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Cuentos Para Tonantzin: A Chicana/Latina Feminista Perspective on the Experiences of Latina Immigrant Mothers Navigating the K-12 Education System

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2023

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Cuentos Para Tonantzin[1]: A Chicana/Latina Feminista Perspective on the Experiences of Latina Immigrant Mothers Navigating the K-12 Education System

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education Studies with a specialization in Critical Gender Studies

by

Ruby Osoria

Committee in charge:

      Professor Francis Contreras, Chair
      Professor Christoforos Mamas, Co-Chair
      Professor Sam Museus
      Professor Roy Pérez

2023

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[1] Translates: Takes for Tonanzin (Náhuatl language, means our mother)

The Dissertation of Ruby Osoria is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2023

DEDICATION

Para las platicadoras y testimoniadoras que participaron en los estudios, por confiar en mi con sus historias.

Para los padres inmigrantes y sus hije/a/os.

Para mis hijas Quetzalli Jimenez y Citlali Jimenez.

Para mi apá, Miguel Osoria, mi tita, Blasa Vazquez, y mi amá, Sara Vazquez.

Para Santaana, una ciudad llena de semillas.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Para mi apá, Miguel: Hay tantos momentos que desearía haber podido compartir contigo. Sigues siendo la figura más influyente en mi vida; me diste mi amor por mis comunidades y mi corazón por la justicia social. Cada día de tu vida en el que formé parte, me hiciste sentir vista, escuchada y valorada. Me permitiste soñar tan grande como quería, sin barreras que me detuvieran. Sigues siendo una figura central en mi vida, con mis hijas y en mi hogar. Una de las cosas más orgullosas que he podido lograr es asegurarme de que usted sea una figura visible en la vida de sus nietas; hablamos de ti todo el tiempo, comparto tantas historias de la infancia y comparto todas las lecciones que me enseñaste. Hacen preguntas y hablan de ti como si estuviera aqui, "remember when grandpa…" Puede que no estés en este mundo físico con nosotros, pero siempre estás con nosotros; usted es visible para nosotros. Hiciste sacrificios interminables para darnos "el sueño americano", un hogar para jugar y un lugar para llamar nuestro, pero en esas paredes, hablaste sobre la belleza de nuestra gente, nuestra cultura, la historia de nuestros antepasados, el dolor de la experiencia inmigrante, y cuando tú y mi mamá marcharon por mejores condiciones de vida. Mi amá me diría más tarde que desearía haber documentado todo eso mejor; ella nunca supo que nos importaría y que tal vez no resonaríamos con esas luchas. Eres verdaderamente la razón por la que obtuve un título en educación; nunca tuviste la oportunidad de obtener una educación formal y todas las habilidades que aprendiste, leer y escribir, las desarrollaste por tu cuenta, con la ayuda y el apoyo de otros. Mi recuerdo más vívido de ti es sentado en el porche leyendo el periódico; esto era un ritual diario para ti. De niña, se sentía como una tarea tan simple; a medida que fui creciendo, aprendí que no era tan simple, ni tan fácil. Estoy muy orgullosa de ti y de todo lo que logrates en tu vida, para ti y tu familia. Espero haberte enorgullecido a ti también; Ésto es para ti, apá.

Para mi tita, Blasa Vazquez: Eres verdaderamente el corazón y el espíritu de nuestra familia. El pensamiento y los recuerdos de ti traen la sonrisa más grande a mi rostro. Soy tan increíblemente bendecida y afortunada de tenerte como mi abuela, me río tanto de tus recuerdos; verdaderamente trajiste la alegría más profunda a nuestras vidas. El fuego que llevaste a lo largo de tu vida para determinar tu propia vida de manera independiente y vivir en tus propios términos es algo que todos tus nietos reconocieron y admiraron mucho de ti. Quiero agradecerles por estar siempre ahí para mí y por animarme; por los momentos en que mi mamá expresó temor sobre posibles oportunidades o viajes, usted me defendieron y calmaron sus nervios. Nunca quisiste que nos sintiéramos limitados o atascados, y me beneficié de tu aliento. Solo puedo imaginar lo que estás pensando en este momento y lo que me dirías sobre este momento en mi vida y obtener este título, y no puedo evitar sonreír. Memorias que llevo conmigo todo el tiempo; no hay día que Quetzalli no hable de ti y le cuente a su hermanita de ti. Eres una figura central en nuestras vidas, y en cada recuerdo tuyo que compartimos, siempre terminamos sonriendo o riendo, siempre deseando que todavía estuvieras con nosotros. Espero que sepas y veas que has inspirado mucha investigación que busco comprender sobre las experiencias de las madres inmigrantes latinas, y entre cada palabra que escribo hay una carta de amor oculta para ti y mi mamá.

Para mi amá, Sara, for my brothers, Michael and Jessi, and my sister, Carol:

Amá, nunca habrá suficientes maneras en las que pueda decir gracias, suficientes veces para pagar todo lo que has hecho por mí y por mis hijas. Gracias por creer en mí y por recordarme mis metas y sueños, especialmente durante los momentos en que estaba tan cansada y no quería continuar, por contestar todas mis llamadas telefónicas durante el día cuando las cosas se sentían pesadas, para celebrar los hitos. , o simplemente porque te extrañé. Estoy muy

agradecida de compartir este hito contigo a mi lado. Estoy aquí por ti; gracias por ser una figura tan visible en la vida de mis hijas, especialmente por cuidar de Citlali mientras yo manejaba hacia y desde San Diego durante el primer año de mi programa de doctorado; me hizo sentir a gusto saber que estaba con su abuela. Gracias por la cantidad infinita de amor que dan a mis hijas; fue gracias a ustede, Michael, Jessi y Carol que pude lograr esto. I am filled with gratitude for all of your support; in one way or another, you all stepped in to help care for Quetzalli and Citlali so that I can get to this point; I am forever grateful; this is our moment. Thank you for cheering me on in the way that only siblings can.

 For Kymani and Noah: The two coolest kids I know. You both bring me so much joy, and it is because of you two and Quetzalli and Citlali that I found fun in this graduate journey. At times holidays and birthdays felt heavy because there was so much work waiting for me on my desk but hearing you all complain how bored you were would get me up, and eventually, I took on making sure we had games and activities, went out and explored when we were together. You two and your cousins forced me to let loose and just be present in a way that, at times, I resisted. I hope you all know that I am incredibly proud to be your aunt, and I will always be there to cheer you on and advocate alongside you both. The love that you two and Quetzalli and Citlali have for each other is my favorite thing to witness.

 Chapter 2, in full, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Ruby Osoria was the primary investigator and the sole author of this paper.

 Chapter 3, in full, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Ruby Osoria was the primary investigator and the sole author of this paper.

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FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Education Studies

    Family and Community
    Chicana Feminisms

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Cuentos Para Tonantzin[2]: A Chicana/Latina Feminista Perspective on the Experiences of Latina Immigrant Mothers Navigating the K-12 Education System

by

Ruby Osoria

Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a Specialization in Critical Gender Studies

University of California San Diego, 2023

Professor Francis Contreras, Chair

Professor Christoforos Mamas, Co-Chair

This dissertation consists of three stand-alone scholarly articles, comprising of one

systematic literature review and two separate empirical studies. Article one, From Institutional

Exclusion to Internalized Worth: A Literature Review on Latina Immigrant Mothers'

Experiences in the K-12 Education System, brings insight into the institutional barriers Latina

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[2] Translates: Takes for Tonanzin (Náhuatl language, means our mother)

immigrant mothers confront in the K-12 education system and the internalized impact of self-perception. Article two, Esperanza y Frustración: Mexican Immigrant Mothers Navigating Distance Learning During COVID-19, centers on the systemic and institutional challenges Mexican immigrant mothers endured during the first wave of distance learning during COVID-19. Article three, Reflejando Sobre Las Notas: The Contours of a Chicana/Latina Feminista Mixed Methods Study Through the Employment of Ego-entrenos, proposes six contours when employing ego-entrenos methodology, which aims to advance a critical race feminista mixed methods approach that braids together testimonio (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and ego-net (Lin, 2002; Mamas et al., 2019). Connecting the three articles together is the reliance on Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998). To some extent, each article is guided by the overarching research questions, what are the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers navigating the U.S. K-12 education system? What are the systemic barriers being confronted by Latina immigrant mothers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system? How do Latina immigrant mothers confront systemic barriers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system? The goal of this dissertation is to provide (1) a critique of the historical, political, and social factors that shape the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, (2) use an asset-based perspective to break down the deficit narrative of the Latinx community, and (3) provide insight into the empirical tools necessary to understand the formation of social networks and exchange of cultural and social capital as a tool to overcome the challenges that Latina immigrant mothers face when attempting to support their children in the education system.

　　Keywords: Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology, Latina immigrant mothers, K-12 education pipeline, parent engagement, social networks

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The studies discussed in this dissertation recognize that Latina immigrant mothers[3] have a significant role in supporting and navigating the education system to create opportunities for their children in the U.S. As a result, it is necessary to gain insight into how institutions like the education system engage or exclude Latina immigrant mothers. Further, how Latina immigrant mothers navigate and respond to the education system and educational practices, both at the macro and micro levels. Latina immigrant mothers are more likely than their male counterparts to engage with institutions and child socialization practices due to the social construction of gender expectations tied to notions of womanhood and motherhood (Caballero et al., 2014; Segura, 1991). As women of color, Latina immigrant women's motherhood occurs within the historical context of social constructs of race, class, gender, immigration, and other intersectional identities (Caballero et al., 2014; Collins, 1994), shaping their interaction within institutions and private and the public sphere.

Recognizing the growth in the population of both Latina immigrants and Latinx[4] youth in the U.S., it is crucial to create visibility on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as they attempt to support their children during the pivotal period in their children's academic journey throughout the K-12 pipeline. This dissertation is made up of three distinct studies that are presented as three standalone scholarly articles, Chapter 2: From Institutional Exclusion to Internalized Worth: A Literature Review on Latina Immigrant Mothers' Experiences in the K-12

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[3] Latina immigrants consist of Mexicans, Central Americans, and South Americans from diverse racial backgrounds (Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). The term speaks to an individual and shared experience as a racialized group of people during the colonization and immigration process in the U.S (Lopez & Espiritu,1990; McConnell et al., 2004; Montero-Sieburth & Meléndez, 2007).

[4] This paper will use the term Latinx to include a rage of gender identity, including Latinas, Latinos, and gender non-binary. The X signifies fluidity and mobility of self identification. It further challenging conventional ideologies, philosophy, and medical binaries that assign humans to one gender identity out of two when they are born. X recognizes self-determination and honor unrecognized ways of being and expression (Contreras, 2017).

Education System, Chapter 3: Esperanza y Frustración[5]: Mexican Immigrant Mothers Navigating Distance Learning During COVID-19, and Chapter 4: Reflejando Sobre Las Notas[6]: The Contours of a Chicana/Latina Feminista Mixed Methods Study Through the Employment of Ego-entrenos. In some capacity, each study explores the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as the participants navigate the institutional and systemic impact of the K-12 education pipeline through the guiding framework of Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Chicana feminist epistemology. Each study recognizes the systemic barriers that Black, Indigenous, and parents of color encounter when attempting to navigate and support their children. These studies also highlight how Latina immigrant mothers respond and combat institutional exclusion embedded in educational hegemony. Through the presentation of three scholarly articles, this dissertation will highlight (1) the institutional barriers Latina immigrant mothers confront in the K-12 education system and the internalized impact of self-perception through a systematic literature review (see Chapter 2), (2) the systemic and institutional challenges Mexican immigrant mothers endured during the first wave of distance learning during COVID-19 (see Chapter 3), and (3) the expansion of methodological approaches when conducting research alongside Latina immigrant mothers through the employment of a Chicana/Latina mixed methods approach (see Chapter 4).

Demographic Background: Significance of Latina Immigrant Women and Latinx Students

The American Immigration Council (2020) reported that in 2018, 23 million female immigrants lived in the U.S., having a significant presence and impact on American society. Latina immigrant women are the largest immigrant group residing in the U.S. The largest female immigrant demographic consists of Mexican immigrant women accounting for 23.26 percent of

[5] Translation: Hope and Frustration.
[6] Translation: Reflecting on the research notes.

the overall female immigrant population. Based on the report, the top four Latin American countries where women immigrated consisted of El Salvador (3.07%), Cuba (2.93%), Dominican Republic (2.86%), and Colombia (1.97%). In recent years there has been an increase in immigrants and asylum seekers from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. They are predominantly female identified, which will increase the percentage of Latina immigrant women from Central America in the U.S. and the need to support this growing population (Passel & Cohn, 2019).

The Pew Research Center reported that the states with the largest Latinx population consisted of California, Texas, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, and Colorado (Stepler & López, 2016). The 2019 United States Census Bureau's population estimations revealed that the largest ethnic group in California identified as Latinx or Hispanic (Jones et al., 2021). The year prior, the American Immigration Council (2020) indicated that 27 percent of the population in California consisted of immigrants. Half of the immigrants living in California were born in a country that is part of Latin America. It is worth noting that between 2017–18, 4.2 million children had at least one immigrant parent; most of these children had parents that immigrated from a country considered part of Latin America (Lou et al., 2020).

The Latinx population is the largest racial/ethnic group living in the U.S. and the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population under 18 years of age (Camarota & Zeigler, 2016). By 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that 1 in 4 students will be Latinx (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Latinx students account for the largest demographic in the public school system and schooling in states like California. Central to this interaction are Latina immigrant mothers. Due to the social construction of motherhood, Latina immigrant mothers are more likely to be the parent interacting with institutions on behalf of their children, like the education system

(Fuentes, 2013). Further, the steady presents of Latinx immigrants in the U.S. and the growth of Latina immigrant women demonstrate the need to pay special attention to the experiences of a significant demographic group in the Latinx community as they navigate and engage with institutions in the U.S. Lastly, there is a need to recognize the generational and demographic difference among the Latinx community, which puts immigrants at a more vulnerable position.

The California Department of Education reported that Latinx students accounted for 56.1% of students enrolled across the public school system in the 2022-23 school year (Finger Tips Facts, 2023). Further, in 2022-23, 1.113 million english language learners (ELL) were enrolled in the California public school system; it was reported that 82.03% of ELL students came from primarily Spanish-speaking homes (Facts About English Learners, 2023). Academically there has been a growth in Latinx students' educational attainment across the educational pipeline from high school and college graduation rates (Hernandez & McElrath, 2023). Despite the significant presence of Latinx students, they continue to be underserved academically throughout the K-12 education pipeline (Pérez Huber et al., 2015).

Black and Latinx students are more likely to attend underserving schools, attend schools with a lack of adequate school facilities, and are more likely to be segregated in their school settings when compared to other racialized groups (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014). Low academic expectations further perpetuate a lack of college-going school culture and a lack of rigorous academic curriculum, which have negatively impacted Latinx students (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). Latinx students experience a lack of educational and social support from teachers and administrators (Pérez Huber et al., 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Yosso, 2005). There is also a disconnect between the dominant school culture and Latinx families and neighborhoods (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

This data is alarming, considering that the fastest growing population in the U.S. is projected to be the most under-educated. This suggests that to address the needs of this ever-increasing population, researchers need to continue examining the interactions and impact between the home and communities within the Latinx population; it is necessary to highlight the challenges that immigrant families confront in attempting to support their children's academic journey—further, research how Latina immigrant mothers respond and resist systemic barriers and exclusion.

Racialization of Latina Immigrants in the United States: Deconstructing "the unfit" Immigrant Mother

It is necessary to recognize that the systemic barriers and forms of exclusion that Latina immigrant mothers are forced to face in everyday interactions with institutions are shaped and informed by the racialization of Latina immigrants that is further solidified by immigration policies. This section provides insight into the ways in which Latina immigrant mothers have been targeted and framed within the context of the U.S. as a threat to American stability and a burden to government resources. The purpose of this section is to provide insight into the ways in which the sociopolitical context of the U.S. has perpetuated a deficit narrative of Latina immigrant mothers rooted in xenophobic and sexist ideologies, which in turn, influences their ability to access resources or insight into institutions like the education system.

Contemporary discourse of Latina immigrant mothers, as *criminals* and *unfit mothers,* was arguably solidified in the 1980s, as it aligned with the mass increase of immigrants from Mexico and Central America (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). Romero (2011) identifies national and state immigration policy as critical components in perpetuating deficit narratives of Latina immigrant mothers due to race and gender. For example, in 1986, the Regan administration

passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in an attempt to address the *issue of illegal immigration* (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). While IRCA provided residency for thousands of immigrants, it specifically excluded immigrants that fell under the category of "public charge." Including single immigrant mothers and immigrant mothers who participated in social services (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Romero, 2011). The image that was perpetuated consisted of Latina immigrant mothers attempting to exploit the benefits of residing in the U.S. While dominant discourse positioned the conversation around "citizens" and "non-citizens," due to the racialization of Latina women in the United States, they were seen as immigrants regardless of their documentation status and framed as "welfare queens" and "baby machines" (Romero, 2011). This perspective was further by the 1994 passing of Proposition 187 in California.

Proposition 187 called to ban undocumented immigrants from public services, including health care and access to public education (Bishop & Arellano, 2019). The images perpetuated in the ad campaign consisted of framing Latina immigrant mothers as a burden to the economy and exploiting U.S. resources (Romero, 2011; Kim et al., 2018). Proposition 187 was branded as a campaign against *illegal* immigration but specifically targeted Latinx immigrants. Further, it ignored the reality of mixed status families that would have been impacted in various ways. The proposition provided no avenue to protect Latinx American citizens (i.e., the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants). Within this context, Latina immigrant mothers were framed as the primary threat to American social stability. Latina immigrant mothers were further positioned as the key sources of disrupting immigration flow, the perspective being that if access to basic human rights is being denied, this would encourage the exiting of Latinx immigrants and decrease the flow of Latinx immigrants into the U.S.

Abrego and Menjivar (2011) described the passing of the USA Patriot Act, the elimination of the Department of Immigration, and the development of Homeland Security, as central to criminalizing the Latinx immigrant family. The authors argue that the role of legal categories (legal and illegal) determines civil rights, levels of social acceptance, treatment by authorities, and levels of suffering. While the Patriot Act was framed as a policy to protect the nation against *terrorists*, it resulted in a high increase in public home raids within the Latinx communities across the United States (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). Kim et al. (2018) argue that the separation of whole families, which resulted in the call to stop home base raids, perpetuated the depiction of Latina immigrant mothers as leveraging their children to gain benefits such as citizenship and public resources from the U.S. Within this context, Latina immigrants' motherhood and advocacy for their children was framed and branded as deviant.

Since the early 2000s, there has been an increase in political figures calling for the elimination of birthright citizenship. Through this process, Latina immigrant mothers, regardless of documentation status, were framed as utilizing their reproduction system and children for personal gain. This further insinuates their inability to be good mothers and their status as deviant (Romero, 2011). Kim et al. (2018) claim that the deficit framing of immigrant women, in particular, Latina immigrant mothers, is the result of progressive change in racial demographics in the U.S. Currently, the Latinx community is projected to become the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Targeting mothers is a direct way of disrupting community stability, cultural practices, and social networks. Through the use of policy, the federal government has managed to continuously perpetuate a negative narrative of Latina immigrant mothers that has placed them in a state of "otherness" due to race, gender, and immigration status.

Latina Immigrant Mothers and the K-12 Education System

Latina immigrant mothers have a vital role in their children's development through child-rearing practices and socialization (Durand, 2011; Valdés, 1996). The feminized labor embodied by Latina immigrant mothers extends beyond the home and into their navigational practices within institutional entities, such as the education system. Previous research has indicated that maternal aspirations are positively associated with students' academic ambition and effort (Fan & Chen, 2001; Juang & Silbereisen, 2002), highlighting Latina immigrant mothers' significant role in their children's educational trajectory. Research has revealed how Latina immigrant mothers are actively involved in their children's educational journey (Ceballo et al., 2014; Gonzales, 2012). For example, in the form of parent-student dialogue regarding aspirations, through the transmission of funds of knowledge[7], pedagogies of the home[8], notions of *consejos*[9], and *dichos*[10] (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021; Hayes, Montes, & Schroeder, 2013; Valdés, 1996). Further, through the storytelling of the immigration experience, everyday sacrifices, vocalizing their academic goals for their children, in-school volunteering, school leadership roles, and community activism in response to

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[7] Funds of knowledge refers to a particular type of knowledge that is historically developed through familial and culturally based experiences that are redefined, interpreted and applied in various contexts (Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Funds of knowledge position the mother as the primary source of transmitting cultural knowledge to her children. Research has shown a positive correlation between FOK developed in Mexican American families and the impact this has in both home and academic spheres (Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Hayes, Montes, & Schroeder, 2013).

[8] Pedagogies of the home refer to culturally specific forms of teaching and learning that are constructed and occur in sites such as the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021). Pedagogies of the home recognize the local community as a vital component that influences and impacts the home space. Pedagogies of the home utilize cultural knowledge and language, as guiding factors to better understand the lessons learned in the home and community.

