent, reflective, and interrogative of their preconceived notions, and allows for the opportunity for the researcher to position themselves within the research (Patton, 2002; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Levitt et al. (2017) specified reflexivity is necessary regardless of the researcher having a personal connection with the research topic. Romero & Umaña-Taylor (2018) suggests the

subjectivity of the researcher must be acknowledged at all levels of the research study (i.e., design, recruitment, collection, and interpretation of data). Finally, methodology emerges from the philosophical assumption of ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The methodological assumption addresses the process of research and answers the question of how we gain knowledge. Within qualitative research knowledge is gained through an inductive and emerging process that is shaped by the researcher and participant's experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is rooted in the lived experience of participants through a focus on context, making this approach particularly fitting for multicultural and cross-cultural research due to its philosophical assumptions and values of egalitarianism, cultural sensitivity, and respect (Romero & Umaña-Taylor, 2018).

*Research with Latinx Populations.* Given the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research it is a fitting approach for examining the experiences of diverse populations and minoritized communities (Cauce, 2011; Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Scholars propose qualitative research as multicultural research as it contextualizes reality based on one's social and historical context and acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher and participants (Cauce, 2011; Delgado-Romero et al., 2018; Ponterotto, 2010). Qualitative research allows for the recognition that knowledge is informed by individual reflection, human interaction, psycho-social-political processes, and the lived experiences of the researcher and participants (Hays & Wood, 2011). Particularly, qualitative research with Latinx people can bring forward the lived experiences and diversity of the population (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Scholars have identified qualitative research as a culturally compatible method for exploring and examining Latinx communities as it allows for an in-depth approach of

understanding their experiences through the process of personal and intimate data collection (Arredondo et al., 2014; Delgado-Romero et al., 2018).

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the emphasis on understanding the subjective experiences of *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexican individuals] this research study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach focused on gathering an understanding of the common experience's individuals encounter in a particular phenomenon (e.g., in this case subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

IPA is a qualitative approach with a primary goal of exploring how individuals assign meaning to their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). IPA was first introduced in 1996 by Jonathan Smith, who argued for the need for a psychology approach to capture the experiential and qualitative nature of research. Across time IPA has become well known in clinical and counseling psychology (Smith et al., 2009) and is described as a methodological approach capturing “psychology in the real world” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 9). IPA is rooted in phenomenological philosophy and is informed by three concepts in the philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Smith et al., 2009).

*Phenomenology.* The philosophical approach of phenomenology refers to the study of experience (Smith et al., 2021). Phenomenology focuses on an experience being assessed through the form in which it occurs, rather than through preconceived categories of how it should occur or how it occurred (Smith et al., 2009). This often involves a process of stepping into the encounter with intentionality and reflecting on how the phenomenon was experienced. Smith et al. (2021) described phenomenology as a dynamic process of an

individuals lived experience based on their meaning making and social/historical context through which the experience occurs. They describe this process as “disengaging from the activity and attending to the taken-for-granted experience of it” (p. 8). Phenomenology is grounded in the process of reflection and in the process of perception, awareness, and consciousness (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology views the person as embedded and immersed within their social and historical context, accounting for the relationships, language, and systems in which an experience occurs (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). The theoretical underpinning of phenomenology within IPA integrates a specific interest in exploring what the experience of an individual is like, identifying aspects of the experience that are of importance to the individual themselves, relevance of the experience, perception of it, and the relationship the participant has to it (Smith et al., 2009).

*Hermeneutics.* The theoretical underpinning of hermeneutics refers to the theory of interpretation and understanding, with a focus on “the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 27). Smith et al. (2021), suggest that the interpretation the researcher offers is one the participants cannot offer themselves, as it involves a process of the interpreter developing a relationship with the language used by the participants. Smith et al. (2021), further suggest there is something unique the researcher offers: a process of art, skillset, intuition, and reflexivity. Hermeneutics involves the process of understanding the writer (e.g., researcher), the text, and the participant. Within IPA, it integrates underpinnings of hermeneutics by “attempt[ing] to understand how we have come to be situated in the world in the particular ways we find ourselves” (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p.195). Smith et al. (2009) indicate that as the researcher interprets, they engage in the hermeneutic circle in

which interpretation is informed by parts (interviews) and the whole (sample). This process provides understanding of meaning from an iterative approach in which analysis is not linear but rather a dynamic process that occurs through rhythms between the participant and the researcher, the participant and the sample, and the sample and the researcher (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

*Ideography.* The third philosophical underpinning of IPA is ideography. Ideography focuses on the particular and offers a focus to detail (i.e., systemic in-depth analysis) through specific context (i.e., small purposeful sampling; Smith et al., 2009). Within IPA ideography can be understood through various dimensions in which the event/phenomenon is grounded. First, IPA is committed to an in-depth and detailed approach to analysis, and second, it focuses on understanding how a specific event/phenomenon has been understood by a particular individual. This focus on the ideography informs interpretation made across a group (e.g., sample) as it first starts off with a commitment to understanding the experience of the event among the participants. Thus, IPA is not intended to make generalizable claims about a population but rather offers an in-depth analysis that is contextualized in the lived experiences of the group and engages in a commitment to greater understandings of experiential realities (an event, process, relationship, identity; Smith et al., 2009)

The IPA approach is unique as it develops a detailed description of the phenomena of interest for each participant and across participants. Phenomenologists focus on offering a detailed account of what participants have in common based on the phenomenon of interest and offer a complete description of the “universal essence of the phenomenon” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). These results are accomplished through the in-depth approach to data collection and the exploration of how participants make sense of their personal and social



worlds (Smith et al., 2009). This process is described as the researcher engaging in double hermeneutics – making sense of the participants' experience while the participant themselves is making sense of their own lived experience (Smith et al., 2009).

*Paradigms of Science.* The philosophical assumptions of the method used in the study were congruent with critical-ideological and interpretivist-constructivist paradigms.

Paradigms of science are “basic sets of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17) and are brought into the research process by the researcher. The critical-ideological paradigm disrupts the notion of objectivity in research and is grounded in the beliefs of emancipation and transformation. The goal of the paradigm is to account for the role of power relations within social and historical contexts of individuals' lived experiences (Alase, 2017; Ponterotto, 2005). Similarly, the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm also challenges objectivity as an illusion and views each experience as co-created and valid (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). A defining feature of constructivism is the centrality of interaction between the researcher and the participants (Ponterotto, 2005). Both paradigms deviate from objectivity and center the belief of reality being constructed within a social and historical context informing various views and truths that are considered real and valid (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The qualitative methodology of IPA is rooted in the belief that individuals are meaning makers of their lived experiences based on their social and historical contexts. Smith et al. (2009), describes this as “human beings are sensemaking creatures” (p. 7). IPA's focus on the ideography and hermeneutics process of understanding and interpreting the lived experience of the participant positions the method within the paradigms of critical-ideological and interpretivist-constructivist. IPA recognizes the subjectivity of the researcher,

the unique lived experiences of each participant given their socio-historical context, and the convergent and divergent experiences across a group (Smith et al., 2009).

### **Data Collection Methods**

Qualitative research utilizes various forms of collecting data (interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisuals; Creswell & Poth, 2018). IPA suggests the use of an in-depth semi-structured interview protocol as one of the best means for gathering rich data as it facilitates the elicitation of stories, feelings, and thoughts about a particular phenomenon (Smith et al., 2021). However, it also proposes other forms of data collection that facilitate rich data and intimate approach for a participant's experience can be helpful for IPA studies (Smith et al., 2021). For this reason, photo elicitation was also included as a data collection method for the study.

*Semi-Structured Interviews and Photo Elicitation.* Semi-structured interviews are described as a technique facilitating a conversation with a particular focus. A semi-structured interview is made up of several open-ended questions that are informed by the research questions. The protocol is intended to facilitate the focus of the interview and center participants, creating a space in which participants can tell their own stories, share their own experience in their own words, and recount their experience through an in-depth and detailed explanation (Smith et al., 2021).

Photo elicitation is the use of photographs to help generate verbal discussion (Thomas, 2009). Photo elicitation is described as showing a picture(s) owned by the participant and followed by the researcher asking the participant to discuss the contents of the picture(s) (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Within qualitative research the use of semi-structured interviews is considered to be a research-led discussion, while the use of photo elicitations

aims to foster participant driven discussions (Bates et al., 20017). Harper (2002) described photo elicitation as “the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview” (p. 13). The use of audiovisuals (e.g., photographs) helps enhance the researcher-participant dyad, fosters the bridging of cultural worlds between researcher and participant, and enhances the richness of data (Glaw et al., 2017; Meo, 2010). Photo elicitation can help evoke feelings, memories, and information (Bates et al., 2017); it also places the participant as the expert in their own lived experiences. This facilitates empowerment and collaboration in the data collection process (Harper, 2002).

Given the researcher’s intentionality in gathering an in-depth understanding of the subjective experience of aging and wellbeing by *Mexicanos en la tercera edad*, with regard to culture, two forms of data collection were used, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation. The use of two different data collection methods helped corroborate findings, provided the triangulation of data, and promoted dialogue and new dimensions to the research topic (Bates et al., 2017; Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Further, the use of semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation allowed for the triangulation between different sources of information and offered different insights into the research, increasing the rigor and trustworthiness of the study (Glaw et al., 2017). Within IPA semi-structured interviews are considered the primary mechanism by which data is collected (Smith et al., 2020), however, within qualitative research it is suggested the use of photo elicitation offers a “phenomenological sense” (Harper, 1986; p.23). This study sought out to integrate the triangulation of data (e.g., combination of data drawn from different sources; Kelle & Erzberger, 2004) as a means of capturing the essence of aging among *Mexicanos en la tercera edad*. Bates et al. (2017) indicated, “Photos in the interview setting are used not only

to steer the discussion but also to stimulate memory in a way that standardized questions may not” (p.461).

The initial semi-structured interview and photo elicitation protocol was reviewed by the researcher’s dissertation committee in which feedback around the structure of questions was provided. Following implementation of feedback and review of Smith et al. (2021) suggestions around developing an interview protocol, the protocol was piloted with two individuals who met criteria for the study. Based on these individuals’ feedback, the interview protocol was updated to ensure clarity and relevance of questions and word choice. No significant changes aside from use of words or redundancy of questions resulted from the piloting process.

### **Researcher’s Reflexivity**

As previously discussed, reflexivity is a key component in conducting qualitative research. Within qualitative research, researchers recognize how their social locations inform the research process from conceptualization to recruitment, researcher-participant relationship, and the lens through which research findings are interpreted. In exploring one’s positionality in a study, it is important to consider one’s insider and outsider status. The insider/outsider status refers to the degree to which a researcher is located either within or outside a group being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Dwyer & Buckle (2009) propose the personhood of the researcher, whether an insider/outsider or both, is an essential aspect of the study under investigation. While there is risk in being an insider, outsider, or in the space between (i.e., holding the complexity of similarities and differences), there can also be benefits. For example, being an insider may allow for acceptance and openness from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In the study, the principal researcher held both an insider and outsider status. The researcher used she/her/ella pronouns and identified as a bilingual (Spanish and English), second generation, Latinx woman of Mexican descent; this placed her as an insider to the community under study. In addition, while the researcher lived near her home institution during graduate school, she continued to commute home and routinely engaged with family and community members that informed the study. However, she was also an outsider in that she is a 30-year-old woman, born and raised in the U.S., placing her as an outsider to the participants, based on age, generation, and country of origin, as well as being a doctoral student pursuing a degree in counseling psychology, which placed her at a particular social location. As a first-generation college student, daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico, and raised in a predominantly low-income and Latinx community, yet pursuing doctoral studies and experiencing the privilege involved with education, the researcher had to navigate two distinct worlds (e.g., academic world and personal world).

While the researcher was not an elder, her interests in the proposed study were informed by her relationship with her older parents (Socorro and Luis) and her connections with older Mexican individuals in the community. Specifically, the researcher valued the wealth of knowledge she has learned from older individuals in her life and the ways her cultural /social locations informed her understanding of the world. For example, she grew up hearing *dichos* from her parents and now integrates them into her own life. Some examples include *Dios dice ayúdate que yo te ayudare* [God says help yourself, that I will help you], *la juventud es corta, pero la vejez es larga* [youth is short, but old age is long], *lo que uno siembra uno cosecha* [what one sows one reaps]. Further, it was important to note that the researcher had a keen interest in fostering and producing knowledge that is rooted in the

cultural knowledge of older community members, particularly in gathering an in-depth understanding of the various forms in which cultural practices inform individual wellbeing, as she has observed how her parents and community members engage in various practices that inform their day-to-day lives (e.g., *dichos*, *convivios* [gatherings], *familila* [family], *musica* [music], food, religious practices, spirituality, and meaning making).

Because of the insider and outsider status this researcher held in the study, it was important that she engage in an ongoing process of reflexivity and consideration through the recruitment of participants, data collection, analysis of data, and process of dissemination (Morrow, 2005). It is also important to note that the researcher's identity – as a Mexicana, doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology, interested in culture and wellbeing, with a commitment towards serving the Latinx community – influenced the questions that were explored, the focus and rhythm of interactions with participants (the emphasis on strengths and cultural knowledge), lived experiences by participants, and the analysis and interpretation of data. Given the researcher's positionality in the study, she made an ongoing and conscious effort to “stay close to” the data by taking notes all steps of data collection and analysis, using specific language used by participants, analyzing the data in the language by which interviews occurred, and engaging in consultation and member checks as called for by IPA (Smith et al., 2021).

## **Recruitment**

Within IPA studies a smaller number of participants is recommended as the goal is to offer an in-depth account of the experience of each participant (Smith et al., 2009). Given Smith et al.'s (2009) suggestion of a smaller sample in order to invite both depth and breadth, a total of 7 participants were recruited based on the following criteria: (1) immigrated from

Mexico to the U.S., (2) had a minimum of 20 years living in the U.S., (3) self-identified as Mexican/ Mexican American/ Chicana/o, (4) resided in California, and (5) were 65 years or older.

Purposeful sampling was used for recruitment of participants. Purposeful sampling refers to the selection criteria of participants based on a specific context (Smith et al., 2009). It is a form of intentional sampling of a specific group of individuals that inform the study under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By integrating purposeful sampling, findings create the opportunity for transferability. Transferability refers to results in a qualitative research study being conveyed to other contexts; it does this by outlining the process and offering an in-depth analysis of findings (Anney, 2014) through purposeful sampling and thick description of findings (Bitsch, 2005, p. 85).

After the researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from her home institution, she began recruitment by posting on her Facebook page and asking family and friends to re-post. Recruitment posts and flyers included a short passage providing information regarding the study (i.e., purpose, inclusion criteria, compensation, researcher contact information, IRB protocol number; see Appendix A). All recruitment was done in both English and Spanish. Recruitment was initiated May 2022 and data collection was completed by July 2022.

Individuals who expressed interest in participating in the study were first screened with a short screening questionnaire to ensure eligibility for the study (see Appendix B). Those meeting criteria were invited for an interview. Out of the 10 individuals who were screened, seven met criteria for the study. Three of the individuals that expressed interest did not meet criteria, two due to age (e.g., younger than 65) and one who lived outside the state

of California. All interviews were conducted in person in the place of most comfort to the participant.

## Participants

A total of seven individuals participated in the study. **Table 1** organizes relevant participant demographic information. Four participants identified as “man” and three as “woman.” Participants ranged from 66 to 76 years of age at the time of data collection with a mean age of 71.57 years. Years living in the U.S. ranged from 42 to 56 years with a mean of 47.14 living in the U.S. State of origin in Mexico varied, two participants were from Guerrero, two from Jalisco, two from Zacatecas, and one participant from Puebla. Marital status also varied, three participants were married, two widowed, one separated, and one single. All participants were retired, all had access to healthcare, and income ranged from less than \$10,000 to \$29,000.

**Table 1**

### *Participant Demographics*

| Pseudonym Name | Age | Gender | Years Living in the U.S. | Place of Origin   | Marital Status | Occupation                           | Access to Health Care | Income              |
|----------------|-----|--------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Guillermina    | 75  | Woman  | 45                       | Guerrero, Mexico  | Widow          | Retired                              | yes                   | Less than \$10,000  |
| Julián         | 68  | Man    | 45                       | Puebla, Mexico    | Married        | Retired                              | yes                   | \$20,000 - \$29,000 |
| Joaquín        | 71  | Man    | 42                       | Jalisco, Mexico   | Single         | Retired                              | yes                   | Less than \$10,000  |
| Antonia        | 73  | Woman  | 48                       | Zacatecas, Mexico | Married        | Retired/ takes care of grandchildren | yes                   | \$10,000 - \$19,000 |
| Simón          | 72  | Man    | 52                       | Zacatecas, Mexico | Married        | Retired                              | yes                   | \$10,000 - \$19,000 |
| Felipe         | 66  | Man    | 42                       | Jalisco, Mexico   | Separated      | Retried                              | yes                   | Less than \$10,000  |
| Rafaela        | 76  | Woman  | 56                       | Guerrero, Mexico  | Widow          | Retired/ takes care of grandchildren | yes                   | \$10,000 - \$19,000 |



*Guillermina.* Guillermina is a 75-year-old self-identified Mexican woman, who was raised in Guerrero, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 45 years ago. Her highest education level was elementary school and due to limited resources, she was not able to continue school in Mexico. Guillermina resides in Southern California and was married for over 40 years, until nine years ago she became a widow. Guillermina is retired and her day consists of day-to-day chores and attending to her health. Guillermina receives dialysis three times a week and has access to health care and described her health as “*mas o menos*” [“so-so”]. Guillermina reported earning less than \$10,000 a year and lives in a multi-generational household of 10 with an adult son, adult daughter, three grandchildren, and 4 people that rent a space in the home.

*Julián.* Julián is a 68-year-old self-identified Latino man who was raised in Puebla, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 45 years ago. Julián’s highest education level was *titulo de secundaria* [secondary education certificate] and he shared he would have loved to continue pursuing his education but was unable to do so due to financial limitations. Julián resides in Southern California and has been married for 41 years. Julián is retired and spends his day enjoying his home, cooking, and supporting his family in the ways he can. Julián has access to health care and described his health as “*regular.*” Julián reported earning between \$20,000 and \$29,000 a year and lives with his wife, and two adult children.

*Joaquín.* Joaquín is a 71-year-old self-identified Mexican man, who was raised in Jalisco, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 42 years ago. Joaquín’s highest educational level was elementary school. Joaquín resides in Southern California and lives with a family relative. He is single and lives in a multi-generational home with his cousin, cousin’s husband, and two adult children. Joaquín is retired and spends his days running errands,

walking his dog, going to church, and engaging in community. He described his health as “*mas o menos controlada*” [“more or less controlled”] and has access to health care. Joaquín reported earning less than \$10,000 a year.

*Antonia.* Antonia is a 73-year-old, self-identified Mexican woman, who was raised in Zacatecas, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 48 years ago. Antonia’s highest educational level is elementary (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Antonia resides in Southern California and is retired. Her days consist of helping take care of her grandchildren. She lives with her husband of 48 years and an adult child. Antonia described her health as “*bien, gracias a Dios*” [“good, thanks to God”] and shared she has access to health care. Antonia reported earning between \$10,000 and \$19,000 a year.

*Simón.* Simón is a 72-year-old self-identified Mexican man, who was raised in Zacatecas, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 52 years ago. Simón’s highest level of education is elementary (6<sup>th</sup> grade). Simon resides in Southern California and is retired. His days consist of attending to the house and enjoying his family. Simon lives with his wife of almost 50 years and two adult children. Simón described his health as “*bien, todo esta bien*” [“good, all is good”] and he has access to health care. Simon reported earning between \$10,000 and \$19,000 a year.

*Felipe.* Felipe is a 66-year-old self-identified Mexican man, who was raised in Jalisco, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 42 years ago. Felipe’s highest level of education is elementary (6<sup>th</sup> grade). Felipe resides in Southern California and lives with his younger brother, brother’s wife, two nieces, and extended family members. Felipe is separated from his wife and had to retire due to health complications. He described his health as “*bien, con*

*ciertas enfermedades*” [“overall good, but with certain problems”] and shared he has access to healthcare. Felipe reported earning less than \$10,000 a year.

*Rafaela.* Rafaela is a 76-year-old self-identified Mexican woman who was raised in Guerrero, Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. 56 years ago. Rafaela’s highest level of education is elementary (6<sup>th</sup> grade). Rafaela resides in Southern California and lives in a multi-generational household with her four adult children and four grandchildren. Her husband passed away two years ago due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Rafaela is retired and stated that her day consists of attending to her home and her family. She described her health as “*bien, pero hasta ahorita no mas las rodillas*” [“Well, as of now just my knees”] and she has access to health care. Rafaela reported earning between \$10,000 and \$19,000 a year.

## **Instruments**

All instrument materials were developed by the principal researcher in both English and Spanish.

*Screening Instrument.* A screening instrument was developed to ensure eligibility of criteria. The screening instrument included questions about age, country and state of origin, ethnicity, and years living in the U.S.

*Demographic Questionnaire.* A brief, demographic questionnaire was developed to gather contextual information about the participants. The demographic questionnaire included questions about participants’ age, gender, marital status, country of origin and state, occupation, access to healthcare, education level, and income (see Appendix C).

*Semi-structured Interview Protocol & Photo Elicitation.* A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to gather an in-depth understanding of participant experiences of aging and wellbeing with regard to culture (see Appendix D). Topics from the semi-

structured interview protocol included experiences of aging and wellbeing (i.e., lessons of aging, challenges, gifts), cultural messages around aging and wellbeing (i.e., cultural practices, forms of wellbeing), and their reflections on such topics. As part of the semi-structured interview protocol, participants were also asked to provide a photo that was representative of their wellbeing and culture. The last portion of the interview focused on questions that pertained to the selected photo.

## **Procedures**

Once eligibility was confirmed, the semi-structured interview was scheduled, and consent forms were reviewed. The consent process consisted of two forms (e.g., consent to participate in the interview and photo consent; see Appendix E and F). The researcher carefully reviewed the purpose of the study, participant rights, possible risks and benefits of participation, confidentiality, and compensation with the participants. As the researcher reviewed the consent form, she checked-in with participants regarding any questions they had about the study or the protection of their confidentiality. Due to the collection of photographs, the researcher also reviewed a second consent form with each participant (e.g., photograph consent form), in which the use of photographs for scientific purposes, ownership of photos, ethical considerations, and use of photographs outside data analyses was reviewed. The researcher answered all questions pertaining to the photograph consent form and reiterated participants rights. With the consent of participants, the interviews were audio recorded and a picture of participants' chosen photograph was taken by the researcher.

Prior to the start of the semi-structured interview protocol, participants were provided with a demographic questionnaire to gather contextual information regarding their age, gender, marital status, country of origin and state, occupation, access to healthcare, education

level, and income. The information gathered from the demographic questionnaire was used to contextualize and inform the interpretation of results (Smith et al., 2021).

All semi-structured interviews were conducted in-person and in Spanish (the preferred language of all participants). Interviews ranged from 75 to 120 minutes and were audio recorded. After the completion of the interview, the researcher took a picture of the identified photograph participants selected and participants were given a \$35 Target gift card as a thank you for their participation. Participants were also invited to share what their experience was like after the completion of the interview. All participants disclosed having a positive experience and noted no concerns regarding next steps. All participants expressed gratitude and shared interest in participating in member checks and hearing the results.

