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Cultivating Care: Understanding Intimate Partner Violence Experiences of Undocumented
Latinas in Washington State

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Abstract

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Researchers have acknowledged the deleterious effects of intimate partner violence (IPV) and have incorporated findings into prevention and intervention practices, but research with Latina/o immigrant communities remains limited. By combining Chicana feminist theory and intersectionality frameworks to existing IPV survivorship models, this study explores contextual factors impacting IPV experiences in Latina/o communities. This study investigated the immigration context impacts on IPV experiences for 20 Latina immigrants living in western Washington State. It also explored survivor strengths and hopes to imagine futures without violence. Culturally-relevant testimonio methodology was used to qualitatively investigate the complexity of IPV and how immigration status, ethnicity, class, gender, and informal/formal social supports impacted the experience. One-on-one testimonio interviews were conducted on two different time points with each of the interviewees. Thematic and narrative analyses revealed racialized, gendered, classed, and nativist injustices Latina immigrants experienced along with

healing, empowerment, and advocacy when seeking social support. Seeking support from informal and formal social support systems as undocumented individuals meant they encountered barriers attached to their immigration status. Latina immigrant women's cultural experiences of IPV were mediated through structural forms of oppression, such as racism and economic exploitation especially when they interacted with formal social support systems. Findings informed social work practice regarding identity intersectionalities that increase IPV vulnerabilities for undocumented women and contribute to culturally-responsive interventions.

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DEDICATION

*Para todas las mujeres guerreras que encuentran sus voces y comparten con las demás.
Especialmente para mis abuelitas, Remedios Magallon Nieto y María Ruiz Torres,
que sus voces continúa iluminando mis sueños.*

For all the warrior women who have found their voices and have shared with other women.
Especially to my grandmothers, Remedios Magallon Nieto and María Ruiz Torres,
that their voices continue to illuminate my dreams.



Image 1. Las Abuelas on the Altar

My grandmothers' survival, struggles, and spiritual transitions emulate courage and perseverance; their legacies carry on in my research.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Cultivating Care: Understanding Intimate Partner Violence Experiences of Undocumented Latinas in Washington State

“Pero ahora me pongo a pensar que si no encuentro trabajo ¿a dónde me voy a ir después de aquí? Si yo tuviera seguro no me preocupara que me quiten la ayuda porque yo puedo trabajar. Pero así [sin seguro], eso sí me preocupa. Pienso que debe ver alguien que nos escuche más y nos pongan más ATENCIÓN cuando contamos esto porque muchas lo vivimos.”

“Now I am thinking what happens if I do not find a job. Where will I go after here? If I had a social security number I would not worry if they took away the aid because I can work. But like this [without a social], that really worries me. I think there needs to be someone to hear this more and that they pay more ATTENTION when we share this because many of us live it.”

- Interviewee Esperanza¹

In Esperanza’s remarks, the sense of urgency and hint of desperation to find employment were evident. Her words placed a responsibility on me, the researcher, to offer a rigorous analytical process relevant to practice efforts that addressed intimate partner violence (IPV) within Latino immigrant communities. It was not just about her. Intertwined was the commitment to have this information reach the other women Esperanza invoked as her *comadres*² in the struggle. IPV dilemmas have continued to impact many other undocumented women. This qualitative study utilized *testimonio*³ and phenomenology to investigate the IPV experiences of undocumented Latina immigrant women. Community-based participatory research techniques were integrated throughout the research process; hence, IPV phenomena were examined using an alternative conceptual model that centered the voices of the women. A

¹ Each interviewee chose a pseudonym for their story to be depicted with anonymity and confidentiality.

² A comadre can be a sister, a friend, a trusted confidante, and part of the “compadrazgo” (kinship) system in Latino communities. Oftentimes, these are interrelations of people that are not related by blood.

³ Testimonio, or testimony, was the methodology that utilized story-telling where the witness or story-teller “speaks to reveal racial, classed, gendered and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more humane present and future” (Huber, 2009, p. 643).

Chicana feminist lens and intersectionality frameworks were incorporated to IPV survivorship models (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988) to expand the conceptual understanding of undocumented IPV survivors' lived experiences.

This study empirically captured the perceptions of 20 Latina immigrants living in western Washington State to first examine how their immigration status impacted their IPV experiences. The impact of their ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality was explored not only as discrete phenomena but also from an intersectional perspective. Second, attention was given to their interactions with informal social support networks (e.g., friends, family) and formal help-seeking efforts (e.g., accessing shelters, calling the police) to better illustrate their survivorship process based on Gondolf & Fisher's (1988) survivor theory. Third, the research highlighted how survivors expressed strength and hope to imagine a future without IPV for themselves and women relatives in future generations. Aligned with social work's commitment to social justice and advocacy to end injustices, the knowledge generated from this inquiry propositioned new insights to inform IPV practices with marginalized communities such as undocumented immigrant women whose voices were often silenced or not visible in previous studies.

This introduction chapter delineates an overview of the context and background that framed the current study about IPV with undocumented Latinas. It presents the problem statement, statement of purpose, and accompanying research questions. Also, it includes brief discussions of the methodological approaches along with the theoretical foundations, researcher perspectives, and assumptions that influenced me as the principal investigator. Finally, this chapter outlines the rationale and significance of the current research study along with the definitions of key terminology used throughout the investigation.

Background and Context

Researchers have broadly studied the etiology, prevalence rates, incidence rates, health consequences, and potential interventions for intimate partner violence (IPV) often referred to as domestic violence (DV). In the past, emphasis on the physical abuse in heterosexual marital relationships was denoted as wife battering. The extensive literature has contributed to multiple fields (e.g., social work, public health, psychology, nursing, medicine, law) (see Roberts, 2002), and it has involved multiple generations of feminist scholars (e.g., Ginorio & Reno, 1986; Flores-Ortiz, 1993; Dasgupta, 2005) magnifying what was known about the topic. These efforts have included social work researchers who acknowledged various deleterious effects of IPV and incorporated empirical findings into prevention and intervention practices (McClennen, 2010). However, research with immigrant communities has remained limited especially with respect to a link between undocumented immigration status and IPV for Latinas in Washington State.

Reports have indicated one in four women in the United States will experience IPV in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Some research suggested that Latinas may experience IPV at rates higher than White women (Straus & Smith, 1990) but other studies have found no significant differences between these two groups. The National Crime Victimization Survey, a leading source of IPV data, reported no significant differences in the prevalence of IPV for Latinos/Hispanics as compared to other specified race groups (e.g., Caucasian, Black, Asian) (Truman, 2011). Tjaden and Thoennes' (2000) prevalence study also reported similar rates in immigrant and non-immigrant groups. In this study, a breakdown was not specified of the various ethnic groups that were included in the immigrant and non-immigrant categories. Respondents were asked if they immigrated to the U.S., and Spanish-speaking interviewers were available for the phone interviews. However, the percentage of Mexican women, for example, that were included under the categories "Hispanic" and "immigrant" was not mentioned.

Unfortunately, these prevalence studies dismiss ethnic differences within racial categories and also do not investigate IPV severity differences amongst diverse communities. Other IPV studies have delineated the various types of violence (physical, sexual, and psychological) (e.g., Marshall, 1992) as a way to measure IPV severity objectively. Validated scales often measure the types of violent behaviors as well as the timing of the violence (e.g., past, current, or most recent relationship). In a global study conducted across 23 countries (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005), they found an association between the number of injuries reported and IPV severity. The pattern across the multiple sites demonstrated IPV severity increased as the respondents reported more physical injuries resulting from the IPV. Another study that included Black and White women seeking care from family practice clinics in the United States (South Carolina) found that sexual violence can be a marker of violence escalation (Coker et al., 2000). However, Coker and colleagues could not assess for IPV severity differences across different racial groups besides those included. To my knowledge, the issue of IPV severity that includes Latinos/Hispanics continues to require additional investigation.

Diverse communities may also respond to IPV in various ways. An example related to IPV community responses can be seen with the underreported IPV incidences in undocumented communities of color. A study that included women of different ethnicities (West, 2005) found that fewer IPV reports may be related to being afraid to seek help from law enforcement institutions. They found that non-immigrant women were twice as likely (55%) to file IPV reports than documented immigrant women (30%), and four times more likely than undocumented women (14%). The possibility that an undocumented abusive partner could face deportation may indicate a greater fear of reporting to authorities especially for undocumented

immigrants of all ethnicities (West, 2005). These findings emphasized the need to extrapolate the underpinnings of IPV experiences for undocumented immigrant survivors.

Menjivar and Salcido's (2002) extensive research with immigrant women permanently living in industrialized immigrant-receiving countries demonstrated that their IPV situations were magnified by their immigrant position, limited host-language skills, lack of access to dignified jobs, isolation from family, and concerns with their uncertain legal status. More specifically, the barriers faced by U.S. Latinas when seeking IPV help included lack of information about legal rights and availability of domestic violence services; fear that IPV reports would result in citizenship denial or deportation; and distrust and fear that the police would inadequately respond to IPV disputes (Rios, 2007). The respondent of Rios' (2007) study also identified negative experiences with DV programs which included long delays or failure to obtain a shelter bed, difficulty communicating because of the lack of bilingual staff, geographic inaccessibility, and transportation difficulties. These issues need to be further explored since it may signify higher rates of violence not reported, or severity differentials that cannot be verified through cross-sectional statistical data collection.

Though there was paucity in the literature regarding this topic, some scholars articulated a need to investigate other factors that may exacerbate the effects of IPV for Latina undocumented immigrants. These included linguistic and cultural barriers (Acevedo, 2000; Bauer et al., 2000; Murdaugh et al., 2004), experiences of structural inequality such as legal issues tied to immigration (Ammar et al., 2005; Bui, 2003, Perilla, 1999), and oppressive practices by agencies who were not equipped to negotiate the complexities of Latina immigrants (Dutton, Orloff, & Aguilar-Hass, 2000; Orloff & Little, 1999). An oppressive practice example included the disregard shelter programs had for complicated legal consequences that impact

undocumented immigrant women such as when they looked for employment or housing without government-issued work permits or legal authorization to live in this country. When a “color blind” approach (described as a way to disregard racial characteristics when selecting an individual to receive services) was adopted (Donnelly, Cook, van Ausdale, & Foley, 2005), culturally specific challenges that women of color, including Latinas, faced were disregarded or undermined by service providers. These findings reflect what Bonilla-Silva (2009) has described as the disadvantages or barriers that get ignored when no racial classification is used. Yet, the lived experience of racial groups includes realities of institutional regulations and state-sponsored racist processes implying differential experiences.

Within a societal context that has included legacies of colonialism, racism, discrimination, and class oppression, it has been argued that IPV does not impact women similarly. For example, undocumented women have harsh realities to confront after they had left a violent partner especially if they were expected to financially provide as single parents and were placed in precarious circumstances to survive without legal work authorization. Structural inequalities and social power differentials influenced by racism and discrimination may also expose them to various forms of violence that interrelate with the IPV (e.g., sexual harassment by employer, community violence) (see hooks, 1984) as well as coercion to stay in relationship due to threats of being reported to immigration officials. Hence, the strategies used to address violence against immigrant women of color must take into account their histories and current conditions of violence. These unique circumstances can provide information not obtained in previous IPV prevalence and incidence rates studies. Therefore, the current research study centered the marginalized voices of women survivors to expand what was known about their IPV

survivorship process. It also demonstrated their location at the fringes was “the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance (hooks, 1984, p. 149).”

Problem Statement

In the context of western Washington State, the IPV issues within Latina undocumented immigrant communities have not been empirically investigated. Certainly, anecdotal stories (Gonzalez, 2009) and professional social work practices illustrate that intersecting social identities are relevant to understand the IPV experiences of undocumented Latina women residing in Washington State. Their immigration status places them at risk of being discriminated against, excluded from having access to social support networks, or being denied social services when seeking help for the violence. Particularly, there has been minimal information of how informal social support networks and formal help-seeking efforts from social services were navigated as part of the IPV experience for undocumented women. An analysis of immigration status, while incorporating an intersectional lens, is crucial to understand the impact of IPV on Latina immigrant survivors. The current inquiry addressed compelling social welfare concerns that added to the plight of undocumented immigrant IPV survivors that arrived after the 1996 welfare reform era and were situated in a historical context inundated with anti-immigrant sentiments. It also advances the theoretical foundations by women-of-color and Chicana feminists, whose pioneering contributions on intersectionality theories expanded violence against women research. The combination of all these things will decipher how future social work provisions and services can be more accessible to undocumented women survivors.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the perceptions of Latina immigrant women on how their IPV survivorship experiences have been impacted by their

immigration status, gender, ethnicity, class, and nationality. By better understanding these IPV experiences, with a focus on the response the women received (both formal and informal) when seeking help for the violence experience, more appropriate and culturally-informed decisions can be offered by social service programs and social support networks. Survivors were also asked about the impact they perceived their immigration status had on the received responses. For example, women shared multiple instances where they called the police and their lack of state-issued documents placed them at risk of the police report never being filed or filed improperly which later impacted their access to legal services. In order to shed light on the problem, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How does the immigration context of Latina women survivors living in Washington State impact their intimate partner violence (IPV) experience?
2. What formal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social service programs/agencies?
3. What informal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social support networks?

The undocumented Latina IPV survivors were asked to reflect on the ways they continued to find strength throughout their IPV experience. They were also asked to elaborate how they envisioned a future without violence for future generations. These responses were interwoven into the illustrative excerpts in the final thematic results to underscore the moments of survivorship, strength, and hope. It was not an analytical question, but some of the quotes that emphasized these experiences were evocative of the ways that women continued to survive despite the adversities. This project honored the women's willingness to participate in the project only if the research would generate more community awareness about their lived experiences.

The research also generated dialogue that helped facilitate a community-internet radio show series as part of community-responsiveness.

Research Approach

This investigation represented a multi-case study using qualitative research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In-depth semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection. This process included two separate one-on-one interviews (usually two weeks apart)-designed to interact multiple times as a way to more thoroughly gather individuals' perspectives. I was the sole interviewer for the interviews. The study was approved by the University of Washington's institutional review board. The 20 interview participants were recruited from various community organizations and programs that assisted Latina immigrant IPV survivors in western Washington State. All participants had received formal help from various IPV social service agencies, some of which were Latino agencies providing bilingual services, during the 12-36 months prior to the interview date.

The interviews explored the phenomena of IPV and undocumented immigration status by using phenomenology to portray the lived experience (Creswell, 2007) of the women. The focus was on developing a deeper understanding of the women's attempts to make meaning of the things that happened to them; therefore, it was informed by hermeneutics- the theory of interpretation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In the first meeting, a semi-structured interview guide developed by the author was used that contained general questions of IPV and immigration and helped to build rapport for their upcoming interview. In the second meeting, the women shared their testimonios. I utilized the Latina Feminist Group's (2001) definition that testimonio was "a way to create knowledge and theory through personal experiences, highlighting the significance of the process in theorizing our women of color realities" (p. 11). By using

testimonio, it offered space for narrated journeys of IPV and immigration life experiences with “attention to injustices one has suffered and the effect these injustices have had on one’s life” (Brabeck, 2001, p. 3). The use of semi-structure interviewing for the testimonios uncovered multiple layers of the women’s experiences that included hope and resilience, regardless of the severity of the injustices.

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008) were integrated at various steps of the research process. This included beginning with a research topic of importance to the community and attempting to create a collaborative research approach by including alternative deliverables to share major findings (i.e. community radio talks) and by presenting findings to the community. As a dissertation project, there were limitations to seamlessly incorporate these CBPR principles. However, as a research orientation, this project kept the goals closer to the application of possible change towards health equity practices (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010) and direct impact for undocumented IPV survivors. The various ways in which CBPR principles were incorporated in the research will be discussed in the methodology chapter.

The information collected in the 20 interviews formed the basis for the overall findings. Each interviewee was identified by a self-selected pseudonym, and most interviews (16 of the 20) were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews that were not audio recorded required detailed notes during the interviewing process to create narrative files that would be used for the coding procedures. To confirm an accurate depiction of the final transcriptions, participants were asked to review their individual transcripts and provide feedback. Any changes requested by the interviewees were documented, so the final transcripts used for analyses were those that the women approved as an honest representation of their experiences.

A comprehensive review of relevant literature and pilot tests shaped the data collection method. Coding categories were developed and refined on an ongoing basis with a group of trained coders, guided by the study's conceptual framework as well as individuals' practice experience in IPV social services programs. Due to the nature of this study, there was no intention to achieve triangulation that involved using multiple data sources or multiple methods of investigation to produce understanding (Patton, 1999). Rather than using triangulation as a validation method, I used this technique to ensure that the accounts were rich, robust, comprehensive, and well-developed. Multiple analysts iteratively reviewed the findings to provide a check on my selective perceptions and to illuminate blind spots in the interpretive analysis (Patton, 1999). The goal was not to seek consensus, but to understand multiple ways of seeing the data. The findings were discussed with a group IPV survivors, DV advocates, and DV leaders currently engaged in Washington State's Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a way to better understand the data. This process helped to gauge if the empirical knowledge reflected similar stories that professionals encountered in their current practice.

Theoretical Foundations

Feminist components have historically been a part of the field of social welfare. The current study cultivated feminist epistemologies to expand our understanding of IPV as a systemic problem that has been institutionalized throughout the society. As a social welfare scholar, I was intentional to excavate and bring forward the feminist roots of social work. As Russo (2001) expanded on what feminist theories offered, she stated: "Structural inequalities and the social conditions of women's lives inform and shape the incidences of violence in women's lives, the ways that women experience violence, and the ways that social institutions respond to

it (p. 7).” Thus, struggles for personal dignity and social justice were central tenets for feminist theory and complemented social work principles and values.

Because IPV research has continued to expand disciplines, multiple explanatory theories about the problem were available. Relevant theoretical frameworks have included social psychological theory, sociocultural theory, ecological perspectives, and other models (see Renzetti, Edleson, & Bergen, 2001). For the current study, a Chicana feminist perspective (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Anzaldúa, 1990 & 1999; Sandoval, 1991) was applied to position a critical stance and to argue against “universal truths” that have been embraced by knowledge-building traditions (Hesse-Bieber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004). This theoretical stance assisted to explore the complexities that other IPV theories do not get at. Primarily, mainstream feminist theory (Dobash & Dobash, 1979) has centered concepts of patriarchy and the societal institutions that helped maintain the structure of relationships in male-dominated culture on power and on gender (Bograd, 1988; Yllö, 1993). Research conducted within a feminist framework has questioned social power, resisted scientific oppression, and has been conscientious to issues of difference (Haraway, 1988; McCann & Kim, 2010). Feminists have been committed to political activism and social justice which were focal tenets for this study.

Contentiously, critiques have been a part of the conversations related to feminist lenses. Some of the criticism has focused on problematic dynamics of the mainstream White feminist movement in the United States that did not address issues of race which resulted in womanist (term coined by Alice Walker, 1983) ideologies to incorporate women of color and acknowledge the mainstream feminist movement’s racist underpinnings. Trinidad Galvan (2001) proposed how womanist pedagogies can speak directly to third-world women’s knowledge and experiences. She explored pedagogical formations of spirituality, well-being, and coexistence

(convivencia) to learn and create knowledge among a group of Mexicana migrant workers. This allowed for the experiential knowledge of communities of color to be viewed as a strength and an asset. These epistemological gaps were further highlighted by the women in the current study who did not necessarily prescribe to feminist ideologies. However, their behaviors and resistance were deemed appropriate for a feminist perspective that brought forward the stories of women that lived and spoke without ever calling what they did feminism or even being aware that their actions could be feminist (Behar, 1993; Hurtado, 2003b).

bell hooks (1984) has also offered an argument that acknowledges the limitation of using feminist theories to end violence. The feminist movement's struggles have focused on ending violence against women and have not consider the larger movement against violence. hooks elaborated, "By the concentration being solely on ending male violence against women, feminist activists may overlook the severity of the problem. They may encourage women to resist male coercive domination without encouraging them to oppose all form of coercive domination (1984, p. 119)." Feminist movements have generated settings for women to tell their stories, to develop analyses and theories based on women's experiences, and to collectively engage in political action to change (Russo, 2001). However, as hooks (1984) emphasized, women have a responsibility to condone all forms of patriarchal violence that goes beyond male violence against women.

Another critique has focused on the lack of racial diversity in feminist positions. Critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado, 1995) focuses on common experiences for various groups (i.e. African Americans, Native Americans, Latinas/os, and Asian Americans) that have been conjoined through a dominant racialized ideology of Euro-American epistemology (Ladson-Billings, 2000). CRT scholars have posited that members of these groups have unified around the

common experiences as outsiders/others and have engaged with racialized labels for political and cultural purposes. This work has revealed the ways that dominant perspectives distorted the realities of the ‘other’ to maintain power relations that continued to disadvantage those outside of the mainstream (Barnes, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Working with racialized discourses challenged the hegemonic structures (and symbols) that kept injustice and inequity in place. These concepts are well suited for the violence against immigrant women conversation that is not tied exclusively to an isolated system of misogyny and male dominance.

To address power structures highlighted in CRT and not equally distributed across gender, the incorporation of Chicana feminisms was essential. My scholarship was grounded in a Chicana feminist epistemology (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Anzaldúa, 1990 & 1999; Sandoval, 1991) which constituted a political stance that confronted patriarchy as it cross-cut forms of disempowerment and silencing such as racism, class inequality, and nationalism (Arredondo, Hurtado, & Klahn, 2003). Chicana feminist scholarship⁴ has challenged analytical frameworks that dichotomize the multiple sources of oppression; it posited alternative frameworks grounded in life experiences. These discourses extended towards intersectionality and hybridity (Alarcon, 1990) and moved beyond binaries. An intersectionality framework (Crenshaw 1991; Collins, 1990, 2000; Richie, 2005; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005) also allowed for the expression of multiple oppressions and forms of resistance that were not easily accessible through traditional methods of analysis. Oppressions were recognized as fluid systems that take on different forms and nuances depending on the context rather than conceptualized as static. Additional theoretical underpinnings will be provided in the subsequent chapter.

⁴ The term ‘Chicana’ generally refers to U.S. born Mexican-American women. However, in this study ‘Chicana’ scholarship specifically refers to ideological stances and theoretical models that are used to analyze the experiences of women that do not necessarily identify as Mexican-American. Chapter Two presents the historical underpinnings of these Chicana feminist theoretical frameworks that go beyond identity labels.

Researcher Perspectives

As a critical feminist scholar, I acknowledged research intertwined with politics; therefore I included an integral action agenda that would bring about some form of change in the lives of IPV survivors and the institutions and communities in which they interacted. In addition, as this was a dissertation project, I needed to set realistic expectations of where the process would actually lead within a reasonable time period from dissertation proposal approval to oral defense. The project agenda was developed alongside a few IPV survivors, DV advocates, and state-coalition leaders that influenced policy decisions at a state-level. Even if the women interviewees would not “benefit” from the research, the goal was to inform the Latina immigrant community about their rights and what help may be provided for IPV circumstances. The hope was to contribute to a larger change still warranted in existing social structures and processes that impacted undocumented IPV survivors. My investment to engage in this research agenda was also shaped by my personal and professional experiences with the study’s topics. I was dedicated to the field of violence against women before I began the PhD program, and I was unaware of how these commitments would manifest in the actual dissertation project.

According to Delgado Bernal (1998), four sources of cultural intuition were what Chicana researchers drew upon during the research process- academic, professional, personal, and the analytic process itself. While conducting this academic study, I was an ally in the IPV community advocacy work in Seattle, Washington as well as in immigrant right’s community organizing. I attended lobby days at the state capital with the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) to advocate for state laws and programs that would assist victims of domestic violence. I also marched at May Day rallies to demand social justice for immigrant workers and their families. A call to Rosie Hidalgo (Deputy Director for Policy with the Office on Violence Against Women) in Washington D.C. during the 2013 legislative

hearings related to reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act reminded me that this was a multi-layer process requiring all of us to push an equitable agenda for immigrant and indigenous women survivors. My loyalty to social justice sparked interest to move forward with the dissertation with a renewed spirit of solidarity and urgency to an issue that continued to plague our communities.

My professional experience has also included more than 10 years of practice work in the DV field. Prior to this, I worked in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, education-based violence prevention programs, case management referral services, and legal advocacy in California and Texas. I was often asked to “enrich/strengthen” the services provided to Spanish-speaking communities because many of the providers did not have bilingual or bicultural services available. Most recently, I was employed as a child advocate for a transitional housing program in Seattle, WA that served Latina women survivors and their children with housing, case management, counseling, support groups, and legal advocacy. I was no longer an employee when I began the research project, but the networking and relationships that remained intact helped me during the recruitment process. Therefore, relationship building was integrated in my professional repertoire a few years prior to the data collection process.

I have also been impacted by my personal “immigrant” experience raised in a Mexican household by two immigrant parents that benefitted from the 1986 Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) to become legal permanent residents. Growing up with undocumented parents until I was eight years old shaped my life outlook. I was born in California, so in theory I was able to access all the privileges granted by the rights of my citizenship. Unknowingly, my parents’ fear and distrust of U.S. institutions planted a hyper-vigilance of sorts in my own interactions with these systems. Additionally, I have been aware of family members who have continued to

migrate without legal authorization to the U.S. in search of job opportunities or to flee the ongoing violence in the state of Michoacán, Mexico- my parents' place of birth. Undocumented immigration continued to be of importance, even after my parents became naturalized U.S. citizens. Many of my family members continue to be impacted by President Obama's most recent executive orders to grant temporary deportation relieve and employment opportunities as well as having to deal with the attacks from opponents blocking these policies.

In regards to IPV, I never witnessed my father physically hurt my mother but I clearly remember the day he tried to slap her and my mother did not allow it. This moment has shaped my own understanding of autonomy, women's rights, and intimate partner dynamics. Perhaps my mother's life did not resemble a "feminist" trajectory, but her actions on that day remain engrained in my psyche. I was seven years old and a gathering around our kitchen table was taking place in our tiny one-bedroom apartment. My mother's older brother- uncle Antonio- was present. He and my father were drinking beer while my mother finished washing dishes. I was playing on the kitchen floor, and I was keenly aware that tensions between mom and dad were emerging as the alcohol consumption of the two men increased. In a matter of seconds, my father was agitated at my mother's refusal to stop nagging him about his drinking. Interestingly, my uncle (mother's brother) aligned with my father; he encouraged my father to hit my mother to 'teach her not to talk back!' As my father approached my mother and his arm went up to hit her, she splashed soapy dish water in his eyes and ran towards the bathroom to get away from him. My father followed her, but his efforts were to no avail.

Commotion escalated; I cried as my inebriated uncle advocated for my mother to learn a lesson to respect her husband. My father left the house with my uncle to continue their drinking somewhere else without the nagging. My mother came out of the bathroom still upset but

without a scratch. The more I have learned about IPV dynamics, I have realized that there were moments where my father would use emotional tactics to control my mother's behavior. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, I think my father was trying to maintain his male responsibilities from his cultural upbringing but was unsure of how to negotiate this in their new home that came along with a different culture, stressful context, and complicated class dynamics. As my parents have gotten older and my dad stopped drinking (he has been sober for 19 years now), things have been better between them. After this incident, I have never again seen my father try to raise his fist at my mother. This incident continued to be vividly imprinted in my childhood memories.

The analytical research process has also placed me in interesting junctures related to family dynamics. I have learned of the violence many of my aunts and both of my grandmothers suffered at the hands of their husbands. It has brought to light the ongoing struggles of my undocumented relatives. Within my family, I see the dynamics: silence, we do not talk about these issues. Sadly, IPV has trickled down to the younger generations and the one in four statistics has been surpassed. In the past six years, I have helped multiple female cousins on IPV cases and seeking services in different states; hence, my personal and political commitments denounced the dire need to bring more attention to these issues. Most recently, with my close following of how to apply for various deportation relieves, I helped my 18-year-old cousin apply and receive DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) relief. Together we assembled the entire application and with a final review from my dear friend Tania Santiago (paralegal and DACA certified), we accomplished success. These examples have illustrated I bring to the empirical inquiry process experience as a working professional, a community advocate, and a family member. I have knowledge and understanding of the cultural context and the professional

tensions in IPV interventions. These sources of cultural intuition were important roots that grounded this project to decipher IPV experiences for undocumented Latina women.

Researcher Assumptions

These same experiences that have provided valuable insight could likely serve as a liability, biasing the judgment regarding research design and the interpretation of the findings. Hence, I made explicit my assumptions and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study. I also remained committed to engage in ongoing critical self-reflection through journaling and dialogue with professional colleagues. Various procedural safeguards were delineated in Chapter Three to address subjectivity and to strengthen the credibility of the research. I wanted to place my awareness on the women's unique experiences without my values swaying them to tell their story a certain way. Prior to undertaking the research task, I engaged in a process in which I did my best to set aside any prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about immigration status and IPV. I acknowledge not all biases can be placed to the side, but this process included self-awareness and self-reflection to attempt to get closer to this goal.

Bracketing (Tufford & Newman, 2012) was done with the focus being on the research study and everything else (e.g., prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas) was set aside to assure that the research process was focused on the topic and question at hand. The process provided me, the investigator, a clearing of the mind, an awareness of my biases, and their influence on my viewpoint. For instances, my values and beliefs, associated with my Mexican heritage (i.e., familismo, machismo, marianismo), as well as my religious upbringing (e.g., believing the Virgin Mary is the 'good' model for Latina women), and the belief that women inherently suffer more than men, continued to be challenged. Various women referred to these same values and beliefs in their stories, but we had varied dynamics and processes. Some of the

narratives the women shared conflicted with my views of gender justice or my tolerance for maintaining patriarchal dynamics within family units. Through this process, I gained awareness of my biases while holding them in suspension when I interacted with the women participants.

Undoubtedly, the dialogical interactions required that I share glimpses of my assumptions about these topics, but I did not raise the issues first. For example, if someone shared that they were discriminated while seeking services, I inserted my views that the current systems still needed improvement. I did this to empathize with their experience and to let women know that they had a right to feel angry, and it was not just them that experienced these barriers. The bracketing helped for self-awareness but building solidarity also required fluidity of the ideas being shared. This was a reminder of Heidegger's rejection of the concept of phenomenological reduction. He argued that bracketing out preconceptions was neither possible nor desirable (Heidegger, 1962) to fully understand the lived experience.

Rationale and Significance

Social workers make up a large sector of IPV advocates, but it has remained unclear how a survivor's immigration status intersects with the violence experience. We are unaware of the multi-layered story that has impacted undocumented Latina IPV survivors. Immigrant-specific conditions can be layered onto other systems of oppression, such as class and race/ethnicity that further increase immigrant women's vulnerabilities. The undocumented survivors' voices of IPV survivorship cannot remain silent in research endeavors. Social workers often feel frustrated when advocating for undocumented women within a context that lacks services, particularly culturally responsive services, and with dwindling resources (Kullgren, 2003; Chaudry et al., 2010; Romero & Williams, 2013). This qualitative project focused on undocumented Latina immigrant women to bring attention to the complexity and impact their immigration status,

ethnicity, gender, and responses from their communities and society had on their IPV experiences. The purpose of this study was to explore a first-hand perspective of IPV survivors to understand the IPV experience through a cultural context and ethnic lens while incorporating intersectionality frameworks.

This research contributes to the understanding of violence against undocumented Latina immigrant women by uncovering their lived experiences beyond what IPV statistics provide. It will build our social work research knowledge by incorporating a testimonio methodology that provided a culturally-relevant process to re-imagine innovative possibilities for our research to push the boundaries of ways to speak to social justice concerns that impacted undocumented women on the ground. Additionally, this research will inform our practice knowledge regarding identity intersectionalities that may increase IPV vulnerabilities for undocumented women which in turn contributes to responsive interventions that better serve these communities. Current IPV research rarely asks survivors what gives them strength, hope and the possibility to imagine a future without violence; including these experiences in this project highlights the importance for future research to engage these least understood areas.

Notably, this research explored the issue of IPV for undocumented Latinas beyond the individual perspective by incorporating historical, social, political, and spiritual considerations. This inclusion helped to better understand the holistic experience and informed responsive and innovative practice models to address IPV in Latino communities. The data gathered from these narratives can inform and strengthen ongoing IPV practices and policies that have significant implications for social work practice with undocumented Latina immigrants. Furthermore, its contribution to theoretical disruptions of the mainstream definitions will challenge the universality agendas which women of color preferred to re-envision (as the quote below cites).

It is not that elites produce theory while everyone else produces mere thought. Rather, elites possess the **power** to legitimate the knowledge that they define as theory as being universal, normative, and ideal.
 – Patricia Hill Collins, 1998, p. xv

Terms and Definitions

Throughout the dissertation, I use terms that required explanation for clarity. I have highlighted below definitions of survivor, undocumented women, and intimate partner violence.

Survivor vs. Victim. I intentionally use survivor rather than victim. During my 10 years in the field of DV service provision and community practice, it was evident that women that experienced IPV had to survive throughout the length of the abusive relationship and re-occurring violent circumstances. Whether it was thinking ahead and safety planning or actively calling the police, the women found ways to survive even if viewed as a victim at the moment when they were interacting with support networks and service provisions. All the women in this study had been separated from their partner for some time (from six months to eight years) when they were interviewed. Subsequently, the use of the word ‘survivor’ seemed appropriate.

During the ongoing communication with interviewees in the data collection and member checking phases, three of the women returned to their abusive partners. Regardless, I considered them survivors too because during the interviews they shared ways that they protected themselves and they expressed possibilities to live violence-free. Even if I did not agree with their choice to return to their partners, it was a choice made due to their unique circumstances (e.g., Berk & Schur, 2001; Romero, 2008; Ayón & Becerra, 2013). A majority of the research studies included in the literature review referred to the person that experienced the violence as a ‘victim’. Thus, the word ‘victim’ will only be incorporated in the text of the dissertation if other research studies depicted their participants as such.

Undocumented Women. Women interviewed in this study only included those women that were from countries of origin Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala. This was intentional to capture experiences of the most recent and increasing patterns of female migration from Central America. There were other Latinas that could be undocumented (e.g., Dominican, Peruvian, Colombian), but I determined their migratory experiences would be different based on the historical context of their country's involvement with the U.S. All the interviewees were asked to situate their interactions with helping systems and the IPV experiences during the time that they were still undocumented, unauthorized, or within a liminal status. At times, I also used unauthorized to depict undocumented. Liminal status (Menjivar, 2006) in the U.S. had to be closely deciphered because the women shared about undocumented experiences, but they were in different places of this long process and spectrum to obtain some form of legal authorization to stay in the U.S. permanently. In the current study, six women were waiting on the u-visa petition response, indicating there was a possibility to obtain a form of temporary legal residency.

Intimate Partner Violence. IPV definitions remain highly contested particularly as multiple disciplines (e.g., social work, psychology, public health, and law) study violence etiology, the harmful health and behavioral outcomes, and help-seeking responses. Aisenberg, Gavin, Mehrotra, and Bowman (2011) have reiterated that most of these disciplines have worked in silos so the investigations continued to be independent of each other. Aware of this dynamic, the IPV definition I used in this study combined interdisciplinary components from public health, feminism, and social work. Generally, all IPV definitions have included components of physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional violence. Some definitions have also included the use of intimidation and/or coercive tactics to threaten physical harm. The information provided below began the conversation of IPV definitions, and the women also influenced how IPV was defined.

First, I used the Center for Disease Control's public health definition of IPV which included physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner (i.e., spouse, boyfriend, dating partner, or ongoing sexual partner). Examples of physical violence included but were not limited to the following; hitting, slapping, punching, hair pulling, pushing, choking, kicking, and confining. Sexual violence included forced intercourse or any type of unwanted sexual touching, advances, and sexual coercion. Examples of coercive tactics, specific to immigrant women, could include exploitation of their vulnerabilities (e.g., undocumented status) and isolation from their family networks. The public health perspective offered information to describe the violent behaviors.

Second, feminist IPV definition elements consisted of an *ongoing pattern* of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in which one partner in an intimate relationship attempts to *maintain power and control* over the other through the use of psychological, physical, and/or sexual coercion (SchorNSTein, 1997). The emphasis on the cause of the violence being related to power issues has been a key component of a feminist definition. Furthermore, Johnson (2008) argued that there was more than one type of IPV. His feminist approach distinguished types of violence on the basis of the control context in which they were embedded. For example, "intimate terrorism" in heterosexual relationships was usually perpetrated by men. Most people think about intimate terrorism when referring to 'domestic violence'. This was the violence observed in shelter populations, hospital emergency rooms, and where law enforcement got involved. This has been the basis of most feminist theories of domestic violence.

Distinctions were imperative because not all IPV involved a general pattern of coercive control. For instance, Johnson also pointed out that "situational violence" (2008) was not about general control but occurred from the escalation of specific conflicts. Reviewing his theoretical

framing confirmed that there was an overgeneralization in which IPV was considered a unitary phenomenon. General survey studies usually captured a different phenomenon than agency samples. His argument for a theoretical framework that recognized that there were different types of violence in intimate relationships was incorporated in my own scholarship as I attempted to demonstrate there were different IPV causes and consequences for Latina immigrant women. The current study focused on non-mutually-combative violence so there was a focus on the violence where one partner was being abusive of the other.

Lastly, I focused on IPV as a violence against women issue because I argue that gender oppressions correlates to women being disproportionately impacted by IPV compared to men. Nonetheless, I acknowledge men may also be survivors. I have worked with men survivors, and I have witnessed the difficulties seeking assistance especially when most services are geared towards assisting mothers (and their children). I center women's experiences, but I do not intend to dismiss the importance of understanding experiences of men survivors. Similar issues can emerge for non-heterosexual relationships. In this study all the women share about IPV experiences in heterosexual partnerships, but I acknowledge IPV can also impact same-sex relationships. The scope of this study did not offer an opportunity to delve into these diverse situations but further research is called for.

Organization of the Dissertation

In the subsequent chapters, I offer an expansion of Chicana feminist theory, intersectionality frameworks, and survivorship models of IPV that tied together the goals of the analytical findings. Chapter Two reviews the literature about empirical findings related to the IPV experience of immigrant women which included help-seeking behaviors. Also it delineates the conceptual framework informing the research. Chapter Three traces the genealogy of

testimonio and also expanded on the methods and research procedures used in this process. Chapters Four and Five untangle the qualitative analytical findings related to undocumented Latina immigrant survivors and their IPV experiences. These chapters comprised the thematic analyses about undocumented IPV experiences and the women's experiences navigating formal and informal help/support. The findings also incorporate narrative analysis on a singular case study with five levels of narrative review to demonstrate the depth that one single woman's testimonio offered with multiple readings of her narrated stories. The rationale for these two separate analyses was to highlight with-in and across-case similarities and differences. Themes compiled from the transcript analyses explain 'what' the women experienced and the actual narratives capture 'how' this was experienced. Chapter Six discusses the implications for future practice and research with undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors and provides concluding thoughts.

To summarize, the analyses of the women's stories inspired significant dialogues that will continue to shape the social support that can be formally and informally offered to undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors in the United States. The initial title of this dissertation was "harvesting care" but through various iterations it changed to "cultivating care." As the women's experiences illustrated, the harvest, or the process of gathering ripe crops at the end of the growing cycle was not yet completed. Metaphorically the crops symbolized the processes, lessons, and advice available to address IPV in immigrant communities. The current conditions were more of a cultivation that has continued to blossom as the women grappled with the implications of IPV in their lives. This also included a deeper meaning making of IPV effects intergenerationally and futuristically which would contribute towards a harvest of healthy models to tackle enduring IPV issues.

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CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence against women continues to be a crucial social and public health problem with serious consequences for society, communities, families, and individuals. Of interest to this study was intimate partner violence (IPV), often referred to as domestic violence (DV)⁵. Its health consequences have included physical injuries, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy injuries, miscarriages, suicidal behaviors, and death (Golding, 1999; Campbell, 2002; Coker, Sanderson, & Dong, 2004; Silverman, Decker, Reed, & Raj, 2006; McLaughlin, O'Carroll, & O'Connor, 2012). IPV has been reported across all racial, ethnic, and economic groups, and impacts heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The original foci of the DV movement were safety and practical support (e.g., providing shelter) for women who sought help (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Tierney, 1982).

Given this focus on protection, the criminal and legal systems have promoted IPV interventions that addressed safety concerns (Horton & Johnson, 1993) that have involved labeling certain IPV behaviors as criminal offenses that can be prosecuted. Specifically in Washington State during 2012, a total of 45,944 domestic violence-related crimes were reported with 50% (26,519 of 52,819) of simple assaults and 29% (58 of 203) of murders categorized as DV-related (WASPC, 2013). IPV has often been under-reported, primarily in communities of color that may distrust coming forward in the criminal justice system due to fear of retaliation, so caution was warranted with the findings. The dynamics involved in reporting IPV have limited

⁵ I use IPV in my work because DV may also incorporate these patterns of violence with other family members' relationships (e.g., in-laws, siblings, parents). However, DV is used interchangeably in the literature review particularly if the cited article labeled it as domestic violence with a focus on the intimate partner violence results.

the view of the problem. Addressing IPV in Latina/o communities required an insight about their lived complexities to tackle the deleterious effects still under-investigated.

This chapter provides the current study's theoretical framework that uses Chicana feminist theory and intersectionality frameworks. Subsequently, the preceding literature review demarcates four major sections. First, the scope of the IPV problem is delineated with prevalence data as well as the cultural differences established in incidences data reviews. Second, key issues of help-seeking behaviors from a survivor perspective offer alternative explanations to the "battered women's syndrome" (Walker, 1979, 1984). This section expands on the literature related to Latina immigrants' help-seeking behaviors. Third, the immigrant context in the United States was described during an overall feminization shift of Latino immigrants (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Segura & Zavella, 2007) and specific to undocumented Mexican migration (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). In this section, anti-immigrant sentiment is mentioned to provide evidence of the compounded layers of vulnerability for recently arrived immigrants (Schmidt Camacho, 2008). In the fourth section, the intersections of IPV and undocumented immigration provide insight of the complex social and legal systems that interplay in the life's of undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors. Examples are highlighted around the issues of male spouses petitioning legal immigration status for their undocumented female partners and the concept of "marrying for papers" reported in other studies.

Chicana Feminisms and Intersectionality

"Necesitamos teorías [We need theories] that will rewrite history using race, class, gender and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries – new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods... We need to de-academize theory and to connect the community to the academy. 'High' theory does not translate well when one's intention is to communicate to masses of people made up of different audiences."

- Gloria Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxv

Anzaldúa's quote encapsulates the importance of reimagining theoretical explanations that go beyond a description of identities being fractured by gender, class, race, religion, and sexuality. Her theoretical contributions also positioned factors of 'place' such as growing up on the borderlands as unique ways of understanding people's lived experiences. The concept of 'mestiza consciousness' (Anzaldúa, 1999) represented the complexity of identity, representation, and scholarship in a dynamic way. For instance, the interactions undocumented immigrant women may have between the places they work (e.g., factory assembly line worker, live-in nanny, or restaurant employee) and live (e.g., Spanish-speaking community, low income housing, shared living quarters) may create unique gendered and racialized expectations of how they could navigate instances of IPV. Working with these undercurrents, Chicana feminists have made visible subjugated knowledges and offered new theories of IPV insights (e.g., Flores-Ortiz 1993, 2003). These theories have begun to navigate our experiences to form our own categories and theoretical models for these patterns being untangled.

In this section, the historical context, central tenets, and ongoing theoretical complexities of Chicana feminisms will be delineated. In the seminal critical reader of Chicana feminisms (Arredondo et al., 2003), the contributors made their claim in the intellectual landscape of the U.S. on their own terms. Hurtado (2003a) stated the ways in which they rebelled against existing paradigms: "They transgressed boundaries of genre, of method, of content, of disciplines. They claimed fragmentation and hybridity not as a methodological development or an intellectual intervention, but as best representing their lived experience (p. 215)." Chicana feminist epistemology has also been informed by the work of Alarcon (1990), Delgado Bernal (1998), Castillo (1995), and the contributors to de la Torre and Pesquera's (1993) edited collection where they exemplified the intersections of race, class, and gender. These Chicana scholars have

claimed theory has to originate from the collective experience of the oppressed especially that of women of color, and it should not only come from written text.

The historical context played a significant role as to why Chicana theorists needed to be a part of the larger epistemological academic platforms. As Hurtado (1998) detailed, Chicana feminisms emerged to disrupt oppression and to create space of resistance. During the 1960s, Chicana women were often simultaneously involved in the civil rights movement and the Chicano movement. All along, they kept central issues of gender as part of the political agenda to analyze oppression. They were often caught in the crossroads to defend both gender and racial justice issues. Especially within the Chicano movement, Chicana feminists created spaces of resistance to patriarchy in general and within their own ethnic/racial group (Garcia, 1989). Chicana feminisms argued from an active agent standpoint (Collins, 1990). They recognized the multiple ways that culture, traditions, and power contributed to the historical significance of being able to offer a unique and coalitional voice in the wider feminist agenda.