[9] Consejos are used to teach a moral leson. Valdés (1996) states that consejos are a special genre of verbal teaching activity used by Mexican parents.

[10] Espinoza-Herold (2007) defines *dichos* as all forms of verbal support that are considered a cultural asset.

educational issues and social inequalities (Gonzales, 2012; Guzman-Martinez, 2012; Kiyama;

2010).

Latina immigrant mothers' cultural capital, ways of knowing, and parent experiences[11] in

the education system have historically been unrecognized due to hegemonic understandings of

parental involvement[12] (i.e., Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and in-class volunteering) (Jasis

& Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; López, 2001). Scholars have offered critiques of this precise

understanding of parent participation, noting the emphasis on white middle and upper-class

forms of involvement and cultural capital embedded in the K-12 education system (Auerbach,

2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 2007; Fuentes, 2013; Poza et al., 2014). What results is a social

stratification of "fit and unfit parents," positioning white parents as fit or good parents and Latinx

immigrant parents as unfit parents or bad parents. There is a devaluing and positioning of

anything other than upholding hegemonic practices and culture as "non-dominant," "othering,"

and as an "invalid form" of parental engagement within the context of the education system

(Fuentes, 2013; Nygreen, 2017). These understandings fail to recognize how Black, Indigenous,

People of Color (BIPOC), and immigrant parents, particularly mothers of color, have

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[11] In an attempt to move beyond the framing of parental involvement (Ceballo et al., 2014; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Valdés, 1996) and parental engagement (Greenberg, 2012; Jiménez-Castellanos et al., 2016; Matos, 2015), when referencing parents and the education system, this paper will rely on the term parent experience. This term is meant to account for the multiple ways that parents experience the education system and account for diverse facets. Including, but not limited to, teacher/administrator interaction, academic expectations, school culture, discourse, and framing (i.e., in parent workshops and flyers sent home), access to support and information (Valencia & Black, 2002; Velez, 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). The purpose of this term is to more accurately present the complex and layered ways that Latina immigrant mothers navigate and interact in the K-12 education system.

[12] In the field of education parent involvement, parent engagement, and parent participation have been used interchangeably. The literature reveals that there is no difference in conceptual framing and understandings between the terms, parent involvement, parent engagement, and parent participation (Carreon et al., 2005; Fuentes, 2013; Greenberg, 2012; Nygreen, 2017; Quicho & Daoud, 2006). All three terms refer to parent interaction and practices within the education system and the upholding of western culture. These terms are limited in conceptualizing the full scope that speaks to the experiences of BIPOC and immigrant parents, including Latinx immigrant parents.

participated beyond the school setting and how they are systemically pushed out of their children's educational trajectory. It further perpetuates racialized stereotypes of BIPOC communities, minimizes institutional responsibility, and reproduces and upholds notions of white superiority.

Deficit perspectives of Latinx immigrant parents are rooted in racist nativism (Pérez Huber et al., 2008, Velez, 2008). Racist nativism is defined as "the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived as white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be people and immigrant of color, and thereby defend the rights of whites or the natives, to dominance" (Perez Huber et al., 2008, p. 43). Within the context of the education system, how Latinx immigrant parents experience educational settings and entities (i.e., teachers, administrators, etc.) is a micro reflection of more considerable social tensions (Velez, 2008). This is due to the racialization of Latinx immigrants in the U.S. and the presence of anti-immigrant sentiments targeted explicitly toward the Latinx community. When centering on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, recognizing intersectionality is necessary to understand the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, immigration, and socioeconomic status. Intersectionality is a prism that assists in understanding how marginalized identities (i.e., race and gender) intersect and result in the compounding of disadvantages and inequalities that create obstacles beyond a conventional understanding of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1990).

When accounting for the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, their racialized, gender, and intersectional identities have shaped their individual and collective experiences with the K-12 education system. For example, educational practices and interventions for Latinx students and Latina immigrant mothers have centered on reproducing and upholding colonial-

patriarchal practices to respond to perceived deficits, such as the Latinx culture, the Spanish language, and Latinx family/home practices and communities (Montoya, 1994; Valencia, 2010). This is seen through parent workshops that aim to teach Latina immigrant mothers how to parent their children, responding to the perception that Latinx children are not socialized adequately for academic success (Velez, 2008).

Statement of the Issue

Latina immigrant mothers have been identified as having a vital role in their children's development through socialization and school experiences (Durand, 2011). However, Latina immigrant mothers have a limited role in advancing their children's educational careers within socially accepted practices in the education system. Little is known about their experiences and challenges while navigating K-12 schooling beyond educational hegemony. Historically the research focusing on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers has centered on the school setting itself and further perpetuated limited notions of parent involvement and dismissing how Latina immigrant mothers support, advocate, and guide their children in the home and community.

Methodologically, there has been an over-representation of qualitative research through the employment of ethnographic studies and interviews with Latina immigrant women. Expanding methodological approach can provide a more complex understanding of the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers and how they navigate the public and private sphere, and how they intersect due to their own intersectional identities. Overlooked has been asset-based research that has the potential to highlight the various forms that Latina immigrant mothers have relied on to disrupt systems of oppression while creating pathways for their children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: first, to explore the factors that have negatively impacted the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as they help their children navigate the U.S. education system; and secondly, it explores how despite these systemic barriers, Latina immigrant mothers develop a source of support within their community by creating social networks of Latina immigrant mothers and local community members (Yosso, 2005). The goal of this dissertation is to provide a: (1) critique of the historical, political, and social factors that shape the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, (2) use an asset-based perspective to break down the deficit narrative of the Latinx community, and (3) examine and understand the formation of social networks and exchange of cultural and social capital as a tool to overcome the challenges that Latina immigrant mothers face when attempting to support their children in the education system.

Research Question

This dissertation consists of three distinct studies, presented as three stand-alone scholarly articles with their own set of guiding research questions. The larger question that each article speaks to and threads all three articles together consists of the following:

1. What are the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers navigating the U.S. K-12 education system?

    a. What are the systemic barriers being confronted by Latina immigrant mothers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system?

    b. How do Latina immigrant mothers confront systemic barriers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system?

Theoretical Framework

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The overarching theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding the three articles consist of Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) and Chicana feminist epistemology. The body of literature in the field of education focusing on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers fails to conceptualize the intersectionality of race, gender, immigration, and socioeconomic status, as valid categories of analysis that can assist in expanding the scholarly literature and lead to possible equitable practices that will incorporate the Latinx community and expand notions of cultural capital (Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Collins, 1993). Therefore, LatCrit and Chicana feminist epistemology provided the methodological tools to go beyond surface findings and critically analyze the participant's experience with the education system, intersectional identities, and methodological practices that can capture a deeper understanding of social network formation. Figure 1.1 illustrates a visual of the framework.
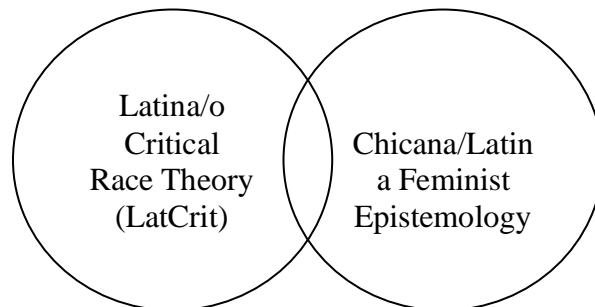
FIGURE 1.1: Visual representation of theoretical and analytical frameworks.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

The emergence of CRT is rooted in the civil rights era of the 1960s, which fought for social justice, liberation, and economic empowerment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Tate, 1997). What proceeded was the development of critical legal studies (CLS). CLS emerged out of the need for a framework that interrogated traditional understandings of the legal system that reproduced systemic and institutional oppression (Tate, 1997; Yosso et al., 2004). The limitations of CLS perpetuated the continued dismissal of race and racism in legal studies,

resulting in a paradigm shift and the analytical development of CRT by legal scholar Derrick

Bell (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Bell was informed by his lived reality as a Black

male in the U.S. and his professional experience in civil rights law, shaping CRT scholarship

(Tate, 1997). An interdisciplinary body of literature informed CRT legal scholars, including

African American studies, law, history, ethnic studies, sociology, and women's studies (Yosso et

al., 2004). Central to CRT is the study of race, racism, power, and critique of the liberal order

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Since its emergence in the 1970s, CRT has expanded beyond legal

studies and into other fields, including education (Ladson-Billing, 1998), and developed sub-

theories, such as LatCrit (Iglesias, 1997).

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) state that when utilizing CRT in educational research, the

analysis needs to contain the following five elements: (a) race and racism need to be central to

the study and allow for intersectionality, (b) the dominant Eurocentric ideology needs to be

challenged, (c) a commitment to social justice, (d) an emphasis on experiential knowledge, and

(e) provide an interdisciplinary perspective. The five tenets that guide CRT also guide LatCrit,

with each tenet focusing on the issues that affect Latinx communities, including intersections of

culture, language, ethnicity, immigration status, and phenotype (Pérez Huber, 2011). Iglesias

(1997) states that LatCrit allows researchers to expand the conversation of race and racism from

the Black and white paradigm, bringing forth a more complex analysis of white supremacy in

multiple areas of society. LatCrit repositions the Latinx population as the central component that

brings forth an appropriate cultural and historical context to specific experiences (Davila & de

Bradley, 2010).

In the context of Latina immigrant mothers in the education system, a LatCrit framework

assists in (a) understanding discrimination based on cultural capital, (b) reveals racist practices

that are seen as "neutral" and "color-blind," (c) helps understand the perpetual stereotype of

Latinx immigrant parents, and (d) it challenges the construction of parent involvement all together by revealing other forms of unrecognized parental involvement (Velez, 2008). Villenas and Deyhle (1999) relied on a CRT framework to analyze ethnographic empirical studies on the experiences of Latinx parents. Analysis grounded in CRT exposed the school practices that pushed parents out of the education system, the limitation of parental involvement, and the disregard for Latinx parents' knowledge and culture. This dissertation builds on previous scholarly work by expanding the analysis on research studies centering on Latina immigrant mothers within the context of the education system through a LatCrit framework. It centers on race, ethnicity, and the racialization of the Latinx immigrant community in the U.S. and the systemic implications and barriers resulting from colonial imperialism.

Chicana/Latina Feminist Epistemology

Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology shifts the discourse away from patriarchal frameworks and white liberal feminist theory. Its central premise is to focus on the voices and highlight the experiences of Chicanas and Latinas (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Further, to validate and address the intersectional experiences of Chicanas and Latinas in various areas of their lives. It explores race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, immigration, migration, generational status, bilingualism, and sexuality by framing research questions that highlight women's voices and sheds light on their experiences in navigating systems of oppression (Calderón et al., 1992). Recognizing the different experiences between Chicanas/Latinas, males, and white women, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology challenges and disrupts dominant forms of knowledge and experiences accepted in western society by positioning Chicanas and Latinas as experts of their own lives and recognizing them as producers and holders of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology incorporates understandings of ones lived experiences,

collective experience from a particular community, and research, all aiming to work toward social justice.

As it relates to the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology provides the analytical and methodological tool to expand and reimagine how research is conducted alongside Latina immigrant women in the U.S. It further extends the analytical approach to the category of motherhood, immigration, and cultural capital reproduction. For this study, a feminist analytic extends beyond womanhood, but centers on the feminist analytics of reproductive politics, domesticity, and the public/private sphere divide. Through a feminist analysis, this dissertation expands the literature on parent experience in the field of education by also bringing forth notions of resiliency, resistance, and unrecognized forms of labor among Latina immigrant women. Further, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology informed the implementation of plática and testimonio embedded in two of the studies contributing to this dissertation (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), allowing for the opportunity for collaborative research that positioned the participants as an integral part throughout the research process.

Significance

This dissertation makes a significant contribution to the field of education by studying the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers through an asset-based perspective that recognizes the participants' knowledge and influence over their children and community. All three articles focus on the experiences and narratives of Latina immigrant mothers through a different angle that provides insight into an immigrant population that is often ignored due to gender bias that favors male discourse over females (Dreby, 2006). This dissertation further contributes to the field of education by positioning motherhood within a sociopolitical and sociohistorical context that frames mothering as a valid metric of analysis, complicating western notions of motherhood

(Caballero, 2004; Caballero et al., 2014). This dissertation expands our understanding of navigating the education system beyond the physical confinement of the schoolhouse building and, centers the home and community as a place that produces knowledge and opportunities that inform educational experiences for Latinx students. Further, it challenges racist nativist framing associated with predominantly Latinx neighborhoods and people in urban settings. Methodologically, this dissertation expands the use of Chicana feminist methodologies beyond qualitative approaches and begins to reimagine the potential for merging methodological approaches that provide a more holistic insight into the participant's experiences.

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CHAPTER 2: FROM INSTITUTIONAL EXCLUSION TO INTERNALIZED WORTH: A

LITERATURE REVIEW ON LATINA IMMIGRANT MOTHERS' EXPERIENCES IN THE

K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM

Abstract

Latinx immigrant parents have historically been blamed for institutional academic shortcomings and for their children's educational challenges, resulting from systemic and institutional inequalities embedded in the education system (Valencia, 2010; Valencia & Black, 2002). However, current empirical studies on Latina immigrant mothers provide insight into how they encounter systemic barriers when navigating the education system, hindering their role in their children's educational trajectory. The scholarly articles analyzed in this systematic literature review show that administrative gatekeeping, language discrimination, racist nativism, and hegemonic cultural practices emerged as mechanisms that reproduced the exclusion of Latina immigrant mothers. Additionally, revealed in the literature was the institutional impact of self-perception among Latina immigrant mothers. Despite the challenges confronted by Latina immigrant mothers, they continue to have high hopes and aspirations for their children's educational journey. The findings have significant implications for Latinx immigrant parents, Latinx students, and school practices.

Keywords: Latina immigrant mothers, parent experience, K-12 schooling, institutional inequalities

Introduction

Extensive empirical research has focused on the significant role that parents can have on the academic trajectory and academic aspirations of their children (Durand, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2001; Juang & Silbereisen, 2002; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996). Within the K-12 education system, parent involvement, engagement, and participation are expected. Despite the literature revealing that there is no difference in conceptual framing and understanding between the term's involvement, engagement, and participation (Carreon et al., 2005; Greenberg, 2012; Poza et al., 2014; Quicho & Daoud, 2006; Terriquez, 2012), as an institution, there are clear expectations placed by the education system in the ways in which parents are expected to partake within the school setting (Greenberg, 2012; Nygreen, 2017; Ramirez, 2003). Traditionally speaking, parents are expected to take part in "in-school" forms of participation; this includes Parent Teacher Association (PTA), in-class volunteering, English language interaction, and upholding dominant western cultural values (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; López, 2001).

Scholars have offered critiques of this singular expectation, noting that it creates a dichotomy that defines "parental involvement" within a framework of a dominant perspective that devalues and positions anything else as "non-dominant," "othering," and as an "invalid form" of "parental participation," within the context of the education system (Fuentes, 2013; Nygreen, 2017). As a result, immigrants and parents of color have historically been dismissed and framed as not valuing education due to primarily taking part in in-home "parent engagement," which has often gone unrecognized and devalued in relation to the education system due to challenging western cultural norms and practices (Montoya, 1994; Valencia, 2010; Vélez, 2008). Further, there is evidence in the scholarly literature that indicates that immigrants and parents of color experience discrimination in the educational setting that implicates their

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relationship to their children's schooling and ability to participate (Valencia, 2010; Valencia & Black, 2002).

This systematic literature seeks to extend the empirical understanding of immigrants and parents of color within the education system by focusing on the parent experience[13] of Latina immigrant mothers[14] in the public school system. The Latinx[15] population is the largest minoritized group in the United States and the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population under 18 years of age. One in 5 U.S. residents is either an immigrant or a minor child of an immigrant parent (Camarota & Zeigler, 2016). By 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that 1 in 4 students will be Latinx (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The American Immigration Council (2020) reported that Latina immigrant women are the largest immigrant group residing in the United States. The steady presents and growth of Latina immigrants and students demonstrate the need to pay special attention to the experiences of a significant demographic in the Latinx community, as they are more likely to navigate and engage with institutions on behalf of their families. It is recognized that Latina immigrant mothers continue to be positioned as having a

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[13] To move beyond the framing of parental involvement (Ceballo et al., 2014; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Valdés, 1996) and parental engagement (Greenberg, 2012; Jiménez-Castellanos et al., 2016; Matos 2015), when referencing parents and the education system, this paper will rely on the term parent experience. This term is meant to account for the multiple ways that parents experience the education system and account for diverse facets, including, but not limited to, teacher/administrator interaction, academic expectations, school culture, discourse, and framing (i.e., in parent workshops and flyers sent home), access to support and information (Valencia & Black, 2002; Velez, 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). The purpose of this term is to more accurately present the complex and layered ways that Latina immigrant mothers navigate and interact in the K-12 education system.

[14] This literature review relies on the term Latina immigrant. Latina immigrants consist of Mexicans, Central Americans, and South Americans from diverse racial backgrounds (Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). The term speaks to an individual and shared experience as a racialized group of people during the colonization and immigration process in the U.S. (Lopez & Espiritu,1990; McConnell et al., 2004; Montero-Sieburth & Meléndez, 2007). It is important to note that the body of empirical studies presented in this paper does not account for race or colorism, which can lead to the erasure of the experiences of Afro-Latina immigrants and Indigenous immigrant women (Gómez Cervantes, 2021; Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2002; Vega et al., 2012). The intent is not to reproduce a harmful essentialist perspective but work within the framings of the articles presented in this paper.

[15] The term Latinx is intentionally used in this paper to disrupt the binary language around gender when referring to the panethnic identity of people of Latin American heritage (Salinas & Lozano, 2019).

limited role in their children's educational trajectory without accounting for their multiple identities and treatment within the K-12 education system. In response, this literature review employs a Chicana feminist epistemology as an analytical tool to answer the research questions: What does the literature reveal about the institutional experiences of Latina immigrant mothers navigating the K-12 education system? What does the literature say about the impact on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as they navigate the K-12 education system to support their children?

Framework

Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology shifts the discourse away from patriarchal frameworks and liberal feminist theories. Its purpose is to center the voices and highlight the experiences of Chicanas and Latinas in the U.S., including Latina immigrant women (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Chicana feminist epistemology seeks to validate and address the intersectional experiences of Chicanas and Latinas. It explores topics concerning race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, immigration, migration, generational status, bilingualism, and sexuality by centering on the experiences of women of color (Calderón et al., 2012). Recognizing the different experiences between Chicana/Latina and males and white women, Chicana feminist theory challenges and disrupts dominant forms of knowledge and experiences accepted in western society (Delgado Bernal, 1998). The literature on Latina immigrant mothers is limited in recognizing the education system as a site that can uphold and reproduce hegemonic practices (Valencia & Black, 2001). Empirical studies have not fully explored the relationship between Latina immigrant mothers' racialized identities and the K-12 education system (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Relying on a Chicana feminist epistemology provides the analytical tool to critically analyze the strengths and limitations of the selected scholarly articles, shifting the

conversation from individual practices to institutional impact (Velez, 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

<div align="center">**Methods**</div>

This systematic literature review aimed to understand the scholarship that examined the institutional experiences of Latina immigrant mothers within the K-12 public school system in accounting for intersectional identities. The research questions guided the selection of two databases, EBSCO/ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) and JSTOR (Journal Storage), the development of search terms, selection criteria, and the analysis of the articles through a Chicana feminist epistemology understanding.

Data Collection

Databases and Search Terms

The targeted databases consisted of EBSCO/ERIC and JSTOR; these databases were ideal because they primarily featured scholarly articles focusing on educational research and educational empirical studies in relation to families and communities (Alemán, 2018). Similar keywords were used when searching for scholarly articles throughout the databases with mild modifications. These modifications consisted of changes in the order of the keywords, the use of identifiers (i.e., AND, OR), and quotation marks to refine the results further (see TABLE 2.1: Search Strategy). Special attention was placed on selecting the terminology and the keywords that would capture the various labels and regions encompassing the Latinx community (Calderon, 1992; Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). More pertinent was selecting terms that captured the mothers' experience in the education system that aligned with the terminology in the field of education. The following keywords were used throughout the search, Hispanic immigrant parents, Hispanic immigrant mothers, Latino immigrant parents, Latina immigrant mothers,

Mexican immigrant Mothers, Central American immigrant mothers, education system, K-12

schooling, parent-school involvement, and parent-school engagement.

TABLE 1.1: Search strategy.

