UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

LABOR OF LOVE: LATINO MIXED-STATUS FAMILY EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO STUDIES

by

Karina Ruiz

September 2024

The Dissertation of Karina Ruiz is
approved:

Professor Jessica K. Taft, chair

Professor Steven McKay

Professor Barbara Rogoff

Peter Biehl
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduates Studies

Copyright © by

Karina Ruiz

2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents iii

List of Figures v

Abstract vi

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction 1

Chapter Outline 9

Chapter 1 13

Social-Emotional Learning as Children's Contributions 13

Emotional Labor and Children's Work 16

SEL in Schools 19

LOPI in Mixed-Status Latino Families 20

Rearticulating Emotional Labor as Learning 25

Integrating SEL and Emotional Labor 27

Conclusion 30

Chapter 2 31

County, Organization, and District Contexts 35

Eligibility and Recruitment 41

Participants 43

Data Collection 48

Analysis 53

Positionality 54

Conclusion 57

Chapter 3 59

Literature 60

Working Across Spaces 70

Mother Time 73

Mothers Battle Fatigue 77
Emotional Labor Across Contexts 80
Creating Spaces of Communal Care 83
Conclusion 87
Chapter 4 90
Literature 91
Caring for Children 92
Community, Care, and Education 93
Children and Care(work) 95
Children's Emotional Labor in Mixed-Status Families, Schools, and in Community .. 96
Children's Emotional Labor for Children 97
Children's Emotional Labor for Adults 107
Conclusion 114
Conclusion 117
References 125

List of Figures

Figure 1: CASEL Wheel 20

Figure 2: Framework for Mapping Social Emotional Learning Onto Emotional Labor 21

Figure 3: Organizing Terminologies of Labor and Learning 26

Figure 4: An Integrated Model for Social Emotional Learning and Emotional labor 29

Figure 5: Immigrant and Undocumented Latina Mothering 66

Figure 6: Children's Interpersonal Learning 113

Abstract

Labor of Love: Latino Mixed-Status Family Emotional Landscapes
Karina Ruiz

This study draws on intensive ethnographic engagement with mixed-status families and their wider community circles to explore children's material and immaterial contributions to family life and how they learn and practice emotional labor through observing and participating in family and community activities alongside their mothers, whose labor for organizations and schools constitutes an unrecognized form of intensive mothering.

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the support and contributions of many individuals. First, to the children and mothers who welcomed me into their homes, families, and community—this is all yours.

Second, this project received funding and support from the department of Latin American and Latino Studies at UC Santa Cruz. In particular, I would also like to thank my advisor and chair, Jessica Taft, who fostered my intellectual growth and whose patience and understanding never wavered. I am also grateful to my dissertation committee members, Steve McKay and Barbara Rogoff, whose mentorship, guidance, and time has been invaluable. And of course, to the LALS department at large, whose faculty and graduate students' generosity was critical to the success of this project.

Last, this project was made possible through the support of my family and community. I am so grateful for all my friends, including Michelle Gomez Parra, Roxanna Villalobos, and especially to Theresa Fromille and her family. I could not have done with without the influence and support of my siblings, particularly my sister Cynthia and my nieces Harper, Avery, and Dani, my parents, cousins, uncles, aunts, and partner. And most of all, I would like to thank my son, Andres, whose birth reignited a love in me that made this all possible.

Introduction

"What would you do," Esther asked. It was another Friday afternoon, and we were sitting on benches in the park, facing the playground. Other mothers were seated and standing across the other benches facing the same way. There was a kind of privacy in how we were seated, and Esther looked away after she asked, resting her gaze on her younger son who was sitting on a slide a few yards away. Esther had just told me about a hard decision she had to make. Esther was a noncitizen mother and immigrant from Mexico. When she came to the United States with her family, she only had her older son, Miguel. Over the last 12 years, he was granted legal residency as a childhood arrival. Miguel, considered by most as a 1.5-generation immigrant, was born in Mexico but spent all of his school years in the United States. His younger brother, Martin, was born 2 years after him in the United States. Now, Esther had to decide whether she would apply to renew her visa. If she did, she would need to leave for Mexico and apply from there. The trouble of it all was by leaving, she risked not being let back in.

As she told me about the options she weighed, she said, "Martin, he's ok, he wants to go to Mexico, and he can come back when he wants. But if I leave, does that affect Miguel? He does not want to go. What would you do? Should I reapply?" I could feel Esther's nerves as she focused on Miguel. This process was unique to Esther, but it was also a familiar situation for the group of mothers we were surrounded by. In my time with these mothers, I heard of families who lived transnationally not because of the specter of deportation, but because the difficulties of everyday life as noncitizens were too much to bear. They existed in invisibilized yet hypervigilant ways. In the 2 years I was with these mothers, I knew of three women who went back to Mexico on their own accord. Some left with their children, some without, some divorced their spouses as a result, and some continued to try and keep a family together across borders. These families are impacted by each member's individual relationship to citizenship and legality, and those individual relationships reverberate across

the family unit, shaping who does what kinds of work like care and emotional labor, whether they are citizens or not.

This dissertation provided evidence of children's active contribution to society, especially in their learning and their socioemotional contributions in the family. I gathered evidence from mixed-legal status Latino families with young children. This dissertation drew on community-engaged and ethnographic research in a county on the coast of Central California, which I called Tierra Linda. I looked for ways in which children in mixed-status Latino families observe, learn, and do emotional labor.

The purpose of this study was primarily aimed at understanding how children participate in society as immaterial laborers, specifically as affective laborers who produce nonmaterial aspects of daily life. This project emerged from two overlapping gaps in the literature on emotional labor and childhood participation. The literature on emotional labor, rooted in feminist and applied political economy, continually collapsed emotional labor with reproductive labor. And in general, this work hinged on an analysis of gender to name most of men's productive work outside the home made possible because of the reproductive labor women do inside the home. Though this work centered the home and family as sites of reproduction, it also centered adults and frames children as objects of protection and cultivation and representations of the future. In doing so, children are not seen as active members and contributors of the families in which they learn and grow. This effectively claims children are powerless and have no impact on the world around them. On the other hand, in the fields of childhood studies, children have been interrogated as subjects, objects, agents, and symbols of the contexts in which they live. Much work has considered the impact of children on reproduction; however, this work was primarily around children as household contributors to material labor.

This project was the result of an idea I had in 2017. At that time, I was thinking a lot about reproductive labor and all of the myriads of ways that it looks, and how it is sometimes hard to see, and how still some people do not want to see it, or these laborers, at all. What I

thought was so interesting was the gendered aspect of it all. I kept returning to the idea of social reproduction and patriarchy. It was hard for me to reconcile men who upheld the patriarchy, who outsourced the cleaning, cooking, and care of their daily lives, had once been boys, babies, perhaps enamored with the women who did this labor. I wondered about what happened, in that time of motherhood and childhood. In what ways did children learn about whose job it was to clean up, make dinner, wash the laundry, and take care of others? Working in the tradition of family systems, I analyzed the ways literature continually fell back into the trap of familial roles, which resulted in deficit framings of families without traditional structures, without interrogating why these families could not or would not be able to fulfill the roles necessary for the idolized nuclear family.

I think of care work as something done by everyone, though to different extent based on each individual's positionality. As a result, I do not deny fathers contribute to the care work and systems of labor exchange impacting families. But in *these* families, which are mixed-legal status, and in which fathers are often the ones working for pay, and often the first citizens of the family unit, mothers rose as central figures. In part because they, like Esther, are typically noncitizens, but also because their noncitizenship relegated them to spaces of privacy in the home. Because of gendered labor division in addition to the gendered regimes of citizenship valuing working men more than reproductive women, mothers are the primary laborers in household settings of mixed-status families.

Children's value in the home and family continued to be framed as "mother's helpers." And I thought often about that relationship, between mother and child, and the ways emotional labor was a system supporting the teaching and learning of household help. Drawing from literature in family science, I aimed to see children as contributors of what they do, not as statis roles necessary for a family structure. Importantly, as I looked closer at family systems, it was clear the processes of teaching, learning, and contributing emotional labor were gendered but also more than family socialization. It was not that children were learning about gendered work through their family, but children as agents of their own lives

were observing reproductive labor done in gendered ways and learning emotional labor specifically from their mothers.

I interrogated the ways children are more than consumers of market and reproductive labor, and in fact are participants and contributors to society. I also highlighted the ways their immaterial labor serves to garner immaterial resources like attention and investment, which are critical for their futures. Much literature on children's participation in family life has come out of research on family and consumer science. The field of family and consumer science has roots in micro and family economics. However, economists have tended to ignore children in preference for a focus on homemakers, time use, and subsistence labor. Even with a focus on housework, economists have struggled to identify what counts as "productive" labor, much less measure immaterial forms of reproductive labor.

Reid's (1934) third-party criterion, which identifies what reproductive work counts as labor by asking whether someone could pay someone to do the task for them. This shifted the definition of labor from something of material production to thinking about labor stemming from the worker's energy and time. Measurement in this approach is not focused on an externalized product, but a measurement of one's limited, expendable, and reproducible sources of energy. This definition for productive work was revelatory for identifying what kinds of reproductive labor could be counted as work. In identifying a type of work outsourced to an employee, and therefore with a position in the realm of market labor, Reid called attention to the slippery and intrinsically linked nature of labor and reproduction. Rooted in a feminist approach to labor, I see families as interdependent units of individuals who hold different positionalities as market, reproductive, and emotional laborers.

The trouble with reproductive labor is the terminology is a big umbrella for things like home economics, care work, subsistence labor, and housework. Each of these areas silos the labor without really interrogating the ways they overlap. For example, a decision on household economics to make your own bread or raise your own chickens can overlap with subsistence labor, but not until you are able to produce enough that the cost of supplies is

met and real savings kick in. Of course, these things will make more housework, or more dishes, at least. And all of this takes time, which is an integral piece of care work. Time to check on others, time to talk and listen. All of these kinds of work are so wrapped up together it is hard to really tease out where anything happens. When I was thinking about how it is mostly women juggling all of these pieces, and boys and girls alike were watching this happen, it felt like there was just no way around it. Boys learned all of it was someone else's job and of course girls were learning about all the work they would take on. I felt like if we were going to really see changes in the distribution of reproductive labor, where all genders understood it as basic life skills, then it probably had to start with mothers. Mothers would have to teach their children about all of it, including what *it* is and how to *see it*.

I focused in on families as sites of this teaching and learning. I felt fairly comfortable with my understanding of reproductive labor in all of its material and immaterial forms; how had I learned about it? I reflected on my own childhood and the ways I had seen my mother do the same things and more. My mother was our seamstress, our nurse, our advocate, and judge. It was hard not to think of it all against the backdrop of my parents' different relationships to work and legality. I knew from personal experience people's legal status was a complicated subject. It affected where people worked, what they did for work, who they socialized with, who they married, how mobile they were, and how they moved around. In 2017, mixed-status families were just making it into the research as books, but they were creeping into dissertations and works in the early 2000s (Solis et al., 2013). Immigrant families were studied for decades, but the insidiously individualizing effects of legal status had not been unpacked to the extent they are now.

Immigrant families were emerging in the literature in distinct ways depending on where family members came from, where they went, and when they migrated. When families were a central theme to studying migration, researchers focused on what it meant to be children of immigrants and find belonging in U.S. society. It was like literature skipped over the period of building a family in these processes, jumping from migration to incorporation like

it was ever that simple. But it is not. Families migrating to the United States often transform in the process.

As historians grappled with the issue of how family migration became such a taboo, sociologists highlighted the ways some families were welcomed to the United States as highly skilled workers (Paret, 2014; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 2004). Nearly all of these studies focused on the systemic factors creating push and pull factors (Soto Nishimura & Czaika, 2023). Immigrant families were being examined at the level of policy and as collective patterns of migration as the result of wars and natural disasters (Castles, 2004). Though family migration was always mentioned, there was little consideration of what families experienced in these processes. These gaps in the literature mean there is little documentation of mixed-status families who are often transnational, and include immigrant generations, U.S.-born generations, and a gamut of legal statuses in between. I build on the work of seminal scholars of family migration including those interrogating family migration from Latin America, their experiences of incorporation, and of family making postmigration (Castañeda, 2019; Dreby, 2010; Enriquez, 2020; Menjívar, 2006; Schueths & Lawston, 2015).

Latino immigrant families are unique in their structure by comparison to other immigrant families. Unlike immigrant families who must travel by plane and thus often obtain permissions and visas well prior to their travel, Latino immigrant families can enter by foot and evade some of the processes immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere must go through (Menjívar et al., 2016). These experiences are also impacted by what nation the family is coming from and what their socioeconomic and racial composition is. Latinos' experiences with migration are racialized, classed, gendered, and also impacted by legality (Rodriguez, 2023). Sometimes out of necessity, and sometimes as an effect of the difficult and alienating processes of migration, different family members' relationships to each other change (Castañeda, 2019). Fathers can face difficulty in self-image when they struggle to provide; mothers can experience extreme loneliness if they do not work and are not socially

incorporated; children are aware of the disjuncture between their family's culture and U.S. culture (Van Hook & Glick, 2020).

What happens is as families migrate, individuals change, and so the family units change too. However, there was little in terms of child-centered approaches to understanding mixed-status families. Some work on adverse childhood experiences has highlighted the ways children of immigrant families can experience higher levels of stress and health impacts in their lifetime (Menjívar et al., 2016). However, these studies have not framed children as active agents in their own lives, but as objects of protection at times harmed by the dynamics of their family life. Sometimes these studies even position the citizen children as being in danger when with their family of origin, despite the issues being harms like intergenerational trauma, health disparities, and adverse childhood experiences from systemic factors, not harms done at the hands of individuals aiming to harm children.

Studying mixed-status families necessitates a continuous refocusing on what impacts an individual, what impacts a family, and how individuals in the family impact each other. The field of family science is relatively new but has old roots in the early disciplines of home economics and adult education (Roy & Settersten, 2022). Today, people know families are not a monolith. Families' racial, economic, cultural, and gendered composition have all been used as different vantage points through which we interrogate family units (Coltrane & Adams, 2008; Hooker et al., 2023; Van Hook & Glick, 2020). However, in the field of family science, citizenship and legal status is an angle of understanding families not broadly studied. Most of what is known about immigrant and mixed-status families has been documented by sociologists who focus on citizenship and legality (Gubernskaya & Dreby, 2017; Menjívar & Kanstroom, 2013). These works show how legal status of individuals have impact on other members, how they shape family experiences as a unit, and how the lack of incorporation of family and citizenship as legal categories creates more challenges for transnational family structures.

All of these experiences are deeply personal and emotional. A culture of illegality can be described through observable features like liminality (Chacon, 2014; Menjívar & Kanstroom, 2013), abject citizenship (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013), performance of a "super citizenship" (Anderson, 2013), and in/hyper/visibility (Schreiber, 2018), to name a few. More recent work on mixed-status families has uncovered the ways one family member's experiences of illegality reverberate to others, even spanning entire communities (Lopez et al., 2021). Research on citizenship and legality has a curious way of hitting extremely sensitive subjects, and yet evading the effect of it all. There are some exceptions, where researchers highlight the emotions arising as a result of being in mixed-status partnerships, marriages, and families (Enriquez, 2020; Gubernskaya & Dreby, 2017). However, in discussing the emotional experiences of being in a mixed-status family, the researchers do not consider affective currents that constitute what some call emotional climate. Research on emotional climate tends to focus on institutions like schools and workplaces, where the climate can develop into a hostile work environment. As families are a unit of members, but not a collective of individuals, the scale of emotions and how they work at this level are not often captured by research on legality.

In my experience, immigrant families are highly emotional and sensitive as the result of many of the factors and processes of immigration which I have mentioned. As I continued to think through the questions of reproductive labor, and the teaching and socialization of it all, I also interpreted the gendered and legal factors that impacted who did this kind of work. It was not enough to say families were sites of reproductive labor, or that families were sites of affect and emotional climate. Because I felt both of these pieces were undergirded by legality. As I developed my research questions, I thought of who works, and who benefits. In families, children are regularly framed as dependents and beneficiaries of adults' labor. But because I was aiming to understand how invisible emotional labor is valuable to everyone and shared across actors in a family, children's labor had to be included too. And if I wanted to really capture children's contributions, I had to make a project not just about adults' emotional labor

but about a child-centered project about how emotional labor flows and is exchanged across actors.

I started to then think about who teaches and learns, and how and where this all happens. My research question—How do children in Latino mixed-status families learn and practice emotional labor?—was supported by two subquestions. First, I aimed to understand what kind of self-conduct children contributed to mixed-status family dynamics. Second, I asked what kinds of deliberately adopted conduct do children contribute. Together, these questions get at understanding children's agentic contributions of emotional labor as self-control and emotion management, and also how they observe others' conduct and then adopt and tailor their conduct as they learn and practice emotional labor. I completed ethnographies with families in settings where children and mothers were most likely to be together and collaborate to address the questions. I aimed to observe both how children managed themselves and how they embodied the stances and conduct of their mothers.

By framing children as contributors, I ascribe to the feminist perspective all labor is valuable, and also push for a redefinition of what counts as labor. A central argument in this dissertation is learning is labor. Emotional labor is not just a product but actually a set of skills always being developed, taught, and learned. Further, by working in the context of mixed-status families, I show how all labor is impacted by legal status as a category of power. Legal status comes up as power to work, drive, travel, and more, or as a lack of power thereof. Finally, I argue the impact of legal status on different aged-actors emotional labor is the reason mixed-status families do not just experience an emotional climate, but are participants in an emotional landscape functioning like a topography of high points and low points of power as actors age and go through life experiences that change their legal statuses and experiences of illegality and/or incorporation.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 proposes a theoretical framework that puts key fields of teaching, learning, and practicing emotional labor into conversation with each other. I show how emotional labor

has been conceptualized and defined by Hochschild as the production and commodification of affect. I show how in its current state it reifies the boundaries between children's learning and adults' production. I then unpack how social-emotional learning is used in schools in the United States. I focus on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), one of the nation's leading agencies in developing curriculum, training, and assessments for students, families, and educators. I identify CASEL's approach to social-emotional learning continues in traditional U.S. models of teaching and learning. I challenge both of these assumptions: emotional labor is productive, albeit immaterial, work adults do; and social-emotional learning is best taught in classrooms and schools, with the support of families and communities. My approach to challenging these embedded assumptions uses a model for teaching and learning that stems from indigenous-heritage communities in Mexico and Guatemala.

Learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI; Rogoff, 2014) asserts Latino families may organize teaching and learning in family and community spaces through fluid collaboration between generations on real-time work in shared context. By seeing learning through the lens of LOPI, children's learning is a form of contribution and adults work is a form of teaching. To fully marry the distinct fields of emotional labor and social-emotional learning, I propose an embedded model of understanding social-emotional learning, formulated by CASEL, and the process of emotional labor, conceptualized by Hochschild. In doing so, I show how learning social-emotional skills is a form of emotional labor, and how the best place to see it happen is in fact not classrooms but in families and communities where LOPI is much more likely to happen, and the structures are aligned to teaching and learning social-emotional skills.

Chapter 3 focuses on my methodological approach in this project. I discuss multiple overlapping contexts of the county, school districts, and community organizations I work with and in. I explain the process of my community engagement and recruitment, reviewing the specifics of each of the families who participated in some way. Chapter 3 takes up the issues

of best practices for community engagement research and problematizes the ways best practices are most effective when working with organizations. I outline how the structures of collaboration between researchers and organizations are not the most effective forms of building partnerships and relationships with individuals and families. In particular, I pay close attention to the ways mixed-status families are unable to be formal decision-makers in community organizations due to the systemic legal factors that make mothers unemployable by community organizations and school districts. I recommend researchers interested in doing community-engaged work that focuses on individual experiences need to include a community-based element to their methodology and work to build strong relationships existing outside the structures or organizations that sometimes are the perpetrators of harm in their communities. I also outline some of the child-centered methodologies that I designed for working with children as young as 6 years old. Finally, I unpack how my own positionality played a role in recruitment, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter 3 is about Latina immigrant mothers who participated in this project and the ways their community work is the basis of teaching social-emotional skills. To do so, I discuss the overlaps between emotional labor, intensive mothering, and care work, demonstrating how some work is unpaid, some work is paid, and some work is immaterial. By teasing out the distinctions that charge some work as important/unimportant, and why, I show how collapsing immaterial unpaid labor functions to the detriment of seeing mothers as contributors on their own behalf. This pushes mothers to engage in intensive mothering as a way to prove their value as reproducers of "good" children. I outline how Latina immigrant mothers engage in intensive mothering (Hays, 1998) but due to impacts of legal status, the psychological and relational processes by which they end up doing intensive mothering is different. I also show how these relational processes decenter the mother/child attachment dyad central to intensive mothering approaches. Instead, Latina immigrant mothers aim to make all spaces family spaces and thereby bring intergenerational participation into settings normally divided into adult or child spaces. In doing so, they model the interpersonal

emotional labor necessary as they navigate challenges specific to being members of mixed-status families.

Chapter 4 explains how children practice emotional labor through social-emotional skills for their peers and adults. I review how children came to be relegated to particular spaces in contemporary society. In discussing children's placement in educational institutions, I highlight how these decisions were made on assumptions and illusions of what places and activities are appropriate and safe for children to participate in. In fact, children have been active contributors to society throughout all of history and I claim children's main form of contribution and labor today is through their learning and practice. I show how children's emotional labor for their peers looks like mothers modeling their interpersonal relationships and conflict management. When children do emotional labor for adults, it can be seen as impactful in both indirect and direct ways. On one hand, children can do emotional labor for adults by helping them transform emotions and change perspectives. On the other, I show how in an adultist society, all children's contributions are indirectly impactful to adults' benefit. This is a result of the structures adults create for children's participation and reckons with the prerogatives of adults in designing children's participatory spaces to benefit adults.

Finally, I conclude by highlighting how these findings are impactful for a variety of stakeholders in a number of fields including child development, education, childhood studies, family science, and educational policy.

Chapter 1

The role of children in U.S. society has swung from one extreme to another, from being economic actors within family work, both domestic and market, to emotionally "priceless" but economically "useless" objects of protection (Zelizer, 1985). Kids' positionality as objects of protection and investment, but also as dependents of adults, is relatively new. In reality, U.S. children have a long history as workers and laborers, at home with their families, in communities through intimate relationships like apprenticeships, and under conditions of slavery or indentured servitude and in other entirely different paradigms of work and care for children (Cunningham, 1995). This chapter introduces the conceptual framework that undergirded this dissertation. By using concepts of social-emotional learning and emotional labor, and applying an indigenous paradigm of education, I demonstrated how I understand children's learning and practice of social-emotional learning as part of a complex labor exchange which begins in the family but can be applied to all contexts of childhood.

Social-Emotional Learning as Children's Contributions

An indigenous paradigm of childhood includes children in every aspect of the community and does not separate work from childhood. Instead, children are expected to be avid observers, listeners, and contributors (García, 2015). Children's contributions in indigenous communities are primarily identified in community- and family-based work. In these contexts, the relationship between learning and producing is fluid and reciprocal. Children learn as they do, and though they receive assessment and correction, the context of learning is significantly different because the realm of childhood learning is not separated from society. As children observe and pitch in to work, they are learning they are valued members of society and have responsibilities to their community which effectively socializes children in moral and socio-cultural expectations of communal reciprocity and responsibility (Alarcón Glasinovich, 2012; Ruiz, 2004). Thus, the work of learning is raised in its importance, rather than relegated to the realm of practice for their future role as citizens, workers, and maybe providers of their own families.

However, in the United States, the dominant contemporary understanding of childhood is cultivated through children's role as dependents served by adults who are their providers of shelter, food, education, and culture (Lareau, 2011). U.S. paradigms of childhood have maintained children are objects of investment, as they are future citizens. Framing positions child learning squarely in the bounds of K–12 education and is separated from any application of knowledge besides for assessment purposes. Through this model, children are expected to learn until they become adults, at which point they are expected to have reached mastery of skills and to apply them to be upstanding citizens. By centering children in the theory of emotional labor, I expand current understanding of what counts as labor, where it happens, what it produces, and who is a producer. By including children in the theory of emotional labor, understanding of laboring along the binaries of adult/child, provider/dependent, and self/other-centered is complicated. Inserting children highlights the ways labor and exchange can function in communal and reciprocal ways.

These skills are not just learning objectives related to math, science, and language, but are also soft skills like social emotional learning (SEL). Perhaps more than the other subjects, SEL has been coopted to advance neoliberal agendas of education curriculum. Skills like communication and conflict management are leveraged by overwhelmed educators to stand in for classroom management. Where teachers would benefit from smaller class sizes and increased multitiered support systems, SEL has been applied as a tool for individual students to learn self-control and self-management.

To introduce the concepts with which I worked, I explain how socio-emotional skills are developed in family and educational settings. I unpack the context of Hochschild's (2012) theory of emotional labor and immaterial but paid work adults generally are expected to do. I then show how in school settings the concept of emotional intelligence is being used to explore the use of social emotional learning curriculum. I contend emotional intelligence is more welcome and dominant in both popular and academic discussions of children's emotional practices than the concept of emotional labor because it asserts these skills are

used in students' future adult lives as working and contributing members of society. I then show how children's learning in family settings has been identified as an important feature in indigenous heritage ways of organizing teaching and learning. In the second section, I delve deeper into one of the leading approaches to SEL, as designed by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL).

I demonstrate how despite being situated in developmentalist educational approaches, CASEL's SEL wheel offers scholars of social-emotional skills discrete and specific language to refer to particular kinds of skills. Then, I show how mapping these skills onto an organization of collaborative learning helps to shift the locus of where learning happens from schools to families and communities. Finally, I return to the divide between children learning and contributing and propose an integrated model that ties together CASEL's wheel for social-emotional skills and Hochschild's (2012) theory of emotional labor. Ultimately, I argue children's learning is work because children, like adults, are functioning on conditions of limited energy exchanged for other resources. So just because their work is not materially productive, does not mean they are not active contributors to society.

Before articulating this framework, I would like to offer a brief review of the various terms I use in this chapter and the distinctions between them. Specifically, I refer to SEL and emotional labor. The most important distinction between these terms is their divergent associations with work or learning. Though they all require similar, sometimes overlapping skills, the term emotional labor has almost exclusively been used in contexts of adult's commodified labor. On the other hand, SEL has been heralded in educational contexts a curricular approach to teaching soft skills that can support a variety of interpersonal challenges, including classroom management and teacher/student relationships.

CASEL's SEL wheel was created for the fields of primary and secondary education in the United States. However, CASEL's foundation comes from multisector stakeholders, including Goleman, author of *Social Intelligence* and *Emotional Intelligence*, and educator–philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald (CASEL Briefs, 2007). SEL is a process by which

people understand how handle themselves, their relationships, and work in effective and ethical ways. Second, emotional labor and emotion work have overlapping uses. Emotion work refers to a component of emotional labor. Emotion work is the management of one's own emotions, which is critical for emotional labor which produces an affective state in another person.