Chicana feminist theoretical frameworks have offered various tenets to enhance feminist theory as a whole. Foremost, the methods used were critical to have inclusion of diverse women experiences rather than erasure of their distinctiveness. In spite of the concerns addressed or the method used, most Chicana feminists adamantly declare their scholarship and artistic production should result in political action aimed at social change (Hurtado, 1998). Because structural oppressions are far from dismantled, ideas of coalition building are necessary. Hence, two central tenets have always included the use of collaboration and political coalition. Rather than adhering to an essentialist notion of identity, many Chicana feminists struggled with implementing standpoint theory through formed coalitions (Hurtado, 1998). Their concepts alluded to

intersectionality, which will be considered in the next section, to demonstrate how larger intersectionality frameworks weaved intricately with Chicana feminists notions.

As Hurtado (2003a) summarized, these theorists spoke back to the struggle highly influenced by their gender but not independent of other historical conditions. Chicanas have usually joined forces with other feminists of color to deconstruct hegemonic beliefs and to unearth alternatives to address ongoing issues. Furthermore, in emphasizing survival rather than victimhood, they have inadvertently mapped a set of strategies for resistance and for coalition building. They were oftentimes motivated to produce knowledge from the “politics of urgency” to change the current social conditions. Specific to IPV, this could mean organizing community programs that did not promote mandatory arrests precisely because of the disproportionate contact of men of color with law enforcement entities. Lastly, they have assumed knowledge construction will continue to be about power. Beyond the construction of discourse, they have justified the distribution of power by offering diverse modalities of knowing.

These theories have expanded knowledge creation, but some challenges and barriers for future feminists need consideration. Hurtado (2003a) succinctly mentioned ongoing challenges to include younger generations of feminists as part of the table discussions. Some avenues have been created for this scholarship to expand (Hernandez & Rehman, 2002), but more prospects were needed. Along with representation, challenges have persisted to develop paradigms complex enough to encompass contradictions and subtleties that earlier Chicana feminists could not have envisioned in an ever-expanding world of complexities. For example, understanding gender expression, identity, performance, and fluidity have far-reaching effects than previous interests to acknowledge sexual orientation inclusion. Another ongoing conversation was related to ideas that incorporated macro issues such as capitalist paternalism and spectrum-oriented

behaviors rather than static categorical and individualistic explanatory factors. These encouraged Chicana feminist scholars to continue engaged in this process of heterogeneous understanding.

To summarize, an interest on issues of violence against women emerged during the U.S. feminist movements of the 1970s. Yet, many of the research initiatives, legislative, and social policy efforts did not incorporate women of color IPV survivors or their experiences at the fringes and margins of a larger racist society. Ginorio and Reno (1986) reflected on the “triple burden of discrimination” (p. 13) that was evident for Latina IPV survivors in Seattle, Washington. These women were ignored not only on a basis of their gender but also because they were not white women, and they did not speak English. Therefore, their diverse IPV experiences were not understood so accessing help meant additional barriers for Latina IPV survivors. Ginorio and Reno’s professional practice observations in the Latino communities offered a unique contribution to the scarce texts rendered after their analysis of government reports and scholarly publications. These observations also placed in the forefront intersectional elements that were further expanded by Chicana and Black feminist scholars.

Even though within academic discourse intersectionality has continued to expand, it has been shaped by an extensive intellectual past. Notions of intersectionality have been historically rooted on the specialized knowledge created by African American women that clarified the standpoint of and for Black women (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; King, 1988; Lorde, 1984). Early stages were evident during the Reconstruction and the women’s suffrage movements of the 1800s and early 1900s (see Murphy et al., 2009 for detailed history). The modern feminist movement reemerged during the 1960s and 1970s in which Black feminist critiqued the essentialism of white feminist identity-based politics within the movement. In the 1980s and 1990s, women of color feminists formally established intersectionality theories and

brought about the introduction of sexual orientation as a category of oppression rendered by Black women and advanced by queer studies.

Crenshaw (1991, 1994) was one of the first scholars that interrogated how we exist in social contexts created by the intersections of systems of power (e.g., race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) and oppressions (e.g., prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality, and heterosexist bias). Her contributions unpacked the diverse experiences of women of color in regards to identity, social location, and structural barriers situated within multiple forms of oppression. Through the elaboration of the concept of intersectionality, she (1994) admitted attention was most often given to structural intersectionality or the interaction between the primary categories of oppressions such as race, class, and gender. These patterns served as a basis for the multitude systems of domination that affect access to power and privileges, influence social relationships, construct meanings, and shape people's everyday experiences.

As women of color scholars and activists challenged white feminism's construction of 'woman' as a monolithic identity category, they exposed how racial and gender oppressions along with their unique sociopolitical location as women of color could not be separated (Anzaldúa, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; & Lorde, 1984). A Black feminist epistemology emphasized the need to use and promote an alternative and interpretive race, class, and gender framework that dismissed additive models- those that considered race plus class plus gender- and replaced them with intersectional models (Collins, 1993, 2000; King, 1988; McCall, 2005). Intersectionality complicated the meaning and nature of our lived experiences by the self and how others responded to it. In practice, intersectionality frameworks considered that social dimensions were not mutually exclusive, static, or abstract descriptions as they were imbued with evaluations that have social consequences. This allowed for the

expression of multiple oppressions and forms of resistance that were not easily accessible through traditional methods of analysis and measurement.

Three basic assumptions of intersectionality need to be expanded to better comprehend the human experience as complex and multi-layered. First, themes of context and dynamism of intersections were critical. The context needs to be considered because as it shifted so did the meaning of race, gender, and class. Simultaneity and multiplicity posited that people most often were members of more than one community so at the same time they could experience oppression and privilege. Some theorists have suggested that, at the structural level, the relations of inequality were always present. Depending on the context as well as the issue, “race may be the more significant predictor of black women’s status; in others gender or class may be more influential (King, 1988, p. 48).”

The second assumption of the mutual constitution referred to the ways in which racism, heterosexism, and classism operated in conjunction with each other. For a gender analysis to utilize an intersectional perspective, the gender category must be used in conjunction with at least one other intersecting category of oppression to produce a more accurate depiction of the problem. Third, the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000) view asserted that race, class, and gender may be applied as descriptive demographic variables. However, the fundamental reality was that they were continuously changing social relations of inequality and systems of oppression larger than individual demographic identities. These two assumptions formed a large complex set of interlocking and self-perpetuating relations of dominations and subordination.

An intersectional analysis interrogated any unbalanced power dynamics in relationships beyond an individual-focused framework by incorporating structural, familial, and geopolitical circumstances. Based on these tenets, a homogenous experience cannot be predicted for all

undocumented young Latina women by simply recognizing their immigration status. Other factors such as their class, nativity, sexuality, and social location along with their individual experiences with oppression could function in tandem. For example, considering immigrant women that resided in battered women shelters, Crenshaw (1994) suggested that “their status as immigrants can render them vulnerable in ways that are similarly coercive, yet not easily reducible to economic class (p. 96).” Thus, those not able to secure employment as single mothers and as undocumented immigrants may be impacted not only in their housing conditions but also control and manipulation within their intimate relationships. There can also be added layers of isolation if they are far away from family and have difficulty reporting the violence.

Chicana feminists have constructed the differential and intersectional contexts for women particularly combined with borderlands theories. Hurtado (2010) described the various ways these ideas have been incorporated. This has included occupying liminal spaces (Lugones, 2003) which have resulted in the development of a *mestiza* consciousness. Hence, this concurrently embraced and rejected opposing realities, and it included critical assessment. Other Chicana feminists have called this ability a “differential consciousness” (Sandoval, 2000), “multiple realities” (Alarcon, 1990), and “multiple subjectivities” (Hurtado, 2003a). The notion was “that women who are exposed to multiple social worlds, as defined by cultures, languages, social classes, sexualities, nation states, and colonization, developed the agility to navigate and the ability to challenge linear conceptions of social reality (Hurtado, 2003a, p. 33).”

Primary intersectionality theorists have continued to confront challenges associated with demarginalizing a nontraditional paradigm in a traditional academic environment (Collins, 2000). Discords have included a) a lack of consensus on a common language, b) no clarity to define concepts, and c) disagreement on the extent to which intersectionality qualified as a

theory. Although multiple definitions have emerged, intersectionality theories, articulated women's simultaneous experiences of gender, race, and class as interdependent identities and oppressions (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). Feminist scholars have also postulated the use of intersectionality continuums (Mehrotra, 2010) to further politics and racial justice efforts. Regardless of the expansive models, Collins' (1993) quote was a reminder that intersectionality offered unique modalities of interpretation, "Recognition that one category may have salience over another for a given time and place does not minimize the theoretical importance of assuming that race, class, and gender as categories of analysis structure all relationships (p. 26)."

To conduct the subsequent literature review, multiple sources are used including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, other professional journals, dissertations, and electronic resources. Most of these sources are accessible through ProQuest, JSTOR, PsycINFO, and Social Work Abstracts. The time frame of this search began in 2012, prior to the dissertation proposal, and it continued throughout the dissertation process to capture recent publications. Throughout the analysis, important gaps and omissions in the literature were listed as they became apparent. Relevant contested issues were identified and discussed, and research implications were synthesized for each literature sub-section. The subsequent review illustrates how the evidence informed the ongoing development of the study's conceptual framework.

IPV Prevalence and Incidence Rates

The National Institute of Justice (2004) estimated nearly 1.5 million women in the United States were raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner each year. Statistics from the 2010 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) delineated that women experienced four times as many incidents of violence by an intimate partner (22%) as men (5%) (Truman, 2011). These data offered a synopsis of crime reporting from a nationally representative sample of

random households (Rand, 2009). However, these statistics did not include emotional abuse and stalking, which were integrated in the literature's IPV definition but not measured in the NCVS. Truman's (2011) findings were a reminder that only 50% of violent crimes (includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) were reported to police; this was a consistent trend in the last ten years. It was critical to decipher the data with caution, even if it was a representative sample, because it did not include many immigrant experiences.

The National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey was another national telephone survey⁶ jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The NVAW Survey findings indicated one in four women were physically abused, sexually assaulted or stalked by a spouse or dating partner in their lifetime compared to one of every 14 men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Defining physical assault as a range of behaviors, from slapping/hitting to using a gun, this survey found that 22.1% of women and 7.4% of men reported being physically assaulted by a current or former intimate partner in their lifetime. The NVAW Survey did not capture experiences of emotional violence. The extent of the IPV problem was reported but it was difficult to accurately document its prevalence given under-reported cases, societal minimization of the issue, and various types of IPV not captured in the survey (e.g., emotional abuse, stalking). These statistics only began to uncover the IPV dynamics that affect the lives of women undocumented Latina immigrant survivors.

Specific to Latino households, the IPV incidence and prevalence rates were often inconsistent. Generally, the rates of IPV experienced by Latina/Hispanic women were statistically similar with other women in national surveys. For example, the NVAW Survey found that 23.4% of Latinas reported abuse by intimate partners in their lifetime compared to

⁶ The NVAW survey was conducted from November 1995 to May 1996. It consisted of telephone interviews with a representative sample of 8,000 U.S. women and 8,000 U.S. men.

25.6% among all women in the United States (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). There was little difference between the women's reports of intimate partner physical assault and intimate partner stalking. However, Latina/Hispanic women were significantly more likely than non-Hispanic women to report rape by a current or former intimate partner in their lifetime. To support NVAW findings, the 1994 and 1998 Department of Justice reports (NCVS data) found that Hispanic and non-Hispanic women had similar IPV rates (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1994; Greenfeld et al., 1998).

In a few circumstances, prevalence rates of IPV indicated higher rates of partner violence in Latino households versus non-Latino households. Straus and Smith (1990) conducted the National Family Violence Survey with a nationally representative sample of Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites to examine etiology and incidence rates of family violence. They reported that one of four Hispanic households experience assault between married partners. Hence, the rate of IPV among Hispanics was 54% greater than that of non-Hispanic Whites. Sorenson and Telles' (1991) examined lifetime IPV prevalence rates in a community survey of U.S.-born Mexican Americans, Mexico-born Mexican Americans, and U.S.-born non-Hispanic Whites in Los Angeles, CA. Their study revealed lifetime prevalence rates highest for U.S.-born Mexican Americans (30.9%), and rates among Mexico-born Mexican Americans and U.S.-born non-Hispanic Whites reflected no significant differences (12.8% and 21.6% respectively). Various limitations of the studies made it impossible to generalize to Latina undocumented immigrants.

Additional studies have been conducted in an interest to untangle the experience of Latina IPV survivors and the rate of IPV within the Latino population (Caetano et al., 2000; Kaufman Kantor, et al., 1994; Murdaugh et al., 2004). Researchers see racial or ethnic differences dissipate after controlling for the effects of structural variables, i.e., family income, age, and economic stressors (Kaufman Kantor et al., 1994; Straus & Smith, 1990). For example

Kaufman Kantor and colleagues (1994), in examining incidence rates of IPV in three Hispanic subgroups (Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans) and a non-Hispanic White sample, found higher rates of wife assault among Whites were not significantly different from Hispanic subgroups after holding variables constant such as age and economic stressors. Other researchers conceded weaknesses in their studies that omitted culturally-relevant data. Straus and Smith (1990) cautioned overgeneralizing their findings since the respondents were selected by Hispanic surnames, and their interviews were in English only (excluded monolingual Spanish). Therefore, the findings did not incorporate accounts of Latino immigrants that have arrived more recently.

Ingram (2007) further explored this information gap with analyses of a random-digit-dial telephone survey of Latinos and non-Latinos households conducted as a post-assessment of the impact of coordinated community responses to IPV. Overall, 600 adults participated from each of the 20 sites ($N = 12,039$) and more than half of the Latinos were immigrants to the United States (52.6%). Findings indicated 57.2% of all respondents reported some type of intimate partner aggression in their lifetime and 16.2% in the past year. Latinos reported a lower percentage of lifetime experience of IPV (50.6%) than non-Latinos (58.5%) but a slightly higher percentage of past-year victimization (18.7 vs. 15.7%). Among Latinos, more non-immigrants (56.5%) than immigrants (43.5%) reported IPV. These findings mirror Sorenson and Telles' (1991) observations of higher prevalence with U.S.-born Mexican Americans compared to Mexico-born peers. Ingram's findings (2007) indicated a higher percentage of lifetime prevalence compared to other large samples, both for Latinos and non-Latinos. Multiple studies focused on diverse samples have also found 50% to 70% of the women reporting IPV (Grossman & Lundy, 2007; Hass, Dutton, & Orloff, 2000; Murdaugh et. al., 2004). Therefore, we can

postulate that IPV continued to be a serious concern that affects Latina women's wellbeing and health while also taking into consideration the serious assumption of underreporting.

The degree of violence seemed similar in immigrant and non-immigrant communities, but the severity of violence and how it was approached indicated some variations between groups of immigrants (Sokoloff, 2008). Ideally the experiences of all undocumented Latina women would be captured; however, the various modes of migration, the different immigration policies between the U.S. and Latin American countries, and the diverse arrival treatment towards immigrants of color influenced the experiences of immigrant women and these differences were not illuminated in the literature. The "Latina/Hispanic survivor" text often erroneously lumped diverse Latina immigrants into one unitary group (Ammar et al., 2005; Kasturirangan, 2003; Murdaugh et al., 2004). If all immigrant women's experiences were not generalized, we could explore how diverse immigration experiences, sociocultural factors, and sociopolitical factors impacted their experiences. This could capture a deeper understanding of the barriers of their unique situations and the ways they have overcome the violence. For the current study, I focused on the IPV experiences of Mexican, Salvadorian, and Guatemalan undocumented immigrant women to bring attention to the complexity their immigration status, ethnicity, gender, class, and immigrant-lived experiences contributed to their IPV survivorship.

IPV Help-Seeking Models

The current study aligned with Gondolf and Fisher's (1988) survivor hypothesis that provided an alternative characterization of battered women. It also countered theories of learned helplessness (Walker, 1984) which suggested that IPV victims were submissive and passive in response to the abuse. According to Walker (1979, 1984), IPV female victims "gave up" as the abuse happened and their psychological paralysis, along with an underlying masochism, required

they obtained treatment through specialized therapy. On the contrary, a survivor perspective viewed IPV victims as resilient, persistent, and strong; hence the pathological orientation of “victims” did not prevail in Gondolf and Fisher’s survivor theory. They suggested that women actively engaged in help-seeking behaviors to address the abuse/violence, but these efforts went mostly unmet. Women continually resisted their victimization even when the help-seeking efforts were unsuccessful because of institutional failures (Moe, 2007).

Their survivor hypothesis was analyzed with over 6,000 responses from interviews with women in all 50 Texas shelters (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). In their findings, it was evident shelter women did not display “victim” characteristics. Rather, they were “survivors,” acting assertively and logically in response to the violence. They contacted multiple help sources including friends and relatives as well as social services and the police. However, there were few responses that were actually helpful. Gondolf and Fisher’s implications pointed to the ways that some help agencies, designed to assist battered women, affirmed learned helplessness so these pre-disposed beliefs regarding IPV female victims (e.g., lack of self-esteem, self-blame) hindered help-seeking efforts. This survivorship perspective aligned with feminist critics of IPV research approaches that primarily investigate personal characteristics of the perpetrator or the victim (see Koss et al., 1994) while ignoring how violence was embedded within social contexts.

Scholarly efforts continued to expand on ecological and contextual approaches to better examine the impact of help-seeking and social support for IPV survivors as well as the ways in which they accessed help (e.g., Tan, Basta, Sullivan, & Davidson, 1995). Research findings indicated that social support was imperative in the lives and outcomes of IPV survivors, even though they may not ask for the support they needed at the time. Few studies offered theoretical frameworks to investigate the nature and extent of help-seeking behaviors among IPV survivors.

In some studies, the severity of the abuse was linked to the help-seeking tactics used among IPV survivors (Coker, et al., 2000; Goodman et al., 2003). They explained the process as a stage model, where “IPV survivors progress from private attempts to deal with the violence (e.g., placating and resisting) to informal support-seeking (e.g., from family and friends) and as the violence worsens (e.g., Goodman et al., 2003), survivors engage in more public help-seeking (e.g., from legal system or community agencies)” (as cited in Liang et al., 2005, p. 77).

By drawing from general models of help-seeking (Pescosolido, 1992; Srebnik, Cauce, & Bayder, 1996), Liang and colleagues (2005) explained the process among IPV survivors. The help-seeker’s internal, cognitive process was a primary interest for these models. Their theoretical framework offered explanation of how survivors decided to seek services by using three stages: problem recognition and definition, the decision to seek help, and the selection of a help provider. The authors argued that a survivor’s appraisal of her situation shaped her decisions whether and from whom to seek help. The helper she selected would also influence how she defined the problem and whether she chose to seek help again. It was worth noting that the ways in which women define IPV and seek help for IPV mutually influence each other. Ultimately, the distinct stages in this process were not linear.

In analyzing their framework, Liang and colleagues (2005) found that all help-seeking choices were influenced by individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors. For example, efforts to seek help by immigrant women were often hindered due to low social class, economic, and cultural isolation. When they immigrated, they lost social status and power, access to financial resources, and the support of family and friends left behind in their countries of origin. Hence, immigrant survivors were financially and emotionally dependent on their partners, and unable to escape from their IPV situations. Additionally, other research endeavors mentioned

language barriers and lack of education as reasons why immigrant women may be unaware of and have trouble connecting with services (Huisman, 1996). Not being able to access existing services, due to class or cultural barriers, interjected on women's hesitancy to seek help.

These frameworks offered a better comprehension of immigrant IPV survivors' experiences with seeking assistance for the violence, and they also raised implications of why IPV survivors may not always actively obtain help. To expand on this conversation, Fugate and colleagues' research (2005) presented information about a group of women that experienced abuse the year prior to data collection, had not ended the intimate relationship, and did not seek help. Rather than focus on the interventions used by abused women, they examined the reasons the women gave for not using the following sources of support: police, medical attention, counseling assistance, and informal help (defined as talking to a family member, acquaintance, or friend). With this imperative information, we have begun to understand what kept victims from accessing help as well as how social services systems need improvement to accommodate the needs of the intended users. These results particularly impacted the factors that needed to be considered when support was offered to undocumented immigrant Latina women.

Fugate and colleagues (2005) examined the help-seeking choices of abused women that participated in the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study. All respondents were screened for abuse if they entered one Chicago-area hospital and four community-based health centers. The study incorporated a comparison group of non-abused women, but this help-seeking analysis only included the interviews with abused women (n=491). Even though the sample was predominantly African-American or Black (69%); they also interviewed 22% Latina or Hispanic women. They found that contacting an agency or counselor was the least used intervention (82%) followed by 74% of the women not seeking medical care following an incident. Sixty two

percent did not call the police, and 29% did not talk to someone else about the incident, such as family and friends. Even with low numbers seeking help, 71% talked to someone close to them about the abuse, reinforcing their attempts to find support.

The most cited reason for not using formal help-seeking such as contacting an agency or counselor, not seeking medical care, and not calling the police was because they reported it was not useful or not needed. Also, women assumed that going to an agency or counselor would get their partner into trouble or they would need to leave the relationship with their partner. An important theme for not contacting the police was to protect the partner or preserve the relationship. Other responses for not seeking help included: consequences for victim or perpetrator, privacy/confidentiality, external barriers, and fear (Fugate et al., 2005). The most common reason for not talking to someone (i.e. informal support) was related to barriers and isolation. The women may want to discuss the IPV with someone but did not have anyone available. These findings were reminders that a critical examination of the approaches used to address IPV help-seeking need to acknowledge the multiple and complicated reasons why immigrant IPV women survivors do not seek help.

Before presenting help-seeking patterns of Latina immigrant IPV survivors, there needs to be acknowledgment of the societal inequalities that intersect for women IPV survivors when they seek help. Few qualitative studies have been achieved, but Moe (2007) used standpoint epistemology with battered women living in a DV shelter to offer a relevant argument for the notion of social entrapment (Ptacek, 1999) when surviving and resisting violence. This theory stated that “the combination of coercive control tactics by abusers, and social and institutional failures to adequately address battering, are largely responsible for the social entrapment of battered women (as quoted in Moe, 2007, p. 676).” This argument closely aligned with the

survivor hypothesis (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988) where women resisted their victimization but oftentimes their help-seeking efforts were unsuccessful because of institutional malfunctions. Women in Moe's study shared a myriad of help-seeking (e.g., calling the police, obtaining orders of protection, asking family or friends for support, seeking medical attention) with a few empowering moments, but most attempts were laden with failure and disappointment.

The interviews with 19 diverse women residing at an Arizona shelter brought to the forefront how the women's resistance to IPV and success at employing help-seeking tactics were shaped by structural inequalities predicated on patriarchy, poverty, racism, or ethnic bias (Moe, 2007). Most of the women seeking help were likely to face disbelief, discreditation, or hostility in their efforts. Long-term they may fair better or worse within the social welfare, criminal justice, or legal system depending on the intersection of various socio-structural inequalities in their lives (e.g., being undocumented, having a criminal record, being homeless). Women felt empowered to resist their partners' violent behaviors and to pursue safe and independent lives when they received unconditional and empathetic institutional and/or social support in response to their help-seeking efforts. Alternatively, those whose abuse was ignored or minimized when they reached out for help reported feeling deserted, silenced, and blamed for their victimization. These women were likely to internalize their hurt (through depression or suicide attempts), blame themselves, and return to their batterers. Moe's findings reminded us that, "examining the ways in which social institutions respond to battered women must involve a critical analysis of gender relations and the maintenance of institutionalized forms of patriarchy (p. 692)."

Latina Immigrants Help-Seeking Behaviors

Immigrants have responded and translated violence based on their value systems, their experiences in the labor market, the legal system, racial/ethnic relations, and immigration

adaptation (Gondolf, 1997). Therefore, immigrant IPV survivors' help-seeking behaviors need to be recognized within the social context of gender, race, class, and immigrant-status relations as well as the effects of cultural continuity and change (Bui, 2003). A description was provided below of the studies conducted in the past 20 years to identify help-seeking behaviors of immigrant IPV survivors as well as their overall experiences when accessing both informal (e.g., talking to a family member or friend about IPV, asking a priest to intervene) and formal (e.g., calling police, seeking shelter, talking to a counselor) support. A few studies that included non-Latina women's experiences (i.e. primarily comparisons to African-American and non-Hispanic White) were also presented to elaborate on the observed differences. This analysis revealed that the decisions of women to seek help or not to seek help were affected by multiple factors. An array of structural, cultural, and situational forces interacted on different levels to influence the women's help-seeking behaviors. This section offered supportive evidence for a theoretical framework that combined gender, class, race, immigration status, and culture intersections to understand the help-seeking behaviors used by undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors.

To date, one of the largest research endeavors focused on the characteristics of help-seeking and resources for battered Latina immigrant women was conducted by Ayuda Inc., a non-profit community based agency offering legal and social services in Washington, D.C. (Dutton et al., 2000). This study was modeled after the efforts of the Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services (CIRRS) from the Immigrant Women's Taskforce Study. The data examined obstacles for the Latina IPV survivors and the services used to escape the abuse prior to the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Surveys were conducted with women that experienced physical and/or sexual abuse (50%), only experienced psychological abuse (12%), and no abuse comparison group of help-seekers (38%).

Most of the women were from El Salvador (45%), with 16% from South America and 6% from Mexico. Forty-four percent reported being undocumented, the majority being from Mexico.

Their study documented the various types of help/support that women most utilized. Latina IPV survivors most often spoke to female friends or relatives (i.e. mothers and sisters) than helping professionals. They reported this type of informal support was helpful when they were encouraged to leave the abuse and received emotional support (Dutton et al., 2000). On the other end, several studies have demonstrated how women in immigrant communities often condone or disregard the abuse (Bui & Morash, 1999; Huisman, 1996; Perilla, 1999; Rodriguez, 1999). In a qualitative study with 34 Vietnamese immigrant women, Bui (2003) found that 62% talked with relatives, friends, and/or religious leaders about the IPV experiences. They employed these tactics to seek emotional support and/or advice for the IPV problem. Unfortunately, there were women that did not disclose because of the shame and fear of the abuser. Most participants initially reached out for help from their personal networks. Thus, women reported asking for assistance from the criminal justice system mostly after they could not secure help through their efforts with relatives and friends (Dutton et al., 2000; Bui, 2003).

Based on immigrant women's IPV experiences, occurrences, and intensity, the frequency of contacting the police among the women were less than would be expected. The experience of Latina IPV survivors contacting the police for help to reduce, halt, or escape the violence was further explored (Ammar et al., 2005). These results focused on interviews with 230 battered immigrant Latina women from the larger-scale project. Only 27% of the women called the police, and they were mostly from Central America; the least likely to call the police were Mexican women (7.5%). Of the women who called the police, most made three calls or less (74%). Bui's (2003) multi-site study (four Vietnamese communities in the United States: Orange

County, CA; Houston, TX; Boston, MA; and Lansing, MI) confirmed that (65%) of survivors called the police or asked their neighbors and children to call the police to report abuse incidents. In Acevedo's (2000) in-depth ethnographic interviews with ten battered immigrant Mexican women in Los Angeles, California, seven women called the police and had mixed opinions about the assistance they received. For example, two women felt their partners were quickly released from jail only for the women to experience worse violence afterwards. Language barriers and victims being ignored by police officers were also mentioned as obstacles that hindered efforts to call the police to obtain assistance for the IPV situations.

There were other help-seeking behaviors reported by immigrant IPV survivors besides connection with informal social networks and reaching out to the criminal justice system. In Acevedo's study (2000), women reached out to counselors but DV shelters were not a choice for eight of the ten women. This was mostly due to the lack of information regarding shelters. Four of the participants did not know what shelters were or that they existed. Half of the women in Bui's (2003) sample reported going to victim service agencies to seek legal and financial assistance. The most common formal services used by respondents in Dutton et al.'s study (2000) were immigration assistance (26%), maternal and child health care (25%), and health insurance (20%). In regards to government resources, Medicaid, food stamps, and free meals were most accessed and a few reported AFDC (cash assistance), workers compensation, and SSI benefits. Significant to point out, these women did not seek help specifically for IPV. Hence, Dutton and colleagues (2000) suggested that awareness of the signs of abuse and cultural sensitivity need to be a part of the efforts used by law and health care professionals. Furthermore, IPV information in Spanish needs to be shared through public service announcements (PSAs) on

radio and television as well as with grassroots women groups in the community because help-seeking efforts would not be encountered specifically within IPV-related social services.

IPV research with immigrant women has demonstrated that immigrants are less likely to access social services and informal support than their U.S. citizen counterparts due to social isolation, language barriers, discrimination, and fear of deportation (Acevedo, 2000; Ammar et al., 2005; Bui & Morash, 1999; Bui, 2003; Dutton et.al., 2000; Torres, 1991). For example, Acevedo (2000) reported that the women considered reaching out for assistance but recognized their social support systems were geographically and/or emotionally unavailable. Social isolation intensified for immigrants because their extended family support systems were outside of the country. The immigration process often leads to fragmentation of the extended family which Latina women may customarily rely upon to resolve conflict (Ginorio et al., 1995). A lack of economic sources and non-existent or limited support systems of family and friends often caused immigrant women to depend financially and emotionally on their husbands or intimate partners; consequently, they stayed in abusive relationships longer (Brabeck & Guzman, 2009). Ironically, immigrants may hold traditional values of familial ties and support, but their immigrant circumstances make these resources less available to them compared to U.S.-born survivors.

Help-Seeking Comparison Studies. Few research studies have investigated help-seeking behavior differences between Latina IPV survivors and non-Latina IPV survivors (O’Keefe, 1994). The first study was conducted using the National Alcohol and Family Violence Survey (Kaufman Kantor et al., 1994) where they obtained a national probability sample of 1,970 persons; it included an oversample of 846 Latinos, all who were living in a heterosexual couple. Researchers found that women were active help seekers (West et al., 1998); however, Latinas underutilized both informal and formal resources relative to White women. Low

acculturation, measured by preference for the Spanish language, was the only significant cultural barrier for Latinas seeking help. The research suggested an underutilization of services by battered Latinas, particularly by Mexican women.

West and colleagues (1998) elaborated on the observed differences. Taking into account the total amount of help sought, less than half of the abused Latinas in this sample sought one or more types of help, while two thirds of White women did so. Conventional patterns of help seeking were similar across ethnic groups, with friends and relatives being the most likely source of support, but Latinas sought less help from both informal and formal help sources. Specifically, White women were twice as likely to contact friends and family members, and were five times more likely than Latinas to solicit psychologists. There were no significant ethnic differences in the use of women's shelters, clergy members, or lawyers. It should be stated that more Latinas called the police while more White women consulted attorneys. Perhaps, this hinted at the differences encountered at the various help access points. Latinas and White women equally experienced severe violence, but poverty and lack of resources worsened the abuse for Latinas. Furthermore, the combination of lower educational attainment, income, and acculturation made Mexican battered women more vulnerable and isolated (West et al., 1998).

Almost ten years later, Lipsky (2006) studied a sample from a case/control hospital-based study of adult female patients seen at an urban emergency department (ED) in Dallas, Texas. Six hundred eligible patients were approached to participate in this study, including 334 cases and 266 controls. This research examined the relationship between IPV and health and social services utilization (help-seeking behaviors), with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities. Specific help-seeking behaviors were significantly associated with race and ethnicity among IPV victims. Non-Hispanic White and Black women were more likely to use housing assistance and ED services

and Black women were more likely to use police assistance compared to Hispanic women (Lipsky, 2006). In addition, non-Hispanic White women were twice as likely to use DV services compared to Hispanic women, although the association did not reach statistical significance. It was important to mention that non-Hispanic White women were nine times more likely and non-Hispanic Black women were six times more likely than Hispanic women to use the ED in the previous 12 months. This low utilization emphasized that many undocumented immigrant women, particularly Latinas, may not access emergency room assistance for IPV (Gibson, 2013).

The third comparison study was Ingram's (2007) prevalence and help-seeking research. Overall, this study concluded that Latinos reported seeking help for IPV victimization at a level similar to that of others in the general population. Help-seeking behaviors of Latinos and non-Latinos were similar (50.1 vs. 49.1%). Both groups frequently approached friends and family for help. Latinos told a family member (31.5%), a friend (29.7%), a health care worker (7.9%), the police (7.4%), and the clergy (9.6%), in that order. Non-Latinos' help seeking followed a similar pattern. They talked to a friend (31.4%), a family member (25.4%), a health care worker (11%), a friend (10.8%), the clergy (12.6%), and the police (5.9%). The differences between the two groups were that more Latinos told a family member (31.5%) than did non-Latinos (25.4%). Consequently, family services for abused women could focus on interventions that enhance family support and provide services to family members (Yoshioka et al., 2003). This would help populations who rely heavily on the family network for support to address IPV.

Ingram's research (2007) also found that Latino immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to seek help from formal agencies. There was a significant difference between Latinos and non-Latinos in knowledge of community resources for IPV (18.7 vs. 36.1%). Despite this difference, both Latinos and non-Latinos looked for similar types of services. There

were no differences between Latinos and non-Latinos in requests for information, use of court advocacy, support group participation, health care, financial assistance, child care, and job training or assistance in getting a job. The only significant difference between Latinos and non-Latinos in the types of services sought was that more non-Latinos (14.2%) than Latinos (10.2%) reported seeking access to shelters, which is consistent with the IPV literature.

In conclusion, the literature expands what we know about undocumented immigrant Latina survivors' help-seeking behaviors. Studies have considered the conditions for Latina immigrant survivors to seek or not seek formal and informal support systems. Many of the research studies conducted with Latina survivors only included a few undocumented women. To my knowledge, there was no study that had strictly focused on the help-seeking behaviors of Latina undocumented immigrant. The literature presents evidence to develop a theoretical framework that combined gender, class, race, and immigration status to promote help-seeking behavior among immigrant women. Women did not always passively accept the violence, and they used various strategies within different levels of social constraints to navigate their safety and survivorship. Their help-seeking behaviors were complex, diverse, and shaped not only by their IPV experiences but also by structural, cultural, and situational forces that can both impede and facilitate their efforts to reach out for help. As Dutton and colleagues (2000) reminded us, "The immigrant battered Latina may easily fall between the cracks of available complex systems of help because the unique web of contextual layers reflected in the nested ecology of her life may necessitate more individualized, coordinated, and comprehensive responses (p. 12)."

Immigration Context

Current estimates have discerned Latinos in the United States constitute 16% of the total U.S. population, close to 50.5 million people (Passel, Cohn, & Hugo Lopez, 2011) and have

continued to be the fastest growing ethnic minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Of these persons, 30 million (59%) are U.S. born, and 20.5 million (41%) were foreign born (Passel & Cohn, 2011, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Projections to 2050 have estimated Latinos will represent up to 29% of the U.S. population (Passel & Cohn, 2012). In Washington State, the Hispanic/Latino population doubled in the 1990s and had become 10.2% (684,021 people) of the population by 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The value of expanding research with Latino communities was significant particularly because of these population growth trends and the limited information currently available about Latina immigrants (Hazen & Soriano, 2007).

The undocumented immigrant, sometimes referred to as an ‘illegal alien’, was not always a part of the U.S. society. Ngai (2004) chronicled the origins of the illegal alien in American law and society and how illegal immigration emerged as the central problem in U.S. immigration policy in the 20th century. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act was not the first restrictive immigration law (i.e. Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and late 19th and early 20th century exclusions of “undesirable aliens”); however, it was the first time numerical limits on global immigration were established via a racial and national hierarchy that favored some immigrants over others. These restrictions, precisely of Mexican immigrants, engendered the illegal alien as a new political ‘impossible subject,’ - “inclusion within the nation was both a social reality and a legal impossibility since they had no rights and barred from citizenship (Ngai, 2004, p. 5).”

Ngai argued that undocumented immigrants were seen as cheap and disposable labor for the economic fabric of the nation, so their marginalization to lower social strata work options situated them outside the boundaries of formal membership and social legitimacy. Mexicans and Central Americans have continued to make up the vast majority of undocumented immigrants today. They have experienced high levels of poverty and disfranchisement as embodied

stereotypical illegal aliens. Oftentimes media images and public discourse of unauthorized immigrants focus on border-crossing Latinos, so this has fostered a racialization of the illegal immigrant category (De Genova, 2002; Dick, 2011). Thus, U.S. immigration discussions have occurred in a polemical context where race, ethnicity, and language were politically charged (Dick, 2011). For example, 52% of U.S. adults believed that recent immigrants “cause problems”; the majority of U.S. adults (69%) also believed undocumented immigrants should “be prosecuted and deported for being in the U.S. illegally” (Rasmussen Reports, 2007).

Contrary to public opinion, over half of Latinos living in the U.S. were born in this country. Furthermore, half of the foreign born Latinos were legal residents (about 10 million) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Almost 11 million Latinos were unauthorized, and they represented 82% of undocumented residents in the U.S. but only made up 3.7% of the nation’s population (Passel & Cohn, 2011). Inaccurate depictions of actual unauthorized Latino immigrants have skewed the public discourse on immigrants to be de-humanizing and racist. Hence, the majority of Latinos perceived themselves to be the targets of bias (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). These hostile attitudes may be conjoined with the increasing visibility of the U.S. Latino population but also to the growing association between race and undocumented immigration legal status (DeGenova, 2005; Dick, 2011). This climate has also impacted Latino legal citizens because they were perceived as being unauthorized and subjected to restrictive rights and entitlements while the worthiness of their citizenship was questioned (DeGenova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003).

The Latino presence in the U.S. and their migration was different from earlier European immigrants in crucial ways. First, the Latino immigrant flows were directly related to the needs of the U.S. empire expansion. Gonzalez’ (2011) deciphered the political reasons to stabilize neighboring countries and to accept refugees (e.g., Salvadorans, Guatemalans) as a way to

accomplish foreign policy objectives. The economic need also played a role for immigrants (e.g., Mexicans) to satisfy the labor demands of particular U.S. industries. Second, Latin American immigrants were not afforded a mainstream status like most white European immigrants; rather they were categorized into a linguistic/racial caste status. Third, most Latino immigrants arrived to the U.S. during the postindustrial period. This meant Latinos did not have the option to work at unskilled factory jobs to rise into the middle class like European immigrants.

Contextual effects have been observed through the stipulations of the Bracero Program (migrant guest worker program began in the 1940s and continued through the 1960s) and the policies that followed. The Bracero Program purposively did not recruit women to ensure men would not settle and assimilate in the U.S.; hence, they would return to their families in Mexico. However, in the last 30 years, a continued increase in labor migration and settlement has altered the complexity of migration and the family. As a way to reduce immigration, Congress passed the landmark Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 which had three provisions: increased border enforcement, employer sanctions for those hiring the unauthorized, and a legalization program that allowed those who could demonstrate they had lived in the U.S. for five years to apply for permanent residence (Chavez, 2001). Ironically, an unintended result of IRCA was the increased number of authorized (and unauthorized) migrants in the country. Scholars have suggested this policy transformed a circular migratory flow into permanent settlement (Cornelius & Lewis, 2006; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). This encouraged a large number of women and children to settle long term in the U.S.

This context has impacted the limitations imposed on Latino immigrants as their numbers continued to expand. For example, the U.S. Census counted 94,000 Salvadoran-born people in the U.S. in 1980. Today more than 1.2 million Salvadorans live in U.S., nearly 20% of their

homeland's population. Similar increases occurred for Guatemalans (from 71,642 to 226,000) during the same period. As Gonzalez (2011) emphasized, "vicious civil wars and the social chaos those wars engendered forced the region's people to flee, and in each case, the origins and spiraling intensity of those wars were a direct results of military and economic intervention by our own government (p. 127)." In Menjivar's pivotal work (2000), it was indeed denoted that Salvadoran immigrants had faced serious hardships. Many fled the political conflict in their home country, but they did not receive political asylum or resettlement aid once in the U.S. However, they continued to enter the U.S. because they had family and friends who had migrated earlier and helped them make the journey. Ultimately, friends and family networks were the most noteworthy factors of the migration of Salvadorans in recent years (Menjivar, 2000).

Another critical point during this increased migration was the 1994 ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This had intense impacts on people migrating from Mexico to the United States even though it was not an explicit immigration policy. A flood of subsidized corn imported into Mexico from U.S. impacted about 1.5 million rural families that were driven out of business (Gonzalez, 2011). Before NAFTA, an average of 350,000 Mexicans was migrating to the U.S. annually. By the early 2000s, this was nearly 500,000 per year (Zavella, 2011). Today, workers in Mexico's export manufacturing sector, the maquiladora factories, earn much less than their previous wages. These earnings do not provide basic necessities for a family and not to mention the increasing safety concerns that disproportionately impact women and girls (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2009). NAFTA's labor rules did not provide Mexican workers with workplace rights. Thus, many of these workers eventually choose the hardships and uncertainties of crossing the border (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001; Hagan, 2008) for

the certainty of long hours in unhealthy conditions for below-subsistence wages (Gutierrez de Soldatenko, 1999; Cleaveland, 2012, Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

Two major impacts to the way immigrants in the U.S. interfaced with social services included the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). These laws had the following effects: terminated welfare benefits for all undocumented immigrants and for some legal immigrant residents; made deportation mandatory for a range of offenses; and virtually eliminated administrative discretion in deportation cases by curtailing judicial review. Legal permanent residents have continued to live under permanent probation because they can be deported for certain offenses (certain IPV and DV aggravated offenses included) regardless of how long they have lived in the country. The legislation reconfigured the space between legal and illegal immigration and widen the grounds that turn legal immigrants into “illegal aliens.”

Within the opening decades of the 21st century, we have witnessed a sharp rise in racial nativism in the United States (Chavez, 2001; Santa Ana, 2002). In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, the USA Patriot Act (2001) established a national security regime that allowed arrests and detainments of individuals, many without charge. Arabs and Muslims became the most visible and feared racialized persons. Latinos became more vulnerable to detentions, interrogations, or deportations without due process (De Genova & Peutz, 2010). Racial nativism and xenophobia made it nearly impossible for undocumented immigrants to legalize their status. Thus, even as immigrants have become a larger and more visible part of American society, alienage remained a conspicuous category of difference. The

public condemnation of migrants who lived in close proximity to U.S. citizens also offered opportunities for immigrant coalitions to form as the complexities were better deciphered.

Immigration and Gender. For women immigrants arriving under these circumstances, their experience were marked by the gendered and racialized interactions they participated in via employment, education, and/or social relationships. In the post-IRCA era, women were about one-third of the unauthorized migrants (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). By 1995, women were 57% of authorized migrants from Mexico (Cerrutti & Massey, 2001). In 2008, an estimated 11.9 million undocumented immigrants were residing in the United States, 4.1 million of whom were women (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Increasingly women migrated with the support of their own social networks and without authorization (Segura & Zavella, 2007).

Transformations in U.S. labor markets, modifications in U.S. immigration policies that emphasized family reunification, and shifting gender relations in Mexico changed the sex composition of Mexican immigrants (Greenlees & Saenz, 1999). Women were less likely to cross the border by themselves compared to men, and women were much more likely to use the services of a recommended coyote in their communities (Donato & Patterson, 2004). Women often articulated economic rationales for migrating, especially in relation to their children, or the desire to join up with family in the U.S. (Malkin, 2007; Velasco Ortiz, 2007). That women viewed these economic responsibilities as their primary impulse for migrating indicated that gender relations were shifting in Mexico (Zavella, 2011).

Interestingly, Menjivar (2000) expanded the understanding of gendered networks. With consideration of the resources available to men and women, the immigrants in her study faced structure of opportunities that limited the resources they had available to assist one another. The gender ideologies and cultural prescriptions subdivided immigrants' participation in informal

networks. Men and women confronted the situation in different ways because gender mediated the effects of larger structures on these individuals' informal networks of exchange. In general, women had fewer financial and material resources with which to help others, and this placed them at a disadvantage in exchanges of financial or material help.

As important, women were frequently in charge of seeking out the assistance of community organizations and other local institutions to fulfill the needs of their families. This increased opportunities for expanding their networks with other women in similar situations. They could also personalize ties with those who ran the organizations. Women's participation in the public sphere allowed them to establish networks independent from those of men. Their networks were key in disseminating information ranging from employment to housing to various institutions in the host society. For women, this increased their social capital, and their links provided them access to a wider range of resources and activities (Menjivar, 2000).