Database	Search Strings
EBSCO/ERIC	("Latina immigrant" OR "Hispanic immigrant" AND "Mothers" AND "School Experience" OR "Parent Involvement"); (Latinas OR Hispanic Women AND Immigrant Mothers AND Parent Involvement OR Parent Engagement); ("Mexican Immigrant Mothers" AND "Central American Immigrant Mothers" and Parent Involvement" OR Parent Engagement"); (Latinas" OR "Hispanic Women" OR "Latinas" AND "Immigrant Parent" AND "Education System"); ("Latina mothers" AND "Hispanic Mothers" AND "School Experience"); ("Latina Immigrants" AND "Hispanic Immigrant Women" OR "Parents-School Experience"); ("Hispanic immigrant parents" OR "Latino immigrant parents" AND "K-12 Schooling" OR "Parent School Experience") Timespan: 2000-2020. Peer Reviewed. Only Academic Journal Articles.
JSTOR	("Latina Immigrant" OR "Hispanic Immigrant" AND "Mothers" AND "Parent Involvement" OR "Parent Engagement"); ("Latina Immigrant" OR "Hispanic Immigrant" AND "Mothers" OR "Parents" AND "School Experience); ("Latinas" OR "Hispanic Women" AND "Immigrant Mothers" AND "Education System"); ("Latina Immigrant mothers" OR "Mexican Immigrant Mothers" OR "Central American Mothers") AND "Parent school engagement" AND disc: education-discipline); ("Latino" OR "Hispanic" AND "Immigrant Parents" AND "School Engagement" OR "K-12 Schooling"); ("Mexican Immigrant Parents" OR "Central American Parents" AND "Education System") Timespan: 2000-2019. Peer Reviewed. Education-Discipline. English. Only Academic Journal Articles.

Note. All searches conducted from August 2020 through November 2020

Inclusion Criteria

The article search was further bounded by customizing the search of articles between

2000 - 2020. The decision to focus on the last 20 years of empirical research on Latina

immigrant mothers' experience within the K-12 education system was to obtain an insight into

the contemporary understanding of historically marginalized voices during a period of growth of

the Latinx population in the U.S. and Latinx student growth in the U.S. education system (Chapa

& De La Rosa, 2004; Krogstad, 2020; Passel & Cohn, 2019). The following parameters were

used to guide the selection of the final peer-reviewed published research for the purpose of this

synthesized paper: (1) centered on the voices of Latina immigrant mothers, (2) the primary

participants consisted of Latina immigrant mothers, (3) focused on the context of the K-12

education system, (4) centered on Latina immigrant mothers navigating the education system in support of their children schooling, and (5) the study must be in reference to the U.S. education system. All articles used for the purpose of this paper met all five components of the parameters.

I began my search with EBSCO/ERIC, which consisted of searching for articles using seven combinations of keywords; the search for articles stopped once the results began to be repetitive. This search initiated an overall total of 229 article results. After reading the abstracts of the articles, a total of 197 articles were eliminated. Of those 197 articles, 159 were removed from consideration because they were not relevant, and 38 of the eliminated articles were repeated. Articles were eliminated because they focused on the student, teacher, or administrative perspectives, Latinx immigrant students' experience, and parent experience in the preschool setting. The remaining 32 articles were read, 19 were eliminated because they did not meet the required parameters, and the remaining 13 articles were used for this literature review. I then proceeded with my search in JSTOR, using six combinations of keywords, with an overall total of 911 articles. The abstracts of the articles were read; based on this total, 875 articles were eliminated, and 49 of the eliminated articles were repeated articles. Most articles eliminated consisted of a sample of U.S.-born Latina, Latina student experience, Latino immigrant experience, Latina professionals, preschool parent involvement, child-rearing practices, health practices, immigration policy, and the implications on Latinx families. The remaining 36 articles were read, 21 articles were eliminated for not meeting the required parameters, and the 15 remaining articles were used for this review. The additional two articles reviewed in this paper were obtained from looking through the reference pages of scholarly articles.

Data Extraction

Given this literature review's interest in understanding the systemic experiences of Latina immigrant mothers navigating the K-12 education system, the primary information[16] that was extracted from the peer-reviewed articles included the following: (1) framing of intersectional identity, (2) institutional experiences, and (3) institutional impact.

Data Analysis

The articles were analyzed using Chicana feminist epistemology, which accounts for the intersectional identities of Latina immigrant mothers (Delgado Bernal, 1998). In coding for the first research question, I was specifically attuned to how researchers framed their findings and analyzed the experiences of their participants, accounting for forms of inclusion (i.e., affirmations and cultural inclusion) or exclusion (i.e., racism, sexism, and racist nativism). For the second research question, I coded for the reference of perception of self, comparison to other parents, and forms of empowerment and disempowerment. The coding of the scholarly articles occurred in two cycles. The first cycle of coding consisted of initial coding by thoroughly reading through each article and identifying emerging themes (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2016; Saldaña, 2013). After extracting the more prominent themes, the second cycle of coding employed focused coding (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2016; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Focused coding assisted in narrowing the data identified during the first cycle of coding and reorganizing by categories and themes (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Saldaña, 2013). This analytical approach was ideal for identifying central themes that specifically answered the research questions guiding this literature review.

Findings

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[16] In addition to the primary information additional content extracted from the literature review consisted of research questions, methods/methodology, and framing/theory.

The purpose of this systematic literature review is to critically examine what the research states about the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers in the K-12 public school system and provide further insight into how their racialized identities, including race, gender, immigration, and intersectional identities, shape their interactions within institutions. There are four central themes that emerged from the literature, but for the purpose of this article, this paper will focus on the two following themes: (1) Voices from the Margins: Latina Immigrant Mothers Experiencing Systemic Barriers in the K-12 Education System and (2) Institutional Impact on Latina Immigrant Mother Self-Perception. The understanding of this literature is necessary to provide an equitable learning environment for Latinx students that incorporates Latina immigrant mothers and parents and caretakers, to that extent.

Voices from the Margins: Latina Immigrant Mothers Experiencing Systemic Barriers in the K-12 Education System

Historically, the literature in the field of education, centering on the voices of Latina immigrant mothers and other parents of color, has been through a deficit perspective (Montoya, 1994; Valencia, 2010; Valencia & Black, 2002). A deficit perspective argues that the systemic inequalities students of color face are due to their family structure, culture, community, and socioeconomic status (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). This section focuses on four studies highlighting the systemic barriers that Latina immigrant mothers confront in the K-12 education system. These articles provide insight into how Latina immigrant mothers are pushed out of their children's K-12 educational trajectory. The findings in these articles can provide insight into how to best support Latina immigrant mothers by addressing and reducing forms of systemic barriers that are embedded in school practices and culture. Despite their limitations, these articles begin to push the literature on Latina immigrant mothers beyond parent involvement and deficit

understanding. They situate research questions around issues related to institutional inequalities rather than cultural understandings related to the family and schooling.

 Auerbach (2002) studied working-class Latinx parents' narratives of their children's schooling challenges in their empirical research. Through the employment of an ethnographic case study research design, the author interviewed two Latina immigrant mothers and two Latino immigrant fathers from Mexico and Central America. At the time of the study, the participants' children were enrolled in a racially and socioeconomically diverse high school in Los Angeles. The author relied on CRT and sociocultural theory to analyze the data. Findings revealed that participants encountered hostile interactions with school staff. Alicia, an immigrant mother from Guatemala, described her son's counselor as a gatekeeper and critiqued their lack of communication regarding her son's failing grade. This was a similar interaction that Estrelle, a Mexican immigrant mother, encountered; she could not get in contact with her daughter's counselor; once they communicated, the counselor was unsupportive of Estrelle's request to place her daughter in AP classes. Participants described the power struggle over their children's education and lack of support from key administrators; they recognized the low expectations school staff had towards their children and felt they were being excluded from having any say in their children's education. The data indicated that parents associated school staff "rudeness" as a form of discrimination and associated this treatment with their identities as parents of color. Auerbach's (2002) article provides insight into how Latina immigrant mothers' identity as Latina immigrants shapes how key school figures racialize them and how they experience discriminatory practices that hinder their voice and power as parents and their ability to impact their children's academic opportunities.

Plata-Potter and de Guzman's (2012) study expands on Auerbach's (2002) research by illustrating how language was a barrier to Latina immigrant mothers. Plata-Potter and de Guzman (2012) conducted a qualitative study exploring how Mexican immigrant parents helped their children navigate the education system and barriers when supporting their children. A total of seven Mexican immigrant mothers participated in the study, along with one Mexican immigrant father. At the time of the study, participants had children enrolled in elementary, middle school, or high school. Their narratives reflect their experiences across the educational pipeline with no clear indication of different experiences based on students' grade levels. Through an ecological systems model as an analytical tool, the data revealed that Mexican immigrant mothers encountered challenges in assisting their children due to unfamiliarity with the U.S. public school system. All participants in the study were Spanish speakers and struggled to communicate with school staff and teachers.

Further, they indicated that school flyers and homework were all in English, preventing them from fully engaging in their children's schooling. Participants described the language barrier as a source that prevented them from voicing their concerns to key school figures. Participants described the lack of access to information about the U.S. K-12 and higher education pipeline as creating barriers for them to advocate and guide their high school children on qualifying or applying for college. Through the analysis of ecological systems models, the authors highlighted how Latina immigrant mothers' experiences in the U.S. K-12 pipeline are nested in the context of inequalities embedded in the education system. Still, their analysis is limited in revealing the lack of a critical connection between language exclusion and racist nativist practices. Plata-Potter and de Guzman (2012) explain how english exclusionary practices push Spanish-speaking parents from fully engaging in the school setting.

Fernandez and Paredes Scribner (2018) expand on the previous two articles by demonstrating the connection between U.S. sociopolitical context and systemic barriers to Latinx students and Latina immigrant mothers' experiences in the education system. Fernandez and Paredes Scribner (2018) draw on, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework to analyze how a Latinx parent group negotiates tensions between Latinx immigrant parents and school officials, the nurturing of community cultural wealth, and the cultivation of parent leadership. Through the employment of a qualitative study, five Latina immigrant mothers (3 Mexican, 1 Guatemalan, and 1 Colombian) participated in field interviews. The study was conducted in an urban elementary school in the Midwest, in which 80% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch, and 29% of students identified as Latinx. Findings revealed that participants relied on various types of community cultural wealth. Participants relied heavily on aspirational capital; this was when the threat of deportation was present in their community. Participants discussed the impact immigration policy and racist nativism had on their children's ability to focus and succeed in school; some participants discussed the deportation of their husbands. Mothers described a lack of ability for the principal and school administration to recognize the connection between immigration policies and their children's schooling experience. The school was a place where Latinx immigrant families did not feel valued, experiences were dismissed, and knowledge, culture, and language were excluded. Fernandez and Paredes Scribner (2018) illustrated the emotional labor carried by Latina immigrant mothers to support their children through heightened anti-Latinx immigrant policies and schooling.

Like the previous three studies, Sanchez-Suzuki Colegrove (2019) conducted a qualitative study to research Latinx immigrant parents' experiences in their children's school settings. Fifty-five Latinx immigrant parents were interviewed; participants immigrated from

Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. The study took place in six elementary schools, four in Texas and two in California. This study fell short in dividing the data based on gender and regional location; further, the author did not rely on any theory to analyze the data. It is important to note that data overwhelmingly highlighted the voices of Latina immigrant mothers. Findings indicated that parents had minimal access to their children's classes, with minimal opportunity to volunteer. Participants also described having limited communication with their children's teachers and were only reached out when an issue occurred. The data revealed that parents were aware of the power dynamics embedded in the education system; they feared that it would negatively impact themselves or their children if they raised any concerns. Parents described experiencing racism, unequal treatment, and discrimination due to their ethnicity and Spanish-speaking status. Participants stated that their children's schools favored parents with higher educational levels and who spoke English. Sanchez-Suzuki Colegrove's (2019) study demonstrates how Latinx immigrant parents are contextualizing how their identities shape and inform the power struggles they experience in relation to the education system. Together, these four articles provide important insight into the forms of barriers Latina immigrant mothers face and how they are being racialized and pushed out of their children's educational trajectory.

Institutional Impact on Latina Immigrant Mother Self-Perception

The overview of the current literature on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers within the K-12 education system has assisted in bringing forth critical voices and experiences that have historically been silenced. While the previous section provided an overview of the systemic barriers endured by Latina immigrant mothers, this section highlights articles that speak to the impact of institutional discrimination and institutional affirmation on Latina immigrant

mothers' self-perception. These articles provide insight into the institutional harm that is often ignored and gone unrecognized, further, how Latina immigrant mothers view themselves in relation to the education system.

Institutional Harm to Latina Immigrant Mother Self-Perception

Three articles discuss the role of institutional harm in shaping mothers' self-perception. Ramirez (2003) researched the experiences of Latinx parents in a predominantly Latinx community in California. The purpose of the study was to determine the concerns of Latinx immigrant parents regarding their children's schools. A total of 43 participants took part in the study, 29 females and 14 males, and participants had children throughout the K-12 pipeline. The author didn't provide insight into the analytical process, indicating no theoretical framing to analyze findings. Data revealed that parents wanted to be more involved in their children's schooling but were prevented due to school policies and practices. Participants felt abandoned and helpless to assist their children in their education. Parents expressed not feeling welcomed and recognized the low expectations school figures had towards them and their children. Participants spoke about the framing of Latinx parents by school administrators as "not caring for their children's education (p. 30)." Due to these experiences, participants described feeling "stupid" and not qualified to assist their children. Ramirez (2003) provides important insight into how Latina immigrant mothers internalize discrimination and microaggressions in the education system.

Expanding on Ramirez's (2003) findings, Auerbach's (2007) study demonstrates how parents of color constructed their role in promoting their children's access to educational opportunities. This article brings forth important insight into how Latina immigrant mothers contextualize their role in their children's education and demonstrates an internalization of

deficit narratives that ignore the impact of institutional inequalities. It further illustrates how cultural practices in the education system harm Latina immigrant mothers. Using a qualitative research approach, the author interviewed 6 Mexican and Central American immigrant mothers, 5 Mexican and Central American immigrant fathers, 2 Chicana mothers, and 3 Black mothers. The data was not disaggregated based on race or gender. At the time of the study, the participant's children were enrolled in a high school in California. The author relied on cultural capital, social capital, and social network to guide the data analysis. Key findings demonstrated that parents provided emotional and moral support, stressed hard work, and talked about college and careers with their children. Immigrant parents spoke about their insecurity due to their lack of knowledge of the education system, which resulted in difficulties supporting and guiding their children. Parents relied on their own lived experiences as a cautionary tale designed to steer children to pursue higher education. Participants discussed their own educational experiences in deficit ways, highlighting feelings of shame and anger due to their missed educational opportunities; despite this, parents were active in encouraging their children's educational aspirations.

Thomas-Duckwitz et al. (2013) builds on Auerbach's (2007) study, demonstrating Latina immigrant mothers' self-perception about their children's schooling. Thomas-Duckwitz et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study that examined the parent involvement perspective among seven immigrant mothers from Mexico. All participants came from limited educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. At the time of the study, the participant's children were enrolled throughout the K-12 education pipeline. The authors did not provide insight into their theoretical approach. Primary findings revealed three themes: giving our children something better, parental purpose, and the messages the schools send to parents. Participants described making academics

their children's primary responsibility. They highlighted conversations with their children and were vocal in expressing not wanting their children to be "stuck" in low-income jobs. Participants expressed self-deprecation and belittled themselves to encourage their children. They stated that their primary role as mothers was to provide emotional support, motivation, and advice as a form of encouragement for their children. Most of the participants felt welcomed by school staff and administrators, stating that having Spanish-speaking school figures assisted in feeling included in their children's schools. This article contributes to the literature on Latina immigrant mothers by providing further insight into how institutional harm and ideologies are being upheld despite feeling welcomed and affirmed in the school setting. It demonstrates the complex and contradictory messaging Latina immigrant mothers confront. Further, this study sheds light on the emotional labor of women of color to encourage their children to pursue higher education despite not fully feeling part of their children's educational journey.

Institutional Affirmation of Latina Immigrant Mothers' Self-Perception

One article in the literature demonstrated how culturally responsive and inclusive approaches in the education system could result in institutional affirmation of Latina immigrant mothers' self-perception. Vidal del Haymes et al. (2019) expand on the previous articles using a quantitative research approach. Relying on ecological systems theory, the authors surveyed 469 participants, including Latina immigrant mothers, U.S.-born Latina mothers, and Black mothers in Chicago. 72.8 percent of participants reported being immigrants from Mexico, 81.8 percent of participants identified as Latinx (this included the Mexican immigrant population), and 53.7 percent reported being primarily Spanish speaking. Participants had children enrolled in pre-k through eighth grade, and the survey was distributed in 64 public schools in low-income communities. The Parent Engagement Institute developed the survey.

Findings revealed that participants who engaged in school settings that incorporated strong family, school, and community engagement had more robust levels of efficacy in supporting their children's educational journey. Participants with strong social networks reported increased engagement in a school setting, community organizations, and resource-seeking. All of these resulted in having a positive impact on Latina immigrant mothers' self-perception and ability to support their children in their educational journey. This study provides important insight into how Latina immigrant mothers internalize their engagement in their children's schooling and how that influences their self-worth. This study expands on the previous literature by highlighting how school practices can impact the self-perception of Latina immigrant mothers and position them as key figures in their children's educational journey. The four articles highlighted in this section bring forth important insight into institutional harm and notions of self-worth perpetuated in the education system, broadening the literature on Latina immigrant mothers that considers the internalization of messages and practices presented throughout the K-12 pipeline.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through the employment of a Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998), this systematic literature review attempted to gain insight into the institutional experiences of Latina immigrant mothers when navigating the education system and the institutional impact on Latina immigrant mothers. The scholarly literature presented in this paper highlighted two themes: (1) Voices from the Margins: Latina Immigrant Mothers Experiencing Systemic Barriers in the K-12 Education System and (2) Institutional Impact on Latina Immigrant Mother Self-Perception.

The study's findings reveal that Latina immigrant mothers face various institutional barriers and sociopolitical contexts that shape their experiences in the K-12 education pipeline. The forms of institutional barriers highlighted in these articles included school administrators as gatekeepers, language discrimination, racist nativism (immigration policy), and hegemonic cultural practices in the education system (Auerbach, 2002; Fernandez & Paredes Scribner, 2018; Plata-Potter &de Guzman, 2012; Sanchez-Suzuki Colegrove, 2019). Embedded in the articles is insight into the discrimination Latina immigrant mothers confront due to their racialized identities as Latina immigrants in the U.S. The participants' racialization in the K-12 education system reflects the dominant perception held against Latinx immigrants in the U.S., which is highlighted through anti-Mexican/Latinx immigrant rhetoric, immigration policy, state policies, and Mexican/U.S. border enforcement, and widespread deficit depiction of the Latinx community in the media (Gonzalez, 2012; Sui & Paul, 2017).

Fernandez and Paredes Scribner (2018) illustrate the role of Latina immigrant mothers as key figures in the home, school, and community, the emotional labor placed on them due to their gender and role as mothers, and further shed light on their struggles and resiliency. Apart from Fernandez and Paredes Scribner (2018), the articles highlighted the voices of Latina immigrant mothers; still, the authors fell short of providing a rich and in-depth analysis that incorporated the participant's gender. The role of gender matters because it can speak to how the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers are being shaped by their intersectional identities and the opportunities that they are able to access or are being denied. Further speaking to their inability to have power within the education system, a power that has historically been granted to white mothers (Velez, 2008). The scholars' argument primarily centered on race/ethnicity and immigration, taking the participants' gender for granted. The inability to contextualize the impact of gender continues to

erase the complex reality that Latina immigrant mothers confront in and out of the education system and their identity as women of color attempting to navigate historically exclusionary institutions. The limited number of empirical studies presented in this section speaks to the need to continue expanding the literature on Latina immigrant mothers that account for sociopolitical and sociohistorical contexts and studies that bring forth the social injustice Latina immigrant mothers experience in the K-12 education system.

Further, the studies demonstrate how Latina immigrant mothers position themselves in their children's educational trajectory and provide insight into how their self-perception is informed by the education system's culture, practices, and power dynamics. Auerbach (2007) demonstrates the insecurity Latina immigrant mothers and parents of color carry due to a lack of knowledge about the K-12 education system. The types of cultural knowledge, social capital, and ways of knowing carried by Latina immigrant mothers are not affirmed nor validated in the U.S. education system. The education system is a microcosm of the larger society, both of which affirm meritocratic ideologies that the participants in this study internalize. This is depicted in the ways participants position themselves as counterexamples for their children; educational attainment is presented as a choice. In addition, Ramirez (2003) provides insight into how school practices create barriers that further perpetuate a deficit narrative of Latina immigrant mothers and position them as uninvolved in their children's trajectory. Participants felt unfit to support their children. Thomas-Duckwitz et al. (2013) study demonstrates the education system's contradictions that can empower and reproduce harm to Latina immigrant mothers. Lastly, Vidal del Haymes et al. (2019) highlight how culturally responsive practices can affirm and positively impact parents of color self-perception. These studies are important to the scholarship on Latina

immigrant mothers because they provide a critical layer to better understand their journey as key figures in their children's educational trajectory.