### **Data Analysis Process**

All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Audio files, photographs, and interview transcripts were uploaded to secure cloud-based storage (i.e., UCSB Box) and files were password protected. In addition, the researcher's computer was password protected to ensure confidentiality. Consent forms and demographic questionnaires were placed in a locked cabinet and all materials will be destroyed after the study has been completed.

Data analysis involves an interpretative approach, emphasizing the dynamic role of the researcher as they make sense of the data. Smith et al. (2009) emphasize that data analysis is not intended to be formulaic or procedural. Data analysis is instead flexible, and the process includes an iterative, fluid, and inductive cycle.

Following IPA analysis guidelines (Smith et al., 2021), data analysis was completed through an iterative process of "moving through the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative" (Smith et al., 2021, p.75). The principles of understanding

the participants point of view and focus on psychological and personal meaning-making in a particular context (i.e., subjective aging and wellbeing; Smith et al., 2021) were placed at the forefront of the analysis. Interviews were analyzed within the IPA lens of what was experienced by participants, what meanings and connections participants attributed to their experiences, and how the researcher made sense of the data (e.g., double hermeneutics – how the analyst makes sense of how the participant makes sense; Smith et al., 2021). Throughout the research process, the researcher engaged in a constant process of reflexivity, which involved exploring her positionality and experiences around aging, wellbeing, and culture. The researcher did this through ongoing journaling, consultation with advisor, and reflection with peers, informing the interpretation of findings through the lens of the participants' lived experiences and the shared insights of the researcher, advisor, and peers (Smith et al., 2009, 2021). Overall, the analysis process was a multi-directional practice that involved expansive thinking, process of reduction, revision, creativity, flexibility, and innovation (Smith et al., 2021).

**IPA Guidelines for Analysis.** A particular focus of IPA is the emphasis it places on the lived experience of a participant, engaging in a deep and analytic process of understanding and interpreting the participant's lived experience. Thus, analysis of IPA began with a deep dive into single cases and ended with the cross-case analysis (Smith et al., 2021).

*Single Case Analysis.* Analysis began with an in-depth reading of a single case (i.e., one specific transcript) which included reading and rereading the transcript. This step is intended to help the researcher slow down the process and become familiar with data where she was able to identify patterns of dialogue, rapport building between the researcher and

participant, as well as notice the pattern of shifts from explanation to description of events, to emotion and reflection (Smith et al., 2021). Organically, the process of reading and rereading and even listening to the audio recording merge together with the second step of analysis, exploratory noting. The step of exploratory noting focused on examining the semantic content and use of language from an exploratory lens. Within this process the researcher tried to think broadly about responses and made notes of anything of interest within the transcripts, creating a dialogue with the data. The exploratory notes included topics pertaining to linguistic patterns, timeline of events, identified values, explanations, pauses, laughter, tearfulness, repetition, and tone of voice. This conceptual and detailed commenting also involved personal reflection of the researcher in which she drew from personal and professional knowledge. The third step within analysis of each single case was the construction of experiential statements. Constructing experiential statements involved a shift from working with the transcript itself to primarily working with the exploratory notes, and because the exploratory notes were comprehensively conducted, the researcher remained close to the data. The identification of experiential statements reflected a “synergistic process of description and interpretation” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 87) that involved the participants' lived experiences but also the researcher's interpretation. After the construction of experiential statements, the researcher searched for connections across statements (search for connections were within the single case). This process led to the mapping (i.e., charting) of statements informing the creation of Personal Experiential Themes (PETs). PETs are what Smith et al. (2021) call “the highest-level organization” (p. 95). PETs are the overarching personal themes derived from a single case being examined. Within PETs you will also find sub-themes which compromise the overall PETs and are derived from the experiential

statements. The result after the analysis of a single case was the mapping of participants PETs informed by subthemes (e.g., experiential statements).

After this in-depth analytic process was completed with the first single case, the researcher repeated the process highlighted above with all remaining cases. It is important to note that in the process of analyzing each single case, the case was treated on its own terms allowing for the individuality of each case and lived experience of each participant. Thus, in this process of treating each case on its own terms, the researcher engaged in ongoing reflection and consultation with peers and advisor as a means of helping reduce the reproduction or interpretation from the previous case(s).

*Group Analysis.* Once the researcher completed the single case analysis of each participant, she conducted cross-case analysis. This stage focused on looking for patterns of similarity and difference across all PETs. In identifying similarities and differences, the researcher then went on to create a set of Group Experiential Themes (GETs). GETs highlight the shared and unique features of the experience across the participants. Questions that were considered during this process of cross-analysis included: “What lies at the heart of this experience? How did each of your participants live through it? How did each one make sense of it? What connections are there across the contributing cases?” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 100). In presenting the mapping of the cross-analysis, GETs represent overall themes found across participants and are informed from group-level subthemes. A table of GETs (see Table 2) illustrates the convergence in participants’ experiences.

The final step included organization and the analytic write-up of analysis from initial steps to final steps, this process allowed for the analyzed data to be traced through the entire process and provided a detailed blueprint of steps taken and informed the trustworthiness of



the data (Smith et al., 2021). Results were then written up, the purpose in showing results is to provide an account of the data, communicate the essence of the data, and offer an interpretation. Specifically, Smith et al. (2021), offered guidelines around the “shape” of the analytic write-up; they suggest the write-up is influenced by the number of participants (p.113). They argue, “With one or three participants, there is an expectation of comprehensive detail of each individual. The larger the number of participants, the more selective one will be with choosing extracts” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 113 -114).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is used to evaluate the rigor of a study (Levitt et al. 2017, Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Williams & Morrow (2009) suggest trustworthiness in qualitative research is influenced by integrity of the data, reflexivity, and clear communication and application of findings. In this present study, several steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness.

*Triangulation.* Triangulation refers to the integration of multiple methods (i.e., data, investigator, theory, and methodologies, Denzin, 1970) within a research study.

Triangulation of data helps corroborate findings by using different sources that shed light on a phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2018). By incorporating interpretive methods such as photo elicitation participants can provide insights to important/meaningful areas in their life. Photo elicitation have the ability “to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant’s life” (Collier, 1967, p. 858), which help provide a richer gathering of the phenomenon under study. Further, photo-elicitation creates the opportunity for “knowledge-building” and fosters critical discussion about participants' social worlds (Rocha et al., 2016, p.760).

In this study, triangulation of data included the integration of various forms of data collection (e.g., semi-structure interviews and photo elicitations). The use of two forms of data collection helped promote a deeper understanding of participants experiences of aging and wellbeing. Photo elicitations promoted memories, feelings, and past experiences that participants coined as important and meaningful. Analysis of data (e.g., semi-structure interviews and photo elicitations) occurred simultaneously, interviews and discussion of photos were used analyzed following IPA guidelines. All photos shared by participants helped offer a deeper understand of the themes that emerged during the analysis, they also helped invoke feelings among the researcher and the participant.

*Consultation.* The principal researcher, a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology trained in qualitative and cross-cultural methods engaged in ongoing consultation with her dissertation advisor to confirm the "sense" of thematic identifications and analysis of themes. IPA suggests that by creating a chain of analysis (i.e., documenting analysis process, findings) the trustworthiness of the study can be assessed through an independent audit/mini audits. Independent audits “attempt to ensure that the account produced is a credible one, not that it is the only credible one” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 153). Principal researcher’s advisor is a faculty member in Counseling Psychology with many years of experience in conducting various forms of qualitative research with the Latinx population around topics of resilience. She identifies as a mixed Latina (Mexican and European).

*Member Checking.* Member checks were completed during data collection and findings to insure trustworthiness of study. Member checking refers to reviewing interpretations and thematic summaries with participants for accuracy of finding (Morrow, 2005). During interviews, the researcher checked-in with the participant for clarity that she

was understanding the experiences of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Participants were also contacted after analysis and were offered the opportunity to view and discuss findings. All seven participants were contacted via phone for an opportunity to discuss findings. However, of the seven participants that were contacted only four responded, of which only three shared they were available for member-checks. For all participants the researcher created a table for each participant that highlighted their individual Personal Experiential Themes as well as shared with participants Group Experiential Themes. All three participants that reviewed their individual and group themes expressed agreement and support of the findings.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results for this study are presented through the group narrative of experiential themes, both for context and in accordance with IPA's idiographic nature. Group Experiential Themes include (1) *Vivencias de su Crianza en México* [Experiences from their Upbringings in Mexico], (2) *Experiencias Inmigrando a los Estados Unidos* [Experiences Immigrating to the U.S.], (3) *La Esencia de la Familia* [The Essence of Family], (4) *Agradecimiento por la Vida* [Gratitude for Life], (5) *Prácticas que Informan su Bienestar* [Practices that Inform their Wellbeing], and (6) *Transiciones de la Vida* [Life Transitions].

The results for this study are presented in the context of group experiential themes from participants' accounts of their experiences around subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing. Group experiential themes were developed after consideration of personal experiential themes within and across individual participant narratives. Photos collected at the time of the interview are also presented as triangulation to the data. Group experiential themes are presented and broken down into subthemes that are connected to participant accounts. As per IPA's attention to the ideographic (Smith et al., 2021), themes were not solely identified through repetition across cases but as relevant to individual participants and their unique contextual experiences and understandings. **Table 2** below organizes themes, definitions, and subthemes.

**Table 2**

*Group Experiential Themes*

| <b>Group Experiential Themes</b>  | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>Subthemes</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Vivencias de su Crianza en México</i> [Experiences from their Upbringings in Mexico] | <i>Desafíos, fortalezas y valores que ayudaron a dar forma a su perspectiva en la vida</i> [Challenges, strengths, and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Creciendo con Necesidades</i> [Growing-up With Needs]</li></ul> |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | values that helped shape their outlook in life]  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enseñanzas de su Madre</i> [Teachings from their Mother]</li> <li>• <i>Respetar a los Mayores</i> [Respect for your Elders]</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Experiencias Inmigrando a los Estados Unidos</i> [Experiences Immigrating to the U.S.] | <i>Una experiencia significativa en la vida de los participantes que es un punto de reflexión y recuerdo</i> [A salient experience in participants life that is a point of reflection and remembrance] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Venirse por Necesidad</i> [Leaving Home Out of Necessity]</li> <li>• <i>Agradecidos por las Oportunidades</i> [Grateful for the Opportunities]</li> <li>• <i>Trabajando Toda Una Vida</i> [A Lifetime Working]</li> </ul>   |
| <i>La Esencia de la Familia</i> [The Essence of Family]                                   | <i>Una perspectiva multigeneracional en torno al valor de la familia y las formas de cuidado</i> [A multigeneration lens around the value of family and forms of care]                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recuerdos de sus Padres y Familiares</i> [Memories of Their Parents and Family]</li> <li>• <i>Ver a sus Hijos Crecer</i> [Seeing Their Children Grow]</li> <li>• <i>Disfrutar de sus Nietos</i> [Enjoying Their Grandchildren]</li> </ul>                                       |
| <i>Agradecimiento por la Vida</i> [Gratitude for Life]                                    | <i>Agradecimiento y reflexión en torno a las etapas de la vida</i> [Gratefulness and reflection around the stages of life]   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gracias a Dios por ver Llegado a Esta Edad</i> [Thank You God for Having Arrived at This Stage of Life]</li> <li>• <i>Etapas de la Vida</i> [Periods of Life]</li> <li>• <i>Estar Bien de Salud</i> [Being Well in Health]</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Prácticas que Informan su Bienestar</i> [Practices that Inform their Wellbeing]        | <i>Actividades espirituales, sociales e individuales que informan su bienestar</i> [Spiritual, social, and individual activities that inform their wellbeing]  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Creencia en Dios</i> [Belief in God]</li> <li>• <i>Convivir con las Amistades</i> [Interacting with Friends]</li> <li>• <i>Caminar</i> [Walking]</li> <li>• <i>Platicar y Recordar Historias de su Crianza</i> [Sharing and Remembering Stories of their Upbringing]</li> </ul> |
| <i>Transiciones de la Vida</i> [Life Transitions]   | <i>Cambios en la vida a lo largo del envejecimiento</i> [Changes in life throughout aging]   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Retirarse</i> [Retirement]</li> <li>• <i>Enfermedades</i> [Illness]</li> <li>• <i>Perdiendo las Fuerzas y el Ánimo</i> [Losing Strength and Encouragement]</li> </ul>   |

- 
- *La Vida no es Para Siempre* [Life is Not Forever]
- 

### ***Vivencias de su Crianza en México* [Experiences from their Upbringings in Mexico]**

The group experiential theme of *Vivencias de su Crianza en México* [Experiences from their Upbringings in Mexico] included participants reflection around their childhood in their respective homes in Mexico. Participants highlighted challenges, strengths, and values that helped shape their outlook in life. Subthemes included (1) *Creciendo con Necesidades* [Growing-up with Needs], (2) *Enseñanzas de su Madre* [Teachings from Their Mother, and (3) *Respetar a los Mayores* [Respect for Your Elders].

Most of the participants reported they grew up in *pueblos/ranchos* [villages/ranches] in which they faced numerous struggles growing up due to limited resources, *Creciendo con Necesidades* [Growing-up With Needs]. For example, Antonia shared her upbringing as a child was hard due to her family having limited resources, “*Pues al principio fue poquito duro, difícil porque no teníamos mucho que comer. Era un rancho y no había luz.*” [“Well, at first it was a little hard, difficult because we didn't have much to eat. It was a ranch and there was no light”]. Similarly, Rafaela stated,

*Si, es como mis papás estaban pobrecitos comíamos pobre pero rico. Y pues uno comía de todo los que nos daban ellos ... era la cultura que siembran maíz, milpas, elotes, y todo. Siembran de todo, calabacitas. De todo un poco, con eso se mantenía a la gente, comía la gente. [Yes, it's like my parents were poor, we ate poor but delicious and well, one ate everything that we were given ... it was the culture, we cultivated corn, milpas, and everything. They grew everything, pumpkins. A little bit of everything, that's what kept people going, what fed us]* (Rafaela).

Simón also reflected on his experience growing up with necessity. Simón disclosed his mother died when he was young which impacted his family's wellbeing, "*Mi mamá murió. Mi mamá murió a los 57 años. Murió joven...y nos quedábamos ahí los más chicos, pero sin que comer, ni que vestir – nada, sufrimos mucho.*" ["My mom died. My mom died at age 57. She died young...and the youngest of us stayed living there, but without food or clothing – nothing, we suffered a lot"]. Felipe also recalled his experience growing up. He remembered much of the work and care fell on his mother,

*Mi mamá trabajaba planchando, lavando y todo eso. Nos crio como pudo ella, pero ya de ocho de familia era muy difícil para ella, a veces no teníamos para comer. Y ella se ponía a lavar y mi papá muy desobligado él nunca nos dio un peso ni nada. [My mom worked ironing, washing and all that. She raised us as best she could, but as a family of eight it was very difficult for her, sometimes we didn't have enough to eat. She began to wash, and my father was very irresponsible, he never gave us a dime or anything] (Felipe).*

Participants also reflected on the simple ways they grew up, Simón shared, "*Como allá que vive la gente en casitas de adobe y el piso de tierra, las cerquitas de piedritas, los magueyes, los nopales, había mucha necesidad.*" ["Over their people lived in adobe houses with a dirt floor, the little stone fences, the agaves, the prickly pear, there was a lot of need"]. Antonia added,

*Y pues uno no tenía dinero ni, pues no más para comer, pues uno andaba trabajando a la gente y ayudándole a la gente alabar, a planchar. Así con la gente que vivía ahí mismo. [And well, one did not have money, not even to eat, we often went around*

*working for people and helping people to wash or iron. We went with the people who lived near us] (Antonia).*

Similarly, Rafaela recalled memories of how they would make their own dolls to play with as they did not have money to buy toys,

*Jugábamos de juguete las telas de los lotes, hacia uno muñequitas con sus trencitas y luego hojitas que cortaba y según esas eran las tortillitas y así uno jugaba porque pues mi papá no podía compraros juguetes, entonces era bien, no tenía dinero. [We used to play with the leaves from the corn, we would make little dolls with their braids and then cut little leaves to make tortillas and that's how one played because my father couldn't buy us toys, so it was fine, he didn't have money] (Rafaela).*

Julián and Rafaela also spoke about how they were not able to continue with school due to financial limitations. Julián reported,

*Para mí la escuela no existía. Recuerdo que me enojaba y a veces con el burro me desquitaba...Recuerdo que yo pasaba unos días por la escuelita y el rancho y todos mis amiguitos estaban ahí en la escuela. Los miraba muy bien vestiditos, formados para entrar en la escuela y yo pasaba por allí con mi burro, iba al campo a trabajar. [For me the school did not exist. I remember that I would get angry sometimes at the donkey. I would take it out on him. I remember that I would pass through the school and the ranch, and all my friends were there at school. I would see them be well dressed, lined up to go to school and I would pass by with my donkey, I would go to the fields to work] (Julián).*

Rafaela added, “Ellos no tenían. Sali de la primaria y le dije a mi papá, ¿Me puede meter a la secundaria? Dice ‘no, hija, yo no puedo, yo no tengo dinero.’ Y pues ya no me metió a la



*escuela, ni juguetes nos compraba mi papá.” [“They did not have money. I finished elementary school, and I told my dad, can you send me to secondary school? He said ‘no, daughter, I can’t, I don’t have money.’ And well, he didn’t put me in school anymore, my dad didn’t even buy us toys”].*

Participants also reported emotional needs. A distinct memory Julián shared was how he grew up feeling lonely,

*Fíjate que yo crecí muy, muy solitario, a pesar de que tenía ahora así que tres o cuatro familias, los abuelos, los tíos, el papá, los hermanos ...viviendo con una familia o con otra, yo miraba cómo se trataban en un lado y en otro y en otra casa y había ciertos comportamientos que no me gustaban. Desde chico, yo tenía esa necesidad de tener una familia de no sentirme solo. [Let me tell you that I grew up very, very lonely, even though I knew I had three or four families, grandparents, uncles, father, siblings ... living with one family or with another, I saw how they treated each other on one side and on another and in another house and there were certain behaviors that I did not like. Since I was a child, I had this need to have a family and not feel alone] (Julián).*

As participants recalled memories of their childhood, Antonia shared a photo of herself when she lived in her village (see Figure 1). She stated that this photo was a reminder of her upbringing, her traditions, customs, and home. Antonia stated,

*Pues de cuando andaba en el rancho que andaba acarreando agua ... pues nomás le da gusto ver que anda uno por ahí uno entre las piedras y entre la tierra en su rancho. Me recuerda de mi cultura, costumbres, y mi abuelita. [Well, when I was in the ranch, and I was carrying water ... it only gives me pleasure to see that I was*

*there between the stones and among the earth on this ranch. It reminds me of my culture, customs, and my grandmother] (Antonia).*

**Figure 1**

*Antonia's shared photo that captures an aspect of her culture*



*Note.* Photo was taken when Antonia lived in Zacatecas, Mexico. She stated she would go to the well for water.

As participants shared hardships they encountered during their upbringing in Mexico, they recalled the salient role their mother figures played in their life. Participants reflected on the *enseñanzas* [teachings] and observations they witnessed from their mothers,' *Enseñanzas de su Madre* [Teachings from their Mother]. Many spoke about how their mother's offered guidance, embodied cultural traditions, and signified a very special relationship. Joaquín spoke about how mother figures in Latino culture are sacred, "*Para nosotros los Hispanos la madre es algo sagrado.*" ["For us Hispanics, the mother figure is something sacred"], he also added how for him his mother meant everything, "*Para mí, mi mamá fue todo.*" ["For me, my mom meant everything"]. Simón shared his mother was a very joyful person and taught him the value of laughter,

*Mi mamá era bien risueña, siempre andaba risa y risa, nunca andaba enojada, entonces yo pienso que de allí aprendí yo. Dicen que reír es una terapia porque siempre anda alegre y si está ahí bien callado, bien dicen a la mejor está enfermo, no platica, ni se ríe ni nada. Y pienso que de ella aprendí a reír y compartir. [My mother smiled a lot, she was always laughing and laughing, she was never angry, so I think that I learned that from her. They say that laughing is therapy because one is always happy and if one is quiet, they say maybe he's sick. He doesn't talk, he doesn't laugh or anything. And I think that from her I learned to laugh and share] (Simón).*

Guillermina and Antonia also recalled how their mothers taught them how to have faith and engage in religious practices, a practice they both still engage in, “*Mi mamá, mi mamá siempre decía vámonos a la iglesia (risas). Todas las tardes nos llevaba a rezar.*” [“*My mom, my mom always said let's go to church (laughs). Every afternoon she would take us to pray*”] (Guillermina) and Antonia shared, “*Mi mamá desde que estaba chiquita me enseñó sobre dios y me llevaba a la iglesia.*” [“*Since I was little, my mother taught me about God and took me to church*”]. Rafaela also stated her mother taught her about to pray and remember the dead,

*Entrevistadora: ¿Y de dónde usted aprendió el poner el altar y recordarlo? Rafaela: De mi mamá, de mis padres, que siempre tiene uno que ponerle su veladora, sus flores y su vasito de agua decían que según vienen y que toman su agüita. Yo no sé eso, pero sí sus cositas y pues rezar por sus almas. [Interviewer: And where did you learn to set up the altar and remember? Rafaela: From my mother, from my parents, they would tell me to always place a candle, flowers and a glass of water as they [the*

*dead] come to drink their water. I don't know if that is true, but I do the little things and I pray for their souls] (Rafaela).*

Participants further discussed words of guidance their mothers had shared with them. For example, Joaquín disclosed his mother shared words of affirmation as he decided to immigrate to the U.S., “*Mi mamá me dijo ‘¿mira quieres ir a EE. UU? está bien, pero mira te voy a decir una cosa tu juégatela si te va bien y si te va mal no vayas a decir ‘a mi ama me mando’ tú vas a ver cuál es tu suerte.’*” [“My mom told me, ‘Look, do you want to go to the US? It's okay, but look, I'm going to tell you one thing, you go for it, if it goes well for you and if it goes badly for you, don't come saying 'my mom sent me,' you're going to have to see what your luck is”]. Simón spoke about how his mother would tell him to be a good man, “*Me inculcó que pues que fuera un buen muchacho, ella decía ‘yo me voy a morir y ustedes se van a quedar, llévensela tranquilos y sean buenos.’*” [“She instilled in me that I be a good boy, she said 'I'm going to die, and you are going to stay, take it easy and be good'”]. Rafaela also indicated her mother would tell her to be a good woman, “*Mi mamá me decía que, pues no anduviera de loca que hiciera las cosas bien, que no fuera a salir con mi panza, que no sé qué tanto, tantas cosas que me decía.*” [“My mom would tell me, don't go and do something crazy, she wanted me to do things good. She didn't want me to end up pregnant, and all these other things she would say to me”]. Felipe went on to say his mother would remind him, he had to help others, “*Mi mamá me decía que uno tenía que dar a los demás, dales un poquito de lo que uno tiene’ aunque no tengas mucho.*” [“My mother used to tell me that one had to give to others, give them a little bit of what one had' even if you didn't have much”]. Guillermina added, her mother would tell her to pray and remain faithful to their religion, “*Mi mamá decía, ‘tienes que aprender a rezar, aprende a rezar.’ Y pues este, decía, ‘yo no*

*quiero que se vayan a meter a otra religión, ustedes tienen que seguir esta religión católica, siempre.”* [“My mother used to say, ‘you have to learn to pray, learn to pray.’ And well, she said, ‘I don’t want you to go into another religion, you have to follow this Catholic religion, always’”].