Intersections of IPV and Immigration Status

In regards to intersectionality theorizing specific to IPV, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) provided a focus on the social structural underpinnings of IPV in culturally diverse communities. These approaches questioned the universality of IPV experiences, traditional IPV definitions, and primacy of gender inequality to explain IPV. Tensions between culture and structure were also considered. For example, although culture may be crucial to understand and combat IPV, this cannot simply rest on notions of culture. Rather, it must address how different communities' cultural experiences of violence were mediated through structural forms of oppression, such as racism, colonialism, economic exploitation, and heterosexism. Sokoloff and Pratt's (2005) edited book also offered examples of programs that have been developed to incorporate these larger theoretical framings that complicated the understanding of IPV. These efforts have included

community and intergenerational attempts as well as family interventions not specific to the IPV but incorporating other issues that impacted the families and their contexts.

Specific to IPV research, Abraham (2000) proposed an ethno-gender approach to understand the simultaneity of lived experience and structured conditions based on ethnicity and gender. This ethno-gender approach required a deeper understanding of complexity in the lives of undocumented immigrant women that have experienced partner violence. For these women, IPV was not necessarily the only or primary violence shaping family life (Bograd, 2005; Richie, 2005). For example, undocumented women that arrived in the U.S. through clandestine avenues may experience violence at the border crossing or later experience violence in their communities (patriarchy, isolation) or U.S. society (labor markets, social interactions). Intersectionality theorists suggested that no one dimension, such as gender inequality, exclusively explained violence against women; gender inequality was modified by its intersection with other systems of power and oppression. Moreover, it was important to situate these voices within the social and systemic structures of inequality (i.e. race, gender, class, and immigrant status) that hindered and shaped the lives of women (Sokoloff, 2008).

Menjivar & Salcido (2002) concluded that incidence of DV for immigrants were no higher than that of the general population; however, their social position as immigrants was exacerbated by the social structured systems of inequality in their lives. Because of the continuous efforts of women of color, the anti-domestic violence community has begun to recognize and challenge the system's insensitivity to race and class. Regrettably, domestic violence research has frequently ignored the impact of immigration status and the role that anti-immigrant sentiment plays in law, policy, and the provision of services to battered women (Dasgupta, 2005). Sokoloff (2008) expanded on the unique ways immigrants dealt with and

challenged IPV in their communities in the U.S. This included harm reduction on a continuum of safety rather than leaving being the goal (person should be safe whether they leave or not), grassroots organizing, and immigrant women positioned as the experts to create social and personal change.

A vital example remained critical of the entrusted power granted to an abusive spouse in regards to a woman's ability to adjust their immigration status (Dasgupta, 2005). A doctrine of patriarchy has often reified unbalanced immigration patterns and processes (Bhuyan, 2008). Therefore, male spouses were granted the power to decide when and if they would petition legal status for their female counterparts. Ammar and Orloff (2005) summarized some of the many immigrant-status-related abuses that locked women into their relationship with their abusers and kept them from leaving. These included (1) abusers threatened to call Homeland Security (i.e., threaten deportation, threaten to withdraw or withdrew immigrant papers), (2) failed to file papers to confer legal immigrant status on her or the children, (3) refused access to documents she needed for legal immigration status application, (4) and used her lack of legal immigrant status and her inability to speak English to argue that she should not have legal custody of her children. These examples demonstrated the barriers still present in these situations.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, 1994) guaranteed certain rights to battered immigrant women and their children, documented and undocumented, including the right to gain legal permanent resident (LPR) status through self-petition or suspension of deportation (Orloff & Kelly, 1995). VAWA 2000 attempted to remedy some of the VAWA 1994 concerns by offering battered immigrant women not covered by VAWA 1994 access to a new crime victim visa (u-visa) and by creating a waiver of deportation for some battered immigrants with domestic violence related convictions (Orloff, 2000). In 1996, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility

Act (IIRRA) also allowed documented and undocumented immigrants battered by U.S. citizen or LPR spouses some rights to public benefits once they filed a VAWA case or a family-based visa petition. Eligibility depended on when they first entered the United States, whether they could prove that their need for benefits was related to the abuse, and in the case of food stamps or social security benefits, whether they or their spouse (if they were still married) had 10 years of recognized work history. IIRRA exempted battered immigrants from deeming rules, so the battered spouse was no longer deemed to have access to the abuser's income. This facilitated a survivor's ability to receive aid.

Orloff (1999) demonstrated that immigrants in all states, as a matter of federal law, were legally entitled to crisis counseling, police intervention, assistance from child protective services, shelter and transitional housing for up to 2 years, treatment for mental illness or substance abuse, and other health assistance without having to provide verification of immigrant status. Further, the 1997 federal legislation allowed women to have access to lawyers trained in DV to assist them in domestic violence cases regardless of immigrant status. Unfortunately, immigrant women battered by their boyfriends could not receive corporation-funded legal services under this provision. Despite the efforts of violence against women and immigrants' rights advocates, anti-immigrant U.S. laws remained that continued to prevent immigrant women from receiving all the assistance they needed and constrained their options regarding leaving abusive partners.

Another important example of these dynamics was the concept of "marrying for papers." Facing constrained avenues for legalization, immigrant women sometimes married U.S. citizens or permanent residents in the hope of obtaining permanent legal status. A woman interviewed by Menjivar (2006) was on her fourth marriage- two marriages were to gain legalization and two were "for love." However, her legal status was still in limbo, and her political asylum application

had been turned down. Women with conditional immigration status have indicated that as long as they are subject to legal dependency, they experienced battering similar to an undocumented woman who lacked the possibility of legal status (Salcido & Adelman, 2004). Furthermore, not all undocumented women pursue marriage to obtain legalization, so we cannot assume this was a common trend or that a heightened vigilance was needed for supposed marriage fraud. Careful precautions were needed because most undocumented immigrant women that experience violence by their intimate partners did marry for love. Obtaining papers through marriage was a secondary possibility for the women in the current investigation and only available for very few.

In Salcido and Adelman's (2004) study, the women's narratives revealed the complex connections between illegality and battering, including the maneuvers used to survive domestic violence. To survive, some of the women worked illegally and drove without a license. Second, the intersection of domestic violence and immigration was discussed at length. Narrative illustrations highlighted what other researchers have mentioned (Menjívar & Salcido, 2002) about abusive husbands threatening to call immigration officers, withdrawing petitions for the legal permanent residency (LPR) or destroying legal paperwork. For example, one respondent's partner used his citizenship to control her, so the immigration policy served as a convenient battering strategy. His actions affected her ability to move her immigration paperwork forward. She was quoted, "I have seen everything go wrong, and I would like to be able to take off, but I cannot leave...He has me tied with the blessed and damned papers" (Salcido & Adelman, 2004, p. 167). Lastly, they examined the women's narratives about illegality and battering; this provided information of how immigrant women's experiences with IPV were distinct from those of U.S. citizens. This area of study continued to require additional investigation.

Summary

In the 1980s, Zambrano's bilingual (Spanish and English) book "*Mejor sola que mal acompañada*" was one of the few publications offering DV victims advice and encouragement to seek help as well as acknowledging the barriers Latinas encounter. Zambrano's text (1985), locally published, evoked the expression translated as "better to be alone than in bad company" to connect with Latina survivors' cultures, immigrant experiences, and gendered relationship expectations. Since then, while an interest in Latina women's lives has increased in the violence against women scholarship, information remains limited. To address this ongoing gap that was cited almost 30 years ago, the present study used a Chicana feminist survivor perspective to further explore the IPV experiences of Latina immigrant survivors migrating to Washington State in the 1990s and 2000s. This study provides persuasive data that illuminates the multiple intersections in the women's lived experiences as undocumented immigrant IPV survivors and how they survived the violence in a country that continued to marginalize their existence.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The current qualitative study used an intersectional lens to empirically explore how intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences of 20 Latina immigrant women (living in western Washington State) were impacted by their immigration status, ethnicity, class, and gender. A better understanding of how IPV phenomena intersected with undocumented immigration status for Latinas was especially warranted. This investigation yielded culturally-relevant prevention and intervention tools to address accessibility of social support networks for undocumented Latinas and their children exposed to the violence. Eventually, it will better inform social welfare researchers and practitioners as they assist undocumented immigrant survivors. The study addressed the following empirical questions: 1) How does the immigration context of Latina women survivors living in Washington State impact their IPV experience?; 2) What formal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social service programs/agencies?; and 3) What informal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social support networks?

This chapter delineates the study's research methodology and the process that informs how the methodology was implemented. The following are included: 1) rationale for a critical qualitative approach beginning with phenomenology, and expanding testimonio and community-based participatory research practices, 2) research sample and research site description, 3) information about the measures, 4) research design and data collection methods, 5) analysis and synthesis of data, 6) ethical considerations, 7) issues of trustworthiness, and 8) methodological limitations. The chapter concludes with a brief summary setting the stage for the analytical findings presented in the subsequent chapters.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Congruent with my feminist and constructivist epistemological stance (Harting, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2000), one central goal of this study was to collaborate and corroborate with participants rather than derive generalizable results. Specific to vulnerable communities which are rarely invited to participate in research, or hesitant to be involved due to previous misrepresentations or abuses (e.g., Smith, 1999), critical qualitative methods offered the best available research for emerging problems or for applying evidence to diverse populations (Hurtado, 2003) in contact with social work practitioners. As a woman of color feminist scholar, my commitments were focused on research that countered traditional positivist paradigms. Thus, qualitative inquiry provided a space for research questions that addressed the complexities of the sociocultural world and how they were experienced, interpreted, and understood within a specific context and point in time (Carter & Little, 2007; Howitt, 2010; Silverman, 2011). This research design emphasized discovery and in-depth description while the objectives focused on interpreting the meaning of an emic experience to achieve a holistic rather than reductionist understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Sandelowski, 2004; Patton, 1990).

Previous quantitative studies have expanded the understanding of the IPV phenomenon; yet findings were often used to inform practices in health settings or help-seeking contexts which continue to be limited to Latina immigrants. For example, Kelly (2006) identified fear to disclose abuse to health-practitioners or fear the abuse would be detected were reasons why Latina battered women would not share about the abuse they experienced from their partners. Hence, the health-practitioners could not offer help if they were unaware of the IPV. Interestingly, the women wanted to be asked about the IPV and to receive help despite their fears. Unfortunately, if the violence remained a secret, it was difficult to address the IPV effects. Quantitative

approaches have attempted to explain or predict IPV by recording prevalence rates, incidence rates or by analyzing risk factors that affect IPV severity or intergenerational IPV transmission (see Chapter 2). However, the current qualitative study added complexity to the current theory assumptions of generalizability and also illuminated contemporary issues of injustice and assistance barriers for undocumented IPV survivors.

The use of qualitative inquiry in previous investigations has begun to magnify the IPV experiences for Latina undocumented survivors living precisely in this current sociopolitical moment where anti-immigrant sentiment is openly voiced and accepted. Parson and colleagues (2016) offered a deeper explanation of the fears associated with immigration status, language barriers, economic and housing barriers, as well as discrimination and racism by using multiple qualitative methods (i.e. semi-structured interviews, focus groups, in-depth life histories). They discussed the structural and normalized violence Latina women experienced in New Jersey and the systems of care they accessed. The detailed accounts yielded the use of integrated social service responses as key health care responses to address the needs of immigrant women. These findings have continued to impact social work advocacy responses and support for vulnerable populations beyond the numbers underlining IPV as a problem requiring our attention. Similar empirical efforts were the objectives of the current research study.

Constructivist approaches have been used to qualitatively explore a deeper and richer understanding of the complex and holistic lived experience (Profitt, 2000) of women survivors of violence/abuse. Furthermore, issues of representation and social responsibility have been considered for this type of investigation (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 1997). However, a thorough understanding of IPV in marginalized undocumented Latina immigrant communities was largely missing from this body of knowledge. Recent endeavors by Reina and colleagues

(2014) have started to make major contributions by highlighting the multiple needs for undocumented immigrant women and the barriers that were encountered when seeking help. Methodologically, the current study engaged with novel, creative, and insightful ways of knowing in the field of social work. By accessing the voices of the survivors directly and differently by allowing them to tell their story via testimonios, it broadened the conversation of what was known about their cultural experiences (Brabeck, 2001, 2003). Hence, this study situated critical theory paradigms precisely to expand the limited information that was available about the phenomenon in question under the precarious social context for undocumented Latina immigrants.

Rationale for Phenomenology

Phenomenology in this study used thick description (Sandelowski, 2000) and close analysis of the lived experience to assess how meaning was created through embodied perception (Sokolowski, 2000). It aimed to capture a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday happenings (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Phenomenology was used to comprehend Latina survivors' interpretations of their relationship to the world and the phenomena of interest: IPV intersections with undocumented immigration status. This was done to gain insightful accounts of the way the women experienced the world around them (van Manen, 1984, 2006). The German philosopher and phenomenology founder, Husserl (1859-1938), referred to the 'world' as a world experienced and made meaningful by acts of consciousness. The primary task of phenomenology was to describe this experience of the world as given in immediate experience and prior to any other interpretation (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

This methodological stance required a dynamic interplay of four processes delineated by van Manen (1984). First, the phenomena being investigated had serious interests tied to my

personal commitments to make sense of the human existence of undocumented women IPV survivors. Second, I studied the experience as it was previously lived by the women rather than as it was conceptualized by others. This required I would be present in the midst of living relations and shared situations. The women talked about the coping and meaning-making that they engaged in as survivors of IPV throughout their survivorship process. The third phase required reflection on the essential themes which characterized the phenomena. A distinction between appearance and essence brought to the forefront the things that were obscure: that which grounds the people, moments, and interactions of our experiences. The final step encompassed the description of the phenomena through re-writing and analyzing the information (Sandelowski, 2000). The phenomenological process provided the ground work to gather evidence of lived experiences, but other methodologies were also essential.

My initial goal situated the knowledge as being subjective and tied to relative realities (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) of undocumented Latina IPV survivors. Phenomenology lacked the political stance from which the women revealed their experiences. The phenomenological steps reassured that these lived stories uncovered details that would not only inform the research process, but also highlighted essential themes that were unique to undocumented IPV survivors. Along with personal commitments that first motivated my interests to empirically investigate the problem, the themes that the women identified as important required a larger scope of analysis. Therefore, phenomenology was combined with testimonio and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodologies to maintain the study's core essence to empower other women in these communities as well as to offer others awareness into their lived realities.

Rationale for Testimonio Methodology

Testimonio emerged as a method from the field of Latin American Studies to document the experiences of oppressed groups and to denounce injustices (Beverly, 1992, 2004, 2005; Booker, 2002). Initially, testimonio was seen as a literary form but it has been rethought as a critical race methodology (Felman & Laub, 1992; Huber, 2009; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012) providing alternative scientific inquiry. As a literary form, critical stories of injustices have been exposed. This has included the human rights violations that Indigenous people in Guatemala faced under abusive military dictatorships (Menchú & Burgos-Debray, 1984); the 1937 Haiti massacre ordered by dictator Trujillo in the Dominican Republic to annihilate an entire group of people (Danticat, 1998); and the political commitment of four sisters that suffered retaliation after planning to overthrow the Trujillo dictatorship (Alvarez, 1994). All these texts divulged stories of collective trauma and loss which were critical to Latin America liberation movements.

The use of testimonio has been questioned particularly when deciphering notions of “Truth.” A specific case was of Rigoberta Menchú’s (1984) account being the subject of increasing controversy. American anthropologist, David Stoll, traveled to Guatemala and interviewed Menchu’s family and neighbors to later discredit what Menchú vividly imparted in her book. Stoll (1999) claimed that Menchú invented or overstated many of her reports, including being a witness to her younger brother’s public death at the hands of the Guatemalan military. Though published as an autobiography, Menchu’s book used storytelling and the literary tradition of testimonio. Therefore, as a speaker, she presented the story of an entire community as though it were her own. Hence, its portrayal of the injustices that the entire Indigenous population faced in Guatemala made the book accurate.

These critiques have encouraged other researchers to write about testimonio as not being strictly about an absolute truth (Beverly, 2004; Partnoy, 2003). Rather, its form has served as a

tool for building a solidarity discourse with victims of state terrorism or other forms of injustices. Thus, it can engender and regenerate this discourse of solidarity. Specifically relevant for the current study, Partnoy (2003) advocated for centering “the ways the survivor and her story built a web of solidarity relationships (semiotic plane) rather than asking if the words of the survivor represented in all truth the real world that she wanted to describe (mimetic plane)” (p. 176). Also, it was important to be aware that the women may have withheld secrets about culture or details of their lives, for political or safety reasons, so the stories narrated may not reveal the entire truth. In this form, testimonio has been reclaimed as a tool for women of color to theorize oppression, resistance, and subjectivity (Latina Feminist Group, 2001).

Testimonio may have a complicated history, but it also encapsulates Latina immigrants’ complex, layered lives. As a methodology, testimonio has carved a space within academia to recognize sources of knowledge that were often ignored and delegitimized (Huber, 2009). Historically in the feminist movement, Latinas have also engaged in the political praxis of feminist consciousness-raising (Hurtado, 1998) and testimonio has been an imperative method for this research praxis. Chicana feminist standpoint has advanced the process of testimonio from method to methodology by allowing the co-construction of knowledge through collaborative data analysis (Brabeck, 2001). Borrowing from Huber’s (2009) model, the participants agreed their meaning of testimonio was “a verbal journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racial, classed, gendered and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment and advocacy for a more humane present and future” (p. 643). Therefore, the testimonios allowed participants to work in collaboration with me on how knowledge about their experience was represented.

The reasons to center testimonio are evident throughout the iterations of the study's procedures. First, these testimonios were guided by the narrator's will to share events that she viewed as significant to recount the situation's urgency (Yudice, 1991). Even though there was minimal writing available documenting the embodied effects of the violence through testimonio (see Flores-Ortiz, 2003), the women disclosed explicit circumstances where their bodies and spirits still hold on to the trauma. Second, their stories were often presented as a collective experience rather than an individual one. During the initial participant recruitment, it became apparent that the women were most interested in centering their stories to benefit future service provision and community support for other survivors. Even though the women shared their individual stories, their motivation and intention was very deliberate: 1) to help other women that were still in violent relationships and 2) to speak about the ways in which they would change barriers they experienced throughout the survivorship process. There was a sense of urgency that their stories would have an impact on those women currently experiencing IPV because they knew first-hand of the hardships associated with this process of trying to survive and overcome.

Being rooted in story-telling was significant and the third reason to use testimonio. Simply understanding the depths of IPV and undocumented immigration phenomena did not resonate with the women's intentions to participate. This collaborative process was also vital to learn from each other's differences rather than reaffirming essentialist categories. This process reflected what has been revealed by other Latina scholars: "it was through telling life stories and reflecting upon them that we gained nuanced understandings of difference and connections among us. Through testimonio we learned to translate ourselves to each other." (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 11). These revelations established respect and a deeper understanding between me and the women interviewed for the project. Furthermore, their participation interests aligned

with Hurtado's (1998) assertions that scholarship can potentially result in political action aimed at social change with a focus on the struggle rather than on victimhood.

Finally, testimonio uncovered new knowledge about experiences that were often untold by the academy and to connect others to the realities of undocumented Latina survivors of IPV. It can be seen as a crucial means to witness and inscribe into history the lived realities that "otherwise succumb to the alchemy of erasure" (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 2). A general emphasis in feminist IPV research has strategically focused on the common experiences of IPV survivors in the interest of forging a strong feminist movement to end woman abuse. However, this approach has continued to silence marginal voices. One strength of testimonio was to connect human beings in ways that enable us to bear witness to struggles of those beyond our own. It was also a way to conduct feminist research on socio-political stories and make visible the ways in which systemic issues and dominant discourses impact the IPV experiences of undocumented immigrants. It extended our understanding of the ongoing barriers and illustrated the injustices that were being witnessed and lived in current anti-immigrant contexts. This resulted in a deeper understanding of the experiences of women of color hence the impact of centering issues of importance for these communities rather than leaving them at the margins (Spivak, 1988). For the women sharing their testimonios, it was significant for collective responsibility and to address the issues that other immigrant women continued to undergo.

Community-Based Participatory Research

The third methodological stance incorporated elements of community-based participatory research (CBPR); it was used as an orientation to the research process in combination with the two methodologies mentioned above. CBPR was often described as valid and critical research

that included three interrelated components: participation, research, and action (Minkler, 2005; Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). The following CBPR definition was used in this study:

A collaborative process that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities (Israel et al., 2008, p. 174).

Community engagement and social action (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010) were goals of this study. Hence, the use of CBPR balanced power relations between me, the academic, and my community research partners; it also linked the junctures of science and practice to improve health equity (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006, 2010) for undocumented women.

With a CBPR orientation, there was an opportunity for the research to be transformative and to strive for the elimination of health disparities related to IPV. Because the community that would be impacted by the results was a part of the dialogue throughout the various research steps (Wallerstein, Duran, Minkler, & Foley, 2005), it offered a genuine voice to an underserved community (Chavez et al., 2008) which can increase the likelihood of an intervention being successful. The use of CBPR in other IPV studies also guided some of the decisions made in the current study. For example, Wahab and colleagues (2014) relied on the wisdom from African-American IPV survivors and a community partner to implement a culturally tailored intervention using motivational interviewing to reduce depression severity of African-American women that had experienced IPV. In another study (Sukhera, Cerulli, Gawinski, & Morse, 2012), the inclusion of diverse Honduran community leaders (both female and male) allowed for a prevention program to explore local perceptions and experiences of IPV. The researchers gathered imperative information about cultural norms, community hierarchies, and gender roles that were pertinent for a successful intervention. Similarly, a third study (Shoultz, Magnussen,

Manzano, Arias, & Spencer, 2010) highlighted that an awareness of individual and group perspectives regarding cultural norms and expectations, socioeconomic forces, and relationship factors allowed them to address IPV in relevant ways within the specific cultural groups.

Specific to Latina immigrants in the U.S., a few studies have too been developed for effective interventions with abused Latinas and the community-based organizations that served them (Bloom et al., 2009; Gonzalez-Guarda, Cummings, Becerra, Fernandez, & Mesa, 2013). For example, a study that combined CBPR with photovoice methodology (Moya, Chávez-Baray, & Martinez, 2014) augmented the response to IPV as well as access to sexual and reproductive health services. The recommendations were achieved through a promotora training program on IPV and sexual health. This extended beyond HIV and sexually transmitted infections risk behaviors and highlighted disease prevention within a wellness and health promotion framework. Likewise, they were able to propose a call of action to immediately provide improvement to sexual and reproductive health for the survivors. These scenarios provided precedence to honor CBPR in the current study.

There were multiple barriers that CBPR helped address through the applied processes. For example, external validity was strengthened by engaging community stakeholders to adapt the results within complex cultural contexts and organizational systems (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). An initial awareness of how Spanish-speaking women sought services as well as the budgetary constraints for program development played a role in the considered solutions and interventions. Another challenge attended to was the evidence that was privileged in academia (Israel et al., 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). With CBPR, a space was created for culturally supported interventions and community advocacy. In this project, the voices of the women and their concern to share results with the larger community required that an alternative space be

used rather than simply publishing the findings in academic writing. Hence the creation of the community radio programs that were coordinated with advocates that interacted with the women in various settings. This process also decentralized business as usual by shifting power through bidirectional learning (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008) and having shared resources, collective decision making, and outcomes that would benefit the community. A final barrier that CBPR addressed was the lack of trust that communities often have towards academics. In this process, we formed a memorandum of understanding and sustained longer-term relationships to promote mutual benefit rather than taking their stories and leaving nothing in return.

Due to the time constraints of the dissertation project, the model of CBPR was not fully applied in every step of the study. Therefore, CBPR principles and values informed the study. A diligent process was used to identify the key components where collaboration was imperative. This began with defining the problem and the research aims with survivors and social service providers to address relevant research questions the community identified. The interview guide questions were co-written with four Latina immigrant survivors residing at a temporary transitional housing program. Two pilot interviews at the beginning of the data collection process provided an opportunity to refine the final wording. In subsequent chapters, more details were illustrated about ways the research process tried to achieve balance between knowledge generation and intervention (e.g., community meetings with DV advocates to review analyses, community radio show to disseminate results to larger Spanish-speaking audiences) for the mutual benefit of all partners (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008).

Research Setting

Trust from the participants was crucial because undocumented immigrants continue to live in the shadows- afraid to disclose their immigration status to others. The added layer of

sharing about the intimate partner violence also required that respondents were willing to remember and recall difficult moments in their lives. Interviewee recruitment began at one community mental health non-profit agency and involved deliberate planning due to the sensitivity of the issues. Four years before conducting the research, I began various work with Consejo Counseling and Referral Services in Seattle, Washington whose standard practices integrated Latino ancestry and cultural values. In a 2010 presentation my engagement was peripheral as an invited speaker at their 7th annual Latino Behavioral Health conference. Later, I was employed as a part-time child advocate in their housing programs working with survivors of domestic violence and their children. I was no longer an employee when participant recruitment and data collection began, but I maintained ongoing connection with Consejo's leadership team. These relationships allowed for the project to incorporate CBPR components and for these efforts to be integrated in future programming and service delivery.

Consejo is a certified outpatient Community Mental Health Center by the State of Washington Mental Health Division. Their programming has included a domestic violence and sexual assault team that offers mental health counseling, therapeutic support groups, case management, legal advocacy, children's programs, and transitional housing. In 2010, their domestic violence department was honored with the Northwest Immigrants Rights's Project (NWIRP) Outstanding Community Partner Award for working in partnership to provide advocacy and guidance to Latina/o immigrant survivors of domestic violence. Part of these efforts included a media campaign to confront domestic violence and promote culturally-responsive mental health services. Hence, the recruitment information was also disseminated to their community partners and other agencies that IPV survivors accessed.

Recruitment began at this western WA non-profit agency that specialized on mental health services for the Latino population. For over 35 years Consejo (word meaning advice in Spanish) has provided culturally-competent behavioral health services to the growing yet underserved Latino communities in Washington State with a focus on families with children. As part of their standard assessment practice, they ask individuals about their immigration status. This facilitated the recruitment process since the organization's staff members were able to refer Latina immigrant IPV survivors that met the criteria. Staff members (DV advocates, legal advocates, sexual assault advocates, and housing coordinators) reached out to their colleagues that provide services to this population. Washington State's Coalition Against Domestic Violence was also informed about the study but recruitment efforts were most successful with the local agency and their collegial referrals. A copy of the recruitment flyer is included in Appendix A. It was crucial to maintain the women's safety, privacy, and confidentiality; these issues were discussed at length in the ethics section below.

Research Sample

The current study implemented a purposive sampling procedure. The sample consisted of 20 Spanish-speaking Latina immigrant IPV survivors that had received formal help from various IPV social service agencies in the past 12-36 months from the interview date. Of the 20 women, only six of them were not receiving services from Consejo at the time of the interview. However, it was important to note, all the women had at some point received services and referrals from the agency that was the main site of recruitment. The advocacy services received varied from transitional housing, legal assistance, support groups, mental health, and immigration assistance. Demographical information about the sample was provided later in this chapter.

The participants had to meet the following criteria to participate in the interview process. First, interviewees could participate if their country of origin was Mexico or any Central American country (i.e., El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua). Other Latin American and Caribbean countries were excluded to focus on the Central American countries that have most recently (since the 1980's) exhibited increased immigration patterns to the U.S. as well as increased violence in these countries. Second, the interviewees had to be undocumented at the time of the interview or had recently (in the last 2 years) legalized their immigration status or obtained a visa to legally reside in the U.S. Participants self-identified and had to contact the researcher directly to be screened for participation. It was expected that the women would be at different stages of coping with the IPV which allowed for diverse IPV narratives to emerge.

Measures

The measures included a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix B) that included the following sub-sections (experiences before migrating to the U.S.; migration journey; current experiences of being undocumented; defining IPV; lifetime violence exposure; formal help-seeking and response; informal help-seeking and response; and healing and hopes). After co-constructing the interview guide with four Latina survivors, it was piloted with two different undocumented Latina IPV survivors to ensure language use was appropriate and to have a sense of the time it would take to complete the interviews. A demographic sheet (see Appendix C) was used to collect interviewee's information (e.g., age, employment status, education level, number of children, immigration status). Information was confidential and recorded with an alias name and code number. To confirm the second interview, I recorded the interviewee's phone number under their alias name in a protected file that was destroyed after the last interview. Data for this

study were stored in a locked file cabinet in my university research office and a secure computer accessible only by me, the principal investigator.

Sample Demographics

The women in this study immigrated to the United States beginning in 1991 up until 2004. With the exception of five women obtaining visas to first enter the U.S. legally, all the other women (n=15) crossed the border via unauthorized avenues such as human smuggling, coyote-led desert crossing, and the use of fraudulent paperwork. Most women lived in two states (n=11) with California (n=9) and Texas (n=5) most often mentioned after Washington. Seven women only resided in Washington state since immigrating to the U.S. The table below depicts countries of birth, arrival dates, and reasons for migration.

Table 3.1
Country of Origin and U.S. Arrival Year

	Total Number	Total Percentage
<i>Country of Origin</i>		
Mexico	16	80%
Guatemala	2	10%
El Salvador	2	10%
<i>U.S. Arrival Year</i>		
1991-1995 (post IRCA)	6	30%
1996-2000 (post Welfare Reform)	10	50%
2001-2005 ("War on Terrorism")	4	20%
<i>Reasons for Migrating</i>		
Travelled with husband for a better future	7	35%
Travelled with family for a better future	4	20%
Travelled without children (remained in home country)	3	15%
Reunited with husband	4	20%
Reunited with family member (mother)	1	5%
Fled domestic violence	2	10%
Fled civil unrest/war	2	10%

An imperative emphasis of these data was that most women migrated during a time that immigration restriction, particularly border enforcement, was more hypervigilant. After the restrictions placed with the 1996 immigration reform policies and the “War on Terrorism” period, a larger number of immigrant families were no longer practicing circular migration where individuals would work and return back home (Cornelius, 2001). People remained in the U.S. longer and often permanently, and women were no exception (Menjivar, 2000). Only seven women in this study reported leaving the U.S. and returning after they entered the country without permission. For clarification, only one of these seven women left due to deportation. One woman left after obtaining legal permanent resident status so she had permission to return to the U.S. legally. The table below delineates other demographics of the women interviewees.

Table 3.2
Interviewee Demographics

	Total Number	Total Percentage
<i>Age Range</i>		
30-34 years	4	20%
35-39 years	9	45%
40-44 years	5	25%
45-49 years	2	10%
Average Age (38 years)		
<i>Number of Children</i>		
1-2	4	20%
3-4	13	65%
5-6	1	5%
7-8	1	5%
Average number of Children (3 kids)		
<i>Relationship Status</i>		
Single	5	25%
Married	6	30%
Divorced/Separated	9	45%
Average length of last IPV relationship	9 years (Range 1-22 yrs)	
Average length of separation from last IPV	3 years (Range 6 mos- 8 yrs)	

With the exception of one woman, all of them were mothers to U.S. born children. Nine of the women were also mothers to mixed status families, meaning that some of the children lacked documented status while others were U.S. citizens. Part of these women's reality was that their kids were engaging with the U.S. system in differential ways. Some of their kids had full access to what U.S. citizenship offered (e.g., medical coupons, food stamps, and TANF benefits) while undocumented kids did not. Thirteen of the women were also single parents and not currently involved in a romantic relationship. The majority of the women were single, divorced, or separated. Of the six married women, two were still in complicated relationships with perpetrators of the violence and four re-married after surviving the IPV. Since I interviewed women that survived the violence, the length of time not living with the abusive partner ranged from six months to 8 years (Mean= 3 years). When asked to report the length of time in their last IPV relationship, responses ranged from one year to 22 years (Mean= 9 years). Five women reported being involved in multiple relationships where IPV was present.

In regards to labor force status, the women mostly engaged in care labor such as babysitting and house cleaning. There was also one unique woman that represented a "Jack/Jane of all trades" (e.g., labor included landscaping, painting, and construction). During the interview, four women were employed full-time. Four others were employed part-time often in service industry jobs such as restaurants, hotels, and care labor. Eight women were unemployed and all of them were seeking employment especially because they were single parents and their children solely relied on their income for their basic needs. Lastly, four women were stay-at-home mothers. Three had partners providing financially for the family and one woman had a child with special needs that required she stay home. In regards to educational levels, the majority of women attended some high school either in their country of origin or the U.S. (n=9) and most of

them did not graduate from high school. Six women had some college and one woman graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Mexico. Three women did not complete elementary school and one woman had no formal education. Overall, this group had limited educational levels as well as limited employment options.

Imperatively, the housing circumstances of these women were dire because many of them confronted poverty, unemployment, and single parenting which constricted the resources they had available for affordable housing options. During the interviewing process, four of the women resided in a transitional housing program that served IPV survivors and their children. Another four women resided in a subsidized low-income apartment. Three women stayed at a temporary shelter with other families, so they did not have their own apartment. Lastly, two women rented their apartments and did not have any kind of housing assistance. Their housing stability was often correlated to the length of time they had left the IPV relationship.

Immigration Status. This study centered the impact undocumented immigration status had on Latina IPV survivors, so it was important to clarify how women reported their current immigration status. Some of the women were eligible to apply for a u-visa being that domestic violence is one of the crimes included in the definition of being a victim of a crime. Therefore, immigration status needed to encompass an expansive understanding of the liminal status and areas that were not captured in a binary structure. The matrix figure below illustrated how the women's and their abusive partners' immigration status overlapped.

Figure 3.1

Immigration Status Matrix

	Undocumented ex-partner	LPR ex-partner	US citizen ex-partner
Undocumented Survivor (no u-visa application filed)	5	0	2
Undocumented Survivor (applied for u-visa, pending decision)	2	2	0
U-visa approved for Survivor (pending work permit)	2	0	0
U-visa holder Survivor (already obtained work permit)	5	0	0
Legal Permanent Resident Survivor	0	1	1

Undocumented people have various avenues of relief or support depending on where they were positioned on the spectrum of illegality. Seven women were undocumented and had not applied for a u-visa and did not have any other alternative to obtain legal authorization. In most of their situations, they did not have enough evidence to file a u-visa application. Interestingly, with the recent proposed executive order Deferred Action for Parent Arrivals (DAPA, 2015) for parents of U.S. citizens, all the women would have been eligible to apply. But during the interviews, these women had more barriers due to their inevitable undocumented status with no options to try to get some form of legal work permit. Four women were still undocumented but they had filed a u-visa application and were in limbo as they waited to hear if their application would be accepted to obtain a temporary u-visa. Furthermore, two women had already received a letter of approval for their u-visa but they were still waiting to receive their work permit in the mail. Even though these two women had something to look forward to, they were still undocumented and without a work permit.

Even though the study focused on experiences of undocumented women, five women were interviewed that were recipients of u-visas and already had a work permit. The u-visa was protection from deportation; however, the visa was a temporary status. These women were

interviewed because it was very recent that they had received their work permit and u-visa approvals. Thus, they were able to share imperative recent information about their undocumented experiences navigating IPV assistance. Similar circumstances were considered for the two women that had recently received their legal permanent residency (green card). One of them received it through the VAWA self-petition process and the other received it through her spouse's petition. Based on the initial definition during the recruitment process, these women were not eligible to participate, but they offered important insight about IPV survivorship. By interviewing women at various steps of this process, there was deeper interpretation of how the process was experienced at various pivotal points.

Research Design and Methods

The implementation of this qualitative research design required an investment to gain insight and understanding about the phenomena of interest. Approval from the University of Washington's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted on July 24, 2013. The methods included one-on-one interviews to understand individuals' perspectives (Englander, 2012). Two visits (two weeks apart) were scheduled with interviewees. The first visit closely aligned to a semi-structured interview where general questions of IPV and their experience immigrating to the U.S. were discussed to begin building rapport with the women. The second visit sparsely used the semi-structured guide, so it also included testimonio. Both uncovered multiple layers of the women's experiences (Hollway & Jefferson, 2006; Holloway & Todnes, 2003) that included hope and resilience, regardless of the severity of the injustices (see Appendix D for informed oral consent form).

The interviews took place where the participants were most comfortable- often being their home or an office space reserved at a local non-profit agency which provided privacy and

confidentiality. Four of the women preferred meeting in the office, but the majority of the visits took place in their homes. Data collection began in August 2013 and the last interviews were conducted in January 2014. With the exception of five interviewees, the remaining 15 women completed both interviews of the study. The last five interviews took time to schedule due to conflicts that included: 1) being unable to get referrals for women that met the criteria to participate, 2) scheduling conflicts due to multiple responsibilities to their families and/or employment, and 3) women unwilling to participate during a time that phone records and other forms of privacy were put into question in the larger U.S. societal context. During this time, the government was being accused of getting access to customers' big data from phone providers. My affiliation with a large university and all the procedures delineated in the IRB application, made the process questionable for some. They were unaware of the trustworthiness of where (and how) their transcripts would be shared. Most of the interviews were audio-recorded, but interviewees had the choice to decline it. Service provider partners, whom primarily referred participants, were told that potential interviewees had a choice to opt out of the audio recording and still participate. Hence, four of the last five interviews were not audio-recorded.

Safety was always accessed over the phone and at the first visit. Flexibility was key because some of the women I interviewed lived in neighborhoods that had a reputation of being unsafe. Being able to blend in with other people of color in the neighborhood, I never felt threatened or unsafe. This was critical because if I did not identify as a Latina, the interviewing process would have looked different especially when we think about the researcher being a primary instrument of data collection in qualitative inquiry. The relationships and rapport allowed for the women to share in-depth and candidly about their experiences which is

imperative to qualitative inquiry (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I was available through phone and email in between the two interview meetings.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Qualitative data often get analyzed inductively which required flexibility in the research design with data analyses often occurring concurrently with data collection. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in Spanish to represent the stories as closely to the way they were imparted by the women. To include a process of member checking, the completed transcripts were circulated with half of the interviewees before the analysis began. This gave participants an opportunity to review their transcript prior to the analytical progression. This also ensured their interview experience was captured thoroughly in the written records (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). An attempt was made to have every interviewee review their transcription; however, it was difficult to reconnect with everyone because of scheduling conflicts and changes in contact information. Thematic analyses were used to analyze the interview transcriptions and to look for patterns and common themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hycner, 1985; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). The process was iterative so there was a continuous movement between data and ideas (Simons, Lathlean, & Squire, 2008).

Transcription Procedures. As the principal investigator, I transcribed all the interviews in Spanish to capture as close to an authentic depiction of the women's voices (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Furthermore, half of the interviews were randomly selected to be reviewed by a trained undergraduate transcriber to ensure the audio matched the word for word transcription. To keep integrity to their testimonios, the analytical process was also conducted with Spanish texts. Quotes were only translated into English if used as excerpts in the text to highlight themes. For the interviews that were not audio recorded, detailed notes were obtained

along with an audio-recording of me, the interviewer, recapping the information immediately after the interviews. These interviews were still included in the analysis, but the amount of quotes used as exemplars in the thematic analyses were limited. Express Scribe Pro (NCH Software, 2014) provided a platform for digital audio files to be manipulated with transcription software and voice masking to provide anonymity in the coding process. All audio-recordings were stored on my office computer that was password protected with access restricted to only the transcribers (with supervision) and I. Back-ups of the interviews were saved on a storage device to which only I had access. Written records included the women's pseudonym and identification codes and not their real names.

To engage in a deep immersion of the data, I transcribed all the first interviews. The majority of the transcriptions were completed within two weeks from the interview date. I was the only interviewer, so I was acutely intertwined in the stories. Listening to transcribe verbatim helped to deeply engage with their stories. Exact words from the participants were recorded, along with non-verbal communication, such as laughter, crying, pauses, and interruptions (Ochs, 1999). I kept detailed case memos after each transcription especially to keep track of potential themes or parts of their stories that they related to in the interviews. After the transcription was completed, I re-listened to the audio to review for accuracy.

The second interviews took longer to transcribe so a group of five people assisted (three undergraduate students, 1 Masters of Social Work (MSW) student, and 1 MSW graduate) with the transcriptions. A training was completed with each transcriber to ensure uniformity in capturing the components of the conversations. We reviewed the use of the computer transcription program along with the transcription key (i.e., how to depict inaudible interview sections). Confidentiality was of utmost concern, so thorough instructions were provided of how

to maintain audio-recordings private; all the transcribers signed a confidentiality statement (see Appendix E). I asked all the transcribers to keep notes of what things stood out to them while listening to the story as they transcribed. When I met with them to debrief, we used their notes to also get a gauge of their responses, reactions, and moments of surprises. These notes informed the subsequent coding process with a research team which began May 1, 2014.

Coding Procedures. Four research assistants were trained to assist with the coding process. The research assistants (RAs) were recruited from professional networks of women of color in academia. The RAs were required to read and speak fluent Spanish since all the transcriptions were in Spanish. Members of the analytical team were graduate students who had work and lived experience with domestic violence programs and/or had worked with Latina IPV survivors in the past. Each research assistant was assigned transcripts for three women. Only the fifteen transcripts for the women that participated in both interviews were coded by the team. They were compensated \$50 for each team meeting they attended to review codes. Each set of transcripts was coded by one research assistant and me, the principal investigator. We scheduled team meetings for others in the group to provide feedback as we reviewed each person's coding. A two-hour initial training was offered to each research assistant to review confidentiality, coding scheme, emotions journal, and Dedoose (online analytic software) training. Along with coding in Dedoose (2015), we also kept a paper copy of our codes that entailed highlighting passages in the transcript and code labeling. This back-up system was invaluable especially when Dedoose experienced a huge loss of data (included half my dissertation transcripts) when their systems crashed summer 2014.

To begin the coding process, key categories were provided to pay attention to transcript sections that addressed the research questions (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Saldaña, 2009). These

categories were broad and intended only to help us begin organizing the large text files. For example, for immigration context, three categories were provided- undocumented interactions, undocumented relationships, and IPV-related situations with being undocumented. As individual coders, we kept track of what was said that matched the larger categories. If someone mentioned feeling afraid when they interacted with community programs because they were undocumented, it was coded as an undocumented interaction but a new code was created for “fear” that went deeper into the meaning of the story shared. This open coding technique helped to specify what was being depicted while allowing the data to speak for itself (see Appendix F for coding charts).

Each transcript was read a minimum of three times by each coder. The first read was to get an overview of the interview with no coding conducted. We took notes on the margins and kept track of what categories isolated possible thematic categories, but the coding was done until the second read. During the second read, each coder reviewed the transcriptions for initial coding. The group engaged in dialogue around the codes/themes used to categorize the data and how and why they would use these themes. By conducting collaborative transcript reviews, we were able to triangulate the findings. Group consensus was not the ultimate goal; the process was used as an opportunity to reflect on personal experiences and engage in dialogue that allowed analysis team to ‘see’ the data in ways that we would not have seen on our own. If coding differences occurred, we discussed these differences to decide if the code would be refined, changed, or eliminated.

Originally, the testimonio analytical process suggested that interviewees be included in the analytical stage. However, due to the unique circumstances of undocumented Latina IPV survivors, it was a burden to ask women to take time away from their children and limited work opportunities to participate. The majority were single mothers with limited family support- to

include them in each collaborative meeting required resources beyond what this research project could provide. The team met four times every other week with the two coders and a minimum of a third person to help us review the coding decisions. The third read was to keep track of how the story was told by each interviewee. Therefore, the third read highlighted the arc of the story being revealed and the emotions or ways in which the women were sharing about their story. For example, some women centered the barriers they faced while others centered the help they received. Some of the women situated their contexts in a transnational aspect while others focused on their experiences once in the U.S.

The final knowledge production process attempted to incorporate participants into the analytic process as best possible and with IRB ethical limits. The thematic categories were shared at a meeting (focus group format) with 12 DV advocates to account for respectful representation of the stories and to engage and discuss the categories represented through the testimonios of women. Creating meaning of the findings was done in a transactional way with the social workers, mental health workers, legal assistances, and IPV advocates as our interactions expanded on information disclosed in the research process. This was also an opportunity to use concept mapping to explore the relationships between categories and develop analytical codes to identify larger theoretical connections (cyclical process of bridging and building theory). The final review of the thematic and narrative analysis was discussed with five advisors with various ranges of qualitative analyses expertise. These various steps added rigor to the analytical processes (Krefting, 1991).

Ethical Considerations

Inherent risks and ethical challenges in this research required careful consideration especially when subject matters such as IPV and undocumented immigration can be potentially

traumatic in nature or threatening to share for the participants. The three ethical principles delineated in the Belmont Report: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, were only the beginning of the ethical processes necessary in this study. Descriptions of how these components were addressed as well as ethics that were recommended specifically for domestic violence research (e.g., Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; Ellsberg & Heise, 2002; Btoush & Campbell, 2009) were discussed. Research ethics with battered immigrant Latinas were also implemented to ensure cultural appropriateness and safety for this population (Silva-Martinez & Murty, 2011). This section entailed a delineation of how the rights of the participants were protected.