Across the literature, the framing of Latina immigrant mothers centered on their identity as immigrants in the U.S. As a result, the literature focused on a racialized experiences rooted in racist nativism, which contributes to the literature of Latina immigrant mothers by recognizing the role of systemic barriers in U.S. society and the education system. This was directly seen through the exclusion of the Spanish language due to the education system's cultural practices and ideologies. An area that the literature needs to expand is the understanding of race and ethnicity. A key factor that shapes individuals' experiences within institutions is their perceived race, the literature on Latina immigrant mothers did not account for racial identifications or colorism. Understanding the history of colonization across Latin America, the implications of colorism have shaped the opportunities afforded to people in the U.S. and abroad. To gain better insight into how Latina immigrant mothers are engaging and experiencing the U.S. K-12 education system, further research is needed on the impact of colorism on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers. Further, the literature on Latina immigrant mothers needs to account for intersectionality; while some of the literature was direct in speaking to the complexity of the identities of Latina immigrant women, the majority took these components for granted and did not address them directly.

The literature demonstrates that when researching the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers in relation to navigating the K-12 education system, it overwhelmingly continues to be within attempts to understand notions of parent participation, involvement, and engagement. An area of growth in the literature on Latina immigrant mothers is a focus on culturally specific ways that Latina immigrant mothers engage, motivate, and encouraged their children to continue

to pursue their educational aspirations. More empirical studies are needed to gain further insight into the ways in which Latina immigrant mothers are framing education and how that aligns with or challenges western ways of thinking. Further, the empirical studies in this literature review demonstrated that Latina immigrant mothers navigate hostile institutional environments. There is much to expand to gain an understanding of systemic barriers that are being confronted by Latina immigrant mothers; developing research questions that seek to gain further insight into these experiences is necessary, and there should be a reliance on critical theories to help analyze findings to contextualize better what is occurring and the challenges that Latina immigrant mothers are confronting.

The growth of the Latinx student population in the public school system and low-academic attainment speaks to the need to make systemic changes that better support students, their families, and communities across the K-12 education pipeline, which can increase students' ability to pursue a college degree. A key figure in the Latinx students' K-12 journey is Latina immigrant mothers. School administrators need to be intentional in recognizing the ways that school practices can lead to the exclusion of Latina immigrant mothers, which can ultimately "push parents out" of their children's educational journey. To best support Latina immigrant mothers, schools need to incorporate avenues for co-creation and partnership that authentically bridge the home, community, and school. Further, recognize and incorporate Latina immigrant mothers as holders and producers of knowledge and assets to their children's educational journey.

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Chapter 2, in full, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Ruby Osoria was the primary investigator and the sole author of this paper.

CHAPTER 3: ESPERANZA Y FRUSTRACIÓN[17]: MEXICAN IMMIGRANT MOTHERS

NAVIGATING DISTANCE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

Abstract

This qualitative study centers on the experiences of eleven Mexican immigrant mothers as they navigated the pandemic (COVID-19) and managed their K-12 grade children's education during the first wave of distance learning between March to June 2020. Guided by the overarching theoretical frameworks, Chicana feminist epistemology, Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit), and racist nativism, this paper critically analyzes the varied experiences of the participants that illustrate the impact of systemic inequalities that limited the mothers' access to resources for their children and family. Further, the data demonstrate how the continuation of educational practices limited the mothers' role from fully engaging in their children's academic development and schooling. Through the employment of pláticas as the primary methodological tool, the data highlights how the participants responded to the systemic barriers they confronted to continue supporting their children's education.

Keywords: Latino students, Latina mothers, family, distance learning, K-12 education

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[17] Translation: Hope and Frustration.

Introduction

By mid-March 2020, 670 school districts in California had shut down due to the increase in COVID-19 cases throughout the state (Cano & Wiener, 2020). The decision to transition from in-person to distance learning impacted over 6 million students enrolled in the California public school system and their families, the majority of students being Latinx[18] (California Department of Education, 2020; Cano & Wiener, 2020). Distance learning positioned parents, caretakers, extended family, and at times, siblings as responsible for teaching and facilitating academic activities assigned to students (Gao et al., 2020, Garbe et al., 2020). What resulted was the merging of the home and school not previously seen in the California public school system. Families' distance learning experiences were impacted by micro and macro social factors shaped by the social stratification embedded in the U.S., bringing forth an awareness of the various forms of social injustices reproduced in the education system throughout the pandemic and distance learning (Gao et al., 2020; LaFave, 2020). This empirical study centers on the voices of Mexican immigrant mothers as they supported and navigated distance learning alongside their children.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Latinx students accounted for 54.90 percent of the student body in California's public school system (California Department of Education, 2020). Between 2017-2018, in California, 4.2 million children had at least one immigrant parent (Lou et al., n.d.). The American Immigration Council (2020b) indicated that 27 percent of the population in California consisted of immigrants in 2018. Half of the immigrants living in California were born in a country that is part of Latin America, the majority immigrating from Mexico (Johnson & Sanchez, 2019). Latinx immigrant parents and their children faced substantial challenges when

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[18] The term Latinx is intentionally used in this paper to disrupt the binary language around gender when referring to the panethnic identity of people of Latin American heritage (Salinas & Lozano, 2019).

navigating distance learning due to systemic barriers that have historically pushed out parents of color and immigrant parents from their children's educational journey (Valencia, 2002; Velez, 2008).

To obtain an understanding of the experiences of Latinx immigrant households and the challenges faced by immigrant parents during distance learning, this study explores the experiences of eleven Mexican immigrant mothers as they supported their children academically and navigated the first period of distance learning between the months of March and June of 2020. Mexican immigrant women are one of the largest ethnic groups residing in the United States, accounting for 23.26% of the overall female immigrant population (American Immigration Council, 2020a). Shaped by patriarchal notions and gender expectations, women are significantly more likely to take on the responsibility of the primary caretaker and the provider of their children (Segura, 1991). Women continue to take on most of the responsibility for the care of their children regardless of family structure or employment status (Durand, 2011; Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Valdés, 1996). Positioning Mexican immigrant mothers as more likely to have been managing their children's distance learning reinforces the importance of highlighting the participants' experiences during a critical period in their children's education (Fuentes, 2013).

For the Latinx immigrant community, distance learning highlighted the continued systemic and institutional inequalities perpetuated throughout the education pipeline. Recent studies have revealed that large portions of the Latinx immigrant community, along with Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), navigated distance learning with limited resources and limited support, resulting in a widening the education debt[19] for low-income

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[19] Landson-Billings (2006) explains that education debt refers to the impact of the cumulation of lack of resources in low-income schools, in addition to policy formation that excluded BIPOC from schooling, lack of academic funding, and the historical social political exclusion of BIPOC.

BIPOC students (Gao et al., 2020; LaFave, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The disparities of the digital gap have disproportionally affected low-income Black and Latinx households (Chandra et al., 2020; Horrigan, 2015). Most low-income immigrant families are under-connected to the internet and rely on mobile devices with data limits to search the web (Rideout & Katz, 2016; Vargas & Sanchez, 2020). Further, 38% of Latinx parents reported not having enough computers for all their family members to log in to their online classrooms and work from home (Latino Decision, 2020a).

While school districts have attempted to address the digital divide[20], early research findings on the experiences of Latinx immigrant parents indicated that little instructional support for parents had been provided (Horowitz & Igielnik, 2020; Latino Decisions, 2020b; PIQE, 2020; Vargas & Sanchez, 2020; Park et al., 2021). Increasing the probability of Latinx immigrant parents having to confront further barriers due to limited familiarity with technology and online applications in the form of limited digital literacy (Park et al., 2021). Primarily Spanish speaking Latinx immigrant parents reported having difficulty assisting their children with english only homework assignments (Horowitz & Igielnik, 2020; Latino Decision 2020b; Morales & Hanson, 2005; Ramirez, 2003). Latino Decisions (2020b), in partnership with Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, conducted a survey on the experiences of Latinx parents and grandparents during the initial enforcement of distance learning. The survey revealed that 83 percent of parents had concerns about their children falling behind in school in the areas of math, writing, and science.

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[20] In relation to the education system, the digital divide refers to the gap between those who have physical access to digital technology, a product of economic inequalities, it also accounts for how effectively computers and the internet are used in the classroom, and it accounts for the resources available to support the use and knowledge of the use of computers and the internet (DiMaggio et al., 2001; Martin, 2003; Valadez & Duran, 2007). This paper positions digital literacy as an extension of the digital divide as both terms are referring to the different forms of digital exclusion.

Further, 65 percent of participants described facing challenges in their ability to support their children with online schoolwork during distance learning. These responses were similar to those reported by the Pew Research Center, demonstrating the disparities based on socioeconomic status (Horowitz & Igielnik, 2020).

The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the continued systemic inequality perpetuated within the education system during distance learning and to explore the factors that have impacted the experiences of Mexican-immigrant mothers as they supported their children during the first period of distance learning. Through the guiding frameworks of Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998), Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), and racist nativism (Pérez Huber et al., 2008), this research makes a valuable contribution to the field of education by studying the experiences of Mexican immigrant mothers through a qualitative research approach, through the use of Chicana feminist methodology, pláticas. This study is significant because it provides a snapshot of the initial impact of the pandemic and distance learning through the lived reality of eleven Mexican immigrant families. This study assists in highlighting new issues that are a result of sociohistorical and sociopolitical realities embedded in the social structures and educational practices in the U.S. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What were the experiences of Mexican immigrant mothers when managing their children's distance learning during COVID-19?

    a. What were the challenges and barriers faced by Mexican immigrant mothers in assisting their children through distance learning?

Theoretical Framework

The guiding theoretical and conceptual frameworks in this study consist of Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology, Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), and racist nativism (Calderón et al., 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Pérez Huber et al., 2008; Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Velez, 2008). The braiding of the three frameworks provides the necessary analytical tools to analyze the experiences of the participants while recognizing the shifting interplay of race, gender, immigration, language, and socioeconomic status (Espinoza-Herald, 2007; Ruiz, 2000). The use of the three frameworks is justified because it allows for the recognition of the intersectional experiences of Mexican immigrant mothers as they navigate the impact of the pandemic and their children's distance learning.

Chicana/Latina Feminist Epistemology

Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology expands the analysis of the lived experiences of Chicanas and Latinas in the United States by recognizing their unique lived realities outside the western discourse that centers the voices of males and white women (Delgado Bernal, 1998). In the field of education, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology supports an analysis that accounts for participants' intersectional[21] identities and sheds light on the participants experiences in the education system. Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology informed the development of the research questions and guided the methodological approach in this qualitative study in the form of platicás. Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology assisted when conducting an in-depth analysis of the gendered experiences of the participants as mothers, as caretakers during the pandemic and managing their children's education through distance learning (Calderón, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Ruiz, 2000).

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[21] Intersectionality is a prism that assist in understanding how marginalized identities (i.e., race and gender) intersect and result in the compounding of disadvantages and inequalities that create obstacles beyond a conventional understanding of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991).

Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit)

This study utilized LatCrit, an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT provides researchers with the tools to analyze the role of race and racism. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) indicate that when utilizing CRT in educational research, the analysis needs to contain the following five elements: (a) race and racism need to be central to the study and allow for intersectionality, (b) the dominant Eurocentric ideology needs to be challenged, (c) a commitment to social justice, (d) an emphasis on experiential knowledge, and (e) provide an interdisciplinary perspective. The five tenets that guide CRT also guide LatCrit, with each tenet focusing on the issues that affect Latinx communities (Pérez Huber, 2011). In the context of Latinx immigrant parents in the education system, a LatCrit framework assists in (a) understanding discrimination based on cultural capital, (b) reveals racist practices that are seen as "neutral" and "color-blind," (c) helps understand the perpetual stereotype of Latinx immigrant parents, (d), and it challenges the construction of parent involvement all together by revealing other forms of unrecognized parental involvement (Velez, 2008). A LatCrit framework was utilized when conducting an in-depth analysis of the experiences of Mexican-immigrant mothers within the context of navigating their children's distance learning and responding to educational practices (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Racist Nativism

A conceptual framework within LatCrit, racist nativism is defined as "the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived as white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be people and immigrants of color, and thereby defend the rights of whites or the natives, to dominance" (Perez Huber et al., 2008, p. 43). In the field of education, racist nativism allows for a deeper analysis of the

institutional discrimination in the education system and state and federal policies during the pandemic. A racist nativism framework guided the analysis when analyzing the impact of the pandemic on Mexican immigrant families due to their racial/ethnic and immigration status (Pérez Huber, 2011).

Methods Section

Methodology: Pláticas

This study employed a qualitative research design, rooted in Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology based on pláticas, by conducting individual interviews over the phone that ranged between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours. Pláticas, as defined by Gonzalez (1998), are conversations that take place in one-on-one or group settings, which is a way to "gather family and cultural knowledge through the communication of thoughts, memories, ambiguities, and new interpretations" (p. 647). Pláticas, as a methodology, counters traditional forms of qualitative research that have historically marginalized Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color (Milner, 2007). Pláticas recognizes the knowledge that both the participants and the researchers hold and validates their personal experiences (Zanoni, 2008; Guajardo et al., 2014). In the field of education, plática as a methodology has served as a research approach for Chicana/Latina scholars that is intentional in honoring the research participants and recognizes the presence of power structures in the research process. Through the implementation of a pláticas methodology, the researcher should work towards disrupting the power structures throughout the research process and not simply interpret pláticas as a culturally responsive method (Fierros & Delgado Berna, 2016, p. 116).

Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) identify five principles of pláticas methodology: (a) the research is informed on Chicana/Latina feminist theories, (b) the recognition of participants

as co-constructors of knowledge, (c) scholars make connections between the everyday lived experience and research inquiry, (d) the opportunity to cultivate a space that allows for the potential for healing, and (e) reliance on relational reciprocity, vulnerability, and research reflexivity (p. 109 - 114). Pláticas was the best methodological approach for this research study because it allowed the participants the opportunity to determine and discuss the most significant aspects of their experiences in relation to the research topic and not be limited to the guiding questions. In every pláticas, I worked towards intentionally recreating an environment that positioned the participants as equals, recognized the participants as holders and producers of knowledge, and honored their lived experiences. These components were necessary when addressing sensitive topics around the family, community, education, and the impact of Covid-19 on the Latinx immigrant community.

Participants

Participants were recruited from the city of Nueva Vista (pseudonym), located in southern California. The participant requirements included: (a) identify as Latinx/a/o, (b) must be an immigrant to the United States, (c) participants must be 18 years or older, (d) reside in the City of Nueva Vista, (e) the participant's child/children should be enrolled in a K-12 school located in the City of Nueva Vista during the time of the study. A total of eleven self-identified females, immigrants from Mexico, participated in the study ranging between the ages of 33 – 45. During the duration of the study, the participants' children were enrolled in the K-12 public school system via distance learning (See TABLE 3.1: Participant Demographics).

Recruitment and Sampling

Once this study was approved by IRB, I began recruiting participants by sharing the recruitment flyer with my contacts via email. I asked my networks to share the recruitment flyer

with individuals that they believed met the participation requirements and may be interested in participating. My network included program coordinators and community organizers that worked directly with nonprofits that served Latinx immigrant families from the City of Nueva Vista and provided programming for students and their parents. Soon after receiving the flyers, individuals interested contacted me via email and via phone. At this point, I explained the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, length of commitment, and participants' rights. I addressed any questions and concerns and utilized this initial interaction to connect with participants. Individuals who contacted me via email scheduled a phone meeting with me and received the same information. This initial phone call lasted between 20-30 minutes. Participants received a nominal gift after completing their participation in the study in the form of $25.00 in cash, which was distributed through the postal service.

TABLE 2.1: Participant demographics.

Participant (Pseudonym)	Country of Birth	Years Living in the United States	Children (Pseudonym)	Children Education Level
Ana	Mexico	25 years	Elena David	Kindergarten 2nd Grade
Araceli	Mexico	23 years	Jose Clara	7th grade 10th grade
Berenice	Mexico	19 years	Xochitl Lupe Dani	5th grade 8th grade 10th grade
Delia*	Mexico	24 years	Mike Emmanuel	4th grade 5th grade
Fabiana**	Mexico	20 years	Miguel Jacob	5th grade 8th grade
Josefina**	Mexico	18 years	Jonathan Fabian	Kindergarten 6th grade
Luz	Mexico	15 years	Angel Bianca Noel	1st grade 3rd grade 5th grade

TABLE 2.1: Participant demographics.

Marisol	Mexico	24 years	Vanessa Jorge Natalia	1st grade 3rd grade 8th grade
Monica*	Mexico	22 years	Estela Donna	4th grade 10th grade
Sofia**	Mexico	15 years	Xitlali Yvette	2nd grade 8th grade
Victoria	Mexico	16 years	Teresa Michelle	1st grade 6th grade

* Participants with adult child/children (adult children not included in the participation table).
** Participants with an infant or toddler-age child/children (children not included in the participation table).

Data Collection and Analysis

The research protocol consisted of a demographic survey, semi-structured plática, and a reflective letter. Prior to the semi-structured plática, participants answered demographic questions. I filled out the demographic survey while the participants provided their responses over the phone. A set of open-ended questions assisted in guiding the plática. Open-ended questions were used to eliminate the possibility of implied and leading responses (Creswell, 2013). Each plática was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in Spanish. After the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to take part in the reflective letter activity. Participants took pictures of their letters and sent them to me either via email or text. A total of five participants completed the reflective letter activity; the findings of these letters are not included in this paper.

Transcriptions were read with the intent of refamiliarizing with the participants' responses and identifying connections and themes among all eleven interviews (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Saldaña, 2013). After loosely coding the data, I relied on axial coding and began to group codes

based on similar interpretations and meanings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Richards, 2014). The last cycle of coding consisted of narrowing the data by reorganizing it by category and theme, as needed (Saldaña, 2013). The analysis process was informed by the theoretical frameworks, which guided the identification of themes related to race, gender, immigration, and the education system.

Findings

> Fue una experiencia que no los vamos a olvidar, porque, nosotros los padres nos convertimos en maestros, sin querer queriendo. Uno no esta capacitatdo, para uno, para mi si fue deficil.
>
> *It was an experience that we will never forget because we, the parents, became teachers. One is not qualified; for everyone, for me, it was difficult.*

Ana, the mother of Elena (Kindergarten) and David (second grade), described the feeling of having to take on the role of a teacher for her children during the pandemic and distance learning, one that came as both a surprise and with challenges. The systemic challenges confronted by the participants came in the form of taking on the emotional and tangible labor of sustaining their home during the pandemic, the exposure to financial vulnerability, and limited government support due to the mix-immigration status placed on their family. Simultaneously, the U.S. education system was forced onto the home, which highlighted structural disparities in the form of a lack of institutional support and investment, the digital divide in the form of limited digital literacy, and of english language preference. The combination of these factors shaped the experiences of the participants and created barriers in the ways in which they were able to support their children throughout the first wave of distance learning.

The findings from this study are organized to provide a greater understanding of the experiences of the mothers that account for the impact of the pandemic and distance learning on the home. Recognizing that the home became the primary infrastructure for the education system

to function during the pandemic, I believe that it is necessary to provide insight into the ways in which the home was being impacted during the pandemic through the experiences of the mothers. Which speaks to the resources available to the participants, their children, and family. Proceeding this section is an overview of the systemic inequalities perpetuated during the pandemic, the structure and implementation of distance learning, the impact of digital literacy, and Spanish language exclusion. Each section provides insight into the complex and layered experiences of the mothers, which are informed and shaped by larger systems of exclusion and oppression.

Nuestra Ofrenda: Navigating Systemic Inequalities[22]

The data revealed the ways in which the participants simultaneously managed multiple systemic barriers during the pandemic. It was the societal meaning and value given to their intersectional identities, including gender, race, class, and immigration status, that shaped their experiences in navigating the challenges and the resources that were presented to the mothers. These structures placed an additional burden on the participants. The data demonstrate the impact of various factors that placed the emotional labor on the mothers to maintain the home and positioned them and their families in a financially vulnerable situation during the first wave of distance learning.

The participants were all in heterosexual relationships, either married by church or state or cohabitating with their long-term spouse. The participants had two to three children enrolled in grades from K-12 during the time of the study. Five of the participants had infant children or adult children in addition to their K-12 age children. The participants in the study came from a working-class or low-income background, and during the pandemic — which was marked by

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[22] Translation: Our offering.

scarce resources, lack of access to goods, and financial instability — an additional burden was forced on the participants to attempt to gain access to goods to provide for their families. Prior to the pandemic, the data revealed that eight of the participants were either employed (i.e., factory, food industry, or receptionist) or self-employed (i.e., sold homemade decorations, sold homecooked meals, or house cleaning). During the pláticas, only one participant was still employed; it is necessary to note that apart from one individual, ten of the participants' spouses were employed during the interviews, as they were essential workers. Pre-pandemic, the participants described living paycheck to paycheck but still having enough money to enjoy for themselves and their children.

Three of the participants were stay-at-home mothers prior to the first wave of the pandemic. Luz, a mother of three, Angel (first grade), Bianca (third grade), and Noel (fifth grade), stated that she decided to be a stay-at-home mother because she wanted to be able to be more involved in her children's life and education. During her pláticas, Luz described being involved in her children's school and volunteering when time permitted; she stated that her children's education was a priority for her but also acknowledged that her immigration status prevented her from obtaining a stable job. This was a sentiment shared by the additional two participants; their decision to be stay-at-home mothers was informed by their desire to be present at home for their children and the systemic limitations of obtaining a job due to immigration policies in the U.S. The three participants were forced to wager the pros and cons of going into the "informal work sector," with an understanding that their immigration status determined the access to resources given to them and opting to be full-time stay-at-home mothers, where they felt that their time would be an investment for their children.