As participants recalled teaching from their mothers, two of the participants shared photos of their mothers as cultural figures (see Figure 2 and 3). Felipe stated he cherished the photo of his mother, “*Es muy importante, por eso las conservo. Yo la quise mucho a mi madre, ella sufrió mucho, siempre fue padre y madre. Ella me dio mucho cariño fue mi madre y padre.*” [“It’s very important, that’s why I keep it. I loved my mother very much, she suffered a lot, she was always a father and mother. She gave me a lot of love; she was my mother and father”].

**Figure 2**

*Felipe’s shared photo that symbolizes an aspect of his culture and wellbeing*



*Note.* One of the last photos that was taken of Felipe’s mother in Jalisco, Mexico.

Additionally, Joaquín reported his mother was everything for him, *“Yo creo para mí, mi mamá fue todo aparte de mi papá. Pero ella porque ella trabajó para cuidarnos. Ella nos aconsejaba. También nos regañaba, Nos decía ‘pórtense bien.’”* [“to me, my mom was everything, apart from my dad. But her because she worked to take care of us. She guided us. She also scolded us, she would say, ‘behave well’”]. Joaquín went on to state,

*“Me dolió perderla, pero siento que si me porté más o menos con ella – no la regué, la cuidé. En ese sentido si me dolió su muerte, pero lo pude superar.”* [“It hurt me to lose her, but I feel that I behaved more or less with her – I didn’t mess up, I took care of her. In that sense I was hurt by her death, but I was able to overcome it”]

(Joaquín).

### **Figure 3**

*Joaquín’s shared photo that symbolizes an aspect of his culture and wellbeing*



*Note.* This photo was taken when Joaquín’s mother was around 18 – 20years old in Jalisco, Mexico.

Participants also reflected on *enseñanzas* [teachings] they were taught about people who were older in age. Many of the participants spoke about the value of respect, *Respetar a los Mayores* [Respect for your Elders]. Simón shared he recalls younger folks extending respect to their elders. He elaborated,

*En aquel tiempo, cuando se encontraba una persona mayor uno sé tenía que quitar el sombrero y tenía que saludarle y luego besarle la mano, era como un respeto que había entre los mayores y entre la juventud. [At that time, when you met an older person, you had to remove your hat and greet them and kiss their hand, it was a sign of respect that existed between the elderly and the youth] (Simón).*

Joaquín also mentioned care and respect for the elder was a value in his hometown, “*Allá de donde yo soy decían que los mayores de 60 años se tienen que cuidar. La gente cuidaba a la gente mayor y la respetaba mucho.*” [“Where I am from, they said that those who were over 60 years we had to care for them. People took care of the elderly and respected them a lot”].

Julián explained there was always an understanding that people who were older in age held wisdom, “*Yo miraba como la gente buscaba y oía los consejos de los viejitos, se sabía que ellos sabían mucho.*” [“I watched how people searched and listened to the advice of elders; it was known that they knew a lot”].

Joaquín and Rafaela referenced how part of showing respect to people who were older in age included extending care to them, Joaquín shared, “*En ese tiempo uno cuidaba de ellos mucho.*” [“In that time, one took care of them a lot”].

Rafaela discussed that when her mother became ill her and her sister took care of her, “*Es que se inculcaba de corazón cuidar a los demás. Yo decía, ‘no, mi madre no la va a cuidar*

*otra persona más que nosotros.' Somos dos mujeres y la tenemos que cuidar yo le decía."*  
[*"Caring for others was instilled in the heart. I said, 'No, my mother is not going to be taken care of by someone other than us.' We are two women, and we have to take care of her"*].

Guillermina also shared that when her mother passed away at the age of 100 years old, she and others were in admiration of her, "*Entrevistadora: ¿Y cómo fue para usted ver que llegó a 100 años su mamá? Guillermina: Pues una admiración verla, pues Benito Sea Dios que llevo a sus 100 años, la gente la respetaba mucho.*" [*"Interviewer: And what was it like for you to see your mother reach 100 years of age? Guillermina: Well, it was amazing to see her, well, thank God, she reached her 100 years, people respected her"*].

Julián also recalled his grandfather was a serious man who was also respected by others, also demonstrating the value of respect for elders,

*Los abuelos hablaban muy poco. Mi abuelo [nombre]. Él era un viejito que había participado en la revolución de Emiliano Zapata. Y ahí tengo un libro que incluso ahí está el nombre y su foto. Él era serio y muy respetado por los demás .... Y yo pienso que él tenía ese coraje en lo que había vivido que no hablaba mucho, él no era muy expresivo, él simplemente daba órdenes. [The grandparents spoke very little. My (grandfather's name). He was an old man who had participated in the Emiliano Zapata revolution. I have a book that contains his name and his photo. He was serious and highly respected by others.... And I think that he held that anger he had lived that he did not speak much, he was not very expressive, he simply gave orders]*

(Julián).

Rafaela shared she learned from her mother the importance of culture, life, and extending respect to others,



*Pero pues como le digo, fue por mi mama que aprendí pues mis padres ya de grandes que la cultura es lo mejor – el respeto a la vida y la vida de otros. El respeto, como quien dice eso es lo mejor que hay en la vida de todo ser humano. [But as I say, it was from my mother that I learned, well my parents as elders that culture is the best – respect for the life and lives of others. Having respect, is the best thing there is in every human being’s life] (Rafael).*

### ***Experiencias Inmigrando a los Estados Unidos [Experiences Immigrating to the U.S.]***

The group experiential theme of *Experiencias Inmigrando a los Estados Unidos* [Experiences Immigrating to the United States] was defined as a salient experience across participants that was a significant point of reflection and remembrance. The group experiential theme offers a glimpse around experiences of immigrating to the U.S. for participants. Subthemes included (1) *Venirse por Necesidad* [Leaving Home Out of Necessity], (2) *Agradecidos por las Oportunidades* [Grateful for the Opportunities], and (3) *Trabajando Toda una Vida* [A Lifetime Working].

Majority of participants shared immigrating to the U.S. was a significant event in their lives. Many stated their decision to immigrate to the U.S. was related to necessity and poverty, *Venirse por Necesidad* [Leaving Home Out of Necessity]. For example, Simón stated, “*Pues, pura necesidad, tuvimos que dejar nuestra tierra por necesidad y venirnos por acá para ver si encontramos una vida mejor y gracias a Dios nos ha ido bien hasta ahorita.*” [“*Well, pure necessity, we had to leave our land out of necessity and come here to see if we could find a better life and thank God, we’ve been doing well up to now*”]. Similarly, Antonia shared, “*Pues me viene por necesidad, te tener que luchar. Uno se venía a este país para seguir luchando, para seguir adelante.*” [“*Well, I came out of necessity, to push forward.*”]

*One came to this country to continue pushing forward, to move forward”].* Rafaela recalled her father would tell her suffering comes along with immigrating to the U.S.,

*Cuando estaba en el cerro me acordé de las palabras que me decía mi papá, me decía, ‘hija vas a sufrir, no te van a dar ni de comer y todo,’ Y ya cuando miré que andaba el helicóptero arriba decía ‘ay, mamacita linda, mi padre bien me decía que iba a sufrir hasta hambre’ pero pues imagínese la necesidad que teníamos. [When I was crossing, I remembered words my father used to say to me, he told me, ‘daughter you are going to suffer, they won’t give you anything to eat,’ and when I saw that the helicopter was overhead I said ‘oh my! My father was right, he told me I was going to suffer even of hunger,’ but imagine the need we had] (Rafaela).*

Guillermina put it succinctly, *“Uno tenía que venirse para sobrevivir.”* [“One had to come to survive”]. She also recalled her experiences crossing the border, *“Pues cuando yo venía de ilegal a EE. UU. pasamos por el cerro, esas son cosas difíciles, sufrí mucho viniendo.”* [“Well, when I came illegally, we crossed walking to the U.S., those were difficult things, I suffered a lot coming here”].

As participants recounted their experiences immigrating, they also expressed gratitude for the opportunities they have had accessed to in the U.S., *Agradecidos Por Las Oportunidades* [Grateful for the Opportunitiess]. Rafaela spoke about how she has not experienced poverty here in the U.S. like she did at home and expressed gratitude for the opportunities, *“Pues sí, me ayudó mucho el venir me para acá porque de ahí ya no hemos sufrido pobreza como en me tierra, aquí no nos falta algo, gracias a Dios.”* [“Well, yes, it helped me a lot to come here because we no longer have suffered poverty like in my land, here we do not lack something, thank you God”]. Rafaela also shared, *“Gracias a Dios, pudimos comprar*

*nuestra casa allá en México y esta pues la agarramos también aquí, la estamos todavía pagando, pero ya mero.” [“Thank God, we were able to buy our house in Mexico and here, we got one here, we are still paying for it”].*

Participants further reflected on their gratitude for having had the opportunity to seek residency and/or citizenship in the U.S. Guillermina shared she was grateful for becoming a U.S. resident, “... *Pues que arregle mis papeles benditos sea Dios. Estoy agradecida por esos regalos que me dio la vida.*” [“... *Well that I was able to fix my papers, thank you, God. I am grateful for those gifts that life gave me*”]. Joaquín also expressed gratitude, “*Uno tiene las oportunidades como eso de arreglar papeles y eso sí, de eso si estoy agradecido de que pude arreglar papel en el 85.*” [“*One had opportunities, like fixing my papers. I am grateful that I was able to fix my papers in 1985*”]. Simón stated that after obtaining his residency he worked towards becoming a citizen,

*Entonces, dure una temporadita de ser residente, y espere la oportunidad de poner solicitud con la ciudadanía. Yo la metí, y me hablaron de que fuera y la pasé en inglés. Me siento orgulloso y agradecido. [I lasted a while as a resident and waited for the opportunity to apply for citizenship. I submitted the application, and they told me to go, and I showed and took the exam in English. I feel proud and grateful]*  
(Simón).

Antonia expressed she valued being born and raised in her home country but was also grateful for the opportunities the U.S. had given her,

*Pues algo bonito, algo que, pues Dios nos dé licencia de nacer allá y de crearnos allá, y también de venirnos para acá y venir a descubrir un país que nos dio muchas oportunidades de trabajar. [Well, it's something beautiful that, God gave us*

*permission to be born there and to be raised there, and also to come here and discover a country that gave us many opportunities to work] (Antonia).*

Guillermina further states living in the U.S. has helped her stay alive as she receives support for her health. She indicated due to working many years for the U.S., they now help support her health expenses.,

*Aquí ay muchos beneficios por eso aquí estoy, si no ya me viera muerto por que en esta situación que estoy en la diálisis cuesta dinero, cuesta mucho dinero, y aquí no me está costando, me está ayudando, como trabaje por mucho tiempo y de lo que trabajaba uno, de ay están pagado. [Here there are many benefits, that's why here I am, if not I'd already be dead because in this situation that I am in dialysis costs money, it costs a lot of money, and here it is not costing me, it is helping me. I worked for a long time and from what I worked; they are paying for my healthcare] (Guillermina).*

Working hard was a strong characteristic that was referenced by most participants. Many of the participants reported that since a very young age they worked. They indicated a desire to work was a drive they had when they arrived at the U.S., *Trabajando Toda una Vida* [A Lifetime Working]. Rafaela indicated upon her retirement she felt strange as she had worked all her life,

*Pues yo trabaje, era todo el tiempo de trabajar y trabajar. Ya cuando dejé de trabajar me sentía media rara. Sí, porque yo me he acostumbrado a andar trabajando, era puro trabajo y trabajo. [“Well, I got used to working, I worked all the time, it was work, work. When I stopped working, I felt weird. I had gotten used to going to work, it was pure work and work”] (Rafaela).*

Julián said, “*En el pueblo uno trabaja desde que empieza a caminar y a andar correteando a las vacas, el ganado, las chivas, los caballos.*” [*"In my town you worked from the moment you started walking and running. You helped take care of the cows, cattle, goats, and horses"*] (Julián).

Rafaela shared how her desire in coming to the U.S. was to work and provide for her parents,

*Yo quería trabajar para mandarles dinero a mis papás y yo como me vine con mi hermano, le dije, yo no viene a gastar, viene a trabajar. Le daba yo limitado, le decía este dinero va a hacer para mi papá y mi mamá para que lo gasten allá. [ I wanted to work to send money to my parents and since I came with my brother, I told him, I don't come to spend, I came to work. I gave him limited money. I told him this money is going to be for my dad and my mom so they can spend it there]* (Rafaela).

Participants also recalled some of their experiences working in the U.S. Guillermina stated,

*... Aquí a trabajar en las fábricas, yo aquí trabaje en las fábricas de costura haciendo chores, camisas, pantalones dure ahí 20 años en una sola fabrica. Además, trabaje en el fil juntando fresas, trabaje en hoteles, trabaje mucho – pero en ese tiempo estaba yo de 45 años yo tenía ganas de trabajar. [...Here to work in the factories, I worked here in the sewing factories making shorts, shirts, and pants, I lasted there 20 years in a single factory. I also worked in the fields picking strawberries, I worked in hotels, I worked a lot – but at that time I was 45 years old, and I wanted to work]* (Guillermina).

Antonia also stated,

*Yo duré 40 años trabajando aquí. Duré diez años en una compañía y 30 en la otra que fue en la que salimos últimamente. Así que, pues como les digo a mis hijos, al principio ganábamos poquito, cuando llegamos era a 2.35\$ pero ya después pues ya fuimos ganando ... les digo esa fábrica nos dio de comer, 'les dio de comer a ustedes cuando estaban chiquitos y les dio trabajo también a ustedes,' porque mis cuatro hijos trabajaron ahí, sí, pero trabajaron nomás al principio, cuando empezaron a trabajar ... [I lasted 40 years working here. I lasted 10 years in one company and 30 in the other, which was where we recently retired. So, as I tell my children, at first, we earned a little, when we arrived it was \$2.35 but later, well, we started earning... I tell them, 'That factory fed us, it fed you when you were little and it also gave you work,' because my four children worked there, but they only worked at the beginning, when they first started working... (Antonia).*

Simón also reflected on his experiences working,

*Me vine en los 70s, a llegar a trabajar en un restaurant lavando platos, ganando la hora a menos de 3.00\$. Después ya en el restaurante como de 'bus boy' como limpiar mesas de allí le brinque a una compañía de hacer partes de avión. Allí duré unos cinco años y después me cambié a otra compañía que hacíamos pipas de fumar y ahí duré otros cinco años. Después me cambié a otra que porque era de costura Ahí también duré como otros cinco años, y en la última duré 32 años y ahí fue donde me retiré. Pero todo bien, gracias a dios. [I came here in the 70s, to work in a restaurant washing dishes, earning less than \$3.00 per hour. Later in the restaurant as a 'bus boy' how to clean tables from there I jumped at a company that made airplane parts. I stayed there for about five years and then I moved to another company that made*

*smoking pipes and there I stayed for another five years. Later I changed to another one because it was sewing. I also lasted there for another five years, and in the last one I lasted 32 years and that's where I retired. But all good, thank God]* (Simón).

Felipe also shared his experiences with working,

*Pues la vida aquí también se batalla y pues como pude yo encontré un trabajito duré 32 años trabajando en una compañía y este no más que me retiré, porque como lo acompañó se desintegró. [Well, life here is also hard. I found a little job, I lasted 32 years working in a company and then I retired because the company disintegrated]* (Felipe).

Although they were grateful for the work opportunities they had, working also created difficulties for some of the participants. Julián stated some of the hardships working in a new country where he did not know the language.

*En los trabajos era una discriminación increíble porque no hablabas el idioma y claramente podías ver algunas veces que incluso te insultaban porque no entendían lo suficiente. Entonces eso me motivó a mí a aprender el inglés. [In the job there was an incredible discrimination because you didn't speak the language and you could clearly see sometimes; they even insulted you because you didn't understand enough. So that motivated me to learn English]* (Julián).

As participants identified opportunities they had coming to the U.S. and their experiences with working, Rafaela chose a photo of herself (see Figure 4), that represented her younger self working in the field picking strawberries and sending money to her parents. Rafaela shared,

*Esa foto fue tomada cuando vine sin papeles, cruzando por el cerro. Mi hermano me tomo una foto. Después de trabajar en el fil mi hermano me llevaba a los bailes, me llevaba a la Montaña Mágica, al Convention Center. Mi hermano me decía 'tú te chingas mucho para que no disfrutes, vente vamos a salir, tenemos que gozar también.' [That photo was taken when I came without papers, crossing. My brother took a picture of me. After working in the field, my brother would take me to the dances, he took me to Magic Mountain, to the Convention Center. My brother would tell me 'You work a lot and for you to not enjoy yourself, come we're going to go out, we have to enjoy as well'] (Rafaela).*

**Figure 4**

*Rafaela's shared photo that symbolizes an aspect of her culture and wellbeing*



*Note.* Rafaela stated this photo was taken within a few years of her arriving to the U.S. She shared after a long-worked week she would go out dancing with her brother. Music and dance were forms in which she attending to her wellbeing.



### ***La Esencia de la Familia* [The Essence of Family]**

The group experiential theme of *La Esencia de la Familia* [The Essence of Family] symbolized a unique finding as it captured a multigenerational perspective around the value and essence of family. Family was represented as a dynamic process in which it was experienced as a cultural value and practice that embodied memories, recollections, and encounters of the past, present, and hopes for the future. In this theme participants recalled their upbringings (e.g., relationships with their caregivers), their adult children, and their grandchildren. The group experiential theme *La Esencia de la Familia* [The Essence of Family] provides a multigeneration lens around the value of family and forms of care. Joaquín beautifully capture how important family is, “*Yo creo para mí la familia es la base de todo, estar la familia unidad.*” [“*I believe for me the family is the basis of everything, to be a united family*”]. Subthemes within included (1) *Recuerdos de sus Padres y Familiares* [Memories of Their Parents and Family], (2) *Ver a sus Hijos Crecer* [Seeing Their Children], and (3) *Disfrutar de sus Nietos* [Enjoying Their Grandchildren].

As participants reflected on their subjective experiences of aging, they all recalled memories from their upbringing with their family, *Recuerdos de sus Padres y Familiares* [Memories of Their Parents and Family]. Rafaela shared her parents were affectionate, “*Mis papás eran muy cariñosos.*” [“*My parents were very affectionate*”] and “*Ellos cuidaban mucho de todo nosotros*” [“*They would care for us all a lot*”]. Felipe also recalled how his mother would give good advice, “*Sí. Pues como le digo todavía me acuerdo de ella, de cómo nos daba buen ejemplo a mis hermanos y a mí.*” [“*Yes. Well, as I told you, I still remember her, how she gave my brothers and me a good example*”]. Antonia spoke about how her family taught her about God, “*Pues mi mamá, mi abuelita y mi familia, desde que estaba*

*chiquita me enseñaron sobre Dios.” [“Well, my mother, my grandmother and my family, since I was little, they taught me about God”], she also shared how they taught her how to prepare meals (e.g., making tortillas),*

*Pues nos enseñaron como por decir, a poner un nixtamal para hacer las tortillas, a saber, cómo ponerlo y luego cuando era que ya estaba el nixtamal o ya para el otro día llevarlo al molino a que lo molieran y a veces lo molía uno en molinos de esos de mano y pero ya después pues ya hubo un molino ahí en el rancho este y pues ya íbamos a llevar el nixtamal a que el mordieran, lo molieron y pues ya llevábamos la masa y hacer las tortillas. [Well, they taught us how to put a nixtamal <sup>3</sup>to make tortillas, how to put it and then when the nixtamal was ready the next day we would take it to the mill to be ground and sometimes one would grind it in mills one of those by hand but later, well, there was a mill [machine] that made it easy and we would take the nixtamal for them to grind, they would grind it and we would have the dough to make tortillas] (Antonia).*

Guillermina also spoke about how her parents taught her to eat well despite having limited access,

*Ellos me modelaron comer, pues ellos comían, cuando estábamos en el rancho. Puras cosas sanas y frijoles, calabacitas, este con tortilla. Y a veces comíamos carne, a veces casi puro frijoles, sopita, arroz. Pobrementemente, comíamos muchos guajes. [They modeled eating for me, because they ate, when we were at the ranch, pure healthy*

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<sup>3</sup> *Nixtamal* a traditional maize preparation process in which dried corn is cooked and steeped in an alkaline solution (e.g., often water and food-grade lime).

*things beans, zucchini, with tortillas. And sometimes we ate meat, sometimes almost all beans, soup, rice. Poorly, we ate a lot of gourds]* (Guillermina).

Joaquín reported he grew up helping his mother make *atoles* (e.g., a warm Mexican drink made of flour, sugar, and vanilla),

*Yo le ayudaba hacer muchos atoles a mí me gusta mucho el atole, el champurrado – yo le ayudaba. Me acuerdo de mi mama uno atole de eso que, de fresa, de tamarindo – todo eso lo hacía. Tamales, atole, ponches de fruta – todo eso es lo que mi mama hacía. [I helped her make a lot of atoles. I really like atole, champurrado – I helped her. I remember my mom would make different atole flavors, strawberry, tamarind – she did all that. Tamales, atole, fruit punches – she would make all of those]*  
(Joaquín).

Julián disclosed what his experience was like being raised by various family members,

*Yo crecí con diferentes familias porque yo quedé huérfano cuando tenía dos años. Yo no conocí a mi mamá ...Y entonces yo estuve con la tía y estaba viejecita y los abuelitos igual que ya estaban viejecitos y yo observaba que era, era muy difícil. Eran muy enojones. Eran muy regañones. Nunca, nunca te hacían una caricia. Nunca te decían te quiero mucho. Jamás te daban un beso eso no existía. Era una simple orden ... pero verdaderamente eran unos viejitos muy lindos que todo lo hacían por uno. Por darte de comer, para que estuvieras bien. Era algo que sin decirlo lo sentías que tenía ese compromiso y ese cariño por los nietos. [I grew up with different families because I was orphaned when I was two years old. I didn't know my mother... And when I was with my aunt, she was old and the grandparents were old and I observed that it was, it was very difficult. They were very strict and angry a lot.*

*They never, ever caressed you. They never told you I love you very much. They never gave you a kiss, that didn't exist. It was a simple order... but really, they were very nice old folks who did everything for you. For feeding you, so that you would be well. It was something that without saying it you felt that they had that commitment and that affection for their grandchildren]* (Julián).

Simón also recalled his experiences growing up in a large family with limited resources,

*Nosotros de la crianza de nosotros éranos diez de familia, diez hermanos más mi papá, mi mamá. Éramos 12, una docena. Pero de esos 12 no había este, no había como suficiente trabajo para podernos mantener. Entonces andábamos mal comidos, mal vestidos y entonces mi papá trabajaba, pero no era lo suficiente para todos, mucha familia, había mucha necesidad. [We from my upbringing were 10 siblings plus my dad, my mom. (We were 12, a dozen. But of those 12 there was not enough work to be able to support us all. So, we were eating poorly, poorly dressed and then my dad worked, but it wasn't enough for everyone, we were a lot of family, there was a lot of need]* (Simón).