Basic principles of ethical research along with vital steps to uphold the highest levels of safety and security were registered with the University of Washington's institutional review board (IRB). First, respect for persons was recorded by obtaining informed consent and maintaining participants' confidentiality during and after the interviews. A waiver for written consent was requested and approved by the IRB to lessen the risk for the undocumented IPV survivors. Hence, an oral informed consent process was provided to the participants. Careful considerations were implemented when giving the women copies of the consent form to take home. Most of the women were not in contact with their perpetrators, but they were still advised to consider their safety issues and to practice discretion with any of the written materials provided during the interviews (WHO, 2001). Maintaining confidentiality was complicated especially for the women that resided in similar residential and transitional housing programs. Privacy was of utmost concern when scheduling interviews; no information was shared with other participants that resided in the same housing facilities. Agency employees were also not previewed to who participated. Staff members were encouraged to share the recruitment flyers and the researcher's contact info, but I could not confirm if someone in particular participated.

Likewise, recruitment and retention were carefully considered so their participation was voluntary and there were no explicit forms of coercion. I would verify at the beginning of each interview that the women were participating on their own will and they were not receiving some form or “credit” from their counselors or case managers to participate. Recruitment was achieved mostly by speaking directly to women survivors at support group meetings or housing program meetings and through word of mouth from their therapists, counselors, case managers or other IPV advocate. A safe method (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001) to contact them was requested during the first interaction, so it was crucial to ask for a safe contact number and if it was okay to leave a message. Collaborative relationships were formed to improve retention, and there was a firm agreement of the interactions between me and advocates referring someone to participate.

Beneficence was implemented by ensuring that the women’s involvement incorporated minimal risk and a balance between potential benefits and harms. Anticipated benefits for the individual could not be guaranteed, but through the CBPR process it was agreed that the participants in telling their stories would be offering a benefit for other women experiencing IPV. The risks were reasonable in relation to potential benefits because the survivors knew the uncomfortable feelings that may come up would also offer strength for others to speak up about the injustices that continued to disproportionately impact women in their communities. Emotional distress was a common risk associated with IPV. Therefore, allowing women to share their stories freely served beneficial; however, talking about the abuse evoked sadness, pain, anger, and shame. Strategies to minimize the distress were incorporated such as writing the study questions in a non-judgmental manner and free of stigmatizing language (WHO, 2001). Furthermore, the interviews always ended positively by acknowledging the women’s strengths and survivorship efforts. On a few occasions extremely traumas were shared (e.g., childhood

sexual abuse, human trafficking), so I called the women within 24 hours of the interview to assess their emotional status and need for assistance. The women were okay, but due diligence was employed. Participants have reported benefits from talking to concerned listeners (Griffin, Resick, Waldrop, & Mechanic, 2003; Johnson & Benight, 2003; Hlavka, Kruttschnitt, & Carbone-Lopez, 2007). Therefore, previous research has also demonstrated that IPV survivors were usually not traumatized by sharing.

Justice entailed an equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of the research as well as specialized training for the research team (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002). Because the women in this study could be considered vulnerable and a part of a marginalized group, measures to protect them from being exploited were incorporated. This included the general protocol in violence research to provide helpful resources to all participants. Additionally, I verified that all the agency numbers were up-to-date and were able to provide Spanish services. Careful selection of the research analysis team included training in ethical conduct guidelines. None of the team members intermingled with the women, but they were in close interactions with the transcripts.

The training plan included debriefing sessions to address the psychological and emotional impact of researching IPV and potential discomfort that would be raised because of their own experiences. The training process also included concepts of personal biases and experiences with IPV, fears, and stereotypes of abused women. Because listening to these stories multiple times impacts individuals differently at an emotional level, each member of the analysis team kept brief journal entries of how they felt as they coded. The emotional nature of studying violence has received little attention in academic discourse but it is an important question to consider. We used Campbell's (2002) emotionally engaged researcher framework in our analysis to document a) specific emotions that are triggered during the analyses, b) the situations/stories that gave rise

to these emotions, c) intellectual gain of emotional reflection, and d) coping strategies. During every team meeting we had the opportunity to share a journal sketch or entry with the group. We also imparted ideas and practices of self-care (e.g., exercise, music, massages, pedicures, aromatherapy, meditation, prayer, crying, sketching, painting, and dancing) with one another.

It was critical to consider cultural aspects that impacted research participation (Ahrens, Isas, & Viveros, 2011) especially with the fears attached to deportation and undocumented status. Silva-Martinez and Murty (2011) offered important lessons learned in their work with undocumented Latinas in rural Iowa as well as elders in Mexico. By learning the local language and culture, it helped to gain access to research settings and develop trust to have communities comfortable participating in the research. Key informants were critical to pilot the questions and to help think through the ways in which the language being used may not capture the experiences that women would share. In the current study, I had to revisit language because women in the pilot interviews reminded me that words like IPV, DV, and rape were not always the way that women label their experiences. Therefore, open-ended questions asked them to describe their relationships. It was interesting how often women mentioned that they did not realize they were experiencing IPV until they received help. The entire community was the focus of the research, so the community radio shows that were developed with advocates and volunteers were a part of the ongoing commitment to the community. This allowed for a collaborative, non-oppressive, and culturally congruent process. As the researcher, I became an ally and supporter of these participants in their struggles. This also required the deconstruction of dominant ideologies and to develop research based on equality, solidarity, and justice (e.g., Wilson, 2008).

Issues of Trustworthiness

I incorporated the seminal work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to achieve trustworthiness and to represent the perspectives of the research participants as closely as possible. Their conceptualization and criteria denoted the most cited standards for evaluating qualitative work (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). In this study with undocumented Latina IPV survivors, I had some predetermined ideas regarding what the participants might share. In spite of these ideas, the study embedded specific steps in the research procedures to warrant the perspectives of the participants were authentically gathered and accurately represented in the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered four concepts to achieve trustworthiness – credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability. The strategies used to enhance the quality of the research were reviewed below.

Credibility was defined as the degree to which a study's findings represent the meanings of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve credibility, qualitative research must manage the risk of research reactivity and bias (Padgett, 2008). Research reactivity was the potential for the researcher or the study procedures to impact the participants thereby risking changes in the study's findings. To manage this threat, I was aware of how the research procedures exerted an influence on the credibility of the data. The data gathering was done without deception. A group of two immigrant Latina survivors and two IPV advocates were consulted throughout the process to ensure the yielded findings were credible. I also documented the frequency, duration, and intensity of data collection efforts, probing techniques, whether interviews were audio-recorded or notes were taken, the coding and analyses training of the researcher assistants, and whether data saturation was achieved.

Researcher bias involved how the researcher's preconceived ideas and socio-political locations may shape the study design and analysis. This type of bias can affect the research

question, procedures, data collection, and data analysis to some degree by the experience, knowledge base, and standpoint from which one comes to a research (Horsburgh, 2003). To manage researcher bias, I engaged in reflexivity to build self-awareness about my own influence on the project (Drisko, 1997; Finlay 2002). Reflexivity was defined as “active acknowledgement by the researcher that her/his own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under investigation” (Horsburgh, 2003, p. 308). Reflexivity involved a thoughtful consideration of my standpoint through written journal reflection and engaged dialogue with peers versed in qualitative research (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

Other strategies used to increase credibility included triangulation, member checking, and thick descriptions. Padgett (2008) defined triangulation as a concept involving the use of “two or more sources to achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference” (p. 186). Data triangulation in this study involved gathering data at multiple time points. Triangulation by observer involved having more than one researcher analyze the data to be sure important ideas were not missed and that there was some consistency to how data analysis was linked to the findings. While member checking can be a valuable strategy for increasing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), it raised practical concerns such as not being able to locate research participants or assuming that a sample of members’ experiences were similar enough that they would all agree to the findings (Padgett, 2008). Despite these concerns, member checking was essential for this study because it stemmed from feminist critical paradigms that seek collaboration and corroboration with research participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Even though only half of the interviewees were available for the member checking process, it was vital to incorporate this step. Likewise, the thick description depicted in the transcriptions of the interviews provided the last component of credible research.

Although qualitative researchers do not seek generalizability, transferability can be achieved when the findings have applicability. Qualitative studies typically used purposive sampling to seek a specific group of participants who have experienced the phenomena being studied. Therefore, transferability referred to the degree to which the findings were useful to theory, practice, and future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Devers (1999) suggested for findings to achieve transferability, the contexts must be similar and key aspects of the context need to be identified. For instance, the context of being undocumented in Western Washington state was critical because the findings discussed in later chapters cannot be transferred to rural settings, for example, where culturally-responsive resources were not widely available for non-English speaking immigrants.

The last two criteria for evaluating qualitative research were interrelated. Auditability, signified the degree to which research procedures were documented allowing someone outside the project to follow and critique the research process (Padgett, 2008). I kept an audit trail and written account of the research process that included a report of what occurred throughout the research project along with a demonstration of reflexivity. Additionally, peer debriefing involved consulting with senior colleagues experienced in qualitative methodology (Padgett, 2008). By discussing research decisions and procedures, important feedback was provided enhancing the quality of the project. It also improved the research process by generating new ideas and identifying potential pitfalls related to the methodology. Lastly, confirmability indicated the ability of others to confirm or corroborate the findings (Drisko, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several strategies that I used to increase the study's confirmability included member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails. These strategies would allow collaborators external to the research team an opportunity to evaluate or confirm the research procedures.

Limitations

There were some limitations about the methodological decisions and processes that need acknowledgment. Because of the parameters intentionally imposed on who were eligible to participate, the transferability of the results may not translate to all populations. Those living in rural communities or with limited social support networks may not have similar encounters as the women in the interviews that resided in counties with infrastructures to provide services. Also all the women that participated heard about the study through a service provider which posited an important question of transferability to those women that were still in abusive relationships. Another group of participants not included were the male perpetrators. As Sukhera, Cerulli, Gawinski, & Morse's (2012) study addressed earlier, including both female and male participants augmented the findings to be more comprehensive of the community needs. In this study, the knowledge gaps continued for the people not represented among the participants.

Relevant limitations also arose for the actual participants. For example, the majority of the interviewees recruited were from Mexico. There was limited representation from El Salvador and Guatemala. Ideally, additional interviewees would have been recruited to have far-reaching findings. Due to time constraints and limited resources, an over sample of these two countries, or other Central American countries, was not possible. Furthermore, the women that had more complex situations were difficult to schedule for the second interview. Ideally each participant would have been interviewed twice. Unfortunately, five women were unable to complete the second interview. Reasons included the following: on the verge of losing transitional housing with no employment options due to immigration status; child with special needs that required single mother to be extra involved at school; open case of fraud being investigated where interviewee was main witness in high profile case of human trafficking; and two of the women were contemplating returning with their partners and one actually moved out of state to return to

abusive partner. Significant efforts were made to have an inclusive and exhaustive sample but supplementary attempts would have strengthen the sample's representation.

Specific to the methods, there were a couple limitations that were of specific concern. First, the mixing of qualitative methods (Morse, 2009; Nepal, 2010) was not implemented with the women interviewees. A focus group setting was used when discussing the analytical findings with professionals. However, with the participants, only one-on-one interviews were executed. Focus groups were considered, but after consultation with the key informants, a list of potential risks for the women was presented. Some of the women were only comfortable sharing with the individual interviewer rather than sharing in a group setting. This was due to their personal circumstances related to the undocumented status that they often did not share even with other IPV survivors in their networks or social circles. Second, the use of more detailed questionnaires related to health effects would have helped to deliberately identify the various symptoms and health effects the women shared during their interviews. These additional methods could have offered more extensive results. Yet, the interviews were already onerous and time consuming, so adding questionnaires or meetings may have deterred women from partaking in the study.

As a final note, I acknowledge the vitality and impact these stories will have for future research and practice. Multiple considerations were diligently followed to offer a genuine voice to the issues raised by the women. Yet, we cannot dismiss the words of Doris Sommer (1999) as it related to the spaces we hold within academia: "the subaltern...cannot be adequately represented by literature or in the university- that literature and the university are among the practices that create and sustain subalternity (p. 15)." Community collaboration was essential but eventually the actual writing was pieced together by a sole author and it was navigated with the edits and feedback of a committee of academic advisors.

Summary

To conclude, the use of phenomenology and testimonio along with CBPR practices allowed for a unique opportunity to highlight the voices of women often marginalized in research endeavors. The hope was that this study would help to develop, implement, and disseminate effective interventions across diverse communities through strategies that redressed power imbalances, and to facilitated mutual benefit among community and academic partners (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006, 2010). The qualitative analytical investigation included reviewing transcriptions of the audio recordings, checking audio files for transcription accuracy, reviewing interviewer notes, transcription coding by multiple reviewers using Dedoose, and collaborative reviews of the themes. Themes were derived from what was brought up in the interview transcripts. The analysis used a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. For instance, the data coding process of their migration experience, was not trying to fit a pre-existing coding frame or analytic preconceptions. On the other hand, their experiences with formal help-seeking institutions and social networks included an exploration of themes that have been written about in previous projects with added themes that emerged from the data. The ethical considerations in this research ensured the protections of human participants and their autonomy, safety, and confidentiality of personal information. It also warranted that the benefits of the research outweighed the risks and benefits.

The subsequent results chapters offered a portrayal of across-case and within-case approaches of data analysis (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2003) that elaborated on the stories disclosed by the participants. The opening poem in Silko's 1986 book, *Ceremony*, underscored a key motivation to further decipher these stories and themes that emerged.

I will tell you something about stories,

[he said]

They aren't just entertainment.

Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,

All we have to fight off

Illness and death.

You don't have anything

If you don't have the stories...⁷

⁷ From Leslie Marmon Silko's book, *Ceremony* (1986, p. 2)

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CHAPTER 4: THEMATIC ANALYSES

The current qualitative study empirically illustrated the lived experiences of 20 Latina immigrants living in western Washington State to explore how their immigration status impacted their intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences. An intersectional perspective was incorporated to further understand the impact of their ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality on the IPV. An interest was to focus on their interactions with informal social support networks (e.g., friends, family) and formal help-seeking efforts (e.g., accessing shelters, calling the police) to better exemplify their survivorship process. The study's research questions were as followed: 1) How does the immigration context of Latina women survivors living in Washington State impact their IPV experience?; 2) What formal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the IPV? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social service programs?; and 3) What informal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the IPV? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social support networks?

This chapter delineates the study's thematic findings which focus on the patterns and common themes that emerged from the interview transcriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hycner, 1985; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). The iterative method (Simons, Lathlean, & Squire, 2008) reveals multiple commonalities of the IPV experience for the undocumented immigrant IPV survivors. To expose these similarities and to answer the research questions, the subsequent prominent themes are reviewed: 1) undocumented interactions, 2) undocumented relationships, 3) undocumented IPV experiences, 4) formal help-seeking, and 5) informal help-seeking. Each of these major themes offered categories and sub-categories to understand the nuances of these experiences. The chapter conclusion transitions into the subsequent chapter where the focus was on the way in which the narrative was told by one woman.

The interviewees were asked how their immigration status affected their interactions and relationships once they were in the United States prior to addressing the IPV-specific questions. This route exemplified the contextual significance of their undocumented immigrant experience that eventually impacted their IPV circumstances. The thematic results were organized to showcase across-case shared experiences. This centered the women's desire to be connected with other survivors and/or women that were still in an IPV relationship. Evocative excerpts were utilized to expand on the themes that emerged through the analytical process of the interview data. If the original quotes were brief, they were only included in the English translation to conserve space in the results narrative. The longer quotes were embedded in Spanish followed by English translations. This was an attempt to keep their detailed narrative in-sync with the way they originally shared their stories and to honor the women's voices.

The coding procedures were detailed in Chapter Three; a brief overview is included below. The coding process began with key categories that addressed the research questions (Saldaña, 2009). These general categories helped us to begin the organization of the text files. An open coding technique allowed the data to speak for itself (see Appendix F for examples of coding charts). Four research assistants were trained to implement the coding process. They were fluent in Spanish since all the transcriptions were coded in the original language that the stories were shared. Each research assistant received three transcripts. Each transcript was coded by one research assistant and me, the principal investigator. Team meetings were held to provide feedback as we reviewed each other's coding. The group dialogue helped to understand the codes/themes used to categorize the data and why certain themes were employed.

The coding process was iterative, so each transcript was read three times by each coder. The first read did not entail coding, so it was to get an overview of the interview. It was in the

second read that initial coding of the transcriptions occurred. If coding differences existed, we discussed these differences to change or eliminate the codes. The third read highlighted the arc of the story being shared and the emotions the women talked about in their story. The final thematic categories were shared with 12 DV advocates to account for respectful representation of the stories and to discuss the categories represented through the testimonios. This provided an opportunity for concept mapping and to identify theoretical bridges.

Detailed sample demographics are provided in Chapter Three. The data summary table below offers another glimpse of who the 20 women were that participated in this project. Their alias name was used to provide key aspects of their lives. An important note needed to be considered about their current immigration status. The table referenced those women that had applied for or were waiting for their u-visa. If the status only mentioned “undocumented” then it can be surmised that no u-visa application had been filed. For the two women that were legal permanent resident (LPR), a note was included about how the LPR status was obtained. The last column depicted the number of years someone was no longer in the IPV relationship to highlight the range of time the survivors were no longer involved with abusive partners.

Table 4.1
Data Summary for Interviewees

Alias	Age	U.S. Arrival Year	Country of Birth	Current Immigration Status	Number of Children	Total Years out of IPV relationship
Santa	41	2001	Mexico	Undocumented	2	2
Linda	41	1992	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa pending)	0	2.5
Jimena	36	1996	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa pending)	3	1
Victorya	35	2000	Guatemala	Undocumented	4	3.5

Esperanza	36	1997	Mexico	Undocumented	3	2
Esmeralda	40	1998	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa approved)	3	7
Carmen	36	2004	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa approved)	2	2
Sonia	37	1991	Mexico	Undocumented (Current U-visa Holder)	3	8
Angeles	45	1999	El Salvador	Undocumented	8	2
Marcela	37	1991	Mexico	Legal Permanent Resident (VAWA approved)	5	1
Milagros	48	1997	Mexico	Undocumented (Current U-visa Holder)	3	2
Maricruz	35	1998	Mexico	Undocumented	4	2
Elizabeth	40	1993	Mexico	Undocumented (Current U-visa Holder)	4	8
Chio	34	2003	Mexico	Undocumented (Current U-visa Holder)	3	4
Marisol	37	2004	Guatemala	Undocumented (Current U-visa Holder)	1	4
Lola	34	1997	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa pending)	3	4
Gabi	37	1998	Mexico	Undocumented (U-visa pending)	4	2
Estela	32	2000	Mexico	Undocumented	3	2
Adeline	34	1995	Mexico	Legal Permanent Resident (spouse petitioned)	4	0.5
Anabel	40	1994	El Salvador	Undocumented	2	0.5

Prior to delving into the thematic results related to the participants IPV encounters, there was an essential obligation to acknowledge the context between the women's exposure to different forms of violence in their lifetimes (Aisenberg, Mehrotra, Gavin, & Bowman, 2011). Eleven of the 20 women reported they witnessed IPV between their parents when they were children. Additionally, a couple of the women depicted vivid moments that their mothers shared with them about the IPV that occurred during pregnancy as well. Seven of the 20 women also

narrated personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual abuse during childhood and their teenage years. These incidences included at least two women that were raped and this resulted in teenage pregnancies. In their adulthood, over half (n=14) of the women attested to the abuse they confronted from employers. This included employers in their countries of birth and in the United States; however, U.S. context stories were more common since most of the women had spent the majority of their adulthood working in the U.S. One person also faced human trafficking, so she shared about the sexual and physical violence she endured and witnessed. The subsequent analyses focused on IPV effects and interactions, but it was critical to not exaggerate the contributions of this one type of violence since that would fail to consider the co-occurring exposure of violence in their lifetime (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008).

Undocumented Interactions

To address research question number one, it was essential to portray how the women navigated day-to-day moments, not IPV related, when they interacted with services, businesses, or individuals. Undocumented interactions themes focused on the interaction dynamics during the experience and not the contact they had with certain people. In comparison, themes for the undocumented relationships were specific to actual relationships they had with people such as neighbors, co-workers, and friends. The themes that emerged focused on the dynamics of their relationships. The following two sections depicted how the women's undocumented status shaped the ways in which they interacted with their new environments and how they related to people in their lives. A summary figure that combined the categories of these two larger themes will be presented at the end of the section. This will be followed by specific themes and categories about their undocumented status intersecting with their IPV experiences.

“No comparto mi estatus”- I do not share my immigration status. Collectively, the women would not share about their undocumented status particularly when they interacted with unknown systems or institutions. A central tenet for not disclosing was tied to the overwhelming fear related to possible deportation threats. Eighteen of the 20 women were parents to U.S. born children, so these deportation threats had the potential to impact their children and families. Mothers expressed how crucial it was that they remained hidden or unidentified especially during a time period of anti-immigrant sentiment. As parents, sooner or later they had to interact with U.S. institutions. Hence, there were confusing moments when their immigration status had to be somehow addressed or disclosed. Carmen indicated,

“Casi todo lo que vas y llenas te pregunta por el número de seguro. No sabes que contestar. Siempre tiene uno en la cabeza que no debes decir que no tienes, ¿Verdad?... A veces ni quieres ir porque si me preguntan del número de seguro o si no calificas, ya vez- aquí para todo lo médico- así es. Te da pena preguntarle a alguien.”

“Almost everything you have to fill out asks you for a social security number. You do not know what to answer. You always have in your head that you should not say that you don’t have any, correct? ... Sometimes you do not want to go because they will ask for a social security number or you may not qualify, you know- here with everything medical- that is the way it is. You are embarrassed to ask someone.”

Carmen’s example centered the limitations that came with not being able to openly share about her undocumented status. She named the embarrassment and the sense of confusion because she had been told she could not share about her immigration status. This created circumstances where she did not know if she could leave blank the social security number question. Carmen admitted she avoided obtaining medical care when it was needed on various occasions. The embarrassment she felt hindered her from asking how to respond to the question.

An interesting category that emerged for this theme was related to women’s different levels of comprehension related to being an undocumented person [in the U.S.]. Some of the women knew before they migrated to the U.S. that being undocumented was attached to stigma

and it would require they lived under the shadows. For those women, they often complied with the silence surrounding their immigration status. They knew that certain paperwork (e.g., fraudulent work permits or social security cards) was not shared with others. Conversely, there were a couple of women who were unaware of what it meant to be undocumented in their new country of residence. Jimena described confusion at the beginning of her situation. “The papers they [in-laws] gave me were fake and that is why I could not carry them with me. I could be taken to jail. I would only use them to apply for work.” Quickly, she realized that being undocumented required cautionary steps when interacting with her children’s school or at her place of employment.

Jimena’s experience underscored that not all immigrant women knew what it meant to come to the U.S. without formal permission. It was possible that she could have surmised after crossing the border clandestinely that her existence in this new country would require she hide. However, just like Jimena, there were eight other women that migrated under circumstances that already involved IPV in their country of birth. In these situations, it was common for them to be forced to migrate as part of the controlling relationship. For these women, an understanding of what it meant to be undocumented unraveled the longer they lived in the United States.

“*Venimos a trabajar*”- We are here to work. The majority of the women shared that their interactions in their new environment were often tied to employment. Seeking jobs was central to the description of their U.S. existence. Most of them migrated for better opportunities which included acquiring employment. If they migrated alone, it was an automatic assumption that they would work to help their family that stayed behind in their country of birth. Some of the women initially migrated knowing they would not be working, especially if their partners

preferred that they stay home to care for their children. In some situations they were forced to not work as a form of control and isolation from their partners. However, most of them needed work.

A couple of categories emerged that described what the work-related interactions were for these women. First, twelve of the women shared that once they were employed they worked long hours so labor outside of the home took up a large component of their lived experiences. This frequently meant they spent a lot of time away from their children. Three women also shared painful stories of wage theft. Their places of employment often did not include formal systems that they could access if they had complaints of injustices. One woman also shared about her experiences with sexual harassment from two distinct employers. Women were commonly employed cleaning houses, babysitting, or in jobs that paid them under the table. Therefore, they were targets of employer deception and abuses that went unreported.

The second category had to do with women's need to find employment when they left their IPV relationships as part of their survivorship tactics. At this juncture, they had to find employment to provide for their children as single mothers. Fifteen of the 20 women shared that they witnessed a shift in the last ten year that made it difficult to find jobs. They saw this shift as businesses began to check for legal work authorization through programs such as e-verify. Previous to this change, some had been successful in securing work at hotels, fast food restaurants, warehouses, school cafeterias, and other forms of gendered labor (e.g., sewing, cleaning, baking, and cooking). For those who worked in areas that did not require work permits, they still had a hard time getting employed because they could not afford child care. The women had to navigate the labor market with many more obstacles as single parents with few family members to provide child care support.

“Yo no sabía”- I did not know. All the women, with the exception of one interviewee, shared multiple ways in which their interactions were shaped by being unfamiliar with the new environment. Nineteen women did not know the English language when they first migrated, so they did not know how the system worked. This meant they had limited awareness and access. The exception was a woman that grew up visiting the U.S. since her parents had travel permits to go back and forth during her childhood and teenage years. A couple of women also mentioned the value of U.S. currency was unclear, so it hindered how they navigated their surroundings. Elizabeth shared, “You get here and they do not speak your language at work so you do not understand, it is so frustrating. It is too difficult.” Contrary to Elizabeth’s frustration, Linda called a Spanish radio station in Texas where she found her first job cleaning houses in the U.S. Linda also described not knowing the system. This was a common sentiment for women even though they had different approaches to tackle the circumstances.

The many unknowns impacted how the women interacted with their daily tasks and commitments. In some situations the women only communicated with immediate family; hence, it resulted in a limited network of information to navigate their environment. For instance, Gabby and Marisol found their employment through family members. Interestingly, Anabel and Adeline approached the difficult surroundings by asking questions to access assistance for their children. This allowed them to learn about programs and community institutions that they would not have known otherwise. The words “I did not know” were repeatedly used to preface stories of what it was like to be undocumented in the U.S.

Seventeen women also shared the myths they heard related to public benefits and health care access for their children. A common myth shared by Milagros, Lola, Angeles, and Sonia was that their children would be removed from the home if they received public benefits.

Another myth was that the children would need to pay back any cash assistance when they were adults. For example, Chio believed her friends when they told her that her sons would be forced into the military as adults if she asked for public benefits as children. Even if the women knew their U.S. born children had certain rights, they were unaware how the systems specifically worked. They were left without access to services for which they were eligible and often were terrified to interact with similar systems. It created a vicious cycle of disconnection.

An important category of the many unknowns was the culture shock they experienced once in the U.S. It was described through different moments of confusion and frustration. If they came from small rural towns in their countries, they also explained that being in a metropolitan city required that they learn to navigate a larger place with much more diversity than they were used to. One way that culture shock was described included situations where they learned about various immigrant stories. Marcela shared her confusion when she realized there were diverse groups of “Latina/o” immigrants in the U.S.

“Cuando conocía a otros hispanos me daba cuenta que eran muchos países y lugares y yo pensaba que era solamente mi pueblo. Todos hablábamos español pero éramos de diferentes lugares. No comprendía, tarde años para comprender. Le pregunte a mi papá que era la diferencia entre un mexicano y un hispano. Yo no sabía y me explico él.”

“When I would meet other Hispanic people I realized we were from a lot of countries and places and I thought it was only people from my town. We all spoke Spanish but we were from different places. I did not understand, it took me years to comprehend. I asked my dad what was the difference between a Mexican and a Hispanic. I did not know and he explained it to me.”

Even though Latinos/Hispanics were often lumped into one ethnic group in the United States, Marcela’s words captured the essence of within group diversity. A similar language may be spoken, but there were differences in customs and beliefs. This created culture shock moments for immigrant women that may be considered homogeneous in the larger society.

“Ay más opciones aquí que allá”- There are more options here than there. Lastly, all the women alluded that regardless of the struggles that came along with being undocumented immigrants, they had more options in the U.S. than in their country of origin. At least there were places to seek help, as limited as they were, for undocumented IPV survivors. They had some viable options. Most of the women came from rural towns, so their view of support systems might have been different if they lived in a larger city. For example, Milagros and Estela came from larger urban cities in Mexico so they had heard about women shelters. Neither of them accessed that support mostly because of the stigma. They also knew the police could not be trusted. A few women underlined patriarchal rules that enabled perpetrators to pay off officers so reports were not filed. Perhaps they were not as socially connected as they were in their country of birth, but to access services for the IPV, they all mentioned things were better in the U.S.

Even though most of the women shared perspectives that things were better in the U.S., only eight women gave specific examples of how their interactions in a new country included having access to trusted institutions. Some women had traumatic experiences in the U.S. when they called the police, but they mentioned that if they needed to call the police again they would. In some stories the option of returning to their country of birth was considered but it was a sad reality that even if they would be homeless in the U.S. they had more help available to them than back home. The context of this experience needed clarification. Many women fled violent-torn communities or dire economic troubles so the original departure context was not ideal to return. Therefore, the dismissal of their IPV case by police officers in the U.S. was tolerated with the hope that someone they encountered during this journey would be responsive sooner or later.

For some, returning was not a conceivable option because their kids were U.S. born or raised in the U.S. so their kids would not go back with them. Milagros, Angeles, Gabby, Jimena,

and Elizabeth had teenage children who were raised in the U.S. and born in another country. They only knew the U.S. as their home so the kids refused to go back to their country of origin. A couple of the mothers mentioned their kids had no plans of leaving the U.S. even if their parents wanted to leave. For the majority of the mothers, separation from their children was unthinkable. Therefore, they resigned themselves to the limited support that was offered and some of the mothers mentioned, “*nos quedamos por necesidad*” - we stay because of necessity. Milagros explained the following interactions with her daughters.

“Me dicen que aunque no nacieron aquí, yo me las traje chicas y las crie aquí y se sienten que son de aquí. No les explicamos las consecuencias- no vas a poder hacer una carrera, no vas a poder trabajar en forma legal. Como padre crees que te va ir bien y con el tiempo vas a poder arreglar pero la situación también del gobierno es otra.”

“They tell me that even though they were not born here, I brought them very young and raised them here so they feel like they are from here. We don’t explain the consequences- you will not be able to have a career, you will not be able to work legally. As a parent you believe that things will be okay and that with time you will be able to fix the situation but then there is the government.”

Undocumented Relationships

The next section focused on the themes that emerged regarding how the women interfaced relationships with other people once in the U.S. These themes captured general relationships in which they engaged in as an undocumented immigrant; the IPV relationship dynamics were separately discussed in the subsequent section. These undocumented relationship themes underscored trends to hide one’s immigration status, live in isolation, engage with fragmented networks, and the maintenance of transnational relationships. Close attention was given to these experiences because it provided insight to later understand IPV informal help offered by their community, friends, and family. These relationship dynamics demonstrated the impact this could have to navigate informal support systems during and after the IPV instances.

“No tengo confianza en otros”- I don’t trust others. This theme focused on the lack of trust that motivated the women not to share about their immigration status. Trusting others with sensitive personal information was minimal and often not an option. The women found ways to keep their status hidden or sometimes lied about it if asked. The women highlighted reasons why they could not trust other people with their immigration status, even if they engaged in relationships with these people on a regular basis. In some instances, the silence about their undocumented status was an unspoken understanding between them and the other individuals. For example, Esmeralda never told her white female neighbor about being undocumented, but the neighbor figured it out after multiple interactions. Her neighbor assumed that Esmeralda was in an IPV relationship when she witnessed some physical marks. The neighbor helped Esmeralda get her state identification card and offered her a job. The trusting friendship flourished but all the while Esmeralda did not openly share she was undocumented.

In other situations the women expressed an underlying understanding that an immigrant position meant there were certain parameters of whom to trust and how much information to divulge. Milagros knew that because she was in the country illegally, she had to be careful about what she shared. Jimena, Angeles, Sonia, and Estela echoed similar moments in their lives. They figured out how much to share or where to share. This uncovered a difficult reality: other Latinos would use immigration status against them. Santa revealed advice from a Mexican acquaintance that helped her cross the border.

“Me decía ya estás aquí, vas a pasar por muchos problemas. ‘Te vas a topar con personas muy mendigas, personas que porque están aquí ya saben y ya se creen mejor. Pero tú tienes que tratar de ser fuerte, no les demuestres que tienes miedo porque te van a aplastar. Aquí te tienes que defender.’”

“She would tell me that I was here now, I will experience a lot of problems. ‘You will bump into mean people, people that have been here longer and they know more so they

think they are better than you. But you have to try to be strong, do not demonstrate fear because they will walk all over you. Here you have to defend yourself.”

Santa observed other Latinos/as treating her differently at her job and in day-to-day moments. As much as she did not want to embrace the advice, she realized she had to be cautious of trusting someone with her immigration status, including Latinos who were legal residents or citizens. There were 11 women that also expressed coming in contact with Latinos/as who thought they were superior to them because they had papers and citizenship. To trust other individuals with their immigration status, required being wary around people that could share similar immigrant beginnings but were far removed from, or never a part of, the clandestine immigrant experience.

“Comunidades Fragmentadas”- Fragmented Communities. Nineteen of the women shared they were completely alone (n=7) or they had fragmented networks and friendships when they arrived in the U.S. (n=12). Below, I illustrated what “fragmented” looked like for some of the women. Nine of the women had family members in the U.S. prior to their arrival. These circumstances allowed for the women to have a network already established in the U.S. before they migrated. Unfortunately, in many situations the people in this network struggled to make ends meet since most of them were also undocumented. Some had legalized their status, but their financial situation was unstable and precarious so they could not offer material or financial assistance to the women. Even though Chio’s husband arrived before her, she was expected to find employment at arrival to pay him back for the cost of hiring a person to smuggle her into the country. She cried as she shared the stress she was under to pay him back the \$4,000 that her border crossing entailed in 2003. She assumed having him in the country meant she could better navigate her new environment, but that was not the case.

Chio was not the only person to experience fragmented support from her assumed community in *El Norte*. Jimena, Esmeralda, Linda, and Anabel shared common experiences of

having in-law family members that they assumed would provide more support once they were in the U.S. However, after the first week of arrival they were expected to pay rent, pay bills, buy their own food, provide their own transportation, and in some circumstances find their own employment. Jimena's sister-in-law and mother-in-law did offer support to find work but she was then expected to figure out the nuances on her own. The "imagined community" shattered in front of their eyes or transformed into an unexpected limited network of support. Sometimes the IPV dynamics also fragmented the networks more because of disagreement of how the IPV was being addressed and the isolation that came with IPV.

Regardless of the fragmentation, a few of the women shared ways they were able to combat the limitations. When women found themselves being single-parents, they would access support from neighbors or acquaintances in their neighborhoods to assist with child care and in some situations temporary housing. If their family circle was disintegrated, they accessed support from other trusted individuals. Sonia tackled these issues as a teenage mother trying to graduate from high school. She recalled the obstacles she encountered,

"Cuando iba a la escuela me los cuidaba una amiga que vivía cerca de mí y ella no trabajaba o estudiaba. Ella se quedaba con sus hijos y ella me dijo que me los cuidaba para que yo fuera a la escuela. Por todo un año me los cuido."

"When I was going to school a friend that lived close by would babysit my kids since she did not work or go to school. She would stay home with her kids and she told me she could care for mine so I could go to school. For a whole year she took care of them."

Sonia could not count on her family for support and at the time she did not know about programs available to assist teenage single mothers. Thankfully she had a friend that would babysit her kids, but that also was temporary so she was unable to finish high school. Sonia continued to be melancholic because she did not graduate. She later learned that there were

services available to help her graduate. Because she was an undocumented high school student with limited English language, she was never offered the support by her counselors or teachers.

“Estar aislada significa menos amistades”- Isolation means fewer friends. The isolation in the women’s lives was prevalent and this impacted their networks and friendship circles. The isolation the women experienced in their relationships impacted how many people they came in contact with and the number of meaningful friendships that emerged thereafter. Some of the women experienced the isolation since they were young because their parents were also recent immigrants that worked long days. Marcela recalled, “In this place [U.S.] we were just locked in our apartments because my mother worked all day. When we did not have school we would just be inside the apartment all day. We would not go out anywhere and you get like depressed.” This isolation later overlapped with IPV dynamics where their partners isolated them from family, friends, and other social contact. Chio, Anabel, Lola, Victorya, Marisol, Milagros, and Sonia described the IPV relationship isolated them more than their immigration status. But they often felt the intersection of these issues made the isolation dangerous and daunting to overcome. On the other hand, Adeline, Carmen, Linda, Angeles, and Maricruz talked about at least having one good friend they could trust- making the isolation less intense.

Isolation meant the women had limited opportunities to meet other people that could help them navigate their new country of residence. A common isolation category that emerged was related to the educational system being difficult to access for the women that migrated with school-aged children. This was important because some of the women shared that their children’s school was one way they connected with other parents and forged friendships. Esmeralda shared her in-laws did not tell her how to enroll her two children in kindergarten. She figured out she had to enroll them only after her neighbor friend helped her go to the school. Her

children were not born in the U.S. so she was scared to go to the school. Her neighbor explained that her kids did not need proof of citizenship to access public school.

“Me dice tu niña no va ir a la escuela este año. Le digo es que no se, me daba pena decir que la niña no tenía papeles. Me dijo no te preocupes, no tienes que decirme nada- la niña no necesita nada más que la acta de nacimiento para inscribirse. Le digo es que yo no sé dónde queda la escuela. Me dice yo te llevo. Mi dice tu esposo no te deja, cuando se vaya al trabajo yo te llevo.”

“She asked me if my daughter was not going to school that year. I told her I did not know, I was embarrassed to tell her my daughter did not have papers. She told me not to worry, I did not have to tell her anything- your girl does not need anything besides her birth certificate to enroll. I told her I did not know where the school was located. She told me she would take me. She asked me if my husband would not let me, when he leaves to work I will take you- she said.”

Like Esmeralda, various women agreed that access to the education system for their children minimized the isolation as immigrant parents.

“Los que se quedan atras”- Those that stay behind. This transnational ties theme focused on being a parent while living in a different country and being unable to travel back to visit their children because of their unauthorized status. This captured the types of relationships that continued even after many years of not being physically in the same place. Chio and Santa navigated transnational parenting of their teenage children during the research interview process. Six other women talked about the transnational parenting of their children as a significant part of their relationship dynamics as undocumented immigrants. A few respondents also mentioned their transnational relationships with parents, grand-parents, aunts, cousins, and/or siblings. However, those that were parenting with transnational parameters shared that their illegality was a significant issue that complicated their relationships. Some circumstances were temporary and their children joined them afterwards. In contrast Santa’s situation impacted her health especially after being away for more than 10 years from her now teenage daughter. Santa regretfully

shared, “I am going crazy being alone here because I miss my daughter, my mother, my family, and my friends. My friend just brought me here and abandoned me to my luck.”

Santa’s struggle was unique compared to the other interviewed women. However, the distinctive story uncovered a complexity when undocumented immigrants were still tied to relatives in their countries of birth beyond the monetary remittances sent every pay period. She shared about the sadness and desperation tied to the stress of being an undocumented transnational mother. She imparted why her current situation was escalating her worry and fear.

“(Suspiro fuerte) Ya, ya, ya, estoy desesperada. Quiero trabajo, necesito sacar a mi familia para adelante. Ya las cosas cambiaron mucho. Entonces, como me gustaría poder hacer algo más. Poder hacer algo para legalizarme aquí. Poder traer a mi hija porque está pasando por una situación bien difícil. Tiene 16 años. (Suspiro fuerte, empieza a llorar) Eso me duele ahora mismo que no pueda hacer nada por ella.”

“(Heavy sigh) I am so so so frustrated. I want a job, I need to support my family and move forward. Things have changed a lot. Then, how I wish I could do something else. If only I could do something to legalize my status. I want to bring my daughter with me here because she is going through a difficult situation. She is 16 years old (heavy sigh, begins to cry). It hurts me right now that I cannot do anything for her.”

Her daughter had recently been involved in her first dating relationship and Santa’s mother was worried for her grand-daughter’s safety due to physical abuse in the intimate relationship. Santa felt guilty for not being there to protect her child.

These multiple themes offered a deeper understanding of the immigrant context for the women in the current study. Even though these responses were not specifically related to the IPV, some of the themes insinuated evidence that these dynamics set a precedence that intensified during the IPV experience. Unique cases and ways the women confronted some of these dynamics were also presented to expand on the broader themes in this section. The summary figure below diagramed these themes before exploring the themes that were particularly related to IPV.

Figure 4.1
Undocumented Interactions and Relationships Themes

Undocumented Interactions	Undocumented Relationships
<i>“No comparto mi estatus.”</i> I do not share my immigration status.	<i>“No tengo confianza en otros.”</i> I don’t trust others.
<i>“Venimos a trabajar.”</i> We are here to work.	<i>“Comunidades Fragmentadas”</i> Fragmented Communities
<i>“Yo no sabía.”</i> I did not know.	<i>“Estar aislada significa menos amistades.”</i> Isolation means fewer friends.
<i>“Ay más opciones aquí que allá.”</i> There are more options here than there.	<i>“Los que se quedan atrás.”</i> Those that stay behind.

Undocumented IPV Experiences

The following section provided the thematic findings for how being undocumented impacted the women’s IPV experiences. The similarities were noticeable from those themes already discussed in the current study’s literature review as well as the empirical findings of their general undocumented experiences described above. This section focused on the understanding of how undocumented status directly impacted their IPV relationships. The four themes that were discussed included the following: manipulation, isolation, ongoing stress after IPV relationship ends, and differential treatment. The two themes of manipulation and isolation mirrored previous empirical results. The sections focused on the ongoing stressors and differential treatments were of notable mention because it was here that the women vividly described multiple incidents where their undocumented status had eminent negative effects on their IPV survivorship process.

Manipulation. Related to their IPV relationships, all 20 women shared stories about events and circumstances where their undocumented status was used to manipulate the relationship dynamics. Their immigration status was used to threaten the women as well as cause

fear in an already unfamiliar and sometimes hostile country. The threats included their children's safety, their possibilities of gaining employment to have some financial independence, as well as deportation threats from their partners, some of whom were undocumented themselves. Victorya was often told by her partner, “‘without papers how are you going to work and provide for your kids? Immigration is going to take you away’... I wanted to work to help him but he would say no. He would say that immigration would come and take me away.” Interestingly, he was also undocumented and he secured full-time employment. However, he never allowed Victorya to find employment once they got married. When he met her, she was working full-time to provide for her daughter from a previous relationship. Victorya could not rationalize why he expected her to change her employment status once they got married. She lived with the fear of being taken away from her kids due to her immigration status and it was fueled by the constant threats of deportation from her ex-husband. Santa, Esmeralda, Elizabeth, and Anabel shared similar issues.

Another common tactic of the manipulation occurred when the survivors threatened their partners with calling the police due to the IPV. They were quickly stopped from reaching out for formal help especially if their partners would remind them that they could use their immigration status or English language limitations against them. Carmen remembered, “He said that because I did not speak English that they were not going to pay attention to me that they were going to send me to Mexico and he would stay with the kids. He would always tell me this when I would tell him I was going to call the police.” This comments worried Carmen, so she did not call the police. In Chio's situation, her ex-husband also used scare tactics to prevent her from calling 911 when the physical and sexual violence escalated. She shared, “My ex always said that 911 was connected to immigration. He did not have papers but he knew the system more because he came to the U.S. before me. He would use it against me to have me more tied to him.” Clearly, looking

back the women were able to identify the manipulation that their ex-partners exerted as a way to keep them scared, and at times terrorized which impacted looking for support.

All the women's stories highlighted above were of those women who had undocumented partners. In Linda's case, as well as the handful of women that had legal permanent resident or U.S. citizen partners, the threats related to their immigration status highlighted the dynamics at play when their partner had legal authority to reside in the U.S. Linda eloquently spoke about the bind women could face if their partners tried to leverage their differences in immigration status.

“Me dijo, ‘yo te puedo arreglar papeles. Pero una vez que te cases conmigo tienes que darme la mitad de tu cheque porque así son las leyes aquí.’ Yo le dije que no tenía prisa casarme y que primero quería ver cómo nos llevábamos. Mientras me dejen estar en este país trabajando augusto, no me importan los papeles. O si me los van a dar que sea sin amenazas. Porque era como una sentencia lo que me estaba diciendo. No me gusto. Y uno lo primero que piensa es, ‘va venir inmigración y me va llevar.’ Es una amenaza y un miedo que uno tiene y más cuando viene de una persona que esta legal y se lo dice a uno que no está legal...Tienes un miedo.”

“He told me, ‘I can fix your immigration papers. But once we are married you have to give me half of your pay check because those are the laws here.’ I told him I was not in a hurry to get married and I first wanted to see how we got along. As long as I can be in this country working okay, I do not care about the papers. Or if I am going to get them I want them without threats. Because it was like a sentencing what he would say to me. I did not like it. The first thing we think about is ‘immigration will come and take me away.’ It is a threat and fear that comes with it especially when someone that is legally here tells someone that is not legally here...You are afraid.”