Emotional Labor and Children's Work

In the construction of child as dependent/adult as provider, adults' roles as caregivers include doing emotional labor in the family system. Hochschild (2012) conceptualized emotional labor as both in oneself and for another. Emotion work is involved in a relational process to help regulate someone else's emotions. Part of this is managing one's own emotional to the extent they can control an emotional display, what Hochschild referred to as surface acting. Hochschild developed this term from research on service workers, specifically flight attendants and debt collectors, who experienced combative interactions with customers. Emotional labor requires workers to use their emotional intelligence to facilitate conflict resolution. Emotional labor is highly contextual and largely invisible because it does not produce a material output, and the energy expelled to do emotional labor is difficult to measure because it is largely self-reported and subjective. This makes identifying emotional labor difficult.

Hochschild (2012) broke emotional labor down into two aspects, self-awareness of one's own emotions and empathy based on others' emotional displays. The first part of self-awareness is what she called emotion work. 'Emotion work involves language for emotion identification, emotional regulation skills, and expectation management. Together, these three pieces are necessary for the management of oneself. The second half of emotional labor is interpersonal and uses the same knowledge of emotions, emotional regulation, and expectation management, but in work to understand others. Other scholars have extended the concept of emotional labor into the studying of families, though typically maintaining an

assumption it is still adult work, primarily taking place in motherhood (English & Brown, 2023; Malhotra, 2022; Wingfield, 2021).

By framing emotional labor as work adults do, people ignore the active presence and contributing role of children as learners. When educators employ SEL curriculum, they largely frame this work as developing children's emotional intelligence. This is important because it signals a type of future worker's skill set. Emotional intelligence is a version of social-emotional skills rooted in the workplace. Initially, the concept of emotional intelligence took off among business leaders because of the need for staff, managers, and leaders in the private sector with interpersonal skills beyond basic job requirements but key characteristics in highly successful employees. Workers with high emotional intelligence in the workplace exhibit higher adaptive skills, higher retention in the workplace, and lower occupational stressors, as well as a higher ability to cope with workplace stressors (Mokhtar & Krishnan, 2023).

Workers' performance is generally better because of the ability to understand one's own emotions and the impact of emotions in the workplace like stress, relationships, conflict, and collaboration. Emotional intelligence has also gained traction in highly stressful and high-turnover workplaces, including the education sector (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Theodotou & Harvey, 2023), and some research has explicitly tied together the concepts of emotional labor and emotional intelligence in school principals (Silbaugh et al., 2023). The basic tenets of emotional intelligence and SEL are contributing and productive workers need to have self-management skills and interpersonal skills. However, I assert children work when they learn. Thus, I use the language of emotional labor instead of emotional intelligence. In doing so, I advocate for seeing children as learners, contributors, and producers.

Children's first place for learning is typically in family settings. From their caregivers, siblings, and peers, children gather information about how the family system functions as an interdependent unit. They learn how their families in particular handle required tasks like paid work, unpaid work, housework, and care work more broadly. Rogoff et al. (2022) identified a model—learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI)—that organizes children's learning in

some family and community settings. The LOPI model challenges dominant styles of teaching and learning like assembly line instruction in which an adult is an instructor, children are segregated by age in institutions, and experts transmit information out of context for the purpose of assessment. In contrast, LOPI relies on community and in-context learning, capitalizing on real-time work and outcomes. Additionally, LOPI relies on multiple differently aged actors sharing expertise and engaging in dynamic growth. LOPI requires reciprocity, relationality, responsibility, and respect. As such, LOPI is a prime model for understanding how children's learning happens in family and community settings, though more commonly in indigenous-heritage communities in the Americas. Because scholars of human development have generally perceived emotional labor and SEL to be distinct areas of learning, they have not investigated how children can learn emotional labor in household, family, and community settings.

Further, much of the research on children's work has not paid significant attention to children's learning and advocates for children's learning challenge notions of children's working by arguing work would ruin the experience of childhood (Bourdillon & Myers, 2022). Through these main currents of children's contributions in school and at home, a binary has emerged around what counts as work and where appropriate work is done. The main debates on household labor are around the differentiation of space and the impact of work in children's day to day life (Bourdillon, 2009). Issues around space focus on the presumed safety of children's own homes, and the focus on pay tends to consider paid labor as the antithesis of educational investment for children. In reality, the boundaries of work/learning are not as fixed. Children work as street vendors, with their families, outside the home (Estrada, 2019). They prepare products for sale, lead marketing strategies, manage finances and project profits to advocate for collaborative investments for family gain. And in domestic settings, immigrant children apply their learnings of U.S. culture, contributing to family and societal interaction, engaging as cultural intermediaries, and translators (Orellana, 2009; Tan et al., 2021).

Though these investigations have recognized many of the soft skills necessary for emotional labor and have gotten near the explicit naming of emotional labor by identifying skills of emotional labor, they fall short of explaining how emotional the labor part of an exchange of resources is. For example, Orellana's (2009) work on children's translation work in institutional contexts like hospitals and schools named the emotion management kids do when in the intermediary role of translating.

Another example is Delgado's (2023) research on the types of children's contributions to family settings. Positioning children as contributors to the family context, she identified emotional labor as an aspect of children's contributions but does not unpack it any further than Hochschild's theory allows. In these instances, emotional labor is again articulated as the commodification of emotions and affect. Notably, these studies were not focused on the theorization of children's emotional labor and struggle to name and identify what counts as emotional labor. My dissertation aimed to highlight how children do emotional labor by pointing out what emotional labor looks like in noncommodified labor exchange.

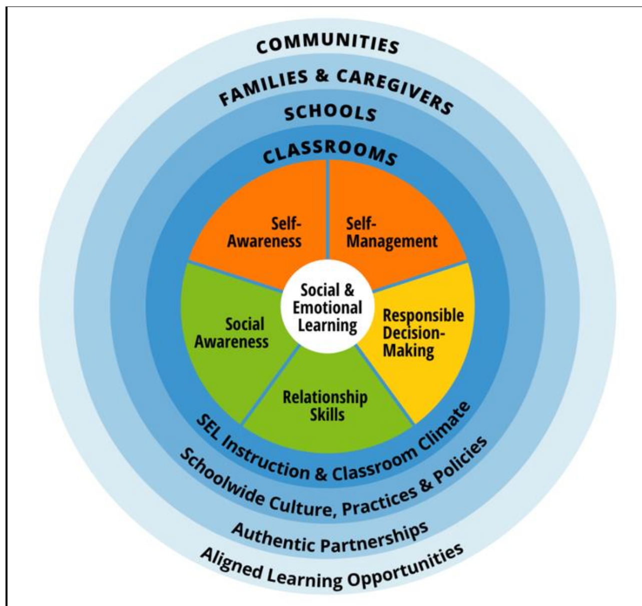
SEL in Schools

Research on children's learning of emotion work has largely focused on school settings, with some attention to school, community, and family partnerships. Further, the primary scholarship on how children learn aspects of emotion work comes from assembly line instruction models of teaching and learning in schools through SEL curriculum. The CASEL is one of the biggest proponents for SEL in the United States. Their framework, the CASEL wheel (see Figure 1; CASEL, 2023), situates SEL in classrooms, then schools, and supported by families and communities. The organization of this framework places schools before families in the system of teaching SEL. By their logic, SEL instruction happens first and foremost in classrooms, which are supported by schoolwide culture, practices, and policies. These schools then leverage their relationships with families through authentic partnerships. This framework proposes SEL curriculum and assessment should be attuned to five areas of skills: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social

awareness, and relationship skills. The value of an SEL curricular framework is it identifies skills for self-awareness and other-centered awareness, an aspect which theory on emotional labor in family settings has not yet developed. However, as noted, it does not centralize the emotional learning occurring within homes, and which often well predates children's experiences with formal schooling.

Figure 1

CASEL Wheel



Note. From What Is the CASEL Framework?, by CASEL, 2023. (https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/)

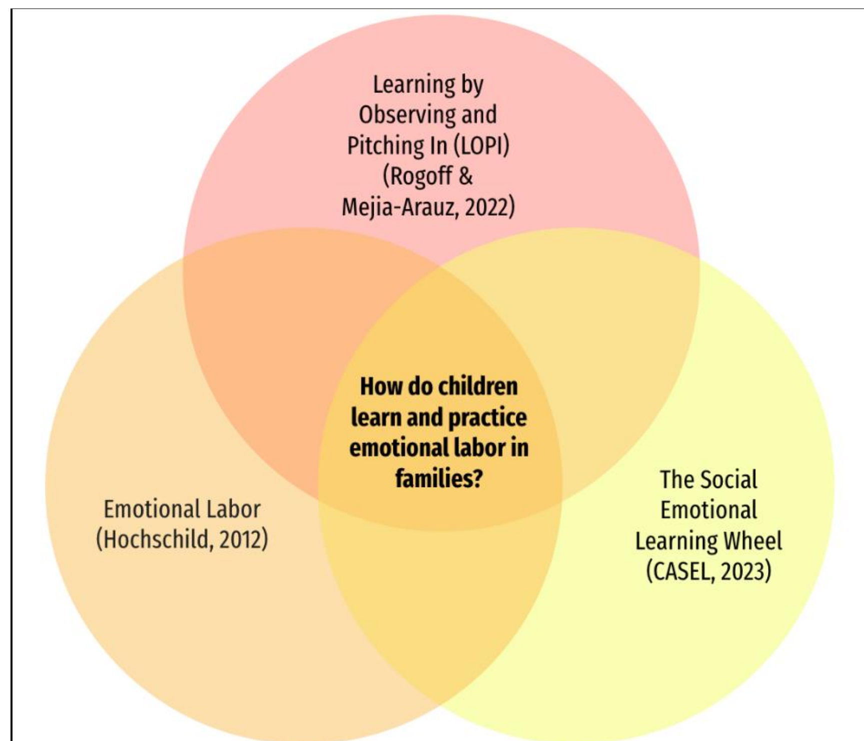
LOPI in Mixed-Status Latino Families

To understand how emotional labor and SEL can function together, as both learning and producing, we must emphasize how children learn in family and community settings. I incorporate LOPI as a core feature of my theoretical framework for mapping SEL onto emotional labor theory (see Figure 2). This framework articulates the way LOPI, SEL and

emotional labor have convergence and are actualized by focusing on how children learn and contribute things in family settings. This new framework emphasizes how learning and producing are not mutually exclusive and offers insight to understanding emotional labor as a skill. Although Hochschild's theorization emerged from a marketized context, this framework rearticulates emotional labor as skills practiced in early childhood.

Figure 2

Framework for Mapping Social Emotional Learning Onto Emotional Labor



Note. Image created by author.

I use Rogoff's (2014) model of LOPI to understand how mixed-status Latino families teach emotional labor in family, community, and informal settings, as well as how children themselves are contributing to families as they learn and practice the skills of emotional labor. The LOPI model is a prism comprised of seven key criteria which Rogoff operationalized as

questions to examine any approach to teaching and learning. The questions unpack how learning is organized, why people participate, how people interact, what the goal of learning is, and how people learn, communicate, and how and for what purpose people evaluate learning.

The framework in Figure 2 shows three overlapping areas of study that converge to support assumptions I made in the research design of this study. As I explained, the fields of education and labor generally have not been brought together in investigating children's role in society. Generally, these fields are discussed in opposition to one another. As such, they create a false binary about how children can exist and what function children have in society, either as dependents and objects of investment or as contributing but exploited workers. I use the LOPI model to bridge these two seemingly disparate fields.

LOPI is rooted in indigenous-heritage worldviews of collaboration and fluid synchrony. Indigenous heritage epistemologies presume a shared reality in which human development happens through collaboration (Mejía-Arauz et al., 2018). This means indigenous-heritage approaches to child development assume the ability to be prosocial and involve children from their infancy (Coppens & Rogoff, 2022). This is different from middle-class European-American paradigms of human development. The European-American paradigm assumes humans are born as individuals and then gradually and with social support learn to be social (Mejía-Arauz et al., 2018). Children from communities of privileged status tend to be allowed what they want and are perceived as still needing to understand how to cooperate (Mosier & Rogoff, 2003).

In Mosier and Rogoff's (2023) observations of Guatemalan Mayan infant and toddler siblings, infants also have a privileged position, but privilege is not a failure of the child's understanding. Interestingly, infants are centered in these communities to create a deference toward babies and thus results in teaching cooperation for slightly older toddlers. This slight variation in how privilege of age is understood, results in practices where the children voluntarily cooperate without needing adult intervention, as they have been taught how to

engage with others of different abilities and roles. Children in indigenous-heritage communities learn through participation, which is socially supported by the shared view members prioritize and respect others' freedom of choice. The seven facets of LOPI check for various angles of achieving collaboration or reflections of collaboration as fluid synchrony.

To explain why this was the appropriate model for understanding interactions between children and parents in mixed-status Latino families, I illustrate how a posada, a Latin American Christmas celebration, functioned as a site where LOPI could be seen. The posada is an example of how community members organize learning through learner incorporation. All ages of people are present and included. Though the majority of organizers are the core group of mothers with school-aged children whom I focus on in this study, there are also members of this group who do not have children, and elders with adult children living far away. As a result of this member composition, learning is organized as intergenerational interactions in which the shared endeavor is to create and hold a community posada. This epitomizes Facet 1 of the LOPI prism. In this space, people participate for the purpose of contributing to collaborative socialization. This includes the organizing of people to secure a space, decorate, feed, and facilitate the tradition of singing and *pidiendo posada*. Pidiendo posada is meant to represent the time in which Joseph and Mary seek shelter and lodging for the birth of baby Jesus. This relates to Facet 2. The interactions to organize and participate in the posada are flexible, which is necessary for mothers, children, elderly, and people with disabilities; thus, related to Facet 3. Still, though there is flexibility, there are many tangible contributions to make, from setting up tables, to cleaning up the space.

The goal of learning in this prosocial setting reflects commitments to teaching responsibility. This aspect demonstrated Facet 4. Children are tasked with laying out tablecloths, arranging chairs, and looking after each other. Many of the times in which children are learning, there are no verbal directions or instructions. Instead, children participate and learn along the way with guidance from adults when they fall out of synch from the group. For example, in the singing and orchestrating of the group to ask for posada,

children stand with adults, singing in a call and response style to each other across a closed door. This aspect of the event shows how Facet 5 might look. In instances where children are distracted, an adult may pull them close and share a document printed with the lyrics. Most participants did not need the paper, but it served as a shared object to use in demonstrating how the call and response song worked, and invited children to read and sing along. In other cases, my son, who was only 1 year old at the time, was borrowed from me, lifted to peek through windows and see the partitioned group singing to each other. I listened as they talked to him and observed as children as young as 5 stepped into the role of teacher, sharing their knowledge with my son. These examples also illustrate Facet 6 and the ways shared reference is created and used as a learning tool. Many of the adults already have shared references in jokes and shared histories, they do not sway from making the reference explicit to create shared reality with children.

Last, for Facet 7 on the question of how and why to evaluate children in social settings, children receive evaluation to assess how they are doing in the space. Assessment, in community settings, is not the same as assessment in a classroom setting. Because the goals and purpose of learning are in context and real time, assessment is not something that needs to be administered after teaching and practice has happened, but instead is an ongoing process of checking in on each other. This can look like small gestures such as the one with children learning the songs of posadas, but it can also look like self-organization and coregulation in group settings. When children were playing together, they engaged across age groups schools normally separate children by. Kids Grades K–12 playing in a central space, aware of themselves and each other as they ran and shared space in play.

This example illustrates how LOPI undergirds children's learning in mixed-status families and community settings but does not evidence how children learn about legality in their family settings. However, the LOPI model can be used to show how children do what they are a part of. Through family socialization, children engage in the processes they have been part of through their own families' practices. LOPI offers an avenue to understand

children's learning regardless of the maladaptive or dysfunctional systems of legality and citizenship that may exist. This is different than many systems of children's learning which require particular settings and systems to be established and employed in to teach children a particular form of engagement. In a mixed-status family - where legality is individualized and experiences can range from transnational family visits to visa and citizenship applications, and experiences of illegality in the United States. Children are a part of and aware of all of these things. I illustrate in Chapter 4 how children learn about legality by being part of mixed-legal status families, and how their experiences are shaped with knowledge they come into by being part of families who regularly convene in socialization and learning through LOPI.

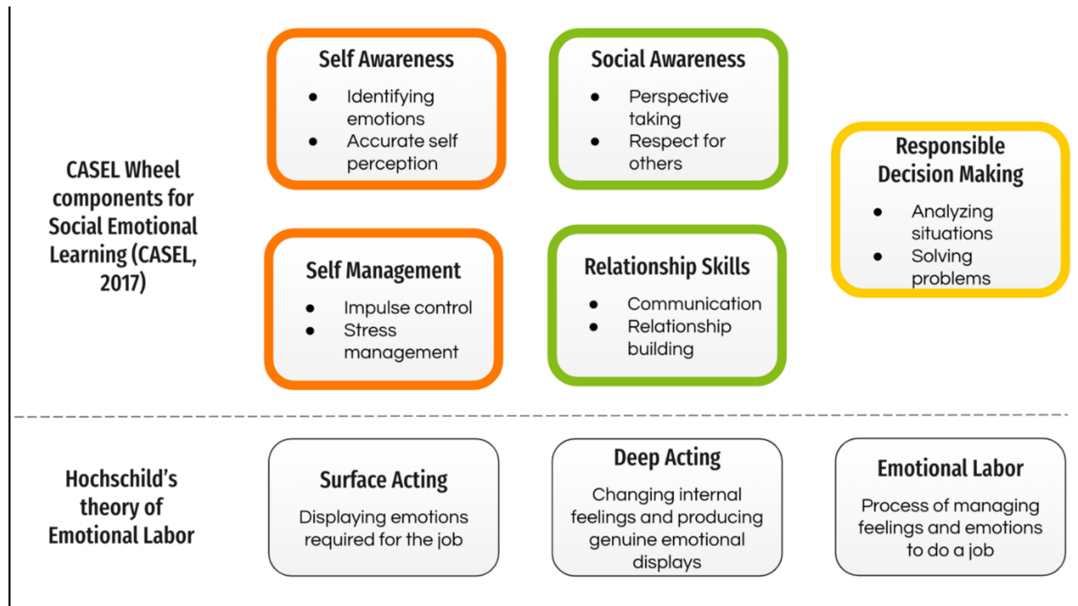
Rearticulating Emotional Labor as Learning

The relationship between SEL and emotional labor can be seen more clearly by interrogating the terminology each uses. The fields of sociology, affect, and labor consider what emotional labor is, but CASEL and educators are invested in understanding how skills for SEL are learned and practiced (see Figure 3). CASEL's objective of teaching social emotional skills means the terminology is inherently scaffolded for skill development. As the wheel's color coordination shows, CASEL understands self-awareness and self-management as related but separate skills. Though there is no decided directionality to the wheel, the skills CASEL identifies as outcomes for each component of the wheel are staged. For example, according to CASEL, stress management and impulse control (self-management) are not possible without identifying one's own emotions or accurate self-perception (self-awareness). And although the wheel does not name the relationality between the color-coded areas (self-awareness and self-management; social awareness and relationship skills; and responsible decision making), early childhood education on social emotional learning typically focuses on teaching the understanding of oneself before understanding of one's relationship to others and place in their community. For example, ECE teaches ownership prior to teaching sharing because to understand giving and engage in empathy, a child must first understand the object is their possession to give and something others want and do not have (Brownell et al.,

2013). The CASEL wheel frames five SEL skills as interconnected but ignores the implicit trajectory of learning and skill mastery.

Figure 3

Organizing Terminologies of Labor and Learning



Note. Image created by author.

Similarly, Hochschild's (2012) theory of emotional labor does not have directionality. This is because in her theorization of what emotional labor is, all of the work is marketized and sold as product, not process. Emotional labor is made up of two types of acting, both surface and deep acting are not interrelated or connected in any learning format. This makes CASEL's lack of sequencing a strong fit for understanding how these practices are alike. Mainly there are three categories readable vertically on Figure 3. The left column, including self-awareness, self-management, and surface acting are all about managing oneself and emotions. The second column of social awareness, relationship skills, and deep acting, require relational connection and empathy to align in values. Last, the right-most column of

responsible decision making, and emotional labor are the skills of assessing situations, understanding conflicting needs, and resolving issues, whether this requires some or all of the previous components discussed.

By organizing the terminology, I interpret the CASEL wheel to understand how emotional labor as a series of skills developed and honed over time. This reconceptualization of emotional labor is the root issue many critics hold over the assumed marketization of human emotional connection. I posit some emotion is marketized, but I also open the door for understanding how emotions are in constant exchange, part of immaterial and affective economies at large. By focusing on the exchange of emotional labor in unpaid contexts, I offer an understanding of children's contributions and agency over their own lives as they act in multiple ways to gain investment and secure their best possible futures.

Integrating SEL and Emotional Labor

By integrating CASEL's wheel into Hochschild's (2012) theory of emotional labor, I demonstrate how the skills used for emotional labor exist in ways not commodified, and a learned process existing at a myriad of levels. When children engage in emotional labor, they exchange their emotion work for the perception adults have of them. This is rooted in a relatively recent shift of children as objects of investment, moving from working contributors to representations of the kinds of care they receive (Zelizer, 2002). Children are in constant negotiation with the world around them, which is governed largely by adults, and which is overtly adultist, even in the spaces that impact children most directly. As they engage in responsible decision making, they receive trust, confidence, and opportunity from adults. My use of emotional labor as a lens through which to see children's negotiations offers a new framing which is not reliant on physical power or intellect but is relationally built and diffused.

Children can use emotional labor to gain respect, comradery, and following from their peers as much as from adults. Emotional labor is therefore different from family socialization because it is expansive enough it can be applied outside of family culture through the exchange of emotion work for investment in their communities at large. Where family

socialization asserts a context and scope for children's learning, using emotional labor to make sense of children's negotiations can provide an avenue for understanding children's agency as separate from their family socialization. Seeing children's emotional labor as separate from family socialization highlights the investment that not only others make in children through the exchange of their emotional labor, but the investment they make as agents of their own mobility. My focus on negotiation maintains a perspective of individuality as far as labor being draining for an individual. However, I do not believe this cost cannot be replenished. In fact, my basis for understanding labor exchange is communality in which all contributions are valuable, and I simply aim to highlight the contributions of children overlooked in recent research.

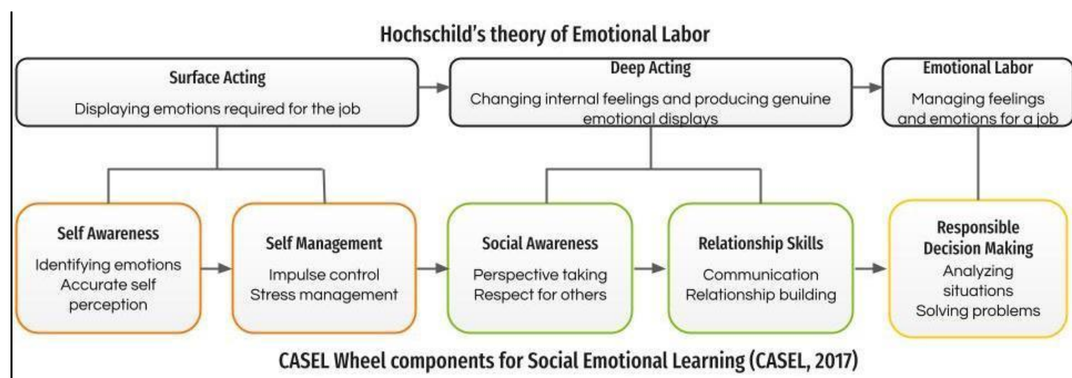
Integrating both models into one requires both are revised in their purpose. For CASEL's wheel, the model components need to be more clearly linked for scaffolding to be understood. CASEL's use of a wheel to model the skills as distinct skill sets is useful. It separates skills by defining a threshold of where each category reaches a limit and what level of skill it builds on. This is thoughtful framing challenging any overtly developmental stance yet is attuned to the realities of complex learning and development. Still, CASEL's organization poses a challenge for understanding how the distinct categories are related or where this learning begins.

The practices CASEL identifies for each skill can be organized in a directional format to explain some skills cannot be developed without learning earlier precursor skills. For example, a child cannot practice relationship-making (relationship skills) without perspective taking (social awareness). Figure 4 demonstrates the integrated model that organizes skills directionally to reflect the scaffolding of learning, but without being sequential, and identifies which ones qualify as surface acting, deep acting, or reflect the skills necessary for emotional labor. Organizing CASEL's SEL skills in this way is rooted in human development; Specifically, the leap around understanding oneself (self-awareness and self-management) and understanding one's place in a group context like family, classroom, or community (social

awareness and relationship skills) are related but distinct and can be practiced and learned concurrently. CASEL recognizes this aspect of human development by truncating practices into the five skill categories but uses a wheel which does not tie these skills to any age or stage of development. Similarly, the integrated model I propose does not link skills to any age. Instead, I link the skills to the language and work which Hochschild argues are part of the commodification of emotional labor.

Figure 4

An Integrated Model for Social Emotional Learning and Emotional labor



Note. Image created by author.

In linking learning and skill development to emotional labor, I challenge the view emotional labor is the commodification of emotion. By emphasizing the learned and practiced aspects of this emotional labor, I show how Hochschild's (2012) surface acting and deep acting are different levels of self and social understanding. I do not assert emotional labor is not commodified. Instead, I offer an expansion of emotional labor which can be applied in the exchange of material and immaterial resources. Thus, I position children as agents who can exchange emotional labor for investment and workers who participate in immaterial production (Hardt, 2006).

Conclusion

I argue children engage in emotional labor through their learning. This requires a shift in perspective on both whether learning is separate from or part of broader society; and whether emotional labor is a product or set of practices. I assert learning is labor and emotional labor is a set of skills and practices that are continually refined. To support this assertion, I offer an integrated model of labor and learning for emotion work. This model also allows us to see teaching and learning happening in community spaces. This framework highlights how learning happens through contextually situated and cultural practices. Thus, I also show how learning happens in multiple contexts which children traverse and weave together in their own experiences, learnings, and contributions (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). By framing SEL as part of emotional labor practices, I show how children can be seen as active producers in society instead of the products of social reproduction.

Following chapters discuss how Latina immigrant mothers create contexts for learning reflective of LOPI approaches to teaching and learning. They do so through their work as mothers and leaders in their communities. I highlight the ways mothers model their care work, expanding on a dominant approach to motherhood in U.S. white and middleclass populations. Situating their work in cultural practices, these mothers engage in work through intensive mothering (Hays, 1998), advance community based organizations that advocate for their families and children, and create community for and from immigrant Latina mothers. Additionally, I show how children participate in practices of care, where they participate, and how they see care work modeled. Together, children reveal how they see care work, and model how they practice and contribute what they observe in community and family spaces.

