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Mexican Immigrants Under the 45th U.S. Presidency:
Impacts of Heightened Immigration Enforcement and Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric

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Abstract

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The lives of various immigrant populations in the United States have been placed under a powerful microscope with the existing executive administration. Its focus on immigrants from Mexico, in particular, began during the campaign season for the 2016 presidential elections. The integrity of Mexican immigrants was forcefully questioned the day that the current U.S. president announced his bid for presidency. On that day and each day since this administration took office, its immigration-related rhetoric and immigration enforcement priorities have contributed to a political and social environment that has led to the following outcomes for Mexican immigrants: feelings of heightened vulnerability and fear, various forms of coping with ever-changing policy, and the sentiment that while the tactics of this administration are unique, the threat of detainment and deportation have long been a danger for people of this community. Analysis of these findings may be used to guide social service organizations in their internal practices and their interactions with Mexican immigrants.

Acknowledgements

¡Ganamos! is the term that my father has proudly exclaimed each time a sibling or I accomplish something in life. If you translate it, your computer will likely say that it means “we won”. When I was young, hearing it was simply a reassurance that I did something good, and also a soft encouragement to continue doing good. Growing older, it has meant that the labor and love I have put into something has overcome institutional racism and sexism that constantly aim to make my success impossible.

Equally as important as these two meanings, it means that I made my father, my mother, and much of my enormous family proud. That is why I do what I do. Everything I have ever done in academia and in life has been to hear those words. At this point, they mean so much to me that sometimes I have to nudge my dad and say, “Hey...ganamos, pa”. To which he responds with a grin, “Si, mijita, ganamos.”

The endless support and love behind these words have made this piece of work possible. However, this research also required the thoughtful guidance from my thesis committee, selfless help from my practicum supervisor, as well as the caring support from multiple instructors, social service providers, and infinitely beloved friends. My successes are not my own—they belong to the village of people lifting me up to make them possible.

The last people I must acknowledge are the 8 voices who I hope have found light in the pages of this study. They were not only gracious enough to allow me into their lives and hearts, but they provided me (us) with the answers necessary to ethically work alongside Mexican immigrant populations in the national climate we find ourselves in. My aim with this work was to elevate their already powerful voices and that my own Mexican immigration family members may find themselves in their words.

Introduction

The history of immigration to the United States has long been a politicized conversation largely dictated by the goals of its executive administration. At various times in this nation's history, different groups of people have been the target of exclusionary policies and practices that either keep people out of this country or relegate them to subhuman classes barred from employment, housing, schooling and essential human services. The story of Latin-American migration, and specifically that from Mexico, has gained great national attention under the current administration.

The quote, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best", was said by the current president of the United States as he announced his bid for presidency in 2015. This statement and subsequent actions to increase border security, end programs with immigrant protections, and strengthen the scope of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has had drastic consequences for over 11.6 million Mexican immigrants of any immigration status living in the country today (López & Bialik, 2017). From U.S born or naturalized citizens, to temporary visa holders, to those completely undocumented, the stress of anti-immigrant policy and rhetoric have been proven to cause poor well-being during prior executive administrations (Hacker et. al, 2011; Almeida et. al, 2016; Gill, 2010). The purpose of the present research project is to engage with people from a range of immigration statuses to holistically answer the question: How have Mexican immigrants been impacted by policy surrounding immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant sentiment under this presidency?

In the pages of this research, readers will find that Mexican immigrants are burdened with the current state of affairs surrounding immigration, but must still access different systems such as educational institutions, workplaces, and social service organizations. The contribution

of this study is that it considers and examines the broader federal policies that social service organizations operate under and proposes internal policy recommendations that contribute to better interactions and effective service-delivery with this population. This research examines how the existing administration has influenced the emotions, behaviors, and perceptions of a group that has been particularly highlighted by this president. The ultimate goal of this investigation is to amplify voices from this community and share them with social service organizations looking to effectively serve and work alongside them.

Background

Mexican Immigrants in the United States

There are key historical aspects of immigration between the United States and Mexico that are crucial to understanding U.S. policies that exist today. In drawing the southwestern border, the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836 and Gadsden Purchase of 1853 led to the acquisition of former Mexican lands that comprise what is now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. This transition from Mexican to U.S. territory relegated Mexicans who chose to remain on their native lands to a disenfranchised colonized group in newly formed U.S. land (Estrada, Garcia, Macias, & Maldonado, 1981). People chose to remain on these lands with the promise of full U.S. citizenship, autonomous land ownership, and economic stability. However, many ultimately lost their land to Anglo Americans by the start of the 20th century, further displacing them and alienating them within their own borders (Estrada, Garcia, Macias, & Maldonado, 1981). This period of transition and the hostile relationships that resulted have arguably dictated how U.S.-Mexico relations have continued to the present day.

Understanding this marginalization and exploitation of Mexicans during the era of conquest is crucial to understanding the policies that came almost a century later. Landmark legislation also provides an understanding as to how the Mexican immigrant population has grown to the magnitude it is today. It lays the groundwork to understanding the expansive impacts the current administration is making with an anti-immigrant agenda. One piece of legislation central to an analysis of Mexican presence in this nation is the Bracero Program, a 1943 “wartime emergency program” implemented during World War II (Calavita, 1992). While the program was initially a short-term solution to meet agricultural labor needs, it lasted 22 years and recruited five million braceros. Roughly translating into “farmhand”, *braceros* from Mexico were called upon to fill vacant jobs in the agricultural sector when laborers were sent to war. Mexican workers became a “reserve army of labor” that were sent to over 20 states with no control over their duties, wages, or working conditions—making them easily susceptible to exploitation (Garcia, 1980; Mize & Swords 2010). Despite harsh conditions and low wages, there were still tales of abundance and opportunity that braceros found in the U.S. This contributed to a large rise in illegal immigration, an unintended side effect that was coined the “wetback problem”, derogatorily referencing the common journey Mexicans made across the Rio Grande to enter the U.S. This played a large role in creating the rhetoric about Mexican workers who “steal jobs” that we hear to this day (Calavita, 1992).

In an effort to curtail the numbers of Mexican nationals coming to the U.S. in the 1950s, Operation Wetback was set in motion. This 1954 action aimed to resolve the looming “wetback problem” of the time by way of a large-scale deportation measure (Garcia, 1980). Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)—the agency responsible for immigration enforcement before ICE—succeeded in deporting over one million undocumented workers to Mexico and instilling

fear in Mexicans both in the U.S. and those with hopes to cross the border. However, the measure proved to be fundamentally rooted in saving face with U.S. citizens instead of truly addressing concerns of supposed less job availability in the agricultural sector. Given that agricultural employers had grown accustomed to paying low wages and ignoring working conditions on their sites, they demanded a continued flow of Mexican workers, forcing the INS to “legalize” formerly deported workers to meet their demands (Garcia, 1980). This back and forth created what some scholars refer to as the “revolving door” of Mexican migration to the United States, where employers had the option of taking an influx of workers when needed and sending them back when they were no longer useful (Avi, 2009).

Additionally, policies that reached both Mexican immigrants and those from other regions of the world were the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The common stereotype of the Mexican laborer in agricultural fields continued into the late 20th century and expanded to other Latin American immigrants through the IRCA (Simmons, 1991). On face value, the act was a great opportunity for many undocumented immigrants—both from Latin America and other regions—in that it was the single largest amnesty program in U.S. history (Pan, 2007). Amnesty in this context was the permission to acquire temporary legal status, followed by permanent legal residency, and eventually U.S. citizenship if the person satisfied several requirements (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2016). Of the 3 million people who applied for legal status under the IRCA, an estimated 2.7 million were eventually granted legal permanent residency by 2001 (Rytina, 2002). Despite the general positive effects of the IRCA for those who qualified, it had—arguably intentional—side effects such as overall lower wages for newly legalized workers (Bansak, 2005). Many congress people of the time highlighted that the true

intention behind this legislation was, as Texas Rep. Henry Gonzalez stated, simply a guarantee that U.S. employers who wanted to exploit foreign labor could continue to do so without consequence (Congressional Record, 1986). The IRCA also increased immigration enforcement efforts that led to a total of \$219 billion in spending by 2012 (Meissner et. al, 2013).