Regardless of the various partner immigration circumstances, the manipulation, threats, and fears were legitimate concerns. These experiences repeated patterns disclosed in prior research studies.

Isolation. In the previous section, isolation was discussed at length but there was an elevated risk while in an IPV relationship to have this isolation experience intensified. The issue of isolation trickled down to their help-seeking tactics as well as how they proceeded with any form of separation from their ex-partners. The language barriers already existed along with

myths about service provision so there were many unknowns that impact their IPV isolation.

Victorya's narrative exemplified how isolation manifested itself when there was IPV.

“Lo malo que yo hice fue que no quería que me quitara a las niñas entonces puse todo pero para que el me diera más rápido el divorcio no le puse nada de la violencia, solamente lo de la pornografía. Yo tenía miedo que me fuera a quitar a las niñas o pelear. Nadie me dio un consejo. Mi hermana me decía que lo pusiera pero yo no quería pagar un abogado porque no tenía recursos. Yo no quería seguir con el problema de la violencia domestica porque él podía llamar a la policía y me podían cuitar a mis niñas. Yo tenía miedo que me quitaran a mis niñas.”

“The bad thing I did was because I did not want him to take away my girls so I wrote down everything that would help expedite the divorce process so I did not report the violence, I only reported the pornography issues. I was afraid he would take the girls away or he would fight me for them. Nobody gave me advice. My sister told me to report the violence but I did not want to pay for an attorney because I had no resources. I did not want to continue with the problem of domestic violence because he could call the police and they could take my girls away. I was very afraid that they would take away my girls.”

Even with her sister's help, she was isolated from other support systems so rather than thinking she could get some support if she reached out or shared about the IPV, she thought she would be the one to be affected if her children were taken away. On top of being isolated by not being allowed to work, her husband convinced her that she would be punished if she reached out for help because she was undocumented. In this quote the isolation was brought to the forefront but also the fear and threats that kept her silent about the violence.

Several other women felt they would be punished if they spoke out about the violence so the isolation cycle would be increased for them. Milagros also raised an issue where she blamed herself for not knowing more about the system and available information. She recounted,

“Yo no sabía de ningún tipo de derecho. Yo no sabía que existía ayuda o que había refugio para mujeres. Yo no sabía que podía aplicar para estampillas de comida, nunca recibí ayuda hasta apenas que me quede completamente sola. Yo no sabía que había guardería gratis para mi hija chica. Estaba hecha, disculpa mi palabra, una idiota.”

“I did not know about any rights. I did not know that help existed or that there were shelters for women. I did not know I could apply for food stamps, I never received help

until I found myself completely alone. I did not know there was free child care for my youngest daughter. I was a complete, excuse the word, a complete idiot.”

Similar to Milagros, Estela, Lola, and Maricruz were holding on to self-guilt and self-blame for not knowing where to find assistance. Even though all of them named the isolation, some of them also held on to victim-blaming thoughts that were sometimes difficult to address. The next theme highlighted the ongoing stressors after their IPV relationships ended.

Ongoing Stress after IPV Relationship Ends. All the women had ended their IPV relationships during the time of the interview. There were two cases in which the separation was fairly recent (i.e. 6 months) so there was a likelihood that the women would return to their partners, based on what we know about the cycle of abuse. From interviews to analyses, I became aware of the two women returning to their abusive partners as well as a third woman that returned to her husband after he was released from an immigration detention center. Some of the women that had been separated and considered themselves survivors for a longer time also had stories to share about how even after the relationship ended, they still struggled with stressors related to their undocumented status. Thirteen women gave examples of how this manifested; three of the most common circumstances were described via stories shared by the women.

Along with others, Jimena voiced the stressors that came from her family after she decided to report the IPV. Her ex-husband lost his legal residency after he was charged with DV. She disclosed how his family responded to this situation. “This is another thing they blame me for. Explicitly, his mom told me that I should have waited five more years. But I could not endure another day. No, I did not care. I was not going to tolerate him disrespecting me.” In Sonia’s case, she was also blamed for her ex-partner’s deportation proceedings after he was arrested for physically assaulting her at a family function. In these moments, the blame towards the survivor increased from those that could have validated her efforts to stay safe.

The second and third common ongoing stressors related to financial barriers trying to make it on their own. Victorya along with many of the other respondents commented on the ongoing issue of trying to get a job when they do not have a legal work authorization. She also was unable to rent her own apartment because she did not have a good social security number. Victorya wanted to study nursing to have better career options as a single mother, but that was also denied. She applied for an online program and the lack of social security hindered her from moving forward with her goals. Her worries were shared by many others. The third issue was related to accessing child support especially when their ex-partners were undocumented. If they were getting paid under the table or with a different identity, the women were unable to seek child support from them. Carmen shared her frustration about the limited money she received when her husband was still in the U.S. working.

“Cuando me ayudaba que estaba aquí era como \$82 de child support al mes. Yo decía porque no mas eso. Él se llevaba muy bien con su jefe. Una amistad que tenemos en común me decía que el sabia que el señor estaba todavía trabajando bien todas sus horas. Yo decía que porque no mas \$82, por sus hijos. Al principio si me las vi duras. Yo tenía 3 trabajos que no eran de diario. Llego el momento que no podía con la renta. Tuve que pedir prestado de amistades los últimos 2 meses porque no podía con la renta. Me dijeron que podía ir a un shelter y así fue que conseguí este lugar.”

“When he helped me it was about \$82 a month on child support. I would wonder why I would not get more. He got along with his boss. A mutual friend told me that he knew my ex was working all his hours. I wondered why only \$82 for both his sons. At the beginning, it was rough. I had three jobs that were not daily. I got to the point that I could not pay rent. I had to ask for a loan from friends for the last two months because I had no money for rent. They told me I could go to a shelter and that is how I found this place.”

Carmen’s husband was now in Mexico, so she no longer received any child support. During her interview, she shared a letter received in the mail that her work permit was soon to arrive. She counted the days as she struggled with the anger she felt towards her husband that did not take on his parental responsibility to offer financial support during the separation. Being undocumented added layers of financial difficulty even after the women were no longer in the IPV relationships.

Differential Treatment. A total of nine women gave specific examples of how their undocumented status was used to treat them differently when they sought help for the IPV. The remaining women did not specify this information. For example, Marisol did not feel she was treated differently because of her immigration status. However, she was aware that she had to wait longer for services to be approved because she was low income. Because Marisol had a work permit to legally work in the U.S., she was somewhat sheltered from the issues described below. Again, only nine women attested to this dynamic but their stories clearly were important as the theme emerged. Jimena's statement pointed to the misconception that all undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes. She had heard this excuse from social service providers at various moments that she tried to access formal help. Her comments were from a recent conversation she had with the transitional housing coordinator before I interviewed her.

“Porque a veces en algunas formas se te recalca que los ciudadanos Americanos pagan impuestos para que tu tengas esto. Te hacen sentir como que estas pidiendo limosna. Te hacen sentir que estas dependiendo de ellos. Cuando tú dices, ‘yo también he trabajado’ Yo también he pagado impuestos. Porque ahora que necesito la ayuda se me recalca eso. Porque me viene a decir que yo vivo de esto y te hacen sentir incomoda más que nada. Más adelante mis hijas van a trabajar y van a pagar impuestos porque son de aquí. Igual, yo desde que he trabajado los he pagado.”

“Sometimes there are ways that they emphasize that American citizens pay taxes for us to have these things. They make you feel like you are asking for charity. They make you feel like you are being dependent on them. When you say, ‘I too have worked’ I too have paid taxes. Why is it that now that I need the help it is being used against me? Why do they come and tell you that I am living from this and more than anything, they make you feel uncomfortable. In the future my daughters will work and they will also pay taxes because they are citizens. Regardless, ever since I worked, I always paid my taxes.”

Jimena was the only interviewee that named this differential treatment directly. A couple other women alluded to feeling treated differently but Jimena named the misconception held by many, including some people who work in the DV field.

The other differential treatment issue that was identified related to the u-visa process. Oftentimes it was assumed by service providers and some of their social networks that the u-visa was accessible to all undocumented immigrant IPV survivors that were married to undocumented partners. Assumptions were made of how the process would occur so Carmen voiced the frustration with the process. As mentioned earlier, Carmen was waiting for her work permit to arrive any day after the interview. Hence, the long three years and waiting in-between meetings with pro bono attorneys period had left an impression for her. Her words challenged the ideas that once the women accessed the system, the process would be seamless or helpful. Carmen shared,

“Te ves limitada porque sin el número de seguro, no puedes. Una vez que metes los papeles con la abogada para inmigración, no puedes trabajar supuestamente. Ya no porque pediste un perdón entonces, ¿cuál es la ayuda? El gobierno bien sabe que no tenemos seguro y nos están ayudando porque en vez de darnos así las cosas tan fácil, no tan fácil porque es un proceso muy largo pero ¿porque no darnos las herramientas para luego empezar a trabajar? O un permiso provisional mientras que te llega todo. De eso estamos hambrientas muchas.”

“You are limited because without a social security number, you can’t. Once you submit your paperwork with the immigration attorney, supposedly you cannot work. You can’t anymore because you have asked for a pardon so, what is the help? The government well knows that we do not have a social security and they are helping us so instead of giving us things so easily. Well not that easy because it is still a long process but why not gives us the tools to then begin working? Or a provisional work permit while you wait for everything to arrive. Many of us desire this.”

In conclusion, the themes derived from the interviews painted an overall picture of the ongoing struggles that Latina undocumented women experienced as IPV survivors. Areas of resistance and questioning were also a part of the shared narratives. The stress of being undocumented was articulated through various examples that began in their day-to-day interactions as well as other relationships. More specific to IPV, the women also expressed the ways in which their undocumented immigrant status intersected with their lived experiences. Some moments were mentioned where they indeed felt treated differently specifically because

they were undocumented. The following sections analyzed further their formal and informal help-seeking behaviors. This information addressed the remaining two research questions of the current study and underscored some of the repercussions of seeking help while being an undocumented immigrant IPV survivor.

Some essential considerations need to be prefaced for a thorough interpretation of the help-seeking analytical findings. First, recall where and how the interviewees were recruited. This process took place primarily at one Western Washington non-profit community agency that provided culturally-competent behavioral health services to the Latino community. These services included a domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault unit. Second, all the women had received some form of assistance from a service provider. The recruitment notice was forwarded by their counselors, therapists, case managers, and support group moderators that they knew from various program interactions. Therefore, the findings needed to be interpreted under the pretense that the survivors in this study actively considered formal help during or after the IPV experience. During the interview process, the majority of the interviewees resided in transitional housing programs that were a part of DV services. With the exception of four interviewees, all the women were residing in or had received DV-specific transitional housing in the past.

Formal Help-seeking

This section provided the thematic analyses results that emerged for the women's help-seeking behaviors and the response they encountered when they attempted to receive formal help/support through various systems. I also intended to investigate what formal support programs and/or institutions were accessed by the undocumented Latina survivors to address the violence. While attending to these research aims, their stories highlighted two additional components which contextualized the impact their undocumented immigrant status may have

had when receiving or asking for formal help. The women provided details in regards to *how* they accessed the support systems and *when* they sought the support. First, information was presented about what types of formal services and programs were used. Then these details (how and when) were diagramed in tables to decipher the major themes, categories, and sub-categories that contextualized the responses the women reported about the formal social support responses.

The interviewees gained access to a multitude of formal support programs to combat the effects of the violence or to intervene when the violence occurred. From analyzing the facts, it was worthy to point out that temporally, most of the formal services were accessed after gaining transitional housing approval. A few exceptions were reported which included Women, Infants and Children (WIC) assistance during pregnancy or if children were under the age of five. Seeking medical attention during physical altercations was reported by some women prior to obtaining transitional housing assistance as well. Some women also joined support groups without obtaining shelter assistance. Nevertheless, the majority of the women shared that the DV shelter system opened doors to access and opportunities to other formal support systems. Table Four provided data of how many of the women accessed the various types of formal help.

Table 4.2
The Types of Formal IPV Help-Seeking Services Utilized

Formal Help-Seeking (Institutions, Programs & Services)	Total Interviewees Sought Help
Legal Protective Orders (DV-related)	20 (100%)
Transitional Housing/Shelter	16 (80%)
Immigration-related Legal Assistance	12 (60%)
Child-related Legal Assistance (child support & child custody)	5 (25%)
Police Department	10 (50%)
Support Groups (emotional support, art-based, & financial counseling)	17 (85%)
Counseling and Therapy (individual, family, & children's therapy)	10 (50%)
Medical Assistance (related to physical and sexual violence)	8 (40%)
Charity programs (assist w/food, utilities, bus passes, and/or clothing)	15 (75%)

Women, Infants, and Children (food and nutrition program)	12 (60%)
Food Stamps	14 (70%)
TANF (Cash Assistance)	3 (15%)
School Social Worker	5 (25%)
Child Protective Services	4 (20%)

Everyone in the sample had obtained a protection order against their partners at some point during the IPV process. In some circumstances the police were called prior to accessing legal protection orders which oftentimes lead to receiving a temporary protection order that facilitated the consideration into transitional housing programs. Esperanza succinctly expressed how her help-seeking behaviors would have been different if she had known these options were available. She stated, “I did not know about this help until I was at the shelter then I began to learn these things- believe me that I would not have waited so long [to get out].” The pattern to access these programs only after the procurement of shelter was crucial especially considering the isolation the women reported due to the lack of a permanent legal immigration status.

A special note was needed for specialized formal help which included school social workers and child protective services (CPS) personnel. Very few women interacted with these specialized systems. If it was accessed, it was only after someone from the children’s school raised the issue so the women came in contact with these formal systems. CPS became involved when abuse reports were made by teachers and school counselors. School social workers were also consulted only after the children were impacted by homelessness due to the IPV. It was only then that the five women that encountered a school social worker knew this person was available to help them find emergency housing or monetary assistance to ensure their kids continued in school. This issue will be discussed further in the implications section of the project.

Accessing formal help was difficult at times, especially if the Latina IPV immigrant survivors were unaware of where to begin looking for assistance. The table below delineated the various themes that emerged as ways that help was accessed along with categories and sub-categories describing the most common ways that help was obtained. Of specific interest was the last theme that revealed multiple cases where women did not disclose the IPV. This theme will be discussed further in the implications section because it was important to untangle how IPV disclosure could help formal social service providers to address the presented issues.

Table 4.3
Major Themes, Categories, and Sub-categories Describing *How Help* was Accessed

<i>How Themes</i>	<i>How Categories</i>	<i>How Sub-categories</i>
Provided a referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral from a professional (e.g. therapist, police officer, case manager, attorney) (n=20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition from the referral to service delivery was very difficult to navigate. • Frustrating process (lack of information or incomplete info) • Two women expressed an easier process, they received support after a traumatic event that required immediate response from the providers. • Unless someone was available to walk them through the process, the referral was not helpful. (e.g. WIC officer provided phone number referral sheet with outdated info)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral from friends/family (e.g. friends, mother, sister, sister-in-laws, mother-in-laws, and aunts) (n=13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only women relatives and friends offered referrals. • Referrals were offered by other IPV survivors. • Disclosure allowed them to feel comfortable sharing their own experience. • First referral led to connecting with other formal help-seeking agencies. (e.g. Sister-in-law attended a support group for depression and shared about this group that helped abused women.)
Called the police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivors accessed the police department themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called police only as a last resort. • Confusion due to lack of interpreters.

	(n=10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion not knowing what to expect. <i>(e.g. Unaware partner would be arrested, and later deported, after the police call.)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children called the police. (n= 3) • Bystanders that saw physical violence called the police. (n= 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls from kids were often when they were afraid that one parent would kill the other. • These were situations where physical altercations would escalate and someone witnessed it. <i>(e.g. A taxi driver and hotel employee called police after a woman was being followed by her abusive boyfriend.)</i>
Found help without IPV disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing assistance during pregnancy (n= 5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPV was never revealed but it was common that the presenting issues were directly-related to IPV. • Looked for help due to concerns of miscarriages or abortions provoked by the physical violence. • Three of the five women revealed the pregnancy was a result of IPV sexual abuse. <i>(e.g. Marcela did not share the ongoing physical abuse to the gynecologist after her body attempted to miscarry the baby multiple times in her second pregnancy after being brutally beaten.)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed assistance for mental health concerns (n= 10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most sought formal support for depression and anxiety which were connected to their IPV situations. • Seven of the ten women never shared to their therapist about the violence and focused only on the mental health effects. <i>(e.g. Lola attended counseling for major depression when the IPV physical violence escalated but she presented her case as just a “rough time” in her marriage.)</i>

After analyzing the information provided by the interviewees, there was also a temporal process depicted about when formal help/support was accessed. This process demonstrated the timing to seek formal help coincided with the IPV increasing or IPV effects impacting their lives in ways they could not control. The table below presented the various themes that emerged as

times when help was accessed along with categories and sub-categories describing the most common moments when help was acquired.

Table 4.4

Major Themes, Categories, and Sub-categories Describing When Help was Accessed

<i>When Themes</i>	<i>When Categories</i>	<i>When Sub-categories</i>
Concerned with children's safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the main reason to seek formal help. (n= 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most common reason but also connected to reasons below. • Some felt pressure from informal social supports to act on behalf of the children. (e.g. Esmeralda waited until her kids were teenagers to get help and after her teen daughter threatened to runaway.)
During an emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly related to an increase in physical altercations and injuries. (n= 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In these circumstances, survivors often had "evidence." • Helpful response if the initial help sources connected them to other services. • Unhelpful response if evidence was ignored or no documentation resulted from help-seeking efforts. (e.g. Estela went directly to the police after she escaped her apartment, where she was physically and sexually assaulted by an ex-boyfriend. The police refused to send a patrol car to the apartment where she had been held against her will. She received no advice to go to a hospital for the injuries.)
With increased lethality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked for help only after lethal threats and attempts against their lives increased. (n= 17) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were afraid for their safety or their risk of being killed. • Ways in which lethality increased included use of guns, knives, other weapons, and active choking attempts. • Fearing for their lives intensified the sense of urgency to seek help. (e.g. Anabel's partner showed her videos of people being decapitated and he would sleep with a machete next to the bed. He threatened to "disappear" her and her family not being able to find her.)
As a last resort (ultimatum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included specific events that forced them to seek help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situations that led to homelessness or CPS-related investigations.

	(e.g. no money to pay bills and rent, threats to lose kids' custody) (n= 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required the women to find another place to reside or to separate from their partners. • Several women were kicked out of their home or abandoned on the road by abuser with threats that they could not return home. <p><i>(e.g. Milagros did not seek help until she found herself without money to pay her rent after her husband went to jail. She revealed, "He would always threaten me when he was being violent. He would tell me 'let's see who will pay your bills because the police are not going to come and pay your bills.'")</i></p>
To save the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women reached out to counselors that were faith-based or religious support. <p>(n= 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though only three women reported this tactic, it was mentioned because this type of formal help-seeking may offer an alternative to how formal services were depicted and represented as help options when IPV survivors were seeking formal support. <p><i>(e.g. Angeles received support her female pastor while she was dealing with the separation from her husband.)</i></p>

Formal Help-seeking Responses

This section emphasized and expanded on the responses the women received from the formal helping systems they approached. The information presented in the preceding segment offered a context of the types of formal help-seeking the women engaged in as well as when and how they accessed these systems. The themes discussed for formal help-seeking responses widened the understanding of how undocumented status along with other social identities impacted the responses received from the formal help-seeking experiences. Four themes emerged for types of formal responses which were expanded below.

Helpful Responses. Eighteen of the 20 women mentioned some of the specific ways that the assistance they received as part of the formal response was helpful. Key components of these

interactions included being able to connect with a professional that spoke their native language (in all these cases it was Spanish), being able to trust the practitioner with their immigration status information, and feeling respected as an IPV survivor when they interacted with the formal helping systems. Feeling respected was described as finding formal support systems where professionals were informed about how to navigate services for undocumented survivors and when they did not feel discrimination because of their immigration status. For example, seeking formal support from the police department and legal advocates, Milagros mentioned the helpful interactions. “In regards to the police, I had their support. Even for the signature needed for my u visa paperwork. The officer that filed my case was soon going on maternity leave. And even with all this she gave my legal advocate the signature quickly. They were diligent with my case.”

Interestingly, helpful responses in the formal help-seeking setting also included multiple circumstances where the women would meet other IPV survivors, particularly in support group settings. Santa found the assistance helpful when she attended one of these support groups. She mentioned, “It’s impactful to hear each person’s situation is different. My story is heavy but there may be other heavier stories...there are persons that overcame the situation with a lot of effort from their part- they did not allow to be defeated. At first I was very scared but with time I had the strength to speak up more.” Maricruz had a similar experience after attending a different support group. She realized her context was not unique and there were others in similar or worse conditions; this was also the case for Marisol, Anabel, and Angeles. Being able to build solidarity with other survivors during moments of formal help-seeking was described as helpful.

Stigma, Distrust, and Fear. A second theme emerged that focused on the stigma, distrust, and fear associated with seeking help from formal providers. Fifteen women mentioned this stigma, fear, and distrust as part of their experiences. This theme described the things that

came up for the women while facing the responses of the providers. Therefore, it was not that the providers' direct response was fearful but rather that one of these three components was attached to the responses received. For instance, the stigma was related to how others perceived them for seeking the help. Stigma was also associated with seeking help from specific services. This included access to cash assistance (TANF) benefits for their children when they were unable to obtain child support. Seeking mental health therapy was also stigmatized by many. Curiously, for 10 women the stigma then led them to an expectation that the help would only be temporary and limited. They expected the longer-term formal assistance was minimal.

The fear and distrust was related to the inadequate response to their unique immigrant needs. These situations often related to interactions with police officers but there were other institutions and professionals that were also not trusted. In the situation that Esmeralda described below, it was evident that the doctor was trying to help her. However, her circumstances made it impossible to trust the doctor's good intentions to intervene the violence.

Me puso otra friega y de esa fui a dar al hospital. Pero yo dije que me había caído. El doctor hablaba Español. Yo había ido antes por otros leves golpes pero esa vez me golpeo y me lastimo mi espalda. Yo no podía respirar, me dolía, me forzaba para respirar. Entonces el doctor se voltea de espaldas hacia el [esposo] y en el oído me dice, "Si te golpeo, yo te puedo ayudar." Pero clarito en español, para mí fue como un fantasma. Lo mire y me dio miedo cuando vi al otro [esposo] allá y se levantó y le dice al doctor, "¿Qué es lo que tiene doctor?" Le dijo en inglés. Le dijo algo más pero yo no entendía bien el idioma. El doctor le dice que está bien, que se siente. Va y se sienta y el doctor me vuelve hacer la pregunta y dijo, "Yo te puedo ayudar si él te golpea." Yo no hallaba que hacer. Le dije yo que no, que no con la cabeza. Mi esposo quería sacarme del hospital y yo no pude hablar allí. El doctor le dijo que se esperara porque me había hecho radiografías. Yo dije que me caí, ya no paso más.

He beat me up badly and from that I ended up in the hospital. But I said I fell. The doctor spoke Spanish. I had been there before for other mild injuries but this time he hit me hard and hurt my back. I could not breathe, it hurt, I had to force myself to try to breathe. Then the doctor turned his back towards him [husband] and he told me in the ear, "If he hits you, I can help you." He said it clearly in Spanish, for me it was like hearing a ghost. I looked at him and I got very scared when I then saw him [husband] sitting there and he

got up to ask the doctor, “What is wrong with her doctor?” He told him in English. He told him other things but I did not understand the language well. The doctor told him it was fine, he told him to sit down. [My husband] goes and sits down and the doctor asked me again and said, “I can help you if he hits you.” I did not know what to do. I said no, I shook my head no. My husband wanted to leave the hospital so I was not able to speak. The doctor told him to wait because he had taken x-rays. I said I fell, nothing happened.

This doctor situation was unique because usually the fear and distrust was related to a professional not adequately addressing the women’s needs when they called for help rather than fear when someone asked how they could help.

Barriers and Obstacles. All 20 women offered examples of how they experienced barriers from the response which made the formal help more difficult to obtain. These barriers often included not knowing policies which rendered it difficult to navigate services. These unknown policies or program qualifications also added to the strenuous process of seeking help while being undocumented. Victorya specified how this confusion intensified the barriers to obtain housing assistance. “The first thing they ask you is if you have a good social security number” stated Victorya, “Every place asked you this and if you say you do not have one they tell you that you do not qualify but your kids do. If my girls qualify and I don’t [referring to housing], how are my girls going to be by themselves?” Part of the unknown tensions included not knowing if it was safe to share about the IPV. In Chio’s situation, she thought about seeking help but she often wondered: “If I leave and then no one supports me and I need to return to him, it will be worse for me. Maybe they will not defend me and help me.” If the obstacle originated from not knowing how to navigate the policies, the likelihood of seeking formal help decreased.

Besides the barriers of not knowing policies and processes to seek help, the women also mentioned other impediments they encountered. Seventeen women mentioned a lack of bilingual staff to assist them in Spanish. In most cases the systems they connected with had at least one

Spanish-speaking staff member. However, in some settings, there was no one and they were expected to bring their own translator. Eleven women mentioned transportation difficulties impacted their ability to access formal help. In some agencies, women received assistance with gas cards or bus tickets to get to their appointments. The assistance was only offered after the women found themselves in desperate situations without money, so it was always a last resort of financial assistance from non-profit agencies and/or schools.

Significant barriers for 15 of the 20 women were the long waits and delays they faced when seeking help. Sonia recalled her section 8 (federal subsidized housing) application was filed in 2008 and it was 2013; she was told her name was getting closer on the wait list but till this date- nothing. Similarly, Carmen experienced a long wait with her u visa application to obtain work authorization. She was surprised a waiting list existed to have an attorney review her case. Then she had to wait another 13 months after her case was finally filed with immigration. “I feel hopeless because I feel like I am not doing anything and I cannot move forward” said Carmen. On various occasions the women’s tenacity was needed to continue calling after no response and leaving messages with hopes that someone would return their calls. Unfortunately, even with the diligence to connect, women were denied services. Marcela shared her struggle.

“Estuve casi un mes y una semana en la calle sufrieron y navegando porque es bien difícil que te den hospedaje con una familia de la que yo tenía (5 hijos). Y al principio yo no lo sabía hasta que me dijeron la verdad eso es muy difícil para ti ocupar dos cuartos que no hay. Había uno pero no es que no familia es muy grande. Y anduve en la calle anduve en los parques, estuve en hoteles.”

“For almost a month and a week I was on the street suffering and navigating because it was very difficult to get shelter for a family like the one I have (5 children). At first I did not know until they told me the truth- it is hard for you to occupy two rooms that were not available. They had one but my family was too big. I [we] slept on the street, in the parks, and in hotels.”

Even though Marcela's case was unique, three other interviewees mentioned their undocumented immigration status affected them to obtain shelter and required them to wait longer to access.

Ten women also centered the obstacles related to the formal services that were available for their children. Most women did not know how to navigate subsidized child care programs, so they did not access these services until they were at transitional housing programs. Further dilemmas once they were approved for subsidized child care included the temporary access which hindered making plans to get full time jobs with no reliable child care options they could afford. Sometimes the connections also came with barriers because they lacked a social security number for employment opportunities. Esperanza, Estela, Chio, and Esmeralda had children with special needs; sadly, they were unable to access specialized care until much later from when the issue was first diagnosed. It was important to reiterate that 19 women were mothers to U.S. born children in this study. The access was limited or completely unavailable for more than half of their children that qualified for the services. Along with the unknown, there were also barriers with the service provision and how their financial needs, language needs, and immigrant parent needs impacted the response they received from formal service provisions.

Oppressive Responses. In half of the women's situations, they mentioned oppressive practices they experienced within IPV programs and services especially when their immigration status intersected with other components of their lives as undocumented women. For Marisol, she never perceived the overt discrimination was associated with not having legal immigration status. She claimed it was her low income that required that she wait longer for services. She mentioned, "You have to be on a wait list because you do not have enough income. I know that not having money limits me to be able to move quicker on my case, especially the immigration and legal pieces." Marisol also talked briefly about her indigenous Mayan culture being the

reason for ridicule or differential treatment because she looked more “india” or native. Providers and other survivors would assume she did not know how to navigate life in the U.S. It was evident that these stories were difficult for her to talk about, so we did not explore deeper the significance of these uncomfortable circumstances.

For some women their lack of education impacted how formal staff members interacted with them. When Sonia’s time at the shelter ended, she did not receive assistance or explanation to find permanent housing. Oftentimes, she was asked to sign paperwork but she was unaware what she was filling out or if it actually got filed by her case manager. Sonia explained, “I have never filled out forms like this, so sometimes I would not fill them out. I would say, ‘for what?’ I can get my own apartment. When I was finally getting ready to leave the shelter I found out I had bad credit from a previous apartment and then I was unable to rent.” In a slightly different circumstance but for similar reasons, Lola received pressure from the shelter manager to find somewhere to live after her time at the transitional home was ending. Her frustration was evident when she stated, “Before moving I need to find a job. I cannot move if I do not have a job! It is too much, I do not trust her.” Lola also shared that this shelter manager refused to follow-up with her immigration u-visa application when her pro-bono attorney asked her to obtain missing reports and police signatures. Lola said, “She was told to call the police and tell them I was in danger so they could sign my paperwork. But she told me she was not going to do it, she said she was not going to do anything because the police did not proceed to do an investigation. So what help am I receiving? What hopes do I have that she will do anything for me?”

In conclusion, the formal help/support that was accessed was comprised of multiple service providers, community agencies and formal help institutions and programs. There were also various ways that the services were accessed. Furthermore, it mattered when the formal help

was accessed because it was mostly during emergencies or when the IPV was increasing in lethality and it often was also connected with the women being concerned for their children's safety. The responses they received from formal help providers also varied with helpful as well as unhelpful responses. The women offered the reasons they perceived as making their interactions as helpful or unhelpful which will be referred back to in the conclusion section.

Informal Help-seeking

For informal help/support, I aimed to investigate who in their informal support systems the women were able to rely on as undocumented Latina survivors to address the violence. The women's narratives highlighted *what* type of support they obtained and *when* they reached out to their informal support systems. The responses they received from their informal support systems were also analyzed particularly to observe how undocumented immigration status impacted these responses. The following section delineated what people were included in the informal support systems they accessed along with themes the women addressed in their narratives.

The women in this research had various experiences with accessing informal help from their social networks. Oftentimes, women shared the limitations that came with being far away from family. Plus being in an IPV relationship also added a layer of isolation which made it more difficult to access informal support. The table below portrayed the different people that were a part of their informal support systems from which they reached out for assistance.

Table 4.5
The Types of Informal IPV Help-Seeking Networks Utilized

Informal Help-Seeking (Social Support)	Total Interviewees Sought Help
Friends	11 (55%)
Immediate Family Members (includes parents and siblings)	9 (45%)
Extended Family Members (includes in-laws, cousin, and aunt)	5 (25%)
Children (witnessed violence and interfered/interjected)	8 (40%)

Religious/Faith-based (includes priests and pastors)	6 (30%)
Co-workers	3 (15%)
Bystanders (if incident happened in public)	2 (10%)

Attention was warranted to the fact that friends were the people most often accessed for support (n=11). Nine women from the sample reported seeking help from their immediate family members such as parents and siblings. Lastly, a few people reached out to their co-workers or bystanders to provide informal support for the IPV. In these situations, the violence happened in public or there were physical marks from the abuse, so the women reach out to these people in more public settings. Caution should be used when interpreting these numbers. It may seem that less than half of the interviewees reached out to their informal social support systems. Actually, only two women did not report any informal support. Most women only mentioned one or two people in their informal support systems that they reached out to for help.

Many of the women did not have large social support systems so accessible help was limited. It was also critical to mention that this table only included social support individuals that resided in the U.S. since it made a difference if the women could actually reach out to them. The women that mentioned staying in touch with family members living in their country of origin did not count them as reliable informal support. The limitation of being so far away made it difficult for these family members to provide any type of support. Furthermore, two women that cited these experiences strictly said that they spoke to their parents and oftentimes hid the violence that was happening or only provided brief descriptions of their struggles. They did not want to worry their parents or love ones with the IPV issues occurring so far away from them.

Compared to the various formal help-seeking programs, the tangible support that was available to the women from their social support networks varied. The women specified five

concrete types of informal support that they sought when they reached out to social networks. The most common was emotional support (n=15). This included having someone to vent with or talk with about the IPV situation as well as feeling supported when they were trying to seek formal help or to leave the relationship. Consequently, the second most common type of support was safety planning (n=11). This type of support was sought out during emergencies or to buffer the risks associated with leaving an IPV relationship. The women also looked for informal support when they needed financial support (n=7); when they needed a place to live (n=7); and when they needed help with child care (n=7). All their informal help-seeking efforts were tied to a form of informal support that would lessen the needs that formal systems could not address.

As with formal help, the women shared about the instances when they reached out for informal support. Similar themes (see Table 4.4) emerged from the women's narrative in regards to when they reached out for support. However, the temporal process depicted with formal help was not the same for informal help. Seeking informal support varied across situations and circumstances for each relationship. Regardless, this process still demonstrated the timing to seek informal help coincided with the IPV increasing or IPV effects impacting their lives. Seventeen of the 20 women looked for informal support when the lethality threats and attempts increased as well as when they were concerned for their children. Fourteen women looked for informal help during emergencies which were often associated with severe physical altercations. Twelve women mentioned looking for help from their social networks as a last resort. Some examples of last resort situations had to do with securing safe housing when fleeing the IPV or leaving their abusive partners. Other women also sought informal support when they experienced a financial crisis often related to the IPV and their undocumented immigration status. Only 6 women mentioned seeking help from their informal networks to try to save the relationship or make

things better with their partners. This happened during the beginning of the relationship and when the IPV began to escalate. Ultimately, the informal help-seeking efforts happened before the formal help-seeking efforts but the patterns demonstrated similar reasons to seek help.

Informal Help-seeking Responses

The following section focused on five themes that emerged in the women's stories and revealed the responses they received from their informal help-seeking networks. Other categories were brought up that were not included here because they were only experienced by a few women. The coding charts in the appendix encompassed all the categories that were reported. The description below strictly pointed to the four themes that were most often referenced in the narratives. The fifth theme, helpful responses for the entire IPV process, was mentioned only by three women. However, it was explored in the findings because a similar theme was revealed for formal help-seeking networks and it was an important, yet unique, experience that can help inform future steps to support environments that can promote helpful responses. The themes were the following: no involvement in the IPV response because it was not their business; a culture of silence hindered support; gendered expectations related to the IPV; only offered temporary support; and helpful responses throughout the entire IPV survivorship process.

Not Their Business to Assist. A total of 17 women referred to situations where they did not receive any help or assistance for the IPV from their informal social support networks because the IPV was viewed as an issue that was not the business of others to get involved. Remarkably, almost half of these women (n= 7) decided that they would not share about the IPV with their friends and family because it was a private matter. These women had various incidents so in some circumstances people knew about the violence even if it was not vocally shared. For example, Estela mentioned, "I was embarrassed that they would see me with physical marks and

I did not have any excuses because they knew it was him.” There were other women that had similar dynamics and interactions. Even with the IPV physical marks, friends and family members close by did not get involved in the IPV relationship dynamics.

A peculiar category that emerged under this theme described the ways in which some family and friends would actively engage in hiding the IPV but they would still not get involved in the actual relationship because ‘it was not their business.’ This was interesting to observe since the IPV was seen as the private matter; however, when it came to dealing with the aftermath of the violence only then would some of the informal network get involved to hide the occurrences. Four women gave specific examples of this informal help-seeking dynamic. Anabel’s description below illuminated what others also shared.

“Mis ex-cuñadas sí que sabían lo que pasaba, nunca se metían pero me decían, ‘ponte este maquillaje o ponte esto.’ Siempre andaban cubriendo los golpes y siempre me decían que ponerme. Es lo que más me dolía, que la misma gente sabían y no se metían.”

“My ex sisters-in-law sure knew what was happening, they would never get involved but they would tell me, ‘put on this make-up or put this on.’ They would always cover up the hitting marks and they would always tell me what to wear [to cover up]. That was what hurt the most, people knew and they would not intervene.”

The active ways that were used to ‘cover up’ the IPV still did not change the larger theme of not getting involved. Specifically, the women perceived that their family and friends did not want to intervene in an intimate relationship of two people. Some of the women voiced they did not want to share with others, but this reported theme also exposed moments where the IPV was evident but not responded to because it was seen as a confidential matter.

Culture of Silence. Conversely, yet related, was the theme that 14 women mentioned about the culture of silence that surrounded the IPV. In these situations the IPV was hidden or denied by the women survivors. Five women never shared with anyone and the other nine

women were selective of what they would share and with whom. Several of the women also divulged that the transnational relationships they had with family members in their country of birth required that they not share about the IPV because they were too far away to be able to act. They described it as more problematic to share when family and friends would feel helpless being unable to respond being so far away from the situation.

Of the nine women that were selective of what they shared about the IPV experience with their informal social support networks, a few of them disclosed that the responses they received influenced the culture of silence that was engendered in future interactions. For instance, Maricruz and Angeles were told by family members that they were not crazy so they should not attend support groups or counseling. After this conversation, they never again shared with their family about the violence; they had a couple friends that they would talk to about the home conditions. Another common occurrence was that after sharing some information about the IPV the women obtained advice that negated their efforts to try to report or leave their abusive spouses. Some of the women were reminded that being undocumented would be a huge barrier trying to get any help beyond the family. This reaction also discouraged women from sharing again so the culture of silence generated a larger reach. Therefore, even when the women would try to selectively share about the IPV with informal social support networks, the culture of silence persisted in multiple ways.

Gendered Expectations. A third theme that emerged was related to expectations that were directly connected to their gender. Fifteen women expressed the numerous moments when their gender was used as an excuse or reason for which they had to tolerate the IPV. These interactions occurred even before women were involved in an IPV relationships. Marcela said, “My grandfather taught me I had to know how to take care of all the house-related duties and

chores. But for him it was normal for a man to hit a woman- that was part of being married.” It was often described as the cross they had to carry once they decided to get married or cohabitate with a partner. The violence was normalized in childhood and as the women grew up and began to engage in intimate relationships with men.

For some women, the explicit family or friend advice was given at the beginning of a relationship. Elizabeth recalled the day she was trying to convince her parents that it was not a good idea to travel to the U.S. with her abusive ex-husband. “My parents told me, ‘go with him, he is your husband and the father of your children- why are you going to stay, so someone else comes into your life and you sleep with him and then this other person uses you too.’” In similar dialogues, other women mentioned they were expected to be submissive and loyal partners to their husbands. Jimena continued to struggle with a vivid interface her mother-in-law and her experienced after her husband at the time sexually assaulted her. “[I told her] there was no reason for him to take me forcefully. My mother-in-law told me, ‘he has the right to take what is his.’” It was customary practice in previous generations for women to not have a choice to leave. Hence, these dynamics to suffer as a woman were not uncommon.

An interesting category that emerged from these interactions was related to female relatives that would try to convince the women to stay in the abusive relationships. Multiple accounts were raised about grandmothers and mothers expecting their daughters to tolerate the relationship regardless of the IPV dynamics. Most of the women relatives that were mentioned in these stories had also had problems in their own marriages, not IPV necessarily, but continued to suffer in difficult partnerships. The dynamics of machismo were mentioned by some of the interviewees, such as Anabel reiterated in her quote below.

“Mi mamá es de que pues eso te toco y aguántate. Mi mamá era de que ojala que se arreglen ojala que puedan hablar. No me hubiera ayudo tampoco porque es así la cultura el machismo. La verdad cuando yo me separe, o sea, perdí a mis padres: ‘porque vas a dejar a los niños sin papa. Pues que a veces así es y hay que aguantarles y ay, pues si deberías regresar con él, que mira, que no andarías batallando y todo. Ya regrésate.’”

“My mother said well this is what you got so deal with it. My mother would say hopefully it will work out, hopefully you can talk. It would not have helped me because this is the culture of machismo. Honestly when I separated, like, I lost my parents: ‘why are you going to leave your kids without a father. Well this is how it is sometimes and you have to deal with it and well, yes you need to go back to him, look, you would not have to struggle and all. Go back to him now.’”

Anabel was not alone in hearing this advice from female family members. Angeles also remembered what her grandmother would tell her mother, “Well this man is what you got too bad daughter- you have to put up with him for your kids.” Angeles, as well as other women that heard similar guidance, realized that it was better to leave a relationship because their kids would suffer more if they were surrounded by violence in the home. Angeles had six daughters and she was actively trying to create a new template for her daughters to follow that did not require them to tolerate such treatment from men they dated or married.

Only Offered Temporary Support/Help. A total of 14 women described the help they received from their informal social support networks as being limited or temporary. Oftentimes this support was offered during emergency situations or when particular contexts required that they offer the help. For example, both Carmen and Jimena had their brothers assist them when the police was called for a violent altercation. In both situations, their brothers were available to provide immediate support by translating for the officers or transporting the women to the hospital or police station. Jimena’s brother gave her advice to leave her husband after various incidents of marital rape. Carmen did not have similar luck since her brother never spoke to her after the one time that he was available to help her deal with the police officers in her home.

A common pattern that emerged for eight women was the likelihood that someone from their informal social support system would help the first time they witnessed the IPV but they were likely to not intervene again if they saw it happen again. It could be that this same person was not around the second, third or 20th time the violence occurred. However, the women that shared about this pattern also prefaced that if the IPV continued and they tried to get help again from this same person, it was not a viable option. Linda suffered an intense episode of major depression after having her partner arrested, so she had a couple friends visit her to help her get back on her feet. Sadly, these two friends later told Linda that she was overreacting and that she needed to get over the IPV because it was not that big of a deal for her to be so upset. She perceived that their intentions were to motivate her to move on but their words actually made it much more difficult to trust other friends with the situation. For Marcela and Esperanza, their in-laws offered temporary help especially when they realized that the women's children were witnessing the violence and were externalizing problematic behaviors. This support happened more than once but ultimately their in-laws stopped offering help when they realized that it was unlikely that they could help with a safety plan to leave their husbands.

Helpful Response for the Entire IPV Process. Even though only three people talked about this theme, it was important to mention because there were some contexts where family and friends were supportive throughout the entire IPV relationship. In this situations, even when the women decided to give their partners a second chance to make things better, their informal social support network was always available to help when it was needed. Regardless of the small number of women that experienced this type of informal help, each of the women had slightly different types of interactions with these supportive systems. Victorya was the only one that mentioned that her entire family (parents and siblings) were 100% supportive even when she

decided to return to her husband because she was afraid that he would take her daughters away. Her sister helped her file for divorce and many times her parents and brothers would come pick her up after explosive physical assaults from her husband. Her family would talk to her and brainstorm various ways to address the dire situation she was living.

The other two women that shared about this theme also had access to multiple informal social supports. For example, Adeline had support from her family, several friends, and her in-laws. The help she received was instrumental, and it included financial support when she separated from her husband as well as helping her move across state lines to ensure the safety of her kids and Adeline. In another example, Gabby had the motivational words from her mother even though she had not seen her in over 15 years. Her mother was in Mexico but every time she talked to her she would ask her how things were going with her new partner. Gabby still remembered the emotional words her mother shared with her when she was still in Mexico and living with her abusive ex-husband.

“Pero un día de tantos mi mamá me dijo ‘yo ya no puedo seguir viéndote así y tampoco te puedo obligar que lo dejes pero yo ya no quiero venir a verte porque me duele de que vengo y te veo llorando te veo golpeada y la señora [suegra] se burla de ti y el marido se va y están en las carcajadas y tu aquí llorando- no se me hace justo.’ Y si quieres quedarte, yo no te voy a obligar. Vi a mi mamá llorar por primera vez, lloraba por mi entonces en ese momento yo tome la decisión y le dije no mami no se preocupe. Hoy preparo las maletas y mañana nos vamos no me importa lo que pase con la casa.”

“But on one of those days my mother told me ‘I can no longer see you like this and I also cannot force you to leave him but I do not want to come see you because it hurts that when I come I see you crying and I see you injured and the woman [mother-in-law] laughs at you and your husband and her are laughing while you are here crying- it is not fair.’ She told me that if I wanted to stay she would not force me [to do anything]. I saw my mother cry for the first time, she cried for me so in that moment I made the decision and I told her do not worry mom. I will prepare my bags today and tomorrow we leave I do not care what happens with the house.”

Something in the words and actions that these women received helped them to endure the violence and maintain strength during the moments when they second guessed themselves. It was

evident that these interactions were offered with no judgment, so the women were confident that they could return for ongoing support even when they were not ready to leave the relationship.