As participants recalled childhood memories, they also emphasized how their upbringing informed their value of family. Across the majority of participants, they uplifted the importance of their family, many spoke about their adult children and the significance of having had the opportunity to see them grow, *Ver a sus Hijos Crecer* [Seeing their Children Grow]. Values of support, care, and respect were highlighted as they spoke about their relationship with their children. They also discussed feelings of pride, happiness, and tranquility. Antonia spoke about how her adult children inform her wellbeing and happiness, “*Pues que tengo mis hijos, esa es mi alegría, que estamos todos ahorita juntos.*” [“Well, that

*I have my children, that is my joy, that we are all together right now”] and “Pues cuando están mis hijos conmigo, cuando estamos todos juntos estoy bien, estoy contenta.” [“Well, when my children are with me, when we're all together, I'm well, I'm happy.”].* Antonia also stated how teaching her adult children about her traditions and the food she grew up with was of importance. She expressed hopes that the day she is no longer with them, they would be able to continue to engage in her cultural practices,

*...Me da gusto que les estoy enseñando como los tamales ahorita andan ay que quieren enseñarse a hacer los tamales. Yo les digo que aprendan para que un día que no esté sepan que ellos los van a hacer y pues ellos se quieren enseñar y pues sí, yo les voy a enseñar a que los hagan, a mantener esas tradiciones. [ ...I'm glad that I'm teaching them, like right now about tamales. How they are made and well, they want to teach themselves how to make tamales. I tell them to learn so that one day when I'm not here I know that they are going to do it and well, they want to teach themselves and well, yes, I'm going to teach them to do it, to maintain those traditions] (Antonia).*

Another important aspect of seeing her children grow was extending respect to them and their decision making. Antonia indicated,

*Yo pienso que es lo principal ahorita ya es no meterme con mis hijos. Por ejemplo, ni modo que yo voy a decirles a mis hijos dame dinero, dame esto, dame el otro. No, yo los respeto, yo sé que ellos tienen sus compromisos sus rentas o pagar su casa, tienen sus carros, tienen sus pagos, tiene su familia o no la tienen, pero tienen sus gastos y yo no ando que como que dame dinero... yo no les voy a pedir que me den, porque yo sé que ellos tienen sus gastos, tienen sus obligaciones. [I think that the main thing*

*right now is not to interfere with my children. For example, I am not going to tell my children, give me money, give me this, give me the other. No, I respect them, I know that they have their commitments, their rents or paying for their house, they have their cars, they have their payments, they have their family, or they don't, but they have their expenses, and I don't go around asking them to give me money... I am not going to ask them to give to me, because I know that they have their expenses, they have their obligations] (Antonia).*

Similarly, Simón shared the immense sense of pride and satisfaction he feels around being present to raise his children and instilling values of learning and resilience, he stated, *“Yo a mis hijos les eh inculcado a que siempre estudien, que aprendan, que le haga la lucha de superarse.”* [“I have instilled in my children the value of learning and that they strive to do more for themselves”]. He also shared his children now express gratitude towards his parenting style, *“Y ahora me dan las gracias dicen ‘gracias a ustedes, fue duro con nosotros, pero al mismo tiempo nos sirvió.’”* [“And now they thank me, they say ‘thank you, you were hard on us, but at the same time it helped us’”]. Simón also added how his adult children encouraged him to retire and expressed to him it was now his and his wife’s turn to relax,

*Me siento muy orgulloso (se llena de lágrimas). Me decían pues ‘ya usted ya nos miró crecer, ya nos dio de comer, ya nos dio un techo donde vivir y todo y ya para nosotros ya está bien.’ Y me decían ya ustedes les toca descansar un rato.*

*Entrevistadora: ¿cómo se siente? Simón: Pues bien, orgulloso y como dicen, ‘lo que siembres se levanta.’ Entonces, como yo ya siembre, ahora estoy en posición ahora ya lo que ellos me dan. Y si, si me dan, me cuidan mucho. [I felt very proud (tears*

up). They told me, 'You already watched us grow, you already gave us food, you already gave us a roof to live in and everything and now it's time for us.' And they told me now it's your turn to rest for a while. Interviewer: How do you feel knowing that? Simon: Well, proud, and as they say, 'what you sow, you reap.' So, since I already sowed, now I am in a position now they give me. And yes, they give me, they take great care of me] (Simón).

Similarly, to Antonia and Simón, Julián corroborated seeing his children grow has been a powerful lesson in life,

*Las lecciones han sido muchísimas y las lecciones más grandes que yo creo que hemos tenido, que yo he tenido ha sido de mis hijos. Verlos crecer, ver como ya de grandes ahora ellos me enseñan a mí muchas cosas. [The lessons have been many and the greatest lessons that I think we have had, have been from my children. Seeing them grow, seeing them grown, they teach me many things] (Julián).*

Julián also spoke about how his children and family have been such a gift from life, “... Unos dones sin lugar a duda han sido los hijos, la familia y superar muchas cosas que hemos enfrentado como familia en todo este tiempo.” [“... Some gifts without a doubt have been my children, my family and overcoming many things that we have faced as a family in all this time”]. He shared it has been gratifying to see his children have a sense of purpose, “Es una gran satisfacción ver que los hijos se enfoquen en lo suyo, porque eso quiere decir que, que tienen un propósito, un motivo.” [“It is a great satisfaction to see that my children focus on themselves, because that means that they have a purpose, motivation”]. A distinct aspect Julián highlighted was the various ways he learns from his adult children. He said, “Me han enseñado a no rendirme, me han enseñado a ver la vida de una forma más o menos

*dramática. Ellos son muy, muy calmados.” [“They have taught me not to give up, they have taught me to see life in a less dramatic way. They are very, very calm”]. Julián continued saying,*

*Ellos son muy, muy calmados y esa tranquilidad la transmiten porque nosotros crecimos con esa ansiedad, esa presión de no tener lo suficiente para los hijos, de tener que llevarlos a la escuela. He aprendido de ellos que la vida hay que mirarla mucho más tranquilamente [They are very, very calm and they transmit that tranquility because we grew up with that anxiety, that pressure of not having enough for the children, of having to take them to school. I have learned from them that you have to look at life much more calmly] (Julián).*

As Julián shared the value of his relationship with his adult children, he also shared a picture of them (see Figure 5). Julián expressed his family and adult children informed his wellbeing. He stated how important it is for him to be able to spend time with his children and to recall time they have spent together. Julián shared,

*...Precisamente el momento en que la tomamos, el momento en que estábamos ahí y lo bien que la pasamos, fueron recuerdos muy bonitos y este y te dan ganas de volverlo a vivir. De volverte a reunir. Y eso es un verdadero tesoro el pensar en ese momento. Y saber que puede volver a pasar, más que todo, esta foto mi recuerda que tengo mi familia y que logre. [ ... precisely the moment we took it, the moment we were there and how much fun we had, they are very beautiful memories and it makes you want to live it again. To do it again, and that's a real treasure to think about that moment. And know that it can happen again. Most of all, this photo reminds me that I have my family and that I achieved it] (Julián).*



## Figure 5

*Julián's shared photo that symbolizes an aspect of his culture and wellbeing*



*Note.* Julián and his adult children, photo was taken at a county fair right before the pandemic.

Rafaela also shared her adult children support her and are attentive to her wellbeing. She stated, *“Pues le digo que, mis hijos son cariñosos y cualquier cosa me traen algo de comer o van a la tienda y me preguntan cómo estoy.”* [“Well, like I said, my children are affectionate, they bring me something to eat or go to the store and ask me how I am”], and

*No pues bien todos mis hijos me apoyan, bueno más mis hijas. Ellas me ayudan mucho. Como yo no manejo, ellas me llevan a la tienda o compran lo que ven que hace falta en la casa o me preguntan, ¿‘qué va a cocinar?’ Y así cuando salen del trabajo, ay pasa a la tienda a comprar el mandado y pues ya yo cocino, así cuando vienen todos ya tengo el guiso listo. [No, well, all my children support me, well, more so my daughters. They help me a lot. Since I don't drive, they take me to the store or they buy what they see is needed in the house or they ask me, 'what are you going to cook?' And so, when they leave work, they go to the store to buy the groceries and well, I cook, so when everyone comes, I already have the food ready] (Rafaela).*

Rafaela also shared her children have helped her cope with the death of her husband, “*Entrevistadora: ¿Que le ayudó a poder sobrevivir la pérdida de su esposo? Rafaela: Pues mis hijos, mis hijos me ayudaron.*” [“*Interviewer: What helped you survive the loss of your husband? Rafaela: Well, my children, my children helped me*”]. She reported her daughter offered many words of encouragement, “*Ella me decía, ‘mi papá ya se fue, pero nosotros vamos a seguir adelante como familia.’*” [“*She told me, ‘My dad is gone, but we are going to move on as a family’*”]. Guillermina also described how her children give her a lot of happiness, “*... Mis hijos me dan mucha alegría y paz.*” [“*... My children give me a lot of joy and peace*”] and stated,

*Entrevistadora: ¿Me podría decir qué aspectos de la vida disfruta más en esta etapa de la vida? Guillermina: a pues mis hijos cuando vienen. Entrevistadora: ¿Cómo es para usted el poder verlos? Guillermina: pues bien, bien contenta y feliz.*

[*Interviewer: Could you tell me what aspects of life you enjoy the most at this stage of life? Guillermina: Well, my children when they come. Interviewer: How is it for you to be able to see them? Guillermina: well, well pleased and happy*] (Guillermina).

Guillermina further reflected on how it is part of life for children to go their separate ways and expressed gratitude around still having some of her adult children in the home,

*Pues así, así es la vida, ¿verdad? Ya, ya de ahí pues uno está más grande y los hijos se van, los hijos se van y ya uno se queda solo. Ahorita pues tengo a dos hijos y a nietas y estoy contenta de estar con ellos. [Well, that's how life is, right? From there one gets older, and the children leave, the children leave, and one is left alone. Right now, I have two children and granddaughters and I am happy to be with them]* (Guillermina).

Similar to others, Guillermina reported she tried to instill the values of achievement and education to her children, “...*Que estudien, que sean algo en la vida, no como yo trabajado en el campo, en la fabricas, no que ellos estudien y sigan adelante*” [“...*That they study, that they become something in life, not like me working in the fields, in factories, I tell them that they should study and strive for more*”].

A unique subtheme that emerged among some participants was their reflections around them now being grandparents. Guillermina, Antonia, Simón, and Rafaela all shared spending time with their grandchildren was precious and expressed their love and care for them, *Disfrutar de sus Nietos* [Enjoying Their Grandchildren].

Guillermina shared, “*Pues mis nietos son mi alegría. Tengo una nieta que se fue a estudiar y ella mi busca y me tiene en cuenta. Los nietos se quieren mucho.*” [“*Well, my grandchildren are my happiness. I have a granddaughter who went to study, and she reaches out and considers me often. One loves their grandchildren very much*”]. Rafaela stated, “*Pero si le digo a mis nietos los quiero mucho. Sí, los quiero mucho. Aunque son una vez gritones y todo.*” [“*like I said, my grandchildren I love them very much. Yes, I love them very much. Although they are loud and everything*”]. Antonia went on to say taking care of her granddaughter also gives her an opportunity to spend time with her that expands her life, “*Me siento contenta porque uno sus nietos también los quiero bien mucho. Y pues sí ella también me ayuda mucho porque así no estoy nomás encerrada.*” [“*I feel happy because one loves their grandchildren very much. And well, she also helps me a lot because that way I'm not just locked up*”]. Simón also expressed his care for his grandchildren,

*O sí, porque dicen que uno si quiere a sus hijos porque son sus hijos, pero uno si siente más querer a los nietos ... uno quiere más a los nietos que a los hijos. Uno ve a*

*los nietros crecer y pues a los hijos uno los cría. [Well, they say that you love your children because they are your children, but you do feel more love for your grandchildren ... you love your grandchildren more than your children. One gets to see their grandchildren grow up and well. With your children you raise them]* (Simón).

As Guillermina spoke about what it has meant for her to enjoy her grandchildren, she shared a picture of herself, her husband, and her grandchild (see Figure 6). She stated the picture represented many aspects of life, such as a time where she felt joy, strength, and had a desire to celebrate. She also shared how the photo represented her family and the fruit of her family.

*...Yo aquí apenas, recién llegada a California. Yo tenía bien mucha Felicidad de tener mi primer nieto y de estar aquí, esa es la historia y pues de trabajar, me daba gusto irme a trabajar y echaba yo 12 horas diarias y sábados en a aquel tiempo, todo para apoyar a mi familia. [...Here I had just arrived to California. I had a lot of happiness to have my first grandchild and to be here, that's the story. And of working, I was happy to go to work and I spent 12 hours a day and Saturdays at that time, all to support my family]* (Guillermina).

**Figure 6**

*Guillermina's shared photo that symbolizes an aspect of her culture and wellbeing*



*Note.* Guillermina, her grandchild, and her husband. This photo was taken at her first grandchild's birthday party.

Simón spoke about the importance of his family and how his marriage with his wife has signified much (see Figure 7). He reflected on over 40yrs of marriage with his wife and expressed joy around how he raised his children and now can enjoy his grandchildren.

**Figure 7**



*Note.* Simón and his wife during the celebration of their vow renewals. He stated they celebrated after 25 years of marriage.

Simón shared his marriage is representative of the family his wife and him have created. He shared,

*En esa foto estamos reanudando el matrimonio porque decimos ya llegamos a los 25 años y la hemos pasado bien entonces hay que reanudar el matrimonio para seguir adelante. Y luego decir bueno, como no vamos a ser eternos. Dejar un retrato para un día. Para decir estos fueron nuestros padres, estos fueron tus abuelos. [In that photo we are renewing our marriage because we had reached 25 years and we have had a good time, so we wanted to renew our marriage to move forward. And then, since we not are not going to be eternal to leave a portrait so that one day, they can say these were our parents, these were your grandparents] (Simón).*

Simón went on to share about the photo,

*Representa alegría porque cuantos matrimonios no duran o se separan y ya nosotros ya casi ajustados 50 años. Y dicen que ya la tercera boda les toca a los hijos celebrar. [It represents joy because how many marriages do not last or are separated, and we are almost reaching 50 years. And they say that the third renewal of vows is up to the children to celebrate] (Simón).*

### ***Agradecimiento por la Vida [Gratitude for Life]***

The group experiential theme of *Agradecimiento por la Vida* [Gratitude for Life] was represented through participant's expressed sense of gratitude and reflection around the stages of life. Their relationship and gratitude towards God were a central value across all participants throughout the interviews. Subthemes included: (1) *Gracias a Dios por ver Llegado a Esta Edad* [Thank You God for Having Arrived at This Stage of Life], (2) *Las Etapas de la Vida* [The Periods of Life], and (3) *Estar Bien de Salud* [Being Well in Health].

All participants reported having an immense sense of appreciation for having the opportunity to reach this stage of life and expressed gratitude towards God, *Gracias a Dios*

*por ver Llegado a Esta Edad* [Thank You God for Having Arrived at This Stage of Life].

Participants expressed their feelings of gratitude around having the opportunity to enjoy the various facets of life and articulated this has been possible due to the grace of God. All participants (Guillermina, Julián, Joaquín, Antonia, Simón, Felipe, and Rafaela) shared that their daily gratitude towards God was a practice they engaged in and expressed it was a form of reminding themselves of the gifts of life. Guillermina stated, “... *Estoy contenta de que Dios me dejó llegar a esta edad, enfermita, pero a voy y tengo vida y doy gracias a Dios por tener vida.*” [“... *I am happy that God allowed me to reach this age, sick, but I am here and I have life and I thank God for having life*”]. Joaquín reported a similar sentiment and said, “*Pues por un lado dar gracias a la vida, a Dios, que estoy aún vivo, que todavía respiro y estoy aquí.*” [“*Well, on the one hand, I give thanks to life, to God, that I am alive, that I am still breathing and that I am here*”]. Antonia also indicated, “*Bueno, pues yo estoy feliz, estoy bien, estoy contenta con esta edad que tengo, doy gracias a Dios de estar aquí.*” [“*Well, I'm happy, I'm fine, I'm happy with my age, I give thanks to God for being here*”]. Simón shared, “*No sé cómo muy alegre, me gusta ... y pues dale gracias a Dios por haber llegado a esta edad ... que muchas personas tal vez no han llegado.*” [“*I don't know, very happy, I like it... I thank God for having reached this age... that many people may not have reached*”], he also went on to say “*Darle gracias a Dios, estoy en agradecimiento con él.*” [“*I give thanks to God, I am in gratitude with him*”]. Rafaela further expressed her gratitude towards God and her desire to continue to see her family grow, “*Pues doy gracias a Dios que todavía estoy con vida. Y estoy aquí con mi familia. Espero que me dé más vida para seguir viendo a mis hijo y nietos. Eso es lo que yo le pido a Dios.*” [“*Well, I thank God that I am still alive. And*

*I'm here with my family. I hope he will give me more life to continue living for my children and grandchildren. That is what I ask of God."].*

In expressing their gratitude to God for arriving at this stage of life, they also identified feelings of satisfaction, content, and triumph. Felipe shared how reaching this stage of life was a triumph, he said “*Como quien dice, es como un triunfo de la vida que muy pocas a veces lo aprecian, pero llegar ya a una cierta edad, ya de 60, 70 es un triunfo y una experiencia muy bueno en la vida.*” [“*As someone says, it is like a triumph of life that very few sometimes appreciate, but reaching a certain age, 60, 70 is a triumph and a very good experience in life*”]. Julián also echoed a sense of satisfaction,

*...Tener 68 años significa muchas cosas. Significa que bueno, que estamos envejeciendo, pero al mismo tiempo se siente una satisfacción de ver a los hijos ya realizados y que todavía podemos estar ahí para ellos y ayudarles en todo lo que se pueda, es una satisfacción a la vida. [ ...Being 68 years old means many things. It means that well, that we are getting older, but at the same time one feels satisfaction in seeing our children fulfilled and that we can still be there for them and help them in any way possible, it is a satisfaction in life] (Julián).*

In sharing their appreciation for life, they also stated that despite illness and changes in their life they are well and want to continue to live life. Guillermina stated “*... Ya Dios me dejo aquí y si es pesado, los años pesan, aparte de las enfermedades, pero ay vamos, gracias a Dios.*” [“*... God left me here and it it's heavy, the years are heavy, but apart from the illnesses I am here, and I thank God*”]. Rafaela also expressed that although she is sick, she is also well, “*No, pues yo me da mucho gusto que hasta ahorita estoy buena. Enferma pero buena y los puedo mirar [su familia] y ojalá que los siga yo mirando más tiempo, ¿verdad?*”



*["No, well, I'm very pleased that I'm good right now. Sick but good and I can see them [her family] and hopefully I can see them for longer, right?"]. Simón added, "No más dale gracias a Dios y hasta la fecha estamos bien emos podido sobrepasar y pues ojalá que me siga dando más ánimo." ["Just give thanks to God and to date we are able to overcome and hopefully he will continue to give me strength"].*

Participants further uplifted the cycle of life includes the natural progression of aging, *Las Etapas De La Vida* [Periods of Life]. Participants reflected on how aging is part of life and involves a natural process. Joaquín shared one needs to accept the aging process as it is natural, *"Yo digo que a veces aún que diga uno que no lo acepta lo tiene que aceptar, porque son cosas que son cosas naturales."* ["I say that sometimes even if someone says that they do not accept it, they have to accept it, because these are natural things that occur"]. He also added the aging process can feel like a dream. The process of aging occurs without at times realizing,

*Pues yo a veces pienso que es como un sueño que se levanta uno y ya está en otra etapa, en otra etapa de edad. ¡Y vas viendo, o ya tengo 20! ¡ya tengo 30! ¡ya tengo 40! Ya 50 es señal que como dicen en la iglesia 'ya va uno para abajo.'* [Well, sometimes I think that it is like a dream that one wakes up from and is already in another stage, in another stage of age. And you're watching the years pass, 'I'm already 20! I'm already 30! I'm already 40!' Already 50 is a sign that, as they say in church, 'one is declining'] (Joaquín).

Guillermina also spoke about the changes the arise as one begins to age. She shared sentiments around one's interest and joy in life shifting, as well as one's role in the family evolving through the course of life. Guillermina stated,

*... Pues antes pensaba diferente. Como los que están jóvenes piensan en ir a fiestas o en vestirse 'o me voy a comprar estoy' o a festejar, pero uno de viejo ya no, ya no más lo que nos da la familia 'ya no me den ropa, porque ya no voy a alcanzar a ponérmela.'* [... Well, before, I thought differently. Like those who are young think about going to parties or getting dressed 'or I'm going to buy this' or to celebrate, but when you're old, no longer, it only what the family gives you, but you think 'don't give me anymore clothes, because I'm not going to be able to put it on anymore'] (Guillermina).

Guillermina also reflected on the various stages of life,

*Sí, va por etapas la vida, porque cuando estaba uno niño pensamos en jugar. Cuando ya estamos jóvenes ya piensa en tener novio [risas] y ya te casas y pues si órale, a los trancazos... 'órale, apúrate hacer la comida, a la casa.'* Ya cuando se casa uno y tiene uno ya los hijos, 'ay que los hijitos que ay que cuidarlos', que hay que llevarlos a la escuela, que luego se casan los hijos y se van de la casa. Y ahora ya de grande ellos me mandan [risas]. Antes yo mandaba y ahora ellos me mandan. [Yes, life goes through stages, because when you were a child, you thought about playing. When you were young, one thinks about having a boyfriend [laughs] and when you are ready to get married, well ... come on, 'come on... hurry up to make the food, attend to the home.' When one gets married and one already has children, 'oh, the little children, we have to take care of them', they must be taken to school, and then the children get married and leave home. And now when they grow up, they tell me what to do [laughs]. Before I told them what to do and now, they tell me what to do] (Guillermina).

Simón had a different perspective, he indicated this stage of life allows him to enjoy his time,

*Ahorita puedo disfrutar, puedo hacer un viaje una vez a año o lo que sea y sin compromiso de decir, 'mañana me tengo que levantar a trabajar,' de eso puedo disfrutar, ya es más tranquilidad todo, el no estar atado al trabajo ... tomar unas vacaciones, disfrutar estar retirado. [Right now I can enjoy, I can take a trip once a year or whatever and without commitment to say, 'tomorrow I have to get up to work,' that's what I can enjoy, everything is more calm, not being tied to work ... Take a vacation, enjoy being retired] (Simón).*

Julián reflected on how aging involves a beautiful process, he expressed feelings of happiness and pride for what he has been able to accomplish, “*Yo sé que estoy envejeciendo pero también una experiencia bien bonita. Yo estoy muy contento con lo poco que hemos logrado para mis hijos.*” [I know I'm getting older but also, it's a beautiful experience. I am very happy with the little we have achieved for my children]. Guillermina also shared when one is young, she never imagined she would age, “*Pues pensaba yo que no iba envejecer, que no iba a llegar a vieja (si ríe), y mira, ya tengo 75 años. Ajá, eso lo que yo pensaba, yo no voy a llegar a esa edad, me voy a morir antes, pero mira, ya Dios me dejó aquí.*” [Well, I thought I wasn't going to get old, that I wasn't going to get old (she laughs), and look, I'm already 75 years old. Aha, that's what I thought, I'm not going to reach that age, I'm going to die sooner, but look, God left me here].