Throughout the first wave of the pandemic, the participants described being in a financially vulnerable position and having to wager about where their funds would be allocated. When reflecting on the reality of the pandemic, Marisol, a mother of three, Vanessa (first grade), Jorge (third grade), and Natalia (eighth grade), stated, Fue preocupante y debilitante, uno se preocupaba. ¿Cómo voy a pagar la renta y la comida?/*It was worrying and debilitating, one worried. How am I going to pay the rent and food?* The participants described the stress and pressure they carried in attempting to manage their limited finances, expressing that, for the first time, they did not have enough income for basic needs, such as shelter and food. Nine of the participants stated that they relied on local food distributions throughout their community to access food and other goods; they specifically relied on information provided by their extended family, neighbors, digital flyers distributed by their children's school, and non-profit after-school programs that their children were enrolled in. These resources decreased the stress that the participants endured due to their financial vulnerability, but it also offset the stress they experienced when grocery shopping. The mothers described the fear they endured when shopping for groceries for their family during the pandemic; the mothers were fearful of being exposed to COVID-19 and described being overwhelmed by the lack of food and basic goods available in their local grocery store. All the participants took on the primary responsibility of grocery shopping, a task tied to their gender identity, and the socialization of women taking on the primary role of providers, including nurturing and maintaining the health of their families. Under the reality of the pandemic, the participants continue to navigate systems of oppression, placing participants in a susceptible position on behalf of their families.

The mothers described that while their landlords provided the opportunity for late rent payments with no penalties or added fees, the participants did not necessarily see this as a form

of support or help. Araceli, a mother of two, Jose (seventh grade) and Clara (tenth grade), was critical of the no-late fee policy, making it clear that financially vulnerable families did not necessarily have the option to miss rent because they understood that the amount of rent would eventually add on. Putting families in an unstable situation where they owe double or more in rent would only create or deepen the cycle of debt. This was a sentiment that nine of the other participants shared, all of whom were renters at the time of the study. The family structure of all participants and their spouses consisted of families with a mixed-immigration status, which influenced the types of governmental support they or their spouses qualified for and received.

Apart from two families, the rest of the mothers and their families did not receive any federal aid. The exclusion of resources based on citizenship and residency reflects the subordination and erasure of immigrants without documentation, which removes any responsibility from the government to provide and aid families during a vulnerable period in global history. All participants did receive the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) [23] provided by the state of California, which was a resource for all families, each indicating that this was extremely helpful, knowing that they could rely on the P-EBT funds to buy food for their children. While it was not a long-term solution, the participants stated that it was a valuable resource. Government support for the participants and their families came in the form of the proximity of their children, which further produced stratification within the household, determining who had the right to access specific resources and placing the participants in a position to either reproduce (only buying food for their children) or challenge these structures (buying food for the whole family).

The participants in this study brought forth insight into the systems of oppression that they navigated throughout the first wave of the pandemic and distance learning. The pláticas

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[23] Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT funding was distributed by the state of California and was granted to students who were illegible for free and reduced lunch.

illustrate the significant role that the participants took on to manage and sustain their homes in addition to distance learning, which brings insight into the various ways in which gendered labor was experienced throughout the pandemic. The data revealed the emotional labor placed on the mothers to provide for their families, but despite these challenges, it also highlighted their ability to be resourceful and search for local resources. The participants were critical of the lack of opportunities available to them due to their immigration status, an issue that was present prior to the pandemic, revealing the vulnerable state that participants remain in, experiencing economic instability. As it relates to distance learning, this was the backdrop of the context that the participants and their families had to endure while attempting to make schooling a priority for their children during the first wave of the pandemic. The participants were vocal in stating that they made sure not to burden their children by providing insight regarding the social and financial challenges they were enduring. They wanted to steer their children away from any other aspects that would distract from their schooling and protect them from "adult" problems.

Structure of Inequality: The Limitations of Distance Learning

The participants in the study were sympathetic towards teachers and administrators that had to manage and transition from in-person schooling to distance learning. Each participant stated that they understood that everyone was trying their best, from parents, students, teachers, and administrators. But they also recognized the systemic limitations and challenges specific to their children and their community's distance learning experience. These experiences made the mothers critical of the various limitations placed on their children's academic journey during the pandemic. The data revealed a minimal focus on academic instruction during the first wave of distance learning; this was most prevalent with students in elementary. Further, there was limited teacher-student and teacher-parent interaction and unforeseen challenges due to physical

limitations in the student's home. The participants responded to the systemic barriers by supplementing course content for their children and cultivating a learning environment in their homes.

The children of the participants in the study were enrolled in various schools in the Nueva Vista Unified School District. Marisol, a mother of three, had her children enrolled in a dual language school, while all other participants' children attended english-only schools. Despite each school site having a slightly different procedure regarding announcing the transition from in-person to distance learning and academic structure, the data revealed similar approaches across all participants' experiences. The mothers were informed about the change to distance learning via email and voicemails distributed by the schools; the information was provided in english and Spanish. Students were sent home from school with necessary textbooks, and two weeks' worth of homework and worksheets were distributed. When distance learning was extended to the remainder of the school year, parents were informed that school materials would be accessible via Google Classroom or other online applications, and one elementary school mailed out school textbooks and worksheets.

Class sessions and topic materials were covered both asynchronously and synchronously. Participants with children in elementary stated that in their experiences, students attended Zoom classes an average of 3 times a week; the duration differed depending on grade level. For example, for kindergarten and first grade children, Ana, Luz, Marisol, Victoria (mother to Teresa, a first grader, and Michelle a sixth grader), and Josefina (mother to Jonathan, a kindergartner, and Fabian, a sixth grader) reported that class Zoom meetings ranged between 30 minutes and two hours. Students in second grade through sixth grade spent anywhere between one to two hours in their digital class sessions. At times students were assigned either a morning

or an afternoon session; this allowed for smaller class meetings and fewer disruptions or distractions, as described by the participants. The participants revealed that most of the time spent on Zoom for elementary-age children consisted of the teacher explaining the assignments that needed to be completed, reviewing course material, reading out loud, conducting an arts and craft activity, or participating in wellness check-ins with students.

Participants described their frustration with the distance learning structure and questioned the impact it would have on their children's learning. Monica, a mother of two, Estela (fourth grade) and Donna (tenth grade), was one of the participants vocal about knowing that the lack of academic teaching and support resulted in a lack of learning and a strain on the academic development of her children and their peers. However, she praised her children for siguieron echándole ganas/continuing to persevere, demonstrating her understanding of the ways in which her children navigated the limited institutional support and recognizing that any academic setback was not a result of her children's academic capabilities. While Monica's children attempted to remain on top of their schoolwork, other participants, like Delia, stated that her children felt frustrated during Zoom sessions and would lose interest. These feelings of discontent and concern are further captured through the pláticas with Ana; she states:

> Para mí fue muy difícil. Fue muchos muchos niños y les dieron muy poco tiempo. ¿Qué hicieron en media hora? Nada, y con muchos niños y se acabó el tiempo. Y yo iba allá a ayudar a mis hijos, porque no teníamos ayuda.
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> *For me, it wasn't easy. It was many children, and they gave them very little time. What did they do in half an hour? Nothing, and with many children and limited time. And I would go and help my children because we did not have help.*

Ana's statement sheds light on the frustration and sense of isolation that was being cultivated during distance learning. Participants recognize the lack of time invested in their children's learning through the structures and decisions made around distance learning. While participants

empathized with teachers and administrators, they wanted more instructional time invested in their children. Further, there needed to be more resources to provide adequate digital instructions for students. The lack of institutional support and resources further positioned the participants as the primary figure responsible for their children's academic learning. The data also shed light on in-person challenges faced by many urban schools with large classrooms, which, during the pandemic, manifested itself with its own set of challenges in the digital space.

Students in middle school and high school tended to follow their class period schedule and transition from one class subject to the next, periodically, as they would in person. Participants with middle and high school-aged children stated that students logged in to their classes three to four times a week. Each class session (or class period) lasted for about an hour. The class content was supplemented through individual assignments. Participants recognized that distance learning was different from in-person learning, which would require different pedagogical approaches. For many participants, it was especially challenging to watch their children struggle with their academics and feel like they could do very little to support them due to language barriers and, at times, limited knowledge of particular subjects. Araceli, the mother to Jose and Clara, who at the time of the study were in middle school and high school, discussed her discontent with the structure of distance learning in her children's schools.

> Las escuelas deberían proporcionar otras formas de explicar las cosas (materiales). Los estudiantes se sienten saturados porque no pueden terminar el trabajo y es estresante estar en un solo lugar. Si van a trabajar desde casa, enfócate en una clase por día. Eso sería ideal.
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> *Schools should provide other ways of explaining things (subjects). Students feel saturated because they cannot finish the work, and it is stressful to be in one place. If they are going to work from home, focus on one subject per day. That would be ideal.*

Like Araceli, the rest of the participants in the study were critical of the limitations and challenges brought forth by how distance learning was structured for their children throughout

K-12 schooling. Araceli witnessed Jose and Clara stressed due to the online classes being structured like in-person classes and having to transition from various class periods in one day. This brought much stress for Clara, who was also experiencing difficulties with submitting assignments on time and needing more reliable access to the internet, as she was required to send pictures of the worksheets she completed. Araceli felt irritated on her children's behalf and guilty for the limited workspace available to them in their apartment. Ten of the participants lived in an apartment complex, which limited their children's learning space. Still, the participants ensured an individual learning environment for each of their children. Some participants purchased desks for their children while others made do with home furniture, but a key component for all had a quiet space for each of their children, especially for the participants who had children from elementary to high school. They wanted to ensure their older children had a quiet space to focus on their class and the privacy to attend their synchronous courses. Some participants went as far as restructuring a corner of their home to mimic a classroom with images, posters, calendars, and displayed school supplies.

The data indicates the structural limitations embedded in the distance learning practices based on the participant's experiences in the Nueva Vista School District. The first wave of distance learning revealed challenges that are a manifestation of already established barriers that families and students in underfunded schools have historically experienced; in the form of overpopulated classrooms, lack of digital support, and limited student investment. Inherently, what was reported throughout the pláticas, was an exacerbation of academic inequalities that have the potential to increase the education debt. Further, the distance learning structure placed the primary responsibility on the mothers to take on the role of the teacher and attempt to respond to their children's academic needs and limited institutional support. The structure of

distance learning was further compounded by the negative impact of the digital divide in the form of limited digital literacy among the participants and Spanish language exclusion, which further forced hegemonic educational culture and practices into the participants' homes; this data will be demonstrated in the following sections.

Digital Literacy A Form of Digital Divide: Navegando por nuevos espacios tecnológicos[24]

Central to distance learning was the ability to have access to the proper digital technological tools to engage in a virtual space and digital learning effectively. The participants in the study reported that all their children enrolled in K-12 had access to a Chromebook and free WIFI, both provided by the Nueva Vista Unified School District. Despite having primary access to digital technological learning tools, the mothers in this study and their children experienced challenges when attempting to use and navigate the Chromebook and the various learning applications assigned to students. The data revealed that limited digital literacy on behalf of the participants was one form in which the mothers confronted systemic barriers to support their children's distance learning. Digital literacy refers to the knowledge and competence that allows individuals to function, engage in digital tools, and mobilize information resources to address everyday needs and for learning purposes (Katz & Gonzalez, 2016, p. 236; Park et al., 2021). The following data demonstrates the impact and response, of the mothers, towards the barriers they confronted during distance learning due to digital literacy and the lack of systemic support provided to the participants.

The mothers expressed relief that their children had access to laptops and WIFI as, for many, the assigned Chromebooks were the only computer access for their children; further, the participants stated that they could not provide a laptop for each of their children to use during

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[24] Translation: Navigating New Technological Spaces

distance learning but recognized that having access to digital technology for learning purposes was only the minimum needed to cultivate an effective learning environment. Central to the educational structure during distance learning were the applications used by various school sites, the most common ones being Google Classroom, ClassDojo, Zoom, and the school website. The participants described themselves as not being "technologically savvy" and having limited knowledge of how to manage the internet and applications on a computer, which at times was further compounded by the fact that all applications were in english. For the participants in the study, technology and language were additional challenges in attempting to support their children's learning.

Eight participants had children enrolled in middle school and/or high school at the time of the study; navigating the Chromebook and school applications was relatively easy for these children. The participants relied on their older children to help the younger siblings navigate and use the computer to access course assignments and activities. Araceli relied on her oldest daughter, Clara, a sophomore at the time of the study, to help Jose (in middle school) navigate class applications, access school assignments, and submit school assignments. Araceli described her gratitude for her oldest daughter and explained that she raised her children to care for and support each other when possible. Araceli was vocal in stating that if it weren't for Clara, Jose would have struggled immensely since she would not have known how to access and function all school applications and digital resources. For Araceli, digital literacy prevented her from taking part in fully supporting her children due to the historical digital exclusion of working-class communities and non-English speakers, which limited her knowledge of how digital technology was being used and applied in the classroom.

Fabiana stated that she placed her trust in her children, Miguel (5th grade) and Jacob (8th grade), to log into the computer and figure out how to manage all digital platforms; she said that she was not very familiar with technology, so she relied on her children to guide her on how to log in to the school applications and maneuver school websites. Other participants expressed having a sense of guilt when asking their older children for technological support. As a result, the participants described intentionally limiting the responsibilities placed on their older children because they understood they had their assignments to focus on and witnessed the levels of stress and pressure their middle school and high school children were already under. When possible, the mothers would attempt to "buscar una solución," or find a solution on their own; this looked like logging in to the computer and exploring each application, looking up english terms online and translating them to Spanish, and encouraging their younger children to help guide them.

Monica shared that the most challenging part of distance learning for her was navigating the applications, learning what applications to select, how to log in, and the purpose of each website and app. Unsurprisingly, the data revealed that the participants with only elementary-age children struggled the most when dealing with the technological aspect of distance learning. This was because Ana and Luz did not have a family member they could rely on, like an older child, who had knowledge and experience with computer and digital academic resources. This brought forth a sense of hindrance, as expressed by Ana:

> Ya me metia yo, y aveces ni yo lo entiendo. Y al principio fue muy difícil. Yo nos les podía ayudar, de verdad no se entendía, ni a quien preguntarle, no avía ayuda.
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> *Sometimes I would log in, and I wouldn't understand it. At first, it was extremely difficult. I couldn't help them; honestly, I didn't understand anything, no one to ask for help; there was no help.*

Ana was ultimately able to manage by "buscando" and figuring it out by trial and error when exploring her children's online applications. Still, she described it as time-consuming and

disruptive to her children's learning, resulting in many stressful days for her and her children out of fear that materials would not be submitted on time or that her children would miss out on an assignment or activity.

While the participants in this study had access to the equipment and resources for online learning, an overwhelming number of the mothers described needing more experience with academic applications and larger technological applications like a laptop when referring to digital literacy. This created limitations that were offset by family support from individuals familiar with the public school system and the digital technology being used. There is a clear digital gap between students and their parents in the context of this study; some participants suggested that in the future, schools should be providing handouts in Spanish or workshops for parents on how to use digital academic resources, but all participants stated that they did not receive any handouts, descriptions, or guidance by the school district on how they should be using the Chromebook with their children, the purpose of the applications, and the learning component associated with each application.

Language of Exclusion: Traduciendo Las Experiencias De[25] Spanish Speaking Mothers

The pláticas revealed that language was a significant form of systemic barrier confronted by the participants throughout distance learning. All participants identified Spanish as their primary language and the primary language spoken at home, with a few stating that they understood english and could speak it "a little bit" but did not consider themselves english speakers or proficient. With the exception of Marisol's family, the remainder of the participant's children's schools were in english only, meaning that all academic instructions were taught in english, and all learning materials were accessible in english. It is important to identify that all

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[25] Translation: Translating the Experiences Of

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participants cited language as a challenge when attempting to assist their children, even within

the dual language school, since not all school assignments were available in Spanish due to the

90-10 model (Spanish instruction decreases, as the english instruction increases). While most

participants received school updates and flyers in english and Spanish, assignments and

homework instructions (i.e., math steps and reading comprehension) were only accessible in

english. This created difficulties for the participants as they were limited in their ability to

support and guide their children.

The mothers in the study described feeling limited by the exclusion of the Spanish

language in academic spaces. The mothers were vocal in stating that they would be more

effective if they received homework instructions in Spanish; this way, they could better guide

their children, even if the assignments would need to be completed in english. The mothers and

their children felt overwhelmed by the amount of schoolwork that needed to be completed, with

little language support; this is captured through Monica's pláticas:

> Si la tarea estuviera en español, eso ayudaria mucho. Uno puede ayudar un poco más. Pero no es igual en inglés. Mandan la tarea en ingles, de matematicas y lectura, y mi hija lloraba por que no entendia….no soy buena para el ingles pero lo leer mos, lo leer mos. Y despues pienso, preguntale a tu hermanas, pero esta ocupada. A tu papá, pero el tampoco sabe. Entonces me meto en el Google para traducer y completer la tarea.

> *If the homework were in Spanish, that would help a lot. Parents would be able to help a bit more. But it is not the same as it is in English. They send the homework in english only, math and literature, and my daughter would cry because she didn't understand. I am not good at english, but we would read, and we would read. Then I would think, let's ask your sister, but she is busy. Let's ask your dad, but he also doesn't understand. So, then I would get on Google and translate, and that's how we completed the homework.*

Monica described an incident that occurred when she was attempting to help her daughter

complete her language arts assignments, which centered on reading comprehension and

reflective questions. Monica empathized with her youngest daughter, Estela. Monica did what

was within her reach to assist her daughter to the best of her abilities; for Monica, this meant

entering the internet via her phone and using Google translate, so she would be able to understand what she was reading alongside Estela to help her answer the reading comprehension questions. Unfortunately, days like these were not isolated events and were not unique to Monica and her daughter, as the participants shared their struggles confronting the limitations perpetuated by academic language exclusion.

These challenges were confronted by participants and their children across the K-12 pipeline, as captured by Araceli's pláticas, whose daughter was in high school at the time of the study:

> Me sentí frustrada porque no pude ayudar, no entendí. Cuando no entiendia, les dije que les manden un mensaje a sus maestras. Yo les decía que decir y ellos lo escribieron. Su papá trató de ayudar con las matemáticas pero las enseñan de otra manera, aquí en los Estados Unidos, y mi hija se confundía. Fue muy difícil.
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> *I felt frustrated because I couldn't help; I didn't understand. When I didn't understand, I would encourage them to email their teachers. I would tell them what to say, and they would type it. Their dad tried to help with math, but they teach it differently here in the United States, and my daughter would get confused. It was difficult.*

With limited support, Araceli and her husband attempted to assist their middle school-age and high school-age children with their homework. This resulted in multiple obstacles, even in a topic that is often referenced as being a "universal subject," like math, due to school requirements around teaching specific subjects. Despite these challenges, Araceli was intentional in cultivating a space where her children could advocate for themselves and speak up when they needed help. She would often encourage her children to reach out to their teacher for support, and when her children resisted, she would guide them in how to word the email while they translated and typed it in english. Participants described having to sit down with their children and explain to them that, at times, they would not be able to assist with their schooling due to language barriers and knowledge on the subject. During these instances, children had to explain

the homework assignment to their parents or relied on older siblings or relatives to explain the content. As a result, participants endured the continuation of being pushed out of their children's academic learning and were positioned as helpers through the limited roles and restricted contributions to their children's formal learning—failing to position immigrant parents as producers and holders of valid knowledge.

Luz was one of a couple of parents who identified key figures within the school system that provided support and guidance. Most parents relied on their children to communicate directly with their teachers either via Zoom or email, while parents with children in elementary communicated with teachers via ClassDojo, which required them to translate their questions and submit them via the phone app. The data revealed that language was a factor that hindered communication between the participants and teachers. Luz described having an effective form of communication with her child's teacher, who was bilingual; she states:

> Por eso pude comunicarme con ella, porque ella hablaba en español y no era lo mismo con los demás maestros, había que traducir todo, por esa parte me sentí cómoda con ella porque pude expresarme en mi lengua y los demás maestros no.

> *That is how I was able to communicate with her because she spoke Spanish, and that wasn't the same with the rest of the teachers. Everything needed to be translated. That (language) is part of the reason I felt comfortable with her because I was able to express myself in my language, and with the rest of the teachers, no.*

As previously stated, Nueva Vista School District is in a historically Latinx immigrant community; most students come from primarily Spanish-speaking homes; while language exclusion is not new to the school district, the impact was more visible due to the merge of the home and school, in a way that has not been previously seen. Participants were vocal about needing schools to be more intentional in serving the needs of the student population and local communities, as expressed by Delia, the mother of Mike (fourth grade) and Emmanuel (fifth grade):

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Yo entiendo que la mayoría de maestras no hablan español, pero si la maestra sabe que los padres no mas hablan espanol y no hablan en engles, que se comunica con el principal. El director es Latino, y habla español. Que trabajen juntos. Que le díga, me gustaría que se comunique con estos padres que solo hablan español. Yo noto que muchos padres no hablan inglés. Necesitamos mejor comunicación.