Chapter 2

This dissertation used what I would qualify as ethnographic community-engaged research. What I aim to illustrate in this chapter is more than what I did, who I did it with, and how I did it. I hope to show how community-engaged research can be done in a myriad of ways that do not always adhere to the formalized norms found in much of the community-engaged methodology and literature. At its core, I believe this difference to be about whether community-engaged research requires a community-based presence. I assert being community-based is an accelerating factor in the development of community research partnerships. Further, I urge researchers to think deeply about what qualifies as a research partnership and how to be inclusive of individuals unaffiliated with organizations. Ultimately, I show how my methodological choices did not follow traditional and formalized agreements and processes. However, the outcomes still fit as a community-engaged approach. I contend community-engaged processes should be rearticulated with more attention to levels of societal organization and pay particular attention to the differences that emerge when working at the level of individual community members.

Community-engaged research has developed over the last 25 years as a way for researchers to rethink the power relations between researchers and the communities they work in, with, and for. Generally, community-engaged research is focused on the needs of communities from researchers, and frames researchers as individuals who should use their skills in service of the communities with whom they do research (Greenberg et al., 2020; London et al., 2022). This challenges traditional research dynamics in which researchers work “on” subjects and coopt subjects’ experiences for their career’s benefit. This shift in perspectives about subjects as participants and agents in the research process has opened doors for new methodological development, like participatory action research (PAR; Leavy, 2022). In the process of creating methodologies and approaches for community-engaged research, the field has built boundaries around what counts as this kind of work. In the

definitions of community-engaged, implicit claims get made—and then taken for granted—about what counts as 'community' and 'engagement.'

Alongside the development of community-engaged research methodologies, researchers in fields like psychology, public health, and medicine have pushed for deeper engagement defined as community-engaged participatory research. The primary piece of methodology that differentiates community-engaged and participatory research is the latter requires community members codesign the project from its inception (Wallerstein et al., 2020). Community members participate in regular meetings to discuss community concerns, carry out needs and asset mapping, and codify a research question and process. Some work may also qualify as participatory action research if the community members conduct an action related to the research questions they have developed for their community's needs. PAR and participatory research in general has been heralded by many as a highly ethical approach to community-engaged research, which can be laden with power differentials.

I do not believe all the ethical conundrums of community-engaged research are resolved in this approach. For example, one of the ethical challenges of community-engaged participatory research is the amount of time it requires of community partners and the question of ethical compensation for their time and energy. This has yet to be resolved, as researchers have continually come up against the challenge of securing funding to compensate their community collaborators financially. Additionally, the question of best practice can be tricky to navigate as researchers often know best practices from their positions as highly schooled individuals. As researchers have attempted to convey their knowledge base to their collaborators, they have often take on timely processes to ensure their partners are informed decision-makers, but impasses still happen sometimes.

Another example of ethical challenges that emerge from current conceptualizations of community-engaged research is the question of who counts as a community partner. To qualify as community-engaged, researchers must develop a partnership with a community organization. This, I argue, is a limitation of the formalized processes that define community-

engaged research which should be built on relational power dynamics. From a sociological and anthropological perspective, individual community members become representatives of different issues when they are working on behalf of an organization. Yet, to constitute ethical boundaries of research with communities, organizations are charged with crafting a memorandum of understanding (MOU). For example, an MOU typically outlines organization and research needs and the expectations collaborators can have of each other, including compensation, work division, and decision-making processes.

Formalized structures like MOUs are also typically required for organizations like schools and public health entities charged with protecting their communities' privacy and interests. Employing an MOU as a hallmark of ethical community-engaged research means 'community' is defined around the assumption a community organization can speak on behalf of their community. Though I agree this is a solid approach, I aim to highlight the issue of scale in the structures of community-engaged research. I aim to draw attention to the ways organizations' MOUs and transactional standards pose a direct challenge to relational power that community-engaged research should have. I argue at the scale of individual membership, in diffused and informal communities, the standards of engagement should change. It is precisely at this scale of analysis I believe researchers should be community-based to employ ethnographic methods that capture individuals' experiences of quotidian life. This issue of rightsizing is at the heart of the methodology which I discuss in this chapter.

My dissertation focused on individuals from many community organizations. However, I showed how their experiences with transactional expectations, like those outlined in MOUs between organizations, sometimes end up harming the community members who work on behalf of organizations. My focus was on their individual experiences in a network of women working with community organizations. Although they were often still at odds with the transactional approach of organizations, they did not leave them but instead formed a secondary system in which they could support each other in relational ways after they have been harmed by transactional processes. The relationality of this group emerged as one of

their strengths, and was supported by collaborations between county resources, community-based organizations, and community schools. So though bound together through work and community, these individuals had entirely separate relationships with each other outside of these organizations.

In my work, I maintained focus on the individuals as a community, rather than subsuming them under the organizations in which they participate. They showed up for each other regardless of organizational agency. They met regularly, organized events, shared information, and built knowledge. I focused specifically on women who generally did not have access to formalized relationships to institutional and organizational titles due to their status as noncitizens and undocumented residents. Additionally, I aimed to include children as agents of their lives and as key contributors to their community.

My rationale for engaging with families and children in these ways was rooted in building relational trust. I did not aim for them to only trust me, but also, I was looking for ways to trust them. This population is both over addressed in research for marginalized groups in the country and not evenly distributed, so they have been asked to participate in community feedback spaces. Additionally, because a major feature of their challenges at work is their time has not always been recognized and valued in ways they deem appropriate or just, I needed to be extra careful of the relationships I was building. In this process, I took their lead about where we went, what we did, and where I was documenting them.

By foregrounding an approach of relational and mutual trust, I surpassed the idea of being an objective observer and instead was a participant privy to information guarded from outsiders. To supplant this approach, I chose methods that allowed me to engage in mutual trust building such as ethnographic methods. I also brought relationship-building strategies into my work with children to signal myself as a safe and welcoming person with whom they could be honest and open.

County, Organization, and District Contexts

Table 1 offers an overview of the demographics of Tierra Linda county. The county is mid-size for the state of California and was classified as primarily rural as it sits between national parks and touristy scenic ocean views. Nestled into the mountainside, the county was broken into four regions—the mountains, north county, mid-county, and south county. At the time of this study, the county was predominantly white at 57.17%, with 35.98% identifying as Latino. By region, the mountains was the whitest region, at 78.23%. This demographic makeup was inverted when compared to Latinos in South County, who made up 76.09% of the region's population. Most of the households in my study were located in South County, with 21,920 families living in the region. North County was equally family driven, holding 22,963 families. Household size varied only slightly among mountains, north county, and mid-county from 2.36–2.5 persons per household. South county exceeded this median with 3.58 persons per household, and 49.87% of those households had children.

Table 1

Demographic and Economic Snapshot of the County

Region	County overall	Mountains	North county	Mid-county	South county
Population (people)	268,108	33,962	117,753	43,767	101,372
Percent White	57.17	78.23	64.8	73.01	26.78
Percent Latino	35.98	11.87	23.6	18.58	76.09
Households	94,726	13,456	43,874	18,367	27,789
Families	58,333	8,604	22,963	11,078	21,920
Avg. household size (people)	2.66	2.5	2.44	2.36	3.58
Percent of Households with children	31.32	27.51	25.95	26.12	49.87
Median household income	$101,068	$137,273	$103,211	$115,178	$82,403
Percent of families with children below poverty	3.44	0.70	2.94	2.14	6.28
Owner occupied housing units average value	$1,095,870	$1,139,274	$1,178,170	$1,200,642	$823,141

Median household income varied from $137,273 in the mountains to $82,403 in South County. The percent of families with children living below poverty reflected this economic disparity as mountains had less than 1%, and south county nearly doubled the county-wide average at 6.28%. For a sense of home value, the mountains and north county exceeded $1.1 million, and South County homes on average were valued at $823,141. It is important to note these values can be further disaggregated. For example, in South County the average household size was 3.58 persons; however, 25.03% of the households were 2-person households, and 25.76% were 5+ persons, and 7.23% were 7+ persons. Similarly, the average household income for Latinos in South County was below the average at $73,127.

Another important note is the participants in this study were largely uncaptured in demographic averages. Because the families I worked with in this study encompassed a variety of legal statuses, and therefore had different work permissions and different forms of income, their experiences were not easily tracked in census questionnaires. Additionally, censuses have historically struggled to capture Latino experiences along the axes of race and ethnicity (Hernández, 2021; López & Hogan, 2021). Importantly, I reflected the population of white and Latino people as disparate categories because the dataset I drew from included Latinos as an ethnicity and broke the category into "Hispanic/Latino" and "non-Hispanic/Latino," thereby lumping together Hispanic and Latino and entirely ignoring the alternative of non-Hispanic Latino. The use of Hispanic Latino tends to refer to Latinos of Hispanic or Spanish origin. This is different than Latinos who identify as having Indigenous or Black heritage.

The demographics of the county reflected its fairly stratified racial and economic composition. Indeed, this stratification existed in the minds and lives of residents as well. This county has been consistently ranked as one of the most expensive in California and requires many families to travel to Silicon Valley jobs and as far as San Francisco tech industries. On the other hand, the central coast's proximity to California's Salad Bowl means other workers in the county are part of the agricultural industry as farmers and field workers. The largest

employment sector in the county is education, followed by the county itself. At the time of designing this project, I realized many mixed-status families in the county had a family member who worked in the education sector, and a member who was making money as an unauthorized worker in the fields, in restaurants, in cleaning, or another service job. Uniquely positioned between the tech-centered Bay Area and Central Californian farming, Tierra Linda hosts a variety of jobs that support both citizen and noncitizen workers.

I also saw an increase in attention from county leadership for mixed-status families in the county, particularly as the COVID-19 global pandemic spread. As I prepared to undertake this project, COVID-19 became part of the context in which everyone was living. Under California's shelter in place order, household spaces became more dynamic than ever before, and leaders were thinking about basic needs many homes were going without. Homes became school, workplaces, and places to isolate. It was fertile ground for a mental health crisis across all age groups. Amid this syndemic, social service providers were called into action across the county. As I collaborated with other researchers to understand mixed-status family experiences in the county, and now during the COVID-19 global pandemic, I met a community initiative and the various community resource centers that would be the basis of my future recruitment and work.

When I began forging relationships for this project, I worked with organizations like the local food bank, the county advisory board, and a local family initiative I called Championing Children. Championing Children (CC) emerged in the county in 2015. The initiative aimed to support parents and families by building relationships through their children's schools. When I encountered CC in 2020, they were based out of Douglass Elementary school and aimed to have two parent representatives from each elementary school and middle school in Big River School District, a school district located in the mid-county region. Since then, they spread to all districts in the county, launching a pilot program involving one elementary school from each district. CC was a reputable organization among community providers, and I first heard of them at a county-wide immigrant justice conference,

led by a major nonprofit in the county. I heard about how they were a trusted community organization, committed to supporting Latino families.

During the COVID-19 global pandemic, specifically toward the end of shelter in place and quarantine orders, when parents were not permitted to enter school grounds, CC played a critical role in bridging the gap between teachers and parents. And at the height of the pandemic's economic impact, CC found a niche in the community as a financial resource. When many undocumented and mixed-status families found themselves ineligible for federal and state relief programs, CC began using grant funds to offer direct aid via gift cards for families utilizing the food bank's satellite distribution centers. They also facilitated public health trainings and launched a promotora style program with parents to reach Spanish-speaking community members and spread the work about pending vaccinations and changing regulations about social distancing and shelter in place. Their staff supported families and parents, primarily mothers, in being heard by teachers and school administrators alike. At its core, CC aimed to be for and by community members. As a result, staff were liaisons to leadership in schools and the county more broadly, and parents generated ideas about events and supported the outreach and involvement of other parents. CC aims to be a relationship and trust-centered organization. Their objective in building strong relationships between parents, teachers, administrators, and county leaders, has been to leverage relationships to support equity in family advocacy.

Considering CC's strong public presence as trusted members of and advocates for Latino families in the community, I felt their organization would play a critical role in vouching for me as a relatively new member in the county. Additionally, the mission and core values of CC reflected a commitment among its collaborators to the "whole child" approach in education. In addition to their commitment to education and character development, CC talked about mental health and emotional well-being. Because their model of advocacy stems from relational power building, these values are reflected in their trainings, retreats, and

planning meetings. This signaled families who worked with CC had already been primed to an educational approach.

As I discuss in later chapters, children's labor as learners is one often ignored by traditional approaches to education. So together, CC seemed like an ideal site to begin recruitment as they worked with the population I was seeking, and in a way that facilitated conversations on emotional labor by way of topics like emotionally attuned parenting. These conversations involved teaching parents about the social-emotional development of their children in different phases of transition including their first cell phones, new schools, moving districts, and more. CC aimed to support the whole child by training and educating parents to be advocates for their children and families.

The district in which I began doing this work, called Big River, was developing and implementing a community school approach to serving students and families. Community schooling is a strategy for education whereby schools act in partnership with other community organizations to create infrastructures of support for children to feel secure in their families and communities. As a result, schools often serve as hubs for public service providers to meet the needs of community members. Often, school sites house public resources like mental health services, health screening services, mobile dental services, and in some instances resources like laundry rooms and community gardens. Big River's superintendent, Dr. Davila introduced the community school model when I was working with families apart of her school district.

At the time of this study, Big River had six schools, comprised of three elementary schools (Pine, Douglas, and Spruce elementary schools), one middle school (Western Middle School), an alternative school (Southern Alternative), and a charter school (Green Charter). In an interview with Dr. Davila, she said districtwide about 60% of students were Latinos, 30% white, 1% Filipino, 2.5% Black, and .25% Pacific Islander, with the remaining percent being families who did not respond. Dr. Davila explained each school had its own identity and was known for different programs and approaches. For example, one school was known for

being a transitional kindergarten and pre-K program site and another was known for its strong Spanish speaking faculty and principal. Dr. Davila also said most caregivers in the district worked in the service industry, as cooks in restaurants and in housekeeping for the local tourist industry, or in house cleaning for the more affluent portion of the city. When asked about the wealthy families she saw in the district, Dr. Davila said many of them were from Tierra Linda County generationally. She said many of the families who owned their homes inherited them from their parents or grandparents who purchased decades ago when they were significantly more affordable.

Dr. Davila also echoed the trend I outlined in the county's demographics: wealthier families had caregivers who traveled to tech hubs for work. This fact has ramifications for the school site councils and parent organizations that rely predominantly on parents who participate in person. When asked about the parents and families who she was working with most closely, she identified a group of mothers active in CC and in the school's spaces of family engagement. These mothers, primarily Latina and immigrant mothers, were in the unique position of staying local, and therefore tended to be the most available for meetings, after-school programs, and local family resources. These mothers often held multiple volunteer positions in district-level work, site-level work, and community work. Given the reach of their involvement, they emerged as the most visible families in the county, with sway in multiple different arenas.

Overall, Tierra Linda's demographics were not representative of California. Tierra Linda's percent of white residents was higher than California's by 17.58%. The Latino population in Tierra Linda was lower than California's by 4.93%. The median household income was higher in Tierra Linda by $11,449 per year by comparison to California overall. The cost of living in the county was regularly among the top five highest in the state. This proved Tierra Linda to be predominantly white and wealthy with high disparities along axes of race, ethnicity, class, and geography. In 2023, the necessary hourly wage to afford Tierra Linda's cost of living for a 2-bedroom apartment was $63.33, or $131,720 annually. Finally,

the highest median household income was in the mountains, which were predominantly White, and South County, which was predominantly Latino. This information also highlights the ways residents in the county were struggling to make ends meet as the median cost of living in the county also continued to rise. Mixed-status families, disadvantaged by their varying legal statuses and work permissions, faced additional barriers to affordable living in this county. But they could leverage the county's strong network of community resources to help with all of these challenges.

Though the county was classified as rural, they were recipients of significant philanthropic and private-sector funding from agriculture and tech corporations. As a result, the county did not operate on the same landscape as rural counties like those in northern California or in other parts of the United States that face significant challenges in funding community resources. This discord, between being a rural school district and a highly resourced county, amplified the possibilities for the community. In a county where even U.S. born, highly schooled, and wealthy families struggle to afford the cost of living, mixed-status families were demonstrating innovative ways they rallied for each other by tapping into local family resources and taking up leadership roles. Additionally, because of their unique positionalities as mixed-status families, they created more insular groups for nontraditional resource sharing and exemplified how they functioned as a network of mutual aid.

Eligibility and Recruitment

The criteria for recruitment to participate in this study were to be a mixed-status family with at least one child between the ages of 6 and 9 years old. For the purpose of this study, I defined mixed-status families as one in which at least one member was a U.S. citizen and at least one member is a noncitizen, including being a visa holder, having deferred action for childhood arrivals, and any other temporarily protected status. I began formal recruitment after I had spent time meeting the families I wanted to recruit. Prior to recruitment, I joined them in meetings, seeing them in drop off lines, and at community events. By the time I

decided to recruit from CC and the Big River School District, many of the mothers who I would recruit had seen me and knew a little bit about me.

When I went to the end of year celebration for CC, which was held at Douglass Elementary, I brought quarter-sheet flyers I had printed with my recruitment information. On this sheet I listed the criteria, my phone number and email address, and listed my institutional affiliation. In the beginning, two mothers said yes to participating. From there, they began sharing my recruitment flyer with more families and other mothers also eligible to participate.

Although my recruitment flyer listed my research questions and explained the aim of the study, mothers often wanted to hear me explain the project. I explained the project from the perspective I thought would be the most accessible and important to them as mothers—the social emotional development of their children. I explained how I aimed at understanding how children's social emotional development takes place in the household and family setting. And in particular, I believed Latina immigrant mothers and mixed-status families engaged in teaching social emotional skills in ways often ignored by traditional and normative school systems. In many cases, I used the example of how customary practice in classrooms is to applaud children for doing their work individually, and collaboration was perceived as a classroom disruption. However, in many Latino families, collaboration is not only the norm but the expectation. I offered them this example to illustrate how my work, in documenting the various ways children in these families, under their particular care, were learning and practicing ways of relating to each other not always valued as strengths. I aimed to position myself as their ally in the school spaces we entered and wanted to explain my project as something aimed at changing how our shared community in the county see Latino families and children.

Because this project was ethnographic and followed the daily experiences of the participants, I became aware of their close relationships and inner circles. This relational approach to recruitment and data collection yielded the best information from a population guarding itself from outsiders due to their vulnerability as mixed-legal status families.

Ethnographic data collection is most aligned to relational trust building, and also supports the process of understanding nuanced interpersonal interactions. Through this snowball sampling I got to know the group of mothers who frequented the parks. Those women lived mostly in mid-county, but some lived in other regions. Together, they documented the process by which community schools began to roll out across the county.

As a researcher who was community-based, I was able to leverage all my time in community. Sometimes I learned things by just being out in the community and seeing public signs, or getting targeted advertisements such as for universal pre-K, or the local swim center and family resource centers. During the time of building trust, I leveraged my role as a community member. These mothers saw me as a volunteer alongside them at collaboratives, such as for farm working women's reproductive health, and with them in receiving public support for my family. I ran into my participants on personal errands like the grocery store, and in offices like the local women infant and children office. It was my experience we built trust by being together in community.

As I grew into a new version of myself, as a mother, I was always tapped into a community understanding part of who I was becoming. There was something important in being community-based let them know I was really being me because there was no boundary between myself and my field site. As I reflected on the process of leaving this community when I finished my doctoral studies, I was more convinced this research was with a community I was a part of instead of a community I came to serve. And it is those blurred lines I believe accelerated the research process but did not adhere to the rules of formalized community-engaged research.

Participants

In this dissertation, I refer to individuals by pseudonyms. To orient readers to the families with whom I worked, I briefly review each family in this section. Because my work focused primarily on how mothers support the development of social emotional learning, I

only included mothers and children in this section. However, all the mothers who participated in this study were married to men.

Daniela was mother to two daughters: 6-year-old Itati and 8-year-old Natalie. They lived in a 1-bedroom apartment. Daniela had a sister who lived between Mexico and the United States on travel visas. Their mother also lived between the United States and Mexico on travel visas. They both came for periods of time to work in a local restaurant that hired Daniela's sister, and when her sister's visa ended, they hired her mother. In this way, Daniela's family housed an additional 1–2 people at any point in the year. However, due to the need for work and limited duration of their travel visas, Daniela's sister and mother typically alternated when they were in the United States with her. Daniela also had more siblings in other parts of the United States and Mexico.

Daniela wasone of the few mothers in this study to have a work permit, which she received just prior to the start of my study. Although Daniela initially overstayed her visa, she was married to a Mexican origin, naturalized U.S. citizen and was able to obtain a work permit through her marriage. When I met Daniela, she had just begun a job as a cafeteria worker in her daughter's elementary school.

Leticia had one daughter, 10-year-old Mariana, and two sons, 9-year-old Jose and 7-year-old Eric. Leticia was undocumented and her husband had a work permit. Mariana and Jose were born in Mexico, and Eric was a U.S.-born citizen. They lived in a double wide trailer with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, a small yard, and their dog. Additionally, Leticia's sister visited with a temporary visa and worked at the restaurant Daniela's family worked in.

Cynthia had three children. Her eldest daughter Herminia was 11-year-old, her youngest daughter was 5-year-old Lali, and her middle child was 10-year-old Edgar. Neither Cynthia nor her husband had any form of regularized status. However, the couple met locally through family and friends and all three children were U.S.-born citizens. The family lived in a one-bedroom trailer.

Lizette was the only U.S.-born mother in my study. She was married twice, both undocumented partners. In her previous marriage she had two sons, Diego who was 16, and Mario who was 17. She was able to regularize her ex-husband's status and he was now a naturalized citizen. Her current husband was still undocumented. She had one daughter from her current husband: 5-year-old Luisa. When I first met Lizette, she worked for CC but left the organization and now worked for Big River School District as the district office's family and community engagement manager. The family lived in a two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment.

Esther was an undocumented mother to two sons, 10-year-old Martin and 12-year-old Miguel. Miguel was not a U.S. citizen and Martin was a U.S.-born citizen. Esther sometimes worked cleaning houses but did not hold any regular employment. This family lived in a studio apartment.

Mari had three daughters, 16-year-old Destiny, 10-year-old Liliana, and 5-year-old Lucia; and two sons, 12-year-old Daniel and 7-year-old Santiago. Mari recently received a status adjustment when she applied to be listed as the legal caretaker of one of her children who had special needs. After this status adjustment, Mari focused on looking for paid work and held multiple paid and unpaid positions across the country. She was a well-known community member respected for her leadership on behalf of the Latino community.

Yolanda was mother to one daughter, 10-year-old Antonia, who was a U.S.-born citizen. When I met Yolanda, she was undocumented but working in a daycare requiring her to complete a background check and fingerprinting. During the time of my data collection, Yolanda separated from her husband and returned to Mexico, taking Antonia with her.

Linda was mother of three daughters, 17-year-old Cristina, 15-year-old Ana, and 10-year-old Camila. Liliana was undocumented but sometimes worked in her husband's family restaurant or cleaning homes when her friends reached out for extra help. Liliana was the only participant in my study to live in a single-family home.

Mona was my only participant from Central America. Originally from El Salvador, she had a daughter from a previous relationship who recently joined her in the United States. In addition to 16-year-old Gabriela, she had 8-year-old Joaquin who was from her marriage in the United States. Mona was undocumented and worked cleaning houses.

Jovanna had three children. Her two sons, 26-year-old Enrique and 22-year-old Alejandro, were already moving into adulthood when she became pregnant with Estrella who was 8 at the time of this study. Alejandro had a son of his own, and Jovanna played an active role in her grandson's life. Jovanna used to work as a hairdresser but stopped working when Estrella was young. She now only cut hair on occasion by request of friends. Her family lived in an apartment and recently moved to a more affordable part of town due to the increasing cost of living in the county.

Brenda had one son, 7-year-old Ernesto, and one daughter, 6-year-old Isla. Brenda was an active couponer and was able to stockpile household items like shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, and more shelf-stable goods. Brenda lived in an apartment and faced challenges in getting permission to re-sell these items because she did not collect enough to sell at an open market or swap meet. Instead, when possible, she set up a garage sale using Liliana's front yard.

Julieta had two daughters, 6-year-old Elena and 10-year-old Teresa. She lived with her sister's family in an apartment.

Luz had two sons, 7-year-old Hugo and 10-year-old Samuel. Luz and her husband were both undocumented and were able to secure low-income housing in the county. They lived in a 1-bedroom apartment.

In addition to these families at the heart of this study, there were more who also congregated on occasion with this set of mothers, forming a relatively stable community. Collectively, they made up a group of 20 women. Some of the women who frequented this group were no longer mothers to children. For example, Laura was an elder community member who was an immigrant from Chile who arrived in the United States by way of

Canada where she lived undocumented several years. She was an active member of the group and was an advocate for the representation of Latina mothers in all parent and family spaces she entered.

Additionally, Susana was a disabled woman who spent time with this group so regularly the children all have known her nearly their whole lives. In a recent celebration for her birthday, Susana said, "What I am most grateful for is the company and acceptance of your children, who I love as if they were part of my own family. It has been an honor to see them grow, and to see you all grow and support one another." I highlight these extra members to show though this group was primarily made up of mothers to young and school-aged children; they were a unique intergenerational group who invited young and old, mothers and other-mothers to join them.

The group, which I later refer to as Madres Unidas, aimed to support each other through mutual aid. This kind of network involved regular gatherings for socializing and working. They blurred the lines of personal and political, effortlessly streaming together things like birthday celebrations, gift exchanges, and local elections or school board meetings. What I think was most impactful in this group was they shared the work of caregiving for each other's children, their families, and their community. Some of the activities they did together were for compensation, like their work as health promotoras, but other activities were designed to celebrate each other or affirm each other's presence in the community. For example, they held group birthdays each month to celebrate whoever's birthday lands in that respective month. Or in other cases, they attended gatherings simply to remind others they were a resource for other mothers. In one instance, many members of this group attended a baptism of their friend's grandson. When I asked where their friend was, they said she had returned to Mexico. Before she left, they assured her they would look out for her daughter, who remained in the county with her father and sister. Approximately 1 year after this baptism, the mothers were talking about how to support this friend's daughter who was starting a business selling homemade donuts, cookies, and gelatins for parties. They agreed

to place an order for the next social gathering. In summary, though the group's expendable or excess resources were limited and sometimes nontraditional, they regularly leveraged resources as a collective. In this case, mutual aid looked like a group of women who leaned on each other not by way of asking, but by leading with generosity.