In reflecting, participants also shared their value around having good health or a relative sense of health, *Estar Bien de Salud* [Being Well in Health]. All participants shared their health was an aspect they did not take for granted, they acknowledged privilege around being alive and well. Particularly, some referenced the COVID-19 pandemic and reported

being well and alive was something they did not take for granted. Rafaela disclosed her husband died due to Covid-19 while he was visiting his home in Guerrero, Mexico. She stated,

*Muchas cosas que no las podíamos creer lo que iba a pasar en la familia, pero hasta que nos pasó ya empezamos a creer...[pause] porque mi esposo se fue solo a México y ella [Covid] le tocó la de malas [lagrimas] ya no lo volvimos a ver. La salud es algo que se tiene que agradecer, porque se nos va un día. [Many things that we could not believe what was going to happen in the family, but until it happened to us, we began to believe... [pause] because my husband went to Mexico alone and she [Covid] touched him, [tears] we no longer saw him again. Health is something to be thankful for, because one day it is taken] (Rafaela).*

Antonia reported being thankful that she was not impacted by the pandemic and for having her health. She shared “*No, pues estamos bien, todos hemos llegado bien, gracias a Dios que estamos bien. Y gracias a Dios que no nos enfermamos de esta pandemia, estoy agradecida por tener mi salud.*” [“*No, well we are fine, we have been well, thank God we are well. And thank God that we did not get sick from this pandemic, I am thankful for having my health*”].

Felipe shared how one would not want to get an illness that is contagious, he stated, “*Pero lo principal que uno no quisiera que les llegara una enfermedad como contagiosa de un cáncer o algo como esta pandemia que fue muy fuerte. Murió mucha gente, mucha enfermedad.*” [“*But the main thing is that one does not want a contagious disease like cancer or something like this pandemic that was very strong. A lot of people died, a lot of disease*”].

Felipe reflected on the importance of being able to accept one’s illness and the emotions that come along with it. Felipe was hospitalized earlier in the year and spoke about

the need to accept, “*Uno tiene que aceptarlas [enfermedades] en la vida, porque las enfermedades nunca llegan solas siempre llegan acompañadas de uno u otra manera*” [“*One has to accept them [illness] in life, because diseases never come alone, they always come accompanied in one way or another*”]. Rafaela shared her uncertainty around her upcoming surgery, but also expressed her gratitude for being alive,

*Le digo yo por mi enfermedad, que tengo. Y no sé si quede yo bien o no, pero me voy a operar porque no nomás me duelen las dos rodillas. Pero si doy gracias por que a pesar de todo estoy aquí. [I’m telling you because of my illness, that I have, I don’t know if I will be fine or not, but I’m going to have surgery because my knees just hurt. But I give thanks that despite everything I am here]* (Rafaela).

Similarly, Guillermina spoke about feelings of sadness that arose when she learned about her illness.

*Entrevistadora: ¿Cómo fue para usted el oír que tenía que empezar diálisis?*

*Guillermina: pues muy triste. Me daba tristeza y lloraba porque yo decía pues que no me fuera a pasar eso. Pero ya vez me paso (se puse triste, llora) y pues a pesar de todo le doy gracias a mi Dios. [Interviewer: What was it like for you to hear that you had to start dialysis? Guillermina: Well, very sad. It made me sad, and I cried because I said that this was not going to happen to me. But now it happened to me but beyond everything, I am thankful to my God (becomes sad, cries)]* (Guillermina).

Guillermina continued sharing her challenges with her health. She disclosed dialysis is really tiring and it is also the thing that keeps her alive,

*...Pues difícil porque ahorita estoy más o menos y mañana también, pero el día que me hacen diálisis me hacen lunes, miércoles y viernes. Entonces esos días no estoy*

*viva, estoy muerta... Pero pues me dan vida, dicen ahí 'pues dan vida'. Y pues sí, si uno no va a diálisis, pues muere uno, imagínate y pues eso, eso me hace ir y seguir. [...Well, it's difficult because right now, I'm okay and tomorrow too, but the day they give me dialysis they give me Monday, Wednesday and Friday, those days I'm not alive, I'm dead... But well, they give me life, they say, 'they give life'. And yes, if you don't go on dialysis, well, you die, imagine... and, well, that makes me go and continue] (Guillermina).*

### ***Prácticas que Informan su Bienestar* [Practices That Inform Their Wellbeing]**

The group experiential theme of *Prácticas que Informan su Bienestar* [Practices That Inform Their Wellbeing] was defined as spiritual, social, and individual activities that inform their wellbeing. Subthemes included (1) *Creencia en Dios* [Belief in God], (2) *Convivir con las Amistades* [Interacting with Friends], (3) *Caminar* [Walking], and (4) *Platicar y Recordar Historias de su Crianza* [Sharing and Remembering Stories of their Upbringing].

All participants, whether directly or indirectly, expressed their devotion to God, *Creencia en Dios* [Belief in God]. Having a relationship with God and praying to God as *personas mayores* [older people] was a practice that participants identified as informing their wellbeing. Participants recalled experiences from a young age that helped them cultivate a religious practice. Rafaela stated her faith and practices of prayer were instilled by her parents from a young age. She acknowledged she does not attend church regularly, but prays daily,

*Porque mis padres siempre tenían su virgen y cada vez que se iban a dormir acostumbraban a persinarse, eso era lo que yo miraba. Era muy bonito, siempre lo hacían y pues así uno también aprende. Yo no voy seguido a la iglesia, pero siempre*

*estoy rezando. [Because my parents always had their virgin Mary and every time, they went to sleep they would make the sign of the cross, that's what I saw. It was very nice, they always did it and well, that's how you also learn. I don't go to church often, but I'm always praying] (Rafaela).*

Felipe also articulated he learned to practice his faith in God since a young age. He reported his family modeled these practices,

*Desde que estaba chiquillo allí en la casa nos despachaban a la iglesia, cada ocho días teníamos que ir al catecismo. Nuestros padres nos decían tienen que ir a la Iglesia. Y ya de ahí siguió, siguieron y hasta la fecha. [Since I was a child there at home they sent us to church, every eight days we had to go to catechism. Our parents would say we have to go to church. And from there it continued, continued, ... to date] (Felipe).*

Antonia also recalled memories of her family taking her to religious practices, “*Ellas me llevaban, pues que vamos a la iglesia, que vamos a misa, que vamos al Rosario.*” [“*They would take me, let’s go to church, let’s go to mass, let’s go to the Rosary*”].

Across participants the practice of prayer and engaging in an active relationship with God was highlighted. Guillermina stated in this stage of life her focus is on praying and thinking about the creator,

*Te digo que la vida va por etapas y para eso ya no. Ya no más pienso en el criador, no más puro rezando ‘gracias por a ver dado me este día’ o ‘gracias por esta noche’ en todo ay que dar gracias. [I tell you that life goes by in stages and one’s focus changes. I now only think about the creator, just praying, ‘thank you for*

*giving me this day' or 'thank you for tonight' one everything giving thanks in everything]* (Guillermina).

Guillermina further shared her prayers to God are around him helping her and her family.

*Pues pidiéndole a Dios que nos ayude – y él nunca nos suelta de la mano, siempre está con nosotros. Naden muere de hambre. Diosito siempre está con nosotros, nosotros somos los rebeldes porque él no nos deja. Ya vez que la palabra que para todos nace el sol. [Well, asking God to help us – he never let's go of our hand, he is always with us. No one dies of hunger. God is always with us; we are the rebels because he never leaves us. You know the saying; the sun rises for everyone]* (Guillermina).

Similarly, Felipe spoke about how God has been a source of strength as he has navigated hardships, *“Pues lo único que me ayudó es que Dios es grande y a la realidad tener como paciencia y control en las enfermedades.”* [“Well, the only thing that helped me is that God is great and having patience and control in one’s illness”]. Simón also stated believing in God offers him a sense of support, *“Porque yo siento que si cree uno en Dios lo tiene todo, porque Dios lo ayuda. Y al mismo tiempo dice ayúdate que yo te ayudaré. Esa es la creencia que tenemos.”* [“Because I feel that if one believes in God, one has everything, because God helps. And at the same time, he says help yourself that I will help you. That is the belief that we have”]. Joaquín reported everyday he practices gratitude towards God and asks for forgiveness around his wrongdoings, *“Pues a Dios le doy gracias por este nuevo día. Y si me equivoqué, también pido perdón porque a veces la riega uno.”* [“Well, I thank God for this new day. And if I was wrong, I also apologize because sometimes one messes up”]. Julián also shared in this stage of life he reflects on his wrongdoings and prays for others,



*La forma en que empieza uno a vivir a esta edad es en pensar más en los demás y arrepentirse de lo que tenga uno que arrepentirse. ¿Verdad? Uno ya se enfoca en orar por los demás, especialmente por los niños o los ancianos. [The way one begins to live at this age is to think more of others and to apologize for what one has to apologize for, right? One focuses on praying for others, especially for children or the elderly] (Julián).*

He also added,

*Pero nosotros nos conectamos más con ese ser que nosotros entendemos que es nuestro Creador y tenemos más tiempo para orar, para rezar, para pedir por la familia y por todo el mundo. [But we connect more with that being that we understand to be our Creator and we have more time to pray, to pray, to ask for the family and for the whole world] (Julián).*

Participants further reflected on the significance of believing in God and engaging in prayer.

Joaquín stated,

*Pues... Yo con mi Señor. Yo sé que aquí estoy. Yo no te veo ni te siento ni nada, pero creo y sé que estás conmigo. Y aquí estoy. Como todo ser con mis buenas y malas. [Well... my Lord. I know that I am here. I don't see you or feel you or anything, but I believe and know that you are with me. And I am here. Like all beings with my good and bad] (Joaquín).*

Guillermina shared engaging in prayer helps her feel a sense of calmness, “*Ya me siento de otra manera, me siento tranquila cuando rezo.*” [“*I feel differently, I feel calm when I pray*”].

Antonia reported engaging in cultural practices such as prayer helps one cope through life,

*Pues eso, que uno cuando siente uno que tiene algo, alguna tristeza o alguna preocupación por algo, a rezar, caminar para que trate, uno de olvidar un poquito eso que le está pasando. Eso es lo que ayuda mucho de salir uno a caminar, ir a la iglesia, ir a rezar, a pedirle a Dios, a la Virgen que lo ayude, a uno, que con aquel problema que uno tenga. [Well, that, when one feels that one has something, some sadness, or some concern about something, to pray, go on a walk so, one can forget a little about what is happening to them. That is what helps a lot to go for a walk, go to church, go to pray, ask God, the Virgin Mary to help you, with that problem that you have] (Antonia).*

Some participants discussed attending to their friendships was a practice that meant a lot to them, *Convivir con las Amistades* [Interacting with Friends]. Across participants having a sense of social connectedness was important for them. Friendships and community neighbors were important sources of connection. Julián shared,

*Significan mucho porque en los momentos más difíciles es eso lo que necesitas. La amistad a alguien que te responda, aunque sea una palabra de aliento, pero que te la dé todo corazón que a veces no es lo que quieres oír, pero te dicen la verdad. Y eso es bonito. [They mean a lot, because in the most difficult times that is what you need. A friendship is someone who answers you, even if it is a word of encouragement, but who gives it to you with all their heart, which is sometimes not what you want to hear, but they tell you the truth. That is beautiful] (Julián).*

Felipe stated connecting with others was important for him, “*Lo principal es convivir uno con la familia, los amigos, o con la gente.*” [“*The main thing is to interact with family, friends, or with people*”]. Guillermina added, “*Las visitas de las amistades, me da gusto que*

me visiten.” [“Visits from friends, I'm glad they visit me”]. Julian added, “Es bien importante que a esta edad uno no se sienta solo, que tenga la convivencia.” [“It is very important that at this age one does not feel alone that one has a sense of connection”]. Joaquín also commented on what makes friendships special,

*Pues sí, porque a veces platicamos o nos vamos a correr, la amistad es importante. Cuando un tiene amistades, es como otra persona es parte de tu vida, las amistades son importantes. [Well, yes, because sometimes we talk, or we go running, friendships are important. When you have friends, it's like another person is part of your life, friendships are important] (Joaquín).*

Antonia stated she also enjoys having friendships,

*Pues a nosotros nos gusta mucho tener amistades, porque donde quiera nos quieren bien muchos, muchos por donde quiera nos invitan y nos visitan y pues cuando vamos a México, la casa está llena de gente todo el tiempo. Unos entran y otros se van y a veces llegan a visitar y a veces no se van unos cuando ya me están gritando que llegan otros. Y siempre, siempre desde muchacha, siempre, muchas amistades. Siempre me quiere la gente, hasta ahorita. [Well, we really like to have friends, because many people care for us everywhere, many invite us and visit us, and when we go to Mexico, the house is full of people all the time. Some come in and others leave and sometimes they come to visit and some leave when they are already telling me that others are coming. And always, always since I was a girl, I always had many friends. People have always cared for me, even now] (Antonia).*

As participants reflected on the importance of friendships, they also shared there are benefits to talking and sharing with others,

*Yo no sé si todas las personas les interese platicar o que las escuchen o hablar. A mí me gusta hablar y es bueno hablar. Lógicamente que no es difícil. Digo, no es fácil encontrar esa persona, esa amistad que te escuche. [I don't know if all people are interested in talking or listening. I like to talk and it's good to talk. Of course, it is difficult. I mean, it's not easy to find that person, that friendship that listens to you] (Julián).*

Julián also expressed it can be hard to find someone who will engage in listening.

*La conversación es muy saludable yo siento que a cualquier persona le hace bien platicar y desahogarse o hablar y desgraciadamente no siempre hay una persona que te escuche. Escuchar es muy difícil. [Talking is very healthy. I feel that it is good for anyone to talk and let off steam but unfortunately there isn't always a person who listens to you. Listening is very difficult] (Julián).*

Felipe added how nowadays it is harder to engaging in conversation and connection with others,

*Entre vecinos y amigos antes uno se saludaba, platicaba uno cosas y convivía. Pero como le digo, ya es muy difícil porque la gente no convive, sino que no más de su trabajo a su casa y no hay convivencia. [Between neighbors and friends, before one greeted one another, one talked about things and interacted. But as I told you, it's already very difficult because people don't interact, they just go home from work and there is no interaction] (Felipe).*

He went onto share why it is important for people to interact with others,

*Deje le digo es importante que uno siga conviviendo con las personas, con su familia... Lo mejor es estar con alguien o hablar con otra gente. Hablar con alguna*

*persona que sea mayor. Como quien dice, eso es lo mejor que hay en la vida ... por ejemplo, a una planta uno tiene que darle el abono cuando lo necesita, no cuando no lo necesita. [Let me tell you it is important that you continue to live with people, with your family ... It's best to be with someone or talk to other people. Talk to someone who is older. As they say, that's the best thing in life... For example, a plant you have to fertilize it when it needs it, not when it doesn't need it] (Felipe).*

Another cultural practice participants engage in to relax and attend to their wellbeing was, *Caminar* [Walking]. Participant stated they actively engage in movement for their bodies'.

Felipe reported, “*Como usted si camina, usted ya se relaja, es un relajamiento.*” [*"Like if you walk, you will feel relaxed, it is a relaxation"*]. Julián added, “*Disfruto caminar, correr es como le digo, salir al aire libre.*” [*"I enjoy walking, running, getting outdoors"*]. Simón shared,

*Siempre me ha gustado ser como activo, que como decir este, no quiero estar un ratito de o quis, siempre estoy pensando qué voy a hacer y al mismo tiempo decir 'pues si aquí me estoy sentado al rato no voy a poder ni caminar y me voy a tullir de los pies.' Entonces trato de salir y caminar, de siempre estar, así como activo. [I've always liked being active, how can I say this, I don't like feeling like I am doing nothing., I'm always thinking about what I'm going to do and at the same time say 'well, if I'm sitting here for a while, I won't even be able to walk and I'm going to tense up my feet.' So, I try to go out and walk, try to be active] (Simón).*

Julián also said, “*Yo prefiero mejor caminar, oír historias, despejarme.*” [*"I prefer to walk, listen to stories, clear my head"*], and Joaquín echoed his preference for being outdoors, “*Me*

*levanto, paseo a este (su perro), me voy a caminar, voy a pasearme, hago mis ejercicios, disfruto el momento.*” [“I get up, I walk him (his dog), I go for a walk, I do my exercises, I enjoy the moment”]. Joaquín also spoke about how going for a walk allows him to distract himself, “*Yo digo que caminar a veces se distrae uno ... Me distraigo, ya me siento mejor, despejado.*” [“I say that walking distracts me... I get distracted, I feel better, clear-headed”]. Felipe indicated going for walks help him attend to his mental health,

*Pues a veces como le digo que me dicen pues quédate aquí, que acuéstate, pero a mí no me gusta estar enserado, así siento que me voy a morir más pronto. Porque afuera uno se despeja más y afuera tiene la posibilidad de que alguien le ayude, por eso me salgo yo a caminar. [Well, sometimes, they tell me stay here, lie down, but I don't like being locked up, I feel like I'm going to die sooner. Outside you can distract yourself more and outside you have the possibility of someone helping you, that's why I go for a walk] (Felipe).*

Another practice that emerged across participants was, *Platicar y Recordar Historias de su Crianza* [Sharing and Remembering Stories of their Upbringing]. A unique aspect of this theme was how much participants enjoyed recalling their past lived experiences. Participants emphasized it was important for them to remember and share with others. They expressed recalling their past was a salient practice they engaged in routinely. Rafaela stated, “... *De vez en cuando platico y me acuerdo de las pobrezas que pasé, o que crecí en el cerro, o que crecí en el campo y que mi papá me llevaba a sembrar.*” [“... From time to time I talk, and I remember the poverty I went through, or that I grew up on the hill, or that I grew up in the field and that my father took me to sow”]. Simón shared recalling his experiences brings him a sense of tranquility, “*Me siento tranquilo, así hacer como un recordatorio. A veces que*

*no me puedo dormir y me pongo a recordar y ya me quedo dormido.” [“I feel calm, engaging in remembering. Sometimes I can't fall asleep, and I start to remember and then I fall asleep”].* Antonia added that her and her husband tend to recall and share their experiences,

*Cuando me pongo a pensar, me siento contenta y me pongo, me siento, me pongo a acordarme de todo lo que, lo que pasó, lo que hacíamos. A lo menos yo y el [esposo] ponemos a platicar. ¿Oye, te acuerdas de esto? ¿Y del otro? ¿Y de aquellos? Pues sí, de la gente. Y luego nos ponemos a contar la gente que se murió y la que vivía y que aquí vivía fulano y así nos ponemos a platicar de allá, del rancho siempre. [When I start to think, I feel happy and I start to remember everything, what happened, what we did. At least me and him [husband] start talking, “Hey, do you remember this? And of the other? And of them?” And then we start counting the people who died and the ones who lived and who lived here so and so we start talking about home, always about the ranch] (Antonia).*

Julián further echoed his life experiences are an opportunity to reflect and share with others,

*Las experiencias vividas son enseñanzas de la vida que uno las usa para reflexionar, contar... ellas nos hacen pensar en la forma en que reaccionamos muchas veces. Lo que se pudo hacer diferente. Hay muchas cosas, pero también al mismo tiempo. Yo pienso que en su momento las decisiones que se hacen son por qué son necesarias. [The lived experiences are lessons of life that one uses to reflect, share... they make us think about the way we often react. What could be done differently. There are many things, but also at the same time, I think that at the time the decisions are made because they are needed and are necessary at the time] (Julián).*

Similarly, Simón said, “*Me siento más tranquilo, más feliz. estar acordándome de cosas que ya pasaron hace 50 a 60 años.*” [“*I feel calm, happier, remembering things that already happened 50 to 60 years ago*”]. Joaquín shared he recalled seeing elders engage in storytelling and how now he does the same,

*Entonces platicaba mucha gente de muchas historias ‘no fijate que este o te acuerdas...’ se juntaba mucho la gente grande, y platicaban sus historias reviviendo. Eso es lo que miraba uno de la gente grande y deja te cuento que ahora yo hago lo mismo, grupos de iglesia, amigos, nos ponemos a contar nuestras historias. [A lot of people shared many stories, ‘let me tell you this or do you remember...’ people who were older would get together a lot, and they would talk about their stories. That is what one saw elder people do and let me tell you that now I do the same, church groups, friends, we start to tell our stories] (Joaquín).*

Simón and Antonia further referenced the importance of sharing the good, the bad, and all the changes that come with generations. Simón shared, “*Recordar lo bueno y recordar lo malo, ¿verdad? Porque si uno no más recuerda puras cosas buenas no está bien tenemos que recordar todo lo vivido.*” [“*Remember the good and the bad, right? Because if one only remembers pure good things, it is not right, we have to remember everything we have lived*”].

Antonia added,

*...De recordar todo lo que antes, por donde uno caminaba, por donde uno andaba, por lo que hacía, por todo, porque pues ya es diferente todo ahorita. Ya la gente allá ya no hace tortilla, ya no, ya no hace lo mismo que nosotros hacíamos antes. [...To remember everything, where one walked, where one was, what one did, for*



*everything, because well, everything is different right now. The people no longer make tortillas, they no longer do the same as we did before]* (Antonia).

### ***Transiciones de la Vida* [Life Transitions]**

The group experiential theme of *Transiciones de la Vida* [Life Transitions] demonstrates various domains in participants' lives that have changed through the course of aging. Participants identified aspects of aging that have been rewarding, challenging, and have required a process of acceptance. Subthemes included (1) *Retirarse* [Retirement], (2) *Enfermedades* [Illness], (3) *Perdiendo las Fuerzas y El Ánimo* [Losing Strength and Encouragement], and (4) *La Vida no es para Siempre* [Life is Not Forever].

Participants spoke about their experiences with *Retirarse* [Retirement], some spoke about how retiring was an adjustment while others shared retiring has allowed them time to relax, enjoy their home, and live without worry. Joaquín stated, "*Ahora que me retire no tengo que preocupar me dé que tengo que ir a trabajar, ahora vivo el día tras día.*" ["Now that I retired, I don't have to worry about going to work, now I enjoy the day to day"]. Felipe reportad, "*Pues el retiro es muy bueno, ya uno descansa.*" ["Well, retirement is very good, I get to rest"]. Simón acknowledged that retiring was an adjustment that took time,

*Entrevistadora: ¿Fue difícil el retirarse, el adaptarse a su día tras día? Simón: Al principio sí, pero ya pasó un mes, dos, ya me controlé porque dije 'pues si ya estoy retirado tengo que disfrutar.'* [Interviewer: Was it difficult to retire, to adjust to your day after day? Simón: At first yes, but a month passed, two months and I was able to adjust myself because I said 'if I'm retired, I need to enjoy'] (Simón).