I understand that the majority of the teachers don't speak english. But if the teacher knows that most parents only speak Spanish and they don't speak english, they need to reach out to the principal. He is Latino and speaks Spanish. They need to work together. They need to communicate; I would like for you to reach out to these parents who only speak Spanish. The majority of parents don't speak english. We need better communication.

During the pláticas, Delia was thinking about possible solutions and was wondering how no initiatives had previously been done to meet the needs of the student body. She felt as though having a principal that is Latinx would position him in a place where he would be more understanding of the needs of the parents. For the participants, this was not a new challenge but an evolution of an established barrier.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to gain insight into the ways in which Mexican immigrant mothers experienced and navigated the first wave of distance learning during the initial outbreak of COVID-19. Key findings revealed that the experiences of the participants consisted of taking on the primary role of the caretaker, the responsibility for providing essential goods and resources for their family, caring the burden of the emotional labor of maintaining the home, and all while being expected to take on the role of the teacher while simultaneously being systemically pushed out of their children's educational trajectory. The participants' experiences are tied to their gendered identity of having to take on the expectation of caring for their family and children within the home and in relation to institutions. These two key entities overlapped during the pandemic in relation to distance learning. This role came with various systemic challenges due to

how Mexican immigrant women's intersectional identities have been forced into a state of subordination in the context of the United States.

For the participants in this study, the barriers they experienced throughout the pandemic and distance learning were explicitly impacted by their gender, immigration status, socioeconomic status, and the racialization of the Latinx population. A key finding revealed that the participants and their families were further pushed towards a state of financial vulnerability throughout the first wave of the pandemic, with no government financial support due to regulations around immigration status. The participants intentionally relied on local resources to offset their families' basic needs (i.e., food distribution). This context is important as it provides insight into the backdrop of the resources available to the family and the home, which was one aspect of the participants' experiences. As it relates to distance learning, the home became the primary infrastructure for the education system, highlighting the resources available to students, which are essential aspects of their academic development.

In relation to distance learning, the mothers were confronted by various systemic barriers that limited their ability to fully engage and support their children throughout their learning during the first wave of distance learning. For the participants, distance learning consisted of attempting to facilitate their children's learning in the form of communicating with their children's teachers, assisting with their homework, navigating technology, and re-teaching lessons. These tasks were challenging for participants due to being primarily Spanish speakers and having limited experience with technology. The participants were expected to take on a role of a (má)estra[26], a term coined in this study that refers to Latina immigrant mothers that took on

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[26] The brackets around the word *má*, which is a short form of mamá in Spanish, meaning mom, are intended to emphasize the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as they attempt to mother and raise their children in the U.S. that recognize their cultural knowledge, ways of knowing, and rearing practices that have historically been ostracized in the U.S. (Valdés, 1996; Velez; 2008).The word *maestra*, means teacher in Spanish, and (Má)estra, is

the role of a primary caretaker and teacher during distance learning. The term is intended to demonstrate the combination of two significant roles in their children's academic trajectory. The term (má)estra, is intended to acknowledge the combination of both roles, a mother and a teacher, and recognize the structural barriers that make it difficult to fully merge the home and school due to school practices which have led to the exclusion of Latinx immigrant parents, families, and communities (Durand, 2011; Fuentes, 2013)

The findings in this study align with previous research that has been conducted on the experiences of Latinx families and distance learning throughout the pandemic, which reveals the multiple ways that Latinx immigrant families were confronted with limited resources and support that highlights the continuation of exclusionary practices that impact low-income families of color (Chandra et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2020; Horowitz & Igielnik, 2020; LaFave, 2020; Latino Decisions, 2020b; Park et al., 2021; PIQE, 2020; Vargas et al., 2020). This study contributes to this growing literature by attempting to bring forth insight into multiple forces that were shaping the home and which the mothers navigated throughout the pandemic. The purpose is to highlight the various systemic and institutional challenges that the participants navigated at the same time. This study recognizes that distance learning did not happen in isolation, and there were other factors occurring in the home that potentially further impacted students' ability to immerse in school at this time. In this study, the attempt is to position Mexican immigrant mothers as an important entity to consider; one reason is due to the responsibility placed on women to be the primary responded to systems of oppression.

It is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, this study sought to understand the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers throughout the first wave of the

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intended to recognize the barriers that the participants endure, but it also acknowledges the various ways in which the participants' demonstrated determination to support and find solutions and resources for their children.

pandemic and distance learning. Still, there was an overrepresentation of Mexican immigrant mothers. This study did not seek to reproduce exclusionary research practices, which have resulted in limiting the voices of Latina immigrants from diverse nationalities within scholarly research. The over-representation of Mexican women in this study reflects the population demographic of the city of Nueva Vista. Researchers need to be intentional about relying on purposeful sampling that specifically identifies desired nationalities when recruiting Latinx populations for empirical studies. Secondly, the data obtained through this study is reflective of a particular period of the pandemic and distance learning. Participants reflected on the months of March through June 2020, which was a snapshot of what was occurring in a limited time and does not represent the participants' overall experience throughout the full pandemic and distance learning. To strengthen these findings, it would have been beneficial to conduct a follow-up study throughout the 2020-2021 school year, which would have brought forth a deeper understanding of possible changes or shifts in resources available to participants or institutional response by the Nueva Vista School District.

This study shed light on the continuation of exclusionary practices that limited the resources available for Mexican immigrant mothers to provide and manage their homes, forcing the mothers to pivot in response to the issues they confronted throughout the pandemic and distance learning. It is recognized that these issues are not new or exclusive to the pandemic but a manifestation of prior established policies and practices. These findings set the stage for future work that investigates the long-term impact on the stability of the family, the home, and the student's education, post-distance learning. This study is also a call for educational leaders to consider the role and responsibility of schools in supporting parents in gaining the knowledge

and skills to support their children via digital technology and the need to incorporate multilingual

learning tools in an attempt further to immerse the home and school culture and practices.

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Chapter 3, in full, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. Ruby Osoria was the primary investigator and the sole author of this paper.

CHAPTER 4: REFLEJANDO SOBRE LAS NOTAS[27]: THE CONTOURS OF A

CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISTA MIXED METHODS STUDY THROUGH THE

EMPLOYMENT OF EGO-ENTRENOS

Abstract

This article discusses the (co-construction of) ego-entrenos methodology alongside Latina immigrant mothers for the purpose of educational research centering on the role of social networks and notions of capital (i.e., social and cultural). Ego-entrenos advances a critical race feminista mixed methods approach that braids together testimonios (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), pláticas (Fierros &Delgado Bernal, 2016), and ego-net (Lin, 2002; Mamas et al., 2019). Informed by Latina/o critical race theory, Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth, this article discusses the six contours that guide ego-entrenos methodology alongside Spanish speaking, Latina immigrant mothers: (1) Familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla[28]. This article seeks to highlight the importance of creating research methods that are rooted in addressing social justice topics that are accessible to Latinx immigrant communities, and that seek to give autonomy and power to the participants.

Keywords: Chicana feminist epistemology, education, Latina immigrant, mixed methods studies, social network

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[27] Reflecting on the research notes.
[28] Translation: 1) Familiarity and accessibility, 2) trust, 3) exposure, 4) tongue/language, 5) new knowledge, and 6) nepantla.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the emergence and employment of ego-entrenos methods as an empirical research tool to address education research questions that seek to understand the role of social networks and cultural and social capital among Spanish speaking Latina immigrant mothers and Latinx immigrant communities. This paper will discuss how ego-entrenos emerged out of a Chicana/Latina feminista mixed methods study through the braiding of testimonios (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), pláticas (Fierros &Delgado Bernal, 2016), and ego-net (Lin, 2002; Mamas et al., 2019) and provide six contours to consider when employing an ego-entrenos research approach. Rooted in Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology, testimonios, as a qualitative methodological tool in the field of education, allows for the participants to engage in critical reflection of their personal experiences within sociopolitical realities and speak to the ways in which race and racial formation occurs in the everyday lived experience (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Reyes et al., 2012). Pláticas, are conversations that take place in one-on-one or group spaces, which is a way to "gather family and cultural knowledge through the communication of thoughts, memories, ambiguities, and new interpretations" (González et al., 1998, p. 647). Pláticas recognizes both participants' and researchers' knowledge and validates their personal experiences (Zanoni 2008; Guajardo et al. 2014). Ego-net is a quantitative methodological approach associated with social network analysis, providing the research tools necessary to identify possible connections between individuals and assisting in recognizing resources between the "ego," the participant, and "alters," individuals that make up a social network (Lin, 2002; Mamas et al., 2019).

Ego-entrenos is positioned as part of the emerging methods within Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology and methodologies. In ego-entrenos, pronounced in Spanish, "el ego" (the

ego) is a reference to the self, and methodologically it encourages the creation of *sitos* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2019), which refers to the literal and metaphorical spaces co-created by the researcher and the participants. Allowing Latina immigrant women to center their lived realities and experiences with full autonomy and recognition of their intersectional identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration, etc.) within the sociohistorical and sociopolitical context of the United States (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Ruiz, 2008). "Entrenos" is a play on word from the Spanish term, "entre nosotres/nosotras/nosotros," referring to the notion of "between us" and "in relation to." For methodological purposes, "entrenos" acknowledges that social networks and capital is developed between the participants and their social networks within the context of hegemony that favors and upholds western ideologies, cultures, and ways of knowing, further recognizing that value is placed on people based on notions of white supremacy, capitalism, and other "isms" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Yosso, 2005). To that extent, within notions of "entrenos," there is a recognition of the important value of connectedness, relationships, and community-based knowledge developed from the "ground up" and the honoring of expertise derived from lived experiences (Garcia & Delgado Bernal; 2021; Moll et al., 1992; Yosso, 2005).

Ego-entrenos, should not be interpreted as a Spanish translated version of ego-net methods, nor should it be limited as a culturally responsive research approach, but recognized as a valuable research tool grounded in addressing social justice topics in relation to social networks and capital that are accessible to Spanish-speaking Latinx immigrant communities, and that seek to give autonomy and power to the participants. The goal of this paper is to provide readers with insight into the six contours that guide the implementation of ego-entrenos with Latina immigrant mothers. These six contours emerged out of a mixed-methods empirical study I

conducted throughout 2022-2023 alongside ten Latina immigrant mothers. Informed by Latina/o critical race theory, Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth, the six contours centered in this article consist of (1) familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla. The role of these contours is to create a pathway of consideration for researchers to implement ego-entrenos as a valid research tool that can be grounded and informed by critical race feminista praxis.

In the first section of this article, I provide an overview of the guiding frameworks, Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). I continue with my research positionality statement to situate further and ground the role of the researcher and participants within the context of Latinx immigrant communities. I will then provide an overview and insight into the mix-methods study that led to the development of ego-entrenos and insight into mixed-methods studies, Chicana/Latina feminist methodologies, and ego-net. Prior to the discussion and conclusion, this article outlines an overview of the six contours of ego-entrenos.

Framework Overview

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks informing the six contours of ego-entrenos, (1) familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla, are Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit), Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth. The weaving of the three frameworks provided the epistemological understanding to theorize and employ an ego-entrenos methodology rooted in social justice that seeks to challenge harmful and exploitative research practices and, in turn, return power back to immigrant communities and communities of color (Decuir-Gunby et al.,

2018; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal et al., 2019; Garcia et al., 2022). Further, it allowed

for the reimagining and expanding research approaches that can assist in understanding research

topics that recognize the role of racism and other systems of oppression in shaping the lived

experiences of immigrant communities and communities of color (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002),

disentangling questions surrounding legitimate truths (Delgado Bernal, 1998), and challenging

the traditional interpretations of social networks and capital (Yosso, 2005). Collectively, these

conceptual frameworks provide the methodological tools to go beyond surface findings and

critically analyze the participants' lived experiences. Figure 2.1: illustrates a visual of the
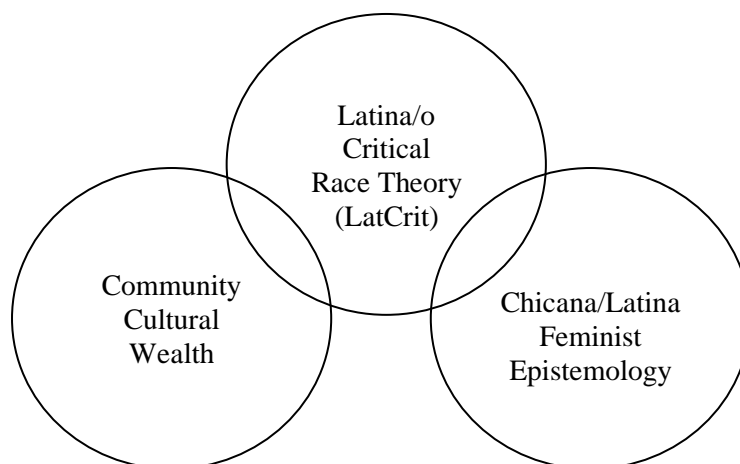
framework.

FIGURE 2.1: Visual representation of theoretical and analytical frameworks.

Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

LatCrit is an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT), established by legal scholar

Derrick Bell (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). CRT has been used in a broad number of

fields, such as law, sociology, history, and education (Solórzano, 1997). CRT provides

researchers with the tools to analyze the role of race, racism, and socioeconomic status and how

these factors intersect. CRT in educational research, the analysis needs to contain the following

five elements: (a) race and racism need to be central to the study and allow for intersectionality,

(b) the dominant Eurocentric ideology needs to be challenged, (c) a commitment to social justice, (d) an emphasis on experiential knowledge, and (e) provide an interdisciplinary perspective (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The five tenets that guide CRT also guide LatCrit, with each tenet focusing on the issues that affect Latinx communities (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), such as notions of racist nativism, racialization, ethnicity, culture, language, immigration status, and phenotype (Pérez Huber, 2011). This allows researchers to shed light on more complex layers of analysis on the impact of white supremacy beyond a binary perspective (Iglesias, 1997). Davila & de Bradley (2010) state that LatCrit repositions the Latinx population as the central component that brings forth an appropriate cultural and historical context to the experiences of the Latinx population. In relation to Latina immigrant mothers in the education system, a LatCrit framework assists in (a) understanding discrimination based on cultural capital, (b) reveals racist practices that are seen as "neutral" and "color-blind," (c) helps understand the perpetual stereotype of Latinx immigrant parents, (d), and it challenges the construction of parent involvement all together by revealing other forms of unrecognized parental involvement (Velez, 2008).

Chicana/Latina Feminist Epistemology

The central premise of Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology is to focus on the voices and bring forth the experiences of Chicanas and Latinas while shifting the discourse away from patriarchal and liberal feminist theory (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Relying on Chicana/Latina methodologies (i.e., pláticas and tesimonios), a Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology aims to challenge and disrupt the dominant form of knowledge and lived experiences accepted in western society by positioning Chicanas and Latinas as experts of their own lives and recognizing them as producers and holders of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Research topics explored through a Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology consist of race, ethnicity,

socioeconomic status, immigration, migration, generational status, bilingualism, and sexuality by shedding light on the participants' experiences in navigating systems of oppression (Calderón et al., 2012). Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology incorporates understandings of ones lived experiences, collective experience from a particular community, and research, all aiming to work toward social justice.

As it relates to the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology provides the analytical and methodological tool to expand and reimagine how research is conducted alongside Latina immigrant women in the U.S. It further extends the analytical approach to the category that can often be ignored or overlooked in education research, such as an intersectional perspective of motherhood, immigration, and cultural capital reproduction. Further, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology allows for the opportunity of collaborative research that positions the participants as an integral part of the research process and co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants.

Community Cultural Wealth

Community cultural wealth is informed by CRT and LatCrit, Yosso (2005) defines community cultural wealth as "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (p. 154). Yosso identifies six forms of cultural wealth that arise from the Latinx immigrant community, which consist of (p. 77-81):

1. Aspirational capital: Ability to maintain hope even when experiencing real and perceived barriers.

2. Linguistic capital: Ability to communicate in more than one language due to knowledge gained through communication experience.

3. Familial capital: Cultural knowledge gained by kin, in the form of community

history, memory, and cultural intuition.

4.   Social capital: Network of people and community resources.

5.   Navigational capital: Skills of maneuvering through social institutions.

6.   Resistance capital: Knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior
that challenges inequality.

Conceptually, community cultural wealth challenges traditional understandings of cultural capital and identifies notions of capital already embedded in the Latinx community. As a methodological tool, community cultural wealth assists in framing and focusing research questions that aim to understand the forms of capital gain within the formation of social networks among Latina immigrant mothers and analyze forms of capital. It offers an asset-based approach that reframes communities of color as valuable and recognizes culturally specific forms of knowledge and experiences that help historically oppressed communities to survive and thrive. Community cultural wealth can highlight how social networks are a tool to navigate social institutions, such as the education system, and expand the literature on notions of capital in education studies beyond the experiences of Latinx students by centering Latinx households and communities.
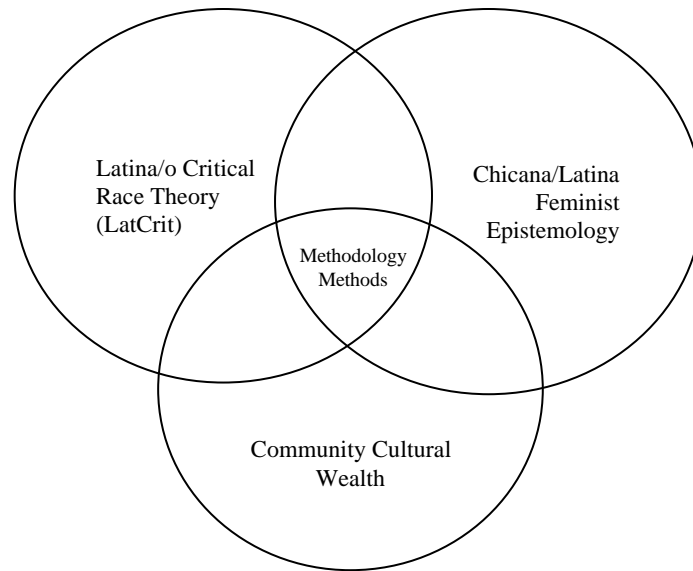
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

Chicana/Latina Feminist Epistemology

Methodology Methods

Community Cultural Wealth

FIGURE 2.2: Visual representation of the methodological employment of the theoretical and analytical frameworks.

Research Positionality

Traditional epistemological views of the research process uphold the notion that

"rigorous" research needs to be impartial. Historically Black, Indigenous, and people of color

(BIPOC) have been misrepresented, silenced, and exploited as participants in educational

research (Milner, 2007). It further perpetuates research analysis rooted in racist nativism and

deficit perspectives that continue to *other* BIPOC, women of color, and immigrant communities

(Hayes et al., 2013; Menchaca, 2000; Pérez Huber, 2010; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997).

Recognizing this history is a conscious decision to be critical regarding my positionality as a

daughter of Mexican immigrants, as a first-generation Chicana/Latina college student, and

mother-scholar. I recognize my identity and role as an insider and outsider within Latinx

immigrant communities.

I have directly experienced how my parents, extended family, and people in my

communities, have navigated, organized, advocated, lived, and struggled as immigrants in the

U.S. My identities and lived experiences have helped shape and construct my understanding of

the world, in and outside of the academy. This is further informed by my cultural intuition, which aligns with my epistemological perspective, theoretical framework, and methodological employment (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2016). Cultural intuition is achieved and can be nurtured through Chicanas/Latina's personal experiences, which are influenced by ancestral wisdom, community memory, and intuition. The literature on and about Chicanas/Latinas illustrates the professional experiences and the analytical process when they are in a central position in the research and research analysis. Thus, cultural intuition is a complex experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective, and dynamic (Delgado Bernal, 1998). My positionality served to better connect with the participants in the study. Further, informing my decision to rely on and theorize on research practices that recognize and honor the humanity of Latina immigrant women. As a mother myself, I feel a sense of solidarity in the experiences of navigating systems of oppression and hegemonic practices that hinder mothers of color; despite this, making the decision to actively participate in the pursuit of a better future and advocate for social change for our children and historically marginalized people.

It is also essential for me to recognize my privileges and position as an outsider to a population I consider an extension of myself. Born in the U.S., I have the privilege of having citizenship and not enduring the same journey and struggles as many immigrants without the government documentation accepted in the U.S. due to the construct of immigration. Through my experience in the K-12 education system, I have allocated knowledge of dominant cultural norms, which have allowed me to navigate through mainstream U.S. society. As a college-educated woman, I may be perceived as an outsider, or my research might be perceived as not addressing more urgent community needs. These realities intersect with one another and inform my position as a researcher. My goal as a researcher is to be guided by my cultural intuition and

conduct research that aligns with a social justice orientation to honor the women who participated in the study, who co-constructed ego-entrenos, as just one form of redirecting power back to the community.