When considering more recent policies concerning immigration, one cannot overlook the progress made by the Obama administration. Having won 67% and 71% of the Latino vote in 2008 and 2012 respectively, some have argued that this president was put in his seat by Latinx¹ voters (Lopez & Taylor, 2012). Although his administration controversially deported more immigrants than any other in history (Street, Zepeda-Millan, & Jones-Correa, 2015), hope came for some through the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program known as DACA. It established a two-year work permit and relief from deportation for undocumented immigrants (largely youth) who immigrated before the age of 16, who had continuously resided in the U.S. since 2007, who were students or veterans, who had not committed a felony or significant misdemeanor, who were under the age of 30, and who had access to over \$450 for application fees (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016). The passage of DACA, while also only a partial win for the immigrant and specifically Mexican community (who make up over 70% of recipients), similarly communicated a value of some immigrants over others shown in the many and costly requirements DACA protections required (Lopez & Krogstad, 2017).

Existing Research on Anti-Immigrant Sentiment & Enforcement

Both the history of immigrant policy and the resulting rhetoric has inspired scholars to investigate how immigrants have been affected. In 2011, researchers in Everett, MA conducted

¹ The term Latinx is used throughout the report as a gender neutral term to be inclusive of all genders

Community Based Participatory Research with various immigrant focus groups. The groups revealed that emotional health and access to health care were negatively affected by ICE activity in their communities given that ICE presence promoted fear and extreme caution during daily outings (Hacker et. al., 2011). Another study utilized a national representative sample of Latinx adults that found poor well-being and perception of more intense discrimination in an environment with more anti-immigrant policies and immigration enforcement (Almeida et. al., 2016). Higher immigration enforcement activity from 2006-2010 was also found to negatively affect the well-being of Latinx populations in North Carolina (Gill, 2010). The Pew Research Center (2017) found that the current executive administration has led 41% of Latinx communities to have very serious concerns about their place in this country. The same report found up to 66% of U.S. born Latinx citizens are worried about deportations under this presidency (Pew, 2017).

Another concerning and powerful impact of immigration policy is the effects it has had on U.S. citizens. The children of Latinx immigrants, for example, have been found to experience dramatic impacts from immigration policies. In 2010, it was estimated that 5.5 million Latinx children in the U.S. (with at least 75% who are citizens themselves) have at least one undocumented parent (Chaudry et al., 2010). “Material impacts” on children of immigrants include economic insecurity, educational barriers, discrimination, and loss of a parent(s) or other relatives to deportation (Androff, et al., 2011). “Emotional impacts” include higher levels of stress, poorer school functioning, a sense of responsibility to protect their parents, hypervigilance, and symptoms of depression (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Rubio-Hernandez & Ayón, 2016). This further exhibits how the impacts of immigration policy reach more than people

directly addressed under these pieces of legislation. They have the power to have ripple effects on larger numbers of U.S. residents.

The 45th U.S. Presidency: Policies & Practices

The current presidency's intention to drastically change immigration legislation began during the campaign season for the 2016 presidential elections. These intentions became a reality starting only a week after the inauguration with the introduction of Executive Order (EO) 13769: "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States". This EO was signed on January 27, 2017 and quickly became known as the "Muslim Travel Ban" as it barred entry for and promoted extreme vetting of those traveling from many Muslim-majority countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Exec. Order No. 13769, 2017). While this EO and its subsequent different versions that aimed to suspend refugee resettlement and reduce the number of refugee admissions (Exec. Order No. 13780, 2017) targeted nationals from African and Middle Eastern countries, the sentiment it communicated against immigrants in general was clear: people from certain countries will be met with extreme policy measures aimed to ensure their eventual deportation. Subsequent Executive Orders that promoted this sentiment include this administration's orders to increase visa screenings, reinstate interview requirements for applicants, longer administrative processing, and more employment-based green card interviews (American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2018).

A policy reversal of this administration that did not target Mexican immigrants, but further solidified its dedicated action against immigrant communities was the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in January of 2018. This had implications for over 400,000 people from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, and Honduras. According to a report by the

American Immigration Council in 2017, the end of this program would mean the end of humanitarian protection initially offered to people from countries experiencing dangerous conflict or devastating natural disasters. Similar to the expansive impacts of DACA discussed below, ending TPS has had serious implications for the families, loved ones, and professional ties of TPS beneficiaries as many have resided and built lives in the U.S. for over 20 years (American Immigration Council, 2017).

In addition to the policies detailed above, the current administration has introduced changes that affect Mexican immigrants specifically. Since the president's election, concern about the fate of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) began almost instantly. On September 5, 2017, the administration announced ending DACA for over 690,000 enrolled beneficiaries (Lopez & Krogstad, 2017). This announcement included an end to accepting new applications, a one-month window to renew applications for those whose status expired before March 5, 2018, and no option for renewal for those whose status ended after the March cutoff (American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2018). Of this DACA recipient pool last September, 79.4% were of Mexican origin (Lopez & Krogstad, 2017). This quantifies the great impact that this policy decision has had on hundreds of thousands of young Mexican immigrants, the families and loved ones they help support, and the many employers or academic institutions that have invested in their growth (American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2018).

Understanding the impacts that this administration has had on Mexican immigrants also requires knowing how many people have been subjected to arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The number of immigration-related arrests has grown under this presidency. The administration accomplished its campaign promise of removing immigrants early on as ICE made 37% more immigration arrests in the first 100 days of 2017 when compared to that of 2016

(U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2017a). Additionally, in September of 2017, ICE conducted the nationwide four-day “Operation Safe City” that arrested 450 undocumented immigrants (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2017b).

Community Response

Both the formal policies introduced by this administration and the sentiment it has emboldened has led to several impacts on the nation’s immigration trends. In 2017 alone, the U.S. saw a decrease in H-1B petitions for the first time in 5 years, international undergraduate student enrollment fell 4%, international graduate student enrollment fell 6%, and there were 2.3 million fewer international visitors in the first 3 quarters of 2017 (American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2018).

This administration has additionally inspired quick and on-going actions by community-based and legal organizations, as well as state and city jurisdictions. All along the West Coast, where participants of the present research reside, have seen community responses that include Know Your Rights workshops for immigrants and organizations that serve them, City-funded legal aid, emergency/financial planning help, local police statements, and DACA renewal help/scholarships. Washington state has even responded with a collective of immigrants’ rights organizations coming together to form the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network that promotes constant and accurate communication about ICE activity and other advocacy efforts.

Method

Conceptual Framework

The social construction of “citizen” and “immigrant” is one that has long plagued the U.S. and its social services. By taking a deeper look into immigration policies that dictate who is

allowed in this country, one can then understand the tension in social work of who is *deserving* or *undeserving* of being an accepted member of U.S. society. Going back to the Progressive Era of the late 1800s and early 1900s, social workers such as Jane Addams simultaneously viewed immigrant groups in deep need of attention, but also as a “vexed problem” (Addams, 1909). This historical interaction between social workers and immigrants was thus riddled with claims to advocate, but in a way that preserved deeply entrenched prejudice and stereotypes. Immigrants were kept as inherently alien until assimilated to the “American ways of life” (Park & Kemp, 2006). Categorizing someone as an immigrant, especially a Mexican immigrant given this nation’s hostile history, questions if they are a worthy, protected citizen or an unworthy, unauthorized foreigner. This issue is discussed all throughout the interviews below and is the foundation of the themes participants focus on.

It is hypothesized in this study that participants will share feelings of not-belonging and great fear of events that could take place under this administration. This study also hypothesizes that participants cope with ongoing and negative changes in policy by turning to distractions as a way to maintain calm. These hypotheses are partly inspired by Policy Feedback Theory (PFT), which informed both the construction of interview questions and the method of analysis in this study. PFT has previously been used for investigations on anti-immigrant policy impacts (Almeida et al., 2016), and the theory posits that one’s perceptions of themselves and their relationships with government and individual people in society are influenced by social policy that impacts them (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Given that both interview questions and resulting discussions often referenced participants feelings of holding a vulnerable, targeted role in this country, this theory provides an appropriate framework for analysis.

Participants

This research was only possible due to the contributions of 8 participants who shared their stories and perspectives on how federal policies and popular sentiment have affected their lives as Mexican immigrants. Descriptors of participants can be found below in Table 1. As a summary, most participants immigrated to and currently live in urban cities on the West Coast. Each one was from a different part of Mexico, were between the ages of 28 and 43, and immigrated between 1990 and 2007. Of the 3 women and 5 men interviewed, everyone was employed, two were going to college, and six had at least some college education. Participants largely arrived in West and Southwestern states of Washington, Arizona, Texas, and California upon first entering the U.S. with the exception of two. One arrived in Alaska, while another briefly arrived in Pennsylvania. Everyone had immediate or extended immigrant family members in the state they reside, 6 were married or engaged, and 4 have children all born in the U.S.