In conclusion, the informal help/support that was accessed was comprised of multiple people that mostly included family members and friends. The support they sought and when they asked for this help was relevant and it mirrored findings observed under the formal help themes. The responses they received from informal help networks also included helpful and unhelpful responses. Even though most of the help was not long-term or it included gendered expectations and the culture of silence, the women were able to reflect on the ways that their informal support systems could offer help especially considering their undocumented status. The women did not refer to their undocumented immigration status as much as they did in the formal help-seeking efforts. It was raised as a barrier by some of their family members, but it did not have the central focus in their help-seeking efforts like what was reported in the previous section. These informal help responses exhibited more of their cultural upbringing and beliefs that could potentially hinder seeking help from those people closest to the women. The following chapter further deciphered the nuances of these interactions for one specific case, the case of Esperanza.

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CHAPTER 5: ESPERANZA'S NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

“For narrative to flourish there must be a community to hear...for community to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics.”

- Plummer, 1995, p. 87

The main purpose of the narrative analysis was to be closely attuned to what the speaker wished to convey through word choice, phrasing, tone, pace, and emphasis as the narrative was performed for the listener (researcher). Hence, the with-in stories were the objects of review (Riessman, 1993). Narrative research incorporated the extended account, rather than fragmented thematic categories. By centering one woman's first-person account, this narrative analysis provided a deeper enquiry of the stories her interviews generated. These components accounted for “how” the testimonio was told not only “what” the testimonio revealed.

The thematic analyses in the previous chapter offered an understanding of the 20 Latina IPV survivors' insights on what they similarly experienced as undocumented immigrants. The analyses also underscored how the women's unique social identities intersected in their IPV experiences. However, the positionality and subjectivity that can be privileged within story-telling methodologies (Mishler, 1986) was lost in the re-positioned themes. The intention of the current narrative analysis was not to produce a master narrative of all the women's experiences. Rather, by focusing on one person's testimonio, Esperanza, there was a genuine engagement with how her specific stories were related and connected to the larger thematic components.

The current research expected Spanish-speaking immigrant women to share traumatic experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) that altered their life stories as mothers, lovers, workers, sisters, daughters, aunties, and grand-mothers. Analysis of their personal narrative illuminated individual and collective action and meanings, as well as the social processes by

which social life and relationships were made and changed. Esperanza positioned her testimonio expecting someone besides the interviewer to listen and to do something about the injustices she witnessed. Perhaps something shared during the recruitment meeting resonated for Esperanza, or she orchestrated this narrative unknowingly. Regardless, her words reflected the notions expressed in Plummer's (1995) opening quote. She weaved her history along with her identity and politics to capture the listener's ear beyond the interview moment while intentionally telling her story to assist or reach other women with similar accounts.

What is Narrative Analysis?

There were multiple definitions of what was considered narrative analysis as well as various models that can be used to conduct this type of analytical process. Its purpose was to see how interviewees "imposed order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives" (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). This methodological approach allowed for an examination of the interviewee's story to analyze how it was put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it drew on, and how it persuaded an authentic listener. This analysis unfolded the forms of telling about the experience, not simply the content of the experience. Furthermore, a focus on narrative allowed for an investigation "not just on how stories are structured but also who produced them and by what means; the mechanisms by which they are consumed; and how narrative are silenced, contested, or accepted (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 2)." The testimonios shared by the women in this study closely resembled psychology and sociology scholarship. These traditions often incorporated personal narrative as long sections of talk that stemmed from extensive life accounts that were provided over the course of multiple interviews.

In Riessman's (2005) chapter, she delineated four models of narrative analysis that can be used in social work research. These included thematic, structural, interactional, and performative

models. The thematic model's focused on what was shared so the content of the experience was extrapolated (Chapters 4). This process included the inductive creation of conceptual grouping for the data which in turn provided a typology of narratives by themes. The structural approach shifted to the way the story was told. Various approaches were included in this chapter by paying close attention to how a story-teller selected particular narrative devices to make her story persuasive along with analyzing the function of certain clauses in the overall narrative. The third model positioned the story as a dialogic process, so the interest shifted to the co-constructed story-telling. This acknowledged that meaning was created collaboratively so it represented the complexity of speech interactions. The fourth model incorporated performative components, so the analysis went beyond the words. The narrative was seen as a performance where the narrator enacted dialogue between characters in a setting where drama unfolded. The narrative was the praxis to her lived experience as the narrator constructed her identity via her story accounts.

Riessman and Quinney (2005) imparted a critical review of narrative analysis in social work research. Most of the publications they reviewed only supplied thematic analyses. They were missing imperative components needed to analyze audio-recorded narrative that was transcribed multiple times to assess the multiple layers a narrative script provided. Hence, this analysis will contribute to the body of social work narrative research by elaborating beyond the thematic approach. The current narrative analysis incorporated the five analytical levels delineated above to increase understanding on how Esperanza's biography, history, and societal context were intersectional in her IPV testimonio. The analytical process took into consideration emotional components as well. By incorporating a more relational mode of inquiry, this analysis complemented feminist methodologies.

Esperanza's IPV experience as an undocumented immigrant was described throughout her two interviews. As the interviewer, I analyzed the words and their expression to be closely attuned to the interviewee's intended meanings. The analysis used the five level process modeled by Poindexter (2002) in her research interviews related to HIV stigma with a Black heterosexual couple. These levels intended to capture not only the events described but also perceptions, feelings, and conclusions about these events. Coding, categories, and themes were a way to attempt to control meaning (Riessman, 2000). This increased the gap between a research interview and naturally occurring conversations (Mishler, 1986). Regardless of the goals to nicely "package" the women's experiences into themes, the interviewing process showed that participants resisted the efforts to break-apart their lived experience into code-able segments.

The narrative analysis allowed for a critical understanding of how Esperanza told her experience so it was not focused strictly on content. There was a discursive space created with this form of case-centered research analysis. By focusing on language and context of production (Mishler, 1979), I saw the ways in which Esperanza and I built solidarity with one another. By sharing her narrative, Esperanza also conveyed that this was a shared experience with other Latina undocumented immigrant women. By listening and asking about her experience, I reinforced her story mattered. Moving beyond thematic discourses also acknowledged the complicated dance that occurred in each of the interactions between interviewee and interviewer.

Social Construction and Representation of Narrative

Research interviewing methods often required dexterity to engage with another person in dialogue. My interviewing methods should be familiar to other qualitative researchers. Even with continual practice, the interviews yielded various degrees of information from each women. They shared concrete situations as well as their interpretations of the incidents. I conducted the

interview in an unstructured way, and I arrived to the study sensitized to certain concepts because of literature reviews and practice experiences. My participation included paralinguistic and nonverbal responses which were typical in conversation. I interrupted occasionally with probes, questions, reflections, and clarification requests, trying to simultaneously honor the narrative urgency and eagerness exhibited by the respondents. Every woman that agreed to be interviewed interacted with me differently, so they shared at different levels.

The narrative segments for analysis emerged from what the participants chose to tell me as well as the representations and boundaries I chose to impose. Decisions of where to end the story segments to analyze were influenced by evolving theories, disciplinary preferences, and research questions (Riessman, 2012). These were the ways that as an investigator, I “infiltrated” the texts. My approach included detailed transcripts from the testimonios so that readers could see the stories apart from the analysis. I stipulated social constructionist perspectives, so the issue of truth with a capital T was not of important concern. I did not intend to verify the “facts” of their lives but rather understand the changing meaning of events for the women while being located within a historical moment and cultural outlook. Therefore, personal narratives were of interest because narrators interpreted the past in stories, rather than reproduced the past. Laslett’s (1999) work was a reminder that narrators created plots from disordered experience so “reality is not clear since they are telling temporally and spatially structured tales” (p. 392) all done by looking back to recount their lived experiences. This was imperative since the stories shared for this study were at times difficult to remember, tell, and listen to; undeniably, these unverifiable memories informed what was shared and how the information was interpreted.

Delving into the narrative analysis, I became aware of how things were self-edited. For example, in the first 15 minutes of Esperanza’s interview, she shared an emotional story of her

father's unsuccessful attempt to cross the border before she migrated. She began crying and my first instinct was to ask her clarification questions to get an orientation of what happened. My second response, which happened within seconds from the first, was to ask if we needed to stop the interview. She said no, we were in silence as she cried. After offering her Kleenex and water, we proceeded. It was evident that any time difficult emotions were raised, I asked clarification questions. I also offered validation and reflection statements. It was possible this happened because I was uncomfortable when I could not console her. It may have also been a way to limit the intensity of the stories that emerged, so this point cannot be dismissed.

This analytical process incorporated social construction and representation which impacts narrative. Riessman's (2005) quote below reiterated the usefulness of narrative analysis while building on C. Wright Mills (1959) tenets that narrative analysis can build connections between personal biography and social structure – the personal and the political. All these were crucial pieces that allowed narrators to re-imagine their lives.

“Narratives do not mirror, they refract the past. Imagination and strategic interests influence how storytellers choose to connect events and make them meaningful for others. Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was. The “truths” of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representations of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future (Riessman, 2005, p. 6).”

These considerations informed the social construction and representation of the narratives that were further analyzed in this chapter.

Case Selection Process

As the principal investigator, I decided how much transcription was needed to center the goals of the in-depth narrative analysis. I reviewed interview notes, data collection process journal entries, case notes, transcription notes, coding diagrams, and thematic data trees along

with thoroughly reading each respondents' transcripts while re-listening to the audio-recorded interviews. In this appraisal, I only included the transcriptions of the 15 women interviewed twice since the depth and the breadth of their narratives provided a larger selection of excerpts that could be used as units of analysis. I reviewed the 15 testimonios to see how many of their stories closely related to the topics that emerged in the thematic analyses.

I considered that the chosen person would need to reflect similarities to other women in regards to the average number of children, country of birth, length of time living the IPV, and length of time out of the relationship. A total of five cases (Carmen, Sonia, Esmeralda, Milagros, and Esperanza) made the top list after setting these criteria. All these women captured emotions and story components that impacted my read of their narratives. For instance, Sonia refused to succumb to self-pity and centered humor in her life. Carmen, Esmeralda, and Milagros shared laughter and tears and were determined to survive with their children without the support of a partner and family members. I chose Esperanza's testimonio for myriad reasons which included some unique moments as well as experiences that were similar to other interviewees.

For this narrative analysis, I took sections of text which were sequenced responses from Esperanza's testimonio related to how her undocumented status impacted her IPV experience. After examining three hours of audio-recording from the two times we met, I generated 40 pages single-spaced of transcripts. From its entirety, a total of 15 units of analysis were included from the extended sequenced responses Esperanza provided to the questions as she recapitulated past events (Mishler, 1986). These excerpts were long and required my interpretation and selection of how to define boundaries for each excerpt. This form of case-centered research analytics (Mishler, 1999) provided an in-depth understanding to the thematic components derived from the review of all the women's interviews in the previous chapter.

Relationship with Esperanza

Esperanza rose from the rest of the group once I began to dig deeper into her story. Her lapse time between the first interview and the last interview was the longest- at two months (September 2013 and November 2013). On the average, I met with women within a two-week span. Due to my scheduling conflicts and her children's school hours, it took multiple calls from her part to finish sharing her testimonio during the peak interview time of the project. Fortunately, this provided more time to thoroughly review the first interview transcript to ensure particular probes were used during the second interview to expand on areas that needed more details to fill the gaps. The same day I interviewed her I also interviewed Estela who had a very traumatic childhood. I was emotionally exhausted and my interviewer notes reminded me that I drove home crying that evening. Reflecting back, as a way to protect myself, I did not pay close attention to Esperanza's stories until I began to re-read transcriptions, analytical memos, and case notes. I was glad she persisted because her testimonio revealed a powerful story-telling experience that ultimately became the centerpiece of this analysis.

My relationship with Esperanza was minimal prior to the interviews. I met her at one of the recruitment meetings and she was the first woman that came after the meeting to let me know she wanted to participate. I did not realize it, but I actually shared a story with her (during first interview) about my mother's first work experience in the U.S. My mother's work name was also Esperanza; she too was working with a fake work permit. I underestimated the connection this story would potentially bring to our relationship. As I read through her transcripts I could see the difference in her stories with a deeper level of emotion and details about her life as an undocumented mother and it flourished throughout the second session. The second interview took place in her apartment and we seemed to have bonded on various levels as there was a sense

of comfort inviting me into her home. Esperanza reviewed her final interview transcripts but we did not remain in contact after she approved the written depictions of her testimonio.

Esperanza's transcript followed the structure of most interviews. After verbal informed consent, we opened the interview with Esperanza sharing about her life before migrating, the migration journey, and the current undocumented experience she lived thus far. The second big topic covered was related to the IPV experience. This included questions about mental health, physical health, effects on children, help-seeking experiences, and the central questions related to how their immigration status impacted this overall IPV experience. This provided segue into the direct impact her undocumented status had on the response she experienced from formal and informal help/support systems. The first interview closed with the strengths that brought hope and courage to survive the IPV. The second interview explored further the help that was available to her and experienced barriers while seeking support. She also provided ideas and suggestions of how formal services could be improved or changed. She provided advice she would give other survivors that were trying to separate from an abusive partner. She covered ideas of how IPV could be eliminated from Latino communities, the changes she saw in her kids after leaving her ex-partner, hopes, future goals and ways that she continued to heal and stay healthy as a parent. The entire transcript was analyzed. However, the excerpts positioned in the results were a total of 15 long excerpts that were selected because they were related to the main research question regarding the impact undocumented status had on her IPV experience.

Historical and Cultural Context

A decontextualized excerpt from a qualitative interview can be problematic because language, when stripped of context, can be misinterpreted (Mishler, 1999). The macro social and historical context during the time that I interviewed Esperanza was important to address. In her

testimonio she mentioned multiple times the promises President Barack Obama had made regarding immigration reform in the U.S. Even though we did not discuss many political views during the interview, she made it a point to mention this more than once. She explained why she really wished those promises were kept and acted on because she could benefit from a pathway to adjust her undocumented status via her U.S.-born citizen children if the u-visa application did not work for her. This was also a time where anti-immigrant sentiment situations were being highlighted in the local and national news coverage and her narrative authenticated some of the ways that she felt discriminated and stereotyped in her own life.

Another important occurrence in Esperanza's immediate interview context was that her exit date was approaching at the transitional housing program where she resided with her children. Because she was unable to obtain employment, e-verify being a huge obstacle not only for her but other women, she was worried of not knowing where she would reside after her time in the transitional program would end. This context clearly served as a catalyst to advocate for better services that considered the best interests of undocumented immigrant IPV survivors. She also referred to the need to have a space to *desahogar* (to relieve, to vent), so the interviews offered this space for her circumstances.

Level 1- Qualitative Transcript Verbatim

The first method of analysis used the usual transcription in qualitative research which focused on verbal content to explore themes; therefore, it was limited to content. This process did not analyze the interviewer's utterances or the complexities in Esperanza's words. The underlined stories were shared during the first interview as we discussed the immigrant context she experienced at arrival. After divulging about the various work sites that were unsuccessful, she shared about places where she secured employment. The two excerpts below were shared as

one moment in time; I separate them into two different stories to demonstrate the thematic context associated with being an undocumented immigrant mother in the U.S.

Spanish Interview Transcription with English Translation
(Line 76 to Line 95)

Laboring Undocumented Mom

En hotel yo sabía que me ponía a trabajar y sale el trabajo Limpiando cuartos Para ese entonces yo ya tenía a mi niño el más grande. Por lo cierto me tuve que separar de él porque pagaba renta y yo no pedía estampillas porque no sabía que eran las estampillas. Yo mantuve el niño Yo todo el tiempo de chiquito, porque Yo trabajaba para él. Pero no me alcanzaba porque ganaba poco y pagaba renta y le mandaba a mis papás. Mi niño estaba todo el día con una señora- era muy amiga de mi tía. Ella le cuidaba a sus chiquitas y me la recomendó. Mi niño el más grande le decía mamá a ella porque la miraba más a ella. Desde la 6 de la mañana lo dejaba yo hasta las 10 de la noche- igual todo el día trabajaba Cuando llegaba el niño ya estaba dormido y no se quería venir conmigo

At the hotel I knew I would work and the job would get done Housekeeping- cleaning rooms During this time I already had my oldest son. Actually I had to be apart from him because I paid rent and I did not have food stamps because I did not know what food stamps were. I provided for my child the whole time he was little, because I would work to take care of him. But it was not enough because I made very little and I paid rent and I would send money to my parents. My son stayed with a lady all day- she was a good friend of my aunt's. She babysat her daughters and she recommended her. My oldest son would call her mom because he would see her more. From 6 in the morning I would leave him until 10 at night- I worked all day When I would pick him up my boy was asleep and he did not want to leave with me

Parenting Across Borders

Tome la decisión de mandarlo [hijo] para México con mi mamá un año Yo salí embarazada aquí Cuando yo tenía 5 meses de embarazada cuando a él lo agarro la policía No salió hasta que duro un año y medio en la cárcel y yo tuve que hacerlo sola. Al niño no le cayó bien el clima dice mi mamá que siempre lo llevaba al hospital- una vez al mes Le daba diarrea, vomito, calentura de todo se enfermaba Yo no más trabajaba para los viles del hospital Mi tío iba ir en Diciembre y se lo trajo otra vez Estaba bien contenta yo porque no más tenía un trabajo y ya me había acomodado mejor Yo deje el otro trabajo porque sabía que iba tener otra vez a mi hijo de vuelta y decidí traérmelo.

I decided to send him [son] to Mexico with my mother a year I got pregnant here When I was 5 months pregnant and then the police arrested him He was not released until he was in jail for a year and a half and I had to make it on my own. My mom said the temperature change was not good for my son- she had to take him to the hospital once a month He had diarrhea, vomiting, and high temperature everything made him sick I was only working to pay the hospital bills My uncle was going in December and he brought him back again I was really happy because I only had one job and I had settled in better I left the other job because I knew I would have my son back with me so I decided to bring him back.

Esperanza spoke about being an undocumented mother while positioning herself as a hard worker. The decision to send her eldest child back to Mexico related to the high expenses compared to her low income after working long hours and rarely seeing her son. These two units of analysis reiterated the low pay that she received while working long hours and multiple jobs cleaning hotel rooms. Her stories related to the undocumented interactions and relationships described in previous thematic analyses (e.g., ‘I didn’t know;’ ‘We are here to work;’ ‘Those that stay behind’). She pointed out that during this time she did not know what food stamps were, so she did not seek this assistance because she did not know it was accessible for her child. At the end of this statement, she emphasized her son referred to the babysitter as ‘mom’. Hence, it led her to the decision to temporarily send her son back to Mexico with his grandparents.

The moment when she sent her son to Mexico was explained with the conditions in her life: being a single parent providing for her child’s needs after her husband ended up in jail. Her son’s re-occurring illnesses while in Mexico required that her money be sent back home for her parents to pay for his medical treatment. With a better work schedule, she knew she could spend more time with her son once he returned. This unit of analysis ended with a happier memory. As the plot unfolded, she shared what happened when her husband returned home. She disclosed her husband was arrested multiple times in multiple states due to unpaid traffic tickets, driving under the influence of alcohol, and other driving-related issues. An interesting dynamic was that he was never arrested for IPV. Even though IPV was not named in this story, her narrative alluded to how her undocumented circumstances would later impact the IPV dynamics.

Level 2- Labov’s Story Elements

The second level of analysis was based on a Labovian approach (1972) focused on the elements of a coherent story defined in terms of the representation of events. The seminal work

of sociolinguists William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (1967) provided a method that produced structural analyses of specific oral personal experience narratives (Patterson, 2008). This form of analysis treated personal narrative as story text rather than a story-telling performance. Narrative was extracted as clauses that may be assigned an element from Labov's six-part model. Two stories extracted from her interviews exemplified how story elements came up in Esperanza's story-telling. The first story was shorter and the second story expanded a wider lens on her lived experiences. I kept track of the key Labovian narrative structures delineated below. This helped to structurally analyze (e.g., coherency) how she told the narrative about the events that occurred.

Figure 5.1

Labov's Key Story Elements

Narrative Elements	Definitions	Underlying Questions
Abstract (A)	Summarizes the point of the narrative	What is the story about?
Orientation (O)	Provides time, place, situation, participants	Who, what, when, where?
Complicating Action (CA)	Describes sequence of actions, turning points, problems	Then what happened?
Evaluation (E)	Narrator's commentary on complicating action	So what?
Result (R)	Outcome or resolution	What finally happened?
Coda (C)	Relates the story to the present-hands the 'floor' to the listener	No question, it puts off question

Interview Transcription (Line 453 to Line 456)	Interview Translation	Labov's Story Element
Pero ahora me pongo a pensar que si no encuentro trabajo	Now I am thinking what happens if I do not find a job	CA
¿a donde me voy a ir después de aquí?	Where will I go after here?	A

Si yo tuviera seguro no me preocupara que me quiten la ayuda	If I had a social security number I would not worry if they took away the aid	CA
porque yo puedo trabajar.	Because I can work.	A
Pero así, eso si me preocupa.	But like this, that really worries me.	CA
Pienso que debe ver alguien que nos escuche mas	I think there needs to be someone to hear this more	E
y nos pongan más atención cuando contamos esto	And that they pay more attention when we share this	A
porque muchas lo vivimos.	Because many of us experience this.	A

The excerpt above was the briefest piece of text analyzed, but it reminded her listener that her purpose for sharing the stories was because she knew other undocumented women worried about similar dilemmas. This quote was used in the introduction chapter, so the analysis decoded the story components. The abstract components in her story preceded the complicating actions related to where she would live after the transitional housing ended. She was without a job because not having legal work authorization undermined her ability to work. The constant worry of not finding employment complicated her life. This was positioned prior to the reminder that if she had a social security number, she would not have to worry about not receiving assistance. Even though the story elements were mostly abstract, the complicating actions and evaluation in her words clearly named the issues that persisted for many undocumented IPV survivors.

The events recapitulated in the excerpt below focused on the discrete story related to how she met her husband, what was the situation, what happened next, and how the context changed from a “healthy/normal” relationship to an abusive partnership. A total of 55 story clauses were coded for this excerpt. The story elements illustrated how her undocumented immigration status

impacted the development of her intimate relationship as well as how it limited her interactions.

The narrator was prompted to tell this story after being asked how her relationship began.

Interview Transcription (Line 173 to Line 201)	Interview Translation	Labov's Story Element
Lo conocí porque yo estaba todo el día en el apartamento sola.	I met him because I was alone in the apartment all day.	CA
Mi tía trabajando y mi primo también.	My aunt worked and so did my cousin.	O
Tenía otra tía política allí y él iba a visitarla a ella.	I had another aunt by marriage there and he would go visit her.	O
Yo lo empecé a conocer allí.	I began to get to know him there.	A
Él era amigo de ella y vivía en el piso arriba.	He was her friend and he lived in the floor above.	O
Él iba con el pretexto de ver a mi tía pero iba a verme a mí.	He would go see my aunt as an excuse but actually he was going to see me.	E
Empezó a platicar y después éramos amigos	We began to talk and then we were friends	R
y como estaba sola, me empezó a sacar a conocer la ciudad.	And because I was alone, he started to take me out to get to know the city.	CA
Él tenía 1-2 años más que yo en este país.	He had been in this country 1-2 years more than me.	O
Como estaba sola,	Because I was alone,	O
él era como caído del cielo porque me llevaba a conocer y dije	he was like fallen from the sky b/c he would take me out to see things	CA
bueno- ya de allí nos empezamos a conocer.	so I said fine- from there we got to know each other.	R
Nos mudamos con su mamá	We moved in with his mom	O
pero se cambiaron de apartamento y yo me fui con él.	but they moved to another apartment and I left with him.	CA
Me salí a escondidas de mi tía	I left my aunt's home in secrecy	O

porque ella no lo quería a él.	because she did not like him.	CA
Ella siempre me dijo que él no era bueno persona.	She also told me that he was not a good person.	A
Porque era bien mujeriego y salía mucho de noche	Because he was a lady's man and he would go out at night a lot	O
y para ella no le parecía una persona para mí.	And for her this was not a good person for me.	E
Ella decía que yo traía buenos propósitos y sentimientos	She would say that I had good intentions and emotions	A
y el me los iba echar a perder.	And he was going to ruin them for me.	E
“Sufriste mucho en el camino para que te vayas con él.”	“You suffered a lot coming here for you to leave with him.”	A
Pero no sé qué paso, me encapriche mucho porque mi tía me decía que no.	But I do not know what happened, I was stubborn because my aunt said no.	CA
Uno hace lo contrario y pues ay voy.	We do the opposite and well there I go.	E
Él me decía que con él iba estar mejor.	He would tell me that with him I would be better off.	O
Me fui con él	I left with him	CA
y aun seguí trabajando y seguí ayudando a mi mamá y papá.	And I continued to work and help my mom and dad.	O
Al principio nunca me negó o nunca me dijo que no le mandara dinero a mi madre.	At the beginning he never denied me anything and he never told me not to send money to my mother	A
Era muy buena persona los primeros años	He was a very good person the first few years	E
pero después empezó a cambiar.	But then he began to change.	CA
Después de que nacieron los dos niños grandes	After the two oldest kids were born	O
		CA

él empezó a cambiar. Él se iba, salía mucho.	He began to change. He would leave, go out a lot.	O
Yo me quedaba todo el día con los niños, cuidándolos.	I would stay all day with the kids, taking care of them.	O
Él trabajaba de noche y llegaba a dormir y yo no lo miraba se puede decir.	He would work overnight and he would come home to sleep and you could say I would not really see him.	CA
Él no me dejaba trabajar porque decía que yo tenía que cuidar a los niños.	He would not let me work because he said I had to take care of the kids.	A
El por eso trabajaba.	That is why he would work.	
En ese tiempo él mandaba el dinero a mi mamá como si yo estuviera trabajando.	During that time he would send my mother money as if I was still working.	O
Aun así, no dejo de mandarles dinero a mis padres.	Even then, he never stopped sending money to my parents.	A
Pero el allí empezó otro ambiente con personas y cambio su forma hacia mí.	But he began with another ambience with people and he changed his way of being towards me.	CA
Si porque antes no mas era que peleábamos y nos salíamos afuera.	Yes because before then we would fight/argue and we would go outside.	A
Cuando peleábamos los niños estaban dormidos	When we would fight the kids were asleep	O
y siempre tratábamos de que los niños no se dieran cuenta de los problemas.	and we would always try so the kids would not find out about our problems.	A
Tratamos de superarlo	We tried to overcome it	E
pero yo me enojaba mucho porque siempre estaba sola.	but I would get very angry because I was always alone.	CA
Yo era la que hacia todo.	I was the one that did everything.	O
Yo creo que él se empezó a molestar que yo le dijera que estaba mal.	I believe he started getting upset that I would tell him he was wrong.	E
		O

Porque vivía con él	Because I was living with him	O
pero él siempre se la pasaba en la calle.	But he was always on the streets.	R
Eso le empezó a molestar.	That began to bother him.	O
Y allí empezaron que un aventón o una cachetada o jalón de pelos	And that it where it started either a push or a slap or grabbing me from my hair	E
y ya después fue mi culpa por aguantar eso.	and then it was my fault because I tolerated all that.	E
Porque desde allí hubiera puesto un alto y me hubiera ido	Because since then I should have put a stop to it and I should have left	CA
pero tenía miedo de que mi tía no me aceptara para atrás.	But I was afraid that my aunt would not accept me back.	
Ahora yo sé que si hubiera regresado ella me abría las puertas.	Now I know if I would've returned she would've opened her doors.	R
Como yo me fui de su casa a escondidas, tenía miedo yo.	Because I left her house secretively, I was afraid.	E

I debated the length of the excerpt above (where to stop the unit of analysis) because the story elements moved from the disapproval her aunt voiced regarding Esperanza's partner to how the "normal" relationship dynamics changed as their two oldest sons grew up. She began her story by stating that being alone while her aunt and cousin worked made her feel isolated. In the first ten lines of this excerpt, she mentioned being alone three times. This dynamic was described with orientation elements to paint a picture of what it was like to be alone in a new country and having someone take an interest in showing her around. Her story described the IPV dynamics and the internal dialogue she engaged in when thinking about reaching out for help from her aunt- whose house she left without her approval. Towards the end of the excerpt, she

mentioned blaming herself for tolerating the abuse for so long. As she looked back, she also realized there was a lot of fear that held her back from seeking support.

Esperanza also mentioned various turning points and she mostly highlighted them by repeating a thought multiple times. For example, she shared how she met her husband because she was always alone with limited friends and family to interact with in her new environment. As she shared her story, she kept coming back to her loneliness and how her husband's presence felt "heaven sent" because she needed someone to interact with and to show her around in her new home. By sharing this information, she also reminded the listener that there was a reason why she thought it was appropriate to leave with him even after her aunt expressed her obstinate disapproval of the relationship. She quoted her aunt's concern and even agreed she had suffered a lot to arrive to Washington State, but she depicted a stubbornness (and perhaps necessity) that motivated her to move in with her new boyfriend and his family.

Another way she highlighted turning points was by recalling the moments when the relationship was normal and he provided support. She divulged the moments when she began to notice the changes and how she responded to the fights. She felt limited control of things in her life and there were ongoing stressors; however, she recalled nagging him as a way to try to make him change his behaviors. She perceived this bothered him so the physical violence increased. At that moment, she thought she could not return to her aunt for support. Recalling this incident and knowing what she knows now, made her realize her aunt could have indeed helped her get away.

With Labov's method, the story elements became clearer to follow and there was an ability to decipher that Esperanza was telling stories with a particular structure that highlighted complicating actions along with orientation and evaluation elements. At the beginning of this story, her complicating actions were mostly related to the external circumstances. Towards the

end she began to talk about internal complication actions related to her emotions. This layer allowed for a deeper sense of how evaluation played a role in her story as well. A primary benefit of the applied Labov's labels was that her passing judgment on these life events was evident. One drawback was that my remarks were not included in this transcription, so there was no grasp of the co-constructed story until level four of analysis was implemented. Hence, a third level of structural analysis was expanded to understand some longer excerpts with attention to particular episodes and the relationship of structure and interpretation (Riessman, 2008).

Level 3- Gee's Poetic Structural Approach

This third analytical representation used Gee's (1985, 1986, 1991) approach to study the architecture of speech which accounted for complex forms of story-telling. Gee's assessment arranged text into poetic units, such as lines, stanzas, strophes, and parts. Gee (1986) argued that researchers need to understand *how* people were making sense; linguistic units, pace, tone, sequencing, and phrasing were noteworthy for coherence and congruence. This method demanded close attention to the audio recording to observe how a sequence of conversations was actually told and to uncover emphasis (Poindexter, 2002). I re-transcribed these sections using Gee's (1986, 1991) poetic structural approach, attending particularly to phrasing, accentuation, pitch glides, and pauses. Stanzas were created by taking a series of text lines with parallel structure which meant they were told at a similar rate with little hesitation between the lines (Riessman, 2008). Narrative scholars who use Gee's approach often do so for smaller amounts of text in which they were most interested, specifically stories with clear beginnings and endings.

The stories underscored below were about a traumatic episode Esperanza experienced the first time the police came to their home after experiencing physical violence from her husband. The two excerpts were about one instance in her life, and she returned to the event after the

conversation shifted to other topics. She talked about the court visit that followed the violent episode, her current safety plan in case she saw her ex-partner, the effects of the violence on the children particularly her older son (the one that called the police), and her ongoing stress. After all these things were shared, she then returned to this episode that impacted her perception of accessing help from the police. The transcription key below provided a framework to analyze how these components contributed to the story being shared. After the long excerpt, I provided the analysis with specific details.

Figure 5.2
GEE'S TRANSCRIPTION KEY

CAPS Vocal emphasis	
? Rising intonation or pitch glide	. Falling intonation or pitch glide
= Successive utterances with no gap	/ Separates idea/unit/phrase with pitch glide
[] Interviewer utterances	{ } Author explanations
{p} Short pause	{P} Longer pause
hard return Indicates a line, or one topic	blank line Separates stanzas, or paragraphs

Interview Transcription (Line 339 to Line 361)	Interview Translation
Estrofa 1 Quince días antes/ummmm él me estaba ahorcando/ y me tenía de las greñas. El me rompió el diente= de aquí/ {Demuestra el diente roto en su boca} porque trapeaba el piso conmigo. {P}	Stanza 1 Fifteen days before/ummmm he was choking me/ and he had me from my hair. He broke my tooth= from here/ {Points to broken tooth in her mouth} because he would mop the floor with me. {P}
Estrofa 2 Mi niño se espantó MUCHO/ y EL hablo a la policía. Llegaron como después de la hora {P} pero el policía no le hizo caso. {P} [ENTONCES no le hicieron preguntas/ a usted/	Stanza 2 My son was VERY scared/ and HE called the police. They arrived after an hour but {P} The officer did not pay attention to him. {P} [SO they did not ask questions/ to you/

<p>¿no más el {esposo}?)</p> <p>No más a él {p} como hablaba bien el inglés.</p> <p>A mí me pidieron mi ID= y a el NO.</p> <p>Estrofa 3 Y yo me sentía/ que supuestamente {p} la policía esta para ayudar. {Esperanza empieza a llorar.}</p> <p>Esa vez yo tenía PRUEBAS {Llora mas fuerte, con mucho dolor}.</p> <p>{P}</p> <p>Estrofa 4 [¿Y no le tomaron reporte ni nada?]</p> <p>Nada. {Todavía llorando}</p> <p>Que porque cuando él= me estaba ahorcando= me tiro al piso.</p> <p>Cuando caí/ lo mordí. Y me dijo que tenía pruebas/ que yo lo lastime.</p> <p>Estrofa 5 {Esperanza parar de llorar y su voz es suave.}</p> <p>El me golpeo en la cabeza/ donde no se mirara.</p> <p>Yo cuando llegue aquí {vivienda transicional}/ tenía muchas cosas olvidadas</p>	<p>only him {husband}?)</p> <p>Only him {p} since he spoke good English.</p> <p>They asked me for my ID= and NOT him.</p> <p>Stanza 3 And I thought/ that supposedly {p} the police was there to help. {Esperanza begins to cry.}</p> <p>This time I had EVIDENCE {Crying harder, with a lot of pain}.</p> <p>{P}</p> <p>Stanza 4 [And they did not make the report?]</p> <p>Nothing. {Still crying}</p> <p>Because when he= was choking me= he threw me on the ground.</p> <p>When I fell/ I bit him. And he told me he had evidence/ I hurt him.</p> <p>Stanza 5 {Esperanza stops crying and her voice becomes very soft.}</p> <p>He hit me on my head/ where it was not visible.</p> <p>When I arrived here {transitional housing}/ I had many things forgotten</p>
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de tanto golpe que me dio en la cabeza.	Because of all the blows to my head.
Pero la policía/ NUNCA nos preguntó.	But the police/ NEVER asked.
Estrofa 6 [¿Era primera vez/ que usted hablaba a la policía?] Si. [Estas experiencias es cuando uno dice/ ¿Cómo les podemos confiar/ que nos van ayudar?]	Stanza 6 [Was this the first time/ you called the police?] Yes. [Because of these experiences you say/ How can we trust/ that they will help us?]
Si, y MAS cuando= me aventó fuera de la casa	Yes, and MORE when= he threw me out of the house
Yo fui hablar a la policía/ y nunca llego.	I went to call the police/ and they never arrived.
Estrofa 7 Una hora/ tarde tocando/ para que me abriera. {p}	Stanza 7 For an hour/ I knocked/ for him to open. {p}
Cuando los niños= empezaron a llorar= Fue cuando abrió PARA SACAR A LOS NIÑOS= no para dejarme entrar.	When the kids= started to cry= Then he opened the door TO KICK OUT THE KIDS= but not to let me in.
Mi niño tenía calentura/ y no me dio ni un dólar/ para medicina.	My son had a fever/ and he didn't even give me a dollar/ for the medicine.
Me dijo {p} { Cambia a tono mas bajo/fuerte. } "No te doy ni un dólar/ arréglatelas como puedas/ LÁRGATE."	He told me {p} { Changes to deeper tone. } "I'm not giving you money/ you figure it out/ GET OUT OF HERE."
Estrofa 8 [¿Desde entonces/ no ha regresado?]	Stanza 8 [Since then/ you have not returned?]
No/ de allí tarde=	No/ it took me=

<p>como una semana en un hotel= porque era día primero= el próximo día= y agarraba dinero de los niños= y me fui a un hotel con ellos.</p> <p>Cuando se me acabo el dinero/ yo hablaba a los shelter/ pero me decían que no tenía lugar. {p}</p> <p>Ese día hable a un shelter y hable BIEN DESESPERADA/ porque no sabía qué hacer.</p> <p>Y no quería regresar con él/ porque sabía que me iba ir PEOR.</p> <p>Esta persona= me dijo que no tenía/ que regresar= y ellos vinieron por mí al hotel.</p> <p>Desde entonces/ no lo volví a ver {p} hasta el día de la corte.</p>	<p>staying at a hotel for about a week= because it was the first of the month= the next day= so I got money for the kids= and I left to a hotel with them.</p> <p>When the money ran out/ I called shelters/ and they would tell me there was no room. {p}</p> <p>That day I called a shelter I called VERY DESPERATE/ because I did not know what to do.</p> <p>And I did not want to go back/ because I knew it was going to be WORSE.</p> <p>A person= told me that I did not have/ to go back= and they came to get me from the hotel.</p> <p>Since then/ I have not seen him {p} until the court hearing date.</p>
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Structural features of the discourse revealed Esperanza's narrative organized data mostly in episodes rather than themes. Temporal ordering of a story can be familiar to a Western listener, but narratives can also be organized thematically and episodically (Riessman, 1987; Gee, 1991). I asked her to think back to moments of her IPV relationship as well as when she migrated to the U.S., so it required she recall historical moments. Subsequently, as she described IPV episodes or migration, she tried to identify a date, time, location and what people/characters were a part of her scenes. A few times she focused on the interactions between her and her ex-partner, children, aunt, or her parents. Generally she described the episode and combined it with some of the interactions. Her episodes were deeply descriptive, oftentimes this triggered an emotional response from her and from me. This excerpt had precisely this effect on both of us.

An analysis of the poetic structure of her story offered an opportunity to pay attention to complexities not evident in a typical qualitative transcription. Attention to Esperanza's intonation demonstrated she placed emphasis on emotions and moments that felt unjust to her by using a rising pitch. This was evident when she emphasized her son's fear that motivated him to call the police. In Stanza #3 she also stressed that she had evidence that she had been beaten and the police did nothing. The rising pitch was also consistent in her story in Stanza #7 where she was kicked out of her apartment by her husband, along with her kids. The complexities of her crying and the pitch change brought forward evidence that this episode brought pain for her and her kids. These components would have remained hidden in a traditional transcription review that does not capture interactional changes.

Furthermore, the analysis provided a deeper insight of moments where she shifted attention in her stories as well as themes that would have been missed otherwise. Her shifts were often situated at moments where she described interactions between her and the police, her husband, and her children. This also brought attention to a new point; she actually called the police before but they never arrived. In Stanza #7 she provided details about this incident and then we move back to the most current episode when the police arrived but did not provide any support. In Stanza #4 she also raised her physical self-defense strategies and how these were perceived by the police officers. These circumstances were not raised within the thematic analyses, so she discerned complexities about IPV dynamics that may have impacted how formal help was delivered. A couple other themes that were raised related to children intervening (Stanza #2) when the violence was occurring as well as the hidden marks of the violence (Stanza #5) which had long-term health impacts for her. A few other women had raised some of these

complications; however, it was not until carefully reviewing Esperanza's stories that these issues became apparently significant.

Lastly, by keeping the rate of speech on the forefront I was able to interpret when there was urgency or hesitancy in her voice. Her rate of speech became urgent as she built emphasis to make something explicit. Stanzas #7 and #8 included successive utterances about her husband kicking out the children with her. She centered his lack of remorse when he would not help access care for a sick child. Similar pacing was used when sharing about going to a hotel with her children and trying to find shelter. She halted her verbal delivery when describing the unexpected interactions with the police officers. In Stanza #1 she took long pauses as she portrayed the brutality of the physical abuse and in Stanza #2 when she depicted the police as inattentive. The last long pause happened after she began crying with intense emotion. These story-telling components were not captured in previous analytical levels. Gee's methods uncovered the subtle differences in emphasis, word usage, and structure. However, this model shared a weakness with Labov's: there was no inclusion of the researcher's part in the construction of the story. The next level of analysis will expand on this narrative co-construction.

Level 4- Mishler's Co-constructed Narratives

The fourth level used Mishler's (1986) work on co-construction of narrative, which modified the poetic format to also include interviewer contributions to Esperanza's stories (i.e. paralinguistic and linguistic cues). The interviewing process was dialogic. However, I did less talking and more listening. I offered up personal information at the beginning of the interview as a way to connect with Esperanza even though I had never experienced a border crossing and/or an abusive 16 year marriage. Some of the information I offered was related to my family's immigrant origins, my mother's own border crossing along with my professional work in the

DV/IPV field. I attempted to create a space where she would feel that I understood some of what she had went through while also being transparent that I did not share her experience. Mostly I used reflection statements, open-ended questions, clarifying questions, and validation statements.

In this fourth analysis, my opinion was evident and my sense of injustice mirrored Esperanza's concerns when she shared her experience with discrimination and treatment from the police that intensified her IPV situation. By our second meeting, I shared opinions of how IPV service provisions functioned and the perceived unresponsiveness towards undocumented immigrant women's needs. I also offered praise and admiration of her survival and continual strive regardless of the encountered formal dismissal. The excerpt below continued the story ever-present in her mind. She returned to this story by expressing the disbelief of how the police responded to both her and her child whom made the emergency call after fearing mom would be killed from the physical abuse. My voice as the interviewer was evident in these interactions, so the potential impact my words had on the story construction was considered. The figure below mirrored the one used in level four (Figure 5.1), but the added layer of my words as an interviewer were included and in italics as these parts of speech would be analyzed further.

GEE TRANSCRIPTION KEY

CAPS Vocal emphasis

? Rising intonation or pitch glide

= Successive utterances with no gap

[] *Interviewer utterances in italics*

{p} Short pause

hard return Indicates a line, or one topic

. Falling intonation or pitch glide

/ Separates idea/unit/phrase with pitch glide

{ } Author explanations

{P} Longer pause

blank line Separates stanzas, or paragraphs

Interview Transcription (Line 428 to Line 445)	Interview Translation
Estrofa 1 No se si no MIRARON?/ pero no más= le hicieron caso a él.	Stanza 1 I am unsure if they did not SEE?/ but they only= paid attention to him.