Ego-entrenos: A Chicana/Latina Feminista Mixed Methods Approach

Between 2022 – 2023, I set out to conduct a Chicana/Latina feminista mixed methods approach through the employment of testimonios, pláticas and ego-net, resulting in the emergence of ego-entrenos methodology. The study explored the formation of social networks among ten working-class Latina immigrant mothers and the role of these social networks in providing support, resources, and knowledge about the K-12 education system. The two primary research questions stated:

1. How do Latina immigrant mothers utilize their social networks to gain resources and knowledge about the education system?

2. How are social networks among Latina immigrant mothers developed?

This study braided three theoretical frameworks, including Latina/o Critical Race Theory, Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth, to provide an analytical insight that accounted for the racialization and gendering of Latina immigrant mothers, systemic barriers, cultural/social capital, and social networks.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods can be best defined as combining and incorporating qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell & Clark, 2018). While mixed methods include both research approaches, it stands alone as a third research practice. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) describe mixed methods as having its own vocabulary, techniques, and epistemology, which the researchers and research questions inform. A mixed methods study needs to be well planned out

and ensure that the research questions lend themselves to a mixed methods study, requiring rigor from the researchers in developing a well-thought-out research plan. As a result, mixed methods research will differ depending on research questions, research tools, practices, theories, and epistemology (Creswell & Clark, 2018). A mixed methods approach aims to provide breadth and depth when researching an area of interest (Johnson et al., 2007). A significant advantage of a mixed-methods study is its ability to gain a more holistic or broader understanding of a phenomenon. Eckert (2003) states that the data obtained through a mixed methods approach can inform and support one another. It allows researchers to benefit from qualitative and quantitative research practices, providing researchers with the tools to develop their research methods to best fit their research questions.

A mixed methods approach allowed for a holistic insight into the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers. The study's goal was to understand further the role of social networks as a source of capital, the formation and sharing of knowledge, and the sharing of resources for participants navigating the K-12 education system in the U.S. This empirical research brought forth the voices of Latina immigrant mothers by expanding the literature in the field of education through the guidance of, LatCrit, Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth. A central component of all three frameworks is linking lived experiences, research, community, and the goal to move toward social change and achieve social justice. In alignment with this study's purpose, this empirical research employed a critical race feminista praxis and critical race feminista quantitative praxis (CRF quant praxis) mixed methods design with an embedded exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Garcia et al., 2022).

Critical Race Feminista (Quantitative) Praxis

Critical race feminista praxis is rooted in anti-colonial praxis that emphasizes the in-between and contradiction in the Chicanx/Latinx experiences. Critical race feminista praxis consists of the braiding of theory, qualitative research strategies, and critical consciousness (Delgado Bernal et al., 2019). Critical race feminista praxis shapes the knowledge production of Chicana/Latina feminist scholars that challenges hegemonic understandings of societal structures and provides a critical analysis of society (Delgado Bernal et al., 2019, p. 113). This praxis is rooted in challenging the colonial legacy of research by bringing forth methodological approaches that encourage collaboration between researchers and participants. A central aspect is a reliance on reflexivity throughout the research process. In this study, critical race feminista methodology was employed using testimonios and pláticas (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal et al., 2019; Guajardo et al. 2014; Pérez Huber, 2009; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012; Zanoni 2008).

Garcia et al. (2022) proposed a critical race feminista quantitative praxis (CRF quant praxis), which builds on the theoretical tools from Chicana feminist epistemology, QuantCrit, critical race feminista praxis, and critical race feminista methodologies to allow for women-centered understandings of quantitative methodological possibilities and analysis (Garcia et al., 2022, p. 5). There must be a clear understanding and recognition of the colonial practices embedded in the research approach through quantitative research methods and analysis that have resulted in reproducing and upholding ideologies of white supremacy, racial realism, and patriarchy. The purpose of CRF quant praxis is to (1) bring epistemological wholeness to quantitative analysis, (2) collaboration (i.e., shared vulnerability and human connectedness), and (3) provide opportunities for healing.

A Chicana race feminista praxis and Chicana race feminista quantitative praxis provide the avenue and the justification for the emergence of a Chicana/Latina feminista mixed methods,

which can be situated in the central tenets of Chicana feminist methodologies. This study is situated in the use of research practices as serving a tool beyond just obtaining data, but as a an "extensions of ways of knowing and being, that are essential to the way (in which Chicanas/Latinas) embody and perform research" (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 101). Calling to pay special attention to the engagement of both qualitative and quantitative approaches through the engagement of epistemological understandings and research practices.

Participants

Participants were recruited from three urban cities located in southern California. The participant requirements included: (a) identify as Latinx/a/o, (b) must be an immigrant to the United States, (c) participants must be 18 years or older, and (d) the participant's child/children should be enrolled in a K-12 school during the time of the study. A total of ten self-identified females, nine immigrants from Mexico and one from Venezuela, participated in the study. During the duration of the study, the participants' children were enrolled in the K-12 public school system.

TABLE 3.1: Participant demographics.

Participant (Pseudonym)	Country of Birth	Children (Pseudonym)	Children Education Level
Alma	Mexico	Gretel Miriam	8th grade 9th Grade
Berenice	Mexico	Mario	2nd grade
Carlota	Mexico	Antonio Isabela	1st grade 5th grade
Dora	Mexico	Benito Becky	Kindergarten 4th grade
Emilia	Mexico	Ricky Magda Alex	3rd grade 10th grade 11th grade
Florinda	Mexico	Tonia	Kindergarten

TABLE 3.1: Participant demographics.

Gema	Mexico	Marina Sofi	3rd grade 8th grade
Judith	Mexico	Emanuel	9th grade
Selena	Mexico	Christina Alberto	3rd grade 4th grade
Vero	Venezuela	Andrea	5th grade

Recruitment and Sampling

Once this study was approved by IRB, I began recruiting participants by sharing the recruitment flyer with my contacts via email. I asked my networks to share the recruitment flyer with individuals that they believed met the participation requirements. I was given the opportunity to present my recruitment flyer at a parent meeting in a non-profit that serves Latinx families. Soon after receiving the flyers, individuals interested contacted me via email and via phone. At this point, I explained the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, length of commitment, and participants' rights. Participants received a nominal gift after completing their participation in the study in the form of $25.00 in cash.

Data Collection

This study employed an embedded exploratory sequential design, which consisted of three distinct phases. The first phase consisted of a demographic survey, which was used to gain insight into the participant's background. For example, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, family (i.e., children's demographic background), occupation, year of immigration, and years residing in the current region. This demographic survey helped gather data that assisted in situating and providing background context on the participants. Further, the survey helped manage the

demographic background of the participant's children and family (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, age, grade, and schooling).

Qualitative Approach

The second phase of data collection consisted of a qualitative approach, which employed structured interviews in the form of testimonios. Testimonios is a "verbal journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racial, class, gender, and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more human present and future" (Pérez Huber, 2009). Testimonios differs from an in-depth qualitative interview as they go beyond simply capturing the narrative and instead serve as a tool that challenges oppressive entities and provides a voice to the marginalized (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012). Testimonios was a crucial methodological approach as it assisted in cultivating an environment for the participants to speak on their personal experiences within the K-12 education system and a place to begin processing notions of social networks and forms of capital. Testimonios lend itself to situating and centering "el ego" (the self) while also recognizing the linkage between "el ego" and "entrenos." The data obtained through the testimonios was crucial in identifying significant individuals within the context of social networks among Latina immigrant mothers. The participants spoke openly about their experiences in attempting to navigate the education system; within those narratives, key figures emerged. These individuals were identified and referred back to when conducting the third phase of the study, ego-net.

Quantitative Approach

The third phase of the study consisted of collecting and analyzing quantitative data through the implementation of ego-net. Ego-net is a methodological approach associated with social network analysis (Mamas et al., 2019). An ego-net consists of the individuals who make up the

social network of one participant. With the guidance of testimonios, ego-net provided the research

tools to identify possible connections between individuals and can assist in recognizing resources

between the "ego," the participant, and "alters," individuals that make up a social network (Lin,

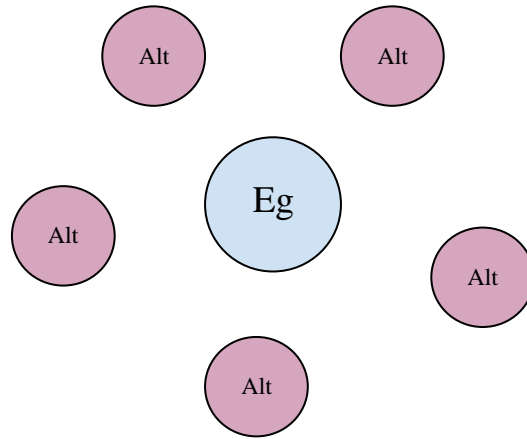2002; Mamas et al., 2019). FIGURE 3.1: Visual representation of the "ego" and "alters."

FIGURE 2.3: Visual representation of the "ego" and "alters."

In this study, the "ego" consisted of participating Latina immigrant mothers, and the "alter"

consisted of individuals they identify as part of their social networks. The strength of relying on

ego-net analysis is the ability to document "alters" inside and outside the school setting. There are

no restrictions or boundaries, which was significant when accounting for the possible physical

limits resulting from the impact of COVID-19 and challenging restraints of physical space imposed

by the educational understanding of parent engagement or involvement. Further, recognizing the

impact of extended family, chosen family, and notions of community at a local, national, and

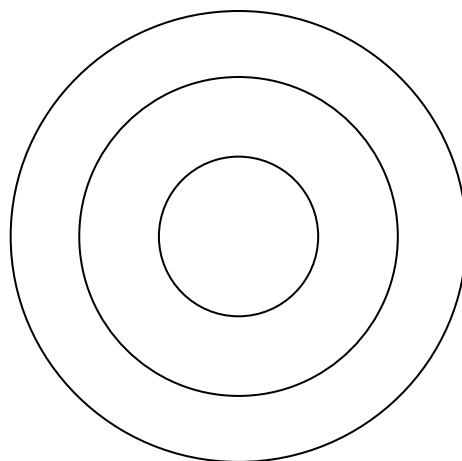international level on Latina immigrant mothers.

FIGURE 2.4: Example of visual mapping.

Once the testimonios were conducted, I engaged in individual pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) with each participant to fill out and complete the ego data matrix and visual mapping. The first portion of ego-net data collection consisted of filling out the ego data matrix. There were three ego data matrices; each asked one of the following questions: (1) Who do you talk to about your children's education? (2) Who do you reach out to gain insight into the education system (3) Who do you talk to gain educational and academic resources for your children? The ego data matrix asked for basic demographic information about their social networks (i.e., occupation, race, ethnicity, gender, years of association, location of interaction, and forms of support). I assisted the participants in completing the ego data matrix form by filling out the document while they provided the details of the individuals in their social networks. After completing this portion, participants engaged in the participatory visual mapping. Through pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Flores & Morales, 2021), participants were able to identify the closeness of the relationship between themselves and their social networks or "the alters." Traditionally, visual mapping is designed to have "the ego" at the center and multiple rings around the center. The closer "the alter" is placed towards "the ego," the more significant the interaction between "the

ego" and "the alter." A system of color-coding was used to identify the categories that "the alter"

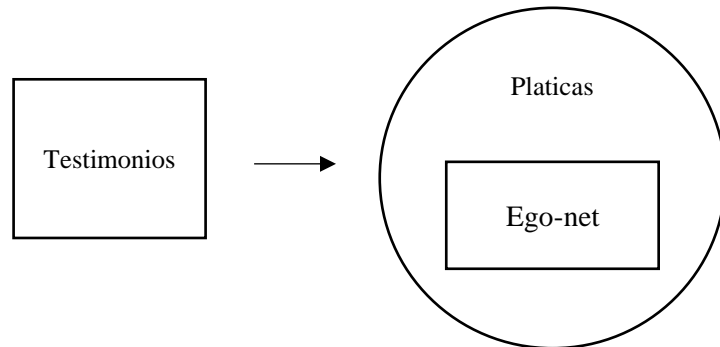fell into (i.e., family, community member, etc.)

FIGURE 2.5: Visual of ego-entrenos methodologies.

Analysis

Phase 1: Qualitative Data Analysis

Once conducted, all interviews from the testimonios were transcribed and analyzed.

Before coding transcriptions, were read to purposely identify connections and themes (DeWalt &

DeWalt, 2002; Saldaña, 2013). Coding occurred in two cycles. The first coding cycle identified

words and phrases that continue to appear throughout each transcription. The second coding

cycle narrowed the data specified during the first coding cycle and reorganize it into categories

and themes (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding was employed to preserve participants' meaning

within the transcriptions (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2013).

Phase 2: Quantitative Data Analysis

The ego-net analysis consisted of reviewing participants' responses and quantifying

responses. Data obtained through the ego-net was inputted into a Microsoft Excel Sheet, which

assisted in managing the data. I calculated three measures, which consist of, tie central tendency,

tie dispersion, and alter central tendency (Crossley et al., 2022; Mamas et al., 2019). To measure

the tie central tendency (degree or the number of alters in the network), I summed up all "the

alters," identified per participant. The significance of the network size provided insight into the social capital that Latina immigrant mothers possessed through their networks (Mamas et al., 2019). The "tie dispersion" measured the spread of ties in the network; this is relevant to this study. It provided insight into social network dispersion and the locations of the social networks (i.e., school setting, non-profit, and community). The last measurement was the "the alter" central tendency, which measured "the alter" attributes, such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and immigration. To calculate the alter central tendency, I counted the number of each alter in each of the categories (Mamas et al., 2019). This provided insight into the composition of the alter, which is significant in identifying who makes up "the ego's" social network based on shared identities.

In this study, testimonios, pláticas, and ego-net, were braided to conduct a Chicana/Latina feminista mixed methods approach with the goal of providing an analytical insight that accounted for the racialization and gendering of Latina immigrant mothers, systemic barriers, cultural/social capital, and social networks in relation to navigating the education system. What emerged was the theorization of ego-entrenos methodology rooted and informed by Chicana feminist epistemology. What follows are the six contours that guided ego-entrenos methodology alongside Spanish speaking, Latina immigrant mothers: (1) Familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla.
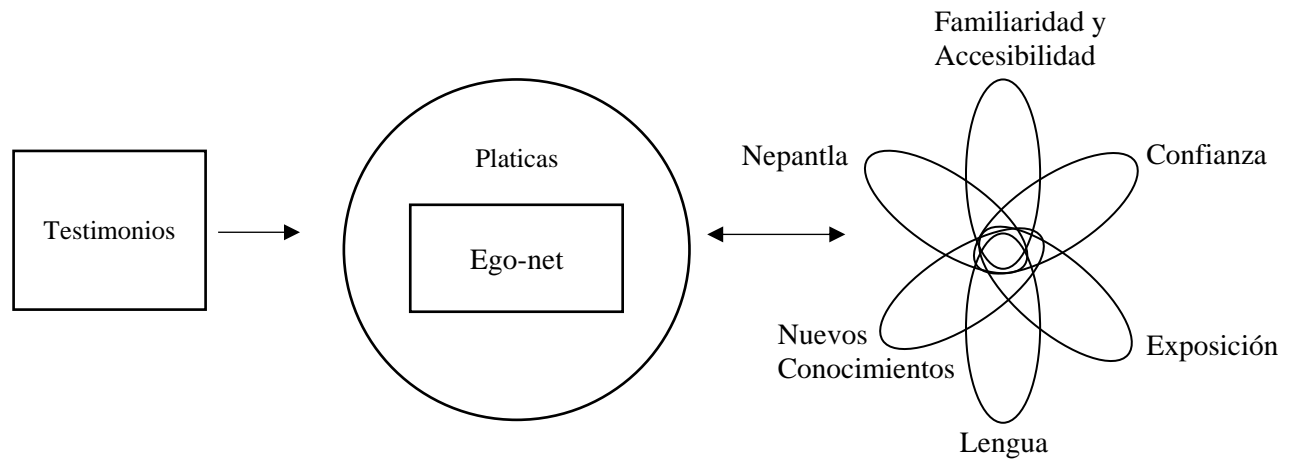
FIGURE 2.6: Visual of the contours of ego-entrenos.

Contours of Ego-entrenos

In this section, I define the six contours of ego-entrenos and provide insight into how these contours are managed and implemented throughout the research process. Ego-entrenos contours are research tools for those interested in conducting research alongside Spanish speaking, Latina immigrant women and immigrant communities. While each contour is presented in list form, it is necessary to recognize that the contours are not intended to be implemented in "isolation," nor should be interpreted as "stand-alone" or rigid. These contours are dynamic, informing one another, intersecting, and overlapping at times. These contours should not be interpreted as a "how to conduct research" nor "how to maximize research participation" but research practices that should be considered, reflected upon, and modify to best fit the needs of the participants, with the primary goal of giving the research participant as much autonomy as possible. These contours challenge the linear perception of research in practice and recognize and honor a state of nepantla (Acevedo-Gil, 2019). Drawing from LatCrit (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998), and

community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), below is a list that delineates the contours of ego-entrenos:

1. Familiaridad y accesibilidad: Refers to the researcher's presence and engagement as part of the organic existence of a physical location (i.e., institutions, neighborhoods, etc.) and metaphorical location (i.e., epistemological understandings), that demonstrates the researcher's commitment to people of color, immigrant communities, and historically neglected spatial locations (i.e., urban and rural), beyond research purposes (Acevedo-Gil, 2019; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal et al., 2019). There is a mutual familiarity between the researcher and the community through social networks that might include family, friends, key community figures (i.e., community organizers, locally elected figures, etc.), and organizations. These community figures create a linkage between the researcher and the participants, which is informed and shaped through some notion of *confianzia* (translate to trust) and *buena voluntad* (the researcher demonstrates care for the well-being of the community being studied and with the goal of having a positive influence throughout the research process) (Acevedo-Gil, 2019). Through this process, the researcher is able to draw from their social capital, as understood by community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), which includes a network of people and community resources that provide the instrumental support to "enter the field" and gain participants for the research study.

For example, when recruiting for possible participants, I was given the opportunity to present at the bi-weekly parent meeting at a local non-profit in southern California. This was made possible by the *familiaridad*, between myself and key figures that worked directly with the parents and further influenced by my direct engagement with a group of mothers who participated in the non-profit. Prior to the pandemic, I volunteered at this non-profit with the goal of remaining connected to my community and reciprocate in a way that felt tangible. The

decision to volunteer at this nonprofit was rooted in the disconnect I felt as a first-year doctoral student and the need to do "tangible work" beyond theorizing. I engaged with a group of mothers, all consisting of Latina women, through informal pláticas, decorating for cultural events (i.e., Día De Los Muertos, etc.), and simply sharing the same space. This location and people became part of my social network, and because of my history with the local community, the non-profit, and the demonstration of commitment to my community, there was an understanding and recognition of mural *accesibilidad* between myself as a researcher and community members as possible participants.

      2. Confianza: The literal translation of confianza is trust. The scholarship on social networks among Latina immigrant women and immigrant communities has theorized notions of confianza. O'Conner (1990) states that confianza implies kinship, which is formed and sustained through reciprocity. Fitts and McClure (2015) state that confianza also implies a commitment to the other person or persons. Relying on Chicana feminist epistemology, Dyrness' (2011) identifies confianza as a critical component of developing bonds and intern confidence in oneself, transforming individual courage into collective action for social change. Expanding beyond notions of buena voluntad (Acevedo-Gil, 2019) for the purpose of ego-entrenos, confianza, is rooted in notions of trust and reciprocity, both the trust that the participant has towards the researcher and determining the value and importance of the study. Further, recognizing and honoring the confianzia, the participants have in themselves to determine their engagement in the study and to what extent.

      Understanding confianza in relationship to the participants requires a recognition of the possible risk and rewards of sharing one's own lived experience. This is due to the acknowledgment of intersectional vulnerabilities women of color and immigrant women of color

can endure when speaking about themselves and their communities, a result of the categorical and systemic value given to gender, economic status, race/ethnicity, and immigration. Women of color are key community brokers (Cornelius, 1982), carrying knowledge, and history of their own family and communities. Participants must have confianza in the researcher and research study to be able to justify their decision to participate in the study; to themselves, their families, and their communities, since the nature of the study requires them to speak on behalf of others due to the centering of social networks. It is the researcher's responsibility to create an environment of open communication and confianza, where any concerns and questions can be brought forth and openly communicated. In no way putting pressure on individuals to participate in the study.

3. Exposición: Meaning exposure, exposición can be understood alongside notions of confianza**.** Informed by LatCrit and notions of racist nativism, when working with communities of color and immigrant communities, there must be a recognition of the social construction of race that divides people into categories based on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity, and culture, upheld by racism and for the purpose of sustaining false notions of white superiority (Lopez, 2003; Yosso et al., 2004). There is a conscious decision to acknowledge the racialization of the Latinx immigrant community in the context of the U.S., which is informed by notions and understandings of racist nativism. Racist nativism is defined as "the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived as white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be people and immigrants of color, and thereby defend the rights of whites or the natives, to dominance" (Perez Huber et al., 2008, p. 43). Also, recognize that gender inequalities are further perpetuated by white supremacy, racist nativism, and economic exploitation (Abrego et al., 2011; Caballero, et al., 2019;

Crenshaw,1991; Romero, 2011), which in turn, highlights the differential experiences between white women and women of color. With the understanding that immigrant communities and communities of color are shaped by their intersectional identities and informed by social, political, and historical contexts, it is crucial to recognize the vulnerability of immigrant participants and honor the nos. Having participants say no demonstrates the autonomy of the community. While it's the researcher's goal to conduct research and obtain data, it is not the communities' responsibility to offer it.