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

| <u>Pseudonym</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Immigrated</u> | <u>Work Sector</u> | <u>Level of Education</u> |
|------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Eduardo | 35 | Man | Late 90s | Social Service | Some college |
| Esmi | 40 | Woman | Late 90s | Education | Master's Degree |
| Rita | 41 | Woman | Early 2000s | Food Services | Some college |
| Patrick | 28 | Man | Mid 90s | Social Service | Bachelor's Degree |
| Paola | 43 | Woman | Early 90s | Social Service | Some high school |
| Carlos | 34 | Man | Late 90s | Education | Some college |
| Mario | 30 | Man | Mid 2000s | Construction | High school diploma |
| Roberto | 35 | Man | Late 90s | Business | Bachelor's Degree |

Procedure & Analysis

For recruitment, a page-long document was created that described the details of the thesis, the requirements for participation, and what volunteers should expect as part of their

participation (Appendix A). It was also translated into Spanish by the primary researcher to provide room for those with limited or no experience speaking English or who simply preferred Spanish (Appendix B). A more concise, appealing flyer was created in English in Spanish to post in organizations trusted by Mexican-American and immigrant communities (Appendix C, Appendix D). These recruitment documents were sent to trusted professors, supervisors, and colleagues with the intent to connect with potential participants known in the community. Participants contacted the researcher by phone or email initially, and a phone call was always made to confirm the interested person's eligibility, and to determine an appropriate time and place for the interview. Each participant completed an in-depth, semi structured interview. In-person interviews took place in a public but quiet setting, such as a library or coffee shop. Once participants were guided through a detailed consent form (Appendix E), they were asked to sign the form and then given a copy for their reference. After the interviews, each interviewee was sent a follow up "Thank You" phone message and a reminder about the researcher's availability to find an appropriate mental health counseling resource should they be interested in discussing interview topics further. By the end of May 2018, no one had contacted the researcher to request a search for a mental health resource. Each of the documents mentioned above was reviewed and approved by the IRB in September 2017.

A modification of each document was sent to and approved by IRB in March 2018 to change the parameters of participation from solely naturalized citizens to anyone from any immigration status. This modification was made after the realization that confining participation to citizens would miss an important perspective from the Mexican immigrant population and perpetuate a system that excludes and silences undocumented immigrants. A recommendation from the IRB was to refrain from asking participants of their immigration status in order to

maintain the effort to protect any participants vulnerable to detainment or deportation. Because of this, no person who contacted the researcher after the modification was asked about immigration status. Any discussion surrounding status only came up if a participant referenced it in their answers naturally.

Three interested participants were turned away due to the fact that they were first generation citizens. One participant backed out after an emergency and was not interested in rescheduling. Interviews were scheduled between February and May of 2018. Two interviews were conducted over the phone and, while each participant was fluent in English, two interviews were conducted in Spanish. They lasted between 35 to 55 minutes and were guided by an IRB approved interview protocol (Appendix F, Appendix G). Transcriptions were completed manually and then coded for preliminary themes in Excel. After going through each interview once, the researcher created a code list and analyzed each transcript guided by this list in Dedoose qualitative software.

Results

The analysis revealed many strong sentiments that policies concerning immigrants—specifically from Mexico—have created a unique landscape for people of this community. The following themes are what stood out as most important to those interviewed given the level of depth they shared on these specific topics. There did not appear to be any stark differences in responses depending on the participant's gender, age, or recency of immigration status, which means that there was a mix of people who agreed to the themes depicted below. However, as the reader will see in the discussion of the first theme, it seems that having a profession with closer

proximity to immigrant groups may have an influencing factor on methods of coping under this administration.

Overall, the details of these themes may, at times, seem contradictory; however, the complex nature of participants' emotions and behaviors may be the most accurate representation of the precariousness and uncertainty many Mexican immigrants feel under this administration.

Coping: Facing the Challenge

The ever-changing landscape of immigration policy under this presidency has led to constant updates and common confusion about where immigrants stand in this country. Exact coping responses varied for each participant, however, four identified their desire to keep as informed as possible on immigration changes. When asked about whether he pays attention to politics Mario, a 30 year-old man who immigrated in the mid 2000s, shared his newfound desire to stay informed as a way to feel “better” about the situation. He disclosed:

“Only with this administration! You have to be paying close attention. My coworkers, my family, my Latino community, we’re all paying close attention. That’s what—well, it makes us more stressed, but also feel better, you know?”

Eduardo, a 35 year-old man who immigrated in the 90s, similarly stated his need to stay up to date given his concerns about the fate of DACA. He shared that he turns to both news outlets and community organizers who are more knowledgeable and involved in the policy and processes:

“At this moment, because it does affect me personally, I try to stay as informed as much as possible...for my sanity, to feel at ease and updated, I want to make sure that I know at least up to date information.”

In addition to keeping informed for his personal reasons, Eduardo also works in a social service organization where part of his duties are to interact with and serve people who are likely to be

affected by immigration policy changes. In this way, staying informed also entails his responsibility of spreading reliable knowledge and attempting to create welcoming community amongst the immigrant communities he works with. Eduardo shared his recent desire to be as open as possible in order to find community by sharing more about himself and his story:

“You know, just disclosing information, I don’t know if this is going to affect me in a good or bad way. I’m always very conscious of what’s gonna happen. But I get through social media, I see groups speaking up about how this is our reality. So, I say, yeah, this is my reality and if people are not aware of that, we aren’t going to see any sort of impact, we are not going to see any sort of change. I’m constantly encouraging myself to be very upfront and share my experience with people. Again, it’s very unpredictable because I’m not sure about the information and who I’m sharing it with if they’re going to be culturally sensitive or sensitive to immigration. But, I mean, it’s part of my identity at this moment, it’s part of who I am. I want to make sure people understand it.”

Esmi is a 40 year-old woman who immigrated in the late 90s and shared a similar desire to provide information specifically for the college students she works with. She also introduced the idea of privilege and how the experiences she has been afforded put her in a place where she has the responsibility to be involved and knowledgeable. She shared:

“It is part of my job to be informed about politics, it is part of my job to be aware of what is happening. Although this isn’t about me, understanding that I have had privilege to enter into this university, it is my responsibility to understand what has happened in this country around immigration. So, I talk about all of this in my work and in my classes.”

Paola, a 43 year-old woman who immigrated in the early 90s, also discussed the feeling of responsibility. She, too, works in a social service organization where she often interacts with mixed-status² families and she shared her need to take action against the policies this administration is proposing and implementing. She stated:

² “Mixed-status” is used to refer to families where there is at least one relative in the household is undocumented or holds a temporary visa or status in the country

“It depends on us...I understand how politics works a little bit, we have to learn that we have a huge responsibility. We have to make sure that happens, we have to speak up, we have to be better determined to speak up and ask for what we want. Nobody will do it for us if we don't do it. A lot of people think that because we have this president he will do this for us or that for us but no. They can't read our minds, [they] will never move if we don't pressure them.”

The four participants quoted above, with the exception of Mario who works in construction, have a professional responsibility to stay informed on the ever-evolving state of immigration policy under the Trump administration. It is likely that their professions influence how they find calm and peace living in this political environment, given that the four remaining participants—only one of which worked in social services—preferred to turn to activities that helped distract them from the constant influx of anti-immigrant sentiment and policy. These activities included writing, physical exercise, and intentionally avoiding all immigration-related events, protests, or community groups. Reasons behind turning to these activities were similar to those stated above in that finding ways to avoid immigration policy allowed people to feel more calm and at ease, which highlights an important complexity amongst Mexican immigrants. Different people, depending on either personal or professional reasons, may not have the same interest or emotional capacity to keep up with policy that threatens their safety or that of their loved ones.

Unique Forms of Vulnerability

All eight participants cited mistrust of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and most felt local police should not be trusted for the fear that they could they be affiliated with ICE. A sentiment shared by all participants was that although they had always known of and/or experienced the unwelcoming policies and environment that the U.S. places on immigrants from

certain countries, the actions of the current administration has reached them in a way that they had not experienced before. This is not to say that feelings of vulnerability are new, but certainly that the pace and intensity of anti-immigrant sentiment this administration promotes is very specific.