Rafaela also stated retiring was a process, "*Fue un proceso el poder retirarme, no porque no quisiera trabajar pero por mis rodillas.*" ["It was a process to be able to retire not because I

*didn't want to work but because of my knees"]*. Julián also stated how in some ways he was forced to retire due to losing his job because of the pandemic. He shared after losing his job he was one of the few employees that was not called back to work, he disclosed he assumes it was related to his age.

*Es increíble como han cambiado las cosas y las etapas difíciles últimamente. Por ejemplo, con la pandemia perdimos todos el trabajo. Después a mi edad, a nuestra edad, muchos de nosotros ya no nos contrataron para atrás entonces eso fue muy difícil. [It's amazing how much things have changed. For example, because in the pandemic we all lost our jobs. Then at my age, at our age, a lot of us didn't get hired anymore so that was very difficult]* (Julián).

Simón also discussed his decision was informed by his adult children encouraging him to retire,

*Y yo de buena gana hubiera seguido, pero ya no me dejaron aquí en la casa. Cada vez que venían la misma pregunta que me hacían mis hijos, ¿Cuándo se va a retirar? ¿Cuándo se van a retirar? [And I would gladly would have continued working, but they didn't let me here in the house anymore. Every time they asked the same question my children asked me, 'When are you going to retire? When are they going to retire?']* (Simón).

While retiring has been a process for some participants, they also shared how they have now been able to enjoy their homes more. Julián expressed,

*Disfruto mucho la casa, la casa, porque en todos estos años la casa era nomás un lugar casi como para llegar y dormir y vámonos porque sales a las 06:00 de la mañana, a veces regresas a las 7:00 de la tarde y todo el día no estás en casa. [I*

*really enjoy the house, the house, because in all these years the house was just a place almost like to arrive and sleep and let's go, because you leave at 06:00 in the morning, sometimes you return at 7:00 in the evening, and all day you are not at home]* (Julián).

Julián added,

*Ahorita pues estar en la casa, las plantas, a hacer de comer. Yo cocino para la familia, me gusta mucho cocinar y eso lo disfruto mucho, estar en la casa y atender a mi esposa, atender a mis hijos. [Right now, being in the house, the plants, cooking. I cook for the family, I really like to cook, and I enjoy that a lot, being in the house and taking care of my wife, taking care of my children]* (Julián).

Rafaela also said she attends to her home and family, “*Pues ni creas, yo estoy atenta a la casa, cocino, limpio, me aseguro que estemos bien.*” [“Well let me tell you, I am attentive to the house, I cook, clean, I make sure we are well”]. Antonia also shared, “*Pues disfruto mi casa y estar aquí y estar con mi familia.*” [“Well, I enjoy my house and being here and being with my family”].

Some participants disclosed managing their health has been challenging, *Enfermedades* [Illness]. They expressed sentiments of hardship, sadness, and moments of hopelessness around their health. While many spoke about the importance of acceptance, they also said feelings of loss and sadness can emerge in the process of aging. Rafaela reported it was hard to accept she had to retire due to her knees hurting. She recalled her desire to work but inability to do so due to her knee pains.

*Ya, por eso me jubilé por el dolor de mis rodillas. Yo fui al seguro, no me querían dejar, y yo les dije yo ‘no puedo,’ y pues si fue difícil aceptar que no podía por mis*

*rodillas. [That's why I retired because of the pain in my knees. I went to social security, they didn't want to leave me, and I told them 'I can't,' and it was hard to accept that I couldn't because of my knees]* (Rafaela).

Guillermina shared,

*Cuando me caí me quebré mi pierna ahí sufrí mucho y luego tuve otra caída y me pegué en la cabeza, esos fueron unos sufrimientos en mi vida, sentí que me morí tres días. [When I fell, I broke my leg and I suffered a lot and then I had another fall and I hit my head, those were sufferings in my life, I felt that I died three days]*  
(Guillermina).

Guillermina also expressed feelings of sadness around her health, “*Ya no hay gusto no más pura tristeza ... por mi enfermedad que tengo.*” [“*There no longer is no happiness, pure sadness ... because of my illness that I have*”], she added, “*Pues cuando no voy a diálisis me siento bien, cuando voy a diálisis me siento muy apachurrada.*” [“*Well, when I don't go to dialysis I feel good, when I go to dialysis I feel very overwhelmed*”]. Felipe also expressed feelings of sadness, “*Pues muy triste, porque ya en este año que todavía no termina pase tiempo en el Hospital, fue algo difícil de aceptar.*” [“*Well, very sad, because already in this year that still has not ended, I spend time in the Hospital, it was something difficult to accept*”], he also shared, “*Pero vivir puede ser triste, hacer se viejo y vivir como quien dice, en una enfermedad. A veces uno puede desear casi la muerte, porque ve uno contrariedades de la vida que lo deprime.*” [“*But living can be sad, aging and living as they say with an illness. Sometimes one can desire death, because one sees setbacks of life that depress you*”].

Julián said getting COVID and being sick without knowing forced him to consider becoming prepared for the unknown,

*Yo me dio el COVID muy fuerte y pues he tardado tiempo para recuperarme. Y eso me hizo entender muchas cosas de que, de que hay que estar preparados porque uno nunca sabe. [I got the COVID very hard, and it took me time to recover. And that made me understand many things that, that you must be prepared because you never know] (Julián).*

Julián added,

*Realmente me sentí tan mal que si te hace pensar más seriamente. Más que nada en el estar en paz con todo el mundo y dejar las cosas preparadas. Porque creas o no, la vida es la vida y al rato no vamos. [I really felt so bad that it makes you think more seriously. More than anything in being at peace with everyone and leaving things prepared. Because believe it or not, that is life and after we go] (Julián).*

An aspect about the aging process that was referenced by some participants was how with time one begins to lose their strength and sense of motivation, *Perdiendo La Fuerzas y Animo* [Losing Strength and Encouragement]. For some participants, they shared suffering informed this process of loss. Guillermina reported, “*Y sufrí pues, sufrí mucho y se cansa uno.*” [“*And I suffered, I suffered a lot, and one gets tired*”]. Joaquín described how part of life includes learning to navigate pain, death, and suffering, “*Hay tres cosas el dolor, la muerte, el sufrimiento y ay que saber cómo afrontarlo.*” [“*There are three things: pain, death, suffering and you have to know how to deal with it*”].

In this process of loss, Guillermina stated happiness begins to fade away as you age,

*Entrevistadora: ¿Por qué cree usted que se ha ido la alegría? Guillermina: ha pues por la viejes, ya vez que todo cambia yo ya no, ya la juventud ya paso. No, para uno ya no, ya no ay y luego que perdí mi esposo ya vez. [Interviewer: Why do you think*

*the joy is gone? Guillermina: It is because of old age, and when everything changes you no longer, youth has already passed. No, for one no longer, no longer woe and after I lost my husband and time] (Guillermina).*

She also added,

*Ni aquí [home] ni allá tengo alegría. Estos cuando van a hacer fiesta 'at ustedes con su mitote'. No para mí ya no, 'bueno háganlo, pero mí no, yo me voy al cuarto.*

*[Neither here [Home] nor there do I have joy. When they are going to party. Not for me anymore, 'well do it, but I don't, I'm going to the room] (Guillermina).*

Felipe further reflected on how one begins to lose strength as an aging person,

*A la persona mayor se le va a acabando la fuerza, nunca va a ver una persona que honestamente le diga en que le puedo ayudar, sino que siempre todo es lo contrario entre más grande te olvidan y se pierden la fuerzas. [The older person starts to loss their strength, he will never see a person who honestly tells him what I can help him with, but everything is always the opposite the older you get, they forget you and you lose your strength] (Felipe).*

Simón shared a similar sentiment around how at some point people begin to see and treat elders differently,

*...Y que me siga dando más ánimo. Pues no mucho, no quiero llegar a 100 anos, porque después ya lo miran a uno en silla de ruedas o algo y ya ni caso le hacen y luego hay un parí o lo que sea y dicen 'no para que lo llevamos es que luego se va a querer venir mejor que se quede.' [...And may he continue to encourage me (God). Well, not much, I don't want to reach 100 years, because then they look at you in a wheelchair or something and they don't even pay attention to you and then there's a*

*party or whatever and they say don't take him, he's going to want to come back soon]*  
(Simón).

As some spoke about losing strength, hope, Guillermina reflected on why this process occurs,

*Entrevistadora: ¿Por qué cree usted que se ha ido la alegría? Guillermina: ha pues por la viejes, ya vez que todo cambia yo ya no, ya la juventud ya paso. No, para uno ya no, ya no ay y luego que perdí mi esposo ya vez. [Interviewer: Why do you think the joy is gone? Guillermina: Well, because of old age. You see, everything changes, I no longer...youth has already passed. No longer for me - especially after I lost my husband]* (Guillermina).

Joaquín went on to share despite challenged around aging one should have a good attitude in life, “*Yo digo que, dicen una buena actitud, buena actitud mental, aunque este uno triste, de tratar de sonreírle a la vida. Ay un dicho que dice, al mal tiempo hacer le buena cara.*” [I say that, they say a good attitude, good mental attitude, even if sad, one must try to smile at life... there is a saying, to bad weather one must make a good face]. Simón also stated how one must stay motivated and move forward, “*De echarle ganas y salir adelante*” [To look forward to it and push forward”].

Another subtheme that emerged among some participants was their reflection around *La Vida no es para Siempre* [Life is Not Forever]. Some participants expressed remarks around the acceptance that they will not always be here. For example, Antonia shared, “*Yo les digo que no voy estar aquí siempre.*” [“I tell them I'm not going to be here forever”]. Guillermina stated, “*Nadie está aquí por siempre.*” [“No one is here forever”], Joaquín stated, “*La muerte es natural – tiene que pasar.*” [“Death is natural – it has to happen”], and Simón corroborated, “*Pues le digo envejecer y morir es parte de la vida.*” [“Well, I tell

*you growing old and dying is part of life"]*. Joaquin also described how illness, suffering, happiness, and death are part of life,

*Es como la enfermedad que no la aceptan, sin embargo, la enfermedad llega... el sufrimiento, la muerte, va a llegar, tiene que ser .... Es parte de la vida ... ay sufrimientos, penas, alegrías, guerras de todo ... pandemias yo nunca hasta aquí viene saber de pandemias. [It is like the disease that they do not accept, however, the disease comes... Suffering, death, are going to come, it has to be.... It's part of life... sufferings, sorrows, happiness, wars everything... Pandemics, I never knew about pandemics until here] (Joaquín).*

Felipe further expressed how one only has one life, *“Uno debe de apreciar la vida, porque la vida no más tiene una vez, y ya no tiene otra vida.”* [*“One must cherish life, because life only happens once, and has no other life”*], He also shared, *“Para todo ay mañana, menos para la muerte.”* [*“For everything there is a tomorrow, except for death”*].

Rafaela also stated how her wish is to never die but that she knows she needs to accept it will happen, *“Algún día le digo me voy, yo nunca me quisiera morir, pero va a llegar un día y me voy a tener que ir.”* [*“Someday I will leave, I would never want to die, but one day I'm going to and I'm going to have to go”*].

Guillermina further referenced how life is like a book of life, she shared, *“Entrevistadora: ¿Y el tener 75 años que le enseñaron sobre ese libro de la vida? Guillermina: Que todo, todas las cosas en la vida que vemos, muchas experiencias a veces bien y a veces mal y así va. Tienes que saber, la vida tiene altas y bajas. Y así como un libro tiene principio, también tiene final”* [Interviewer: What did being 75 years old teach you about that book of life? Guillermina: That everything, all the things in life that we see, many



experiences sometimes good and sometimes bad and so it goes. You have to know, life has ups and downs. And just like a book has a beginning, it also has an ending] (Guillermina).

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation study was to contribute to the existing literature on subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* [older Mexicans]. Through the exploration of subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing seven self-identified *Mexicanos nacidos en México* [Mexican-born] over the age of 66–years-old and with over 40 years of living in the U.S., shared their experiences and reflections around aging and wellbeing. Central to their subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing were their cultural values and practices within the context of recalling their personal histories and their current relationships with God, family, and friends. Interestingly, all seven participants indicated that their practices of meaning making were informed by their past lived experiences. All shared experiences of growing up in Mexico and salient life events that informed their satisfaction with life. Many of the participants identified feelings that emerged in the process of recounting their lived experiences. Psychological research on the subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among ethnic specific older Latinx communities is limited (e.g., Beyene et al., 2002; Choi et al., 2021; Hilton et al., 2012; Laditka et al., 2009; Menkin et al., 2017; Reyes Uribe, 2015).

The present study attempted to expand on the limited research on subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among *Mexicanos* residing in the U.S. Participants discussed aging as a part of life, and remembrance of personal histories, religiosity, intergenerational experience of family, and *convivir* [to coexist] as factors that informed their relationship with aging, providing several contributions to the understanding of aging and wellbeing among older Mexican born individuals living in the U.S. This chapter will

contextualize the findings of this study in the context of the research questions and literature from previous research on subjective experiences of aging among older Latinx communities.

A unique contribution of this study includes the utilization of best practices when conducting research in participants preferred language. Within this study, all interviews, transcription of interviews, analysis, and results were conducted in Spanish. Maintaining the origin of language by which participants shared their experiences offered a direct lens by which *Mexicanos en la tercera edad* engage in meaning making among their subjective experiences of aging. The use of Spanish language during data collection and analysis contributed to the co-creation of meaning among the researcher and the participants. Yeh & Inman (2007) emphasize language is a salient component of culture that transmits beliefs, traditions, perceptions, emotions, and identity (Santiago-River & Altarriba, 2002). Given the importance of interpretation in qualitative research, language, and the forms of communications during data collection become important factors within data analysis (Yeh & Inman (2007). Within this study the co-creation of meaning, interpretation, and analysis was informed by the understanding of gestures, emotions, and changes in tone of voice as the researcher and participants all identified Spanish to be their native language.

### **Subjective Experiences of Aging Among *Mexicanos***

Subjective experiences of aging were informed by cultural beliefs and contextual factors. The beliefs and perspectives through which participants reported understanding their process of aging were in part informed by their cultural practices, values, upbringing in their respective *ranchos/pueblos* [ranches/villages], and immigration experience. Cultural beliefs such as aging being a natural progression of life, nostalgia, remembrance, and extending respect to older adults informed participants' relationship with self. Contextual factors

informing their subjective experiences of aging included, growing up in Mexico and their immigration experiences. All participants referenced experiences of migrating to the U.S., which appeared to be a salient and integral piece in how they reflected on their relationship with aging.

*Aging as part of life.* A finding of this study was participants acceptance of the organic nature of aging. Participants made sense of becoming older through the process of learning to accept the shifts in life that arise through the aging process. In this group of participants, they spoke about the tension around a lifetime of working and the natural shift around retirement and learning how to enjoy it. As well as their evolving relationships with attending to their health conditions. Aging as part of life includes the recognition that it can be challenging, while also a process of learning to accept the changes that come with aging. Literature examining older Latinx individuals' relationship with aging corroborates that older Latinx typically see aging as a natural and normal process (Hilton et al., 2012; Laditka et al., 2009; Roberts et al., 2015).

Participants witnessing others place value and care among older adults in their home country informed their own relationship with aging. The modeling of respect and care among older adults contributed to participants' ability to accept their aging processes despite challenges and at times discomfort. Acceptance of aging was informed by recollections of how participants were taught to view older people while growing up in Mexico: aging is part of life. The majority of participants shared that seeing/interacting with older people when they were young was understood as seeing someone who held wisdom, someone who had to be respected, and someone who needed to be taken care of but also listened to. These

findings corroborate how a communities' perceptions of aging have a direct impact on how older adults experience aging (Iversen et al., 2009).

The value of *respetar* [to respect] informed how participants learned to engage with older adults in their respective communities. The modeling of *respetar* older people occurred through the forms in which individuals spoke to and about older adults, and the gestures they engaged in. These findings are consistent across literature suggesting that among Latinx communities, older people are highly valued and respected (Gonzales et al., 2016; Medina et al., 2014; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1988; Todorova et al., 2014). Specifically, some participants spoke about the care they provided for their aging parents and the ways their aging parents spoke about the acceptance of death. While aging was not always talked about in their communities directly, they expressed their interactions from family and community and taught them about the importance of listening, caring, and respecting older family and community members. The reciprocity of extending respect when they interacted with older adults, and the receiving of respect as now older adults was an experience that comforted participants and informed their processes of acceptance.

The emergence of various emotions through the aging process was a unique finding of this study. As participants reflected on their relationship with aging, they shared that emotions such as sadness, happiness, pain, and suffering were part of the “contract of life.” While acceptance came with challenges (e.g., not wanting to age, not wanting to die) they identified the importance of learning to welcome changes in their life. Among this group of participants, it appeared that seeing aging as a part of life allowed them to experience the evolution of life and the emergence of various emotions.

*Nostalgia and Remembrance of the Past.* A unique result from this study was the process by which participants reflected on their subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing. This reflective process was surrounded by moments of nostalgia and remembrance of the past. “*En mi rancho*” [“In my ranch”], “*Cuando yo era chica/o*” [“When I was young”], “*Yo recuerdo*” [“I remember”], “*En aquel tiempo*” [“In those times”] were common phrases by which participants engaged in meaning making around their relationship with aging and wellbeing. Across participants, they recalled stories, memories, and shared experiences from their childhood/adolescence and adulthood that were significant in their life trajectories. As participants engaged in a process of reflecting and recalling, they made sense of their current experience as older *Mexicanos* through their past histories. Moments of returning to their home countries, loved ones, and past experiences were part of the process by which participants were able to reflect on their aging experience. Nostalgia over the past was accompanied by a wide range of feelings that invoked happiness, longing, suffering, and content. Across literature nostalgia has been commonly linked to positive markers of health such as meaning in life, self-esteem, and optimism (e.g., Fleury et al., 2022; Kersten et al., 2022).

This finding of nostalgia and remembrance of the past also suggests the value of storytelling among older *Mexicanos*. As they recalled past experiences and histories in their home country, they also expressed joy around sharing with the researcher. For some, they reported feeling a sense of positivity as they retold their stories. Through their recollection of stories aspects of their identity, values, and lived experiences were disclosed. This is consistent with literature findings around stories allowing for the promotion of cultural norms, identity, and meaning making (Charon et al., 2004; Hay et al., 2010).

For this group of participants, the remembrance of the past was specifically centered around their experiences in their home country (Mexico). While all had over 40 years of residing in the U.S., the recalling of “home” was an aspect that was a salient practice that informed their sense of wellbeing. The remembrance of their home country appeared to provide a sense of calmness and satisfaction with life. This is consistent with literature findings on remembrance therapy demonstrating clinically significant improvement among older adults in psychotherapy (Bohlmeijer et al., 2003; Pinguart & Forstmeier, 2012; Watt & Cappeliez, 2000).

*Immigrating to the U.S.* Another finding of the study included the significant lived experience of immigrating to the U.S. The decision to immigrate to a new country, leaving family and home, and experiences of a new culture was referenced across all participants. Within their reflections, they identified significant moments when they were young adults that led to them immigrating (e.g., lack of food, aging parents, limited work). Immigrating was described as both a hardship and an opportunity. In this process they identified fear, hope, and uncertainty. Given the mental, emotional, physical nuances of leaving one’s home country (Sangalang et al., 2019), it made sense all participants identified this moment in their life as one that was central. Aging and wellbeing were in turn understood through the remembrance of their upbringing in Mexico, the need to immigrate, and the legacy they aspire to leave. All these factors appeared to be interconnected components that informed their subjective experience of aging. These findings are consistent with literature on aging processes being informed by individuals immigration experiences (age of migration, level of acculturation; Mehrotra & Wagner, 2018).

Arriving in a country with work opportunities was an aspect that participants found value in. They expressed feeling content around the years they spent being active individuals in the workforce. The value of working hard, desire to *trabajar* [work], and strength to work were meaningful aspects of themselves that participants referenced. Most participants expressed gratitude around the opportunity they had in becoming U.S residents/citizens and having access to healthcare. Some shared access to healthcare was in part informed by their years of working in this country. For these participants, their aging experiences were encompassed by feelings of satisfaction around their immigration status, years of work, and access to healthcare. Access to healthcare was an aspect they greatly valued as some participants referenced it was due to their medical care that they were able to stay alive. Staying in the U.S. through their aging years was in part informed by their experiences of feeling supported by their family, health care system, and sense of community. These findings differed from other literature indicating that older Latinx who immigrated at a young age aspired to retire back in Mexico (Vega & Hirschman, 2019).

### **Cultural Practices that inform Subjective Experiences of Aging and Wellbeing**

How cultural practices inform participants' subjective experience of aging and wellbeing was a central question to this study. For all participants their relationship with God, family, and friends informed how they made sense of their experiences of aging and wellbeing. Specifically, participants in this study shared the nuanced and reciprocal processes through which they experienced connection with a higher power, family, and friends. .

*Religion.* Religious practices seemed to be a salient form for how participants made sense of the aging process. Having a strong religious connection with God was a salient cultural practice that informed participants aging and wellbeing. Their focus on prayer,



engaging with the rosary, church groups, attending mass, gratitude, and acceptance were components of their day-to-day religious practices. Several studies have discussed the importance of religion in adjusting to aging (Beyene et al., 2002; Hilton et al., 2012; Laditka et al., 2009; Romo et al., 2013).

For this group of participants having a religious practice and relationship with God augmented their positive perspectives and satisfaction with life. While many of the participants shared challenges with shifts in their health and relationships, all expressed gratitude towards God for allowing them to reach this stage of life despite health conditions, loss of loved ones, and suffering. Believing in a higher power appeared to provide a sense of endurance and enjoyment with the aging process among participants. This finding was consistent with religion being associated with successful aging among older individuals (e.g., Hilton & Child, 2014; McFadden, 1995; Reyes Uribe, 2015). Literature also supports successful aging involves older individuals integrating mechanisms and spiritual resources that in turn compensate for physical limitations and environmental challenges (Young et al., 2009).

In addition, all participants referenced their relationship with God was a way through which they were able to endure challenges in their immigration process and adjustment to a new country. Some participants referenced their experiences crossing the border, while others shared challenges integrating in a country with a different language and experiences of racism. For all, religion served as a protective factor through which they have been able to overcome challenges and changes in life. Religion also symbolized their connection to home, serving as a preservation of their cultural values and ethnic identity as *Mexicanos*. These findings are consistent with literature around religion helping aid the stress-coping process of

migration, as well as facilitating the preservation of cultural values and ethnic identity (Moreno et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020).

Further, some participants spoke about how their focus at this stage of life (e.g., being older *Mexicanos*) entailed letting go of materialistic values and shifting their focus onto acceptance of life, gratitude, and God. It appears that for some participants, their relationship with God was a form of accepting death, an aspect that many described as a “natural process.” This finding is similar to that of a study that explored perceptions of successful aging among diverse elders with late-life disability in which shifting priorities appeared to be a way participants shifted focus away from their disability and onto aspects of their life that they viewed as successful (Romo et al., 2013).