4. **Lengua:** Meaning tongue, notions of lengua is informed by the notion of linguistic terrorism, as theorized by Anzaldúa (1987), there needs to be a recognition that language is a product of social constructions that places colonizing languages, such as english and castellan Spanish, as the dominant language in the U.S., Mexico, Centro America, and most Latin American countries (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ramirez & Osoria, 2023). This results in the placement of other languages as subordinate and framed as invalid or less than; these notions are tied to colonization and classism, which determined the erasure of native languages, the invalidation of home, street, and community-created languages, and the gatekeeping of dominant languages (Ramirez & Osoria, 2023; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Recognizing language as an extension of culture, racial and ethnic identity, it is necessary to create *sitos* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2019), where the participants' language is validated, affirmed, and practiced as the leading form of communication between the participant and the researcher. When conducting research alongside working-class Spanish-speaking communities, it is important to rely on español de casa, which refers to the Spanish language learned in the home (including street and community-created languages), everyday talk that allows for communities to interact and engage with one

another, from the formal, informal, and made-up words that carry deep meaning, which in turn express a shared lived reality.

Language is a necessary tool to create a bridge between academic research and la comunidad. Español de casa was a central component throughout each step of the research process, from developing the research plan, research tools, participant recruitment, data collecting, and analysis. Throughout the research process, there was a reliance on a variety of types of español de casa (i.e., formal, slang, and Spanglish), which was key to explaining the various concepts (i.e., social network) and components of the study (i.e., ego-net matrix, visual mapping). As a result, language took on multiple forms; through the process of testimonios and pláticas, new terms were created and developed that allowed the researcher and the participants to come up with a mutual agreement of meaning and understanding that allowed for the implementation of the research study. Most importantly, the co-construction of language allows for the opportunity for the researcher and participants to make deeper connections that aligns with their identities and give meaning and value that aligns with their lived realities.

5. Nuevos conocimientos: Through the reliance on Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998) and use of español de casa, nuevos conocimientos or new knowledge emerged in the form of methodological practices, understandings, and employment through ego-entrenos. This was made possible by focusing on research questions and methodologies that center the voices of historically silenced communities, such as Latina immigrant mothers, in relation to social networks and forms of capital in education research. Chicana scholars like, Anzaldúa (1987), Emma Pérez (1999), and Chela Sandoval (2000) stated that the reliance on feminist research methodologies can lead to new knowledge, which is uncovered by looking in liminal spaces and interstitial gaps for "the unheard, the unthought, the unspoken" (Pérez 1999,

5). The braiding of testimonio, pláticas, ego-net, and allowing space for the co-construction of new knowledge alongside participants provided the avenue for determining the metrics of the study (i.e., the language that the study was conducted and how the research tools were implemented and understood) led to new knowledge. As a result, the empirical data brought forth insight into notions of social networks and forms of capital among Latina immigrant mothers and the impact on navigating the education system. This was made possible through the reliance on cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal 1998), grounding methodologies in decolonial/anticolonial Chicana/Latina feminist thought, and co-constructing knowledge with the participants and manipulating methodologies (i.e., relying on pláticas to guide ego-net) to align and intern becomes an extension of Chicana/Latinas ways of knowing and being (Garcia et al., 2022).

6. Nepantla: Rooted in Nahuatl language, Nepantla embodies and represents the in-between space of multiple and overlapping worlds (Anzaldúa, 2002; Acevedo-Gil, 2019). Chicana feminist scholar, Anzaldúa (2002), theorized that napatla is the "living between cultures results in 'seeing' double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent" (p. 549). When one is able to move within and among multiple cultures and worlds with the understanding of their overlapping, complementing, or conflicting relationship, they are Nepantleras (Acevedo-Gil, 2019, p. 233). A state of nepantla can lead to harm due to isolation and rejection from conflicting worlds, but it also has the potential for the nepantleras to create "bridges" between worlds (Acevedo-Gil, 2019; Keating, 2006: Mignolo, 2000).

In relation to research, Acevedo-Gil (2019) highlights the bridges that can be built through the research process, arguing that, within empirical studies, nepantleras have the ability to (1) engage in their cultural intuition throughout the research process, (2) centering the

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intersectional experiences of participants of color, (3) rely on an interdisciplinary lens, and (4) recognize participants as holders and producers of knowledge. Illustrating the nepantleras ability not just to navigate multiple roles but bridging new worlds that challenge western research practices. The employment of ego-entrenos methodologies requires the researcher to accept a permanent state of nepantla and the embodiment of nepantlera. The research process and decisions that are made throughout the various steps of the study will bring forth conflicting feelings, doubt, feelings of isolation, and constant rejection from conflicting worlds. Fully accepting nepantla, allows the researcher to recognize the contradictions embedded in research practices while simultaneously placing the interest of communities of color as the primary focus. It is this space of pain, confusion, and discomfort that will determine the interactions between the academic world and notions of home and *comunidad*, that are both central to the identity of researchers of color who seek to do empirical work rooted in social justice. It is necessary to recognize that participants are also emerging in a state of nepantla when engaging in ego-entrenos. Both nepantleras (the researcher and the participant) are able to rely on their cultural intuitions to guide one another and make sense of the research process and research tools, which leads to *nuevos conocimientos y nuevos mundos*.

Conclusion

This article takes on the task of bringing forth insight into the employment of ego-entrenos methodologies. A methodology that emerged through the braiding of Chicana/Latina methodologies, in the form of testimonios and pláticas, along with mixed methods, through the employment of ego-net. The empirical study that led to the emergence of ego-entrenos had the primary goal of understanding the role of social networks and forms of capital that guided Latina immigrant mothers as they navigated the K-12 education system in the U.S. Achieving this task

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required a long and intensive journey of self-reflection, prior, during, and after the research study had been conducted. Through this paper, I wanted to bring forth insight into the nuance of employing an ego-entrenos alongside Spanish speaking immigrant communities in the form of six contours. Guided by LatCrit, Chicana feminist epistemology, and community cultural wealth, I highlighted six characteristics of implementing ego-entrenos. They are, (1) familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla. These contours are intended to bring forth important considerations when employing an ego-entrenos methodology; while they are not intended to be a "how to conduct research," I believe these are important and should be taken into consideration, as they allowed me and the research participants to engage in research practices that honored our shared lived experiences and ways of knowing. These contours should be considered as part of the larger epistemological understandings within Chicana feminist epistemology and a form of expanding Chicana feminist methodologies, as an avenue to create spaces for the silenced.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Relying on three distinct studies, this dissertation set out to further understand the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers as they navigated the K-12 education pipeline through the overarching guiding frameworks of Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology and methodologies (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 1998). The first article consisted of a systematic literature review that explored the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers and their interactions within the K-12 education system through a Chicana feminist epistemology perspective. The second article is an empirical study that researched the experiences of eleven Mexican immigrant mothers navigating distance learning during the first wave of COVID-19; data for this study was obtained through the employment of pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and relied on LatCrit, racist nativism (Pérez Huber et al., 2008; Pérez Huber, 2011), and Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology. The third article is a methodological piece that discusses the emergence of ego-entrenos methods and provides six guiding contours to consider when employing ego-entrenos. This paper was informed by an empirical study conducted alongside ten Latina immigrant mothers through the braiding of testimonios (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), pláticas, and ego-net (Mamas et al., 2019) and reliance on LatCrit, Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Collectively, the three articles aimed to expand the scholarly literature on Latina immigrant mothers through a critical race and feminista perspective and methodology that accounted for the impact of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Caballero et al., 2019; Delgado Bernal et al., 2019). In this chapter, I present a summary of key findings for each study, followed by a synthesis of implications and recommendations for future research and institutional

practices to consider when working alongside Latinx immigrant families. I conclude this

dissertation with remarks and reflection.

Summary of Findings

This dissertation centered on addressing three overarching questions:

2. What are the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers navigating the U.S. K-12 education system?

3. What are the systemic barriers being confronted by Latina immigrant mothers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system?

4. How do Latina immigrant mothers confront systemic barriers when attempting to navigate the U.S. K-12 education system?

The three articles in this dissertation attended to these questions in various ways. In chapter 2, I apply a Chicana feminist epistemology to analyze key scholarly literature centering on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers in the K-12 education system. Through a Chicana feminist epistemology, the analytical metrics for understanding the literature on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers shift from the traditional discourse (or focus) in academia from culture to considering race, gender, and intersectional identities (i.e., social class, immigration status, etc.) of Latina immigrant women in the U.S. The scholarly articles analyzed in this systematic literature review show that administrative gatekeeping, language discrimination, racist nativism, and hegemonic cultural practices emerged as mechanisms that reproduced the exclusion of Latina immigrant mothers in the K-12 education system. Additionally, revealed in the literature was the institutional impact of self-perception among Latina immigrant mothers. Highlighting the ways in which Latina immigrant women internalize forms of discrimination.

In chapter 3, I highlight the empirical findings of the experiences of Mexican immigrant mothers as they navigated the pandemic (COVID-19) and managed their K-12 grade children's education during the first wave of distance learning. In this paper, I offer a critical analysis of the multiple experiences of the participants that illustrate the impact of systemic inequalities within the larger society and the education system that limited the mothers' access to resources for their children and family. Also hindering the participants' ability to fully engage in their children's education. I proposed the term (má)estra, to acknowledge and give meaning to the combination of two roles Latina immigrant mothers had to take on, a mother and a teacher, and recognize the structural barriers that make it difficult to fully merge the home and school due to school practices which have led to the exclusion of Latinx immigrant parents, families, and communities (Durand, 2011; Fuentes, 2013)

Finally, in chapter 4, I theorize the emergence of ego-entrenos methodologies. A mix-methods methodology that emerged out of an empirical study that employed testimonios (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016), and ego-net (Lin, 2002; Mamas et al., 2019). I argue that ego-entrenos methods provide the necessary research approach to gain insight into the social networks and notions of capital (i.e., social and cultural) possessed by Latina immigrant mothers. I specifically identify six contours that guide ego-entrenos methodology alongside Spanish speaking, Latina immigrant mothers: (1) Familiaridad y accesibilidad, (2) confianza, (3) exposición, (4) lengua, (5) nuevos conocimientos, and (6) nepantla. Collectively these contours bring forth new ways of knowing and implementing research alongside Latina immigrant women in relation to educational research.

Implications and Contributions to Theoretical Understandings

Collectively the three articles aim to expand the research conducted on and about immigrant women and families within educational research, with a larger consideration of the sociohistorical and sociopolitical context of the U.S. that shapes the lives of the participants, their families, and communities, at the macro and micro level. This was made possible by taking into account the ways in which race, ethnicity, class, gender, and immigration determine ones lived experiences. This dissertation intentionally relied on a LatCrit and Chicana feminist epistemology to analyze and understand the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, in educational research, through a critical race and gendered analysis. While not explicitly stated in each article, Crenshaw's (1991) theorization on intersectionality provided a significant foundation to begin to theorize, understand, and grapple with the various ways that Latina immigrant women are forced to experience institutional and systemic inequalities.

Understanding the education system as a key institutional entity that reproduces and upholds hegemonic ideologies and systemic inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 2006), the three articles presented in the dissertation expand the conversation from simplistic perspectives of parent involvement (**Poza et al., 2014**), parent participation (Quicho & Daoud, 2006), and parent engagement (Carreon et al., 2005), to consider a wider perspective of the parent experience. Through the guidance of LatCrit and Chicana feminist epistemology, this dissertation demonstrates the need to expand beyond the physical structure of the school to consider how the "education system is managed and experienced" outside the institution in the home and community (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021; Moll et al., 1992, Yosso, 2005). Through the centering of Chicana feminist epistemology, the studies discussed in this dissertation illustrate the unique positions of Latina immigrant mothers managing multiple roles in multiple worlds in relation to creating education opportunities for their children and providing educational support.

Future research in the field of education needs to take into consideration the intersectional experiences of Latina immigrant mothers in relation to the education system. This will not only allow scholars to focus on systems of oppression but further humanize the experiences of Latina immigrant women and give a name to the various experiences that are being had. Also, the studies presented in this paper shed light on the ways in which Latina immigrant mothers resist and respond to the limitations they are confronting. Further, very little attention has been given to the negative impact of the interaction between Latina immigrant mothers and the education system. This dissertation was able to identify the negative ways that some Latina immigrant women have internalized the forms of discrimination they have experienced in the education system (see chapter 2). Future research should consider the emotional and psychological impact endured and carried by Latina immigrant women, which can lead to new practices when working alongside Latina immigrant mothers.

This dissertation relied on "non-traditional" immigrant theories to gain insight into the experiences of Latina immigrant women in the U.S. I argue that this dissertation was able to justify the reliance on LatCrit, Chicana feminist epistemology, racist nativism, and community cultural wealth and bringing forth valuable findings and assertions when researching immigrant communities. This is due to the centrality that race and racialization have in the discourse of the immigrant experiences that, at times, are overlooked or reduced to notions of acculturation and assimilation (Velez, 2008). A Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology has long centered on the experiences of first-generation Chicanas/Latinas within higher education, demonstrating the need to consider a Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology when conducting research and analyzing the experiences of Latina immigrant women. Moving the literature on Latina immigrant mothers to consider how their motherhood and gendered experiences are a product of policies (i.e.,

immigration policies and economic policies, both local and national) and practices (i.e., educational inclusion and exclusion).

Implications and Contributions of Empirical Practices

There is an overrepresentation of qualitative research when conducting empirical studies alongside Latina immigrant mothers in relation to the education system (Hughes et al., 2016). Historically, research alongside Latinx immigrant communities has been done through an ethnographic approach, case studies, and qualitative interviews (Hughes et al., 2016; Gonzalez & Morrison, 2016). There is a clear gap in educational research methodologies with Latina immigrant mothers; expanding methodologies (i.e., mix-methods and quantitative research) can provide important insight into the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers. With this understanding, I wanted to gain further insight into the role of social networks and forms of capital as a tool to combat institutional exclusion within the education system. To achieve this, I employed testimonios, pláticas, and ego-net methodologies, in the form of mixed methods. The process of breading Chicana/Feminist methodologies and ego-net was a difficult task, that at times felt overwhelming and never-ending. This required me to sit with these research tools and reflect on their purpose and if their employment was justified for the purpose of the study. Ultimately it was through this period of discomfort that ego-entrenos emerged as a methodological tool. I argue that ego-entrenos is a valid methodology as it assisted in positioning the participants as co-constructers of knowledge throughout the research process and experts of their own lived experiences.

Further, this study brought forth insight into considerations, in the form of six contours, when conducting ego-entrenos research alongside Latina immigrant mothers. It is necessary to be reflective on how we are entering research spaces within Latinx immigrant families due to the

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historical and current political climate that continues to scapegoat the Latinx immigrant

population and communities of color through very real anti-immigration policies such as

Florida's SB 1718, that specifically aim to destabilize Latinx immigrant families (2023 Bill

Summaries, 2023). When writing about the employment of ego-entrenos, it was really from the

perspective of what it meant to "return" to my communities as a researcher and knowing that our

shared identities aren't enough to build rapport, and it shouldn't be. It is about implementing

research practices and upholding ideologies that are intended to disrupt white supremacy,

patriarchy, classism, racist nativism, and other forms of oppression. Chapter 4 of this dissertation

was also a response to scholarly articles that spoke on the research experiences in immigrant

communities that centered on increasing participation in empirical studies, diminishing the

autonomy of the participants, sensationalizing the immigrant experience, and pushing back

against studies that placed the researcher as the expert of immigrant communities. Guided by

Chicana/Latina feminist scholars, the call for expansion and thinking of new ways to incorporate

immigrant communities and communities of color throughout the research process and

developing new methodologies should be determined under serious consideration and not expand

research practices for the purpose of producing publishable scholarship.

Implication and Consideration for Educational Practices

In this section, I bring forth considerations for school practitioners to consider when

serving Latinx immigrant communities and cultivating opportunities for the emergence of the

home, community, and education system. These responses are based on the empirical findings

presented in this dissertation.

1. **Representation of Community:** Public schools need to be reflective of the communities

    they are serving. School administrators should be intentional in creating school practices and

policies that are intended to support Latinx immigrant families; this is especially urgent within school districts that consist of majority Latinx students. This means having the students and their families best interests in mind and making them feel welcome on school grounds. It is necessary for schools to hire key figures intended to work alongside Latinx immigrant parents, to reach out to the community, and be accessible on school grounds.

2. **Language:** School administrators must reconsider the significant role of language and language practices in the school setting and recognize the role of language as the primary avenue for collaboration. There is clear evidence that basic school information is being provided to families in english and in Spanish. But there are gaps within the ways in which language is creating inclusion and exclusion. This calls for school administrators to be intentional in hiring Spanish-speaking individuals throughout the various segments within the school setting (i.e., teachers, counselors, principals, etc.). Providing insight into pedagogical practices in the classroom in a way that is language accessible to parents. Using language as a tool to incorporate Latino immigrant families and communities into the classroom.

3. **Knowledge Production:** Moll et al., (1992) have provided a platform and avenue to incorporate community and family-based knowledge and ways of knowing within the school setting, through in-class assignments, school projects, and homework, through the theorization and implementation of funds of knowledge. This is a call for schools and teachers to be intentional in disrupting hegemonic ideologies and creating space for the various forms of knowledge that Latinx students can bring forth from the home, their histories, identities, and ways of knowing.

4. **Technology and accessibility to learning materials:** Recognizing the various levels of digital literacy and the digital divide among Latinx immigrant parents, schools need to be

flexible in providing various avenues to create accessibility to learning materials. This may

mean creating documents that are accessible and legible through email or phone. Providing

workshops for Latinx immigrant parents who would like to gain insight into navigating

school-assigned technology and apps. This is material that should be accessible to parents in

their homes via video recording or worksheets.

5. **Recognizing Forms of Discrimination:** School administrators and school districts need to

    have a pathway to respond to discriminatory practices against students and parents of color.

    A lot of what the literature depicted in this dissertation were forms of microaggressions that

    can be difficult to prove or identify, so it is important for schools to be attuned to what is

    occurring and create an avenue for forms of communication between school administrators

    and parents of color.

Implication and Consideration for Policy

The empirical study in this dissertation brought forth insight into the ways in which

immigration status directly determined access to financial opportunities and stability for the

participants and their families in the state of California during the first wave of the pandemic.

What was presented in this dissertation is not new knowledge but a reminder of the ways in

which mix-status families are forced to navigate their continue exclusion because of immigration

status. Recently, the Florida governor signed Senate Bill 1718, which has resulted in the mass

exodus of immigrant families, predominantly Latinx immigrant families, causing a disruption in

their daily lives. When considering the best interest of Latinx students from immigrant

households, one cannot separate their identities and that of their families, and it's important to

recognize that immigration practices and policies are directly impacting Latinx immigrant

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communities, and any call for anti-immigration regulation and restrictions is a call to continue to dehumanize, criminalize, and destabilize the Latinx immigrant population.

Implications and Consideration for Future Research and Limitations

When reflecting on recruitment practices, it is important to recognize the glaring limitation of the two empirical studies presented in this dissertation, which consisted of Mexican immigrant women, apart from one participant. While I argue that these findings are still relevant to racialized experiences of Latina immigrant mothers, at large, special attention needs to be given to creating space for Central American immigrant women and women from other Latino American countries in educational research. While these continents were specifically included in the participation flyers and the recruitment took place in historically Latinx immigrant communities, the participants' demographics lack a diverse representation of the Latinx nationalities. Further, each empirical study consisted of a limited number of participants, eleven and ten, which brings consideration to the ability to over-generalize findings. Ego-entrenos is a methodological practice that emerged from one empirical study and should be revised and reconsidered based on future implementations.

Future research on the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers should consider the aftermath of COVID-19 and its long-term implications on Latinx immigrant families and communities. In terms of financial stability, access to resources, implication of community formation and social networks, and long-term educational impact on Latinx students. Further, when conducting research on social networks in urban communities, future research should consider and explore the impact of gentrification in creating ruptures in social network formation and accessibility.

Conclusion

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A primary goal of this study was to create a space for the voices of Latina immigrant mothers in educational research that situated their realities within larger social structures that impacted their everyday experiences. Through the reliance on testimonio and pláticas, the participants brought forth insight into intimate components of their daily lives and familial structures. The participants explicitly identified the ways in which they created new realities and opportunities for their children despite the limitations placed forth. Through the development of three stand-alone scholarly articles, this dissertation provided insight into the previous literature on Latina immigrant mothers in education studies, a snapshot analysis of the experiences of the participants during distance learning and proposed a methodological approach to understand further the role of social networks and forms of capital among Latina immigrant mothers.

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