For example, when Eduardo was asked about his feelings toward politicians under this administration, he shared that even though he has lived in the U.S. for over 20 years, recent developments have led him to seriously question his place in this country:

“In the last few months, I’ve been stressing a lot. You know, there was the whole DACA issue and my case was pending. I was just trying to maintain my job and trying to stay in school. I heard that so many things that were coming up, so many changes. It was very concerning. There was points when I was like, ‘You know what, I just want to give up. I just want to go back to Mexico.’”

Esmi shared that her aunt achieved permanent residency status years ago and has only recently begun to consider obtaining citizenship due to fear of being unable to in the future:

“I don’t think she would want to, but now she is thinking about [applying for citizenship] because we’re seeing everything that’s happening [under] Donald Trump’s administration and hearing about how he’s taking away permanent residencies from people. So, we don’t know what they’re going to do with that list of people. Perhaps, all of that will convince her to get [citizenship].”

Given what Esmi shared above, it became clear that the importance of sharing reliable and accurate knowledge is also an important concern for people in this community. Esmi shared that this administration’s recent actions have led people like her aunt and others in her family to believe that it may threaten the residencies of immigrants who have already acquired it—a sense of urgency that Esmi’s aunt did not feel before this administration.

Rita is a 41 year-old woman who immigrated in the early 2000s and she introduced a distinction between those in her community that are more integrated into U.S. systems, such as education, versus the vulnerability that everyday workers feel. She shared:

“There's people like my friend that is a student and his brother that say, 'I am illegal, and I don't care and I'm gonna study and I'm undocumented.' So, you have those types of people, but those are people that are in school. There is a huge difference between those people and people that are just workers, like me. I think we just keep working and keep quiet. Like I told you, even my aunt is afraid to go look for a job even before 2011 because of all the deportations. Now imagine knowing all those things and really looking at [how] Trump is committed to carry out what he has said.”

Rita acknowledges that immigration enforcement and deportations have long affected people in her communities, however, seeing the actions carried out by this presidency has severely added to the fear that people like her aunt, who are not largely assimilated into U.S. dominant culture, feel under this administration. Carlos, 34 year-old man who immigrated in the late 90s, is a college student himself and he shared the same sentiment as Rita about the differences in subgroups of immigrants. He shared:

“I knew that the policies were either going to get worse or good, or they were going to get good for people like me who have a chance and that I have some privilege to be able to go to school, being smart, being able to navigate society, and not be like one of my aunts or like people with different levels of education that cannot work or that are just getting by... I knew that it was going to get worse for those people and I worry because most of those people are those that don't want to mix into the main culture of America. [Not assimilating] should be fine, that's the whole point of diversity, but now because certain people live that way they have been made targets.”

Both Rita and Carlos highlight another way that Mexican immigrants are not a homogenous group. There are some who are knowledgeable about and integrated into certain systems that better prepare them to defend themselves, to avoid ICE interactions, or to navigate different systems and situations.

While participants reported varying levels of feeling unsafe, some shared the sentiment that their vulnerability was also connected to what they saw in the people around them. For instance, Rita further discussed how this feeling of direct and imminent threat has led to behavioral changes for the people she manages at work:

“My workers, my employees—when Donald Trump came into the presidency and they knew that, everybody freaked out. And I'm talking about my core dishwashers that were illegal...they were really freaked out. They wanted to leave to Mexico right there and then. The only thing is that they are more cautious about driving. They don't want to drive. They don't want to make a mistake. Now they live in that fear.”

Carlos added that he has also seen behavioral changes in his community. When describing these changes, he shared:

“What I have noticed especially since Trump [was elected] is the fact that all the Latinos that I see, I quickly try to speak Spanish to them and they don't [respond in Spanish]. I go to a taqueria, I am open to speak in very slang Spanish when I see somebody like me, but people shy away. Now I think they don't feel pride, I think they think they can't appear to be who they are because somebody is going to be watching. So yes, I see people scared. I see people that once responded in Spanish that now don't. And I don't blame them. Yes, people are definitely scared and you can see it in their faces.”

Patrick is a 28 year-old man who immigrated in the late 90s, and he similarly shared immense concern for his loved ones and community under this administration in particular:

“[After the election] people were really frantic and panicking because you didn't know what to expect, right? You just heard the threats from his campaign trail, to then having the power to wield a multibillion dollar agency [ICE] that we see now has gone rogue. They've ignored the priority list they had created [to prioritize deportation of immigrants with criminals records] to now taking away folks who are not dangerous to society. So, it's a lot of tough times right now. There's a lot of pain in the community, a lot of uncertainty, a lot of anxiety. A lot of people have mental health issues because they don't know what their future looks like. Consistently, right? Long term. It's not a fast thing. We've been through hell for months and it doesn't seem like it's getting any better, it actually getting close to us folks in places that are deemed sanctuary.”

Patrick's final thoughts on the safety of immigrant and other vulnerable communities discussed a range of consequences from this government in the year and a half it has been in power:

"I feel like my existence is a threat to this government. My existence and presence is a threat to this government, that's how I feel. I definitely don't feel welcome by this government and I feel like its state-sanctioned repression, what immigrants are going through, what black folks are going through, what LGBTQ folks are going through, what women are going through. There is serious suffering...[I] definitely don't feel welcome. I have to be more vigilant in my surroundings because I don't know what fanatics are out there of the administration and its views. They normalize it: hatred, racism, and scapegoat it. I'm one of the people that [feel] I have to be ready or have to be watchful, concerned, and careful. In work, at home, and in public spaces."

Similar to the ways that Patrick considers the impact on his family and greater community, Roberto's perceptions of vulnerability stem from the conditions that he sees his family is burdened with by living in area with perceived higher animosity towards immigrants. He is a 35 year-old man who immigrated in the late 90s and he shared:

"Sure enough, one day I went to go see my mom and I stopped at a gas station in [city] on a Monday afternoon, and I saw ICE trucks just waiting for people from the landscaping industry to pull up and start questioning them...Mexican people avoid going out in those places now because they know that [ICE is] constantly harassing people given the way that they look. Even if you have documents—if you look the part, yeah...so there is definitely fear. I know of stories where entire factories send just one person with documents to fill up all the trucks for the company at the gas station so the rest of them don't have to stop. It's pretty sad."

The feelings of vulnerability ranged for the participants, but they still often involved behavioral changes and emotional consequences for either themselves or for others from their community. However, some also disclosed the impacts they have seen on non-immigrants, as well.

Ripple Effects

While the intent of this administration's immigration policies is clear in its aim to address perceived issues with immigrant populations, interviewees shared their perceptions of how U.S.

citizens are affected by recent political action and rhetoric. For example, Rita shared that she personally feels safe in her immediate community, but she has witnessed the impact on others and their mixed-status families. Below she discusses how she felt about the administration's decision to repeal DACA immediately for those whose applications ended on or before March 5th, 2018:

“People are going to start losing status like crazy. And [Trump] is not being held accountable for those families because—yes, he wants to secure the borders, but what is he thinking by not giving [immigrants] this [DACA] status? What is that going to change? So, personally, no, I haven't felt threatened, but still, when there is pressure for one group, you still feel it regardless because he is messing with households of a lot of people that aren't even immigrants or were born here.”

Esmi continued this sentiment by sharing her personal worries about the future of this administration. She discussed the uncertainty that it has created even amongst those in her life who are naturalized citizens. When asked if political action against immigrants has affected her, she responded:

“I think so, yes. It's more that it has created a feeling of desolation. You hear the news, you hear about so many things that are happening, families are being destroyed. As I watch the news, and even though I know that I am not at risk and my family is not at risk, there is a part of me that feels that could change at any moment. Nothing is impossible here in the United States. And, of course, it affects me to see the images of children from the generation that were born here that are crying. So, yes, it affects me, I feel hopeless. We have to ride this wave of terror. It's a feeling that I haven't experienced before.”

Paola touched on important consequences for citizen children of immigrants, as well, and how entire families have shifted their lifestyles for fear of being tracked and detained. She stated:

“Sometimes if [families] hear that ICE is going to be in the schools, they don't send their kids to the school even if their kids are born here because they say that they will follow the kids to their house and then they will find the parents. They don't go out like they did before.”