<p>Ellos NO LES IMPORTO/ que tan MISERABLE iba ser mi vida/ cuando ellos se fueron.</p> <p><i>[Porque se fueron/ y allí la dejaron?]</i></p> <p>Allí me dejaron {P}</p> <p>y allí fue peor porque estaba el enojado</p> <p>de que le iba manchar su record.</p> <p>Pensando solamente en el.</p> <p>Estrofa 2 ¿Con que confianza/ le vuelvo hablar a la policía?= ¿Qué esperaban/ el verme casi medio-muerta= para hacerme caso?</p> <p>Allí es donde creo/ummm que tienen que ser más HUMANOS.</p> <p><i>[Según los TRENEAN/ que si ay evidencias/ TOMEN FOTOS. Y como dice usted= tenía las marcas todavía= donde la golpeo. {p}]</i></p> <p><i>No creo que no lo vieron. No estaba yo allí= y no puedo decir= pero si le pidieron su ID= tenían que ver visto su cara= que tenía sus marcas.]</i></p> <p>Estrofa 3 Y no fue no más MI PALABRA, también el niño les dijo que “mi papá la traía de los pelos/ y la estaba ahorcando/ y la tiro al piso/ y por eso yo les llame.</p>	<p>They DID NOT CARE how MISERABLE my life would be/ after they left.</p> <p><i>[Because they left/ and they left you?]</i></p> <p>They left me there {P}</p> <p>and it was worse because he was very angry</p> <p>that I was going to mess up his record.</p> <p>Only thinking about him.</p> <p>Stanza 2 With what trust/ will I call the police again?= What were they expecting/ to see me half-dead= to pay attention to me?</p> <p>That is where I think/ummm they need to be more HUMAN.</p> <p><i>[Supposedly they TRAIN THEM/ that if there is evidence/ THEY TAKE PICTURES. And like you said= you still had marks= from where he hit you. {p}]</i></p> <p><i>I do not believe they did not see. I was not there= so I cannot attest= but if they asked you for your ID= they had to have seen your face= and the marks.]</i></p> <p>Stanza 3 And it was not only MY WORD, My son also told them “my dad had her from her hair/ and he was choking her/ and threw her to the ground/ and that is why I called.</p>
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<p>Yo creí que me papá la iba matar.”</p> <p>Y ni así les IMPORTO.</p> <p>Estrofa 4 Yo tarde como un mes= esa vez para recuperarme/ porque siempre me pegaba.</p> <p>Y me decían {p} que tenía que ir al doctor/ para tener pruebas</p> <p>¿pero como iba ir? si te piden seguridad.</p> <p>O tienes que dar el pago/ y yo no tenía ni para comer. ¿Dije cómo es posible? Mejor me quede con el dolor.</p> <p>Estrofa 5 Nadie/ NADIE SABE EL DOLOR más que la persona que lo vive. {p}</p> <p>Estrofa 6 Pero me siento bien orgullosa/ porque aun así logre/ hacer varias cosas= y estoy sacando a mis hijos adelante= y deje a esa persona que no era para mí.= Y estoy con vida.</p> <p><i>[SI, y es importante porque sus niños la necesitan.]</i></p> <p>EXACTAMENTE/ yo sabía que yo tenía que estar bien= para cuidar a mis niños. Y aquí estamos.</p>	<p>I thought my dad was going to kill her.”</p> <p>And they did not CARE.</p> <p>Stanza 4 It took me about a month= to recuperate that time/ because he would always hit me.</p> <p>They would tell me {p} that I had to go to the doctor/ to have proof</p> <p>but how was I going to go? if they ask for health insurance.</p> <p>Or you have to pay the cost/ and I did not have money even to eat. I said how is it possible? I rather stay with the pain.</p> <p>Stanza 5 Nobody/ NOBODY KNOWS THE PAIN except the person that lives it. {p}</p> <p>Stanza 6 But I feel very proud/ because I have been able/to do various things= and I am moving forward with my kids= and I left a person that was not for me.= And I have my life. <i>[YES, and it's important because your kids need you.]</i></p> <p>EXACTLY/ I knew I had to be fine= to take care of my kids. And here we are.</p>
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Esperanza molded her story and recalled this episode after sharing the stressors after the separation from her abusive husband and the struggle to ensure her children access educational

and therapeutic supports that persisted. Within Stanza #1 she raised the suspicion that the police officers did not care to imagine her situation after leaving her in the home with an angry abusive partner. As she questioned the lack of response, she also questioned her ability to trust the police in future abusive incidents. I asked a clarifying question because I wanted to ensure there was no police report filed. In Stanza #2 I attempted to side with her interpretation of the police officers' response and mentioned the typical protocol that I perceived was not followed, based on her story and my professional expertise. My vocal pitch raised when I pointed out that formal training exists for police officers to properly assess the circumstances. Even though her oldest son corroborated with the incident, his words were not taken into consideration. Furthermore, his actions to call 911 were disregarded. Stanza #3 ended with her emphasis on her son's verbalized fear that his dad was going to kill her; regardless, the police did not CARE (pitch emphasis).

Interestingly, in Stanza #4 she mentioned "they" told her to seek help from a medical professional for the injuries. Esperanza never clarified who "they" were but this addition to her narrative pointed to a critical dilemma undocumented survivors encounter when seeking help. My decision to not ask her to clarify who "they" represented in her story also signaled that she did not have to clarify. There was an underlying assumption that as an advocate and with my practice experience, I knew what she was referring to; "they" were either IPV advocates or case workers and probably even family members that knew about the IPV. She could not access medical help due to financial barriers as well as structural barriers that prohibited undocumented people from obtaining medical insurance. She was aware this could be proof of the abuse, but she had to live with the pain. Her undocumented status did not allow her to participate in the help-seeking others assumed she could access as an IPV survivor. Mostly I listened to Stanzas #4

and #5, but it was a frustrating reminder that sometimes well-intended advice offered by IPV advocates and social workers may truly not offer relieve for undocumented IPV survivors.

She reminded the listener that empathy continued to be limiting for those that have not lived this pain. After analyzing Stanza #5, it came to my attention that this was a way for Esperanza to subtly complicate my place to authentically capture the components of her story. The statement was brief, and it was used to shift the direction of her story. She emphasized her pride in her strength, survival, and determination to move forward for her kids. This inserted a coda moment to hand over the story to the listener and to bring us back to the present moment. I uttered a validation statement about her survival and her life being important and connecting it back to her kids. Mishler (1999) stated, “We continually re-story our pasts, shifting the relative significance of different events for whom we have become, discovering connections we had previously been unaware of, repositioning ourselves and others in our networks of relationships” (p. 5). The analytical process of this personal narrative was a reminder that the stories we told to ourselves, to each other, and to researchers offered a unique view into these formations and reformations of the past and our imagined future.

Level 5- Poetics

Several times in the past, I have used poetry within presentations and workshops about these topics. I have realized listeners tend to be moved by its simplicity and power. However, it was Poindexter’s intent of the research poem (2002) that encouraged me to use an alternative to communicate the respondent’s emotional world effectively and with an aesthetic and empathic nature. The final re-presentation consisted of poetry crafted from Esperanza’s words. To develop a poem, I selected talk and reformed it into a nontraditional re-presentation. There was a caveat of research poetry because its usefulness as data re-presentation has been debated and continued

to be controversial. Conversely, core narratives and strong emotions can be communicated with an economy of words. I agreed with Poindexter's observation that as researchers we struggle to use our work for advocacy or to raise public awareness. The poetry was an attempt to reach a larger audience beyond academic analytic minds (it was also used in the radio show) while also acknowledging Esperanza's desire to have her story encourage and mobilize change.

The poetry highlighted below focused mostly on the second interview where Esperanza shared her survival testimonio. The showcased poem surfaced from two interview sections. The first piece was the narrative at the beginning of the interview (Line 572 to Line 576). The other excerpt was from the end of the interview (Line 985 to Line 992) where she mentioned the impact she felt after telling her testimonio for the research project. Remembering traumatic life events can be difficult and can have a deep emotional impact. The emergence of this poem was never imagined until the level of analytical engagement required a re-presentation of her testimonio. Regardless, the resulting poem clarified why sharing her account created a different effect for Esperanza. It also engaged the reader and listener by telling something about her lived experience which was not previously understood (Poindexter, 2002).

Recordar y Desahogar [Remembering and Releasing]

Esta plática es un desahogo.	<i>This talk is a release.</i>
Algo que tenía que sacar-	<i>Something that needed to come out-</i>
Estoy más tranquila,	<i>I am calmer,</i>
lo puedo hablar ahorita sin lagrimas.	<i>Now I speak of it without the tears.</i>
Me conmovió mucho el recordar	<i>It moved me a lot, the remembering</i>
Haz de cuenta que lo volvía a vivir.	<i>Just imagine that I lived it all over again.</i>

Siento una tranquilidad	<i>I feel a tranquility</i>
Siento que lo estoy superando	<i>I feel I am overcoming it</i>
un poquito.	<i>A little bit.</i>
Me siento bien a mí misma,	<i>I feel good with myself,</i>
Mis logros con la ayuda de las comadritas,	<i>My successes with the help of my friends,</i>
De las personas que están aquí y gracias a ti	<i>Of the people here and thanks to you</i>
Me ayudaste: me desahogue mucho.	<i>You helped me: I was able to release a lot.</i>
¡Ya no llore!	<i>I did not cry anymore!</i>
Que alivio sacar todo que tenía dentro.	<i>What relieve to bring out what was inside.</i>
Me lastimo mucho que mi papa,	<i>It pained me that my father,</i>
Estuvo a punto de perder su vida	<i>Was close to losing his life</i>
por buscarnos una vida mejor.	<i>while looking for a better life.</i>
Muchos años han pasado -	<i>Many years have passed-</i>
Sin abrazar a mis padres. Muchos años.	<i>Without embracing my parents. Many years.</i>
Pero los recuerdo	<i>But I remember them</i>
Estoy orgullosa que sigo luchando por una vida mejor.	<i>I have pride that I continue to fight for a better life.</i>

Additional poetry was produced from Esperanza's words which were provided in Appendix G. The poetic stanzas informed some of the community engagement processes that took place after the data collection and analyses phases. It also provided an avenue to recreate the powerful stories shared in intimate interviewing moments into prose that inspired deeper engagement.

To summarize, Esperanza spoke about specific episodes and interactions and as she wove her stories, she revealed a narrative that coincided with what other women shared in their testimonios. There were moments of sadness and anger while also bringing the story back to the

present which was still difficult at times especially not knowing if she would be able to get a job or a permanent housing option. At the end of the second interview, Esperanza also summarized the big points she wanted to ensure I had captured from her story. She reiterated that she wanted others to listen to these stories to do something about the unfortunate dynamics at play. She reminded me, and herself, of the key learned lessons of self-love, confidence, and positive self-worth that continued to make her stronger for her kids. She continued to overcome the scars that the undocumented experience engendered for the IPV relationship. Her recap of the meanings of life events established an essence of evolvment, influenced by subsequent life events.

Evaluation of Esperanza's transcription with a narrative analysis lens allowed for an in-depth exploration of the stories that emerged from the interviews. As Mishler (1999) summarized, "as we access and make sense of events and experiences in our pasts and how they are related to our current selves, we change their meanings (p. 5)." This led to innovative ways to pivot the stories that required a sensitive listener and a flexible story-teller willing to risk being vulnerable to also re-discover and re-imagine the meaning of these lived experiences. The final chapter considered the implications of future research and practice related to these experiences of undocumented immigrant IPV survivors and the multitude of analytical underpinnings that were exposed.

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The current conversation of intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences in Latina/o families was not inceptive; rather, it interjected and bolstered what was known thus far. Since the 1980s, various women of color feminist scholars have promoted specific concern and awareness related to IPV to expand what emerged in the 1970s as a mainstream White feminist issue. Even so, the interviewee participants in the current project noted that limited knowledge was available about what systems were in place to provide support to IPV immigrant survivors. Understanding these concerns for Latina undocumented immigrant women survivors in the 21st century's social welfare context offered an iteration of the larger dialogue still materializing. Particularly when serving immigrant women, social work practice implications continue to challenge critical social welfare scholars to find a way to balance the existing social welfare system within a context of abated services and resources (Kullgren, 2003; Chaudry et al., 2010; Romero & Williams, 2013) and yet underscore the potential areas of growth to re-imagine what help can be extended, how assistance will be offered, and who will offer this support.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of 20 Latina immigrant women living in western Washington State about how their IPV experiences were impacted by their immigration status, gender, ethnicity, and class. A specific focus was to build understanding related to how the IPV phenomenon intersects with undocumented immigration status for Latinas. An intersectional lens was used to analytically decipher how other social identities (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and class) also impacted the women's IPV experiences. The study also examined the responses the women received (both formal and informal) when seeking help for the violence in their relationships. Notably, the study objectives centered on the interpretation of

an emic (insider) experience to achieve a holistic rather than reductionist understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Sandelowski, 2004; Patton, 1990) about their IPV experiences.

This investigation yielded culturally-relevant findings to address access to social support networks and social service programs for undocumented Latinas and their children exposed to the violence. The study addressed the following empirical questions: 1) How does the immigration context of Latina women survivors living in Washington State impact their IPV experience?; 2) What formal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social service programs?; and 3) What informal support did undocumented Latina survivors seek for the violence? How did their immigration status impact the received help from social support networks? The qualitative design emphasized discovery of the in-depth descriptions that were collected via testimonios.

This chapter will revisit the overall findings with specific attention on what new insights the study findings uniquely offered. The results that corroborate with existing knowledge will be discussed followed by the findings that break ground by illuminating the experience of undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors living in Western Washington State. The various practice, theoretical, and policy implications of the results will also be delineated. An expansion of what was happening and why it was happening will be offered as well as potential assumptions or blind spots that were overlooked. Finally, future research endeavors and final thoughts will be presented in the conclusion of the conclusion.

Undocumented Immigrant Experiences Revisited

The main purpose of this study was focused on IPV, but it was necessary to have a glimpse of the participants' overall undocumented experiences to encompass their larger immigrant contexts. In general, the participants' undocumented immigrant experience impacted

how they interacted with other people in a new country's environment as well as how they navigated new systems and circumstances that served as reminders; indeed, they were not in a country that received them with open arms. The women in this study talked extensively about how being undocumented influenced many of their interactions and relationships. Oftentimes, they did not share about their immigration status with others because they could not trust this personal information in the hands of anyone. Some of the women had experiences where this information was misused or placed them at risk when they did share or inadvertently someone disclosed their personal facts. As Zavella (2011) found in her research, Latina/o immigrants' illegality impacted their sociopolitical condition through ubiquitous immigration sweeps, detainment, deportation, or harassment, which pushed the undocumented immigrants into clandestine lives. Even though only one woman in the current study had been deported during her time in the U.S. (and she returned), every woman interviewed faced this reality every day, threatening their safety and ability to be able to stay in the U.S. without proper authorization.

The dynamics of concealment and fear impacted their ongoing interactions and relationships in the United States and also trickled down to their interactions with informal and formal support networks to address the IPV. Certainly, nondisclosure of the IPV because of their undocumented immigrant status added complexity to accessing services. Interestingly, the women still wanted the help if it existed, as long as their immigrant needs were considered and not dismissed. This finding reinforced the dynamics found in previous research Kelly (2006) that Latina battered women would not share about the abuse they experienced from their partners because they were afraid of the impact of their interactions with health-practitioners and perhaps consequences stemming from the knowledge. Regrettably, if the violence remained a secret, it was difficult to address the IPV effects.

As undocumented women, they often did not know how to navigate their new contexts or how to potentially access services such as food banks, housing assistance, or counseling centers that served individuals regardless of immigration status. Indeed, most of them migrated to work or travelled with their families for better opportunities, the women were unaware of services which translated into an avoidance of interacting with service provisions or assistance. The reported isolation suggests that they had less access to people that could tell them about these services, especially services eligible for their U.S. born children. For those women that were able to navigate the services and programs available, regardless of immigration status, accessing services was complex and took multiple attempts. Even with the barriers that came with being undocumented, it is important to note that the women still had some viable options for support which were not available in their home country.

The interviews also highlighted that once women arrived to the U.S. they would experience fragmented communities. Most of the women received support from relatives to immigrate but found themselves with little or no support once they arrived in the U.S. Menjivar's previous research (2000) deciphered the inner workings of informal social networks among Salvadoran immigrants and identified dynamic processes and potential reasons for their instability. This research suggests that networks were affected by the context that immigrants encountered and by their social positions, so the networks did not exist in a social vacuum. This pivotal work also illuminated that the structural conditions faced in the new context profoundly affected the nature of Salvadoran immigrants' social ties (Menjivar, 2000). Similarly, the current study suggests that the support by family and friends changed with new material challenges in the U.S. not just the individualistic culture of the place.

It is clear that social networks that provided informational, emotional, material, and financial assistance on a regular basis were critical for IPV immigrant survivors. The participants affirmed that their social networks' instability was linked to the structure of opportunities that they encountered on arrival which later also impacted their informal help-seeking efforts to address the IPV. Structural constraints such as limited access to employment or prohibitive policies related to housing options also conditioned the resources that these immigrant social networks had available to help family and friends who were in need. Multiple women shared that family members accepted them (and their husband and/or children) to live in a shared apartment, but in a matter of days they were asked to pay rent, even if they were recent arrivals and unemployed. There was no room for sensitivity of their circumstances because as several women echoed, "In the U.S., everyone HAS to pay rent." This context was a pretext that informed the social support that was available to tackle the deleterious effects of the IPV.

IPV-Specific. The four themes that described the IPV undocumented experiences included manipulation, isolation, stressors after IPV relationship ended, and the differential treatment for undocumented immigrant IPV survivors. Immigration status was often used by their abusive partners as a way to threaten and instill fear so the women would not seek help, even if they needed it. These findings of manipulation and isolation substantiated previous research observations. To further consider an intersectional lens, it was evident that gender, class, and ethnicity collided with immigration status in multiple ways. For example, the experienced isolation was differentiated if women migrated into a community network with other people from their country of origin or if they had family rooted in these places. The women from Guatemala, for instance, often came without any support as they were the only or the first person from their social network to migrate to the U.S. Their experiences navigating support were

significantly different compared to Mexican women participants that moved to Washington State after their siblings led the way and had employment connections. Inevitably, for all women, the context of being undocumented intensified how they experienced manipulation and isolation.

Ongoing Stress. Themes related to ongoing stress after leaving the IPV relationship uncovered new insights about their unique conditions related to their immigration status and how this influenced the stress they lived. For IPV survivors in general, there are obstacles related to the financial disruptions to their livelihoods (Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Moe & Bell 2004; Riger & Staggs, 2004; Renzetti, 2009). Similarly, financial barriers were of significant concern for the 20 Latina IPV survivors in this study, especially for those that were also mothers. It was a common experience that financial concerns were heightened when women were expected to solely provide for their children. The increased use of employment verification programs (i.e., e-verify federal program) to ensure a person was authorized to work legally in the United States also resulted in viable employment options continuing to decrease. The implications of these employment realities for the women were profound and meant that they found themselves without employment options during a vulnerable IPV moment. Leaving a violent intimate partner often meant that they were the sole earner and faced insufficient incomes or they would lose the only income in the household, that of the abusive partner. Being undocumented impacted their options for securing employment and provide for their children if they became single parents with no instrumental family support.

It was also widespread that access to child support was non-existent particularly if their ex-partners were also undocumented immigrants; there was no formal way to deduct money from their paycheck if being paid in cash or under a different identity. Regardless of these obstacles, the women shared that their children's best interest was a fundamental motivation to

secure some type of employment including informal jobs. This often constituted cleaning houses and office buildings, babysitting, and other sectors that would pay them under the table. Such precarious circumstances could have diminished the immigrant women's chances to thrive after separation of an abusive partner. For some women this meant they had less support to begin a new life unless they were able to build networks to connect them to jobs that would afford them self-sufficiency. Distinctively, a few of the women were entrepreneurial and began their own catering businesses and cleaning services to successfully hire other women and run small businesses.

Another important ongoing stressor reported by the participants related to the familial and social network disapproval of actions taken to address the IPV. The biggest concerns were the risk that a partner would be arrested for IPV after a report (or any other offense) then deported and that children were left without their fathers if women decided to leave their partners. An imperative consideration that domestic violence offenses could get an undocumented offender deported through the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act (IIRRA) was warranted. Consequently, immigrant women IPV survivors whose husbands or partners were not U.S. citizens were often pressured to not report abuse and to not seek police interventions by their social networks because that could lead to prosecution and conviction leading in turn to deportation of their husband and children's father. Pressure was also expressed towards the IPV survivors in cases where the abusive partners would lose any opportunity to become legal residents because of the DV charges on their criminal record. The deportation of the primary provider often led to a multitude of serious effects including economic hardships, so this pressure was a serious consideration for Latina undocumented immigrant women.

The complexity of these issues was also arduous if a partner was charged with DV/IPV by another person from an extramarital relationship or a prior relationship. One of the participants commented on the irony of this being her particular situation because she never called the police on her husband. He was undocumented and he was the only one that worked, so she was hyper aware of the potential consequences if she called the police. She knew that the police would not be able to assist her if her husband was detained or deported for the IPV he inflicted on her. He would often remind her, “Who is going to pay your bills? The police aren’t going to do it.” Therefore, she lived with his threats and manipulations and feared not knowing if help existed to overcome the situation. These unique circumstances made the IPV experience much more entangled than what was accounted for by encountered policies and programs.

Differential Treatment. The last auxiliary finding related to the moments when the women expressed they were treated differently because of their immigration status and how that intersected with their gender, nationality, and/or class. This differential treatment fell into three sub-themes. The first of these sub-themes was pertinent to the *limited eligibility and longer waiting periods for service provision*. Being undocumented implied a longer wait for services or often being told that they were not eligible for various assistance (e.g., housing subsidies, employment training programs). The women raised frustrating moments where they would begin a particular program (e.g., employment, financial empowerment support groups) to find out that they could not finish the program because they did not have a social security number. In a couple instances, women had experience running businesses in their home countries and they knew programs existed in the U.S. to fund small women-owned businesses. They described their devastation after they realized the program was funded with federal grants, so they could not

apply. Unfortunately, these circumstances left them feeling more upset than when they were unaware anything existed.

The second differential treatment factor related to the *complications and misunderstandings of the u-visa process*. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petition option to legalize their immigration status was not available to IPV immigrant survivors if their partners were undocumented as well. Those married to undocumented immigrants could apply for a u-visa through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (VTVPA). These laws offered an opportunity to break free from their abusive relationships and become legally and economically autonomous in the U.S.; hence, it legitimized their victimization.⁸ In the current study seven women were undocumented and had not applied for a u-visa. In most of their situations, they did not have enough evidence to file a u-visa application or other complications came up with their application process. Unequivocally, these women had more barriers due to being undocumented with no alternatives to obtain legal authorization. The women may have not known all the details required for the application process, but they were key experts to the way the process worked as they waited for the approvals.

In her prolific work (2010a, 2010b), Villalon demonstrated how gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class permeated the formality of the u-visa related laws. She unveiled how the agency of IPV survivors is structurally limited by gender violence-based immigration laws and relative to others' agency and the practices (sometimes informal) of nonprofit advocates assisting immigrants. She found that immigrants from poorer backgrounds and with no formal education had more trouble negotiating the process than those who had higher social and cultural capital that resulted from their working class status and a few years of formal education (Villalon,

⁸ The u-visa offered temporary legal status for up to four years; they received deferred action on deportation procedures and authorization to work in the U.S. for 1 year with the option to renew the permit twice.

2010a). Interestingly, immigrants from a higher social status (middle class) and with higher levels of formal education also had trouble conferring the process because they were perceived to be demanding and critical of the interactions. This was evident in a few cases of the current study where the women had been treated differently because they voiced the injustice they perceived from the advocate's response. The findings of the aforementioned study expanded on some of the issues raised about the u-visa process by the participants of the current study.

Most of the concerns were related to the steps to demonstrate compliance with the u-visa application from beginning to end. First, a good understanding of the complicated process was required, not only by the survivors but also those assisting them through the long and costly case. Second, the police or any other law official needed to be involved to approve the vital u-visa certification. For some of the survivors, their chances to apply for the u-visa vanished if the police believed that the immigrant survivors would not cooperate in the investigation of the crime (i.e. IPV) committed against them. This could mean they would not get certified to proceed which was mandatory to continue the u-visa petition. To recall Esperanza's case, the police never made a report of the family disturbance call, so she did not have proof that she was attacked. There were other women in similar circumstances where they were told there was no "evidence" to obtain the certification; this shattered any hope to legally reside in the U.S.

For the selected group that had all the required paperwork to proceed, the obstacles continued during the waiting period. A third concern was that the prohibition on employment until they received their work permit which could mean a waiting period of more than a year after the case had been accepted. Several women had asked for a pardon and the government had paperwork that they were in the country without permission, but they still had no access to public assistance or temporary work options. These circumstances meant that women had to find

creative or alternative ways to make a living and not violate any laws that would jeopardized their u-visa case. As much gratitude that was expressed when they finally received their work permits and temporary lawful presence in the U.S., there was equally as much frustration about the cracks women encountered with difficulty along the way.

The fourth concern emerged that the immigrants that had the most need ended up getting weeded out so they would not follow through the entire u-visa process which was often the only avenue to legalize their immigration status. Similar to Villalon's sample (2010) in Central Texas, women had more difficulties with certification if they were in unstable living conditions (e.g., moved frequently, no phone access in their residence, temporary employment). A large percentage of the women interviewed in the current study had one or all of these living conditions in their current lives. The fifth concern, not surprisingly, was related to the conclusive evidence that has shown survivors of violence, particularly those that were still traumatized, preferred not to denounce their aggressors to avoid retaliation. These risks were higher for u-visa applicants because the abuser was undocumented and could be deported as a result of the investigation (Grossman & Lundy, 2007; Raj & Silverman, 2002) not to mention the ever-present distrust of immigrant survivors towards the authorities if their interventions were associated with incarceration and deportation (Bui, 2003; Ammar et al., 2005).

The last sub-theme mentioned by half of the women was *the experience of discrimination related to being undocumented*. These women preferred not to share about their immigration status yet their situations where even if their status was kept a secret, others assumed they were undocumented so their interactions were still informed by their perceived immigration status. For example, some of the women held views that they were perceived differently by others either because they spoke Spanish or a broken English. Marisol shared a difficult story where she and

her child were thrown raw eggs by a group of male teenagers from a moving car as they walked home one evening. She blamed the attack on “looking illegal” - it was unclear whether this label was because of her darker skin tone, her indigenous features, or the items she carried; she assumed they viewed her differently because she was carrying grocery bags and wore her McDonald’s uniform.

To complicate their situation, the Guatemalan and Salvadoran women that came from indigenous communities experienced differential treatment if they did seek help. Discrimination and racialized assumptions made it even more difficult for them to reach out for IPV support. A few of the Mexican women in this study also came from *campesino* communities (rural indigenous farming families), and they shared moments where their social class or their native phenotypes implied they would experience responses to their IPV differently. When they called the police, no reports were filed or the officers never spoke to them during the investigation or interaction. Another example was at a DV shelter where another woman resident began to treat the undocumented woman as the babysitter and maid. Within days of sharing a room at an emergency shelter, the immigrant woman found herself caring for the child of her roommate. Even though she never shared about her immigration status, when a fight occurred, the woman (White and English-speaking) yelled at her and threatened to call immigration because she refused to do her laundry and feed her child. These moments vividly capture the painful experiences that are associated to just being perceived as undocumented and this finding has the potential to inform future recommendations to minimize these practices and advocacy interactions.

Undocumented IPV Survivorship Revisited

As IPV survivorship models have indicated (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Liang et al., 2005; Moe, 2007), the women survivors in the current study continually resisted their victimization by intimate partners even when these efforts were not met with supportive responses. Some of the help-seeking efforts were unsuccessful because of institutional failures while others arose from intricate webs of silence or gendered-expectations that influenced social networks responses when they became aware of the IPV. The experiences of the women demonstrated their active engagement in help-seeking behaviors to address the abuse/violence. However, critical considerations about IPV survivorship were warranted because the undocumented experience was different. They observed unique barriers linked to their social identities and the intersection with policies and programs available as well as the access they had to informal support networks. Thematic and narrative analyses revealed racialized, gendered, classed, and nativist injustices Latina undocumented immigrants experienced when seeking informal and formal IPV help.

Overall help-seeking behaviors that were mentioned coincided with the models that were presented in Chapter Two. The women reported key dynamics of when, how, who, and how help was accessed from formal and informal settings. A progression was evident of survivors first accessing informal support and then seeking formal support. This was significant, considering that informal social support has been identified as a key protective factor associated with fewer mental health problems among abused women (Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Tan et al., 1995). The most common reason that has been previously cited for not talking to someone (i.e. informal support) has been related to barriers and isolation (Fugate et al., 2005). This was also the case for some of the women in the current study. They may have

wanted to discuss the IPV with someone but did not have anyone available especially if most of their support system was not physically close by or accessible.

Other IPV research studies have demonstrated that immigrants were less likely to access informal support and social services than their U.S. citizen counterparts due to social isolation, language barriers, discrimination, and fear of deportation (Acevedo, 2000; Ammar et al., 2005; Bui & Morash, 1999; Bui, 2003; Dutton et.al., 2000; Torres, 1991). Similarly, research among immigrant women (Bauer et al., 2000; Dutton, et al., 2000; Sorenson, 1996) found that those who had more recently immigrated, who were undocumented, and who had no family in the United States were less likely to seek social and health services due to isolation and fear of deportation. All of these themes were evident in the current study. For example, the common responses from informal support systems included the following: IPV was not their business to interfere, a culture of silence, gendered expectations, and temporary support offered. Only three of the 20 women stated that informal social supports were helpful throughout or in the entire process. Hence, the response from family and friends mattered. It made a difference when they could tell a friend or relative about the situation especially if their response entailed trustworthiness. It was not simply about accessing an informal social network; it was also about what response was received.

It should be noted that implications of the help-seeking responses require extensive dialogues especially within a context of a culture of silence. Further constraints for immigrant battered women's access to formal help included lack of awareness of available IPV services, lack of culturally or linguistically competent IPV services, and lack of awareness of IPV as a legal issue for which they can receive assistance. The minimal use of public assistance programs that children were eligible for demonstrated their common experience that they did not know

help existed or that they [their children] qualified for this assistance. Recent investigations (Silva-Martinez, 2016) point to the idea that silence is more than just the act of not speaking. The testimonios of the participants in Silva-Martinez' study remind us that it was evident that people around them knew about the violence even if the survivors did not share their feelings about the conditions. Furthermore, these acts of silence were influenced by a patriarchal system that expected women to be perfect wives and mothers. The ongoing silence around these issues implies serious barriers that continue to minimize access especially to informal support that could potentially provide alternatives that make sense in the worlds of undocumented women when they were already experiencing denial of various formal avenues of help.

In the larger help-seeking scope, Reina and colleagues (2014) explored Latina immigrant victims' experiences with domestic violence service outreach in the Midwest region, specifically Iowa. Their ethnographic investigation highlighted the multiple needs for undocumented immigrant women and the barriers that were encountered when seeking help. Their findings demonstrate that immigration status combined with the inability to understand domestic violence within given cultural norms were major barriers for Latina victims residing in Iowa to seek help from formal advocacy agencies (Reina, Lohman, & Maldonado, 2014). This study supported the literature regarding Latinas' experiences with current anti-violence services in other areas (Brabeck & Guzmán, 2009; Hazen & Soriano, 2007; Vidales, 2010). Previous work has shown that Latina survivors are influenced by certain factors that prevented them from connecting to anti-violence services including immigration status, inability to understand domestic violence given cultural norms, feeling ashamed, isolation, a lack of language proficiency, and lack of knowledge of resources. These factors influenced the willingness to utilize advocacy or social services, similarly reported in the current study. Additionally, the lack of awareness of domestic

violence laws in Latino communities living in the Midwest required a great deal of education within these communities about policies, laws, potential solutions, and the availability of programs serving Latino communities. These issues will be revisited as the implications of the current study are discussed.

There has been extensive documentation about the heightened safety risks after IPV survivors have left or when trying to leave their partner (Greenfeld et al., 1998; Campbell, 1992, 1995; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Saunders & Browne, 2000; Campbell et al., 2003). The shared narratives in the current study made apparent the details of this “fleeing context” specific to undocumented immigrant women. Most of their situations escalated to calling the police or leaving their primary residence that they previously shared with their ex-partners. The fear to have their undocumented status exposed implied that seeking support often occurred as the last alternative or to tackle emergency circumstances that they could no longer manage. The Salvadorian women who participated had no family members left to return to El Salvador and the civil unrest and continued violence in their home country had intensified making it difficult to return. There were also difficulties trying to survive in the U.S. and they faced the conundrum of being unable to return to their country of birth. Therefore, their safety concerns were not limited to a national context; it included a complicated transnational perspective that went beyond the violence experienced in the home. Because formal help was often limited by funding and restrictive policies that influenced access, the lethality concerns that were raised by the current participants brought to focus that indeed these efforts cannot be dismissed if we are invested in socially just and culturally responsive support for undocumented immigrant IPV survivors.

Practice Implications

The research findings help us further understand IPV experiences and have the strong potential to influence social worker and/or other social service providers that interface with undocumented immigrant IPV women survivors. The reported differential treatment points to the ongoing need for training that better equips professionals to be up-to-date with issues faced by undocumented IPV survivors. For example, it may not be someone's intention to send an immigrant IPV survivor in the search for u-visa documents that cannot be obtained. Unfortunately, this could happen if the details of the u-visa process are not completely understood by the involved parties. Four specific imperative practice implications will be discussed below.

Our Responses Matter. First, it is critical to note that it is not simply about having practitioners available to respond to undocumented Latina immigrant IPV survivors, but rather it matters how providers involved in these support systems respond. The undocumented dynamics that survivors experience require that practitioners do not separate these dynamics from the individuals. Disclosing the violence interconnects with figuring out who to trust with their undocumented status. Especially since the disclosure of this information is often surrounded by fear, stigma, and distrust of how these systems will respond to them. This includes the responses of other Latinas/os in their informal support systems. This also informs our help-giving decisions since the survivors' help-seeking attempts include both informal and formal support systems. By understanding the complexity of their interactions with potential support systems, it allows us to critically examine the processes that can be put in place to improve our responses.

Second, the way that we respond needs to consider the barriers and gaps undocumented women experienced in the process from receiving referral contact information until assistance is

rendered. To illustrate, the women in the current study mostly became aware of formal support programs after they had involved the criminal justice system or once they arrived at an emergency shelter for battered women. Many times the women with the most needs did not follow through with the entire process of obtaining certain social service provisions even though they were eligible for the assistance. Consequently, the referral process may require closer step-by-step assistance to improve interactions and program delivery offered to immigrant survivors. Having uniform rules that encourage survivors to be empowered through individualistic phases of help-seeking will not necessarily work with a population that does not understand complicated forms or the different steps of the help-seeking process.

Third, important considerations need to be made regarding the ways that we share IPV resources and educational materials. A recent initiative of the Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs has started to use the phrase: “Don’t Ask, Just Tell” in their Pregnant Survivors Project (2013) materials. This practice reminds professionals, including DV advocates, health care providers, and law enforcement, to share the reproductive and sexual coercion information with pregnant survivors to improve service delivery. A similar approach can be used for undocumented survivors that interact with certain health or legal systems. Rather than waiting for a survivor to disclose the abuse or their undocumented status, formal help-seeking systems can automatically offer information, with safety considerations in place.

A fourth concern with service delivery response that persisted for the participants, and has significant implications, was related to the language that is used in DV/IPV practices. The language barriers that hindered access to IPV support in the current study went beyond the lack of English proficiency. Many times the women shared that part of not knowing what access there was to social services and support was that they did not know what the definition of “domestic

violence” and “intimate partner violence” denoted. Hence, cultural differences and interactions with different systems in their countries of origin signified that as they established a new home in the United States, they were unaware that their living situations with intimate partners were indeed violent and abusive- or that these behaviors were considered a crime. This pointed to the possibility of re-imaging how IPV services are provided. It may be that prevention and intervention efforts need to re-consider how to begin this conversation.

Non-IPV Partnerships Matter. The second implication is tied to the multiple occasions the women IPV survivors did not disclose the violence when they were seeking formal help. It was evident that even when the violence was impacting the reasons for seeking the help, these things were not always disclosed. An example of this was shared by Marcela when she went to the hospital’s emergency room for a possible miscarriage that was result of a violent physical and sexual assault from her partner. This incident left her bed-ridden for the remainder of her pregnancy but she never received any IPV screening or follow-up from her obstetrician gynecologist about what caused the pregnancy emergency. Therefore, service provision efforts need to go beyond IPV-specific services and offer a space of interdisciplinary interventions.

It is imperative to incorporate these types of service provisions particularly when it comes to mental health therapeutic services or prenatal/postnatal care. Building partnerships with health care settings or school-based support could reach a larger audience, especially for immigrant survivors that are isolated for other sources of support. Strategies under auspices not related to IPV (focus on child and maternal health) can have a further reach to groups that may not look for IPV-specific help but they are accessing other key entry points to the larger help systems. Nevertheless, for undocumented immigrant survivors, advocacy still needs to be persistent to ensure the accessibility to law enforcement and hospital emergency rooms so they

can actually utilize their services in a culturally responsive manner. New partnerships as well as ongoing improvements to spaces that continue to be of limited access to undocumented immigrant survivors are required.

By offering services that go beyond the IPV conversation- meaning, opportunities are offered to interact with formal support systems while not centering IPV, may also open a space for engagement with healthy family dynamics. For example, instead of beginning from a violence lens, practitioners are encouraged to begin the conversation about what healthy relationships look like and how respect is observed in relationships. This can be beneficial especially for communities that are still grappling with the stigma that IPV may signify within a cultural context. Because IPV is often considered a private matter that is not divulged outside of the family unit, it is unlikely that sharing these experiences will come easily. A hesitation to engage directly with formal services when social interactions are shaped by these identities which means distrust and barriers that have specific immigrant consequences (i.e. deportation) for IPV survivors. Spaces of assistance also need to complement informal social support systems because it is likely to be the first avenue to seek support for undocumented immigrant women. A more holistic approach would also identify stressors for immigrant couples and families that could intensify their immigrant experiences and later impact a violent response.

Employment for Self-Sufficiency is Critical. A third implication is related to interventions that are needed to address labor involvement and job training options for undocumented survivors. If the expectation continues to be that IPV survivors need to leave the abusive partner as the foremost method to survive, there is a larger risk of displacing undocumented immigrant IPV survivors even further. Because of employment limitations enmeshed with their undocumented immigrant status, it is extremely burdensome to find work

that could pay a reasonable living wage to be able to support their children as single parents. Several of the women had never worked outside their home or when they tried finding work, they found themselves navigating their illegality within a context that had very little alternatives to not becoming homeless or further isolated. Oftentimes our efforts to support IPV survivors include emotional and material support, but what happens after some of the temporary support is no longer available? The long-term barriers that the women shared illuminated that simply asking undocumented immigrant women to leave a violent relationship is not appropriately assessing for the long-term financial barriers that will be present.

Self-sufficiency seems almost impossible without a legal work permit, but it continues to be a goal that undocumented IPV survivors yearn for. The temporary state of the formal help oftentimes pushed them to think about the ultimate goal to be self-sufficient and be able to provide for their children without having to rely on formal help systems. One of the respondents, Carmen strongly stated, “Even though the help may be good, I feel that you limit yourself of many things that you can do because we are very hard-working. It is not just about them giving us things- we want to feel capable that we can, we can make it. Believe me that this will even help the government because it is work and we are producing and not only receiving... they need to give us the tools to be able to produce [with our labor].” Because of their inability to find employment without a social security number, this ideology may further frustrate them thinking about actualizing these goals of self-sufficiency. This can fuel feelings of hopelessness that their situation will actually be better after separating from an abusive partner that controls their livelihoods. Options for job training programs could potentially offer useful tools to “make it on their own,” but policy changes would also be required to ensure this is a viable option within the constraints of the law.

Their Children Are Their Hope. The fourth salient implication is related to a specific factor influencing the help-seeking behavior of women: their concern for the well-being of their children especially if they witnessed the IPV. The children were specifically and consistently of utmost concern within women's descriptions of their accounts of abuse and their families' well-being. Interestingly, there is a paradox articulated when centering their children's concern.

Undocumented immigrant IPV survivors share that their children are the reason for staying in an abusive relationship as well as deciding to leave an abusive partner. With their children's well-being in mind, they assess their situations and realize that the violent environment was more detrimental to their children than the negative financial conditions that could persist a long time after they abusive partner is no longer in the picture. This process of realization is complicated and it occurs within a context of IPV dynamics intersecting with undocumented immigration status, so this crux requires a deeper analysis for meaningful practice changes to be a possibility.

Their biological children's future (as well as other relative children, e.g., grandchildren, nieces, nephews) was the focus of the narratives the interviewees share related to their hopes for a future without violence. As parents, they are invested in understanding how their children will heal as adults from the wounds that linger from the IPV. Even when gendered interactions were the women's experiences, several of them voiced the ways that they are disrupting these behaviors and beliefs so their children know of alternative ways to engage with intimate relationships. This includes chats with their children about dealing with emotions such as anger and jealousy as well as questioning sexism and patriarchy. These findings influence application knowledge for practice interventions that incorporate intergenerational experiences and how to interrupt the cycle of violence by including conversations of healthy relationships with children as well as identifying gendered interactions that could change over time.

Theoretical Implications

Including marginalized communities of color in research needs to be forefront to ensure that the research process encapsulates vulnerable experiences in a respectful manner. Developing trustworthy relationships with interviewees is critical especially if undocumented women do not want to disclose about their status with a stranger. By implementing Chicana feminist theories, intersectionality frameworks, and specific participatory and critical methodologies, a different narrative is offered compared to what is reported in previous empirical research projects. Innovative methods to document evidence such as counter-narratives are important and these methods go beyond asking open-ended questions that assume a neutral context. At times, lived realities require that a critical stance is taken to understand the narratives that continue to be hidden or silenced when people talk about trauma.

The preceding chapters point out that issues related to IPV (e.g., etiology, prevalence rates, incidence rates, health consequences, interventions) have been researched with various epistemologies that uncover discrete angles of an issue that continues to be of interest across disciplines (e.g., social work, public health, psychology, nursing, medicine, law). Feminists scholars of color, including Chicana theorists, specifically summarize the struggles that are influenced by someone's gender and not independent of other historical conditions. This intersectional gender analysis conjoins the gender category with at least one other intersecting category of oppression (e.g., racism, heterosexism, and classism) to have an improved assessment of the problem for undocumented immigrant Latina IPV survivors. The women participants in the current study were asked to emphasize their survival rather than victimhood and to map their set of strategies for resistance and future coalition building. The women's multiple consciousness brings awareness of the larger politics that impact their lives and the lives of their children as well as the help-seeking processes they cannot always navigate. The findings

clearly imply that Latina undocumented immigrant women's cultural experiences of IPV are mediated through structural forms of oppression, such as racism and economic exploitation especially when they interact with support systems.

The methodologies employed in this study also derived unique results to expand what is known about IPV for undocumented Latina immigrants in western Washington State. The combination of testimonio and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodologies elevated the study's cruxes: to empower other women in these communities, to engender and regenerate a discourse of solidarity, and to offer others awareness of undocumented Latina immigrants' lived IPV realities and injustices. The testimonio components uncover new knowledge about IPV experiences rarely shared with academics. This method centers the survivors' urgency for their stories to be told and impact the women still experiencing IPV in their communities because they knew first-hand of the hardships associated with this process. Bringing in story-telling technologies offers a space for interviews to share advice with peers still struggling to make sense of the IPV in their lives. CBPR also forges a collaborative process to involve all partners in the research as equitably as possible. Hence, part of the community advocacy initial plan includes an alternative space/stage (i.e. community radio shows) to share the research findings beyond the academic writing. The combination of the multiple methodologies offers a richness of analysis to inform theoretical implications.

Policy Implications

Policy implications require that both IPV and immigration policies, laws, and rules are considered because the women's intersectional experiences demand that the interwoven components are all understood. The immigration-related decisions that are made (or not made) at a federal level will impact the state level social service response as well as the local efforts to

find alternatives that privately fund IPV interventions via foundations and charity efforts. In regards to social welfare access for undocumented IPV survivors, it is important to know how immigration regulations and violence against women laws intertwine when public assistance policies are created and revised. It is critical that policymakers are aware of the unintended consequences of the multiple policy systems (local, state, federal, and international) interacting with one another. An IPV female immigrant survivor may have access to VAWA or u-visa applications, but this process requires a long wait to know your eligibility (up to two years for some) and then a longer wait to receive work authorization (up to seven years). In theory, the process requires that women wait without legitimate financial support, but in life, they need money and materials to survive. IPV undocumented immigrant survivors are at risk of falling through the cracks without proper recognition of the complexities they encounter with multi-level and multi-systemic policies.

The ways in which social services institutions respond to battered women must involve a critical analysis of the maintenance of institutionalized forms of patriarchy (Moe, 2007) which may be evident in the decisions policy makers debate and approve. The initial focus on criminal justice deemphasizes informal and community-based help seeking and leads to policies mandating criminal justice interventions for help seekers (mandatory arrest, mandatory reporting in health care settings, victimless prosecution, and some shelters requiring that victims seek orders of protection or make a police report) (Fugate et al., 2005). Such policies need to be critically examined. For IPV immigrant-related issues, there is overlap of systems for deportation as well as systems to remove children when the caretaker is not able to take care of the minor/s. This means that if undocumented parents are detained and/or deported their children are at risk of being removed and placed in child protective services custody. The policies in these systems

are interpreted in various ways by government workers that decide if children will be separated from their relatives and placed in the foster care system. These complications of systems that do not communicate with one another are larger issues that this study does not specifically address. Regardless, the collected narratives make evident that the consequences of these policies are creating havoc in daily lives of undocumented immigrants.

These implications require that IPV immigrant advocates have up-to-date information and tools, but they also need to be prepared to connect with policy makers to impact policy changes and share the stories of the help seekers. Aggregated evidence for policy makers can help to understand the complexity of the broken immigration system and its trickle down effects that impact state and local government funds. These systems may not have the authority needed to help their citizens in their jurisdiction even though it is at this level that the financial burden increases. If there are limited opportunities to actually advocate for these changes, then it silences the voices of undocumented immigrant IPV survivors before the debate even begins. Lastly, efforts are required to dedicate financial resources that address the multi-faceted aspects of provisions that offer adequate care for this population.

Limitations

This study, as any other empirical investigation, has several limitations that need to be mentioned. Limitations related to the transferability of the results to other immigrant populations were discussed extensively in Chapter Three. Briefly, most of the interviewees were from Mexico with only a few from Guatemala and El Salvador. To be able to deeply understand the experiences of other Central American undocumented immigrants, there needs to be a larger sub-sample. This continues to be imperative especially with more recent immigrants arriving from various Central American countries. All the interviewed women lived in Western Washington

State; this region looks different than places that are more rural or farm working communities in the Eastern Washington area where Latino immigrants often live. Therefore, the experiences of women in these different communities are not captured. Understanding these other experiences is relevant and warrants further exploration to better understand the various contexts and variables.