In their differences of size, class, and legal variation, these families reflected the reality of families today. Though there was no average family, all these families were typical of mixed-status families at large. Like many other mixed-status Latino families, these families were split across nations (Castañeda, 2019). Mothers have left children with family in their home countries, traveled with them, and brought them to the United States later in life (Dreby, 2010). Also much like many undocumented families, some families stay split across borders and due to life circumstances, opt to return to their home country (Van Hook & Glick, 2020). The fact all the families I described included heteronormative partnerships is also typical of immigrant families from Latin America (Menjívar et al., 2016). This is in part because of Latin American culture of Catholicism and patriarchy, which uphold heteronormativity. However, it is also likely because the legal system of citizenship is inextricable from the legal system of marriage and families (Abrego, 2014; Enriquez, 2020). In short, it is difficult to argue there is any representative sample of mixed-status families as each family's legal make up is affected by the composition of their family. Further, because of the predominantly Mexican and Central American population residing in California, their ethnic and racial makeup is much different from what may be found on the east coast.

Data Collection

The first method of data collection I used was ethnographic observations in domestic settings. Families would schedule periods of 2–4 hours at a time in their home. Additionally, they would invite me on outings with their children. These trips included walks around the community, time in parks, school events, shopping and recreational outings, and social gatherings like baby showers, birthdays, baptisms, graduations, and holiday celebrations. I intended for these observations to be most revealing in-home settings. I based this method

on other research which identified family routines like baths and bedtime to be the most collaborative between parents and children. I thought their routines would reveal how parents model emotional labor with their children during these routines of negotiation and how children practiced what they observed to advance their own agenda during these times. During my time in homes, I saw mothers parenting in a naturalistic setting.

In addition to my own observations, homes were also where I asked kids to record youtuber style house tours where they showed me objects and talked about their living and family in unfiltered diary-style commentary. I chose to use this method because by informing participants it should be in a "youtuber style," I was able to communicate I wanted a personal and first-person narrative from the individual doing the recording. It allowed me to hear children's narratives in their own words. Also, this method allowed for children to separate themselves from the adult conversations that typically took place at the same time and the additional chatter gave a veil of privacy for them to linger on objects that meant something to them. I thought I might find children speaking about their feelings toward objects and people in their homes more directly. Instead, they told me stories about objects, told me who purchased objects, why they were placed in particular ways, and how those decisions got made. Though their affective attachments to their homes were evident, it was not so clearly narrated but still gave me a good sense of the general sentiment they felt toward others through the objects they shared or had boundaries around.

Something that emerged quickly and often during these observations was the challenge of housing. All these families were renters, and trailer communities are very common in the county, particularly near the beaches. Main roads of a touristy downtown strip were surrounded by residential and trailer communities. All families were living at the capacity of a home. One family said they wanted to participate in observations but did not understand what I would see because "there's nothing to do" in their homes. I learned some spaces are used by just having people and things in them. Indeed, home observations were mostly revealing of how families lived in the county, rhythms of life for their family, and the site of

informal interviews as well as casual conversation among family members, drop in guests, and visiting family.

In terms of interactions between mothers and children in the context of homes, I primarily saw mothers modeling appropriate reactions and responses. Emotional moments were driven by either adult storytelling or children's dynamics. In the former, children listened intently and observed how their elders reacted and talked about issues. They mirrored laughter, tenderness, and concern as their mothers discussed issues of family members' and friends' legal statuses, work and money troubles, and relationship issues. And in moments where they were emotionally activated, like during tantrums, conflicts, and play, children were more likely to act on their own prerogative. In these cases, mothers sometimes entered with the goal of connection and coregulation, but sometimes they intervened from the stance of a coach, calling out what they saw happening and predicting pathways of choice and action. However, I found these moments were not occurring in homes as often as on outings. Considering the challenge domestic observations posed for families' comfort and participation, I pivoted to collecting observations from public settings like parks, after school events, and social gatherings. After collecting domestic observations with four families, for a total of 6 months, the general group of mothers I came to work with got to know me and so they learned about what I was doing, what the project was, and what I was observing for, and thus welcomed me into observation in these other spaces and contexts.

In school and community settings, I was able to see family dynamics happen in settings where more variables were at play, including, for example, other children, other families, games, coaching, and vendors. These other people changed family dynamics, and summoned dynamics invisible when the family was in isolation in their home. At home, children could do what they wanted without having to ask permission, in public settings children ran back and forth from their mothers and whatever they were engaged in. When the ice cream truck arrived, a table of mothers sitting and chatting erupted, children all asking for a few dollars for a treat. In seconds they were gone and crowding around the truck and the

table was calm again as mothers awaited their change. In addition to always returning to their mothers, children were charged by their mothers to be responsible of and for each other. A hierarchy of age emerged in which elder siblings could be with children of their own age, but still had to be aware of where other siblings were, making sure to keep track of others and stay a part of their family group. Additionally, in parks and at school events, children were able to roam freely in the collective of their group and mothers could connect with each other and have recreational time of their own.

Parks and schools were also a desirable location because they provided a way to see mothers working outside the home. And because parks were the sites of many free and public resources for children after school programs, parks emerged as an important context for family activity. Parks were the primary site of celebration because they were free, accommodated large groups, had resources for children, facilities for use, and were part of a circuit of vendors and county programs. Therefore, I continued going to the park weekly, for afternoons from 2–6 hours at a time, for the better part of 2 years. I used two methods of recording my observations in these diverse settings. When possible, I used video recordings by positioning my cell phone in a propped location to record a session of children's play, a mealtime, or other routine processes like preparing children for outings and trips. Second, I used reflective voice memos which I recorded on my phone to recount what we spent our time doing, topics of special interest, or emerging questions I had speculative answers to.

As I reflected on what I was seeing in home spaces and public spaces, I struggled to see instances in which mothers and children were talking to each other about how they understood work, care, and emotions. I therefore decided to design a focus group for children to have a space in which mothers were not interrupting them, or correcting them, and in which I could ask age-appropriate questions on these topics. In this focus group, I used two tools: books and a card deck. The two books I used were children's books with undertones of social emotional learning. The first, *The Crayon's Book of Feelings*, by Drew Daywalt is a board book for infants and children to learn about feelings. Each page is clearly labeled with

a feeling and juxtaposed against a cartoon of a crayon expressing the feeling. The book closes with an image of a multicolored crayon and says, "It's ok to have different kinds of feelings all at once." And the second, *A Raven's Nest* by Raven Roxanne, is a book about what elements are necessary in a home. The book's illustrations show a woman walking along the seaside collecting aspects that bring calm, joy, stability, harmony, and more features to her "nest." The book ends with a graphic of a wheel composed of pie slices labeled with the pieces discussed in the story and then offers a blank version for readers to complete on their own. This page offers instructions of how to do the activity.

When holding this discussion, I used these books to engage children's perspectives on what emotions looked like in others, and to ask probing questions about their homes and the feelings they carry there. I also used the Fair Play card deck. This deck is a companion for *Fair Play* by Eve Rodsky. Rodsky's book is intended for adults and looks for a way to discuss labor distribution in romantic relationships. Aimed at dismantling gendered labor disparities in household work, her text highlights the invisible labor part of childrearing and household mental work. The deck is made to be a tangible way to divide and re-distribute the labor done in a family setting. I used this deck, specifically the cards on invisible forms of labor and household labor that would also fall under carework to offer tangible examples to children. As I held up different cards, children would tell me who they saw doing this work and how they felt the impact of it. I recorded this session on a sunny spring afternoon with mothers nearby. I brought pizza and juice to welcome the children into the setting, explained I would be asking some questions and reading books. I told them they could have Hershey kisses for answering and sometimes handed them out for following basic instructions. I also put together gift bags with treats and prizes as a thank you to the children who participated. Some children left early, some children brought their younger siblings with them, and all were welcomed and received the same treats and attention for whatever kind contribution they made.

As I wrapped up data collection, I paused to think about what I know and how I know it. I was struck by the layers of context I struggled to parse out and affirmed by the multiple ways my data spoke to the same themes over and over again: work, care, and community. I admired the ways systems, whether they knew it or not, were creating beloved communities outside the limitations of their own organizational walls. I reveled in the ways under resourced community members found creative solutions to the challenges of informal initiative and agency. I admired the ways children cast themselves on highly coordinated and collaborative efforts. But in all the complexity of my participants' lives, I mostly found I would not have had this opportunity, this level of insight, without being a community-based researcher. By living in the community which I do research in, I have become privy to nuanced perspectives reserved for those deemed as "insiders." Because I rarely left the field, I was more inside than not, and that level of access produced diffused, nuanced, contextual, and layered data related to issues that impacted community members.

Analysis

To analyze these data, I worked in phases. The first phase was to transcribe all the voice memos I had collected post observation. I also transcribed audio recordings of household conversations and informal interviews I conducted on walks or driving between locations with families. I compiled these transcripts and began coding under two broad constructs of adult work and child work. It was from these preliminary findings I noticed the trend of mothers speaking for their children and decided to begin the second phase which was oriented toward capturing children's perspectives. After conducting the focus group with the children, I paired this video recording with the video recordings I had from their home tours and the recordings of time at home. I paid special attention to the recordings in homes where children were telling me about themselves through their bedrooms, their friendships, and their life at school. In this set of video recordings, photographs, and recorded conversations with children, I coded openly to categorize all the areas of importance for these children. I took note of the ways they talked about their family, their relationships, and the

memories they shared. I also asked questions about household work distribution and listened for how they differentiated visible and invisible types of work and how parents experience them, or how they took part in the work.

Positionality

Building trusting relationships with these families took time, and there were several ways I could see their trust build. As a member of a mixed-status family myself, I was aware of how insular immigrant communities can be. As a form of protection, immigrant families often socialize in groups of people vetted by other members of the community they trust. Although these families were always friendly to all, the fact many of them only spoke Spanish at home was a marker of difference. Language served as the first marker of difference between them and the predominantly white communities where they lived. However, in a predominantly white community, language can also be a signpost for where they are welcome and who is their ally. As a native Spanish speaker, my interactions with these families were all in Spanish and I was able to interact with them easily. Still, even as a Spanish speaker, there are many differences between my positionality and the mothers in these families. In many ways, I shared a more similar positionality with their children.

As a daughter of Mexican immigrant parents who were undocumented for much of my childhood, I felt like I knew the foggy lens through which children understood legality as it pertained to their family. Seeing young children toggle between Spanish for their elders and English for their peers, I remembered how my own childhood was marked by this melding of Mexican and U.S. culture. For example, one day I was listening in on a conversation between Estrella and Natalie. They confided in each other about the trials of their day and the tiresome feeling of adults trying too hard to be fun at the after-school program. As they talked, I remembered my own elementary after school program, Stone Soup, where I did homework and played until my mom got off work and picked me up. In listening to them, I remembered the relaxing feeling of spending time with peers who had immigrant parents and who understood the complexities of home and school expectations that sometimes felt like distinct

lives. This shared experience highlights the way immigrant generation plays a role in our upbringing because though there are many Latino children in the county, the kids I was most like had immigrant parents and were first-generation U.S. citizens and students. These children did not have anyone to prime them for their future experiences. At best, they had older siblings who could teach them about what they were going through. But this is a unique positionality to hold and stands in stark difference from peers who are second generation citizens and have their own parents', aunts', and uncles' experiences to help navigate growing up in the United States.

I leveraged this shared positionality as I developed relationships with families and specifically, their children. In conversations with mothers, I identified the ways in which they were like my own mother. I talked about my experiences on the receiving end of her parenting and pointed out the benefits I reaped as I got older. I talked about the advantage of bilingualism or my ability to return to Mexico and stay connected with family there, demonstrating the future of their children could be just as positive. I also built rapport by sharing silly stories about what it is like to grow up between cultures. I shared as a child I sang old ranchera ballads about heartbreak with my uncles, not because I knew about heartbreak but because it was a ceremony that closed out the evening of many family gatherings. They laughed at me from a place of sameness and over time allowed me to ask them questions and listen in as they played and talked in each other's privacy.

When working with mothers, we bonded over motherhood. They were drawn to my infant son, Andres, who traveled with me nearly everywhere I went. When I began recruitment, my son was 4 months old, and they saw him grow over the next 2 years. I started to call him my little research assistant because mothers openly told me if he had not been with me, they may not have ever approached me. The saw me as human because of my positionality as a mother. In many cases, they asked me about how I was feeling as a first-time mother, and they offered me advice. We often talked about household remedies for stuffy noses, dry coughs, and how to handle children's development as it impacted everyone

else in the household. They encouraged their children to play with Andres, watch him, and be mindful of him when I was talking with the adults. And because some mothers had small infants in their families, sometimes they brought babies Andres's age.

This aspect of my personal life and my research life melded in the best way it could have and I often looked forward to seeing them in the park as a break from my busy days at school. Mothers were also sensitive to my time as they knew I was a student as well as a working mom. At first, they struggled to understand how I was both a student and teaching at the university. But when I explained I was a doctoral student and hoped to be a professor, they began to understand how I spent time teaching, learning, researching, and mothering. They were interested in the topics I taught about and curious about student life. These parts of me were the pieces that flagged me as different from them. But as we built trust, these aspects of my life were welcomed, and they often tapped me for things they felt uncomfortable with. For example, in many instances in public settings when someone approached speaking English, they turned to me to interpret and respond. All the mothers understand enough English to get by but were uncomfortable with direct interactions with English speakers and felt more comfortable having me as an intermediary. During a social gathering they organized, I arrived and realized they expected me to translate for the master of ceremony because they had invited community members who did not speak Spanish well enough to follow along. Additionally, there were times where they asked about pediatricians, behavioral specialists, and college readiness. As time went on, we became mutually useful to each other, strengthening my role in the group.

Andres also played a central role in building relationships with their children and families. Fathers smiled as they opened the front door to see me carrying my son, sometimes commenting on how they remember when their children were so young. When Andres learned to give high fives, the kids all circled around him and excitedly held their hands open in front of him for a slap. As Andres learned to walk and run, they played with him, teaching him how to keep a balloon up and kick a ball. For his first birthday, with the encouragement of

the mothers, I threw Andres a birthday party at the park. He was not old enough to eat candy and could not crack open his own piñata. But the gesture of hosting a party won over many children and they stood around him for a picture in front of the cake, holding kazoos and whistles. Now, he plays with them on his own, recognizes them by name, and is part of the crowd. Together, it was an amazing experience to grow alongside these families and learn from them. They were an invaluable part of my life and a blessing as I transitioned into motherhood.

Conclusion

The methodology I outline in this chapter shows how I built horizontal relationships to tap into mixed-status Latino families' relational power. As I discuss further in the following chapters, it is precisely the relational power families hold which makes them such valuable assets to organizations. Yet, as organizations' transactional guidelines govern how they fund their work and who they can compensate for their work, the infrastructures of community organizations have limitations in how they serve community members.

Because my findings focused on change making, the impact of this work is relevant to community development, public education, and restructuring community resources. In this way, the findings from community members' experiences are given back to the community for their own meaning-making and application. I advocated for county-wide commitment to community school approaches and integrated systems of support for children and families. Perhaps most importantly, my methodology advocated for an intentional rethinking of what it means to create relational communities in research. I challenged the notion organizations are the only partnerships worth pursuing. Instead, I called for creative thinking around supporting individuals marginalized and limited in their capacity to be decision makers in organizations because of their legal and work status, or simply because of their lack of time.

Through my experiences as a community-based researcher carrying out a community-engaged project, I had unique opportunities and challenges. However, I believe by offering these experiences to others also committed to community-engaged research, we

can broaden definitions of what community-engaged research can be. Ultimately, I hope to make room for more researchers to do community-engaged work and de-center the hierarchy of institutional knowledge-making.

Chapter 3

Across the United States, people have been in a crisis of care. This crisis, which has impacted childcare, elder care, and fields like healthcare and schooling, was the result of shrinking investment in resources for the public good and the offloading of caring responsibilities onto individuals. Mothers have always been central figures in care. For aging populations, the presence of a daughter can mean getting more care through regular visits, phone calls, and general support, even when compared to sons who live near daughters who live far away. For childcare, essentialist perspectives of motherhood claim constant attachment to one's biological mother is the best foundation for children's development. These examples highlight the gendered nature of care work.

This chapter considers how Latina immigrant mothers have complicated classed and racialized notions of motherhood. Specifically, I engage with the concept of intensive mothering (Hays, 1998), which necessitates all of mothers' expendable time, money, and energy be invested in their children. This framing of motherhood is a product of a neoliberal care regime pinning the responsibility of care work onto individual women and reifies a gendered labor division through the socialization of gendered laborers. I complicate these notions by showing how Latina immigrant mothers use their social capital and community organizing to do intensive mothering in community and school contexts, relying on networks of care. If intensive mothering is mothering defined by investing everything into children, these mothers do so by putting all their resources into building the social capital and networks for their children to have a strong community, a sense of belonging, and investment from others.

Additionally, I challenge current understandings of emotional labor focusing on it as only a capitalist commodification of human emotions. By emphasizing how emotional labor can function through intensive mothering, in the context of unpaid care work, I document a form of emotional labor creating connection and community. Last, this form of emotional labor is different because it does not simply explain how limited energy a resource jobs are tapping

into, but shows how in the right contexts, emotional labor can function as both an expenditure and a replacement of limited energy resources, thus challenging the conception of labor as extractive and individualized.

Literature

Under the current system of neoliberal economics, care is divided into two broad categories: public and private. State-funded programs and social services related to education, health, and climate are in the public realm. The central tension in these areas has been the growing divestment of state actors, which has continually diminished financial support by offloading the cost of care onto individuals. The neoliberal model has increasingly framed childcare as a responsibility and cost of individuals. The state has used cost-benefit analysis to frame childcare as an economic issue separate from caregiving, and the labor involved in this largely low-paid and unpaid work. From the first 5 years of life, and breastfeeding campaigns, to educational grants and state testing, programmatic decisions need to prove their worth now more than ever to receive investment from the state. With the scarce public resources available, mothers are one of the primary features of neoliberal care work. Through systematic divestment from U.S. social safety nets, women have moved from being central figures in caregiving to being the primary force behind social supports (Calarco, 2024). Mothers, as actors both pushed out of the workforce and told being a mother is the most important job there is, have bridged the gap created by limited social services in childcare and increasingly expensive and competitive markets.

The dominant ideology of motherhood, or the ideal of motherhood, in the contemporary United States, is intensive mothering (Hays, 1998). Intensive mothering is an orientation to the role of motherhood which engages essentialist perspectives of gender, care, and work. More than a parenting style, intensive mothering involves core beliefs which can undergird many parenting styles. For example, intensive mothering reflects ambivalence toward self-interest, in favor of devotion to one's child, in such a way motherhood supports the reproduction of patriarchal values in gendered labor division. The context in which Hays

(1998) developed the concept of intensive mothering is one of consumerism in the mid-1990s, targeted at mothers, that fueled specific notions of what good mothering looked like. Thus, a core feature of intensive mothering as articulated by Hays is the social belief good mothering is financially draining, if a person is doing it right.

Emerging at the same time as this rising consumerism from mothers, was a set of growing neoliberal objectives of offloading social and economic support onto mothers. Together, these conditions facilitated the emergence of the notion of intensive mothering simultaneously framing good mothers as wealthy caregivers who spare no cost to provide their children the best in life and framed their children as social capital in which mothers needed to invest to prove they are fulfilling an important societal function (Giles, 2014). In this confluence, mothers were made responsible for their children and simultaneously sold the products to demonstrate their excellence as mothers. This messaging creates what Hays (1998) called "cultural contradictions" primarily stemming from the tensions between mothers' self-interest and gain versus their sacrificial nurturance.

There are three core beliefs of intensive mothering (Hays, 1998): (a) children need to be under constant nurturance and care by their biological mothers; (b) the only people who help mothers should be experts; and (c) mothers must spend all their expendable money, energy, and time on their children. These core beliefs are exemplified by five measures: women are inherently better at parenting than men (essentialism); parenting should be fulfilling (fulfillment); parents must provide high levels of stimulation for children to develop adequately (stimulations); parenting is hard to do (challenging); and the needs of the child should be the highest priority (child-centered; Ennis, 2014).

Other scholars have argued alongside these points is a new demand to engage in "maternal thinking" in which their children's lives and schedules are on mothers' minds at all times (Dean et al., 2021; O'Reilly, 2009). Examples of intensive mothering include mothers (a) being friends with the mothers of their children's friends, (b) spending all their free time with their children, and (c) always putting their children's needs and wants before their own.

In the self-sacrificing behavior of intensive mothers, Hays (1998) asked why and how they are driven to continue evading any self-serving or gainful approaches to parenting. She speculated for some of these mothers, their children's success reflects their own work as mothers. This means though intensive mothering requires over-exertion and over-spending, it may not be devoid of self-interest as their children become the evidence of their exceptional mothering and "unselfish nurturance" (Hays, 1998, p. 2).

One of the trends in intensive mothering is advanced by maternal attachment theorists (Raphael-Leff, 2002). These theorists have argued children need security in one person at the beginning of their life, and the first connection is the mother. But this intense framing of motherhood was offset by advocates of good-enough mothering (Winnicott, 1990) who sought to make this approach more manageable and to emphasize perfection was not required. When attachment theorists emphasized the importance of a child-mother bond in practice this led mothers to push their needs to the wayside. This is because attachment itself constitutes and requires a type of work to make spaces and activities child friendly and safe. As a result, the research on attachment parenting in early childhood and developmental psychology, which became the foundation of intensive mothering in wider social and cultural practice, has made ample room for the rise of parenting approaches which demand much more than what mothers are physically, socially, or financially able to do in sustained ways.

Popular books on parenting approaches like *Hunt, Gather, Parent* (Doucleff, 2022) have posed an essentialist form of mothering where motherhood is seen as natural and should not be a site of struggle but of collaboration. In doing so, Doucleff (2022) romanticized indigenous cultural practices in mothering, and ultimately still advocated for near-constant presence with one's children without expanding on the neoliberal conditions contemporary mothers face today. Their suggestions rearticulated the notions intensive, and now "easy," mothering is accessible if one has the time, money, and energy to address the work of incorporating one's child in nearly all daily activities.

Other approaches to mothering have emerged in stark contrast to intensive mothering like *Free-Range Kids* (Skenazy, 2021) and *Bringing Up Bébé* (Druckerman, 2014). These alternatives have faced strong public criticism because of their focus on the independence of mothers and children, despite their intention of striking a balance of "separation-connection" (Ennis, 2014). Both texts advocated for independence in mothering, either by denying child-rearing as a central part of one's motherhood, or by advocating for children's independence from parents.

Intensive mothering explains what is expected of mothers by tying together a set of claims about what experts want, what society wants, and what we as children would have wanted. But the ideals of intensive mothering are not equally attainable by all mothers. Intensive mothering is racialized and classed in ways supporting white wealthy mothers to give themselves to sacrificial caregiving by assuming they are married and have the expendable time and money to do so. Marginalized mothers on the other hand, often assumed to be single in the popular imagination, have a different relationship to the imaginary ideals of intensive mothering. Non-white and poor mothers have been seen as having made selfish, bad choices by becoming mothers at all. If they are not working for pay, their motherhood is seen as a public charge, and are demonized as welfare queens. But if they do work in the labor market, they are perceived as uninvolved in their children's lives, or even negligent if requires outsourced childcare for mothers to manage their time (Giles, 2014).

Intensive mothering is an ideal governing who is seen as a good mother through measures of time, energy, and money. Affluence can be demonstrated through body work, where parents create socially valued cultural dispositions in their children and themselves. These dispositions are a kind of body language and are forms of embodied culture—ways of moving and communicating one's relation to the world around them. This can be seen clearly in affluent caregivers' devotion to developing sign-language skills. Signing as a form of body work is related to the creation of specific types of children and parents, whose childrearing,

and childhood, are deemed desirable through the cultural practices of their family's parenting approach (Ennis, 2014). However, marginalized mothers who have been racialized, classed, and face legal barriers to engage in the labor market are pinned to the contradictions of motherhood and have a much more difficult time being seen as desirable. These mothers are held to the same societal ideals as white affluent mothers. Yet, they are challenged by neoliberal economics that constrain affordable childcare, limit avenues of public aid and support, and demonize mothers for their socioeconomic status reproduction. As a result, mothers may opt to engage in intensive mothering to demonstrate or perform their value to society. This is evidence of the ways intensive mothering traverses the bounds of class, race, and culture.

Another challenge with intensive mothering is the assumption mothers are better at caregiving, which invisibilizes much of the relational labor mothers do. Body work can be difficult to identify because it can be easily lumped in with mannerisms, disposition, and personality. Performances of self in a relational context can be hard to separate from interpersonal dynamics. For example, people have said children behave worse with their mothers because their mothers are representations of safety. After long days of abiding by adult expectations, managing their emotions, and following rules, children collapse into themselves. They let their emotions reign and engage in rowdy movements to recover their nervous systems. However, for mothers, these processes can emerge as behaviors like running, whining, demanding, and general disruption to the family system and parent-child system. Some of these behaviors are evidence of developmental processes children are undergoing in their own time, but which sometimes stands in conflict with parents' expectations, experiences, and needs. Parents can support their children in regulating themselves, but it requires knowing the behavior is not loaded with intent, rather reflects a need a parent can facilitate access to. In summary, parents, but mothers specifically, are in a position of needing to manage their own emotions as part of the emotional regulation support they offer their children. In this exchange of managing their own emotions, and supporting

others to manage their emotions, mothers do emotional labor often gets lumped into or made invisible by essentialist imaginaries of motherhood.

Though intensive mothering is most visible and discussed in early childhood as it is undergirded by theories of attachment, this mode of parenting continues into children's primary education years. Though their scope of decision making is shifted, the locus of their life remains their child and so questions around work–life balance, school searching, and experiences in diverse cultural contexts become sites of contestation and validation of a "good" kind of mother and child. Education is a site of another cultural contradiction of motherhood, where schools as care institutions are meant to facilitate partial care for children but sometimes manifest more challenges for parents struggling to maintain work and personal life balance (Bianchi, 2011). Parents' responsibilities related to their children's schooling can tilt into intensive mothering by prescribing parental sacrifice in everyday routines, habits, and decisions about home economics while stretching their limited personal time to do supervisory tasks such as during homework or practice of extracurriculars (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019; O'Brien, 2005; Teo, 2022). This work is also enacted in gendered ways; across racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, mothers are more likely to absorb the labor of school decision-making (Brown, 2022). Additionally, low-income Black and Latino mothers of school-aged children engage in ongoing labor to monitor the racial climate at school and protect their children from experiences of marginalization (Brown, 2022). Though intensive mothering takes flight in the early years, it casts a shadow on all the mother-related work yet to come.