She went on to describe how her community has heard of many instances where immigration officials have executed tactics like the one she mentioned above, and that there is the constant possibility of having ICE show up at a place unexpectedly. Paola referenced media outlets as responsible for making some feel more anxious, and she feels that they unnecessarily create these consequences for citizen children or even keep people from pursuing their citizenship as she describes below:

“[The media] is scaring a lot of people, but I see families where parents are residents, kids are citizens, but now [the parents] are hesitating to become citizens, they don't know if they will allow them to be a citizen because of all the news they're watching or because of what people are saying.”

Paola introduces the feeling of mistrust and how her mistrust of the media may contribute to feelings of vulnerability. Below, others describe how mistrust of local police enforcement and immigration enforcement have also contributed to feelings of vulnerability.

Trust

Trusting police or ICE less under this administration was a topic that came up frequently during interviews. However, while the majority of conversations surrounding police enforcement involved fear and mistrust, Eduardo revealed an interesting and seemingly productive police-community relationship. When asked about whether his opinion of local police enforcement has worsened under this administration he stated:

“No, actually... I know that [local police] are well involved—at least my city's police department—with the Muslim community. They also understand issues that are happening with the African-American population. They're also very sensitive about immigration issues. I know that the police chief addressed the community. He said, 'Don't be afraid, if there's violence we'll make sure not to call ICE. Make sure to report incidents if you're in danger.' Part of my role is to share that with the community that I work with.”

The remaining conversations; however, did not yield the same positive outlook. When asked about his feelings of the local police department, Carlos shared:

“Even when, you know, you go out and have drinks with your friend and you walk around from bar to bar, I don't feel safe that way because God forbid I get too drunk and I'm targeted for that. I don't have a chance to even do that, to just be human. I actually, in fact, every time I see a cop, my heart stops and I just walk away. And I didn't realize that's how it was, but every time I walk around here, there's always cops and I think they're looking at me. That's pretty paranoid...I feel like they can come take me at any time.”

Carlos goes on to detail both the new fear he has towards police and ICE officials:

“Under this president, yes I cannot trust them. Now [Trump] has made those officers who are intolerant and racist—you can't say that all policemen are, some are more open-minded—but [Trump] has told some that now they can be hateful. Now [police] can use [their] power to ruin somebody's life and that's terrifying. But yes, this president has definitely made police and ICE the power to be a destructive force in society and he's made it okay for them to voice their own individual hatefulness.”

Particularly when considering the presence and magnification of ICE's power, Carlos, considers ICE “soul-less”. Patrick shares a similar sentiment as he described his ongoing disdain for the organization and how it is different under this presidency. He stated:

“Yeah, no, I've never had trust for that agency. It hasn't changed. I just feel like, before there was at least some parameters they were forced to follow, some ethics, and that's gone.”

The “parameters” Patrick mentioned were part of a guide the immigration officials followed in order to prioritize detainment and deportation based on the perceived danger of an individual due to their criminal background (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2015). Patrick went on to share:

“One of my uncles was deported in 2008. So, it's just like, ‘Well, what are you doing about families like this?’. And this was before trying to stop deportations of people who didn't have any criminal records other than being in the country without status. My uncle left with his two daughters, U.S. citizen daughters, and my aunt and they've been living in [Tijuana]. My uncle was the tip of the iceberg in terms of what ended up happening during

Obama administration. He rolled out a massive deportation machine that, 8 years later, Trump inherits and he means business. He means to do even worse than what the Obama administration was doing where the Obama administration was at least able to convince [ICE] and say, 'Hey, can you not do indiscriminate detentions and deportations?' Hence the priorities, the criteria and all that stuff, but that's long gone after this administration."

Mistrust of local and federal enforcement among these participants was very specific as they considered their experiences and emotions under this administration in particular. However, discussion continued with how this unsafe environment for Mexican immigrants has existed under past administrations and their actions/policies, as well.

Continued Attacks on Immigrants

Despite heightened anxiety and new types of vulnerability, all but one participant stressed that anti-immigrant enforcement and rhetoric are not new phenomenon introduced by the Trump administration. One woman stated being resentful of media that make it seem as if attacks on immigrant populations are solely a result of this administration. Others referenced losing loved ones to deportation under past administrations and highlighted that the situation for immigrants has long been precarious. Additionally, participants felt that promoting the idea that these attacks are new disregards the painful history that the U.S. government has had with Mexican immigrants. Mario combined his opinion about the continued attacks on immigrant groups with his priority of creating community and friendship as a way to get through it. He shared:

"I always surround myself with Mexicans. I'm comfortable and understood with them, with my community, so, yeah I've known people who have changed their behaviors [under this presidency], but I also know and identify with Mexicans who are moving forward with their lives because for a lot of us, there hasn't been a lot of change. Except for DACA, of course, but we didn't qualify for that anyway and anti-immigration has always existed, so, there you go. We all know Donald Trump is crazy, but he didn't introduce all this on his own. He's following history."

Roberto moved to the U.S. at the end of the Clinton administration, but had more vivid memories and opinions about the Bush era. When asked what he remembers about that presidency, he discussed the events of 9/11, the creation of ICE, and how the current presidency has built upon it. He continued:

“The [Bush administration] was the beginning of the end, in my opinion, when it comes to Mexican migration to the U.S. But, well, it’s terrible now with this [Trump administration]. I feel like this is a country that I didn’t know existed, or didn’t want to know existed. At the same time, you have to keep in mind America’s little secret: this has been a racist society. People say about immigrants, ‘I’m not racist, [undocumented immigrants] are breaking the law’, and all these dumb arguments...[Trump] appealed to that segment of the population—he made a bunch of people feel comfortable with racist remarks. That is the only reason he won the presidency...[overt] racism was just dormant and he just brought it to life.”

Esmi also disclosed her opinion that the current administration resonated with and emboldened ideals that this country already held. She stated:

“Under Trump, well, the world thought that it wasn’t going to happen. At the beginning, I laughed about it too. But as time passed, he began to empower what has always existed, the racial hatred in the history of the United States. In my personal perspective, he knew how to reach the people of the United States... So, that has to do with how this rhetoric gained so much power and support from the people—because it has always been there.”

She went on to share what she personally witnessed under the Bush administration and how that administration’s anti-immigrant policies affected her community. When asked about whether her views on immigration enforcement have changed she disclosed:

“No, it hasn’t changed. Having worked in this community, I know how [ICE] carries themselves. Actually, I would say that it is very similar to how things were at the end of Bush’s first term, in 2004. During that time, we began to hear about roundups. You would hear about roundups on a national level. You would hear about roundups that are typical every 2 or 3 years to instill fear in the people and keep them under control and from fighting for their rights. So, I do remember...things were happening then that were very similar to things that are happening now. In this moment, there are a lot of people who don’t want to leave their homes. That also happened in 2004 under Bush. People would not leave their homes. There were people who would come to

the center where I worked serving low income people and the people who were willing and able to go out to buy groceries, for example, would buy groceries for their neighbors who did not want to leave their homes.”

Eduardo shared his disappointment with the Obama administration in particular, a topic that resonated with many participants. He shared:

“I kind of knew or thought [Obama] being a person of color, would be more supportive of immigration issues—and this was a common conversation with my family and a lot of friends—you know, we were very hopeful. We believed that there was gonna be some sort of general amnesty to fix a lot of immigration. Now, after his term we realize that during his administration... the deportation of immigrants was even worse. It was really discouraging to see that part.”

Patrick shared his experiences witnessing the anti-immigrant sentiment under the Obama and Bush administrations, and how they affected immigrant groups in general:

“Obama took office during the recession, the housing bubble burst, I was only 17 or 18 at the time, and I witnessed the nasty side of the country in their anti-immigrant sentiment...before that, in 2001, I was in middle school during 9/11 and that was a really intense time afterward with a wave of anti-immigrant and anti-Middle Eastern stuff. Even people who just ‘looked’ Middle Eastern. The country showed its nasty side at that time and I started connecting dots there.”

Paola agreed that living in fear and changing behaviors in order to avoid detainment are not recent developments for immigrant communities. However, she detailed her experiences of even being targeted by naturalized citizens from Latin America:

“At [the time I arrived to the U.S.], I didn't like Bush because living in Houston, it was really bad. I really liked the place, but when Bush became president, even the Latino community, the people who had legal status began to oppress us because they didn't want more immigrants here because that's why they [thought they] weren't treated equal. So, it was my first bad experience living here in the US. I thought, ‘Oh my gosh, living in the U.S., culture doesn't matter if your culture doesn't support you.’ In that time, I remember my husband told me I had to drive carefully, that I couldn't get a ticket, I couldn't be involved in anything that could harm our family because we were under a Republican. So, I did see a difference from Clinton to Bush, but we survived. So, when Obama was elected, I felt hope. I felt like it was

going to be a better environment and it was, but... I feel [the Obama administration] don't really do much for us."

She went on to disclose that her husband and father to her three children was deported in 2016. After opening up about her experience with immigration enforcement that day and the resulting impact it has had on herself and her children, she detailed her anger at the media's portrayal of deportations as something new under the Trump administration. She disclosed:

"The media twists the way that reality is because now everybody is saying [deportation and arrests are] because of this administration and I'm like, 'Wait a minute. That's not true, don't say that because it's not true.' And that's not because I support this administration, but because I have a way to prove that it has existed before. I'm living that situation. So, I don't like it. It is important to find a way to motivate the people to be more active, be more informed, and advocate for themselves and their families. But I also don't like when the media is taking advantage of something to get the benefits, to sell headlines...For me, if I'm honest, this is a benefit [of the Trump administration] because people are more ready to take action. This is a different administration and he is a dangerous person... I don't support this administration, for sure, but I feel like it's not anything new."

Discussion

The experiences, opinions, and worries from the 8 participants of this study open a window into the thought processes of an important group of people under the current presidency. Their thoughtful and open responses yield the answers to questions that people who engage with and work alongside this community should be aware of.

In any social service, advocacy, mental health, or general community based organization, it must be acknowledged that there are important complexities within the community of Mexican immigrants. This became apparent through the differing reactions in relation to how participants respond to and cope with an influx of negative policy changes and antagonism from this presidency. One of the initial hypotheses of this study was that participants would turn to ways of distracting themselves as a form of coping, and it was the general response in four interviews.

This can be understood through Policy Feedback Theory (PFT) in that ignoring governmental action and the political rhetoric it emboldens would be a method of avoiding the negative images created of Mexican immigrants and their impact on this country. PFT posits that further engaging in what this administration is creating and inspiring would mean potentially feeding into and believing the idea that immigrants from Mexico are exactly what historical and current stereotypes have painted them as. Conversely, however, the remaining four participants shared their goal of actively seeking information and spreading it as part of their professional reasonability among immigrant groups. Staying informed and spreading knowledge may be understood as a way of instilling control back into the lives of participants given the new feeling of vulnerability they feel under the tactics and rhetoric of this administration.

While different ways of coping separated this group of participants, the hypothesis of fear and vulnerability was something each person agreed on. The interview protocols themselves included questions about how this administration and its practices have influenced trust, changed behaviors, and the perceived impact on others. The discussion of vulnerability; however, was not confined to these few questions, it was riddled throughout each conversation. The present environment has contributed to making certain spaces, people, and interactions feel unsafe. Participants shared heightened feelings of anxiety and fear of being harassed or otherwise attacked because of their Mexican background. Participants shared a constant and growing fear that, as Patrick stated above: *“It’s not a fast thing. We’ve been through hell for months and it doesn’t seem like it’s getting any better.”* Additionally, there was a clear feeling that participants cannot trust ICE or local police enforcement given that many fear their collaboration with the federal priorities to increase deportations. While not everyone believed that police may help in immigration cases, enough participants stated their mistrust of their police departments to

highlight that police may also contribute to the feeling that this country is holistically against Mexican immigrants.

The last theme was not initially hypothesized by this study, but is not surprising after reflecting on the history of U.S. immigration policy and its effects on people from Mexico. All but one participant shared that while they felt that the tactics of this administration feel unique in their speed and intensity, attacks on immigrant—specifically Mexican—communities are not new experiences. Also referencing PFT, the feeling that the actions from this administration are not necessarily new phenomenon may point to the reality that people feel as though the depiction of Mexican immigrants—whether they believe in it or not—is strong and unchanging in this country. In discussing immigration enforcement and fear of deportations, people often referenced past presidencies, the fear under those administrations, and also their disappointment that this type of action has continued even through administrations that were expected to provide relief.

The resulting feeling that participants are left with after the different presidencies they have endured is that actions against immigrant populations are simply a continuation of U.S. history with Mexican immigrants. However, this communicates a potential feeling of reassurance in that actions against Mexican immigrants are now at the forefront of different forms of media and news. Thus, the negative experiences of being a Mexican immigrant—such as the hateful social/political rhetoric they absorb and the aggressive immigration enforcement that threatens their livelihood—in this country are being brought to light in a way that they had not before. As Paola shared: *“For me, if I'm honest, this is a benefit [of the Trump administration] because people are more ready to take action.”* This sentiment must then be recognized and validated if the individual histories of people like the participants of this study are truly to be addressed in efforts to provide this community with the thoughtful support it deserves.

Limitations & Future Directions

While this study breaks ground in examining the impacts that Mexican immigrants of varying statuses have experienced under this unique administration, the findings of this study are not generalizable to the entire Mexican immigrant community in the U.S. Further research would benefit from pools of participants from different parts of the nation. Given that all interviewees lived in urban, relatively liberal cities, the emotions and behaviors of people in rural places or areas where immigrants are not surrounded by their own communities may look significantly different. Furthermore, this study examines how people are coping with heightened social and political tension in a certain time period, and thus can only inform what practitioners and organizations do now and in the near future. However, providing insight into what is going through the minds of Mexican immigrants in the midst of how many people in their communities are being targeted is the goal of this research, thus it is not intended to be generalizable to people of all backgrounds at any place in time.

Future research should aim to elevate the voices of immigrants from other Latin-American backgrounds and from all over the globe. Simply reflecting on how many groups have been highlighted by the policies under this administration—such as people from the Caribbean, and different African and Middle Eastern countries—shows that the need to serve and work alongside other immigrant groups is crucial at this point in our history. In addition to looking into other immigrant groups, it would be worthy to intentionally reach people from different socioeconomic statuses. While no one in this study was asked about their income, the details they provided about their professions and the relatively high levels of education they attained should encourage researchers to investigate the impacts on people who have fewer financial

resources and thus may need to rely on more community groups, may interact with multiple employers, and may require more diverse social services.

The future of this work with Mexican immigrants would serve great purpose if the reasons behind why people—especially those who have been here for decades, as most participants of this study had been—are so uniquely touched by this administration. Is it that expansive, federal policy is causing more changes locally in their states or municipalities? Is it inflammatory or confusing media coverage? Or is it that the tactics from this administration—such as deporting lawful immigrants or separating families—seem uniquely threatening and demeaning? Whatever the answers may be, feelings of heightened vulnerability for longstanding immigrants may lead to an important understanding that is necessary to fighting against these types of political and social environments.

Implications & Conclusion

The multifaceted worries and emotions participants revealed have many implications for social work and social service practices. The impact of macro-level, federal policies have shown to have very specific daily impacts on people from this community. Given the findings from this study that support this statement, social service organizations may benefit from intentionally creating internal policies that not only remove barriers for Mexican immigrants, but allow them to feel true safety, understanding, and support.

Past legislation, such as Arizona's SB 1070, that alarmingly increased immigration enforcement through state-sanctioned racial profiling, have inspired researchers to investigate the role of social services and social work in the lives of Latinx immigrants. A 2014 study found that Latinx immigrants need services that include educational opportunities, physical and mental healthcare, and efforts to create collective community (Ayón, 2014). This study supports the idea

that the social service sector is called to meet these needs as a way of promoting the tenants of social justice for this community and the many lives they touch.

Given that participants shared how recent political action and rhetoric have led them to feel more unsafe, but want to acknowledge that threats to their community are not new occurrences, community organizations and providers would benefit from intentionally acknowledging these experiences in their service. Providing training to staff to spread this awareness about how Mexican immigrants may be viewing the political landscape and also implementing practices that promote knowledge about legislation could make a great difference for someone struggling with fear and uncertainty.

Internal practices of social service organizations may also benefit from making their intentions and requirements clear. For example, an agency should consider and establish what information—such as immigration status, address, workplace, etc.—they require from their clients and make that known to the community before engaging with them. There should also be an organized and transparent way of storing information that maximizes a client's security and safety from potential harm.

In addition to preparing organizations and staff to work alongside this community, it is worth considering how an organization will build enough trust to attract people of this population. It is not only important, but also very difficult to build trust with this community given that people's lives or loved ones may easily be put at risk of harassment or detainment if trust is given to the wrong person. These high stakes may encourage organizations to hire or consult professionals with lived experiences, such as a few participants of this study. Though the participants who worked with immigrant populations were not asked about how they built trust amongst the immigrant populations they served, four participants working in social services or

education shared how they felt the need to serve their communities effectively after reflecting on their own concerns and worries as an immigrant under this administration. It is possible that their positionality helped bridge a connection between themselves and their clients in a way that may have taken longer or deeper efforts on behalf of someone who was perceived as an outsider.

The long-term experiences of Mexican immigrants who are now living under a proud and determined anti-immigrant government are complex and should be treated as such. The results from this study suggest that people from this background, and even some protected by naturalized or native born citizenship, are frightened in new ways, cope with antagonistic policy and rhetoric differently, and feel as though their place in this country has always been attacked in some way. This is the macro environment that this community finds itself in and it is the responsibility of individuals and organizations to address how these factors prevent clients from participating in programs or initiatives that aim to provide relief. If this understanding is solidified amongst organizations, and if it inspires responsible and welcoming practices within agencies, our social services will be equipped at a baseline for engaging with and working alongside Mexican immigrants.

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Appendix A

Request for Interview Participants

One of the most common stories that we hear about Mexican immigrants within our own Mexican communities is a story of great sacrifice, determination, and perseverance. This study is an attempt to speak with Mexican immigrants during this specific point in time where this story is highlighted in current social and political ways. The aim of this study is to uplift the stories of this group and help the world understand how this community is impacted. It is also an attempt to gather ways that social services can better address the impacts this community is facing.

Study Participant Description

- Born in the country of Mexico
- 18 years old and over
- Interested in sharing your voice, opinions, and experiences under this current presidency and political atmosphere

Your Commitment

- **30-45 minute interview**; preferably in-person, telephone also available
 - May be conducted in **English or Spanish**

Interview Content

- Questions about your experience as an immigrant since you immigrated to the U.S and specifically under the Trump administration
- You will be asked about proximity to other immigrants in your community, but will not be asked their names, addresses, or other identifying information
- You will be asked about your thoughts and feelings about immigration enforcement (ICE) and your community's police force
- You will be asked to what extent you feel welcome and respected in your community and if/how this presidency has affected your daily activities (appointments, school, work, interaction with police/ICE etc.)
- You will be asked about your worries going forward under this presidency and how it relates to your life or that of your loved ones
- You will be asked what you would share to others who seek to come to the U.S.

All interviews will be recorded. Your information will be kept confidential. Names will be changed for the final write-up of this study.

If you are interested in sharing your important story/opinions or would like more information please contact the study's principal investigator, Cynthia Moreno, at cynm@uw.edu or 323-251-2713.

Thank you!

Appendix B

Solicitud de Participantes

Una de las historias más comunes que escuchamos sobre inmigrantes mexicanos dentro de nuestras propias comunidades es una historia de sacrificio, determinación y perseverancia. Este estudio es un intento de hablar con inmigrantes mexicanos durante esta época donde esta historia se destaca en las formas sociales y políticas. El objetivo es elevar las historias de este grupo y ayudarnos a comprender las experiencias de esta comunidad. También es un intento de subrayar cómo los servicios sociales pueden servir mejor a esta comunidad.

Descripción del Participante del Estudio

- Nacido en México
- 18 años o más
- Interesado en compartir su voz, opiniones y experiencias bajo atmósfera política

Tu compromiso

- **Entrevista de 30-45 minutos;** en inglés o español; en persona o por teléfono

Todas las entrevistas serán grabadas. Tu información se mantendrá confidencial. Los nombres serán cambiados para la redacción final de este estudio.

Si está interesado en compartir su historia o si desea más información, comuníquese con la investigadora principal del estudio, Cynthia Moreno, a cynm@uw.edu o 323-251-2713.

¡Gracias!

Appendix C

**REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANTS IN MASTER'S
THESIS STUDY ENTITLED:**

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS UNDER
THE 45TH U.S PRESIDENCY:
IMPACTS OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT AND
HEIGHTENED IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO:

- Born in Mexico
- 18 years old and over
- Interested in sharing your voice and experiences under current political atmosphere

YOUR COMMITMENT

- 30-45 MINUTE INTERVIEW
- ENGLISH OR SPANISH
- IN-PERSON OR TELEPHONE

Interviews will be recorded. Your information will be kept confidential. Names will be changed for the final write-up of this study.

If you are interested in sharing your story or for more information, contact Cynthia Moreno, at cynm@uw.edu or 323-251-2713.

Thank you!

SOLICITUD DE PARTICIPANTES EN ESTUDIO TITULADO:

**"INMIGRANTES MEXICANOS BAJO
LA 45ª PRESIDENCIA DE EE. UU:
IMPACTOS DE LA ATMÓSFERA
POLÍTICA"**

BUSCANDO PARTICIPANTES:

- Nacido en México
- 18 años o más
- Interesado en compartir su voz y experiencias bajo esta atmósfera política

TU COMPROMISO

- ENTREVISTA DE 30-45 MINUTOS
- INGLÉS O ESPAÑOL
- EN PERSONA O POR TELÉFONO

Las entrevistas serán grabadas. Tu información se mantendrá confidencial. Los nombres serán cambiados para la redacción final del estudio.

Si está interesado o desea más información, comuníquese Cynthia Moreno, a cynm@uw.edu o 323-251-2713.
¡Gracias!

Appendix E

Approved
2/26/2018
UW HSD IRB

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
CONSENT FORM
In-Person Interview**

Researchers:

Cynthia Moreno, Primary Researcher for Master Thesis, Social Work Graduate Student

Contact: 323-251-2713; cynm@uw.edu

Jennifer Romich, Committee Chair, Associate Professor at UW School of Social Work

Contact: 206-616-6121; romich@uw.edu

Researchers' statement

We are asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The name of this study is Mexican immigrants under the 45th U.S. Presidency: Impacts of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Heightened Immigration Enforcement. It is to be used in completion of a Master Thesis in Social Work. The study will examine the impacts of increased immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant/anti-Mexican speech and action on Mexican immigrants specifically. Findings may be able to inform policies and methods of outreach used by organizations with mental health services to effectively address the growing concerns of this community. Furthermore, your participation will provide insight into the views and relationships this community has with politicians, police, immigration enforcement, and their general communities.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Participating in this study will include a 30-45 minute in-person or phone interview with the primary researcher, Cynthia Moreno. All participant interviews will be recorded. However, names will be changed and no identifying information will be stored with recordings or interview transcriptions. Names will be changed in the final paper.

All participants will be interviewed about their background—such as when they immigrated to the U.S. and how past and current presidencies have affect their lives as immigrants. No participant will be asked about status explicitly or whether you came to this country legally or illegally. It is entirely up to you how much you would like to share with the primary researcher. However, due to the risks currently posed to immigrants without citizenship status, you are encouraged to keep from disclosing your status throughout the interview. All information acquired through the interview will solely go towards completion of this Master Thesis. Participants will also be asked about reactions, emotions, and behaviors in response to this topic.

Approved
2/26/2018

UW HS QIRB

Questions will involve asking if and how much you trust immigration enforcement, local police, politicians, and fellow community members. You will also be asked about mental health, fear, and worry in response to increased immigration enforcement.

You may refuse to answer any question during the interview. You are also free to stop the interview at any time and refuse to have your responses used as part of the thesis.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

The nature of the questions asked throughout the interview create a possible risk for stress or discomfort. Talking about the nature of anti-immigrant speech and political action may lead to feelings of sadness, anger, or other negative emotions. You, as a participant, will be welcome to pause or stop the interview at any time. Furthermore, resources for counseling or emotional support will be available at the end of the interview.

While this study has confidentiality protections in place, there is a risk of breach of confidentiality. For this reason, it is encouraged that you do not disclose your citizenship status. Additionally, in order to fully capture your responses, you will be recorded on an audio recorder. Your interview will be transcribed, but your identifying information will be kept separately. Your file will be labeled by an ID number and will be kept by the main researcher until the end of the study in June 2018. After this, all audio and transcriptions will be erased.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The expected benefits of this study will be primarily to uncover and highlight the experiences of this targeted community of people living in a specific political moment in history. The final paper may also be used by organizations looking to serve this community effectively. Thus, benefits will primarily be for society and community; however, individual participants may benefit from speaking about their experiences and vocalizing their opinions.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

All of the information you provide will be confidential. However, if we learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, we must report that to the authorities. Government 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 reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

OTHER INFORMATION

You may refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

RESEARCH-RELATED INJURY

If you think you have been harmed from being in this research, contact the primary researcher's advisor, Jennifer Romich, 206-616-6121; romich@uw.edu.

Approved
2/26/2018
UW HSD IRB

Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or if I have been harmed by participating in this study, I can contact one of the researchers listed on the first page of this consent form. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098 or call collect at (206) 221-5940. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of subject

Signature of subject

Date _____

Copies to: Researcher
 Subject
 Subject's Medical Record (if applicable)

Appendix F

MSW Thesis: Mexican Immigrants under the 45th U.S. Presidency: The Impacts of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Heightened Immigration Enforcement

Interview Protocol

Opening

Since this is a study about how Mexican immigrants are impacted by heightened media and political action that targets Latin American and specifically Mexican immigrants, I am going to ask you about your background as well as your thoughts, emotions, reactions, and experiences you have had under the current presidential administration. You will not be asked about your status and, due to current risks posed to immigrants without citizenship, you are encouraged to not disclose your status as part of the interview.

Demographic Questions

How old are you?

In what area of Mexico were you born?

When did you immigrate/how long have you lived in the U.S.?

In what states have you lived in the US?

Where do you live now?

What is your highest education level attainment?

Do you work? If so, where?

What is your marital/family status (i.e.: any children or extended family)?

Do you have any foreign-born citizen family members? Do you have any foreign-born undocumented family members? If so, simple numbers will suffice—there is no need for names or any identifying information.

Interview Questions

1. Do you remember the name of the president when you first arrived in US? What were policies that you remember from that time related to immigration or Mexican immigrants? In what ways did the policies during the presidency of XXX affect you or impact your family? (Participant will be asked same questions if lived in the U.S. under multiple presidencies before the Trump administration)

2. Do you feel that policies and U.S sentiment have changed under the current presidency? In what ways? In terms of feeling welcome and safe in this country, when did you feel most welcome? Most safe? What contributed to these feelings?

MSW Thesis: Mexican Immigrants under the 45th U.S. Presidency: The Impacts of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Heightened Immigration Enforcement

3. How, if at all, has recent political action against immigrants affected you or your immediate community members? For example, do you know anyone who has been detained or deported?

a. Has it affected how you view immigration and customs enforcement (ICE)? On a scale of 1-5, please indicate how much you trusted ICE before Trump became president of the US.

b. Has it affected how you view your local police department? Do you trust them?

On a scale of 1-5 please indicate how much you trust police department after Trump became president.

c. In what ways has recent political climate affected how you view community services such as community centers, churches, and schools? Do you trust people at these services?

d. Has it affected how you see politicians?

d. Has it affected your daily activities such as going to work, school, appointments, or running errands?

4. How, if at all, has recent political action against immigrants affected your daily mental health/well-being (such as stress, worry, fear, etc.)? If so, do you seek any resources to address these emotions?

a. Do you speak with you family, partner, children, friends, and co-workers about immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant sentiment? If not, why? If so, can you provide details about what you commonly speak about? For example, do you share emotions or simply provide updates or strategies?

5. What are ways you find helpful to address your reactions/emotions as a result of the current political rhetoric against Mexican immigrants?

[Note: be mindful of possible responses such as religion, writing/other hobbies, family, community engagement, etc. Probe for whether this has changed since the new administration or if it is ongoing. If it is ongoing, ask what are possible causes]

6. What is your primary worry in relation to immigration enforcement? For example, are you worried it may affect you or your loved ones, that it entails violence, etc.?

7. What is your primary worry in relation to anti-immigrant sentiment? For example, are you worried it may affect you or your loved ones and the communities you live in, that it will entail violence/hate crimes, etc.?

8. What is one recommendation you would share with a Mexican who has recently immigrated to the US or who would like to move here?

Appendix G

Tesis de MSW: Inmigrantes mexicanos bajo la 45^a Presidencia de los Estados Unidos: Impactos del sentimiento anti-inmigrante y el aumento de la aplicación migratoria

Protocolo de Entrevista

Dado que se trata de un estudio sobre cómo los inmigrantes mexicanos son impactados por los medios de comunicación intensificados y la acción política que se dirige a los inmigrantes latinoamericanos y específicamente mexicanos, voy a preguntarle acerca de sus antecedentes, sus pensamientos, emociones, reacciones, y experiencias que ha tenido bajo esta administración presidencial.

Preguntas demográficas

¿Cuántos años tienes?

¿En qué área de México naciste?

¿Cuándo inmigraste/cuánto tiempo has vivido en los Estados Unidos?

¿En qué Estados has vivido en los EE.?

¿Dónde vives ahora?

¿Cuál es tu nivel de educación más alto?

¿Trabajas? Si es así, ¿dónde?

¿Cuál es tu estado civil/familiar (i.e.: cualquier niño o familia extendida)?

¿Tiene algún miembro de la familia ciudadana nacida en el extranjero? ¿tiene algún miembro de la familia indocumentado nacido en el extranjero? Si es así, los números simples serán suficientes-no hay necesidad de nombres o cualquier información de identificación

Preguntas de la entrevista

1. ¿Recuerdas el nombre del Presidente cuando llegaste por primera vez a los EE UU? ¿Cuáles fueron las políticas que recuerdas de esa época relacionadas con la inmigración? ¿De qué manera las políticas durante la Presidencia de XXX le afectaron a su familia? (a los participantes se les harán las mismas preguntas si vivieron en los Estados Unidos bajo varias presidencias antes de la administración de Trump)

2. ¿Cree usted que las políticas y los sentimientos de los Estados Unidos han cambiado bajo la Presidencia actual? ¿De qué maneras? En tus años en este país,

Tesis de MSW: Inmigrantes mexicanos bajo la 45ª Presidencia de los Estados Unidos: Impactos del sentimiento anti-inmigrante y el aumento de la aplicación migratoria

¿Cuándo cree que se sintió más bienvenido? ¿Más seguro? ¿Qué contribuyó a estos sentimientos?

3. ¿Cómo te ha afectado la reciente acción política contra los inmigrantes? Por ejemplo, ¿conoce a alguien que ha sido detenido o deportado?

a. ¿Ha afectado tus opiniones sobre la inmigración (ICE)? En una escala de 1-5, puede indicar cuánto confía en ICE antes de que Trump se hizo Presidente de los Estados Unidos.

b. ¿Ha afectado tus opiniones sobre su Departamento de policía local? ¿Confías en ellos? En una escala de 1-5 por favor, indique lo mucho que confía en el Departamento de policía después de Trump se convirtió en Presidente

c. ¿De qué manera ha afectado este clima político cómo ve los servicios comunitarios, como los centros comunitarios, las iglesias y las escuelas? ¿confía en la gente de estos servicios?

d. ¿Ha afectado la forma de ver a los políticos?

d. ¿Ha afectado sus actividades diarias como ir a trabajo, a la escuela, a citas, o a hacer mandados?

4. ¿Cómo ha afectado tu salud mental o bienestar la acción política reciente contra los inmigrantes (como el estrés, la preocupación, el miedo, etc.)? Si es así, ¿busca algún recurso para hacer frente a estas emociones?

a. ¿Habla con su familia, pareja, hijos, amigos y compañeros de trabajo sobre la aplicación de la inmigración y el sentimiento anti-inmigrante? Si no, ¿por qué? Si es así, ¿puede proporcionar detalles acerca de lo que comúnmente se habla? Por ejemplo, ¿comparte emociones o simplemente proporciona actualizaciones o estrategias?

5. ¿Cuáles son las maneras que usted encuentra útil para abordar sus reacciones/emociones como resultados de la retórica política contra los inmigrantes mexicanos?

6. ¿Cuál es su preocupación principal en relación con la aplicación de inmigración? Por ejemplo, ¿le preocupa que pueda afectarle a usted o a sus seres queridos, que conlleve violencia, etc.?

Tesis de MSW: Inmigrantes mexicanos bajo la 45ª Presidencia de los Estados Unidos: Impactos del sentimiento anti-inmigrante y el aumento de la aplicación migratoria

7. ¿Cuál es su preocupación principal en relación con el sentimiento anti-inmigrante? Por ejemplo, ¿le preocupa que pueda afectarle a usted o a sus seres queridos y a las comunidades en las que vive, que conllevará crímenes de violencia/odio, etc.?

8. ¿Cuál es una recomendación que compartirías con un mexicano que ha emigrado recientemente a los Estados Unidos o que quiere mudarse aquí?