Maternal figures played a salient role in participants' relationship with religious practices. Many of the participants shared that their mother, grandmother, or maternal caregiver taught them to pray, attend church, and engage in a practice of gratitude; their maternal caregivers modeled and instilled the value of having a devotion to God. While there is limited literature on the role and impact maternal caregivers have on Latinx individuals' relationship with religion, Latina mothers do serve as a salient agent of cultural transmission and ethnic socialization (Calderon-Tena et al., 2011; Gonzáles et al., 2006; Knight et al., 1993; Knight et al., 2011). It appears that for this group of older *Mexicanos en la tercera edad*, their maternal caregiver figures played an integral part in their ongoing faith and religious practices. Overall, religiosity, as taught by their mothers, was a salient value that seemed to be reinforced by the aging process for these participants.

*Intergenerational Experience of Family.* Another finding of this study was the intergenerational perspective by which participants spoke about family. Family was an

essential component by which all participants spoke about their experiences of living and wellbeing. The form by which participants spoke about their value of *familismo* extended beyond the present. As participants spoke about family feelings of nostalgia emerged as they shared aspects of their relationships with their parents and gratification about the ways they have raised their adult children. Participants reflected on the love and care they each had for their caregivers and the forms in which their relationships with them informed their relationships with their children and for some, their grandchildren. Family was referenced and remembered through the past, present, and future; participants integrated an intergenerational aspect of the role of family and highlighted how family transcended beyond the immediate. Family not only informed their wellbeing but also served as a mechanism by which they remembered, practiced, and passed on their cultural roots.

Distinctively, participants spoke about family through a generational and reciprocal process of care. *Familismo* was understood beyond a one-directional vantage point but rather through a dynamic and complex system of care. This finding is consistent with research in the field of anthropology where *familismo* has been understood as a cultural ideal that encompasses many complexities (Smith-Morris et al., 2013). Findings indicate *familismo* not only is expressed through the care and centering of others but also through nostalgia of home and the past. Smith-Morris et al. (2013) described *familismo* as, “family [was] simultaneously a reason to go, a reason to stay, and the reason to return” (p. 51).

*Familismo* was shared through their narratives of family that included proximity, distance, longing, and appreciation of deceased and current family members. All participants lived in multigenerational homes and expressed having a physical closeness to family. Of those participants that had adult children, they reported the value they instilled onto their

children around care, respect, and humility. This study offered a glimpse around how older *Mexicanos* recall their own upbringing and familial relationship that in turn informed their relationship with their now adult children. Literature examining predictors of wellbeing among Latinx communities corroborates family as a strong predictor of wellbeing (Diaz & Bui, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2007).

Notably, all participants recalled their home and family in Mexico. Memories of their relationships with their parents/caregivers and practices/values/attitudes surfaced. They described how those teachings served as a blueprint for how they learned to be in relationship with themselves and with their adult children. Such practices and values included respect, care, humility, food, walking, and music. The integration of cultural practices and values within their day-to-day and with their family served as a vessel for how participants practiced, related, and engaged with their cultural roots and family members. Literature findings support consumption and preparation of food, in addition to movement and music are integral ways immigrant communities cope with change (e.g., Cooks, 2008; Weller & Turkon, 2015).

Preparing and eating traditional food was a cultural practice that was referenced across participants. For many, eating traditional foods symbolized them eating well and nurturing themselves with the foods that helped their relatives live a long life. For others, the passing of recipes and traditional foods was an aspect in how they engaged in relationships with their adult children. Literature corroborates the significant experience food offers by enabling the remembering of memories, as well as acts of nostalgia that allows one to recall family, friends, community, and home (Weller & Turkon; 2015), it is also suggested

consuming food associated with individuals' home country can help individuals maintain connection with their home (Cooks, 2008).

Another aspect of significant pride among this group of aging adults was their feelings of satisfaction around their adult children and grandchildren having access to opportunities in the U.S. Ability to seek out an education and non-labor-intensive working opportunities were aspects that instilled joy for them. Access to greater opportunities afforded their family new possibilities that informed their sense of purpose in life.

Last, participants spoke about the importance of respecting their adult children and accepting the forms of care and limitations that exist among their relationships with their children. Having a strong relationship with their adult children was important to them. For this group of participants, they shared spending time with their adult children, respecting their decisions, and feeling cared for by them were factors that informed their satisfaction in life. Among these aging *Mexicanos*, *family* importance seemed to transcend beyond a one-dimensional lens of family to a more nuanced, in-depth, and dynamic system of care and reciprocity.

*Convivir*. Interconnectedness was a salient component of how participants found meaning in their process of aging. Being interconnected with others extended beyond family. Majority of participants shared a significant value around having friendships and people whether through church groups, lifetime friends, or community members that offered support. They shared the importance of having people who would listen and who they felt cared for. Feeling connected to others and having a network of people to share with, lean on, and be a part of reinforced a sense of wellbeing and satisfaction with life. This finding is consistent with studies underscoring the value and importance of social support and

interconnectedness (Beyene et al., 2002; Hernandez et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2019; Pierda et al., 2022; Rojas Perez et al., 2022). Within this study some participants expressed joy and fulfillment around having friends who check-in on them, while others expressed feelings of sadness as they have lost friends due to death. Additionally, this finding of *convivir* highlights how notions of wellbeing among older *Mexicanos* extended beyond notions of self. For all participants, they expressed their wellbeing was directly informed by their relationship with family, friends, and God.

### **Delimitations**

This study provided a unique perspective on the subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among older Mexican-born individuals living in the U.S. However, delimitations (e.g., parameters set in a research study, inform what to include and what to exclude; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019) of this study emphasize the need for more research examining ethnic specific experiences of aging and wellbeing in the psychological literature. Results of a qualitative study are meant to offer an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon but are not intended to be generalizable or representative of an entire community's experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While the purpose of this study was to gather an understanding of the subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among older *Mexicanos*, it should be noted that participants were self-selected and needed to meet a particular set of criteria (i.e., immigrated from Mexico to the U.S, had a minimum of 20 years living in the U.S., self-identified as Mexican/ Mexican American/ Chicana/o, resided in California, were 65 years or older). Thus, participants who were born in the U.S., had less than 20 years living in the U.S., resided in a different state than California, or were younger than 65 years may have offered different insights into their experiences of aging and wellbeing. It is important

that research continues to explore the experiences of older Latinx individuals through an ethnic specific and immigration status lens as research suggests differences among reported wellbeing and mental health.

### **Limitations**

In addition, this study also included limitations (e.g., the systematic bias of a research study that was not or could not control might have affected the results; Price & Murnan, 2004). All interviews were conducted during an ongoing pandemic (i.e., Covid) that has disproportionately affected minoritized and older community members (Piedra et al., 2022). While some participants shared their experiences living through a pandemic indirectly, the lack of direct questioning in the study about the pandemic effects may have failed to capture an experience that may have directly informed participants' process of meaning making and understanding. Further understanding around the impact of living through a pandemic as older *Mexicanos* and Latinx is warranted, particularly gathering a better understanding of resilience factors that promote wellbeing during a time of uncertainty.

Another limitation of the study was around member-checks. All participants were contacted for member-checks upon completion of analysis, however of the seven participants that were re-contacted only four responded, of which only three responded they were available for member-checks. Distinctively, all three participants reported they trusted the researchers process of analysis and briefly skimmed the handout of themes. All three participants expressed excitement around the researcher soon earning her doctorate degree and shared they trusted the researchers process of analysis. This process was also similar during the collection of data where all participants expressed their excitement, support, and encouragement for the researcher pursuing a doctoral degree. Among this group of

participants, the researcher was seen as an “expert,” perhaps because of her inside/outsider positionality, as well as values of *apoyo* [support] and *orgullo* [pride] might have informed how participants engaged with the researcher. Inviting participants to share their insights and reactions to the results may require a different approach than member-checks. Cultural values of *apoyo*, *orgullo*, and *respeto* may have created barriers around older participants sharing their direct feedback.

### **Future Directions**

This study’s findings and extant research suggest subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing may differ across Latinx cultures (Gonzalez et al., 2016; Hilton et al., 2012; Todorova et al., 2015). Although the use of Smith et al.’s (2021) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis allowed for in-depth analysis of subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing, future studies would benefit from utilizing methodology that directly aligns with values of Latinx communities (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Particularly, centering methodologies that invite and explore the use of *cuentos*, *testimonios*, *dichos* [stories, testimonies, words of wisdom]. Such use of methodologies could offer more insight on the diversity of experiences of aging and wellbeing among older Latinx communities.

Another important future direction includes the use of Community-based participatory research. As social connectedness is an integral component of wellbeing among older Latinx, centering research that is informed and led by older Latinx members may better capture experiences of aging and wellbeing. Using approaches that help augment cultural knowledge of communities is imperative in being able to conduct research that better helps understand experiences of communities’ and that is originated and conducted with community members. By using principles of community-based participatory research, future



studies could develop a model that helps understand principles and cultural practices that inform older *Mexicanos'* *subjective* experiences of aging and wellbeing.

Future directions also include the continued understanding of wellbeing and aging through a culturally informed lens, that is exploring meaning making processes of wellbeing across ethnic groups and generational understandings of wellbeing. While all participants shared insights around practices that inform their well-being and processes of aging, they also referenced differences between younger generations. Future research exploring the generational difference of wellbeing and aging may better help develop psychological resources that support and aid older Latinx. For example, the specific role of religion and spirituality on the experiences of aging and wellbeing among older Latinx is an important area of further study. Historically religion and spirituality have been used interchangeably, however recent studies suggest distinctive differences. Particularly, less is known about the generational differences that exist among religion and spirituality and the direct forms in how they aid in nuanced processes of aging among older Latinx.

In addition, future studies exploring within-group differences that exist among aging *Mexicanos* through an intersectional lens are needed to gather a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of aging and wellbeing. Particularly, intersectionality research focusing on the unique experiences of Latinx communities is limited (Torres et al., 2018). Intersectionality research refers to the evaluation of individual, structural or group level factors when examining identities and social processes among communities. For example, Torres et al., (2018) suggest research should continue to consider the intersection of identities (e.g., nativity, gender, documentation status, socioeconomic class), along with related social

processes (e.g., immigration/acculturative stress, ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination, and/or social class bias).

Further, continued research examining the role of family from an intergenerational lens is important. Across literature exploring wellbeing and aging, family is a salient factor that informs wellbeing and successful aging (Fuller-Iglesias, & Antonucci, 2016; Gonzalez et al., 2106; Guo et al., 2015; Treas, 2008). However, limited research has explored how aging Latinx individuals perceive and view their familial relationships. Across all participants in this study, they referenced various family systems (e.g., relationship with deceased parents, adult children, grandchildren) and the significance they played in their wellbeing and subjective experiences of aging. Future research examining generational forms of family systems evolving across Latinx communities is needed.

The specific role mother's/maternal figures play in individuals' relationship with religiosity and cultural practices is another critical area of further study. Although there is a plethora of research that supports the important role family plays in individual ethnic and cultural identity (e.g., Knight, et al., 1993; Perez-Brena et al., 2015; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), less is known about the role of the mother among Latinx communities. Particularly, the role of the mother/maternal figures among aging Latinx individuals.

Finally, continued exploration around the role of social connectedness among aging Latinx communities is needed. The values of *convivir*, *compartir*, y *amistades* [coexist, sharing, and friendships] were a salient finding in this research study. Future research investigating how a sense of belonging among aging Latinx individuals is needed to gather a better understanding of the significance and role friendships among older Latinx. More

research is needed around what informs social connectedness and friendship among older Latinx communities.

### **Implications for Counseling Psychologists**

This study was informed by the values of diversity, social justice, strengths-based, holistic, and contextual approach of Counseling Psychology and has many implications. Using an exploratory, qualitative approach, this study offered a unique perspective around the understanding of subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing among older Mexican-born individuals living in California. Gathering insight to the ongoing process of aging among *Mexicanos* and factors that support their wellbeing offered an opportunity for counseling psychologists to engage in ongoing research, practice, teaching, and advocacy in supporting aging communities. Findings highlight the importance for counseling psychologists to continue to contextualize experiences through an intersectional lens of social identities, social processes, and social determinants of aging and wellbeing.

This study highlights the nuanced and complex process of understanding familial experiences and familial systems that informed older *Mexicanos'* experience of aging and wellbeing. There is a need for counseling psychologists to continue exploring and understanding the value of *familismo* in research and practice through a nuanced, iterative, and ongoing process. The construct of *familismo* has become quite generalized, but this study highlights the depth of *familismo* as individuals age. It is important that in providing mental health services and conducting research among Latinx communities there is an approach towards understanding the role of *familismo* beyond a generalized lens. Open-ended questions and qualitative inquiries may provide a greater understanding of the value of *familismo* among aging individuals.

Counseling psychologists may implement culturally specific approaches of wellbeing that align with older *Mexicanos* and provide an atmosphere of humility, understanding, and connectedness. For example, this study highlights the need for new conceptual frameworks of understanding wellbeing and aging among Mexican communities. Particularly, the study emphasized the significance of religiosity among aging *Mexicanos*. It is imperative that among counseling psychologists the role of religion and spirituality is considered as a predictor of successful aging and wellbeing among Mexican-born older individuals.

In providing mental health services to aging populations, assessment of immigration experience and status, access to resources, health, and value of family must be considered. Values of humility, respect, and care should be centered when working with aging *Mexicanos* as it aligns with their reported values of life. Importantly, counseling psychologists should invite clients to explore and process their own experiences of family, resilience, and aging.

In addition, advocacy for more mental health services for aging *Mexicanos* is needed. It is suggested for advocacy to be centered within the context of social connectedness and religiosity. Perhaps, an avenue for the continued advocacy of mental health support among aging *Mexicanos* is through groups as it promotes being in relationship with others.

Additionally, with the importance of collectivism and harmonious relationships in wellbeing for older *Mexicanos*, counseling psychologists may benefit from developing programming that focuses on creating an atmosphere of *convivencia* [harmonious connectedness] where individuals are provided with the opportunity to learn from each other and with each other. This could include development of wellness workshops in which recounting, retelling, and support are conceptualized from a systems approach (e.g., family,

friends, relationships, interconnectedness) rather than individually. Research has revealed that cultural values related to interpersonal relationships play an integral role when providing mental health services to Latinx individuals (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2016).

It is recommended that further qualitative and mixed methods research examines the experiences of aging through a holistic and contextual approach, that is developing research studies that account for the role of intersectionality, social identities, and social processes. Additionally, recommendations for conducting culturally competent research within Latinx populations (Delgado et al., 2018; Fernandez, 2020; Ojeda et al., 2011) is critical. Specifically, qualitative and mixed method methodologies provide an opportunity to address and center strength-based research that addresses environmental and contextual factors (Helms, 1989). Qualitative methodologies such as participatory action research through the praxis of *acompañamiento* can lead to the liberation, decolonization, healing, and social justice of minoritized communities (Fernandez, 2020). To utilize *acompañamiento* is to “center the praxis *of* and *for* liberation oriented toward transformative justice” (Fernandez, 2020, p. 91).

Lastly, as social connectedness and *familismo* were central findings that inform subjective experiences of aging as well as older *Mexicanos* wellbeing, it is imperative that community members are integrated and considered as part of the care and support of aging Latinx. This can include integration of family within the context of mental health services as well as ongoing community efforts to provide workshops and training around how to best support the aging Latinx population.

## Conclusion

The Latinx population in the U.S. is one of the fastest growing aging communities. In 2019, older Latinx who were 65 years represented about 9% of the older population. This percentage is projected to increase to 21% by 2060 (Administration for Community Living, 2022). Given that in 2019, there were 4,638,966 Hispanics age 65 and older and 509,096 age 85 and older (Administration for Community Living, 2022), it is important that we continue to explore, understand, and identify the needs of the aging Latinx community. Specifically, as older minoritized individuals are at higher risk of chronic illness (Beyene et al., 2002), diabetes, dementia (Mehta & Yeo, 2017), depression (Areán et al. 2005; Chavez-Korell et al.; 2012; Falcon & Tucker, 2000; Gonzalez et al., 2001), and anxiety (Negroni-Rodriguez and Bok, 2004; Yan et al., 2001), there is a need for research to explore the aging population's mechanism of resilience, wellbeing, and satisfaction with life through a cultural informed lens. The present study contributes to the existing literature on the subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing for Mexican-born individuals through an in-depth phenomenological examination of the lived experiences and meaning-making of seven *Mexicanos* over the age of 65 years old and with over 40 years of living in the U.S.

This study offered a glimpse at the nuanced and dynamic process of aging and wellbeing. Findings revealed subjective experiences of aging must be understood through the life course perspective in which one's cultural upbringing, contextual factors, and communities' perspective of aging inform how one experiences and understands the aging process. Aging was contextualized beyond a lens of "good" or "bad" but more so through a dynamic process of meaning making across life experiences that help one live and experience aging. For this group of participants, moments of returning to their home countries, loved

ones, and past experiences through nostalgia and remembrance were part of the process of how participants were able to reflect on their aging experience. The study also offered insights to processes of acceptance, cultural practices, and significant life encounters that informed participants experiences of aging. Approaching the understanding of aging and wellbeing through a cultural lens has been underutilized, particularly regarding aging and wellbeing through a collectivist and culturally centered lens. Further work is still needed in delineating how cultural values, practices, and ritual inform one's psychological wellbeing. There is a need for future research to examine the role of culture among aging Latinx wellbeing and experience of aging. It is important that we continue to explore the individual, intersectional, familial, and societal impacts of aging, so that we may better develop and practice approaches that support aging individuals.

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## APPENDIX A

### RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

#### **Guion de reclutamiento para posibles participantes**

##### **Correo electrónico y solicitud personal**

Hola, usted está siendo invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación que explora las experiencias de las personas mexicanas mayores que emigraron a los Estados Unidos y residen en California. El propósito de este estudio es reunir una comprensión profunda de cómo las prácticas culturales informan sus experiencias subjetivas de envejecimiento y bienestar. Si está interesado en participar, puede comunicarse con Verónica Franco, la investigadora principal para programar una breve evaluación de elegibilidad y revisar el formulario de consentimiento que debe tomara alrededor de 20 a 30 minutos. Si usted es elegible para participar, será entrevistado durante aproximadamente 90 a 120 minutos. Esto consistirá en que complete un cuestionario demográfico (es decir, edad, género, idioma, ocupación), responda preguntas abiertas sobre experiencias de envejecimiento subjetivo y bienestar con respecto a las prácticas culturales, y se le pedirá que comparta una foto que sea representativa de su patrimonio cultural y bienestar como *mexicano / a / x*.

Los criterios para la participación incluirán: 1) inmigraron de México, 2) tiene un minio de 20 anos viviendo en los Estados Unidos, 3) se autoidentifica como mexicana/o; mexicoamericana/o; chicana/o/ x, 4) residen en California y 5) tienen 65 años o más.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o tiene interés en participar, comuníquese con Verónica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu).

##### **Sitio Web/Redes sociales**

¡Hola! Usted está siendo invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación que explora las experiencias de las personas mexicanas mayores que emigraron a los Estados Unidos y residen en California. El propósito de este estudio es reunir una comprensión profunda de cómo la cultura informa sus experiencias subjetivas de envejecimiento y bienestar.

Si tiene interés en participar, comuníquese con Verónica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu), ella le proporcionará más información sobre el estudio.



## **Recruitment script for potential participants**

### **Email and personal request**

Hello, you are being invited to participate in a research study that explores the experiences of elder Mexican individuals who immigrated to the U.S. and reside in California. The purpose of this study is to gather an in-depth understanding of how cultural practices informs your subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing. If you are interested in participating you can contact Veronica Franco, the lead researcher to schedule a brief screening of eligibility and review consent form that should take about 20 to 30 minutes. If you are eligible to participate you will be interviewed for approximately 90 – 120 minutes. This will consist of you filling out a demographic questionnaire (i.e., age, gender, language, occupation), answering open-ended question regarding experiences of subjective aging and wellbeing regarding cultural practices, and will be asked to share a photo that is representative of your cultural heritage and wellbeing as a *Mexicano/a/x*.

Criteria for participation will include: 1) immigrated from Mexico, 2) have lived in the U.S for a minimum of 20yrs, 3) self-identify as Mexican/Mexican American/Chicana/o/x, 4) reside in California, and 5) are 65 years or older.

If you have any questions or have an interest in participating, please contact Veronica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu).

### **Website/Social Media Outlets**

Hello! You are being invited to participate in a research study that explores the experiences of elder Mexican individuals who immigrated to the U.S. and reside in California. The purpose of this study is to gather an in-depth understanding of how culture informs your subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing.

If you have an interest in participating, please contact Veronica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu), she will provide you with more information about the study.