Another limitation concerns the voices that were not represented or missing from the analyses including the testimonies of practitioners and advocates. By centering knowledge and realities of undocumented Latina survivors of IPV, I excluded the voices of those that formally assist them. Hence, there is room for future research projects to combine the various voices that will impact coalition-based changes and perspectives. Another blind spot and missing voice was that of women that are still in violent relationships. Their experiences are not represented even though they are also surviving an IPV experience. There is an assumption that gets created that the only way of getting help is to leave their partners. Three women in the current study returned to their partners after the interviews, so there is a high likelihood of missing an entire group of narratives from the “in-between” phases of IPV relationships. These limitations require careful considerations of how to continue to be more inclusive in our recruitment efforts of marginalized voices.

Other limitations are related to the data collection methods used as well as the analytical choices made. If the safety concerns related to disclosing immigration status could be addressed from the beginning of the study, there would be an opportunity to incorporate focus group methods. Quantitative data could also be incorporated especially to capture health and mental health effects. With more interview time, more important details would emerge. Several women also brought to their interviews photographs, pamphlets, and other artifacts that represented a critical moment in the IPV survivorship process. The image below includes some of the

documents collected throughout the interviewing process. These artifacts ranged from news clippings, church-related literature, and immigration advocacy pamphlets. If the methodology built in ethnographic components, then additional data might be available to include in the analyses.



Image 2. Collected Printed Artifacts.

In regards to analytical choices, the thematic section uses open coding and did not explore axial coding since the study is phenomenological rather than grounded theory; regardless, axial coding could potentially offer a larger theoretical understanding of the experience the women shared as undocumented immigrants. Another future possibility for analytical strategies could focus on the temporal sequence or a specific episode (critical moment) that responded rather than accessing only certain themes. Clearly, there is possibility to continue investigating these issues with multiple analytical components.

Lastly, there are limits of sustainability for a project that uses CBPR. Sustainability with the community agency is difficult after ending the data collection process and not being physically in Western Washington. I continue in contact with supervisors in the DV program and the executive director but the interactions are minimal. The community radio shows most requested are related to the IPV impacts on children. This is very telling of what survivors and the community wants to know more about or is most interested in understanding further. Time and effort is required to expand on these findings that go beyond the timeframe of the active investigation. Yet consideration of the longer term engagement that CBPR practices require will persist and is necessary to continue to tackle the raised issues.

Future Recommendations

There is a need to expand the use of culturally-responsive methodologies and theories to resist the marginalization of the experiences of immigrant IPV survivors. Multi-faceted approaches- macro (policy advocacy), meso (community support), and micro (awareness, empowerment) are also essential. To develop alternative ways of answering research questions, two components from Wilson's (2008) research as ceremony approach need to be strengthened. As he states, "The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves. The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world (p. 11)." Hence, future research needs to incorporate relationality (relationships don't just shape reality, they are reality) and relational accountability. Adding these components to the research project complements the way in which lived experiences are shared between the investigator and interviewees. This is of utmost importance given the sensitivity of the issues discussed.

Future steps also need to focus on the health effects and the stories that emerge under the context of the larger themes for help-seeking efforts. For undocumented immigrant survivors, this is taking place under the guise that most of these women never enter an emergency hospital room or health clinic to disclose the IPV. The original research questions focus on the women's help-seeking behaviors but through the data collection process, the women shared about their health concerns that have been documented with other IPV survivors. These dynamics mean that not enough information measures health and mental health priorities for undocumented individuals. Consideration of Krieger's (2001) social ecology framework and theories of embodiment to further look at these issues will be critical future steps. Bringing in historical trauma and healing framing (Walters et al., 2011) to address intergenerational traumas and other forms of violence that have impacted these communities' interactions are also necessary.

Conclusion

Social work practitioners, other social service professionals, and advocates that work with IPV survivors have a responsibility to identify and respond to the IPV, according to professional standards that include culturally-responsive care. This responsibility becomes a bigger challenge by the social complexity of the IPV problem and the increasing diversity of the populations. Existent literature fails to provide perspectives of women from immigrant and ethnic communities, and of effective strategies for identifying IPV and intervening effectively. The current study offers a glimpse into the dynamics that undocumented immigrant IPV survivors face when seeking help. This information brings forward the ongoing issues that need to be addressed to strengthen the professional standards of the profession as well as the care that needs to continue to be forefront to our efforts of support.

The women in this study proclaimed: we are going to heal; we are healing. They found beauty from the things they left behind. They found healing where they thought it did not exist. The mural painting that some of the women also created throughout a series of support groups with art therapy components (See Appendix H) was mentioned in multiple interviews. Through these help-seeking support systems they were able to see the possibilities that had been shattered at some point in their abusive relationships. I included these mural pictures because multiple women told me how the mural allowed them to understand further their transformation that continued to be intense at times. They are not naïve, they understand the journey towards survivorship requires daily struggles and confronting obstacles when they thought all obstacles had ceased. By allowing me, as a researcher invested in community healing, we raised the curtain and entered into these conversations intentionally. There is hope that the next woman in need of support will encounter a process a bit more gentle and more understanding of the struggle they have been through. This is the cultivation of care that can lead to a harvest of care that will encompass a justice framework that also acknowledges the cultural experiences as strength-based opportunities to change the care systems in place.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Flyer⁹

¿Eres una mujer Latina que ha sobrevivido la violencia doméstica?

¿Actualmente estás enfrentando una situación difícil de migración?

Si tu respuestas son SÍ, puedes participar en este estudio de investigación.



¿Quién puede participar?

Mujeres Latinas (mayor de 18 años)
sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica que
nacieron en

**México o Centro América y que
son indocumentadas o están en proceso
de legalizar su estatus migratorio.**

**NECESITAMOS SU AYUDA PARA
ENTENDER LAS EXPERIENCIAS
ÚNICAS DE LATINAS
INDOCUMENTADAS**

Estamos interesados en aprender acerca de su experiencia de la violencia doméstica como una mujer Latina que vive en Estados Unidos. Como inmigrante, puede tener dificultades para equilibrar su vida en un nuevo país. El experimentar la violencia doméstica puede hacer más difícil su vida en los EE.UU.

La invitamos a participar en una entrevista de estudio de investigación. Si es elegible, usted participará en dos sesiones de entrevistas confidenciales para compartir sus experiencias como sobreviviente Latina de violencia doméstica.

Usted puede recibir hasta \$50.00 por su tiempo.

Si quiere participar, comuníquese con
Miriam Valdovinos (Universidad de Washington, Escuela de Trabajo Social) al 206-839-6918 o por correo electrónico miriam80@uw.edu.

Si deja mensaje de teléfono, por favor deje un número de teléfono SEGURO donde le puedo regresar la llamada.

Este anuncio es para USO DE LA OFICINA SOLAMENTE

⁹ This recruitment flyer was larger, so actual text size was larger on original flyers printed for recruitment sites.

Are you a Latina woman that has experienced domestic violence?

Are you currently facing a challenging immigration status situation?



Who may participate?

Latina women (18 years and older) survivors of domestic violence that were born in **Mexico or Central America** and that are **currently undocumented or in the process of legalizing their immigration status**.

***WE NEED YOUR HELP TO UNDERSTAND
THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACED BY
UNDOCUMENTED LATINAS***

We are interested in learning about your domestic violence experience as a Latina woman living in the United States. As an immigrant Latina, you may struggle to balance your life in a new country. Experiencing domestic violence may make your life in the U.S. more challenging.

We invite you to participate in an interview research study. If eligible, you will participate in two confidential interview sessions to share your experiences as a Latina survivor of domestic violence.

You will receive up to \$50.00 for your time.

If you want to participate, contact Miriam Valdovinos (University of Washington, School of Social Work) at 206-839-6918 or email at miriam80@uw.edu.

If you leave a telephone message, please leave a SAFE phone number where you can be reached.

For Office Announcement Use ONLY

Please Share!

APPENDIX B

Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire

Primera Entrevista

(General Probes: ¿Cómo describiría su situación a los demás? ¿Cómo se siente acerca de su situación? ¿Qué se siente? Cuénteme más, ¿qué pasó? Describa en más detalles por favor.)

DESCRIPCIÓN DE SU EXPERIENCIA MIGRATORIA

Antes de Emigrar

1. Por favor describa su vida antes de salir de su país de origen.
(¿Qué cosas extraña? ¿Quién y/o qué dejó atrás? ¿Cómo mantiene contacto con estas personas o cosas? ¿Hubo circunstancias políticas/sociales que recuerda ser importante?)

2. ¿Cuáles fueron las razones porque se fue de su país de origen?

Su Experiencia de Inmigración

1. Describa su experiencia de venir a los EE.UU. ¿Cómo fue cuando llegó por primera vez a los EE.UU.?
(¿Hubo gente que conocía que habían emigrado antes, con usted o después? La primera vez que migró, ¿Tenía permiso para entrar al país de manera legal?)

La Experiencia de Ser Indocumentada

1. Describa su vida en los EE.UU. ¿Cómo ha cambiado su vida? ¿Que se ha mantenido igual?

2. ¿Cómo ha afectado su estatus migratorio en cómo las personas interactúan con usted?

DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA ENTRE PAREJAS

Nos concentraremos en la pareja violenta más reciente.

La Definición de IPV

1. ¿En sus propias palabras, como describe la relación con su pareja?
(¿Cuánto tiempo estuvo con su pareja? ¿Comenzó la violencia en su país de origen? ¿Cuando/Cómo fue que tu pareja te hizo daño físicamente o emocionalmente? ¿Qué cosas violentas vivió usted con su pareja? ¿Fue usado su estatus de inmigración en su contra, para manipular, aislar, amenazar o causar miedo?)

Efectos a Su Salud Mental & Salud Física

1. Por favor describa cómo la violencia ha afectado su salud mental o la salud física.
(¿La violencia ha activado problemas de salud mental o molestias físicas para usted? ¿Qué le ayudó a sobre llevar la situación?)

2. Describa sus emociones (frustrada, asustada, triste, esperanzada, enojada, feliz)

Búsqueda de Ayuda Formal

1. ¿Qué servicios formales ha usado para lidiar con estos efectos de la violencia en la pareja?
 Lista de posibles servicios- legal, refugio/vivienda, asesoramiento/consejería, trabajadora social, sacerdote / iglesia, grupos de apoyo, policía, defensa relacionada con la inmigración, médicos, necesidades de los niños, la asistencia financiera

(¿Cómo empezó su contacto con estos servicios? ¿Cómo se enteró para acceder la ayuda? ¿De qué manera le ayudaron estos servicios?)

2. Describa la respuesta general de los servicios y apoyos que busco.
 (Describa una buena experiencia que usted tuvo con el apoyo o servicio proporcionado. ¿Que hizo que fuera una buena experiencia? Describa una mala experiencia que usted tuvo con el apoyo o servicio proporcionado. ¿Que hizo que fuera una mala experiencia? ¿Compartió su estatus migratorio?)

Respuesta de la Familia y Comunidad

1. ¿Cómo es que la gente cerca de usted (es decir: de la familia inmediata, la familia extendida, la familia de la pareja, compañeros de trabajo, miembros de la comunidad, y/o amigos) respondió a las situaciones de violencia de pareja íntima en su vida?
 (¿Con cuales personas compartió acerca de la relación abusiva? ¿Cuál fue la respuesta general de la gente a la que se acercó? ¿Ha experimentado la vergüenza o la culpa por las respuestas de los demás? ¿De qué manera han sido las opiniones favorables para usted? O no favorables? ¿Cómo le han afectado estas conversaciones?)

Efectos a los Niños (Ask if interviewee has children)

1. ¿De qué manera cree usted que la violencia ha afectó a sus hijos?
 (Describa los problemas emocionales y físicos que afectan la salud física de sus hijos o el bienestar psicológico. ¿Qué les ayudó para enfrentar los efectos de la violencia? ¿Cómo ha sido la dinámica familiar?)

RELACIÓN ENTRE EL SER INDOCUMENTADA y IPV

1. ¿Cómo es que su estatus migratorio ha afectado el buscar ayuda? ¿Ha habido momentos en los que se ha sentido como si tenía que esconderse debido a su estatus migratorio cuando estaba buscando servicios? Si es así, por favor, comparta algunos ejemplos.
2. ¿Crees que el ser indocumentada y también una sobreviviente de IPV ha hecho una diferencia en cómo las personas cercanas a usted responde a su experiencia con IPV? Si es así, ¿de qué manera?

ENCONTRANDO LA FUERZA

1. ¿Cómo ha visto así misma la sanación de las cicatrices y los recuerdos de la IPV?
 (¿Que sigue siendo difícil? ¿Qué le da esperanza de que el futuro pueda ser mejor? ¿Quién le ha ayudado? ¿Cómo ha encontrado la fuerza para seguir adelante? ¿Qué o quiénes le da esa fuerza?)

Segunda Entrevista

EXPANSIÓN DE IPV Y ESTATUS INDOCUMENTADO

1. ¿Cree que su estatus migratorio (ser indocumentada) la ha hecho más vulnerable al experimentar IPV?

(Si su pareja también es indocumentado, ¿cómo ha afectado esto su experiencia? ¿Cómo es que estas experiencias han afectado su bienestar de la mente, el cuerpo, el espíritu y el corazón? ¿Hay dichos, los cuales ilustran estas experiencias?)

2. Describa una historia que no ha compartido antes (o sólo unas pocas personas saben) que ayudaría a otras mujeres en situaciones similares. Puede compartir acerca de una situación difícil o un punto importante-con el espíritu de compartir esta historia para ayudar a otras sobrevivientes inmigrantes.

LA SANACIÓN Y LA ESPERANZA

1. ¿De qué maneras has visto a otras sobrevivientes resistir la violencia o seguir sobreviviendo IPV? (Si usted tuvo obstáculos en la búsqueda de ayuda, ¿qué sugerencias tiene para cambiar esta respuesta? Si usted fuera la directora de uno de los servicios de apoyo a las mujeres indocumentadas IPV sobrevivientes, ¿qué incluiría en su programa, ya que ha visto el impacto que esto puede tener sobre otros sobrevivientes inmigrantes? ¿Hay mujeres héroes que le dan fuerza?)

2. En su opinión, ¿cómo podríamos eliminar IPV de nuestras comunidades?
3. ¿Qué consejo le daría a otras mujeres inmigrantes sobrevivientes que pudieran estar en situaciones similares IPV?
4. Si plantamos nuevas semillas para la generación futura (que incluye a sus hijos) para detener la violencia en la pareja, ¿qué semillas plantaría y por qué?
5. ¿Algo más que quiere compartir antes de concluir la entrevista?

APPENDIX C

Demographic Forms

Interview Demographic Form

Current Age: _____ Country of Birth: _____

Marital Status (circle one):

Single Married Cohabiting* Engaged Divorced Separated Widowed*Children (circle one): *Yes No* If YES, how many children? _____ Ages _____

Of your children, how many were born in the U.S.? _____

Of your children, how many were born outside the U.S.? _____

Your highest level of education completed: _____

Monthly household income (include wages, supplemental income): _____

Year you first arrived in the U.S.: _____

Before coming to the U.S., what country were you living in? _____

From your arrival to the U.S., what states have you lived in? _____

Current Immigration Legal Status: _____

Labor force status (employed- FT/PT, unemployed, student, homemaker etc): _____

If employed, occupation type: _____

* Spouse/partner (for currently cohabitating couples):

Partner's Gender: _____ Ethnicity/Race/Ancestry: _____

Highest level of education completed: _____

Partner's Current Immigration Legal Status: _____

Labor force status: _____

If employed, occupation type: _____

Language Preference (most often spoken at home): _____

Analytic Case Review*(Detailed Demographics & Important Things to Track)*

Interviewee Alias/# _____

Current Immigration Status: _____

Trauma Experiences

1. Did interviewee experienced childhood abuse or trauma? _____
2. Did interviewee experienced childhood sexual abuse? _____
3. Did interviewee experienced sexual assault at the border? _____
4. Did interviewee report knowing other IPV survivors? _____
Who? _____
5. Was IPV experienced BEFORE migrating or AFTER? _____
If both, did it intensify after migration? _____

Help-Seeking

6. If interviewee filed U-visa, was it related to IPV situation? _____
7. Did interviewee call police authorities for IPV? _____
What was the outcome after calling? _____
8. Was interviewee displaced or homeless due to partner arrest/deportation? _____
9. What family members were helpful for social support? _____
10. What was experience when seeking support from family/friends?
11. What was experience when seeking support from institutions/services/programs?
12. Did interviewee report any of the following issues/problems resulting from IPV experience?
 _____ Addictions _____ Mental Health _____ Physical Health
 Other _____

APPENDIX D

Information Statement- Informed Oral Consent Form¹⁰

UNIVERSIDAD DE WASHINGTON- Declaración de Información Entendiendo las Experiencias de Violencia en la Pareja de Mujeres Latinas Indocumentadas

Investigadora Principal: Miriam Valdovinos, Escuela de Trabajo Social

Teléfono: 206-839-6918

Correo electrónico: miriam80@uw.edu

Declaración de la Investigadora

Usted está invitada a participar en un estudio de investigación. Esta declaración de información le proporciona los detalles que necesita saber para decidir si desea o no desea participar en el estudio. Vamos a leer el formulario en voz alta para que la información sea explicada claramente. Usted puede hacer preguntas sobre el propósito de la investigación, lo que se le preguntará en la entrevista, los posibles riesgos y beneficios, sus derechos como participante, y cualquier otra cosa acerca de la investigación o de esta declaración que no esté claro. Cuando todas sus preguntas hayan sido contestadas, usted puede decidir si quiere participar o no. Este proceso es referido como "consentimiento informado". Usted recibirá una copia de este formulario.

Propósito del Estudio de Investigación

El propósito de este estudio es entender las experiencias de violencia en la pareja (IPV) de mujeres Latinas indocumentadas. IPV se refiere a un patrón de las creencias, actitudes y comportamientos en los que uno de los individuos en una relación íntima intenta mantener el poder y control sobre la otra a través del uso de la coerción psicológica, física y/o sexual. Espero que las historias compartidas en esta investigación informen nuestro trabajo futuro para desarrollar mejores programas y políticas que aborden el tema de la violencia en la pareja.

Procedimientos del Estudio

Este estudio de investigación consistirá de dos entrevistas, cada una tendrá una duración aproximada de dos horas. La segunda entrevista se producirá en 1-2 semanas después de la primera entrevista. Ya que vamos a hablar de temas sensibles, las dos entrevistas nos dan la oportunidad de desarrollar la confianza antes de compartir información personal.

En las entrevistas, voy a preguntarle sobre su vida en su país de origen, su experiencia de venir a los Estados Unidos y su experiencia de vida en los EE.UU. como una persona indocumentada. Vamos a hablar de sus experiencias con la violencia de pareja y cómo los miembros de la familia, miembros de la comunidad y los proveedores de servicios han respondido a sus experiencias. También voy a preguntarle sobre qué le da fuerza durante estos momentos difíciles de la vida. También creará un par de piezas de arte para describir su experiencia. La obra de arte es otra manera de capturar una experiencia que a veces es difícil de describir con palabras.

Con su permiso, voy a audio-grabar la entrevista para que pueda tener un registro exacto de nuestra conversación. Voy a mantener las grabaciones en un ordenador protegido con contraseña al que sólo mi asistente de investigación y yo tendremos acceso. Vamos a transcribir el audio de la entrevista dentro de 4-6 semanas después de la entrevista, asignaremos un código de identificación de la transcripción y la grabación electrónica de la entrevista será destruida.

¹⁰ To ensure safety and confidentiality of participant's identity, IRB granted a waiver so interviewees could give oral consent and they did not have to sign a consent form.

Riesgos, Estrés, o Incomodidad

Los temas que se discuten durante la entrevista pueden hacerla sentir incómoda. Es posible que usted se sienta incómoda contestando preguntas personales sobre su estatus legal y las experiencias de inmigración o con la violencia de pareja. Algunas personas sienten que al compartir información para un proyecto de investigación es una invasión de la privacidad. Otras se sienten avergonzadas cuando están registradas con audio. Si usted se siente incómoda, por favor hable sobre estos sentimientos. Estoy capacitada para ayudarle a lidiar con los sentimientos perturbadores o preocupaciones que usted pueda tener. Usted también recibirá una lista de las agencias en la comunidad a las que puede contactar si tiene dificultad relacionada con su participación en este proyecto.

Beneficios

Es probable que usted no se beneficie directamente de esta investigación. Esperamos que los resultados de este estudio nos dé un mejor entendimiento sobre las experiencias de la violencia de pareja de las sobrevivientes Latinas indocumentadas. Esta investigación puede ayudar a crear nuevos programas y políticas relativas a sobrevivientes latinas indocumentadas de la violencia de pareja en el estado de Washington y en los EE.UU.

Confidencialidad de Información de la Investigación

Aunque voy a hacer todo lo posible para mantener su información confidencial, ningún sistema de protección confidencial puede ser totalmente seguro. Es importante mencionar que el gobierno y/o personal de la universidad a veces revisa los estudios para asegurarse de que se están haciendo de manera segura y legal. Si la revisión de este estudio se lleva a cabo, sus expedientes podrán ser examinados. La información que proporcione será almacenada en un lugar seguro y se eliminará cualquier identificador. Por lo tanto, los registros del estudio no serán utilizados por lo que no la pondrá en riesgo legal.

Toda la información es confidencial y será registrada con un nombre de alias y el número de código y no con su nombre real. Me pondré en contacto con usted para confirmar la segunda entrevista. Por lo tanto, voy a grabar su número de teléfono bajo el nombre de alias en un archivo protegido que se destruirá una vez se completen las entrevistas. Las grabaciones de audio de las entrevistas no incluirán ninguna información personal que pueda identificarla. También voy a utilizar un programa informático para disfrazar su voz para mantener la grabación de audio anónima. Toda la información y los datos para este estudio se almacenarán en un archivo cerrado con llave o en un ordenador seguro y accesible sólo por la investigadora principal. La fecha preliminar para destruir todas las grabaciones de audio de este estudio será el 1 de agosto de 2014.

Soy una profesional de salud mental y se me requiere por ley reportar evidencia de abuso infantil o negligencia a las autoridades estatales apropiadas. Tenga en cuenta que la confidencialidad no cubre información que pueda revelar sobre amenaza de daño a sí mismo o a otras personas.

Otra Información

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Usted puede parar en cualquier momento. Puede editar las grabaciones en cualquier momento antes de que yo las destruya. Si usted decide poner fin a la entrevista antes de que se complete, no le afectará de recibir el pago por su tiempo. Como participante de la entrevista, usted recibirá \$25 durante la primera entrevista y \$25 en la segunda entrevista.

Es posible que los resultados de este estudio se presenten en las reuniones de la comunidad, conferencias, audiencias de promoción de políticas o se publiquen en revistas especializadas y otras publicaciones. Su nombre u otra información de identificación no serán utilizados en las presentaciones o publicaciones. Las obras de arte también pueden ser utilizadas para exposiciones de arte y presentaciones de la

comunidad. Sin embargo, su nombre no aparecerá en ninguna de las materias (se utilizarán los nombres de alias). Le agradezco su participación.

Si tiene preguntas después de la investigación, usted puede preguntar a la investigadora mencionada anteriormente. Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, puede llamar a la División de Sujetos Humanos al (206) 543-0098.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON INFORMATION STATEMENT
Understanding Intimate Partner Violence Experiences of Undocumented Latina Women

Principal Investigator: Miriam Valdovinos, School of Social Work

Phone: 206-221-0661

Email: miriam80@uw.edu

Investigator's statement

You are invited to participate in a research study. This information form gives you the details you will need to decide whether or not to be in the study. We will read the form aloud to ensure the information is clearly explained. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you in the interview, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a participant, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to participate or not. This process is called 'informed consent.' You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand how undocumented Latina women experience intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV refers to an ongoing pattern of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in which one partner in an intimate relationship attempts to maintain power and control over the other through the use of psychological, physical and/or sexual coercion. I hope that the stories collected through this research will inform our future work to develop better programs and policies that address the issue of intimate partner violence.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This research study will consist of two interviews, each taking about two hours. The second interview will occur 1-2 weeks after our first interview. Because we will discuss sensitive topics, the two interviews give us an opportunity to develop trust before sharing very personal information.

In the interviews, I will ask you about your life in your country of origin, your experience coming to the United States and your experience living in the U.S. as an undocumented person. We will discuss your experiences with intimate partner violence and how family members, community members and service providers have responded to your experiences. I will also ask what gives you strength during these difficult life moments. You will also create a couple art pieces to describe your experience. The art work is another way of capturing an experience that is sometimes difficult to describe with words.

With your permission, I will audio-record your interview so that I can have an accurate record of our conversation. I will keep the recordings in a password protected computer that only my research assistant and I will have access to. We will transcribe your interview audio within 4-6 weeks of your interview, assign an identification code to the transcript, and destroy the electronic audio recording of the interview.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

The topics we discuss during the interview may make you uncomfortable. It is possible that you could be uncomfortable answering personal questions about your immigration status and experiences with intimate partner violence. Some people feel that providing information for a research project is an invasion of privacy. Others feel self-conscious when they are audio recorded. If you do feel uncomfortable, please talk about these feelings. I am trained to assist you in dealing with upsetting feelings or concerns you may have. You will also receive a list of community agencies that you may contact if you experience distress related to your participation in this project.

BENEFITS

You may not directly benefit from being in this research. We hope the results of this study will give us a better understanding of the experiences of undocumented Latina survivors of intimate partner violence. This research may help create new programs and policies concerning undocumented Latina survivors of intimate partner violence in Washington State and the U.S.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

Although I will make every effort to keep your information confidential, no system for protecting your confidentiality can be completely secure. I need to tell you that government and/or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The information you give will be stored in a secure location and any identifiers will be removed. As such, the study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

All information is confidential and will be recorded with an alias name and code number not your real name. I will need to contact you to confirm the second interview. I will record your phone number under your alias name in a protected file that will be destroyed when the interviews are completed. The audio-recordings of the interviews will not include any personal information that can identify you. I will also use a computer program to disguise your voice to maintain your interview's audio recording anonymous. All information and data for this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet or on a secure computer accessible only by the principal investigator. The last possible date that I will destroy all audio recordings from this research study will be by August 1, 2014.

I am a mental health professional that is required by law to report evidence of child abuse or neglect to the proper state authorities. Please be aware that confidentiality does not cover information you might reveal about threatened harm to yourself or others.

OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You can ask me to edit the audiotapes any time before I destroy them. If you decide to end the interview before it is completed, it will not affect you receiving payment for your time. As an interview participant you will receive \$25 during the first interview and \$25 at the second (and final) interview.

It is possible that the results of this study will be presented at community meetings, research conferences, policy advocacy hearings or published in professional journals and other publications. Your name or other identifying information will not be used in these presentations or publications. The art work may also be used for art exhibits or community presentations. However, your name will not appear in any of the materials (alias names will be used). I appreciate your participation.

If you have questions later about the research, you can ask one of the researchers listed above. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098.

APPENDIX E

Confidentiality Statements (Transcriber and Coder)

Volunteer Research Assistant Confidentiality Statement

I, _____, acknowledge and will follow to the data confidentiality statement below.

Due to the nature of the research topics discussed in the interview transcriptions (intimate partner violence and undocumented populations), I understand that my highest sensitivity and respect to the participants' voice and the information they shared will be required. To adhere with the human subjects review board, the following will be mandatory of my participation:

- Anytime I access the Dedoose website, I will ensure I log out completely. I will use utmost care to keep access to data confidential. It is not appropriate to have others reading the interview files even if they do not know the identity of the interviewee or they do not understand Spanish.
- After I complete the transcript review, I will document notes and reflections using only alias names (and ID#). All documents related to the study will be kept in secured file.
- I will not download or alter the original data included in the transcription.
- I will contact the principal investigator (PI) if any uncomfortable feelings or distress emerges from reading the interview files. The interviews may impact the coders in multiple ways, so keep in mind PI is trained to process these responses with you. Please contact PI immediately if you believe you may know the interviewee or the story shared may remind you of someone you know. It is not appropriate to reach out to this person because their confidentiality is guaranteed throughout the research process.
- I will maintain all our collaborative meeting discussions private and confidential. Upmost respect will be used when discussing transcripts and lived experiences of the interviewees.

My signature below signifies I have discussed these issues with PI and I agree to follow the delineated protocol of the collaborative data analyses engagement.

Transcriber/Coder's Signature

Date

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

Coding Matrix Chart

	ID#	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
		SANTA	LINDA	LOLA	JIMENA	VICTORYA	GABI	ESTELA	ESPERANZA	ESMERALDA	CARMEN
CODES											
INTERACTIONS	CODE DESCRIPTION										
INTERACT 1	Many unknowns in new environment	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
INTERACT 2	Difficult to find work	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
INTERACT 3	When employed, you work long hours	X	X		X		X		X	X	X
INTERACT 4	Discrimination (work, housing, neighborhood)	X			X	X			X		X
INTERACT 5	Deportation fears	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 6	Didn't know language (English)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 8	Frustration (navigating the unknown)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
INTERACT 9	Doesn't disclose immigration status	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 10	Found 'trusted institutions' in community		X			X	X			X	X
INTERACT 11	More help in US than country of birth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 12	Myths about help-seeking and service provision	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
INTERACT 16	Cultural shock	X		X	X	X			X	X	
RELATIONSHIPS											
RELATION 1	Few shared about immigration status with others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RELATION 2	Had close circles but fragmented (limited interactions and support)		X	X	X		X		X		
RELATION 3	Complicated ties with transnational relationships	X			X				X	X	
RELATION 4	Transnational single-parent (and/or parent)	X			X		X		X	X	
RELATION 5	Difficult to trust others with immigration status	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RELATION 6	Latinos with papers think they are better/superior	X		X	X		X		X		X
RELATION 7	Deportation threats impact parenting US born kids	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RELATION 8	Family that arrived prior helped to find employment				X	X			X		
RELATION 9	Access to limited networks		X	X	X	X			X	X	
RELATION 10	Co-dependent of partners			X				X	X		
RELATION 11	Afraid to talk to neighbors			X	X	X			X	X	
RELATION 12	Made friends with co-workers				X		X		X	X	X
RELATION 13	Very few friends, feel isolated	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
RELATION 14	Prepared teen kids in case she was deported (safety plan)				X		X				
RELATION 15	Religion/faith connected her to 'church family'					X	X				
RELATION 16	Connected to other parents at children's school				X		X		X	X	X

	ID#	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
		SONIA	ELIZABETH	ANGELES	MARCELA	MILAGROS	CHIO	ADELIN	MARISOL	ANABEL	MARICRUZ
CODES											
INTERACTIONS	CODE DESCRIPTION										
INTERACT 1	Many unknowns in new environment	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
INTERACT 2	Difficult to find work	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
INTERACT 3	When employed, you work long hours	X			X		X			X	
INTERACT 4	Discrimination (work, housing, neighborhood)		X		X				X	X	
INTERACT 5	Deportation fears		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
INTERACT 6	Didn't know language (English)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 8	Frustration (navigating the unknown)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
INTERACT 9	Doesn't disclose immigration status	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 10	Found 'trusted institutions' in community			X					X		X
INTERACT 11	More help in US than country of birth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
INTERACT 12	Myths about help-seeking and service provision	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
INTERACT 16	Cultural shock	X		X	X	X	X				X
RELATIONSHIPS											
RELATION 1	Few shared about immigration status with others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RELATION 2	Had close circles but fragmented (limited interactions and support)	X			X	X		X	X	X	
RELATION 3	Complicated ties with transnational relationships						X				
RELATION 4	Transnational single-parent (and/or parent)						X				
RELATION 5	Difficult to trust others with immigration status	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RELATION 6	Latinos with papers think they are better/superior	X	X		X				X	X	
RELATION 7	Deportation threats impact parenting US born kids	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
RELATION 8	Family that arrived prior helped to find employment	X						X		X	
RELATION 9	Access to limited networks					X		X	X	X	
RELATION 10	Co-dependent of partners		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
RELATION 11	Afraid to talk to neighbors		X		X	X			X		X
RELATION 12	Made friends with co-workers	X			X			X	X		
RELATION 13	Very few friends, feel isolated	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
RELATION 14	Prepared teen kids in case she was deported (safety plan)	X				X					
RELATION 15	Religion/faith connected her to 'church family'	X		X			X	X			
RELATION 16	Connected to other parents at children's school		X	X	X		X	X		X	

	ID#	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
		SANTA	LINDA	LOLA	JIMENA	VICTORYA	GABI	ESTELA	ESPERANZA	ESMERALDA	CARMEN
CODES											
IPV-RELATED											
IPV 1	Threats of deportation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 2	Fear of kids taken away (separated from kids)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 3	Isolation (impacted access to support and help)	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
IPV 4	Language barriers	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 5	Unknown info about services (lack of information)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 6	Issues with social security numbers, work permits, visas	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
IPV 7	Ongoing struggles after relationship ends	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
IPV 8	Issue with reporting IPV especially if spouse is also undocumented				X	X		X	X	X	X
IPV 9	Myths about help-seeking and social services	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 10	Immigration status used to manipulate survivor to stay	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 11	Differential treatment due to immigration status	X		X	X			X	X		X
IPV 12	Controlled with immigration status if petitioned by partner										
IPV 13	No access to child support after separation			X	X	X	X		X	X	X

	ID#	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
		SONIA	ELIZABETH	ANGELES	MARCELA	MILAGROS	CHIO	ADELINE	MARISOL	ANABEL	MARICRUZ
CODES											
IPV-RELATED											
IPV 1	Threats of deportation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 2	Fear of kids taken away (separated from kids)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 3	Isolation (impacted access to support and help)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
IPV 4	Language barriers	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
IPV 5	Unknown info about services (lack of information)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 6	Issues with social security numbers, work permits, visas			X						X	
IPV 7	Ongoing struggles after relationship ends		X	X		X		X		X	
IPV 8	Issue with reporting IPV especially if spouse is also undocumented		X	X		X	X		X		X
IPV 9	Myths about help-seeking and social services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 10	Immigration status used to manipulate survivor to stay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IPV 11	Differential treatment due to immigration status				X	X			X		
IPV 12	Controlled with immigration status if petitioned by partner				X			X		X	
IPV 13	No access to child support after separation		X	X		X	X		X		

	ID#	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
		SANTA	LINDA	LOLA	JIMENA	VICTORYA	GABICITA	ESTELA	ESPERANZA	ESMERALDA	CARMEN
CODES											
INFORMAL RESPONSE	CODE DESCRIPTION										
FAM_RESPONSE1	Family members and friends were helpful (entire process)					X					X
FAM_RESPONSE2	Gendered interactions or expectations	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
FAM_RESPONSE3	Violence was normalized		X	X	X				X	X	
FAM_RESPONSE4	Only expected to offer temporary help	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
FAM_RESPONSE5	Advice to try to work it out				X	X		X			X
FAM_RESPONSE6	'Not their business' to get involved	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
FAM_RESPONSE7	Stigma attached to seeking help (what will ppl say)			X					X	X	
FAM_RESPONSE8	Culture of Silence (hiding or denying IPV from others)			X			X		X	X	X
FAM_RESPONSE9	Intervened first time but no interference as IPV continued	X		X	X				X	X	
FORMAL RESPONSE											
FRM_RESPONSE1	Services were helpful	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FRM_RESPONSE2	Limitations/barriers to seek help (expanded codes 8-12)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FRM_RESPONSE3	Don't know policies/procedures so difficult to navigate services	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FRM_RESPONSE4	Only expected temporary help		X		X	X				X	X
FRM_RESPONSE6	Unknown services that U.S.-born kids are eligible for				X	X		X	X	X	
FRM_RESPONSE7	Stigma attached to seeking help		X	X	X	X			X	X	X
FRM_RESPONSE8	Distrust/fear the police	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
FRM_RESPONSE9	Negative experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
FRM_RESPONSE10	Difficulty communicating with staff (lack of bilingual staff)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FRM_RESPONSE11	Transportation difficulties	X		X		X	X		X		
FRM_RESPONSE12	Oppressive practices	X		X	X	X	X		X		X

APPENDIX G

Narrative Analysis Poetry Excerpts

Me Vas Echar a Perder la Ciudadanía (Line 617 to Line 631)

Con coraje me decía

¡TU NO ME VAS A ECHAR A PERDER MI VIDA!

Tenía historial de deportación-

Pero eso no le importo.

Muchas amenazas, capaz de matarme al salir de la cárcel.

Tenía abogados-

Talvez podían liberarlo de la sentencia

Me daba mucho miedo.

¡Estaba como loco!

Me iba ir peor si yo arreglaba por violencia doméstica

Las palabras de apoyo de mi terapeuta y consejera-

Ayudaron a tomar la decisión.

La voz de mi hijo recordándome- no va ser igual

“papá, suelta a mi mama la vas a matar, LA VAS A LASTIMAR.”

Era tiempo, como su madre- no me rajo.

Si Fuera Directora: Alzara Mi Voz (Line 729 to Line 739)

Escucharía más las voces -
de las personas que están pasando estos problemas de violencia.
Tomaría tiempo para escucharlas-
Porque a mí me ignoraron.
Tenemos que ser más humanos,
Ponerte un ratito en los zapatos de esa persona -
Solamente así cambiaran las cosas.

No entiendo
Muchas veces tienen la ayuda y no la dan, no sé porque.
La verdad no sé porque hacen eso.

Nosotros a veces buscamos mucha ayuda y ya no nos la dan.
Necesitamos más programas de viviendas,
Necesitamos más servicios,
Somos mucha gente- que lo necesitamos.

¿Porque no hablamos ingles bien?
¿No sabes usar una computadora bien?
Entonces, No nos enteramos de servicios.
¡Es hora de correr la voz!
Por la radio que pusieran más anuncios, historias, ayuda.
La cultura de silencio- ¡ya no más!

APPENDIX H

Mural Pictures

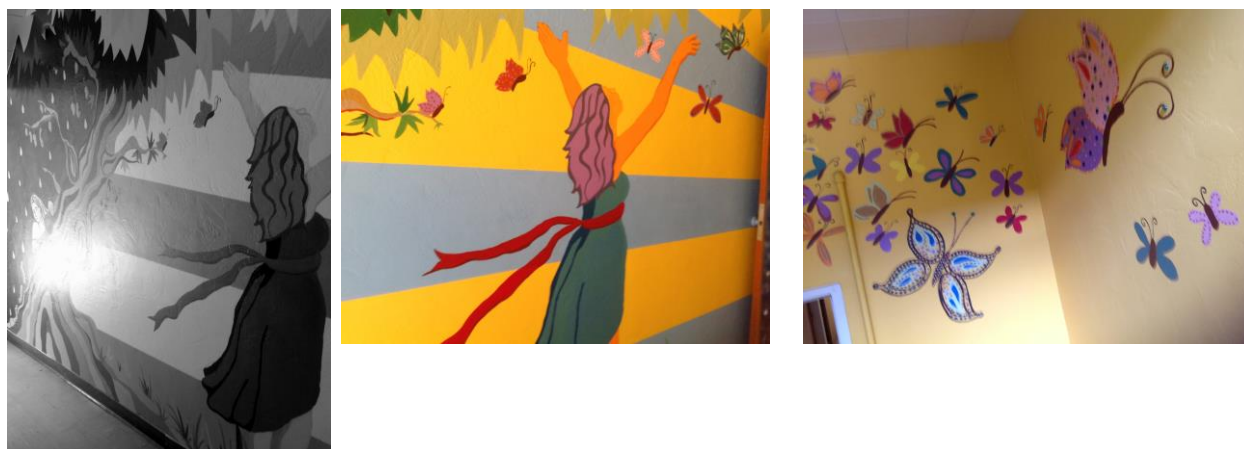


Image 3. Mural Pictures

Miriam Georgina Valdovinos
Abbreviated Curriculum Vita

EDUCATION

PhD- University of Washington- School of Social Work	June 2016
Graduate Certificate- University of Washington- Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies	June 2013
MA- California State University, Fullerton- Psychology (with honors)	June 2007
BA- California State University, Fullerton- Psychology (Cum Laude)	June 2002

SELECTED RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fogarty Fellow- NIH Global Health Kuskaya Fellowship (D43TW009375)	07/2015- 06/2016
Research Fellow- Indigenous Substance Abuse, Medicines and Addictions Research Training (ISMART) Program (NIDA HHSN271201200663P)	03/2015- current
Research Assistant- University of Washington, School of Social Work Whatcom County Domestic Violence Research Initiative (PI: Emiko Tajima, PhD)	04/2011 – 06/2012
Research Trainee- (Grant# TL1 RR 025016) University of Washington & Institute of Transnational Health Sciences Multidisciplinary Predoctoral Clinical Research Training Program	06/2010 – 09/2010
Research Assistant- University of Washington, School of Social Work Seattle Immigrant Research Project (PI: Roberto Gonzales, PhD)	12/2009 – 06/2012
Research & Statistics Coordinator Tarrant County Juvenile Services (Fort Worth, TX)	09/2007 – 09/2009
Biostatistics Research Intern- UCLA, School of Public Health California Health Interview Survey [CHIS] (PI: M. Kagawa-Singer, PhD; A. Yancey, MD)	06/2004 – 10/2004

SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Valdovinos, M.G., Alania, K., Bayer, A., & Garcia, P. (under review). A systematic review of a decade of research (2005-2015) on health-related training programs for journalists. *Journal of Health Communication*.
- Tabb, K., Huang, H., Valdovinos, M., Toor, R., Ostler, T., Hageman, E., Menezos, P., & Faisal-Cury, A. (Review and Resubmit February 2016). Intimate partner violence is associated with suicidality among low-income post-partum Brazilian women. *Public Library of Science (PLOS) One*.
- Valdovinos, M. & Mechanic, M. B. (June 2016). Sexual coercion in marriage: Narrative accounts of abused Latinas. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*.
DOI: 10.1080/15313204.2016.1177804
- Valdovinos, M. (December 2014). Domestic violence in Latino communities: Dispelling myths and acknowledging realities, 54-55. In *2013-14 Washington State Latino/Hispanic Assessment Report*. Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs.

Mechanic, M. B., & Valdovinos, M. (June/July 2005). The cultural context for abuse of Latinas. *Domestic Violence Report*, 10 (5), 65-66, 77-79.

Valdovinos, M. (December/January 2005). Health watch: Health factors affecting pregnant Hispanic women. *Domestic Violence Report*, 10 (2), 23, 27.

Mechanic, M. B., & Valdovinos, M. (October/November 2004). Culturally sensitive interventions among women of color. *Domestic Violence Report*, 10 (1), 10, 16.

ACADEMIC AWARDS/HONORS/FELLOWSHIPS

Dissertation Award (UW, School of Social Work) (\$1000)	2014
Teaching Fellow, UW, Bothell Pedagogy in Interdisciplinary Programs [PIP]	2014
Nominee, UW, Excellence in Teaching Award (university-wide)	2014
Doman Award for Excellence in Teaching (UW Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies)	2012
Institute for Ethnic Studies (IESUS) Publication Fellowship (\$5000)	2012
Ronald McNair Doctoral Fellowship (\$65,000)	2009 & 2013
Blalock Statistics and Methods Award (\$1000)	2009
Ed Stearns Outstanding Research and Statistics Award	2005

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Predoctoral Lecturer- University of Washington, Bothell Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences <i>Topics in Culture: Illegality & Belonging-</i> Undergraduate upper-division class (43 students) <i>Introduction to Social Services-</i> Undergraduate lower-division class (25 students & 28 students)	2014-2015
Adjunct Instructor- Antioch University, Dept. of Psychology (Seattle, WA) <i>Historical Trauma and Healing-</i> Undergraduate seminar class (10 students)	2013
Predoctoral Lecturer- University of Washington, School of Social Work <i>Social Welfare Research & Evaluation-</i> Graduate class (21 students) <i>Poverty and Inequality-</i> Graduate class (22 students) <i>Historical Foundations of Social Work Practice-</i> Graduate class (30 students each section) <i>Foundations of Social Welfare Research-</i> Graduate class (30 students) <i>Introduction to Statistics for SW Practitioners-</i> Graduate class (40 students)	2011-2013

PROFESSIONAL/PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Domestic Violence Child Advocate Consejo Counseling and Referral Services (Seattle, WA)	07/2012 – 04/2013
Education Services & Bilingual Services Coordinator SafeHaven of Tarrant County (Fort Worth, TX)	05/2006 – 08/2007
Residential Case Manager SafeHaven of Tarrant County (Fort Worth, TX)	08/2005 – 05/2006
Case Manager The Eli Home Cariño Center (Anaheim, CA)	06/2002 – 07/2004