The relationship between care work, intensive mothering, and emotional labor is one of overlapping convergence, demonstrated in Figure 5. Though both emotional labor and intensive mothering are forms of care work, they sit on different ends of the economic spectrum, with emotional labor typically being part of paid work and carework generally used in contexts of unpaid and reciprocal care. Intensive mothering, however, is an unpaid form of labor. Intensive mothering even costs mothers' money, time, and energy. Interestingly, both

forms of labor converge as forms of immaterial labor. Both intensive mothering and emotional labor are oriented to the satisfaction of others, and the need for self-control and empathy in the work of connecting to others to reach a point of understanding and find ways of moving forward through conflict. In doing this labor, workers do not produce anything tangible or material. Instead, their labor produces interpersonal outcomes like attachment, investment, loyalty, and influence.

Figure 5

Immigrant and Undocumented Latina Mothering

Mothers in this study also saw intensive mothering as a sign of being good mothers. In the context of their varying legal statuses, and the predominantly white neighborhood in which they lived and worked, being “good” mothers signified they have good children, are part of good families, and can be good citizens. This, too, is a part of intensive mothering and in fact highlights what Hays (1998) called a cultural contradiction in which mothers act in seemingly sacrificial ways but the reason for which they do is one may be self-serving.

Intensive mothers have not been investigated in the context of legality and it is unknown whether mothers' legal status is related to their practices of intensive mothering. But what is clear is these mothers, with the barriers of illegality, have been unable to work in ways mothers of color are expected to be seen, by mainstream society and in part the predominantly affluent community they live in, as devout mothers. It is important to note even some community work, like specific in-class volunteer work, was inaccessible to these mothers. In the school districts these families attended, in-class volunteers must complete a background check by fingerprint. This requirement would put undocumented mothers into the E-Verify system of the state and could be a barrier to their status regularization in the future. As a result, these mothers have not volunteered in class, but they still demonstrated they were good mothers by being involved in district office work, leading parent committees, doing community work, and by taking extra care to prepare their children for school. For example, one mother, Daniela, had two daughters who she dressed in matching outfits, with their hair done, and bows on. She also volunteered for class work outside of school hours, such as volunteering to set up seating for pre-K graduation before the school day. For that ceremony, she also prepared marshmallow lollipops, each wrapped with clear cellophane and tied with curly ribbon in the school's colors, which her daughter handed out to each classmate. Through these kinds of actions and more, immigrant Latina mothers have leaned into intensive mothering to prove their value in society and to secure more investment in their children and families. These practices are not unlikely in their communities of origin, but the context of immigration and a county coded as predominantly white and affluent shape the ways they engage in these practices and impact the purpose of their intensive mothering.

Overall, I argue Latina immigrant mothers do intensive mothering by being leaders in their community's formal organizational settings. As they work in community-based organizations, with social service providers, and community health organizations, the question of mothers' individual legal status often surges alongside questions about compensation, hiring, and the deservingness of being highlighted in the work they do. The

component of deservingness is related to the ideal and ideology behind intensive mothering. The ideology in which intensive mothering is rooted in is one in which mothers are the primary caregivers of their children. The basis of this ideology is an essentialist understanding of women as biologically adept to caregiving because we are capable of biologically reproducing. Though intensive mothering id certainly idolized, it is also rooted in an ideology presupposing a biological attunement to caregiving based on sex. This can be mapped across cultures to the self-sacrificial nature of motherhood in Latinx *marianismo*, or reverence for virginal and holy femininity rooted in *la Virgen de Guadalupe*, and in some Asian cultures' so-called "tiger mothers" who sacrifice to create stringently cultivated childhoods through an excess of activities, classes, and practices.

Because the dominant ideals of intensive mothering are inaccessible to them, due to the legal barriers they face in obtaining costly resources like additional tutors, paid classes, and other forms of children's cultivation, I assert Latina immigrant mothers' intensive mothering looks different. Namely, their intensive mothering occurs in community spaces. Where intensive mothering as previously understood fits primarily into neoliberal and individualized frameworks for childcare, these mothers instead move their intensive mothering into community contexts, negotiating their time between paid, unpaid, household, and community work, all of which are focused on investing in their children's present and future well-being. In this way, they do not do intensive mothering because they do not work, but instead work as a form of intensive mothering. The following findings evidence how mothers work across spaces and organizations in their county, how their time is spread across spaces differently from the white, rich, and educated mothers in dominant and mainstream intensive mothering literature, how their work in formal settings can be rewarding and fatiguing, and how they create spaces of communal care as alternative forms of community work geared at intensive mothering.

I see mothers' work as layered and baked with emotional labor. In particular, as they traverse spaces, encounter different kinds of institutional and organizational actors, and their

positionality enters the landscape of power, I argue mothers' emotional labor is exemplified through their highly relational and collaborative work. Emotional labor is tricky to identify because of the ways is diffused in relationships, and so can appear to be unfolding naturally. Because of the ways emotional labor involved a feedback loop between participants, it is difficult to identify where one's emotions end and reactions to others begins. For example, in engaging in empathy one might join the other in their experience and share the emotional state they express as an attempt to validate their experience and assuage stress. However, because of the willful joining in that emotional state, it may not be interpreted as labor even though the choice to opt in still resulted in fatigue for the empathizer. When considering the level of emotional labor women do in their role as homemakers, caregivers, community liaisons, and family representatives, it is impossible to ignore the gendered and socialized aspects of emotion management and interpretation. Along with these aspects are additional skills like empathy, connection, negotiation, and flexibility. Too often, women are perceived to have these skills innately. In fact, these skills are practiced, and the mothers in this study use them as a form of gaining leverage by engaging in horizontal collaboration.

Though emotional labor may be a feminized form of gendered labor, it is not "natural" to women. Through these findings, I argue these women model a particular type of collaborative emotional labor, which their children perceive and practice as important aspects of their learning and contributions to society. Additionally, though emotional labor is certainly present in white and rich mothers' intensive mothering, it is important to note the emotional labor they do is more likely to exist in the context of child-rearing and family life due to the isolation of neoliberal mothering models. Perhaps more than white citizen mothers, Latina immigrant and undocumented mothers' approach to intensive mothering requires more emotional labor. Because they have more differences to confront, their commitment to community can require greater levels of emotional labor, particularly in predominantly white and resource rich spaces. These findings lay the basis for understanding how intensive

mothering, in this particular style of community involvement, is laden with emotional labor for the purpose of collaboration with community members more broadly.

Working Across Spaces

In their work, mothers make up the community that organizations aim to serve, the contacts for connection, the leadership in developing ideas, and the public faces of the organizations. Their work makes many of these organizations' initiatives possible considering the realities of their limited time, money, and staff. Mothers are the majority of attendees for meetings, hold positions of leadership, attend retreats, travel for conferences, and dedicate significant time and attention to community work. For example, Championing Children, a local initiative carried out through a collaborative of 18 local organizations across childcare, education, healthcare, immigration, and parent leadership. The parent leadership component included a representative-style committee where two parents from each public elementary school participate in planning, organizing, and carrying out programs including soccer clinics, family active days, and after-school family walks to learn about community resources. The mothers who served on this council were often the ones who negotiated how a program will be carried out in partnership and to that degree of partnership. They could do this work because many of the mothers held multiple positions at once.

Herminia, a mother to three elementary aged children, said she worked as "parent leader in Families First, a health promoter, a church leader . . . volunteering at the food bank, and [she was] president of ELAC [English Learner Advisory Committee] and DELAC [District English Learner Advisory Committee]." ELAC and DELAC are parent committees that focus on contributing to curricular changes related to equity for English learners. For example, a DELAC committee a few participant mothers served on 1 year was focused on raising awareness about language reclassification requirements. One mother told me many parents did not know there were written, oral, and comprehension tests along with a letter of support from the students' teacher. In another instance, DELAC achieved a language adjustment from "English learners" to "dual-language learners," which more accurately reflected the

assets these students bring to the school. Although the state still used English learner, the district adopted the new term for internal purposes.

As part of her work with the school district, Herminia and her daughter traveled to a district-wide conference representing the impacts of family engagement. At the conference, Herminia's daughter, Cynthia, spoke publicly about the positive impact of her school environment on her well-being. Herminia stood alongside Cynthia and the district superintendent as an exemplary model of school–family partnerships. In these contexts, mothers serve as public figures and images of success. These images are leveraged by community organizations to demonstrate the impact of their work, justifying state and grant funding for their programs and initiatives. This kind of work is not representative of immigrant Latina mothers. However, there is some precedence in literature about Latina mother's intergenerational political organizing.

Another mother, Mari, was a volunteer with a local parks organization. Mari organized and carried out a weekly children's activity held at a local park. The funds for these resources were collected from a partnership with another early-literacy fund which gave away free books for children. In her weekly activity, Mari set up a popup at the park, opened a table and laid out books free to anyone. She also prepared any materials necessary for children to make a craft for that week. In her work, Mari serviced many of the children of families she was used to seeing, children in the network of families part of the network of mothers in leadership roles, or who simply frequented the parks where these programs were held.

Additionally, this weekly craft program serviced an after-school program from the school across the street. Leaders from the extended learning program walked children over after school and used the park's playground and this craft program. In this case, staff from the program signed in all the children they had in attendance, and they sent the children over to do the activity if they wished. Mari's role as a volunteer in one program had an impact on the school after-school program. The program was a resource for the community at large, and served as a hub for mothers looking for free activities for their children. It was such a hub

that many other mothers from the group arrived early to help Mari set up, brought snacks to share, and socialized with other families. The program even attracted the local ice cream truck, whose owner knew many of these mothers by first name.

The work Mari did was highly relational. When she was not instructing and supporting children to complete the craft, she was calling children back and forth from the after-school program staff at the playground, inviting and welcoming in community members, sharing information about the early literacy program, providing information about more nature-based activities, and indicating how community members can donate to support these programs.

These mothers aimed to design community programs for families as units. They paid special attention to the ways in which events and programs were child-centered and aimed to involve broader family members including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. During a series of community walks led by these mothers, the feedback to organizers from the parks organization showed people wanted more activities that served family members' shared interests. Ideas for future programs included beach days at the boardwalk and rock-climbing activities which piqued the interest of their older children and other adults in their family.

These activities were not the usual open-house or free-admission days. Mothers organized themselves to build and provide the relational capacity they would benefit from as Spanish speakers and relatively recent residents in the community. While doing so, they invited friends from other neighborhoods, expanding the school-centered or neighborhood-specific focus of many public programs. The reach of their work expanded farther than the nexus of their school's boundary and pushed on the institutional limits of county-bound funding. As they worked in these organizations, mothers' foci remained on their children; most of the programs were aimed at supporting families and children in the community. Additionally, because mothers brought their children to most of the community work they did, when they opted to work for an initiative, they were also making decisions about what experiences they exposed their children to, and what contexts they would be parenting in. These decisions change the contexts in which people see mothers doing intensive mothering.

They demonstrate how intensive mothering can be done in community settings, which challenges neoliberal ideas of children's mothers as their primary and sole investors by creating contexts in which many adults are responsible for and accountable to children.

Mother Time

Latina immigrant mothers' time is a valuable household resource stretched across spaces like homes, schools, and community organizations. In choosing where to spend their time, mothers negotiate with their partners about the benefits of working, community involvement, and family needs. All the mothers who participated in my study had multiple children. Family sizes ranged from four, with two children on the smallest end and seven had with five children. As mothers take on the responsibility of childcare, their time is split transporting children to school, hustling to extracurricular activities, preparing meals, and doing most of the household chores.

All the mothers in my study were married to men. All their partners worked for pay outside the home. They worked primarily in service as cooks at local restaurants, with a few in other posts, but still in the restaurant industry. Many of them worked multiple jobs, taking on early shifts and moving directly into evening shifts or working on weekends. One father worked at a pizza restaurant open 24 hours a day. During the COVID-19 global pandemic, where many employees were out for weeks to months at a time, he worked nearly the whole time. Another father worked a morning shift at a business for direct-to-consumer prepared specialty meals. He worked as a cook from early morning through late afternoon. When needed, he picked up his daughters from their elementary school and watched them until their mother arrived. This time was his only regular break—a couple hours—before he went to a Chinese restaurant and worked through closing at 11 pm. Fathers' work was often the only regular source of income for families.

Although most fathers did not engage in equal distribution of housework, most of them made contributions through childcare or outdoor work like gardening or car maintenance. One father did most of the cooking at home and did the grocery shopping, in

addition to watching the children when his wife was in community leadership meetings, and when he was not working. Another father explained he took the kids out for activities like bike riding, to the beach, or to go for hikes in the woods. He explained sometimes he did not feel comfortable taking them out for rides because he was concerned his youngest was not aware of the cars in his surroundings and it can be difficult to manage tantrums in public settings. Regardless of their level of involvement in housework, I saw many times in which mothers were available to attend meetings without their children. In these cases, fathers were often close by, playing with children on the school playground, or visible in the background of online virtual meetings with their children.

Some mothers did occasional paid work, but only if it happened while their children were in school. Multiple mothers explained they would only take on flexible work. Esther said, “If it works out where I can go and then still pick up my kids, then okay, but if not, then no.” This kind of commitment to childcare is a hallmark of these mothers’ decisions around what they are willing to participate in. Jovanna, a mother of two adult sons, had her 8-year-old daughter in her 40s. When her daughter was young and in elementary school, Jovanna enrolled in classes at the local community college. One of her classes was on child development. She told me at the end of her class, she decided she was not going to continue taking classes. Jovanna told me through that class, she learned about the importance of parenting in early childhood, and the mistakes she had made in parenting her older sons. As she explained this to me, she made comparisons about how much she worked in a salon when her sons were young. She compared their financial need in those times was greater as they had two sons to care for. And now, with her daughter, she found her family was in a better financial position, and she described her most important work was to care for her daughter. Similarly, Leticia told me she worked cleaning houses for a little while but when she got home, more work awaited her. In discussions with her husband, they decided she did not need to work for income. Instead, they decided her efforts were better spent caring for their

three children, the youngest of whom receives behavioral health therapy every weekday after school in their home.

These mothers compared their own mothering and paid work experiences to white wealthy women's mothering in two ways. First, Jovanna's decision to stop taking classes at the local community college was informed in part because of the early education psychology she was learning about. Her course taught about the importance of attachment in early childhood for the overall development of her daughter, and by comparing her learnings with the ways she raised her sons, she opted to leave her classes to devote her time to her daughter. Notably, Jovanna's sons were older, over 15 years in age difference from their sister. When they were growing up, Jovanna worked as a hairstylist, and due to the financial circumstances of her family, the income was necessary, and they used school and after-school programs to provide childcare while Jovanna worked.

Second, in conversations around the time crunch working mothers navigate, some mothers compared themselves to white mother they worked for. As a part-time housekeeper, Esther said the white women she worked for paid her to clean for them because they had jobs. She added then when they had children, they left work and kept the housekeeper on, absolving themselves of any additional work. Another mother chimed in, "And us, we do it all, we take care of the house, the kids, and still go clean other people's houses." This conversation demonstrated the ways intensive mothering is racialized as white even in their minds. We can also see how this conversation around limited time use for Latina immigrant mothers and white wealthy mothers still uses childcare as the most important measure of motherhood.

The most common way mothers experienced financial gain was through their participation in community work. Community work offering compensation through gift cards or cash aid received prioritized attention. For example, as parent leaders in the family advocacy initiative Championing Children, mothers received monthly paychecks of approximately $800. In exchange, they were expected to attend bimonthly meetings, and were expected to be

supporting the initiative's paid staff in weekly community events. This work was acceptable to mothers because meetings were made available online so mothers could attend virtually. Additionally, the community events they attended and supported were geared toward families at the schools their children attend, making it easier to bring their children. From the organization's perspective, having parent leaders made these events more approachable as other parents knew they would already recognize someone there.

Similarly, a public health program using the promotora model asked mothers to attend weekly training until they achieved certification, and along the way if they brought others to public health services like for COVID-19 vaccines, the mothers reported their recruitment and received commission per person they bring in. Other forms of community work included running food bank drop-offs, reminding parents of their times of distribution at different sites, and generally supporting through their personal networks and word of mouth.

The ways families distributed work may seem to be traditionally divided based on gender, but there were several areas in which much negotiation took place. These fathers' level of involvement in caregiving, and how they participated in family and household maintenance, are reflective of the broader trends in fatherhood (Palkovitz et al., 2014). This kind of variability in father's involvement in caregiving is standard and evidenced by literature on fatherhood in the United States, and often is influenced by broader gender dynamics in society at large. But at the scale of the household, this variability is also a reflection of personality and dispositional differences. Altogether, their contributions are less a reflection of their love or interest in their family, and more a reflection of their skill, as most families play to individual strengths as they negotiate their time and responsibilities.

Similarly, mothers' caregiving reflects their firm boundaries on the energy and time caregiving takes. As they negotiated with their partners about this work, their husbands often recognized mother work is enough of a contribution to the family. Mothers' negotiation for time and compensation across family, school, and community settings was a form of intensive mothering. They stretched resources to provide the highest possible investment in

their children. In the case of these mothers, many of whom could not legally work, and who lived on limited income, their time was leveraged to piece together other resources. As I explain in the next section, mothers' fatigue is evidence of the laborious intensive mothering they do. This highly gendered cost on mothers' energy is consistent with current trends in intensive mothering and is perhaps the clearest alignment between Latina immigrant mothers' intensive mothering and the ways white wealthy women do intensive mothering.

Mothers Battle Fatigue

When mothers negotiate for community time, then face barriers of legal status in getting compensation or recognition for their work, the costs begin to outweigh the benefits. Mothers lose time, are not compensated sufficiently, or are not recognized appropriately, and end up fatigued from community work in formalized settings. After dividing the work of household labor, paid labor, and community work, mothers are often faced with barriers to upward mobility in organizations. Most mothers start out as volunteers, and many have been working in leadership roles in these organizations on a volunteer basis, receiving the same levels of compensation as when they were new to the organizations. In some cases, when mothers ask for more recognition of their work, the organizations are unable to hire them for formalized work. But this creates a disparity among hired staff and the mothers who volunteer.

For example, Championing Children paid their community organizers $30 per hour, which meant staff were paid nearly double the amount as parents. From the perspective of these organizations, they were compensating in accordance with the cost of living in the region, to employees who had college degrees. A staff member for Championing Children told me a barrier to hiring mothers as staff was many mothers were not able to work legally in the United States. In hearing this, mothers noticed an underlying current of elitism from this organization because from their perspective, they were being paid through checks from the initiative, but were unclear of why they cannot be compensated more. Their observations of those compensated more were those U.S. born and college educated.

From the perspective of mothers, they were dedicating the same amount of time to work paid staff do. Additionally, many of the staff were young, recent college graduates, some of whom were not local and were recently learning about the community's needs and resources as they work this job. This mismatch can be confusing for mothers who hear the narratives stating they are the community members these organizations aim to serve, and their volunteer work is such a vital part of why their community organizing has impact. On one hand, they hear and believe they are the core of the way these community initiatives reach the community, and on the other hand they feel they are not heard internally by the organization, around issues of compensation.

Mari, who worked collaboratively as a parent leader in Championing Children, explained she felt she was used for her time, labor, and for her family's visibility to affirm Championing Children was a trustworthy organization. She told me, at one point, the organization used a photo of her father in a community setting without her family's permission. Although she gave permission for the organization to take photographs of her children in organization events, she had not affirmed consent on behalf of her father and Mari felt the organization presumed too much in using the photo for their advertising.

Mothers also expressed their frustrations in community organizations more broadly about the amount of time they requested. Daniela, one of the mothers who worked part time but who gained full-time employment later on in the duration of this study, expressed how the organizations were not flexible with her competing responsibilities in work. She explained how although she held a chaired position, the meeting times were scheduled during her workday, meaning she was often at work logged into virtual meetings on her phone. Daniela was exhausted by having to be working and attentive to the ongoing meeting in which she often was called on to report on monthly activities of the committees she was on. She also told me when she took full-time work and explained she would not be able to attend all the events she did before, the initiative began to pay her less, cutting her compensation in half. These actions on the part of the initiatives she works with left her feeling undervalued and

unappreciated. By reducing her pay, Daniela felt they were only seeing her for the time she gave them and ignoring the ways her work had impact.

In addition to the challenges Mari had with an organization using photographs without her permission, Mari felt she was not invested in enough by the organizations. Though mothers overwhelmingly acknowledged they gained a network of support and resources in participating in formal community work settings, they experienced financial and social investment differently according to the different spaces. Mari, who did not have work permission when I began my study, eventually gained support in applying for a work permit by receiving a letter of recommendation on her work across the county from the parks organization she works with. Though it was never a secret Mari served in multiple organization leadership positions, and even held a position on the county's ethnic commissioner board, the organization that finally stepped up and offered her the time and energy to support her application for a federal work permit was the parks organization. This differentiated the relationship she had with them, and eventually she went on to be employed by them. Although she serviced the same community as before and was often in the same spaces she was in before, she no longer attended meetings for Championing Children, and now only attended their events as a guest with her children.

In a slightly different context, at the school district, the mothers were not compensated for their work on parent leader committees. The most visible parent leader committee at the district was the one organized events for the district's family engagement work. In this space, mothers were not compensated financially but they were supported through reciprocal relationships with district leadership including the superintendent. This work yielded more social capital than financial gain, and mothers had yet to tell me they felt undervalued in these settings. Additionally, because the district had staff and financial resources for their family engagement work, mothers could offer ideas and feedback on how things can be done better but were not expected to organize or attend if they are not interested. In this way, the district positions mothers as decision makers, not workers.

Additionally, because of their work at the district level, these mothers tapped into status positioning them as district-wide decision makers. Mothers engaged in this space slightly differently than they did in other formal settings that can be viewed as more transactional due to their compensation practices.

Because intensive mothering is conceptualized in ways economically inaccessible to these mothers, the work mothers did in negotiating their time for various forms of compensation was part of the work of intensive mothering. Latina immigrant mothers' focus on community work inserted them, their children, and their families into a web of community resources. Their labor was multifaceted and stretches across spaces. Thus, their form of intensive mothering challenged the division of home as a place of care and communities as places of work. Instead, they advanced ideals of communal care by bringing their children and families into the spaces in which they worked, where they acted as mothers and workers.

Emotional Labor Across Contexts

Emotional labor as a concept emerged from workers burdened with the expectations to manage their emotions as part of their employment description (Hochschild, 1983). Job descriptions like "serve customers with a smile" can necessitate workers manage incongruous realities and expectations. In an analogous way, mothers working with Championing Children had to manage the difference between expectations and experiences. The expectations Championing Children had of mothers' work in their roles as community leaders and volunteers was paired with narratives of the importance of community input and the impact of their community involvement. But when mothers' hours of work did not add up to the expectations, the narrative of impact and involvement fell to the wayside and instead, the organization used hours of work as a measure to decide whether a mother would get partial pay, if any at all. Additionally, though the organization requested feedback regularly, mothers' opinions were not implemented in any change initiatives and the incongruence between being told they are valued members of the organization, but not meaningfully

engaged or invested in, created a context in which emotional labor was an added layer of the work.

Another way emotional labor can be identified in this research was in the ways legality shaped mothers' experiences with different organizations. Championing Children and the school district could not hire individuals without work permissions but only the school district was transparent about the limitations legality had on individuals' participation. When mothers were negotiating their time, navigating how they participated in different organizations, and gauging their role as decision makers, staff, volunteers, or guests, they were engaging in the expectation management others have of them, too. For example, when Mari left Championing Children and took a job with another local agency, she had to establish boundaries around how she was being perceived and what organization she was representing. Because Mari's family was such a visible part of Championing Children, when she left the organization, staff regularly misidentified her and assumed she was there to support Championing Children work. Mari reminded staff and community members she was no longer part of Championing Children and affirmed she was available to help them with Parks questions instead.

This kind of image and reputation management is laden with emotional labor. Mothers negotiate with organizations to use their identities as part of their organizational reputation building. When individuals experience discord with the organization, they are tasked with separating their personal reputation from the organization's. Mothers do this with great tact as they parse out what organizations are requiring more or less of them, and how their work and input is being used. In short, because mothers are not compensated for their emotional labor, it is often the emotionally intense, more draining organizations which become deprioritized in mothers' work as they try to balance their work with growing emotional fatigue.

The second finding regarding time use for mothers highlights the overlapping features of mental labor, childcare, and emotional labor in family work. When mothers

negotiate with their partners about who should do what kinds of work, mental labor is inherently part of the discussion, though it is not explicit. Where it may seem childcare is easier for one parent, it is likely they are just used to doing this kind of relational and dynamic work, so the unseen mental load mothers are carrying seems to erupt in challenges less often. For example, if the nonprimary parent plans an outing but forgets key aspects like packing water, snacks, extra and clothes, it is more likely they face hardship on the outing. This example illustrates the way primary parents' skills are not always recognized because of the invisibility of mental labor. Though mental labor is not emotional labor, an uneven distribution of mental labor can breed resentment, frustration, and fatigue in mothers.

These emotions, in turn, do necessitate emotional labor. Similarly to how a customer service worker engages in emotional labor through self- and others' emotion management to fix issues they are not at fault for, a parent may engage in emotional labor to facilitate problem solving and support for their children. This mental labor and the work of being an almost omniscient task manager, can often get swept in with individual characteristics and behaviors. Some parents may be perceived as prepared, patient, and gentle "by nature" when in fact, many of these behaviors are socialized and gendered. The example of the father who felt nervous taking his son out for bike rides because he was worried about handling his son's emotions in public settings is an example of how nonprimary parents may perceive preference and skill are at play, without acknowledging the labor involved.

In community and school settings, mothers' work aims at garnering investment in their families. To do so, mothers create coherence around issues. As they craft narratives about what their community's and family's needs are, they engage in collaborative efforts to sway organizational administrators and local leaders. Mothers engage in emotional labor in three ways for these purposes: interpersonal work, collaborative work, and interpretive work. When mothers work in community and school spaces, they must assess what kinds of power dynamics are at play and insert themselves. They must understand their role in an organization and assess whether the opportunities for work benefit them sufficiently to justify

the time spent. In doing so, mothers do interpretive work which involves the labor of reading social dynamics, tracking past trends, and projecting possible futures.

Mothers construct new relationships, connect with each other, learn about each other's struggles and challenges, and find common ground around the conditions impacting their community at large. By engaging in friendship and ally making with other mothers and organizational representatives, mothers do loads of interpersonal work. The results of their interpersonal work are they are both working to understand others and to be understood. Their interpersonal and interpretive work serve jointly as the basis of collaboration. When mothers engage in shared decision making, with other community members or school and community organizations, they leverage their perception and knowledge about individuals to advocate for their own vision of what these spaces should look like and how they should operate. By investing time and energy in doing this work, mothers invest in the future they want for their family and in the present they want for their children.

Creating Spaces of Communal Care

When mothers are fatigued from formal community work and the emotional labor required in these sites, they turn to each other in informal settings like parks and playgrounds. Through their children's activities, they gather and create organizing communities of their own, planning and convening cultural celebrations and social gatherings for themselves. In these spaces, they are honest about their legal status, and provide resources to each other including information about work, health services, and public aid. Despite the amount of time these mothers dedicate to community work in formal settings, they spend additional time with each other in informal community settings.

Nearly every week, sometimes twice a week, and all year, these mothers in this study saw each other at the parks. In my time with these mothers, they only missed gathering for a handful of weeks where the rains were particularly heavy. These regular meetings were a major source of social support. In these settings, they updated each other on their week, shared moments of joy and laughter, released the embarrassing moments, and generally

offered an open ear about each other's lives. The reason they attended parks so frequently was related to the community work they did, but also related to the abundance of public programs run through the county's particularly strong parks programs. On a day every week, the parks put on a kid's craft station at one park. Later in the week the parks held free soccer clinics, and on weekends, the parks held active family time. Parks were also used by the formal community organizations as sites for their activities like Zumba. Though they may be attending an organized activity for their children, the mothers often congregated with other moms for the social interaction.

From these meetings, moms were brought into social events like birthday parties, baptisms, and mothers' potlucks. Most events were hosted by one person and other mothers volunteered to bring a dish to contribute. For example, a birthday party would normally be held in a park, where the mother would bring something children would eat, like pizza and juice boxes. They would likely also bring a piñata and goodie bags for kids and some dishes for adults. From there, other mothers would add side dishes or additional drinks. There was always plenty of food and everyone takes some home. Part of the approachability of these moms' events was they were in parks so regularly they became fixtures in some ways. U.S. moms whose children may be playing there for just the day might stand nearby and watch the children line up to hit a piñata, and without fail they were invited to take a whack, too.

In some cases, these outsider mothers were identified to me as the most like them and shared how their child had never experienced a birthday piñata and they were grateful for their child to be included. Similarly, when the children were called together to sing happy birthday and cut the cake, every child in the park was offered some cake and Jell-O. These practices are common in Mexican birthdays taking place in public settings. Not all families accepted the invitation, but repeatedly the mothers continued the same open attitude on every birthday. They commented it is important to include others who might want to be involved. They did not make explicit claims about these practices being rooted in any

traditions but talked about it like it is just the right thing to do, perhaps signaling the ways they have always seen these gatherings get done.

Mothers also organized cultural celebrations. For example, in 2022 around Christmas, they organized a community posada. A posada is a traditional Mexican event where communities gather to recreate the travel Mary and Joseph endured and the process of asking for a place to stay on the night of Jesus's birth. Through their personal networks, they secured a community venue, gathered musicians, invited community members, and organized a potluck including traditional Mexican Christmas foods. At this time, the mothers were organizing themselves as a community coalition, and they opened the event with welcoming remarks and introduced themselves as "Mamas Juntas" (Mothers Together). This was the first formalized introduction of their group. Prior to this, the moms had organized other events, but they had not decided on a name. In the previous May, they organized a mother's day potluck with a gift exchange. They also organized birthday celebrations for each other, gathering in the parks to share a meal and celebrate each other.

On one occasion, for the birthday of a visiting grandmother, they all gathered together, and I witnessed the introduction of a new mother. We all went around and introduced ourselves, our children, and named the school they attend. In this moment, the group's similarities to the formalized organizing spaces were uncanny. I also saw them organize on political issues. One member of the group, an elder and leader in the community broadly, asked who had the ability to vote, then followed up by asking if they knew others who had the ability to vote. By then, nearly all hands were raised. She then asked if she could bring a councilwoman who was going to be on the ballot for a county position. In explaining why this candidate was the best advocate for them as a group, she identified the candidate as a woman of color, and she would be the first woman of color in this position if she were elected. This moment brewed mixed feelings from the group. Some mothers responded with jokes and others engaged seriously by asking for literature on her political stances. Eventually, this elder brought pamphlets and engaged in a serious discussion about the

candidate and they shared how the current policies impact different members of their families, given their varying legal statuses.

These moments reflected some of the ways mothers learned to organize themselves and the ways their gatherings are both for social support and collective empowerment. Their prosocial organizing reflected how they built and used their power. Because their work spanned sectors of nonprofits, churches, schools, and parks, they collectively served in a similar fashion to Championing Children. However, they were not organized in hierarchy. More importantly, as community members of the marginalized groups these organizations aimed to serve, mothers' prerogatives about programming in the organization carried a distinct weight. Their feedback was solicited in honesty, not out of the requirements for funding as was the case with many grant-funded community initiatives. And their continual connection in community, for care and joy, was part of how they positioned their power. These mothers were together because they wanted to be together. Similarly to in the district spaces, there was no financial compensation; mothers showed up because their needs were being met in other ways. Mothers gained friendship, childcare, and collective power. They were received positively as their members have received individual recognition in their various positions within formal organizations. Though Madres Juntas was an informally recognized group, the mothers were recognized in formal spaces, and so the group carried a collective power through their informal gatherings.

These mothers challenged where intensive mothering is done, and what it looks like. By doing intensive mothering through their community-based work, they asserted their children into webs of resources and care. Still taxing on able-bodied women, and to say nothing of mothers who have chronic illness, these mothers' intensive mothering looked entirely different from the current dominant image of intensive mothering. Additionally, these mothers used and applied emotional labor as part of work that is oriented toward mutuality and exchange instead of one-for-one transactionalism. As they maintained an openness to the broader community in the county, and aimed to incorporate new mothers, and organized

in politically savvy ways, these mothers engaged in emotional labor as a prosocial behavior. And this kind of emotional labor, which is mutual and caring, established social capital for their children in a way not about legacy in the county, but about stewardship and connection to each other as individuals who work and live in the same communities.

Conclusion

Though intensive mothering upholds inaccessible ideals, many marginalized mothers demonstrate their exceptional care work by measuring themselves against these ideals. Intensive mothering embeds white, wealthy, and citizen ideas of family units under neoliberalism. In a neoliberal care regime, intensive mothering is the basis of individual responsibility for oneself and one's children. However, my findings evidence Latina immigrant mothers do intensive mothering through community and collaboration. Their power is in their collectivism, and in the networks of care they build and sustain. Latina immigrant mothers devote time and attention to their children, pool expendable income to put together social gatherings, and share resources. A key finding in this chapter is mothers' work with organizations is one of exchange, but it is mothers' relational power making them so valuable. In the context of this highly interpersonal and collaborative work, these mothers' emotional labor is central to their work in community settings.

Their work shifts the context of intensive mothering from individual responsibility to communities of care. By doing collaborative community organizing as a form of intensive mothering, immigrant Latina mothers redefine what intensive mothering looks like and who does it, thereby also changing the dominant discourse of who is a valuable social reproducer. Dominant discourse deems them undesirable, but these mothers prove their value to society by aligning themselves with a nearly universal ideal of motherhood. Their stewardship of community and care also positions their children as learners and participants in the same relationships. Thus, they garner investment for their children, families, and communities at large.

The ideals of intensive mothering can do harm by increasing expectations on mothers who often are precariously caring for their children and themselves. But the fact these mothers can prove their exceptionalism by way of intensive mothering speaks volumes to what their work makes possible, particularly as avid emotional laborers. These findings illustrate the ways mothers are leaders in their communities, schools, and in politics. As they reveal themselves as a collective group, “Madres Juntas,” they leverage their collectivity and demonstrate the reach of their personal relationships. These mothers’ legal precarity also shapes where intensive mothering takes place, and for what purpose. Due to the limited resources available to them, mothers become the link between public, formal, and informal networks. Their stance, as caregivers and mothers first, changes the dynamics of how spaces serve people. By engaging in all spaces with ‘mother’ as one of their most visible identities, spaces are transformed into family centered places of support.

Still, mothers toggle between their multiple identities and often bridge across sectors, un ing to forgo one identity for another. As their children see these behaviors, are present in the spaces, and listen to the discussions and dialogues around these decisions, they too are embedded in the practices of care work through emotional labor. Though not all emotional labor is care work, all care work involves emotional labor. Being in a community necessitates compromise and compassion, and often involves conflict. These mothers navigate complex terrain of power, legality, work, motherhood, and care politics, ultimately emerging as a collective unwilling to engage in individualist practices benefitting individual families more than others. The differences between people can be like canyons voices struggle to traverse. As mothers see these differences, they use tools of relationship making and empathy to build bridges. This does not mean others cannot use the same tools and engage in emotional labor. But my findings show how Latina immigrant mothers have already begun doing this important and necessary community work, and more importantly, what tools they choose to leverage in crafting new kinds of spaces.

Mothers forge spaces outside of formalized organizations where they offer each other friendship, support, and resources. Mothers demonstrate how emotional labor is part of an economic framework which embeds care work in an exchange system of interdependence and reciprocity, challenging neoliberal ideologies separating care from economics. As a result, these mothers' emotional labor is different from the way emotional labor has been traditionally theorized. Emotional labor was originally understood as capitalist coopting of human emotion in exchange for market labor and pay. This version, which exists in the realm of unpaid care work as a practice of intensive mothering, is one which advances collective goals and is part of a network which replaces spent energy. Although mothers' emotional labor is still draining, and their energy needs to be accounted for as a limited resource, the way emotional labor exists in antineoliberal contexts opens new possibilities for the purposes emotional labor can serve.

Chapter 4

Advocates for children's protection believe children's roles in their families and communities should be primarily as dependent receivers of caregiving. Research on children's contributions to the family have been interrogated through the lenses of family consumerism, housework, family businesses, and children's roles as cultural interlocutors (Estrada, 2019; Hill, 2011; Orellana, 2009; Zelizer, 2002). Generally, studies of children as contributors to family life have not considered children as producers, but as the product of social reproduction (Alber et al., 2021; Razavi, 2013). This reflects larger debates around where children are allowed to be, and what is deemed appropriate activity for them (Bourdillon et al., 2010). As part of the Treaty of Versailles, and the end to World War I, the International Labour Organization became a key figure in deciding whether and how child minors could engage in market labor (Bourdillon & Myers, 2022). Paired with an increasing philanthropic sector and a moral panic over uneducated youth, partnerships between educational institutions and public health began the infrastructure of child protection and welfare systems (Oswell, 2013). Since then, schools have been major stakeholders in the protection, provision, and monitoring of children. These systems are inherently adultist and effectively render children at the margins of spaces designed to teach them (Bertrand et al., 2020; Oto, 2023).

In this chapter, my analysis destabilizes and questions the boundaries between adults as workers, providers, and protectors, and children as learners, dependent, and vulnerable. Children in mixed-status Latino families in particular face additional cultural conflicts as they learn through family and community socialization and engage in U.S. public education as immigrants or children of immigrants. I show how children simultaneously learn and contribute to their family and community by engaging in the learning and practicing of emotional labor. I use learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI) to frame children's learning outside of school and engage with it by complicating the cultural context in which children learn. Specifically, where LOPI emerges from indigenous heritage communities

especially from Mexico and Guatemala, the children in this community have been learning and applying their learnings in a mixed-cultural and national context as they traverse the United States and home cultures.

This chapter uses observations, conversations, and a focus group with children to contend they have the skills required to do emotional labor and illustrates how children observed, learned, and practiced emotional labor. Children described how they read emotions through embodied stances and facial expressions, and recounted their experiences supporting siblings, friends, and caregivers. This chapter frames children as contributors to the emotional landscape of family life, with social actors of varying power engaging in emotion work. As children practiced emotion work, they impacted the family at large, and the contributions from actors with relatively small power can have big impact. As a result, the chapter challenges binaries of adult/caregivers and child/dependents, calling attention to the functionality of families as mutually bound social actors, who engage in the joyful and working dynamics of love labor.

Literature

Numerous guardrails separate children's and adults' meaningful participation in their schools, families, and communities. In the United States, cultural and social expectations about good character and citizenship is cultivated by public institutions and actors (Fernández, 2021). Schools, doctors, therapists, and psychiatrists engaged in child development can advance Eurocentric agendas for child welfare (Clarke et al., 2021; Douglas, 2022). Often, their perspectives have shown children should not engage in society fully because they are not yet adults (James, 2011). In doing so, these practitioners and researchers of child development have framed expectations of child development as a time in which children are objects of protection, to be defended and shielded from the harm of adults (Clapton et al., 2013; Taylor, 2013). Their evidence stemmed from children's history as workers. Historically, children were seen as economically valuable social actors. Children

were not precluded from the same expectations of adults to be economically productive, and engaged in paid, unpaid, and forced labor under the same conditions adults endured.

However, through the exporting of U.S. ideals for childhood, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conceptualized one of their four fundamental labor principles around the abolition of child labor. The ILO was a leading figure in fighting for better working conditions, and alongside this conceptualization of child labor as harmful for children, the ILO developed two Conventions related to the abolition of child labor. The first, ILO Convention 138 established a minimum age to work, and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. ILO 182 was the first ILO Convention to achieve universal ratification. Through these legislative and political parameters, children's place in society shrunk significantly in scope (Bourdillon & Myers, 2022; Zelizer, 1985).

Caring for Children

With children out of work, their relationship to schools changed. In the early 1900s, attending school was the norm for kids, but not guaranteed to last longer than primary education (Oswell, 2013). Children attended to gather basic life skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic, if it advanced their capacities to be good workers. Long-term education was seen as a privilege for the wealthy who could spare their children from working. Schools were closely aligned with the social development of U.S. society, but children did not gain any more access to decision making than they did at work. Schools were heavily informed by the world of business and people likened public education to work environments with high levels of control over children and drill-style education (Reese, 2001). Still, Progressive Era politics encroached on educational institutions and the purpose of school shifted from developing basic skills for business needs to more comprehensive education.

Wealthy reformists led the progressive movement in education and installed experts in content areas of instruction (Norris, 2004). These progressive reformists' perspectives on the rising challenge of unemployed and unschooled minors was to increase social welfare systems for child protection (Kwon, 2013). During this time, years of education doubled and

primary education became compulsory. One of the effects of this era of education was the demarcation of professionals as experts, rule makers, and enforcers; and mothers as offenders, culprits, and amateur practitioners of child development (Oswell, 2013).

Contemporary education has continued to bear the hallmarks of Eurocentric standards of human development that reformists in the 1900s ushered in. Educators and families have become oppositional, often after families experience harm from institutional stakeholders trying to enforce child welfare standards (McCarthy Foubert, 2022). At the root of this opposition is a belief schools have a duty to educate children and prepare them to be future adults and citizens. The binary in age, role, and place in society ILO established is still upheld. Children are regularly framed as learning, growing, and becoming, and adults are charged with cultivating, teaching, and disciplining them (James, 2011).

Community, Care, and Education

The binary of adult teachers and learning children is not the only approach to education. Critics of now dominant approaches to education have argued schools need to be more child-friendly and should involve children's active participation in the design of their education. Indigenous approaches to education are less focused on individual learning and assessment. Collaboration is an integral part of indigenous communities' approaches to education, particularly for indigenous heritage communities from Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States (Coppens & Rogoff, 2022). Learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI) is one such model for organizing how teaching and learning works in indigenous heritage communities from Guatemala and Mexico. The LOPI prism communicates how seven facets compose a paradigm for education different from assembly-line instruction.

The seven facets can be used as a diagnostic to understand whether and how LOPI functions. LOPI asks:

- How does the community organize learning? All ages are included and learn as they observe and contribute;

- Why do people participate? For the purpose of being together in community and across generations;
- How do people interact? People collaborate flexibly, with integrated goals and a shared direction;
- (What is the theory and goal of learning? Learning is growth and necessary for participating in the world for collective good;
- How do people learn? By observing broadly, contributing to ongoing efforts, and guided by community expectations in context;
- How do people communicate? They relate to each other through multiple channels but are not limited to spoken language and often use nonverbal conversation based in shared context; and
- How and why do people evaluate? Contributions are evaluated through the process of the endeavor.

The LOPI paradigm is based in family and community endeavors but can be used in school-based efforts as well. One of the cruxes enabling this approach to teaching and learning distinct is the question of evaluation. Traditional U.S. education has evaluated for the purpose of measurement against standards of child development. Indigenous endeavors see assessment and correction as relative to the success of the endeavor (Rogoff, 2014; Urrieta, 2015). A successful or unsuccessful endeavor is a key point of feedback but also, the other facets play into evaluation. For example, communication happens across multiple avenues, but in service of ongoing efforts, so evaluation happens continuously throughout the process. People learn by observing a variety of shared context and in-context teachings; and by pitching in or contributing to the process of the endeavor. This organization of teaching and learning involves sophisticated collaboration across generations, for the purpose of shared community and with the goal of supporting the growth of whole people and the collective good.

Still, even alternative paradigms to children's education like community school approaches tend to take the stance an inherent value of childhood is as a time to learn. Contemporary school equity advocates have regularly argued for more resources to "remove barriers to learning" (Froschauer, 2018, p. 5). In saying so, these advocates considered learning to be of utmost priority to the development of children and reinforced the belief there is such a thing as "adult problems" as if family, economic, and social problems did not affect everyone (Bishop, 2017). Advocates of alternative paradigms know child development involves more arenas than education, but the proponents of "whole child" approaches to education have continued to measure successful child development through academic measures. This frames education and school among the most important levers of change for children. To frame education as the only priority for all children both relies on and reinforces assumptions and illusions about the dangers and perils of work as something only adults should have to bear (Bourdillon & Myers, 2022).

Children and Care(work)

Children in the United States have always sat precariously between the work of learning and laboring, often engaging in both at once. In the following findings, I show how the binary between learning and laboring is simply a reflection of adultist binaries of childhood and adulthood (Morelli et al., 2003; Taft, 2019). There is no limit to development and growth in human capacities. The myth of finality—"you can't teach an old dog new tricks"—is upheld by all such binaries. My findings demonstrate how children in U.S. Latino mixed-legal status families are always working, always involved in labor and politics, and always experiencing the same conditions adults experience.

By asserting children are always laboring when they are learning, I offer a different approach to understanding emotional labor. The concept of emotional labor comes from feminist political economy (Bhattacharya, 2017), and carries adultist perceptions of children as objects of emotional labor. To challenge the idea age is the most important axis for

understanding who works to provide and who receives, I replace those tenets of political economy with a family systems approach to emotional labor.

Similarly, the field of family systems has yet to interrogate labor in ways beyond gendered labor division and maintain a focus on material aspects of social reproduction and family socialization. Drawing on a Marxist framework of labor and capitalism in which capital usurps all physical limits of a working day, and informed by the recent turn of crip theory, in which time and space are experienced differentially due to the impact of disability on bodies, I maintain the essence of work and labor is anything that drains energy as a finite resource. Yet, I also remove carework like emotional labor from the context of political economy as a system of extraction and explore its dynamics within a system of mutual aid and reciprocity.

It is important to recognize children's emotional labor as exchange because of the finite amounts of energy in one person. This aspect of emotional labor is the basis of many arguments regarding the coopting of emotions and humanity in an affective economy (Veldstra, 2020). For example, as Hochschild (2012) theorized emotional labor, critics have contended there is no limit to the reach of capitalism. This aspect also helps to attune emotional labor to the energy levels of children generally smaller, newer, and less adept at prolonged strain and persistence. As I discuss my findings, I show how children do emotional labor, and participate in systems of mutual aid for family, friends, and broader community. Ultimately, I argue children's emotional labor reveals glimpses of a shifting structure of feelings regarding who gets valuable resources like patience, empathy, and love.

Children's Emotional Labor in Mixed-Status Families, Schools, and in Community

In my time observing, talking, and playing with children, they discussed and showed examples of doing emotional labor for their peers. Most commonly, children's labor was centered on siblings. However, there were some examples in which children participated in emotional labor for nonrelative peers in school settings. These examples, typically with peers of similar age but from other families, at times of differing socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, can create a context for more complex emotional labor involving critical

thinking and thoughtful decision making to problem solve and manage conflicts. Conversely, in family settings, collaboration was a stronger motive and so problems were resolved through more fluid interaction. In both cases though, children and parents mentioned how they saw each other practicing emotion work skills.

My second finding shows how children learn and do emotional labor with parents in two ways. First, through collaborative learning approaches of observation and pitching in, children learn about effective ways to communicate a myriad of emotions and how to interpret embodied stances which reflect attitudes and tone during dynamic collaboration. This finding highlights what I call the labor of learning and shows interpretation of emotions is an integral part of emotion work, and is observed and practiced by children.

The second way children do emotional labor for adults is much more akin to the traditional definitions of emotional labor. In these examples, children are empathizing with their parents. They identify emotionally taxing tasks their parents do, talk about how they perceive objects of their parents' frustrations, and insert themselves in problem-solving. The findings in this chapter demonstrate how children as young as 6 years old in mixed-status families can be recognized as emotional laborers. In doing so, I dig deeper into understandings of what kinds of labor children are participating in, and challenge all those who work with children to think critically about the ways children are supported or punished for doing emotional labor in school, community, and family settings.

Children's Emotional Labor for Children

By my observation, children demonstrated emotion work skills most frequently with their siblings. For example, children regularly intervened in escalation management. Often, siblings preemptively acted in ways that would assuage tension. In one instance, 10-year-old Mariana poured juice for her two younger brothers and announced both cups would have the same amount. The brothers watched closely, and after she poured, she repeated, "They both have the same." In this example, Mariana called on her memories of past conflicts over perceived inequality or preferential treatment, and she got ahead of it by narrating she was

intentionally pouring equal amounts for them. This kind of prediction of interactions, albeit at a smaller scale example, as simple as juice, involves the same kinds of skills that bigger issues of emotion work involve. She understood why they would be upset, remembered the results of past times, and made a sound decision to position herself as an interlocutor to mediate between them.

At the same time, Mariana did not seem to be speaking to anyone. She announced her actions as if to set the guardrails of resource allocation. This tactic, of announcing one's intentions or plans, is a common piece of emotion work in general. Adult workers in service industries use similar approaches, sometimes repeating back to the customer what they hear is the problem, how they will try to resolve it, and empathizing with how the customer has been impacted. The basis of this strategy and its effectiveness is naming and understanding feelings. When Mariana announced her brothers had the same amount she was ushering them past any perceived slight and redirected them toward her solution.

My orientation to children's emotional labor, even in love and affection, is it is learned and practiced. Work on sibling adjustment for newborns indicates older siblings can benefit from parent interactions that facilitate the connection between a baby in gestation and their older siblings (Zakaria & Abd Hamid, 2020). These examples can be used to see a kind of coaching happens to prepare older siblings about the changes to come. In another example featuring Mariana and her brothers, I asked her about a nice memory of her siblings. She recounted a memory she had of when her youngest brother, Eric, was born. The story she told me went like this. Her mother was pregnant with Eric, and her grandmother had come to stay with them and help. Mariana woke up this day to find her mother had gone into labor and later that day they would go to see their new baby brother. Before leaving to visit the hospital, Mariana's grandmother made quesadillas for her and her brother to eat before leaving. Mariana told me she ate two, and then when describing what happened after she arrived at the hospital, she explained she told her mother she ate two quesadillas, one for herself and one for her baby brother. In saying this, Mariana was talking about a care already cultivated.

In another example of children's emotional labor with siblings, 6-year-old Luisa told me about how she loved her brothers and how she showed them affection with her words, hugs, kisses, and play. I asked Luisa where she learned to show her love in these ways. She told me it was her dad. Later, her mother confirmed this and gave me the broader context of the family. Her mom, Lizette, remarried and birthed Luisa about 10 years after her two older sons. From Lizette's perspective, the attitudes their family has toward expressing and discussing emotional subjects has changed drastically over the duration of her second marriage. Lizette's husband also was previously married, and he had an older son away at college. Lizette described her time in courtship with her second husband as the beginning of a shift in how she understood the role of affection in her family life. She described her ways of showing care as being primarily rooted in physical care and social and academic preparation. She showed her love by making sure her sons were always clean, groomed, and prepared to engage in school activities. And now, comparing her husband's relationship with Luisa to her own caregiving approach, she perceived a lesser amount of affection, reassurance, and emotional vulnerability in her approach to motherhood with her two older sons.

Lizette said her husband was very emotionally attuned, and expressive about his feelings. She said she herself learned from him about what a loving father figure looked like. Lizette also identified Luisa, being the newest and youngest member of the family always received lots of love and attention, but was especially close with her father, and often repeats his gestures and sayings. When Luisa told me she learned about how to express her love from her dad, she seemed to be speaking from shared and public knowledge her father's affection toward her and others in her family, were the basis of her learnings of how to love her brothers.

It is important to note I do not take familial love as an assumption. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, families and homes can be sources of harm and pain for many people. In some cases, where codependent and abusive relationships continue in systems of dysfunctional functionality, individuals can develop adaptive skills, equally rooted in emotion

work (Zhu et al., 2021). However, in these contexts, the emotion work highlights the dysfunctionality of the relationships (Momeñe López et al., 2021).

Family relationships can be sites of interpersonal conflict related to power, age, and the inherently collaborative nature of family life. Collaboration can include conflict and effective problem solving is a hallmark of good collaboration and shared decision making. Herminia, the eldest daughter in a family with three children, talked about how at times she caught herself either involved in or helping referee arguments with siblings. She said, "Sometimes I tell him [her brother] that we shouldn't fight because we've grown and we need to mature." Herminia's brother, Edgar, expressed similar perspectives on age and the ways they were growing and changing in their relationship to their youngest sibling and their parents. They offered an example of when there was some candy in the house and they were fighting over who had more, but ultimately opted to both leave it alone and the next day they were able to open the bag, and all share it once the tension was gone.

In another family, 9-year-old Jose, the middle child between Mariana and their youngest brother Eric, told me about how the arguments between siblings mostly are over one of them "not doing what we need to." In this conversation, Jose and Mariana responded in tandem, glancing at each other as if to confirm the truth, or maybe checking to see if it was safe to reveal this information to me. Mariana jumped in and said, "Like, sometimes he [Edgar] and Eric don't clean up their things. So I have to do it and then if I tell them, sometimes then we fight."

These examples, though centered on how arguments erupt, are actually examples of interpersonal conflict management. Siblings are doing their best to resolve the problems that emerge in day-to-day life, largely from the expectations of interdependent family dynamics like household chores or a limited and shared resource like a coveted snack. Children are employing future planning skills, projection from past experiences, and an orientation to who they are expected to be as they get older. Additionally, it is interesting to see in both families, the eldest siblings are daughters and both lean into mothering their siblings. I use mothering

in these contexts to highlight the ways children do caregiving as they are informed by their mothers' examples. Both of their mothers also noted this attitude toward their younger siblings can be difficult to manage at times because younger siblings still want to be autonomous and as the eldest daughters try to control situations to avoid upsetting their parents, they end up becoming targets of their younger siblings' frustrations.

However, Leticia, Mariana's mom, added Mariana was very helpful with Eric. Eric was prone to hyper fixation on video games and struggles with sensory overload. Eric did not like to feel wet, and so on hot days, sweat bothered him, and on rainy days, the wet bothered him. If not supported effectively, Eric may have a meltdown and need more of his mother's attention and energy to regulate his nervous system again. Leticia told me when Eric was first starting in school and was struggling with the demands and expectations of classrooms, he had a very hard time coming home and responding to directions and demands from her. Leticia described:

> It's like he was so tired from listening to people, to come home and hear me, it was too much. And then it's always me telling him to do things, or me trying to help him. When he's frustrated like that, he just can't hear me anymore. But he would listen to Mariana. Like it was a different perspective he was hearing, and she would sit with him and read and he would calm down a little bit easier with her.

I asked Mariana if she helped Eric when he was feeling emotional, and she told me, "When he was little, I would show him how to breathe when he was crying because he would cry so hard he was choking so I would take deep breaths and tell him to do it like me." These examples of Mariana's relationship to her brother highlights the ways sibling relationships are also different from parent relationships with their children. By inserting herself into the dynamic of Eric's emotional regulation, she supported both Eric and her mother in different ways. Instead of thinking about families as units of different necessary roles, they can be understood as evolving and shifting units, continually adapting to each member's most

pressing needs. This perspective underscores how children can be more than dependents and in fact work for the benefit of others in their family.

Children's relationships with peers who are not siblings are also structured by the expectations of adults and the ways space is structured for children's autonomy. School spaces are designed to be child friendly, with small toilets, lowered sinks, little chairs, and low cabinets and shelving, all of which are physical features of the ways schools attempt to encourage children's autonomy to move and direct themselves. However, in this autonomy, children are also often asked to manage conflict without the structures of shared expectations because children come from different family backgrounds and are engaging in a space of learned sociality on the basis of family socialization that is different. Namely, in this county, the socioeconomic disparities of U.S. born, white, wealthy families, and immigrant Latino families, can reverberate through conflicts among children. In the months prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic and California's shelter in place, Herminia was struggling with what she terms a "frenemy". Herminia described this as a person who is your friend but is also your enemy.

A series of conflicts had been building around issues like competitiveness on academic subjects, and this friend wanting to be part of a larger group of friends. Herminia's mom, Cynthia, told me she thought Herminia struggled with sociality, but felt self-conscious and so tried to pretend classmates were her friends even though she may not know how to make friends. Herminia was developing symptoms of anxiety, stress, and depression. Her attitude toward school was turning into frustration and angst. One day Herminia did not want to go to school and did not want to tell Cynthia why. Ultimately, it was revealed Herminia's frenemy had dropped a note on her desk she should kill herself. This issue was brought to their principal's attention and the school had meetings with both families individually, but there was no restorative approach to the girls' relationship. This response, from the school site, highlights the ways schools put children in proximity, encourage independence, and then sometimes are not prepared to process the deeply harmful mistakes children can make.

For Herminia's family, the months to come seemed to make matters worse. Where Herminia was struggling to socialize, she now lacked opportunities because of online and remote learning. In the middle of the pandemic, Herminia's anxiety rose, and she regularly talked about the growing impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. In response to their daughter's mood, Cynthia and her husband decided to purchase parakeets for the house. Herminia was immediately attached to them. She held the small birds and cared for them daily. Herminia called them her babies and they was a source of great companionship and healing throughout the pandemic. Another key factor in Herminia's healing was her close relationship with her brother throughout the period of shelter in place and remote learning. During this time, she and her brother played more closely, helped each other in their schoolwork, and created a bond over being older siblings to their baby sister. Edgar now sought her out at school and checked on her. Cynthia told me Edgar tried to hug Herminia, but she was embarrassed by it. This finding shows how emotionally heavy and taxing a school day can be. It also shows how emotional labor is a part of family systems and not reliant on fixed roles, but on meeting overall family needs.

These examples demonstrate how children engage in emotional labor in family and school contexts. Generally, children do emotional labor to strengthen relationships and support the family unit. In some cases, children are left to do emotional labor with their families as a process of healing from experiences that occur outside family settings. Schools can be sites of conflict where children need more supports to process emotional aggression from their peers. In these times, children are practicing deep emotion work to understand their relationship to others, especially in spaces designed for individualized support and attention. The last example highlights how families are sites of emotional labor from experiences outside the household and reflects what some have theorized as other-centered labors of love (Finch & Groves, 1983). Specifically, emotional labor for family members can be explicitly for the purpose of benefiting someone else, but in ways not commodified.

These examples illustrate how children labor in two ways. For one, they work to learn emotional labor by observation and interpretation. By observing how parents care, children practice emotion skills. My observations show children engaged in play, coregulation, and empathy for their siblings and peers. This shows the dyadic nature of both learning and emotional labor. Second, children worked in practicing emotional labor. Many cases of practice emerge in moments of conflict and tension. Their work can be measured through their practice, but the resolutions they develop are evidence of the ways they perceive both their present as children, and the future casting of who they should be and become. Children expressed wanting to meet adults' expectations of their grades, temperament, and behavior.

Further, there is an element of impressing their assessors as a form of demonstrating both their own emotional skills and their own value and worth. Through interactions with teachers on school spirit days, showing off their wacky hair or hauling a bag of 100 buttons for the 100th day, they tried to impress others with the ways they were objects of investment and value. Similarly, for their parents, children regularly outlined the ways they were fulfilling their parents' expectations as contributing members of the household. They also tried to impress me directly as they told me about the new toys they received, how objects were a reward for good grades, or how an object was handmade by their grandmother. In various ways, children signaled their importance and value in their families and communities.

By engaging in this value demonstration, children also expressed what ideas they had of what made them "good children" and revealed the purpose for which they labored. Their perceptions were informed by school, family, and community culture. In fact, one day as we were sitting at her kitchen table drawing, Herminia drew a hand and listed "virtues for life" around the palm and fingers. She listed loyalty, respect, humility, honesty, patience, responsibility, and kindness. Through their actions, art, and stories, children told me about the ways they interpret their role in their family, and how they aim to make valuable contributions. Children communicated how they engaged in emotion work and emotional labor to be good siblings, children, classmates, and community members.

Another element that emerged in these examples was the ways different spaces facilitated the contributions of children in different ways. In the framework chapter, I outlined how children participate in community settings in highly fluid ways. In those spaces, children can see collaboration of many actors and themselves engage in generational modeling by taking the role of learning or being teachers to younger peers. In family settings, similar freedom is given to children. It is important to recognize in both community and family settings, parents are key to establishing the expectations for how children participate. Communication in both settings is more fluid and multidirectional, and communication is often over a shared task a group is working at, so individuals have a shared context and orientation.

Last, in school settings, children experienced the least amount of opportunity to contribute. Children talked about supporting their peers in conflicts during recess, or in expanded learning spaces like after school programs. They rarely discussed classrooms themselves as places for them to practice fluid collaboration without being directed, monitored, and assessed by teachers. The culture of schools is not surprising to families and children, and many aspects reflect broader U.S. culture like individualism and paternalism. Even though it is not surprising, it is still a cultural shift children navigate on a near daily basis. Further, it is one parents navigate less frequently. Often, due to issues of legal status and language barriers, these families are at outskirts of school decision-making. Although many of the mothers in my projects were active participants at district level, they were removed from the school site level because of background check and fingerprinting requirements.

By employing an analysis of intersectional power, I aim to show how children are more than simply aged actors, but also understand the impact of legality, economics, and gendered labor division. My analysis shows how children are “good” children learning to be “good” adults, and how their learning is work. Previous analysis of families and care are mostly chalked up to relationships and interpersonal dynamics, with most attention going to

the ways care work and reproductive labor in household settings is highly gendered. In doing so, researchers have left out the ways age is an axis of power that impacts individual members, and in turn plays into family dynamics. Children are consistently framed as dependents who are objects of others' care work. In contrast, my research shows how children contribute to their families and how their positionality as children can be leveraged for working with peers like siblings and classmates. These examples also show a similar relationship between kids and school and adults and work.

Morrison (2017) theorized the home and family as a place where workers who engaged in racialized, classed, and gendered work on the market could be themselves. Morrison argued workers are only partially themselves, selling their energy and time to work for pay. They then positioned the home and family as sites where individuals are allowed to be complex and whole. Children of immigrants and in some cases immigrants themselves, experience a similar kind of fragmentation as they engage in U.S. schooling and society. The work of performing childhood by U.S. school standards is taxing and can be riddled with interpersonal conflicts that point to the ways people are at odds with their surroundings and peers' experiences in a shared society. In these cases, siblings and families are indeed places where we go to be part of the sameness. These shared experiences are precisely what makes families so complex; because people can also share the same, perhaps unideal, yet functional coping strategies normalized and accepted in family dynamics. Thus, a family systems perspective, paired with an analytic of power, offers a way to see families as complex, power-laden terrain, through which children experience a climate shaped by wider social conditions. This landscape is one children can also shape and mold according to their own intersectional subjectivities and identities. The children in my study engaged in emotional labor for their parents, not as a codependency of adults on children, but as cocreators of an emotional landscape in the family.

Children's Emotional Labor for Adults

Children's care for adults emerged in two ways. In some cases, children did emotional labor for adults as direct carework, like empathizing with their parents. But much more common was emotion work like emotion management they did toward their own prerogatives, and emotional labor for others, like siblings or peers. I refer to these cases as ones with an indirect impact on adults. As I tease out in the examples, both forms of carework can constitute what some call "parentification." First used by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973), the term parentification refers to a process in which children adopt the role of parents, and parents adopt the role of the child. The term comes from processes observed in intergenerational family therapy sessions with adult children and their parents. Most studies on parentification have highlighted the ways children must develop coping strategies for emotionally volatile parents who come to depend on their children for emotional support. In some cases, material aspects are involved such as those of children with parents with physical mobility issues, who may need children to physically care for them (Dariotis et al., 2023).

Practitioners who believe parentification is bad for children have tended to talk about the negative impacts including high stress and inappropriate pressure on children. They held firmly the boundary of children and adults and aim to protect an essentialist ideal of childhood innocence. However, there have also been findings that have suggested parentification can be an experience of positive, adaptive, and empowering coping strategies (Masiran et al., 2023). In studies of positive forms of parentification, examples such as "parents who openly delegate each child's responsibilities," "age-appropriate responsibilities," and children's perception of their contributions and value emerge as part of the process (Masiran et al., 2023, p. 4). However, if the roles of "parentified" children are age-appropriate, and children report positive self-perceptions because of being included as valuable contributors, the hallmarks of parentification begin to fade.

In particular, the arguments of parentification emerge from emotional manipulation as an aspect of parenting. In the following examples, I show how children's emotional labor in both direct and indirect impact could be described as constituting parentification but it is in fact children's dyadic relationship with their parents that shapes whether their contributions are collaborative or required by imposition of their parents. In doing so, I home in on the ways children's contributions cannot and should not be entirely swept into the term of parentification and instead require a more nuanced analysis of power that takes children's agency into account.

Parents who participated in this study agreed it was fine to ask children to participate in chores and sibling support. They also shared ways their children wanted to be contributors, or simply stepped into a helping role on their own. Most parents told me at one point or another it is not wrong for kids to help, but there are limits to what should be required of them. When asked what should be required of children, mothers identified expectations of their children are more individualized, attuned to each child, and should be established at home in family contexts. Daniela, who has two daughters, expressed it is up to parents to set expectations for things like screen time limits, what is appropriate play, how to be productive, and when to respect a parent's decision or direction. Daniela used a common Mexican expression, "te toman la medida," which expresses the ways children observe adults, and measure them up, then tailoring their behaviors to that of the adults. Interestingly, this example of children "measuring" what they can get away with can be a way to understand how children's behaviors are disciplined through positive or negative reinforcement, about what behaviors are acceptable, with whom, and in what settings.

However, I understand, at the root, this sentiment identifies children as agents of their own accord who need to be worked with as well as taught. In the following examples, I show how children's dyadic relationships with parents facilitate carework from children for adults in indirect ways still shaped by input from parents, and thus oriented toward making a positive impact on parents.

When asked about how they cope with difficult situations, children regularly talked about taking deep breaths. This struck me because of its prevalence as an entry point into emotion management for children. In addition to the popularity of breath work in children's books and media related to emotion management, schools have used breath work as a tool in classrooms, particularly related to increasing focus, and regulating nervous systems after play periods (Crandall Hart et al., 2020). In addition to the example in which Mariana supported Eric in taking deep breaths, Mariana expressed she herself took deep breaths when she was feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.

I observed this once in a park setting in which Mariana was struggling to situate herself in play. She was just between the two age groups that had clustered, and Leticia encouraged her to join in on the soccer clinic. Frustrated because it was already in progress, Mariana's eyes welled with tears, and she took a deep breath before turning away in resignation. I could see Mariana trying to regulate herself by inhaling deeply, focusing on her lungs instead of her frustration. When she turned around, I noticed her shoulders go up and down once more in another deep breath. Leticia noticed this too, and she excused herself from the group of mothers to catch up to Mariana. She hugged Mariana, talked to her for a moment, wiped away the few escaped tears, and then rubbing her back, she pointed to an older sibling of one of her friends and identified a way for her to join in on the drills already taking place. In this example, Leticia was not instructing or coaching Mariana on what to do, Mariana was applying what she already knew. Later, I asked Mariana where she learned to take deep breaths, and she said her parents do it. This example shows the seemingly innocuous ways adults model emotion management that children adopt. Further, it demonstrates the expectations of adult/child interactions creating a container for these methods.

When Leticia told Mariana to integrate herself, she took a breath and prepared herself to try. This will to try, even as it may feel hard, demonstrates the deep trust Mariana had in Leticia. Leticia doubled down when she followed her, giving her a moment to

recalibrate before assuring her of where she could enter the ongoing soccer clinic. This example shows the dyadic way a daughter attempts to take responsibility over their experiences and engage as an agent but faced with a structure needed support from her parent to complete the task of integration. The impact for Leticia was indirect, and most evident in context with the park setting. In parks, children are expected to play. Children understand when their mothers are together they sometimes socialize as adults, celebrating each other for any number of reasons. When families are at the park, children take on work like keeping track of each other and resolving their problems as independently as they can before requesting adult help. Mariana was trying to handle the situation herself but ultimately conferred with her mother to proceed.

This kind of dyadic learning typically happens as children and adults engage in projects together. In this case, I am referring to projects of shared interest that occur in the regular mundanity of life, like getting to school on time, supporting siblings in homework help, and going on family outings. When families engage collaboratively on regular projects, power is distributed and diffused into the family across actors. Collaboration is not inherently present in parenting styles of U.S. culture. Oppositely, U.S. cultural norms of parenting are parents should maintain all control and responsibility for their children (White et al., 2013). However, it is these Latino families' culturally situated family dynamics that reflect intergenerational and extended family collaboration. In many cases, children looked after each other as an intentional way of lightening the mental labor for their mothers.

Mari's five children, as old at 17 years old, and young as 6, are an example of the ways children take care of each other. Mari, who worked on multiple committees in the county, often relied on her children to watch each other. Mari's children did not typically show up together, but often arrived at community events in pairs, sometimes with her and sometimes tacked onto another mom's family. This division was necessitated by the variety in age and their diverging interests. Children cared for each other within their family, but they also created a network of safety by numbers when they were in parks and on social outings.

So even when only two of Mari's children were arriving with Leticia's family, they had a collective goal in mind of what a successful outing was like, and they were aiming to achieve it every time. In return, they were rewarded by being given increased opportunities like this, and in being known as children welcomed with other families. In these cases, there was not a negative stereotype like "latch key kid," rather this was part of the communality Latina immigrant mothers in this network have built. Their trust for each other was apparent to their children, and their children in turn build trust with each other and aim to be helpful contributors or, at minimum, avoid being disruptive barriers to a successful outing.

Because adultism saturates parenting worldwide and is a prominent feature of U.S. parenting approaches, it is important to pay attention to how adultism facilitates children's contributions. By setting expectations of good children as children easy to manage, or who can manage themselves without adult intervention, all of children's indirect emotion work and emotional labor for others can be seen as having some impact on their parents or the adults charged with caring for them. Adultism is also a key factor in the ways parentification functions, as adults' needs are framed as more important than children's. So negative impacts like doing emotional labor as a maladaptive coping strategy highlight how parentification is not a problem of children being agents and contributors to society, but is about adults who aim to garner children's contributions as a benefit to parents' needs above all others. In the examples, children are attentive to the care of each other, which certainly is responsive to parents' wants and needs but does not place parents at the center of decision making, nor do they see parents' needs as more important than their own.

In these dynamics, siblings also learn a lot from how they see adults talking to their children's peers. Many mothers shared their younger children learned rules faster because they saw the ways older siblings butted against boundaries and limits. When discussing her daughters' different personalities, Daniela expressed feeling 6-year-old Itati had a calmer disposition, but she also emphasized how, when she was a toddler, Natalie was beginning school and encountering behavioral problems she struggled to deal with. Daniela told me

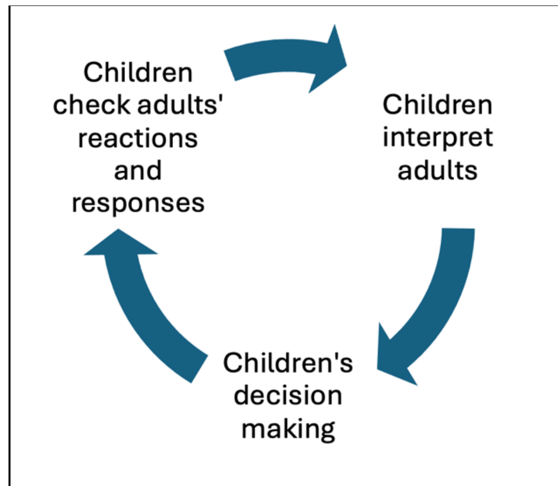
when Natalie was about school-aged, she became very resistant to hearing "no." Daniela typically went on outings with her daughters by herself while her husband was at work, and she said she struggled with having a toddler and a school-aged child.

Natalie would cry when told she could not buy something at the store or have tantrums when told it was time to leave the park. As she told me, it came to a peak when they were at a local toy store to buy a gift for a friend's birthday party. On this day, her husband was with her, and he was witness to the spectacle of Natalie's emotional outbursts. When she was told she would not be getting to buy a toy for herself, she laid on the ground crying and her father picked her up and took her to their car where they waited for Daniela and Itati to join them.

This outing pushed Daniela and her husband to join positive discipline classes through the county's Positive Parenting Program (Triple P). As Daniela told it, Itati was there to witness Natalie's tantrums to the newfound consequences and changed responses of Daniela. It was Daniela's perspective Itati learned by observing her sister and mother's relationship transformation. As rules were implemented, and consequences came into play, Itati began to form a sense of the structures of what she could reasonably expect of her parents, and what her parents expected of her. This example demonstrates how expectations and boundaries are drawn around multiple actors' needs and different orientations: adults engaging in power struggles, a daughter asserting independence, and another daughter observing and learning. The dyadic process of children interpreting adults, acting toward their goals, and checking the reactions and responses of adults, is one that constructs expectations and boundaries of children's agency and facilitates pathways for their emotional labor. This is how children's interpersonal learning (see Figure 6) can happen as they observe and pitch in to shared endeavors.

Figure 6

Children's Interpersonal Learning



Herein lies the difference between the emotional manipulation of parentification, and the normal, deeply attached, relational aspect of parent and child relationships where each family member contributes to the well-being of the others. When asked about their parents' expectations of them, children listed many of the same things: to do my homework, go to school, play nicely, not fight, share toys, help clean, walk the dog, water the plants. And when asked about what it was like when they did not meet their parents' expectations, the children provided insight into the ways children predicted and perceived their parents' responses. Six-year-old Luisa told me about how her brother got nervous to give his report cards to their mom. She said, "He gets good grades like Bs but he thinks he could do better so he doesn't want to show her them." I asked Luisa if her mom had ever been upset with her brother over grades and she said, "Sometimes but not a lot, only if he gets really bad grades. She mostly gets mad if the house is dirty and we didn't help clean up but usually we do." This comment from Luisa indicates the perception her siblings had of her mother was one in which they knew the rules and expectations of their parents and yet, their own standards and expectations of themselves were not enmeshed in their parents' goals for them. Children's

perceptions of their parents' feelings can underscore the relatedness, and yet they may not shoulder the expectation they are the reason for, or responsible for, their parents' emotions.

Parent child relationships are unique because of the closeness they exhibit. It is normal then to see children sympathize with their parents, and their sympathy moves them to participate in ways helpful to the family unit. Eleven-year-old Herminia mopped the floors nearly daily. Their home was a small RV without much room to walk around and therefore not much to mop, but Herminia said she thought it was important to help as she and her siblings were getting older and more mature. In another conversation, Mariana told me about how her dad helped by taking them out so their mom could clean or cook by herself. I asked Mariana why it was important her mom had time to do those things by herself. Mariana answered:

> it's just that she's always with us, and when we're here, the things she cleans get dirty or a mess gets made again . . . my dad, he is out all day and he just comes home and he doesn't know everything she did because he's here, he just sees it's clean now. He doesn't know what it feels like to be her.

This excerpt from Mariana stood out to me because she was simultaneously saying her father did not understand her mother and demonstrated she did. This kind of empathy for her mother was deeply relational emotional labor. She was not taking it personally her mother needed time alone, she was just taking her mother's perspective of what a typical day was and saw how she could use some alone time. In doing so, Mariana identified her role in her mother's work, and willingly shifted that work onto her father by getting her father to take them out to aide her mother's need for rest. Both examples exhibit children's empathy for their parents, not because of unhealthy parental expectations of their children to coregulate, but as a result of their shared understanding of family mutuality, albeit from different positionalities.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I showed examples of children's emotional labor through their emotion work skills. With their siblings, children often did the work of interpreting

situations, managing interpersonal relationships, and predicting outcomes. These cases, supported by shared family and community contexts, are strong examples of successful deployment of emotion work. With their peers, and particularly in school and community settings, children can struggle to reconcile different expectations, rules, and possibilities. Like adults in new situations, children might opt to protect themselves from unknown harms by returning to family for reassurance and support. Families can engage in emotional labor for each other to replenish the emotional drain of complex and difficult situations, including rejection and harm.

Finally, I demonstrated ways children do emotional labor with adults in their lives. By engaging with contemporary ideas of "parentification," I showed how parentification is reflective of inappropriate codependence and how children in safe and healthy families are always going to engage in inter-dependence. The nature of family systems is a unit is made up of social actors of varied positionalities. With more power, comes more access, and surely more responsibility. However, when considering what adults are responsible for, children are not simply passive objects in these dynamics. As adults, parents talk about the ways they must be accountable for their children and to their children in supporting them through difficult times. But this is not the same thing as being responsible for them to the extent it serves us as adults, which I argue is the root cause of parentification and which distinguishes inappropriate reliance on children from adaptive, empowering experiences of agentic and meaningful contribution.

Mixed into my analysis of family systems and children's contributions via emotional labor, are underlying currents of power. For example, when Mariana talked about how her dad did not see her mother's work and did not understand her daily life, it is important to remember Mariana's mother was an undocumented woman. The fact her husband went out to work all day, a job which was facilitated through his permissions as a legal resident, is part of the context of how others can participate in family systems. Families create and experience an emotional climate in their family relationships. By interpreting emotional

climate against the backdrop of positionalities related to power, climate becomes textured. Therefore, I advance a concept of emotional landscapes in which children learn and participate in emotional labor. The texture that positionality and power create can be read as a kind of geography, in which emotional climate functions, in which there are currents and trends, and through which people can understand the challenge of being an actor with relatively little societal power. In a complex landscape such as mixed-status families, emotional currents may be stronger or weaker in different directions, relative to others' power and how they impact the landscape. These findings demonstrate the related aspects of power, labor, learning, and emotions in family relationships.

Conclusion

This dissertation project reveals insights for multiple areas of work. As an interdisciplinary project, it traverses the fields of childhood studies and family studies, drawing on areas of work like education, social reproduction, mixed-status families, and labor. Each of the chapters makes contributions to these distinct fields, and the findings can impact many areas of study, and also inform how we study mixed-status families and children.

Through my theoretical framework for this project, I propose a new model for understanding the labor of learning, specifically for social-emotional learning. This chapter expands the literature on social-emotional learning by explaining how learning by observing and contributing through the practice of social-emotional skills has an impact on others. The model I propose links social-emotional learning and processes of emotional labor to argue emotional labor is not a commodification of emotions but in fact a set of practiced skills. In marrying the concepts of learning and labor, I challenge the definition of emotional labor as conceptualized by Hochschild (2012).

The core assumption of emotional labor in Hochschild's (2012) definition is emotions can be managed and then commodified. However, if, as I propose, emotional labor is a set of skills that function in relational and interpersonal contexts, emotional labor is not limited to commodification but can also be analyzed in exchange systems more broadly. The model I propose pulls emotional labor out of systems of capitalism and instead highlights the invisible reproductive carework that happens across diverse paid and unpaid labor contexts. Additionally, by linking labor and learning, the proposed model of social-emotional learning as emotional labor opens doors to who qualifies as a laborer. Where Hochschild's theory comes from research on adults in service industries, my model frames emotional labor as something anyone who is learning and practicing social-emotional skills can do, suggesting children complete emotional labor as well as adults.

This framework could open opportunities for sociologists and applied political economists interested in understanding how children can be framed as contributors by

drawing attention to the work of reproduction and education in the production of daily life. Additionally, this framework can be used to expand conceptualizations of what counts as teaching and learning. In particular, by building on the model of learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI). My application of LOPI works toward the re-framing of children as producers. In LOPI's origination, children are certainly contributors, but the systems of exchange under which LOPI operates are not always explicitly named. My work aims to name a system of exchange which is not based in a zero-sum or extractivist form of exchange, but which can be understood through reciprocal and communal exchange. LOPI comes from indigenous knowledge systems and does not identify teaching and learning as exchange. In the same way this embedded model can be used to see learning and teaching as productive work, the LOPI model could be fruitfully expanded by engaging with the changing economic and political systems also impact daily life. In the application of LOPI for understanding how learning is organized, the political and economic conditions of the communities being highlighted are important to factor in. In the case of my participants, their experiences in LOPI are shaped by the parents' immigrant status, sometimes as undocumented residents, and parents to both noncitizen and citizen children. Their children, while engaging in LOPI settings, are also traversing cultural contexts which can be affect what different facets of LOPI look like, specifically those related to shared context across generations.

Chapter 3 made contributions to the areas of intensive mothering and unpacked how emotional labor is modeled through community work. In this chapter, I showed how Latina immigrant mothers engage in intensive mothering through different means than mothers of higher socioeconomic status. Though the basis of their ability to do intensive mothering still hinges on the availability of time, my analysis of motherhood from the vantage point of legality and its impacts on family members showed how these mothers come into this time differently than intensive mothers studied by other scholars (Brown, 2022; Ennis, 2014). Namely, Latina immigrant mothers who participated in this study on mixed-status families

reflected the broader trends in immigration literature that has highlighted the gendered nature of legality (Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). Where the most criminalized and stereotyped immigrants were Black and Latino men (Gonzales & Vargas, 2015), the most likely to be rejected for legal immigration were women (Menjívar, 1999).

In the families in this study, most of the women were undocumented with husbands who had some legal permission to work, showing the impacts of citizenship regimes and legality on mixed-status family dynamics. Chapter 3 also made note of the various kinds of informal and formalized work mothers have done as noncitizens. Their work across a network of community-based organizations and social service providers involved the same kinds of time management paid jobs require. However, as each of the organizations they worked with had different forms of incentivization and compensation models, they must negotiate their work with those structures in mind. These different organizational cultures and structures shaped how mothers negotiated their time with each organization. In these negotiations, interpersonal relationships were the basis of what I argue is the modeling of emotional labor and social-emotional skills. These findings highlight not simply the community and social work women do but assert their work is part of a broader system of labor exchange that hinges on invisible and reproductive labor.

Research in the areas of intensive mothering can use these findings to rethink what social, economic, and political systems impact the role of motherhood and the experiences of work produced by systemic factors. For example, though there is some work on how Black mothers do intensive mothering through different psychological processes, their outcomes and actions look similar to white wealthy stay at home mothers (Brantley, 2023). This finding can be related to family science concepts like equifinality, in which individuals' different socioeconomic backgrounds shape their decision-making processes in different ways, but often end up with the same outcomes. Scholars of motherhood would do well to think more critically about the impact of legal systems on motherhood and the work necessary to resist oppression by way of illegalization.

Chapter 4 interrogates the dyadic process through which children learn by observing and participating in emotional labor. Chapter 4 builds on the growing scholarship on children as agents, contributors, and producers (Bourdillon & Myers, 2022; Levison et al., 2021; Taft, 2019; van Daalen & Mabillard, 2019). To insert them in the process of learning and laboring, I both demonstrated how they learned these skills, and how they were impactful by practicing social-emotional skills. Children demonstrated how they saw themselves as contributors to their families and communities. By entering the exchange of emotional labor, they showed how they understood the complex interpersonal dynamics existing between adults. They also must identify existing gaps and when they engage in filling those gaps, they showed how they were acutely aware of their own impact as well as demonstrated a savvy knowledge of the systems that function without their input but have an impact on their life. Schools in particular, as well as spaces of public health and child development, are all designed by adults and have a significant impact on how children are permitted to participate, yet rarely include children's perspectives in their designs. All of these findings talk back to dominant perceptions of children as passive objects of protection and investment.

Further, in framing children as contributors, I aimed to highlight their motives not as individualized desires, but as shared motives developed in their family as a collective. If these children's emotional labor is the practice of social-emotional skills, the outputs of emotional labor and the culmination of skills for responsible decision making demonstrate a misalignment between capitalist models of exchange and labor. Capitalist logic requires labor to produce anything of value. However, contemporary markets and systems of exchange are more reflective of cost and consumption than of labor. The result is an undervaluing of labor not physically or economically productive. Although children's practice of social-emotional skills are valuable because of the impact they have on their families, it is not in alignment with capitalist market logic. Instead, by framing children's practice as labor, I urge everyone all to imagine systems of exchange explicit about the cost of labor are collaborative, collectivist, and rooted in reproduction, stewardship, and care. In these cases, where children's

responsible decision making is reflective of a collective good, and reveals shared motives generated with their family members, their responsible decision-making is not about individual accumulation but about collective benefit.

One of the underlying currents in these findings is the ways children's negotiations in mixed-status families are often necessary because of the multiple cultural spaces they traverse. Where LOPI helps researchers see how children learn and practice social-emotional labor, it does not help us unpack how conflict can be rooted in cultural differences. LOPI has primarily been taken up in shared cultural contexts. However, these findings indicate LOPI could be used to understand a myriad of children's contributions rooted in their Latino culture, and which support them in learning outside of classroom spaces. This could support scholars of cultural assets in childhood learning to rethink the purpose of learning and education systems. These findings illustrate how immigrant families are more than just cultural wealth to be recognized by schools, but in fact are equally important for children's education and participation in society. Practitioners can highlight how immigrant families do all of this work and rethink the ways community organizations, schools, and grant initiatives should engage with children as active agents of change.

Working with children, families, and in the community required a different orientation to community engagement than illustrated in methodology literature. To participate in this work, I became embedded in community organizations. As I carried this work out, and my access to the same families they aimed to serve grew, my relationship with these organizations changed. I became a consultant and link between mothers and these organizations. In many cases, I carried messages already communicated. However, because I was a neutral third party, my representation of their message was taken differently. Yet, to say I was neutral is not accurate. I was embedded in the community, fluctuating between what the literature refers to as community-based and community-engaged. Chapter 2 argues these terms are used with an overly strong exclusivity. Where community-engaged work primarily focuses on and recommends work with organizations using actionable data to

inform their decisions (Greenberg et al., 2020; London et al., 2022), community-based work focuses on the relationality researchers must cultivate with the communities they live in (Shumka, 2023). Still, the literature on community-based research has come primarily from anthropology in which fieldwork is often done by outsiders aiming to be community-based as a way to challenge their outsider perspectives and get critical insights from insiders of the groups they study (Meijl & Wijsen, 2023; Miller, 2021). Because I lived for over 5 years in the same community as these families and followed these families for over 2 years, my relationships with them were more of an insider's perspective. Yet still, these community organizations saw me as an outsider, coming from a university setting. I argue in Chapter 2 critical community-engaged work necessitates a community-based approach.

An additional methodological contribution my work makes is related to working with children. Much of the literature in childhood studies is actually with older youth, young adults, and adults who reflect on their previous childhoods. The methodology I used with children aimed at documenting their perspectives in real time. Video recordings in which they narrated their perspectives, and focus groups in which they dialogued on their opinions and shared experiences of carework revealed how children see the adults around them. Finally, I engaged objects like storybooks, and creative work like painting and drawing, using play and imagination as reflections of how they see the world and their role in it. These methods contributed to the ever-growing work on child-appropriate methodology (Due et al., 2014; Jung, 2014; Mitchell, 2006).

In this area of methodological development, there are existing debates on whether child-appropriate methodology is too limiting, and which at times can assume children are unable to understand complex questions to participate in traditional methodologies like interviews (Kwon, 2021). These debates teeter over questions of child development as overly prescriptive of children's aptitudes and abilities, and the very real schemas of children's learning and development. I used a card deck in my research, designed as a tool for distributing housework between adults. It included cards about caregiving and childcare, so it

had a clear orientation toward adults as providers and children as dependents. However, as I took the perspective in this project that everyone engages in labor, I went through and removed cards about caregiving from adults for children, and instead imagined how a child might see each card and whether they could lay claim to making that particular contribution. This shift in thinking marked my methodological design and allowed me to use complex ideas while bringing a lens of equity to children's particularly aged experiences of learning.

My empirical findings and theoretical contributions are central to understanding children's contributions. They speak to and continue to build the fields of childhood studies, family studies, and Latino studies. Researchers and practitioners working with children can use these insights to rethink the ways children are framed as contributors and emphasize the soft skills development which requires so much learning and practice of social-emotional skills. Seeing children as immaterial laborers and contributors to family life reveals a more accurate understanding of interpersonal dynamics in family life with children. Additionally, the findings on children's contributions remind adults that whether in direct or indirect forms, children make contributions simply by partaking in an adultist society. Whether for their own prerogatives or to meet the expectations of others, children are attuned and responsive to the emotion climate as well as the positionalities of different actors.

Through dyadic processes of learning and laboring, children recognize the emotional labor their mothers do in their families and communities. My findings around how Latina immigrant mothers do intensive mothering can help practitioners and providers understand how to engage with immigrant communities and mixed-status families. These findings revealed the ways immigrant mothers combated isolation and marginalization so common for immigrant and undocumented women. Further, the findings showed how these mothers navigated multiple organizational cultures and models for working with community members. However, perhaps most important in the contributions of these findings is the ways mothers brought a variety of assets, and also how they transformed space into something they need, can use, or that helps them. Their focus on families, as opposed to only their children, is part

of how they broaden the reach of all of the organizations they work with, and fill gaps the organizations struggle to identify. Practitioners can use these findings to equitably redesign the ways they use incentivization, compensation, and the social capital they confer onto community leaders.

Finally, the methodological and theoretical contributions I made based on this study can contribute to the development of more interdisciplinary work that moves toward visions of racial and immigrant justice, challenges binaries of work and care, and imagines a collectivist heart of all the work both reproductive and transformative, and generates ways of being yet to be seen. By bridging the fields of education and labor, with a child-centric approach, researchers can develop innovative approaches to education with equity at the heart of teaching, learning, and assessment. Further, this approach can usher in a new way of understanding where learning happens, and support practitioners in seeing families and communities as assets to their goals for supporting the whole child.

References

Abrego, L. J. (2014). *Sacrificing families: Navigating laws, labor, and love across borders* (1st ed.). Stanford University Press.

Alber, E., Thelen, T., & Goody, E. N. (2021). Parenting and social reproduction. In E. Albert & T. Thelen (Eds.), *Politics and kinship: A reader* (pp. 174–190). Routledge.

Anderson, B. (2013). *Migration as a sign of the times*. Brill.

Bertrand, M., Brooks, M. D., & Domínguez, A. D. (2020). Challenging adultism: Centering youth as educational decision makers. *Urban Education*, *58*(1), 2570–2597. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920959135

Bhattacharya, T. (Ed.). (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentering oppression*. Pluto Books.

Bianchi, S., M. (2011). Family change and time allocation in American families. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *638*(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716211413731

Bishop, J. (2017). *Removing barriers to learning or picking up the pieces? An ethnography of the learning mentor in a performance-based culture* [Postdoctoral thesis, Univerity of Huddersfield]. https://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/34649/1/Final%20thesis%20-%20BISHOP.PDF

Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., & Spark, G. M. (1973). *Invisible loyalties: Reciprocity in intergenerational family therapy*. Lippincott Williams and Wilkins / Harper & Row.

Bourdillon, M., & Myers, W. (2022). Illusions in the protection of working children. In N. Howard & S. Okyere (Eds.), *International child protection: Towards politics and participation* (pp. 77–100). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78763-9_4

Bourdillon, M., Levison, D., Myers, W., & White, B. (2010). *Rights and wrongs of children's work*. Rutgers University Press.

Brantley, M. (2023). Can't just send our children out: Intensive motherwork and experiences of black motherhood. *Social Problems*, *2023*, Article spad047. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spad047

Brown, B. A. (2022). Intensive mothering and the unequal school-search burden. *Sociology of Education*, *95*(1), 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/00380407211048453

Brownell, C. A., Iesue, S. S., Nichols, S. R., & Svetlova, M. (2013). Mine or yours? Development of sharing in toddlers in relation to ownership understanding. *Child Development*, *84*(3), 906–920. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12009

Butler, J., & Athanasiou, A. (2013). *Dispossession: The Performative in the political*. John Wiley & Sons.

Calarco, J. (2024). *Holding it together*. Penguin Random House.

CASEL Briefs. (2007). *Background on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505362.pdf

CASEL. (2023). *What is the CASEL framework?.* https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/

Castañeda, H. (2019). *Borders of belonging: Struggle and solidarity in mixed-status immigrant families* (1st ed.). Stanford University Press.

Castles, S. (2004). The factors that make and unmake migration policies. International Migration Review, 38(3), 852–884. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00222.x

Chacon, J. M. (2014). Producing liminal legality. *Denver University Law Review*, *92*(4), 709–768.

Clapton, G., Cree, V. E., & Smith, M. (2013). Moral panics and social work: Towards a sceptical view of UK child protection. *Critical Social Policy*, *33*(2), 197–217. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018312457860

Clarke, J., Pon, G., & Phillips, D. (2021). The colour of child welfare: Overrepresentation of Black children in Ontario child welfare. In D. V. Mullings (Ed.), *Africentric social work* (pp. 94–120). Fernwood.

Coltrane, S., & Adams, M. (2008). *Gender and families* (2nd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Coppens, A. D., & Rogoff, B. (2022). Cultural variation in the early development of initiative in children's prosocial helping. *Social Development*, *31*(3), 656–678. https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12566

Crandall Hart, S., DiPerna, J. C., Lei, P.-W., & Cheng, W. (2020). Nothing lost, something gained? Impact of a universal social-emotional learning program on future state test performance. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(1), 5–19. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19898721

Cunningham, H. (1995). *Children and childhood in western society since 1500*. Routledge.

Dariotis, J. K., Chen, F. R., Park, Y. R., Nowak, M. K., French, K. M., & Codamon, A. M. (2023). Parentification vulnerability, reactivity, resilience, and thriving: A mixed methods systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *20*(13), Article 6197. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20136197

Dean, L., Churchill, B., & Ruppanner, L. (2021). The mental load: Building a deeper theoretical understanding of how cognitive and emotional labor overload women and mothers. *Community Work & Family*, *25*(1), 13–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2021.2002813

Delgado, V. (2023). Uncovering youth's invisible labor: Children's roles, care work, and familial obligations in Latino/a immigrant families. *Social Sciences*, *12*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12010036

Doepke, M., & Zilibotti, F. (2019). *Love, money, and parenting: How economics explains the way we raise our kids*. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77fr1

Doucleff, M. (2022). *Hunt, gather, parent: What ancient cultures can teach us about the lost art of raising happy, helpful little humans*. Avid Reader Press.

Douglas, K. (2022). Assimilation through Canadian child welfare policy. *Social Work & Policy Studies: Social Justice, Practice and Theory*, *5*(2), 52–64.

Dreby, J. (2010). *Divided by borders: Mexican migrants and their children* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Druckerman, P. (2014). *Bringing up bébé: One American mother discovers the wisdom of French parenting* (Reprint edition). Penguin Books.

Due, C., Riggs, D. W., & Augoustinos, M. (2014). Research with children of migrant and refugee backgrounds: A review of child-centered research methods. *Child Indicators Research*, *7*(1), 209–227. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-013-9214-6

English, C., & Brown, G. (2023). My mum is on strike! Social reproduction and the (emotional) labor of 'mothering work' in neoliberal Britain. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *19*(1), 1941–1959. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.13027

Ennis, L. R. (2014). *Intensive mothering: The cultural contradictions of modern motherhood*. Demeter Press.

Enriquez, L. E. (2020). *Of love and papers* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Estrada, E. (2019). *Kids at work: Latinx families selling food on the streets of Los Angeles*. NYU Press.

Fernández, J. S. (2021). *Growing up Latinx: Coming of age in a time of contested citizenship*. NYU Press.

Finch, J., & Groves, D. (1983). *A labour of love: Women, work, and caring* (1st ed.). Routledge & K. Paul.

Froschauer, L. (2018,). Removing barriers. *Science and Children*, *55*(5), 5. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44709892

Giles, M. V. (2014). *Mothering in the age of neoliberalism* (1st ed.). Demeter Press.

Golash-Boza, T., & Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2013). Latino immigrant men and the deportation crisis: A gendered racial removal program. *Latino Studies*, *11*(3), 271–292. https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2013.14

Gonzales, R. G., & Vargas, J. A. (2015). *Lives in limbo: Undocumented and coming of age in America* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Greenberg, M., London, R. A., & McKay, S. C. (2020). Community-initiated student-engaged research: Expanding undergraduate teaching and learning through public sociology. *Teaching Sociology*, *48*(1), 13–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X19875794

Gubernskaya, Z., & Dreby, J. (2017). US immigration policy and the case for family unity. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, *5*(2), 417–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/233150241700500210

Hardt, M. (2006). Immaterial labor and artistic production. *A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, *17*(2), 175–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/08935690500046637

Hayes, S. D., & Derrington, M. L. (2023). School leadership in uncertain times: Identifying dimensions of effective principal leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, *43*(4), 330–347. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2023.2171002

Hays, S. (1998). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood* (Revised ed.). Yale University Press.

Hernández, T. K. (2021). Latino antiblack bias and the census categorization of Latinos: Race, ethnicity, or other? In M.-K. Jung & J. H. C. Vargas (Eds.), *Antiblackness* (pp. 283–296). Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1grbbwr.16

Hill, J. A. (2011). Endangered childhoods: How consumerism is impacting child and youth identity. *Media, Culture & Society*, *33*(3), 347–362. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443710393387

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling* (3rd ed.). University of California Press.

Hooker, E. D., Corona, K., Guardino, C. M., Schetter, C. D., & Campos, B. (2023). What predicts interdependence with family? The relative contributions of ethnicity/race and social class. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000593

Howard, N., & Okyere, S. (Eds.). (2022). *International child protection: Towards politics and participation* Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78763-9

James, A. (2011). To be (come) or not to be (come): Understanding children's citizenship. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *633*(1), 167–179. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716210383642

Jung. (2014). Full article: Community through the eyes of children: Blending child-centered research and qualitative geovisulization. *Children's Geographies*, *13*(6), 722–740. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2014.964666

Kwon, J. (2021). Research with young multilingual children through child-centered interview activities. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *23*(2), 101–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2021.1914049

Kwon, S. A. (2013). *Uncivil youth: Race, activism, and affirmative governmentality*. Duke University Press.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

Leavy, P. (2022). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. Guilford Publications.

Levison, D., Maynes, M. J., & Vavrus, F. (Eds.). (2021). *Children and youth as subjects, objects, agents: Innovative approaches to research across space and time*. Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63632-6

London, R. A., Glass, R. D., Chang, E., Sabati, S., & Nojan, S. (2022). "We are about life changing research": Community partner perspectives on community-engaged research collaborations. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *26*(1), Article 1. https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/2512

López, N., & Hogan, H. (2021). What's your street race? The urgency of critical race theory and intersectionality as lenses for revising the U.S. office of management and budget guidelines, census and administrative data in Latinx communities and beyond. *Genealogy*, *5*(3), Article 75. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy5030075

Malhotra, R. S. (2022). "Not everyone can do this": Childcare context and the practice of skill in emotional labor. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, *16*(1), Article 8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-022-00101-4

Masiran, R., Ibrahim, N., Awang, H., & Lim, P. Y. (2023). The positive and negative aspects of parentification: An integrated review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *144*, Article 106709. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106709

McCarthy Foubert, J. L. (2022). 'Damned if you do, damned if you don't:' Black parents' racial realist school engagement. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *25*(5), 647–664. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1631782

Meijl, T. van, & Wijsen, F. (2023). *Engaged scholarship and emancipation: 75 Years of cultural anthropology and development studies at Radboud University*. Radboud University Press.

Mejía-Arauz, R., Rogoff, B., Dayton, A., & Henne-Ochoa, R. (2018). Collaboration or negotiation: Two ways of interacting suggest how shared thinking develops. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *23*, 117–123. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.02.017

Menjívar, C. (1999). The intersection of work and gender: Central American immigrant women and employment in California. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *42*(4), 601–627. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921954381

Menjívar, C. (2006). Liminal legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants' lives in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, *111*(4). https://doi.org/10.1086/499509

Menjívar, C., & Kanstroom, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Constructing immigrant "illegality": Critiques, experiences, and responses* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Menjívar, C., Abrego, L. J., & Schmalzbauer, L. (2016). *Immigrant families* (1st ed.). Polity.

Miller, J. (2021). Undergraduate student led research: An applied anthropology course as a community-based research firm. *Teaching Anthropology*, *10*(3), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.22582/ta.v11i3.581

Mitchell, L. M. (2006). Child-centered? Thinking critically about children's drawings as a visual research method. *Visual Anthropology Review*, *22*(1), 60–73. https://doi.org/10.1525/var.2006.22.1.60

Mokhtar, N., & Krishnan, R. (2023). A proposed framework for the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee's performance: Mediating role of job demand. *Information Management and Business Review*, *15*(4(SI)I), 200–207. https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v15i4(SI)I.3593

Momeñe López, J., Estévez Gutiérrez, A., Pérez García, A. M., Olave Porrúa, L., & Iruarrizaga Díez, M. I. (2021). Coping styles, dysfunctional schemes and psychopathological symptoms related to emotional dependence on the aggressor partner. *Behavioral Psychology, 29*(1), 29–50. https://doi.org/10.51668/bp.8321102n

Morelli, G. A., Rogoff, B., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Cultural variation in young children's access to work or involvement in specialised child-focused activities. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *27*(3), 264–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/01650250244000335

Morrison, T. (2017, May 29). The work you do, the person you are. *The New Yorker*. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/05/toni-morrison-the-work-you-do-the-person-you-are

Mosier, C. E., & Rogoff, B. (2003). Privileged treatment of toddlers: Cultural aspects of individual choice and responsibility. *Developmental Psychology*, *39*(6), 1047–1060. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.39.6.1047

O'Brien, M. (2005). Mothers as educational workers: Mothers' emotional work at their children's transfer to second-level education. *Irish Educational Studies*, *24*(2–3), 223–242. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323310500435513

O'Reilly, A. (2009). *Maternal thinking; philosophy, politics, practice* (1st ed.). Demeter Press.

Orellana, M. F. (2009). *Translating childhoods: Immigrant youth, language, and culture*. Rutgers University Press.

Oswell, D. (2013). *The agency of children: From family to global human rights*. Cambridge University Press.

Oto, R. (2023). "This is for us, not them": Troubling adultism through a pedagogy of solidarity in youth organizing and activism. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *51*(4), 530–558. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2023.2208538

Palkovitz, R., Trask, B. S., & Adamsons, K. (2014). Essential differences in the meaning and processes of mothering and fathering: Family systems, feminist and qualitative perspectives. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *6*(4), 406–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12048

Paret, M. (2014). Legality and exploitation: Immigration enforcement and the US migrant labor system. *Latino Studies*, *12*(4), 503–526. https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2014.53

Portes, P. A., & Rumbaut, P. R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the immigrant second generation*. University of California Press.

Raphael-Leff, J. (2002). *Parent-infant psychodynamics: Wild things, mirrors and ghosts* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Razavi, S. (2013). Households, families, and social reproduction. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of gender and politics* (pp. 289–312). Oxford University Press.

Reese, W. J. (2001). The origins of progressive education. *History of Education Quarterly*, *41*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2001.tb00072.x

Reid, M. G. (1934). *Economics of household production*. Forgotton Books.

Rodriguez, C. (2023). *Contested Americans: Mixed-status families in anti-immigrant times*. NYU Press.

Rogoff, B. (2014). Learning by observing and pitching in to family and community endeavors: An orientation. *Human Development*, *57*(2–3), 69–81. https://doi.org/10.1159/000356757

Roy, K. M., & A. Settersten, R. (2022). The family life course framework: Perspectives on interdependent lives and inequality. In K. Adamsons, A. L. Few-Demo, C. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach* (pp. 287–307). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92002-9_20

Rumbaut, R. G. (2004). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the immigrant first and second generations in the United States. *International Migration Review*, *38*(3), 1160–1205. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00232.x

Schreiber, R. M. (2018). *The undocumented everyday: Migrant lives and the politics of visibility*. University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt21c4svc

Schueths, A., & Lawston, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Living together, living apart: Mixed status families and US immigration policy*. University of Washington Press.

Shumka, L. (2023). Rural community engaged learning? Rethinking practice in a pandemic. *Journal of New Brunswick Studies / Revue d'études Sur Le Nouveau-Brunswick*, *15*(1), Article 1.

Silbaugh, M. W., Barker, D. B., & Arghode, V. (2023). Emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and burnout among school principals: Testing a mediational model. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *22*(1), 73–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1904511

Skenazy, L. (2021). *Free-range kids: How parents and teachers can let go and let grow*. Jossey-Bass.

Solis, J., Fernandez, J., & Alcalá, L. (2013). Mexican immigrant children and youth's contributions to a community centro: Exploring civic engagement and citizen constructions. In S Kawecka Nenga & J. K. Taft (Eds.), *Youth engagement: The civic-political lives of children and youth* (pp. 177–200). Emerald Group Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1537-4661(2013)0000016012

Soto Nishimura, A., & Czaika, M. (2023). Exploring migration determinants: A meta-analysis of migration drivers and estimates. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01091-z

Taft, J. K. (2019). *The kids are in charge: Activism and power in Peru's movement of working children*. NYU Press.

Tan, E. C., Wang, K. T., & Cottrell, A. B. (2021). A systematic review of third culture kids empirical research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *82*, 81–98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.03.002

Taylor, A. (2013). *Reconfiguring the natures of childhood*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203582046

Teo, Y. (2022). Education as care labor: Expanding our lens on the work-life balance problem. *Current Sociology*, *71*(1), 1312–1329. https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921211072577

Theodotou, S. S., & Harvey, J. A. (2023). Seeking the golden fleece: A quest to evaluate the way emotional intelligence influences the work of primary school leaders. *Wales Journal of Education*, *1*(0), Article 0. https://journal.uwp.co.uk/wje/article/id/505/

van Daalen, E., & Mabillard, N. (2019). Human rights in translation: Bolivia's law 548, working children's movements, and the global child labour regime. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, *23*(4), 596–614. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2018.1541890

Van Hook, J., & Glick, J. E. (2020). Spanning borders, cultures, and generations: A decade of research on immigrant families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 224–243. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12621

Veldstra, C. (2020). Bad feeling at work: Emotional labour, precarity, and the affective economy. *Cultural Studies*, *34*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2018.1555269

Wallerstein, N., Oetzel, J. G., Sanchez-Youngman, S., Boursaw, B., Dickson, E., Kastelic, S., Koegel, P., Lucero, J. E., Magarati, M., Ortiz, K., Parker, M., Peña, J., Richmond, A., & Duran, B. (2020). Engage for equity: A long-term study of community-based participatory research and community-engaged research practices and outcomes. *Health Education & Behavior*, *47*(3), 380–390. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198119897075

White, R. M. B., Zeiders, K. H., Gonzales, N. A., Tein, J.-Y., & Roosa, M. W. (2013). Cultural values, U.S. neighborhood danger, and Mexican American parents' parenting. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *27*(3), 365–375. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032888

William, D., Lopez, P., Behar, R., & Castro, J. (2021). *Separated*. Johns Hopkins University Press. https://doi.org/10.1353/book.99588

Wingfield, A. H. (2021). The (un)managed heart: Racial contours of emotion work in gendered occupations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *47*(1), 197–212. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081320-114850

Winnicott, D. W. (1990). *The Maturational processes and the facilitating environment: Studies in the theory of emotional development* (New ed.). Routledge.

Zakaria, F., & Abd Hamid, S. R. (2020). Firstborn child readiness for a new sibling: A case study of birth-order challenges and coping for parents. *International Journal of Social Policy and Society*, *16*. https://ijsps.ism.gov.my/IJSPS/article/view/173

Zelizer, V. A. (1985). *Pricing the priceless child: The changing social value of children* (1st ed.). Basic Books.

Zelizer, V. A. (2002). Kids and commerce. *Childhood*, *9*(4), 375–396. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568202009004002

Zhu, X., Tian, G., Yin, H., & He, W. (2021). Is familism a motivator or stressor? Relationships between Confucian familism, emotional labor, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion among Chinese teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.766047