\*\*will attach flyer

## APPENDIX B

### SCREENING INSTRUMENT

#### **Instrumento de Detección**

*Gracias por su interés en participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que complete brevemente esta encuesta. Esto ayudará a informarnos si usted es elegible para participar en este estudio de investigación.*

**Edad:**

**Género:**

**Etnicidad:**

**País de origen:**

**Estado de origen:**

**Años viviendo en los Estados Unidos:**

**¿Está dispuesto a compartir una foto que represente su cultura y/o un momento de bienestar?**

---

*\*\*\*Si el participante es elegible para participar en el estudio de investigación, el investigador principal revisará el formulario de consentimiento y la entrevista semiestructurada programada.*

## Screening Instrument

*Thank you for your interest in participating in this study, you will be asked to briefly fill out this survey. This will help inform us if you are a good fit for the study.*

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Ethnicity:**

**Country of origin:**

**State of origin:**

**Years living in the US:**

**Are willing to share a photo that presents your culture and/or sense of being well?**

---

*\*\*\*If the participant is eligible for participation in the research study the lead researcher will review consent form and scheduled semi-structured interview.*

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

**Cuestionario Demográfico**

*Gracias por completar esta encuesta. No dedique mucho tiempo a cada pregunta, responda con su primera reacción. Por favor, asegúrese de contestar con la respuesta que considere más apropiada.*

**Edad:**

**Etnicidad:**

**Género:**

**Nacionalidad:**

**Orientación sexual:**

**Ocupación actual:**

**¿Tiene acceso a un seguro médico?**

Sí

No

**¿Cómo describirías su bienestar físico?**

**¿Quién vive en su hogar (hija/os, nieta/os, pareja)?**

**¿Cuántas personas viven en su hogar?**

**¿Cuál es su estado civil?**

Soltera/o

Divorciada/o

Casada/o

Separada/o

En relación comprometida

Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

Viuda/o

**¿Cuál es el grado académico más alto que ha obtenido usted?**

Algo de escuela  
secundaria

Alguna universidad  
(A.A. Grado)

Otro, especifique:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Título de escuela  
secundaria

Título de grado

Alguna universidad  
(sin título)

Grado de maestría

**¿Cuáles son sus ingresos financieros?**

1. Menos de \$10,000

2. \$10,000-\$19,000

3. \$20,000-\$29,000

4. \$30,000-\$39,000

5. \$40,000-\$49,000

6. \$50,000-\$59,000

7. \$60,000-\$69,000

8. 70,000 y más

## Demographic Questionnaire

*Thank you for filling out this survey. Do not spend a lot of time on each question – respond*

**Age:**

**Ethnicity:**

**Gender:**

**Nationality:**

**Sexual Orientation:**

**Current occupation:**

*with your first reaction. Please make sure to check the answer you feel is most appropriate.*

**Do you have access to healthcare?**

Yes

No

**How would you describe your physical wellness?**

**What is your household constellation (e.g., children, grandchildren, partner)?**

**How many people live in your household?**

**What is your marital status?**

Single

Divorced

Married

Separated

In Committed Relationship

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Widow

**What is the highest academic degree you have earned?**

Some high school

Some college (A.A. Degree)

Other, Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

High School Degree

Bachelor's Degree

Some college (no degree)

Master's Degree

**What is your financial income?**

Less than \$10,000

\$10,000-\$19,000

\$20,000-\$29,000

\$30,000-\$39,000

\$40,000-\$49,000

\$50,000-\$59,000

\$60,000-\$69,000

70,000 & Above

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### **Protocolo de entrevista**

*Gracias por aceptar ser entrevistado. Esto durará de 60 a 90 minutos y consistirá en 15 preguntas abiertas. Luego le pediré que comparta conmigo una foto y le haré algunas preguntas sobre el significado de la imagen.*

1. ¿Puede decirme lo que significa para usted tener [edad]?
  - a. ¿Cuáles cree que han sido las *lecciones* en esta etapa de la vida?
  - b. ¿Cuáles cree que han sido los *dones* en esta etapa de la vida?
  - c. ¿Cuáles cree que han sido los *retos* en esta etapa de la vida?
2. ¿Puede decirme qué aspectos de la vida disfruta más en esta etapa de la vida?
  - a. ¿Puede decirme qué aspectos de la vida han sido difíciles en esta etapa de la vida?
3. ¿Me puede contar sobre su cultura o sobre su experiencia cultural?
  - a. ¿Me puede contar sobre que escuchaba sobre el envejecimiento en su cultura?
  - b. ¿Cuáles son los mensajes que ha escuchado sobre el envejecimiento?
4. ¿Puede describir qué papel ha desempeñado su cultura en la forma en que ve el envejecimiento?
  - a. ¿Cómo han influido estos puntos de vista en su entendimiento del envejecimiento?
5. Entonces, hemos hablado de *la cultura y del envejecimiento*. ¿Puede reflexionar sobre lo que sus experiencias de envejecimiento significan para usted?
  - a. ¿Cómo se siente cuando reflexiona sobre su experiencia de envejecimiento?
  - b. ¿Cómo ve usted su relación con su edad?
6. ¿Puede describir cómo sabe cuándo usted está bien?
7. ¿Puede decirme con qué prácticas culturales creció que todavía practica?
  - a. ¿Cómo han influido estas prácticas culturales a su bienestar?
8. ¿Puede describir algunas prácticas culturales que la/lo han guiado a través de la vida?
  - a. ¿De dónde aprendió por primera vez estas prácticas?
  - b. ¿Qué significado tienen en su vida estas prácticas?

9. ¿Puede decirme cuáles son las formas en que continúa creciendo a medida que va envejeciendo?
  - a. ¿Cómo han influido estos momentos de crecimiento en su bienestar?
10. Entonces, hemos hablado de prácticas culturales y el bienestar. ¿Puede reflexionar sobre cómo sus prácticas culturales informan su bienestar?
  - a. ¿Cómo se sientes cuando reflexiona sobre su experiencia de prácticas culturales y bienestar?

### **Elicitación de foto**

*Gracias por traer una imagen que es representativa de su patrimonio cultural y bienestar.*

*Ahora le haré algunas preguntas con respecto a la imagen.*

11. ¿Puede decirme cuál es la historia detrás de esta foto?
  - a. ¿Puede contarme cómo esta foto representa parte de su patrimonio cultural?
  - b. ¿Puede contarme cómo esta foto representa un momento en su vida en el que se sentía/o bien?
  - c. ¿Qué emociones siente al ver y hablar sobre esta imagen?
12. ¿Puede decirme cuáles son las prácticas culturales que podrían estar conectadas a esta foto?
13. ¿Qué significado tiene esta imagen en su vida en este momento?
14. ¿Cómo se siente al reflexionar sobre esta foto?
15. ¿Hay algo que no pregunté, que piensa que puede ser importante agregar?

## Interview Protocol

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This will last 60 to 90 minutes and will consist of 15 open-ended questions. I will then ask you to share with me a photo and I will ask you some questions around the meaning and significance of the picture.*

1. Can you tell me what it means to you to be [age]?
  - a. What do you think have been the *lessons* and *gifts* at this stage of life?
  - b. What do you think have been the *gifts* at this stage of life?
  - c. What do you think have been the *challenges* at this stage of life?
2. Can you tell me what aspects of life you enjoy the most at this stage of life?
  - a. Can you tell me what aspects of life have been difficult at this stage of life?
3. Can you tell me about your culture?
  - a. Can you tell me how your culture views aging (*la tercera edad*)?
  - b. What are messages you have heard around aging (*la tercera edad*)?
4. Can you describe what role your culture has played in how you view aging?
  - a. How have these views informed your understand aging (*la tercera edad*)?
5. So, we have talked about *culture and la tercera edad*. Can you reflect on what your experiences of aging mean to you?
  - a. How does it feel when you reflect on your experience of aging? How do you view your relationship with your age?
6. Can you describe how you know when you are well?
7. Can you tell me what cultural practices you grew up with that you find yourself still practicing?
  - a. How have these cultural practices informed your sense of being well?
8. Can you describe some cultural practices that have guided you through life?
  - a. Where did you first learn these practices from?
  - b. What significance do they have in your life?
9. Can you tell me what are ways in which you continue to grow as you age?
  - a. How have these moments of growth influenced your wellbeing?
10. So, we have talked about culture practices and wellbeing. Can you reflect on how your cultural practices inform your wellbeing?



- a. How does it feel when you reflect on your experience of cultural practices and well-being?

**Photo Elicitation**

*Thank you for bringing a picture that is representative of your cultural heritage and wellbeing. I will now ask you some questions regarding the picture.*

11. Can you tell me what is the story behind this photo?
  - a. Can you tell me about how this photo represents part of your cultural heritage?
  - b. Can you tell me about how this photo represents a moment in your life in which you felt well?
    1. What emotions do you feel when you see and talk about this image?
12. Can you tell me what are cultural practices that might be connected to this photo that inform your sense of being well?
13. What meaning does this picture have in your life at this moment?
14. How does it feel to reflect on this photo?
15. Is there anything that I did not ask, that you think may be important to add?

## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT FORM

#### Formulario de consentimiento

Universidad de California, Santa Bárbara

### CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

#### **TÍTULO DEL ESTUDIO:**

*Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad: Explorando Experiencias Subjetivas de Envejecimiento y Bienestar con Respeto a la Cultura*

#### **NOMBRE DE LA INVESTIGADORA, DEPARTAMENTO Y CORREO ELECTRÓNICO:**

Veronica Franco, M.S., Doctoral Candidate  
Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology  
Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Correo electrónico: [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu)

#### **PROPÓSITO:**

Usted está siendo invitada/o a participar en un estudio de investigación que explora las experiencias de las personas mexicanas mayores que viven en los Estados Unidos. El propósito de este estudio es reunir una comprensión profunda de cómo la cultura informa sus experiencias subjetivas de envejecimiento y bienestar.

#### **PROCEDIMIENTOS:**

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Si decide participar, participará en un chequeo inicial para asegurarse que cumpla con los criterios de participación. La evaluación inicial tomará aproximadamente 20-30 minutos, seguida de una entrevista semiestructurada que tomará aproximadamente 60-90 minutos. Usted será entrevistada/o por la investigadora principal del estudio. Las entrevistas serán grabadas en video y audio para capturar la exactitud de la información que proporcione, dado su permiso y consentimiento para fines de análisis de datos. La participación será en las siguientes fases:

**Chequeo.** Durante esta reunión inicial, la investigadora se asegurará de que cumpla con los criterios de participación del estudio. Después de la elegibilidad, se explicará el propósito, el plan y el método del estudio junto con repasar a fondo el consentimiento informado. Esta sesión durará aproximadamente 20-30 minutos. Esta sesión servirá como una reunión introductoria y tiene la intención de que usted haga cualquier pregunta que tenga con respecto al estudio. Luego se le indicará que elija una imagen que presente su cultura y sensación de bienestar. Se le permite hacer preguntas sobre cuestiones éticas y cualquier pregunta relacionada con el estudio a lo largo de todo el proceso de investigación.

**Entrevistas individuales en profundidad.** Luego, la investigadora realizará una entrevista con usted donde se le harán preguntas relacionadas con su experiencia en *la tercera edad*, la cultura y el bienestar. Además, durante este tiempo se le pedirá que comparta su foto y se le harán preguntas relacionada a la foto y los temas del estudio. La entrevista durará aproximadamente 60-90 minutos y realizado en persona y / o a través de zoom con su elección de hora y ubicación.

Consulte el Formulario de consentimiento de fotografía adjunto para obtener más detalles. Tenga en cuenta que no tiene que participar en esta investigación, y puede detener su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización. Puede omitir la participación en partes del estudio de investigación y también puede omitir cualquier pregunta en la entrevista que prefiera no responder.

**RIESGOS:**

Este estudio no implica riesgos para su salud física. Los posibles riesgos asociados con su participación en este estudio son mínimos. Puede experimentar algunos sentimientos desagradables o puede recordar recuerdos difíciles de la vida al pedirle que piense en sus experiencias de vida. Si esto sucede, puede negarse a responder y / o omitir responder preguntas. Usted tiene el derecho de compartir sobre temas a su discreción. Si experimenta angustia, se le recomienda que informe la investigadora de inmediato. Si experimenta algún sentimiento incómodo, podemos proporcionarle recursos de referencia.

**BENEFICIOS:**

No hay un beneficio directo de su participación en este estudio, sin embargo, los posibles beneficios asociados con el estudio *incluyen obtener más conocimiento sobre usted misma/o y contribuir al conocimiento en torno a las experiencias de envejecimiento y bienestar entre los mexicanos en la tercera edad, un tema que ha sido poco estudiado con la población mexicana y en el campo de la psicología.*

**CONFIDENCIALIDAD:**

La información recopilada no estará vinculada a su identidad. Su nombre solo se utilizará en este formulario de consentimiento y se mantendrá separado de la información que proporcione. Su nombre no será utilizado en ningún documento escrito. Se asignará un nombre seudónimo para proteger su confidencialidad. La grabación (es decir, video, audio) y la foto (*ver más abajo*) se guardarán en un archivo digital protegido por contraseña en un sistema seguro. La grabación será transcrita y desidentificada. Solo los investigadores asociados con este estudio tendrán acceso a estos materiales. Todos los materiales se almacenarán en un gabinete cerrado y seguro en un laboratorio de investigación. Todos los datos (incluidas las grabaciones, fotos, transcripciones, hojas demográficas) se destruirán una vez finalizado el proyecto. Los datos serán desidentificados para su almacenamiento. Los datos no identificables pueden usarse en futuras investigaciones o compartirse con otros investigadores, sin su permiso adicional.

**DERECHO A RECHAZAR O RETIRAR:**

La participación es totalmente voluntaria. Puede cambiar de opinión acerca de participar en el estudio y decidir no continuar en ningún momento sin ninguna consecuencia negativa.

**INCENTIVO:**

Como muestra de mi agradecimiento, recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de \$ 35 de su elección después del proceso de entrevista.

**INTERÉS PERSONAL Y FINANCIERO DEL INVESTIGADOR PRINCIPAL EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN:**

Los investigadores de este estudio no tienen ningún interés financiero en esta investigación y no se beneficiarán monetariamente de este estudio.

**PREGUNTAS:**

*El estudio ha sido revisado y aprobado por la Junta de Revisión Institucional en el Universidad de California, Santa Bárbara (Protocolo #\_\_\_\_\_).*

*Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este proyecto de investigación o si cree que puede haber sido lesionado como resultado de su participación, comuníquese con Veronica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu) o asesora, Dra. Melissa Morgan en [mmorgan@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:mmorgan@education.ucsb.edu).*

*Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos y participación como sujeto de investigación, comuníquese con el Comité de Sujetos Humanos al (805) 893-3807 o [hsc@research.ucsb.edu](mailto:hsc@research.ucsb.edu). O escriba a la Universidad de California, Human Subjects Comité, Oficina de Investigación, Santa Bárbara, CA 93106-2050*

**CONSENTIMIENTO DEL PARTICIPANTE:**

*La participación en la investigación es voluntaria. Su firma a continuación indicará que ha decidido participar como participante de la investigación en el estudio descrito anteriormente. Se le entregará una copia firmada y fechada de este formulario para que la conserve.*

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Nombre del participante ( <i>Imprimir</i> )                          | Fecha |
| Firma de participante  | Fecha |
| Firma de la persona que lleva a cabo la discusión del consentimiento | Fecha |

**Consent Form**  
**University of California, Santa Barbara**  
**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

**TITLE OF THE STUDY:**

*Mexicanos en la Tercera Edad*: Exploring Subjective Experiences of Aging & Wellbeing with Regard to Culture

**INVESTIGATOR'S NAME, DEPARTMENT, & E-MAIL:**

Veronica Franco, M.S., Doctoral Candidate  
Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology  
Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Email: [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu)

**PURPOSE:**

You are being invited to participate in a research study that explores the experiences of elder Mexican individuals living in the U.S. The purpose of this study is to gather an in-depth understanding of how culture informs your subjective experiences of aging and wellbeing.

**PROCEDURES:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will participate in one initial participant screening. The initial participant screening will take approximately 20-30 minutes, followed by a scheduled semi-structured interview which will take approximately 60-90 minutes. You will be screened and interviewed by the lead investigator of the study. The interviews will be video, and audio recorded to capture the accuracy of the information you provide, given your permission and consent for data analysis purposes. The participation will be in the following phases:

**Screening.** During this initial meeting the investigator will ensure you meet criteria for the study. Following eligibility, the purpose, plan, and method of the study will be explained along with thoroughly going over informed consent. This session will take approximately 20-30 minutes. This session with the participant will serve as an introductory meeting and intend for you to ask any questions you have regarding the study. You will then be instructed to choose a picture that presents your culture and sense of wellbeing. You are allowed to ask questions about ethical issues and any questions pertaining to the study throughout the entire research process.

**Individual in-depth interviews.** The investigator will then conduct an interview with you where you will be asked questions related to your experience in *la tercera edad*, culture, and wellbeing. In addition, during this time you will be asked to discuss your photo related to the guided prompt questions and your experiences. The interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and conducted in-person and/or via zoom with your choosing of time and location.

Please see attached Photograph Consent Form for further details. Please be aware that you do not have to participate in this research, and you may stop your participation at any time

without penalty. You may skip participation in parts of the research study and you may also skip any question in the interview that you prefer not to answer.

**RISKS:**

This study involves no risks to your physical health. The possible risks associated with your participation in this study are minimal. You may experience some unpleasant feelings or might remember difficult life memories by being asked to think about your life experiences. Should this happen, you can decline to answer and/or skip answering questions. You have the right to disclose topics at your discretion. If you do experience distress, you are encouraged to let the investigator know immediately. If you experience any uncomfortable feelings, we can provide you with referral resources.

**BENEFITS:**

There is no direct benefit to your participation in this study, however, possible benefits associated with the study *include gaining more knowledge about yourself and contributing to knowledge around the experiences of aging and wellbeing among Mexicanos en la tercera edad, a topic that has been understudied with the Mexican population and in the field of psychology.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The information collected will not be linked to your identity. Your name will only be used in this consent form and will be kept separate from the information you provide. Your name will not be used in any written documents. A pseudonym name will be assigned to protect your confidentiality. The recording (i.e., video, audio) and photo (*see below*) will be kept in a password protected digital file in a secure system. The recording will be transcribed and de-identified. Only researchers associated with this study will have access to these materials. All materials will be stored in a locked and secure cabinet in a research lab. All data (including recordings, photos, transcriptions, demographic sheets) will be destroyed upon completion of the project. Data will be de-identified for storage. Unidentifiable data may be used in future research or shared with other researchers, without your additional permission.

**RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW:**

Participation is entirely voluntary. You may change your mind about participating in the study and decide to not continue at any time without any negative consequences.

**INCENTIVE:**

As a token of my appreciation, you will receive a \$35 gift card of your choice after the interview process.

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR'S PERSONAL & FINANCIAL INTEREST IN THE RESEARCH:**

The investigators in this study have no financial interest in this research and will not benefit monetarily from this study.

**QUESTIONS:**

*The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the*

University of California, Santa Barbara (Protocol #\_\_\_\_\_).

*If you have any questions about this research project or if you think you may have been injured as a result of your participation, please contact Veronica Franco, [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu) or advisor, Dr. Melissa Morgan at [mmorgan@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:mmorgan@education.ucsb.edu).*

*If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or [hsc@research.ucsb.edu](mailto:hsc@research.ucsb.edu). Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050*

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT:**

***Participation in research is voluntary. Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to participate as a research participant in the study described above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep.***

---

Participant's Name (*Print*) Date

---

Participants' Signature Date

---

Signature of person conducting consent discussion Date

## APPENDIX F

### PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORM

#### ***FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DE FOTOGRAFÍA*** **Universidad de California, Santa Bárbara**

*Ha optado a participar en la investigación en Consejería, Psicología Clínica y Escolar en UC Santa Bárbara para un estudio de tesis dirigido por Veronica Franco bajo la supervisión de la Dra. Melissa Morgan. Una parte de la investigación consiste en identificar una fotografía que represente su cultura y sensación de bienestar, donde se le pedirá que comparta durante una entrevista en persona como participación en el proyecto. La investigadora utilizará las fotografías para profundizar en la comprensión de su experiencia. Tenga en cuenta que la selección y discusión de fotografías relacionadas con el proyecto de investigación y los propósitos de recopilación de datos es una condición de participación en este estudio. Si no se siente cómoda/o compartiendo una durante la entrevista, hable con el investigador sobre opciones alternativas.*

#### **USO DE FOTOGRAFÍAS CON FINES CIENTÍFICOS**

1. Las fotografías pueden ser utilizadas por la investigadora principal para el análisis de datos relacionados con el estudio. *Inicial*
2. Los datos de las fotografías se pueden utilizar para investigaciones científicas y publicaciones. *Inicial*
3. Entiendo que mis respuestas al cuestionario no estarán vinculadas a la(s) fotografía(s). *Inicial*
4. Entiendo que mi nombre no estará vinculado a la(s) fotografía(s). *Inicial*

#### **PROPIEDAD DE LAS FOTOGRAFÍAS**

5. Las fotografías son propiedad intelectual y propiedad del participante. El participante entiende y es consciente de que la investigadora principal **NO** usará y venderá las fotografías para ningún beneficio monetario o comercial. *Inicial*

#### **CONSIDERACIONES ÉTICAS PARA LA SELECCIÓN DE FOTOGRAFÍAS**

6. Entiendo que si elijo una fotografía mía para el estudio de investigación, estoy renunciando a la confidencialidad de mi identidad y los datos que proporciono. *Inicial*



7. Soy consciente y entiendo que tomar fotografías de ciertos lugares, objetos inanimados, mascotas, animales y artículos personales puede ser identificable y poner en peligro mi confidencialidad. *Inicial*
8. El investigador principal difuminará las caras de los sujetos de fotografía humana para el análisis de datos, publicaciones científicas, conferencias académicas y presentaciones educativas. *Inicial*

### **USO DE FOTOGRAFÍAS FUERA DEL ANÁLISIS DE DATOS**

*El uso de fotografías para otros fines fuera del análisis de datos es completamente voluntario y depende de usted. No es necesario iniciar las siguientes opciones para participar en el proyecto de investigación. En cualquier uso de las fotografías como se indica a continuación, no se utilizará su nombre, pero sí sus imágenes. Puede revocar este permiso en cualquier momento enviando un correo electrónico a Veronica Franco a [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu).*

9. Las fotografías se pueden mostrar durante las presentaciones científicas. *Inicial*
10. Las fotografías se pueden mostrar en un aula a estudiantes de pregrado y posgrado. *Inicial*
11. Las fotografías se pueden mostrar en presentaciones públicas a grupos no científicos. *Inicial*

Las fotografías se cargarán en UCSB Box, un servicio de plataforma segura basado en la nube para el análisis y almacenamiento de datos. Seleccione la siguiente preferencia en cuanto a cómo desea que se eliminen las fotografías después del análisis de datos:

- Las fotografías pueden conservarse indefinidamente
- Las fotografías deben destruirse después de que se recopilen todos los datos para el proyecto de investigación.
- Las fotografías deben ser destruidas en esta fecha:

---

Nombre impreso:

Fecha:

Firma:

Fecha:

**PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORM**  
**University of California, Santa Barbara**

*You have opted to participate in research in the Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology at UC Santa Barbara for a dissertation study led by Veronica Franco under the supervision of Dr. Melissa Morgan. A part of the research involves identifying a photograph that represents your culture and/or sense of wellbeing, where you will be asked to share during an in-person interview as participation in the project. The lead researcher will use the photographs to deepen the understanding of your experience. Please note that the selection and discussion of photographs related to the research project and data collection purposes is a condition of participation in our program. If you are not comfortable with taking photographs or showing them during the interview, please talk to the researcher about alternative options.*

**USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. The photographs can be used by the lead researcher for data analysis related to the project | <i>Initial</i> |
| 2. The data from the photographs can be used for scientific research & publications.           | <i>Initial</i> |
| 3. I understand that my questionnaire responses will not be linked to the photograph(s).       | <i>Initial</i> |
| 4. I understand that my name will not be linked to the photograph(s).                          | <i>Initial</i> |

**OWNERSHIP OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 5. The photographs are intellectual property and owned by the participant. The participant understands and is aware that the lead researcher will <u>NOT</u> use and sell the photographs for any monetary or commercial profit. | <i>Initial</i> |
|--|----------------|

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTING PHOTOGRAPHS**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 6. I understand that if I choose a photograph of myself (selfie) for the research study, I am waiving the confidentiality of my identity and data I provide.                           | <i>Initial</i> |
| 7. I am aware and understand that taking photographs of certain locations, inanimate objects, pets, animals, and personal items may be identifiable and jeopardize my confidentiality. | <i>Initial</i> |
| 8. The lead researcher will blur the faces of human photograph subjects for data analysis, scientific publications, academic conferences, and educational presentations.               | <i>Initial</i> |

**USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS OUTSIDE DATA ANALYSIS**

*The use of photographs for other purposes outside of data analysis is completely voluntary and up to you. You do not need to initial the following options to participate in the research project. In any use of the photographs as indicated below, your name will not be used but your images will be. You can revoke this permission at any time by emailing Veronica Franco at [vfranco@ucsb.edu](mailto:vfranco@ucsb.edu).*

- 9. The photographs can be shown during scientific presentations. *Initial*
  
- 10. The photographs can be shown in a classroom to undergraduate and graduate students *Initial*
  
- 11. The photographs can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups. *Initial*

Photographs will be uploaded to UCSB Box, a secure cloud-based platform service for data analysis and storage. Please select the following preference as to how you would like the photographs to be disposed of after data analysis:

- Photographs may be kept indefinitely
- Photographs should be destroyed after all data for the research project is collected
- Photographs should be destroyed on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name:

Date:

Signature:

Date: