

The Emotional Impact of Anti-Immigration Policies on Latino Youth
and Latino Immigrant Parents' Efforts to Protect Their Youth

by

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ABSTRACT

The Arizona legislature has enacted a number of anti-immigrant policies which negatively impact Latino immigrant families. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Latino parents on how anti-immigration policies emotionally impact their children and how they believe they can protect their children from the harmful effects of such policies. Secondary data analysis was conducted based on in-depth semi structured interviews completed with a sample of 54 Latino immigrant parents residing in the state of Arizona. Grounded theory methods informed the analysis process. A constant comparative approach was used to complete initial and focused coding. Findings indicate that Latino immigrant parents observed a range of behavioral changes in their children following the passage of anti-immigrant legislature. Parents reported that the emotional impact they observed stemmed from children's social interactions in their home, school, and community environments as well as through their exposure to the media. Latino youth experienced emotional impact is summarized in the following themes, concern and sense of responsibility; fear and hypervigilance; sadness and crying; and depression. Findings further demonstrated that parents protected Latino youth from anti-immigration policies directly and indirect ways by focusing on children's safety and well-being (let children live their childhood, be prepared, send messages), building parents capacity (pursue education, obtain papers), and engaging in change efforts at the community level (be proactive). Parents indicated that by engaging in these efforts they could protect their children, and counter the negative effects of anti-immigrant policies. Implications for social work practice to better advocate and serve Latino youth at the individual, family, and community level are discussed.

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BACKGROUND

The United States has implemented restrictive immigration policies which encourage hostile attitudes towards immigrant communities (Androff et al., 2011). These anti-immigration policies have the effect of criminalizing undocumented immigrants and encouraging states to implement policies which restrict public benefits, education, and social services to this population (Androff et al., 2011). Tensions increased when undocumented immigrants were scapegoated through the media as contributing to the most recent economic downfall (Becerra, 2012). The most frequently repeated allegation is that undocumented immigrants steal jobs from real Americans (Ayón & Becerra, 2013).

The state of Arizona has been at the forefront of passing anti-immigrant policies, by which all Latino families suffer due to collateral damage (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). Such policies place the well-being, of children in immigrant families at risk (Androff et al, 2011). The impact of immigration policies on children, coupled with the rising number of children living in immigrant families, has not been sufficiently taken into account (Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, & Viramontez Anguiano, 2012). Limited research has examined how these policy changes and attitudes towards immigrants affect children in Latino immigrant families (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). These children, many of whom are citizens, are unreported casualties in the war on immigration. Therefore, the need for additional research into the effects of public policy on children in Latino immigrant families is critical.

Latinos are the largest ethnic minority population in the United States making up 16.7% of the total population (Centers, 2013). With over 46 million Latinos in the United States, two-thirds are immigrants or children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009). Approximately 5.5 million Latino youth in America have undocumented parents and it is

estimated that three-fourths of these children are American citizens (Chaudry et al., 2010). Children residing in a mixed status household, where at least one parent is undocumented and one child was born in the U.S., are placed at risk as they are likely to be impacted by immigration policies regardless of their own documentation status. Such children are exposed to a number of challenges including family separation due to deportation, heightened stress due to discrimination and exploitative practices, and economic insecurity (Fix & Zimmerman, 2001; Pérez, 2004; Ayón & Becerra, 2013; Androff et al., 2010). Furthermore, children of immigrant families are impacted and experience discrimination due to the perception of immigration status and treatment towards immigrants (Ayón & Becerra, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to explore how Latino children in immigrant families are emotionally impacted by anti-immigration policies in the state of Arizona. Specifically, this study examined the perceptions of Latino parents on how anti-immigration policies emotionally impact their children and how they believe they can protect their children from such policies. This study addresses a gap in the literature as the state of Arizona provides a unique context to learn about the impact of anti-immigrant policies on children. In addition, research has yet to examine Latino parents' perceptions on what they believe they can do to protect their children from anti-immigrant legislation and sentiment, and this research addresses that issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arizona Anti-Immigration Policies

Arizona has a 15 year history of passing anti-immigration policies. These restrictive policies in Arizona contribute to the marginalization of Latino families (Ayón & Quiroz, 2013) and the rise in Latino's experience with discrimination (Pérez, 2011). Many immigration policies in Arizona have targeted the field of education. Proposition 203, in 2000, repealed bilingual education laws and required all classes to be taught in English (Arizona Secretary of State, 2000). It caused students classified as "English Learners" to be temporarily placed in English immersion programs until they are capable of being transferred to regular English language classrooms (Arizona Secretary of State, 2000); thus, prioritizing learning English over developmental appropriate content. In 2006, Proposition 300 became effective and made undocumented university students ineligible for financial aid and required them to pay out-of-state tuition at both the university and community college level (Arizona Secretary of State, 2006). The House Bill 2281, passed in 2010 which prohibited public school districts and charter schools to teach classes geared towards specific ethnic groups (State of Arizona, 2010), consequently banning Mexican-American studies in Arizona (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). In 2012, Governor Jan Brewer also signed an executive order to stop individuals who were granted work permits through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals from receiving state benefits, in-state tuition, and drivers' licenses (Arizona Office of the Governor, 2012).

In 2004, Proposition 200 was passed which required the verification of identity and immigration status of all applicants of public benefits, and required government employees to report any immigration law violations by applicants (Arizona Secretary of State, 2004). Under this policy, state employees who do not report applicants that violate immigration laws are

eligible for misdemeanor charges (Arizona Secretary of State, 2004). The Legal Arizona Workers Act (LAWA) became effective in 2008, which prohibited the hiring of undocumented workers and enforced the use of E-verify for newly hired employees to validate their immigration status (Arizona Attorney General, n.d.). An unintended consequence of LAWA is that some employers continued to hire undocumented individuals or maintain their undocumented employees (Ayón, Gurrola, Salas, Androff, & Krysik, 2012). Although LAWA is meant to penalize business owners for hiring undocumented workers, the treatment of workers has deteriorated as a result of this policy (Ayón, Gurrola, Salas, Androff, & Krysik, 2012; Ayón & Becerra, 2013).

In 2010, Senate Bill 1070 passed, which permits law enforcement officers to question an individual's immigration status if they feel there is reasonable suspicion the individual may be undocumented (State of Arizona, 2010). To acquire reasonable suspicion, an officer must have a reason or specific fact for detaining an individual. This has increased the probability of racial profiling used to implement SB1070 (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). Under this policy, undocumented individuals are placed in the custody of Immigration Customs Enforcement (State of Arizona, 2010). The Supreme Court of the United States filed a suit and challenged Arizona's SB1070 policy. Three provisions of the law were preempted by federal law (Supreme Court, 2012). The Supreme Court's decision stopped the enforcement of making it a crime to be in Arizona without valid immigration papers, to apply or obtain a job without valid immigration papers, or to allow police officers to arrest without a warrant under the belief an individual committed a crime which could cause deportation (Supreme Court, 2012).

The rise of restrictive immigration legislature has harmed all Latino families and placed them at an economic disadvantage (Valdez, Abegglen & Hauser, 2013). These policies lead to

an increase in intimidation, detention, and deportation of Latinos and create difficulty in obtaining work, lost income, financial stress, and family separation (Valdez, Padilla, & Valentine, 2012). The intersection of immigration policies and economic recession place children within immigrant families at risk for poor outcomes.

Impact of Anti-immigrant Policies on Immigrant Families and Children

Androff and colleagues (2011) identified prominent areas where immigrant families face challenges as a result of immigrant policies in their review of the literature. These include economic insecurity, barriers to education, poor health outcomes, arrest and deportation of family members, and discrimination. Within these dimensions, the well-being of Latino children in immigrant families is compromised (Androff et al., 2011). Their research is important for this study in contextualizing how Latino youth are being negatively affected by anti-immigration policies on many different levels.

Economic Insecurity

Economic insecurity in immigrant families is heightened as families experience high levels of unemployment and difficulty obtaining work due to policies which mandate the use of E-verify (Androff et al., 2011). As anti-immigration policies hinder the prosperous growth of immigrant families, children of undocumented immigrants are subject to all the disadvantages that accompany an impoverished upbringing (Androff et al., 2011). More than 6 million Latino children live in poverty in which two-thirds are children of immigrants (Lopez & Velasco, 2011). While many of these children are entitled U.S. citizens, they are still more likely to be poor and have parents who lack a high school diploma (Androff et al., 2011).

Differences in household income for immigrant families demonstrate the economic impact. In 2006, the median family income for all households was \$48,201, while the median

family income for foreign-born Mexican and Central American households was \$36,249 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). While children in immigrant families are more likely to live in two-parent homes compared to native children (Capps et al., 2004); these children are still more susceptible to poverty (Lara-Cinisomo, Xue & Brooks-Gunn, 2013).

Dettlaff, Earnar, and Phillips (2009) suggested that poverty in immigrant families is likely due to immigrant parents relying on wage labor and are often exploited in the workforce due to their immigration status. Ayón and colleagues (2012) found evidence of such exploitation while examining the consequences of the Legal Arizona Workers Act (LAWA) on Latino families. Focus groups from their study revealed that families were facing greater economic hardship since the passage of this policy due to pay cuts and exploitation such as workers not being paid for all hours worked, being paid less while expected to work more, or receiving empty paychecks. Business owners who continue hiring undocumented workers are aware of the limited options these workers have due to their documentation status (Ayón et al, 2012). Therefore, employers can engage in exploitive practices such as reducing pay or not paying their undocumented workers without consequence (Ayón et al, 2012). Apart from succeeding in its original intent of diminishing the ability of undocumented workers to acquire jobs, the Legal Arizona Workers Act has also promoted employers to take advantage of the vulnerability of this population (Ayón et al, 2012).

Barriers to Education

Immigration policies in Arizona also impose barriers to education by disqualifying undocumented students for in-state tuition, financial aid and by enforcing English-only education (Androff et al., 2011), which favors learning English over other developmentally appropriate content. The enforcement of English-only education rejects the second most widely used

language in the nation, Spanish, and may be considered as a form of microaggression in public education. Microaggressions are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults . . .” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). Dual language learners may perceive that English-only education shames their use of Spanish while they are denied more culturally relevant approaches to learning.

In their review of the literature, Androff and colleagues (2011) also found that community service providers noticed a drop in school attendance amongst children of immigrants after many immigrant families fled following implementation of new, restrictive policies in Arizona. Therefore, Latino youths’ education is impacted in many ways by the effects of anti-immigration policies. This impact initiates at the elementary level and progresses to impact the pursuit of higher education. These barriers may also lead Latino youth to feel discouraged and unsupported by their schools in regards to their academic achievement. By imposing additional barriers to education, anti-immigration legislation decreases the likelihood of Latino youth reaching their full academic potential.

Poor Health Outcomes

Latino children in immigrant families experience higher rates of poor health outcomes (Androff et al., 2011) and anti-immigration policies only contribute to more sociopsychological problems (Casas & Cabrera, 2011). Evidence suggests that immigration experiences negatively affect Latino youth’s development, health, self-esteem; positive ethnic and racial identity; sense of security; ability to trust others; and the ability to strive and work towards a better future (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007; Communique, 2007; Morgan & Gonzalez 2009; Passel, 2006).

Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007) found that Latino children are more susceptible to feelings of hopelessness and sadness, and are more likely to consider and attempt suicide than non-Latino white or African-American youth. Latino children are also disproportionately afflicted by depression and anxiety disorders (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). Social science researchers have reported on the increased risks of Latino youth on many domains. But the detrimental effects of immigration experiences and the restrictive anti-immigrant policies in Arizona raise concerns for the well-being of the nation's largest youth group, Latinos.

Few studies have solely focused on Latino children in immigrant families in regards to their poor health outcomes and mental health. Lara-Cinisomo, Xue, and Brooks-Gunn (2013), explored the mental health of first, second, and third generation Latino youth. They explored neighborhood characteristics and internalizing behaviors in association to immigrant generation status. Their findings revealed that first and second generation youth had higher internalizing behaviors scores which indicate that first and second generations demonstrated poorer mental health than third generation and were more likely to live in an immigrant dense community. The first generation youth were also more likely to live in low residentially stable neighborhoods. Peña et al., (2008) also explored immigrant generation status while looking at suicide attempts amongst Latino adolescents. They found that second generation youth, U.S born adolescents with immigrant parents, and third generation adolescents with U.S. born parents were more likely to attempt suicide and to engage in problematic drug use than first generation youth (Peña et al., 2008). Both studies found immigration generation status to be helpful in understanding and revealing the presence of existing mental health concerns in Latino youth of first, second, and third generation. In both studies second generation children with immigrant parents

demonstrated a higher incidence of mental health issues. The negative impacts of anti-immigration legislature may pose a greater threat to this population and increase existing mental health concerns.

Ayón and colleagues (2012) drew attention to Latino children in immigrant families while presenting the negative outcomes of the Legal Arizona Workers Act (LAWA). This restrictive policy harmed families by displacement of potential wage earners, placing them at risk both economically and emotionally through generating constant fear. This fear stemmed from experiencing the effects of racial profiling, workplace raids, and ongoing discrimination (Ayón et al., 2012). LAWA further impacted immigrant families with fear in influencing their return to their country of origin or relocating to another state or to Canada (Ayón et al., 2012). As Latinos endured the effects of this policy, indicators pointed to an increased need for mental health and other support services for children. However, this population faces many barriers to such needed services (Androff et al., 2011; Ayón, 2014; Ayón & Becerra, 2013; Chavez et al., 2012; Goldman, Smith, & Sood, 2006), impacting the healthy development of Latino youth.

Arrest and Deportation of Family Members

Undocumented workers arrested in workplace raids leave behind many US born children while they face the judicial process (Androff et al., 2011). The children of those detained often are forced to live with caregivers who are not informed about their parents' condition (Androff et al., 2011). Many parents also elect not to reveal that they have children due to fear that they could be taken away (Androff et al., 2011). The Department of Homeland Security found that between 1998- 2007, more than 100,000 parents of U.S. citizen children were deported ("108,000 people deported", 2009). The University of California Berkley and Davis School of Law also found that during that same time period, 88,000 U.S. citizen children lost a legal

permanent resident parent due to deportation, of which 44,000 were less than 5 years old (Baum, Jones, & Barry, 2010). Existing U.S immigration laws such as the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, expanded immigration restrictions, which mandate deportation of lawful permanent residents convicted of crimes that include minor and non-violent offenses (Baum, Jones, & Barry, 2010). In such circumstances parents who are lawful permanent residents are deported without the opportunity to challenge the separation from their families (Baum, Jones, & Barry, 2010). Living with the threat of arrests and deportations, immigrant families are faced with making difficult decisions; the entire family may leave the United States, or accept the possibility of separation because only the undocumented parent leaves the country (Fix & Zimmerman, 2001). Faced with such options, children are sure to suffer.

The impacts of deportation and separation of family is important to stress for the purpose of this study. Children separated from their parents due to deportation are more likely to experience negative outcomes in regards to economic security, physical safety, and overall well-being (Chaudry et al., 2010). These deportations cause children to be raised in the U.S. without a parent(s) or to live in a country that is foreign to them (Androff et al., 2011). Alarming, children are left to bear the secondary trauma and emotional stress of workplace raids and deportations (Androff et al., 2011).

Children separated from their families exhibit increased symptoms of mental health problems (Pottinger, 2005). Evidence of this phenomenon was found by the National Council of La Raza by studying the aftermath of workplace raids. Specifically, they studied three communities and found that 500 children were temporarily or permanently separated from their parents (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007). The majority of the youth who were

separated from their parents were U.S. citizens and displayed symptoms of abandonment, trauma, fear, isolation, depression, and family fragmentation following the raids (Capps et al., 2007).

The Urban Institute also studied the effects of traumatic experiences children faced in the aftermath of immigration enforcement. Their findings revealed that children whose parents' were detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers showed significant behavioral changes after separation (Chaudry et al., 2010). These children demonstrated behaviors of anxiety, frequent crying, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, withdrawal, anger, aggression, and clinginess (Chaudry et al., 2010). Children separated from their detained parents were likely to experience such negative behavioral changes both short term and long term (Chaudry et al., 2010).

Brabeck & Xu (2010) further explored the impact of detention and deportation on Latino immigrant families and took into consideration parents' emotional well-being, ability to provide financially and their relationships with their children. They found that parents with higher levels of legal vulnerability reported a greater impact of detention/deportation on the family environment and well-being of children. The factors of parents' legal vulnerability and the impact of detention/deportation on the family specifically predicted poor emotional well-being and academic performance (Brabeck & Xu, 2010).

Discrimination

Anti-immigration policies negatively impact the human and civil rights of immigrants by reinforcing prejudices and increasing ethnic discrimination and racial profiling (Casa & Cabrera, 2011). These policies encourage poor treatment by authorities (Androff et al., 2011). Immigrant families experience further discrimination due to assumptions based on an individual's

phenotype, English proficiency or documentation status (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). Latino youth experience discrimination from teachers, peers, and through within group discrimination or horizontal discrimination (Córdova & Cervantez, 2010). Latino youth also encounter perceived discrimination for the use of Spanish language and traditional dress (Córdova & Cervantez, 2010) along with having their nativity questioned (Ayón, 2014).

A study based on focus groups with immigrant parents revealed that Latino immigrants experience feelings of humiliation and disrespect due to discrimination generated by restrictive policies (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). Immigrant parents reported that children grew fearful of police and teachers due to the impact of discrimination from these adult figures (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). The attention that anti-immigration policies create on deporting undocumented immigrants further fuels negative beliefs and stereotypes that immigrants contribute to greater social problems (Casa & Cabrera, 2011) making them susceptible to discriminatory practices in their communities. Discrimination coupled with the threat of deportation and its generated fear is a distinct oppression that the Latino immigrant population faces.

Existing literature on immigrant families has established associations between discrimination and poor health and mental health (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Parsai, 2010; Ding & Hargraves, 2009; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2008). For example, Turner, Kaplan, & Badger (2006) found that Hispanic girls experienced lower levels of self-esteem and had disproportionate high school drop-out rates due to stressors of discrimination, poverty, immigration and acculturation. The negative impacts of discrimination noted in literature support the need for additional research on Latino youth in immigrant families. This focus is imperative since children in immigrant families are exposed to many forms of discrimination that result from restrictive policies (Androff et al., 2011).

Additional Stressors

In addition to the social political climate, additional stressors must be considered when examining the well-being of Latino children in immigrant families. The migration, adaptation, and integration process can be challenging for families particularly in mixed documentation households. Acculturation, and its varying degrees between generational members within a household, has been identified as a potential stressor among immigrant families. Immigrant families also face many challenges and barriers to services.

Acculturation and Acculturative Stress

Restrictions for support of bilingual and bicultural services within the United States have made integration into the American society difficult for Latinos (Kulis & Marsiglia, 2009). Consequently, Latinos are vulnerable to acculturation stress due to such restrictions because of the pressures of combining two cultures with one another. Acculturation stress has been associated with both unhealthy physical and mental outcomes. Perceived discrimination has been identified as one of the types of acculturation-related stressors experienced by Latino youth (Lorenzo, 2011).

Potochnick and Perreira (2010) studied the impact of migration and acculturation experiences on Latino youth and their psychological well-being. Their results found that migration stressors such as trauma, discrimination and documentation status increased the risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms amongst first generation Latino youth. Both undocumented youth and youth in mixed status families were also at a higher risk and exhibited anxiety. Some explanations for these risks are associated with the fear children experience of being separated from their families or of being sent back to their country of origin (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).

Potochnick & Perreira (2010) found that Latino youth who were more involved in the decision to emigrate experienced lower rates of anxiety symptoms. Involvement in the decision process allows children to better understand and cope with immigrant related stressors. In addition, support from family and teachers, and length of stay in the United States decreased the risk for anxiety and depressive symptoms in Latino youth (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). Therefore, it was suggested that parents should be encouraged to take steps to help decrease the negative mental health consequences of migration and acculturation experiences.

Potochnick, Perreira and Fuligni (2012) later compared Latino youth in Los Angeles to Latino youth in North Carolina to examine how acculturation experiences influenced their daily psychological well-being. In focusing on acculturation experiences and experiences with discrimination, the study found that negative social interactions in the Latino youth's communities and schools significantly increased their psychological distress in depression and anxiety (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012). Meanwhile, positive social interactions promoted positive well-being and helped decrease psychological distress.

Barriers to Services

Immigrant related stressors, including the sociopolitical climate increase the need for services among immigrants, yet they experience many barriers to accessing such care which further increases the risk of poor outcomes among this population. Service needs have been identified in the areas of mental health, physical health care, education, information and support services, and community efforts to promote the well-being of Latino immigrant families (Ayón, 2014). These unmet needs emphasize the on-going challenges immigrant families face in many different settings.

Barriers to services are influenced by multiple factors. Immigrant families experience lower levels of access to services that require proof of identification (Androff et al., 2011) and undocumented immigrants are ineligible to apply for government programs or employer-provided health insurance (Goldman, Smith, & Sood, 2006). Obtaining medical services is a major challenge for immigrant families as they risk deportation of undocumented members when seeking emergency care (Chavez et al., 2012). Many immigrant families also struggle with dilemmas of protecting their children by trying to access the best care for them while also trying to protect themselves from deportation (Chavez et al., 2012).

Immigrant parents further avoid applying for services for their children due to fear of being apprehended by immigration authorities (Ayón & Becerra, 2013). As a result, Latino children in immigrant families encounter risks to healthy development (Androff et al., 2011), and are more likely to be uninsured with the rise of anti-immigration policies (Pati & Danagoulian, 2008). Most of these children are entitled U.S. citizens who are being denied services due to their immigrant parents' documentation status and English proficiency (Ayón & Becerra, 2013).

Protective Factors in Latino Families

Research has yet to focus on the efforts Latino parents take to protect or resist the impact of anti-immigrant legislation on their family. However, evidence suggests Latino parents and families rely on a number of resources and strengths to help them overcome challenges. In particular, families are prioritizing their children's well-being. Families utilize identified strengths that promote family well-being and rely on social supports from their family and friends.

Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, and Viramontez Anguiano (2012) studied the influence of unauthorized immigration status on children's well-being through interviewing immigrant

families. Immigrant parents expressed being protective of their children as they grew up in restrictive immigrant environments. Participants reported the importance of securing their children's future during times of uncertainty and emphasized their desire to provide a stable future for them. One undocumented father shared how he would rather risk deportation in driving his undocumented teenager to school than to have his son stay home and not get an education. This example demonstrates the risks parents take to promote their children's well-being and development (Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, & Viramontez Anguiano, 2012).

Ayón and Quiroz (2013) explored the needs that Mexican immigrant parents identified to promote family well-being. Family unity was reported as a fundamental factor that contributed to protecting families, overcoming obstacles, and enhancing communication, trust, respect, love and support (Ayón & Quiroz, 2013). Parent's internal drive to overcome challenges and succeed was also reported as a critical factor that promoted family strengths and ties. Immigrant parents also reported the desire for children to feel pride in their ethnic identity, since their nationalities were often challenged (Ayón & Quiroz, 2013).

Potochnick, Perreira and Fuligni (2012) further examined the strengths of ethnic identity and family identity amongst Latino youth. Ethnic identification, the extent of positive views towards one's ethnic background, was associated with decreasing youth's sense of negative well-being (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012). Family identification, the extent of family connection and importance of one's family to personal identity, promoted daily happiness and decreased daily anxiety in Latino youth (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012). Positive, daily relationships with parents also promoted the youths' daily psychological well-being. These findings demonstrate ways in which parents may promote their children's well-being through

positive interaction and support of ethnic and family relationships, despite the exposure of negative acculturation experiences (Potochnick, Perreira & Fuligni, 2012).

Familismo or also referred to as familism, is the multidimensional cultural value that treasures a strong family unit and values priorities of family first over individual priorities (Molina, & Alcantara, 2013). It has been suggested that more devotion to familism may improve or protect Latinos from bad mental health because of the social and family support it promotes (Gallo, Penedo, de los Monteron, & Arguella, 2009). Valdez, Abegglen and Hauser (2013) further support the value of family cohesion, cultural traditions, bicultural orientation and community involvement, as factors contributing to the resilience in Latino children who face disruptions in family functioning. Positive parent involvement through warmth, monitoring, and communication also prepare children to cope with stressors such as discrimination and conflictual family relationships (Hughes, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

The guiding theoretical framework for this study is the ecological systems theory. The ecological systems theory was formulated by Bronfenbrenner, as cited in Ashford and Lecroy (2010), which focuses on the holistic perspective of an individual and the systems the person belongs to. This theory takes into consideration the person, situation, and the individual's goodness of fit within the four systems of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Ashford & Lecroy, 2010). The microsystem refers to the closest structures in a child's life that involves direct contact and face-to-face interaction (Trudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997). Examples of the microsystem are the child's family, school, and neighborhood; these interactions present in the child's immediate environment are considered proximal context (Trudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997). The mesosystem refers to the connections and relationships

present within the structures found in the child's microsystem. These include relationships that occur between teachers and parents and with the neighborhood and church (Trudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997). The exosystem consists of larger social systems which a child does not have direct contact with but is still impacted by, such as a parent's workplace and community based resources (Trudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997). Lastly, the macrosystem is the outermost layer in the child's life which is made up of government policies, economy, culture, and customs; these outer structures in the macrosystem are also known as distal context (Trudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997). Key components of the distal context in Latino children's development includes their parents' legal status (Yoshikawa & Way, 2008), and the anti-immigration policies that impact their daily interactions. Overall this theory guides this study as the development of children of immigrant families is directly and indirectly impacted by the different systems to which they pertain (Brabeck & Xu, 2010).

Chapman and Perrerrira (2005) support the use of an ecological framework to better understand the risk and resiliency among Latino youth, which takes into account the challenges of immigration. They believe that within the ecological framework the context of exit from country of origin, context of entry into the U.S., cultural orientation, family context, school context, and youth well-being should be key components to consider when working towards understanding the struggles of Latino immigrant families (Chapman & Perrerrira, 2005). The ecological framework was also used by Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2011), to consider the impact of unauthorized status on the development of children in immigration families. In using the ecological framework, they were able to consider how policies, economic and social factors affected the developmental outcomes for these children along with their family and individual experiences.

The literature indicates that Latino youth are affected by many factors that lie within the different systems in the ecological systems theory. At the microsystem they are affected by living in mixed-status families and by their own personal legal status. In their mesosystem Latino youth have external positive supports available to them and also experience discrimination from negative relationships. At the exosystem Latino youth are indirectly impacted by the work exploitation that their parents experience which can lead to stressed households and economic insecurity. Meanwhile anti-immigration policies in their macrosystems impact youth through the challenges and barriers they influence within each system. Overall this theoretical framework helps guide this study by taking into account the many ways these policies are impacting Latino youth in the systems to which they belong.

METHODS

The two research questions guiding this study are (a) How do Latino parents believe their children are being emotionally impacted by anti-immigration policies; and (b) How do Latino parents believe they can protect their children from the effects of these policies? This thesis is based on secondary data analysis; the author was not involved in collecting the data. Data are drawn from a large mixed methods study examining the ethnic-racial socialization process for Latino immigrant families (Ayón). More specifically, the present study utilized data from in-depth semi structured interviews with fifty-four Latino immigrant parents residing in the state of Arizona.

Recruitment and Participants

Participants in this study were recruited from three non-profit community organizations that primarily serve Latino families. Brief presentations were delivered at various programs offered through the non-profit community agencies to invite individuals to participate in the

study. During the presentation participants were informed about the study's purpose, rights as participants, and eligibility criteria. Individuals who were immigrants, parents with children between the ages of 7 and 12 were eligible to participate in the study. Interviews were scheduled around participants' availability and conducted in their homes, at a community based agency, or in another mutually agreed upon location. All participants were interviewed in Spanish. Interviews were 45 minutes to 2 hours in length. Participants received \$30 to partially compensate them for their time.

Fifty-four immigrant parents participated in in-depth semi structured qualitative interviews in the time period of fall of 2013 to spring of 2014. The majority of the sample consisted of mothers (79.6%, $N = 43$). On average, participants were 36 years old ($M = 35.6$, $SD = 6.47$) and had three children ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.4$). The vast majority of the participants were Mexican (96.3%, $N = 52$). On average participants were 23 years old when they first migrated to the United States ($M = 22.74$, $SD = 12.749$) and on average had lived in the United States for 14 years ($M = 14.45$, $SD = 5.86$). Most of the participants were in committed relationships (81.4%, $N = 44$) while others were single (13%, $N = 7$), or divorced (5.6%, $N = 3$). In this sample, 61.1% ($N = 33$) of participants had an annual family income below \$19,000. Approximately 70% ($N = 37$) of the participants had less than a high school degree; of these 25.9% ($N = 14$) of parents were pursuing their GED. Sixty three percent ($N = 34$) of participants reported that all of their children were born in the United States, while 35.2% ($N = 19$) reported mixed nationalities of children born both in the United States and in a Latin American country, and one participant ($N = 1$) reported that all children were born in a Latin American country.

Interview Guide

The interview guide included a series of open-ended questions. Participants were asked about experiences as immigrants in the United States, their experiences with discrimination in the United States and in their countries of origin; the impact of immigration policies on their families and what parents can do to protect their children from these policies. For the purpose of this study the focus was on the questions that inquired on how anti-immigration policies impacted Latino youth and how parents believed they could protect their children from these policies. Demographic information was also collected. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Analysis

Secondary data analysis was conducted based on the data collected from the qualitative interviews. Data analysis was guided by grounded theory methods including initial line-by-line coding, followed by focus coding. Using grounded theory coding promotes data analysis to be built from the data itself to construct codes that fully embrace the participant's experiences (Charmaz, 2006). Initial coding in the form of line-by-line coding involves the process of breaking up the data into component parts and naming each line in data collected (Charmaz, 2006). The focus coding process involved making analytical decisions and categorizing of the data informed by initial coding (Charmaz, 2006). A constant comparative approach was used throughout the analysis process, which involved comparing codes between and within transcripts. Decisions about coding were specifically derived from the data itself (Charmaz, 2006). The purpose of using grounded theory analysis was to guide analysis to construct an analytical framework which accurately interprets what is taking place and the associations made within the data (Charmaz, 2006).

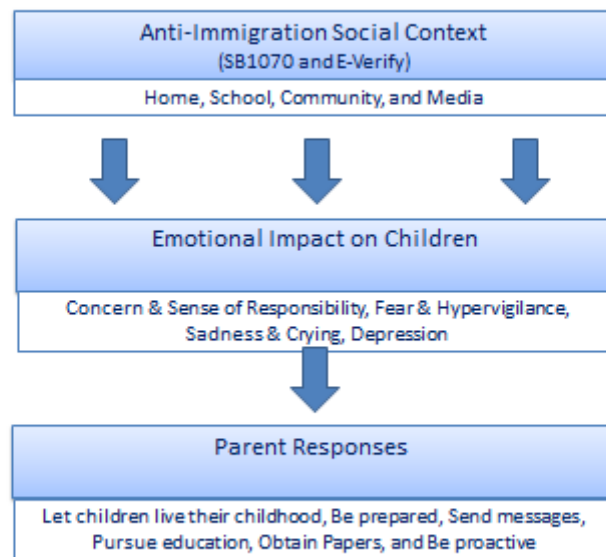
The following strategies were applied to enhance the trustworthiness of this study. To address the confirmability of the study, the author met regularly with the thesis chair to discuss initial and focused coding. Differences in interpretations of analysis were reviewed and discussed. Whenever discrepancies in interpretation emerged, we referred back to the data. Throughout this process analytic triangulation was achieved; this minimized researcher bias. In order to support the credibility of the study, strategies were used to help participants' feel safe within the interview process. For instance, participants understood that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time (Shenton, 2004). In addition, detailed description and quotes are used in the study to further support the identified main themes and to ensure the credibility of the findings (Shenton, 2004).

RESULTS

This study sought to learn from immigrant parents about the emotional impact of anti-immigration legislation and sentiment on Latino children, and what Latino parents believe they can do to counter the effects of anti-immigrant legislation on the children. Figure 1 outlines the major themes found in this study. Based on the participants' perceptions the emotional impact their children experienced due to anti-immigrant legislature, stemmed from children's social interactions in their homes, schools, and community environments as well as through their exposure to the media. Exposure to the negative effects of anti-immigration policies in different social contexts influenced emotional impact on Latino youth in the form of four identified behavioral themes. These included concern and sense of responsibility; fear and hypervigilance; sadness and crying; and depression. Subsequently, parents responded to the emotional impact children experienced by engaging in efforts to protect their children. Six major themes were identified as methods parents used to directly and indirectly address the impact of anti-immigrant

legislation on their children. The six themes fell into three focal areas including securing/promoting children’s safety and wellbeing (i.e., *let children live their childhood, be prepared, send messages*); building parent capacity (i.e., *pursue education, obtain papers*), and engaging in change efforts (i.e., *be proactive*).

Figure 1. Highlights the effects of anti-immigration legislation in the major themes of emotional impact on Latino youth and how parents’ responded to counter negative effects of policies.



Anti-Immigration Social Context

Participants stated that their families are impacted by the prevalent anti-immigrant social-political context. Parents in the study primarily focused on the negative effects of SB1070 and E-Verify and the subsequent discrimination their families experience. They described how Latino youth were exposed to the negative effects of SB1070 and E-Verify in their homes, schools, and communities as well as through the media. One of the negative effects emphasized was the discrimination that Latino youth faced in these micro environments.

Home. Within the home, parents described their children were exposed to the effects of SB1070 as families experience fear, insecurity, and uncertainty under the threat of deportation. Children experienced more social isolation, as families refrained from leaving their homes to avoid the risk of deportation. Parents expressed that families felt imprisoned and limited as they decreased their driving and outings. SB1070 also influenced immigrant families to relocate or contemplate relocating or returning to their country of origin. Within this context participants also shared that children witnessed the deportation of family members and loved ones.

In addition, participants described how E-Verify impacted Latino youth as families experienced financial insecurity due to parental underemployment, unemployment, or withholding of their wages. This policy increased the difficulty of finding work and caused instability in employment for parents. It also influenced two-parent households, either married or living together, to make the decision of having one parent quit the workforce and stay home with the children. The decision to have one parent permanently home was to ensure that children would always be taken care of in case the working parent was deported. Therefore, families reported that they would rather depend on one income, than to expose both parents to the threat of deportation in the workforce and leave their children parent-less. The financial limitations addressed revealed that parents struggled to provide the basic needs for their children. Parents also described that due to their limited options they endured work exploitation including withholding wages and overworking for low pay. Moreover, parents needed to work more hours in order to meet the needs of their families which led to parents spending less quality time with their children.

School. Latino youth were exposed to the effects of SB1070 and E-Verify at school in hearing personal stories from peers about family separation and deportation of parents.

Furthermore, participants described that their children experienced discrimination from teachers and classmates. Due to the negative perceptions of immigrants, Latino youth were discriminated against by peers through derogatory comments that implied they did not belong in the United States. Youth were also called by offensive names, such as “wetbacks.” Latino children were further excluded and teased for their accents, phenotype, and for having Mexican parents. Parents additionally reported incidents of teachers discriminating against Latino youth for speaking Spanish and in treating them differently than other students.

Community. Within their community Latino children were impacted by these anti-immigration policies as well. Parents described that these policies increased negative perceptions and rejection of Hispanics in their communities. These negative perceptions towards Hispanics manifested in Latino youth experiencing discrimination from neighbors and peers in their neighborhoods. Parents reported that adult neighbors discriminated against Latino youth in forms of telling them to return to their country, threats to deport their parents, and the use of derogatory comments- all implying that Latino youth are unwelcome in the United States and not equal. Within their communities, Latino youth additionally witnessed raids where families were separated as sheriffs searched to deport undocumented immigrants.

Media. Parents also shared that their children were exposed to the negative effects of SB1070 and E-Verify through the media. In the news, Latino youth would learn about family separations due to deportation and raids that took place to detain undocumented individuals. Latino youth learned about the discrimination and racial profiling that occurred and they were exposed to political figures such as sheriff Arpaio. Parents reported that through the media their children also learned about the efforts made against these policies through the protests and advocacy marches that took place.

The anti-immigration social context that immigrant families faced became a reality to Latino youth in many ways. As they were exposed to the negative effects of SB2070 and E-Verify, Latino youth raised many questions about their social situation. For example, parents described how their children would have questions about the discrimination they experienced: *Why is the neighbor telling me to return to Mexico? Why would the neighbor tell me that he is going to take my parent away?* Other questions stemmed from the media: *What are the marches for? Why does the sheriff not like Mexicans?* Children began to make important questions and parents reported that there was a need to communicate and provide them with answers. *Why doesn't the president give you papers [parents] so that you can stay with me? What will happen to us if you're deported?*

Emotional Impact on Children

Parents in the study were asked how they believed their children were being emotionally impacted by anti-immigration policies. Parents shared a range of behavioral and emotional changes in their children, which shed light on the emotional impact that anti-immigrant policies have on children of immigrants. Four major themes were identified including (a) concern and sense of responsibility, (b) fear and hypervigilance, (c) sadness and crying, and (d) depression.

Concern and Sense of Responsibility

Participants shared that their children displayed constant concern. Children worried about the threat of deportation their families experienced and subsequent consequences of parental deportation. Parents' shared that children were concerned about what would happen to their parents if they were deported, what would happen if their family were separated, and what would happen to them (children) without their parents. Parents discussed that youth worried about their parents' safety upon understanding that they do not hold the same rights and could be

potentially deported. The following participant shared how her child worried over the threat of deportation and her parents' safety and emphasized that such concern is inevitable.

...si pobre los niños...mas ella dice ama no tienen que decir que no me preocupe... porque yo nací aquí. Ustedes son mis padres, como no me voy a preocupar? ...me preocupa ama, cuando tu sales a trabajar o que sales a la tienda o que salen tu y mi papa yo me preocupo. [...yes poor children ...mostly my daughter, she says 'mom you can't tell me not to worry' she tells me, 'because I was born here. You are my parents, how am I not going to worry? ...I worry mom, when you leave for work or leave to the store or when you leave with dad, I worry']

Along with concern, children experienced a sense of responsibility as a result of learning that their parents were undocumented and children recognize that parents have limited rights.

Participants described how Latino youth felt a sense of responsibility in helping change their families' circumstances.

...a mi niña le ha afectado saber que sus abuelitos están pensando que va a pasar esto[deportación], como ella, el otro día me pregunta que si ella me podía ayudar a mi o a su abuelita para que pudiera tener papeles aquí, y le dije ahorita no puedes hacer nada porque tienes diez años, y para que una niña de diez años esté pensando en eso, se me hace que son problemas que ella no debiera tener en su mente, ella tiene que ser niña y divertirse.[... my daughter has been affected in knowing that her grandparents think about what will happen in regards to deportation, like she, the other day she asked if she could help me or her granny to have papers here, and I said right now you cannot do anything because you're ten years old, and for a ten year old girl to be thinking about this, I feel these are problems that she should not have in her mind, she has to be a girl and have fun.]

The following quote describes another similar case where children expressed a sense of responsibility for their parents in wanting to protect them.

...pues sí él dice mi niño "cuando yo este grande yo te voy arreglar los papeles." Porque él ya sabe de todo eso pues de que nosotros no tenemos...El de nueve...y mi el chiquito dice que va a ser policía y nunca nos va a parar. [...well yes my child he says "when I am older I am going to fix your papers." Because he knows all that, well that we do not have them...the nine year old... and my, the little one says that he will be a cop and will never stop us.]

Children's sense of responsibility fueled their desire for their parents to have papers and to have the same opportunities they have. Accordingly, youth displayed a desire to help their parents fix papers. A participant described "*ella entiende porque no vamos a México porque no tenemos papeles, ella entiende muchas cosas. Y a veces me dice ella, que de grande va ser de inmigración porque ella me va arreglar... 'Yo te voy arreglar mami,' dice.*" [She understands why we don't go to Mexico because we don't have papers, she understands many things. And sometimes she tells me, that when she is older she will work in immigration because she will fix papers for me, 'I will fix your papers mommy,' she says.]

Fear and hypervigilance

Parents described that a state of fear was prevalent in children. Children's concern about the threat of deportation and its consequences developed into a constant state of fear that parents would be deported. Consequently, Latino youth feared that their family would be separated and undocumented children feared potential deportation. The following participant's narrative illustrates the state of fear children experience in being surrounded by the threat of deportation.

SB1070 esa. Sí. Se siente uno inseguro de que mira uno al alrededor a veces que conoces familias, um vecinos, y que, y que ya el policía lo paró que ya se lo llevaron. Dejaron sus hijos solos, su esposa sola y se siente uno muy inseguro de esa, en esas leyes que meten así tan duras... Con eso mis hijos a veces están como temerosos ah porque ellos oyen más en la escuela, que el niño ya, el amiguito, su papá ya no está con ellos y, y ellos cuando vamos como a citas de doctor o cualquier cosa que vamos a, que salimos así y ellos preocupados. Este poniéndose cinturón y este todo porque dicen que que "mami viene un policía" este y se preocupan. Se preocupan mucho y, y ellos yo veo que crecen con eso, con ese miedo. A los niños de uno. De uno de hispano pienso más con ese miedo, con esa angustia de que le vayan a arrebatarse a sus padres. Y yo tuve aquí un sobrinito que mis hermanos se fueron um y lo tuve en la escuela y, y yo veo ese sufrimiento tan, tan tremendo en los niños. Que los alejan de sus padres, de su madre crecen solos y mis hijos lo vivieron pues en esa forma. Y es muy difícil. Tanto uno, uno como los atiende como um como madre mira el sufrimiento de todas formas, de todos lados y es muy difícil. [SB1070 that one. Yes. One feels insecure in looking around, sometimes you know families, um neighbors, and that, and that the police stopped someone you know and deported them. They leave their children alone, wives alone and one feels very

insecure under those laws that they place so hard ...With that my children are sometimes fearful because they hear more in school, that the little boy and the little friend, his dad is no longer with them, and when we go to doctor appointments or anywhere when we go out, my children worry. As they put their seat belts they say, "Mommy there comes a cop" and they worry. They worry a lot and, and I see them grow with that, with that fear, with that anguish that the police are going to snatch their parents. And I have a nephew here that my brothers left behind when deported and I placed him in school and, and I witnessed that suffering so, so terrible in children. That they take them away from their fathers, their mothers raise them alone and, and my kids witness this in a way and it is very difficult. As one looks after them as a mother, one sees this suffering everywhere in all forms and it is very difficult.]

Parents further described how children's fear manifested into a state of hypervigilance. Parents are encouraged by their children to minimize their driving and to stay home as much as possible to avoid the risk of deportation. The following quote describes a child's hypervigilance as he feared his father would be deported.

...porque hay veces que escuchan en las noticias y ellos también se pusieron como tristes, como nerviosos pensando que algún día pues puedan sacar a su mama y su papa de este país ...Si, si ellos nos decían papa y si te llevan, no vayas a trabajar le decían a él y pues él le decía no mijo si yo estoy seguro, usted no se preocupe y cuiden a su mama y a mí me decía mi esposo no salgas cuando estaban las leyes esas. Y pues trataba de no salir para no, más que nada para no preocuparlo.[...because there were times children heard on the news and they also grew, like sad, like nervous thinking that someday, well they may deport his mom and dad from this country ... Yes, yes they said 'dad and what if they deport you, don't go to work' he would tell his father and well his father told him 'no son, I am safe, you do not worry and care for your mom' and then my husband would tell me, not to leave when these laws had just passed. And well I tried not to go out, more than anything to not worry him.]

Fear of Authority Figures. A subtheme that emerged in the data was children's fear of authority figures. Parents described how children began to make the association between authority figures and detainment/deportation of parents. Children feared authority figures such as policemen, sheriffs, firefighters, and political figures such as sheriff Arpaio and Jan Brewer. Children's perceptions of authority figures have changed from someone that can help you to

someone who is a threat to my family. The following quote illustrates how fear has influenced children's belief that authority figures are "muy malo," or very bad.

...son muy inteligentes verdad pero pues sí, sí, él sabe hasta la fecha de Joe Arpaio. Él sabe pues, él es muy malo [Arpaio] me dice...o vamos en el carro y luego vamos los tres, pues mi esposo, el, y yo...allá viene un sheriff me hace y yo no pasa nada le digo. Ah no, no nos quiere me dice y yo a veces yo le he dicho no pero a ti no te haría nada le digo. Pero a ustedes si, ama me dice, a ustedes si, se los lleva los papas los arrestan, dice les ponen esposas me dice él, no le digo y él me dice si me ha dicho a mí, dice ama dice ¿porque es malo con...con nosotros? [... they are very smart really, but well yes, yes, my son currently knows about Joe Arpaio. He knows well, he tells me Arpaio is very bad... or when we are in the car, the three of us, my husband, son and I ...'there comes a sheriff,' my son says and I reply to him nothing will happen. 'Ah no, sheriffs don't like us,' he says, and I sometimes tell him that they will not do anything to him. 'But sheriffs will to you, yes mom,' he says, 'they take parents and arrest them and handcuff them,' he says. No, I reply and he says, he has asked me, 'mom, why is Arpaio cruel with...with us?]

In some instances the threat of authority figures was manifested in more severe ways. A mother describes the trauma she has observed in her son, as he urges her to hide upon hearing nearby sirens.

...unas semanas después él oía las sirenas de los bomberos y él corría a esconderse. Una vez me tocó que estábamos en la lavandería y las escuchó pero yo no había puesto atención y él se quedó así "¡corre, mami, corre!" Y yo, "¿qué pasó?" Y él me jaló y se metió debajo de una mesa y me dice "es que es la policía. Escóndete. Escóndete." Y yo me quede como, pues se me hizo bien feo porque a veces uno no se da cuenta en los traumas que uno le causa a los hijos. Y ya pues con el tiempo le dije no, está bien. Él hasta la edad de siete años, ocho años él le tenía pavor a los bomberos, a los policías. Él era un miedo, él no le gustaba verlos o acercarse a uno de ellos. En las tiendas, por ejemplo, porque acá a veces están, él le daba miedo. No sé porque se quedó con la idea de que si no nos van a llevar [separar], te van a llevar a ti en un lado y a mí a otro. [...some weeks later my son heard the sirens of the firefighters and he ran for cover. One time he nudged me when we were in the laundry room, when he heard sirens, but I had not paid attention and he was like, "run, Mommy, run!" And I replied, "what happened?" He pulled me and crawled under a table and said "It's the police. Hide. Hide." And I was left like; well I thought it was very wrong because sometimes you do not realize the traumas that one can cause in children. And then eventually with time I said no, everything is fine. Until he reached the age of seven, eight years he was terrified of firefighters, policemen. He was afraid, he did not like seeing them or getting close to them. In stores, for example, because sometimes the police were near, he was afraid. I do

not know why he was left with the idea that if the police were not going to deport us, they were going to separate us and take his parent to one place and him to another]

Sadness and Crying

Another form of emotional impact was described by parents through the behaviors of sadness and crying. Behaviors and emotions of sadness and crying stemmed from the concern and fear Latino youth experienced from the threat of deportation and family separation. One participant stated, *“tanto se intimida uno, como se intimida los hijos y por lo mismo por lo que ven en la tele pues [mi hijo] llora mucho ahora con las separación de familias y pues los niños la vez que les afecta bien mucho a los niños.”* [Like one is intimidated, children are also intimidated, and for the same reason, for what they see on TV, well my son cries a lot now because of the separation of families and well children, you see are greatly affected, the children] The following quote describes how a child cried due to fear of deportation upon learning his parents and he didn't have papers.

...en el momento o en que empiecen a resonar pues a temprana edad pues también crecen con ese temor pues...una ocasión el más grande el que tiene once años cuando tenía nueve empezó a llorar, y yo le dije que no llorara verdad y todas maneras si nos agarran pues se quedan con su mama o se van [a Mexico]. O si lo agarran a él por casualidad cuando vaya a la tienda pues ni modos, se van y yo me voy después... (Facilitador: ¿Por qué empezó a llorar?)...Por lo mismo el temor cuando nos preguntó...¿Que porque teníamos nosotros ese temor?, pues que no teníamos como vivir aquí con documentos que somos ilegales en este país y vivir ilegal en un país pues no tiene derecho a nada le decimos. Entonces por eso el niño empieza tener temor verdad... [In the moment or as they start to reason at an early age, well they also grow with this fear...on one occasion the oldest that is eleven years old, when he was nine he started to cry, and I told him not to cry and that either way if they caught us they would stay with their mom or leave to Mexico. Or if he gets detained, by chance when he goes to the store then either way, they would leave and I would follow. [Facilitator: Why did he start to cry?]...For the same fear when he asked us...why were we fearful? Well we told him because we didn't have the means to live here in the US with papers, that we are illegal in this country and live illegally in a country with no rights to anything. So that is why my son began to have fear...yes.]

In other circumstances these behaviors were observed in the children who had a family member deported. Participants who had loved ones deported described how greatly their children were impacted by sadness and crying. The following participant described how her children grew sad and cried due to missing their father who was detained. This quote also highlights the complexity in explaining to children why parents are detained and why they are deemed “criminals.”

...también ellos se ponían tristes. Decían ¿mami este donde esta mi papi? Y yo hablaba con ellos, les decía está detenido mi amor, pero va venir de nuevo, va regresar con nosotros...Pero si ellos estaban tristes ellos decían ¿Que está pasando mami, porque a mi papi lo tienen detenido, que hizo? Le digo no hizo nada simplemente ah ellos no entienden que hay una ley que no permite al mexicano aquí. Oh que si los detienen tienen que ir detenidos ellos todavía no comprenden que situación se encuentran. Y yo trataba de hablarles de una manera y de otra para que ellos me entendieran sin que se tuvieran que sentir mal o tristes porque su papa estaba en problemas pero ellos, ellos pensaban que solo una persona que mata, o roba o hace algo uhm un crimen fuerte va a la cárcel. Entonces por eso ellos no explicaban porque su papá estaba detenido. Y yo a veces no tenía la forma de cómo explicarles las cosas bien a ellos y lo que podía yo los calmaba un poco pero siempre de noche era que extrañaban más a su papa y lloraban y lo buscaban por toda la casa porque él trabaja todo el día y llega como a las seis, siete de la noche...Y ya en la noche era cuando se sentían tristes porque decían no llega mi papi. [... they also became sad. They would say, mommy where is my daddy? And I spoke to them, I would say he is detained my love, but he will come again, he will return to us...But yes they were sad they would say, Why is this happening? Why is my daddy detained, what did he do? I would simply say he didn't do anything. They don't understand that there is a law that doesn't permit Mexican(s) here. Or that when they are detained they have to go detained. My children still don't understand the situation they are in. And I tried to talk to them one way or another for them to understand me without having to feel bad or sad because their father was in trouble but they, they thought that only a person who kills or steals or does something um a crime goes to jail. That is why they cannot explain why their father was arrested. And I sometimes had no way of how to explain things well to them and with what I could I calmed them a bit but always at night they missed their father most and wept and sought him around the house because he works all day and arrives at six, seven p.m... And in the evening was when they felt sad because they would say, my dad doesn't arrive.]

Overall sadness and crying were significant behaviors identified in children who fear deportation of their parents or self and those who had a parent deported. Children also displayed such behaviors when one of their parents relocated for work.

Depression

In some instances the changes in children's behavior were so severe that parents labeled their children as depressed. Similar to the motives for sadness and crying, depression stemmed from worry and fear of family separation and the threat of deportation. One case reported that depression arose from children witnessing parents worry about finances and the lack of employment. This next participant shares how her child grew depressed from the fear and worry that his parents would be deported.

...mi hijo entro en depresión por lo que se oía en la tele por lo que se hablan en las escuelas, por todo. De una vez lo encontré llorando en el cuarto al niño, estaba pequeño todavía, tenía como sus ocho años yo creo, ahorita todavía esta pequeño verdad pero este si como sus siete, ocho años y le digo porque lloras. Y luego dice es que dice no quiero ir a la escuela y luego le digo porque. Porque qué tal si yo estoy en la escuela y te pasa algo, le digo, mijo soy yo la que me debo de preocuparse si les pasa algo a ustedes. No dice porque qué tal si, si me dejas en la escuela y cuando regresas de la escuela ¿Te para un policía? Y entonces le digo no va a pasar eso, ni lo pienses, le digo mira hay que pedirle a Diosito que no vaya a pasar eso. Y si entro como en una depresión el así y lo tuve llevando también a psicólogos por eso. [...my son went into depression for what he heard on TV or for what was spoken in schools, for everything. Once I found him crying in the room, he was still small, he had eight years I think, right now he is still small right but yes like seven, eight years and I asked why do you cry. And then he says that he does not want to go to school and then I ask why. 'Because what if I'm in school and something happens to you', I say, 'son I am who should worry if something happens to you.' 'No' he says, 'because what if, if you leave me at school and when you return from school the police stops you? And then I say that will not happen, don't even think about it, I say lets' ask God for that not to happen'. And yes he went into depression that way and I had to take him to psychologists for that.]

In addition parents reported that depression was significant in children whose parents were deported. The following quote highlights how depressive symptoms of crying everyday developed in a child whose father was deported.

...mi niño el más chiquito es como más apegado a él. Él cayó como, en que depresión...pero él todo los días lloraba. Él siempre decía "le pido a Diosito para que mi papi regrese." Para que regrese. Entonces es, es muy feo para las familias. He mirado casos en la noticias cómo sufren y, y a veces también por ejemplo, si ahorita yo salgo y estoy sola, ando sola, no traigo a mis niños porque estaban de que si arrestaban a la persona, le quitaban los niños y se iban con el estado. Entonces no quería que pasara eso. [... my child is the youngest and most attached to his father. He felt like...that depression...he cried every day. He always said "I ask God for my daddy to return." Then it's, it is very ugly for families. I have looked at cases in the news how they suffer and sometimes also for example, if right now I go out and I'm alone, I walk alone; I do not bring my kids because the media showed that if they arrested a person, they took away their children and their children went to the state. Then I didn't want that to happen.]

Parent Responses

When asked what they could do to protect their children from anti-immigrant policies, parents revealed that they protected youth in multiple ways. Six major themes emerged from the data. The six themes fell into three focal areas including securing/promoting children's safety and wellbeing (i.e., *let children live their childhood, be prepared, send messages*); building parent capacity (i.e., *pursue education, obtain papers*); and engaging in changing efforts (i.e., *be proactive*).

Securing/Promoting children's safety and well-being

Parents demonstrated strong will to secure and promote their children's safety and well-being in three themes of *let children live their childhood, be prepared, and send messages*. Parents felt it was essential to address the threat of fear in their children's lives and aimed for their children to be children in the sense of not being overwhelmed by life stressors. Parents also prepared to ensure the safety of their children in case of deportation/detainment. In addition, parents sent valuable messages to their children to motivate them to continue achieving their

goals and to overcome obstacles. Within these themes parents prioritized to heighten their children's well-being and strengths to counter the negative effects of anti-immigration policies.

Let children live their childhood: Address fear experienced by children

In this first theme parents focused on their children's well-being and emphasized the need to address the fear experienced by children. Two subthemes were identified; parents were determined to, (a) shelter and protect children from fear, and (b) alleviate fear.

Shelter and protect children from fear. Parents revealed that children needed to be sheltered and protected. Parents expressed that the issues their children were experiencing should not be present during childhood. In essence, they believed children should be children, rather than worrying about the implication of policies. The following quote illustrates how a participant aimed to shelter her children from fear in order to care for their mental health.

Y que los mismos niños, yo creo que oían en las casas u oían noticias y eso [miedo], que para mí, eso no debe de estar presente en los niños. Porque uno como papas tiene que cuidar la salud mental de ellos, pues, por eso. Entonces yo creo que oían y comentaban todo eso y ellos se llenaban de temor... Ya están creciendo, a veces siento que tenemos que liberar a ellos de eso porque es nuestra responsabilidad. Mientras viva le digo yo mientras vivan bajo el mismo techo, es mi responsabilidad y de tu papa... Y muchas mamas, porque si yo tengo otras conocidas así que les digo que no hagan eso. Si tú estás mortificada para que mortifiques a tu hijo. El todavía no tiene esa responsabilidad de llevar cargando eso. Y es la tarea quitarles ese peso a ellos. [And the same children, I think they would hear it in their homes or in the news. And for me; that fear should not be present in the [lives of] children. Because, us like parents should care for their mental health... Then I think they would hear and they would comment all that and they would be full of fear... They are now growing up, and sometimes I feel that we should free them from fear because it is our responsibility. While I live, I say while they live under the same roof, it is my responsibility and their dad's. And many mothers, because I know a few, I tell them to not do that. If you are tormented, why do you torment your son? He still does not have the responsibility to carry with that. It is our homework task to take away that fear from them]

Participants felt it was their personal responsibility to address the fear in their children to restore healthier childhoods. Another participant describes how she was cautious with the information she gave her child in order to protect him from becoming fearful.

Entonces trato de decirle las cosas lo más sencillo que puedo de no darle tampoco tanta información porque pienso que a esta edad pues no, todavía no puede comprender mucho y a veces no quiero que comprenda tampoco mucho. Porque siento que en la niñez tiene que ser así como más este, como más relajado como que viva infancia sin tanto preocupación del mundo que hay afuera. Esa es mi manera de pensar. Ya tal vez habrá tiempo para que le explique mas, más cosas, porque yo veo muchas veces que papas hispanos tienen a los niños aterrados diciéndoles que tal vez en la noche ya no llegan y que no los quiere el Arpaio aquí y que los policías son malos porque nos están discriminando. Y yo no [So I try to tell them things the most basic way I can, to not give them so much information because in this age well no, the child cannot understand much and sometimes I do not want my child to understand a whole lot. Because I feel like childhood it should be more like, like more relaxed, like to live their childhood without so much worry that exists in the real world. That is my way of thinking. Maybe there will be time when I can explain more, way more things, because I see it a lot that Hispanic parents have their children terrified telling them that possibly at night they won't arrive home, and that Arpaio does not want them here, and that police officers are bad because they discriminate us. And I don't]

Other participants discussed that they protected their children by choosing not to talk about the negative effects of policies at all in the home. The following parent describes the efforts made to avoid such conversations with the intention to protect their children from experiencing fear.

Pero si siempre tratamos de, de no hablar cosas así de... pues como de racismo, de cosas ilegales de uno, de todo eso tratamos de no hablar con ellos. Porque se imaginan muchas cosas y se asustan. Vienen con, venían antes con un miedo de que si encontraban a su papa o a su mama en la casa no sé, si hubo un tiempo de que estaban muy nerviositos ellos. [But yes we always try to, to not talk about things like that, like of racism, about illegal things about us, of all that we try to not talk about it with them. Because they begin to imagine a lot of things, and they get scared. They come with, they use to come with fear wondering if they were going to find their mom and dad at home, I don't know, there was a time that they were very nervous.]

Alleviate fear. Parents emphasized the need to alleviate children's fear. Parents took various measures to alleviate their children's fear; (a) reassure child and family's safety, (b) reassure law enforcement is not bad, (c) discuss faith in God, and (d) seek mental health services

Reassure child's safety and their family's safety. In the first subtheme parents thought that it was important to comfort children and reassure them that everything would be okay and that they would be safe. Parents reassured their children by telling them there was no need to be

scared or worried about the fears they carried. Utilizing effective communication with children was identified as imperative element in providing such reassurance. The following quote highlights the importance of communication with children to enforce reassurance of both the child's safety and family's safety.

Pues tratar de hablar más con ellos, mas comunicación, um, también no asustarlos porque hay veces que escuchan las noticias y ellos también se pusieron como tristes, como nerviosos pensando que algún día pues puedan sacar a su mama y su papa de este país. Y nosotros hablábamos con ellos y les decíamos, no mijos ustedes no se preocupen, ustedes están seguros. Si nos pasa algo pues mandamos por ustedes para que nos los lleven o un familiar que tenemos aquí y el este pues a ver qué hace para que estén bien. [Well try and talk to them more, more communication, uhm and also to not scare them because there are a lot of things when they hear the news, and they also get sad, like nervous, thinking that one day they could take their mother and father out of the country. And we talk to them and we tell them you guys should not worry, you guys are safe. If something happens to us, we will send someone to you guys to bring you to us or to a family member that we have here and they will do whatever possible so you guys can be okay.]

Reassure that law enforcement was not bad. In the second subtheme parents responded to the fear their children had towards authority figures. Participants took efforts to reassure their children that law enforcement was not bad. Instead they explained that policemen are positive figures that care about their safety. Parents began to encourage youth to trust policemen and that they can depend on them for aid and protection. Parents also projected positive views about sheriffs by reassuring children that sheriffs would not harm them. Such reassurance is illustrated in the following quote.

...yo por ejemplo le digo los policías están aquí para cuidarnos y si algo pasa malo y si algo tu vez que no está bien va a ir un policía a tu escuela y...y puedes contar con el sí en una emergencia puedes acudir con un policía. No quiero crearle la idea de que el policía está para arrestar a su mama, ¿me entiende? Siempre trato de darle esa mejor imagen... [Me for example I tell them that the police is there to take care of us and if something bad happens and if something is not right, a police will go to school and you can always count on them in case of an emergency for help. I do not want them to believe that police is there to arrest their mom. You understand me? I always try to give them the best image...]

Discuss faith in God. Many parents turned to their faith in God as a means to alleviate their children's fear. In embracing religious beliefs, parents assured their children that God was with them to help and look after them. Parents also encouraged children to pray and assured them they were under God's care. One participant stated, "*Pues yo siempre les digo que estamos en las manos de dios y que dios nos va cuidar donde quiera que vayamos y ellos lo saben.* [Well I always tell them we are in the God's hands and that God will take care of us wherever we go and they know it.] Therefore, parents were able to access their religious faith as a strength and support in their efforts to alleviate children's fears. Another participant turns to her family's faith in God to keep her children motivated and hopeful.

Pues yo le digo que, pues que... que ojala y Dios nos ayude en esa parte para pues Obama nos dé la oportunidad y parte del congreso que tomen la decisión de pues que estemos legales aquí en este país y que tengamos los mismos derechos que los demás. Pues que vinimos a trabajar y salir adelante y pues no vinimos a causarles ningún daño a el estado. Vinimos a trabajar y sacar a nuestros hijos adelante. Yo le digo que pues este tranquila que Dios nos va a escuchar y un día vamos a estar bien y también tener la oportunidad que la familia que dejamos en México, un día poder ir a verlos...pues le digo a mi hija, pedirle a Dios... pedirle a Dios porque un día podamos tener un permiso para ir y venir y igual para ellos que sigan estudiando sin preocupaciones de, de que un día la policía los va a agarrar o inmigración. [Well I tell them that... hopefully God will help us in this part so Obama can give us the opportunity and part of the congress to make the decision for us to be legal here in the country, and to have the same rights as others. That we came to work and to succeed and we did not come to cause any trouble to the state. We came to work and to help our children succeed. I tell them to be calm that God will hear us, and one day we will be okay and also have the opportunity to see the family we left in México... Well I tell my daughter, to ask God, to ask God to be able to go and come back and also so they can continue with their education without worries from...a day the police can stop them or immigration.]

Seek mental health services. In addition, several parents sought supportive services to help alleviate the fear they saw in their children. Few participants turned to mental health professionals in such circumstances. As one participant voiced, "*Porque hay muchos niños que le lastimas su mente también y se creen tantas cosas que no deben de ser..., hay ojala y no siga*

así ella. Porque la tuve que llevar hasta al psicólogo.” [Because there is many kids that you hurt their mind also, and they believe so many things that should not be, and I hope she does not continue like that. Because I even had to take her to a psychologist] This quote demonstrates the concern parents felt which motivated them to access external supports.

Preparing for deportation

Under this theme participants identified that a way to protect their children was to plan for their well-being in case parents were deported. Parents articulated the importance of preparation and planning for what would happen to their children in such circumstances. Two subthemes were identified as forms of preparation through (a) letters of power and (b) informing children of plans.

Letters of Power. Under thoughtful preparation parents were compelled to write *cartas de poder* [letters of power or Statement of Guardianship] to protect their children. These letters were notarized documents to grant legal permission to trusted family members or friends to care for children in case parents were deported. With a notarized letter parents felt safer knowing their children would be in good hands, in case of deportation and family separation. The following quote shows how preventative measures of writing a letter are taken to ensure the safety of children.

Bueno una cosa que yo hice, fue que hice una carta notariada. La hice a nombre de mi prima porque ella es una ciudadana Americana y le sedi la custodia de mis hijos...Pero yo le puse allí le notifique que en caso que algo me pasara a mi o a mi esposo...ella se podría hacer cargo de mis hijos. Igual si me deportan, pues le di consentimiento de que ella los podría reclamar con la condición de que claro me los llevaran para allá. Pero eso quedo hablado nada más porque en la carta pues no le puede decir que me los va a llevar. Porque ellos pertenecen a Estados Unidos [Facilitador: Y porque decidieron hacer esa carta?] Por miedo, miedo a que si nos llegaran a parar[policía] que andemos todos juntos, si me los llegaran a quitar, yo no quiero que se queden en una casa [referring to a foster home]. Porque al pasar eso, yo pienso que no los cuidarían como uno de papa. Y si en caso de que yo no pudiera reclamarlos, si los llegaran a poner a

adopción, los van a separar. Es más que nada miedo a que me los quiten... sí. [Well one thing I did is that I did a notarized letter. I did it under my cousin's name, she is an American citizen, and I gave her custody of my children... I put in the letter that in case something happens to me or my husband she can claim them, with the condition of her taking them to me. That was just in words, because in the letter I couldn't tell her that she is going to take them to me. Because they belong to the United States [Facilitator: And why did you decide to write that letter?] Because of fear, fear to be stopped by police if we are out all together, and they would take them away from me, I would not want them to stay in a foster home. Because if that happens, I do not think they will care for them as much as the parents. And in the case that I wasn't able to claim them, if there were to be put for adoption, they can separate them. It's more the fear I have to have my children removed, yes.]

This quote illustrates how fear was a motivating factor for writing a letter of power. Many parents felt the same fear of having their children taken away from them by the government. Participants also expressed feeling apprehensive in having to write such letters, because they believed children belonged with their parents. The following participant demonstrates this uneasiness.

...yo ya le he dicho a [mi hermana], que yo le voy hacer una carta de poder donde ella puede recoger a mis hijos en caso de que yo no pueda estar presente. Y pues ella me dice que sí. Entonces, por ese lado, sí me siento más desahogada pero también [pienso] pues por cuánto tiempo sería y todo eso me preocupa porque pues ella esta joven, está estudiando y está trabajando. Y no es responsabilidad de ella tener a mis hijos, yo sé que ella lo haría con todo gusto por ayudarme. Pero sí, se preocupa uno porque yo pienso que los hijos no van a estar nunca mejor en ningún hogar que con sus papas. Así sean los abuelitos, los tíos o lo que sea y nadie, nadie los va a querer como nosotros. [...I have told my sister, that I will write a letter where she can pick up my children in case I cannot be present. And she tells me yes. Then, on one hand, I do feel relieved but also I think for how long would it be and all that worries me because my sister is young, she is attending school and working. And it is not her responsibility to have my children, I know she would do it with pleasure to help me but I worry because I know that our children will never be better in any home but with their parents. It can be with grandparents, uncles or anyone else but no one, no one will love them as much as we do.]

Inform children of plan. Participants drew attention to the critical need to inform youth about the plans in place, in case of deportation. Parents described the importance of communicating and preparing their children about the reality of their situation. Participants felt

it was necessary to talk openly about the possibility of deportation as undocumented parents.

This was done in order to prepare children in case parents were detained or deported.

Pues primero explicarles, del mejor modo, la situación que esta para que no les tome de sorpresa si algo llega a pasar, pues ellos ya sabían que podía pasar. Um tenerlo listos con toda su documentación: pasaporte, ID, seguro, todo. Y tener todas las cosas en un solo lugar que cual que todos en la familia saben en donde están para que sea fácil que cualquiera las pueda agarrar. Y pues eso como para que ellos [niños] sepan que es lo que va a seguir en dado caso de que pase algo así o que pues nos vamos a ir o vamos hacer esto. Un plan, tener un plan. [Well first explain to them, in the best way, the situation so they won't be taken by surprise in case something happens, well so that they know what can happen. Um, have all of their documentation: passport, ID, Social security card and everything ready and have all these things in one place so that all family members know where to access them, so it can be easy for anyone to grab. And that will be done in order for the children to know what will happen next in case something happens, and whether they will leave or will do this. A plan, to have a plan.]

Along with preparing their children parents focused on comforting them when talking about the plans in place in case of deportation. Parents felt it was essential to reassure children about their safety and reassure them that measures would be taken to ensure the well-being of their family.

Claro que sí. Hablarles abiertamente y decir mira la situación esta sí, pero eso no quiere decir que tienes que librarte, nada que hay si tengo miedo, no tenemos porque es la realidad. Ósea decirle a los hijos, por ejemplo mi hija está bien, mi hijo no. Entonces le digo yo a ti [oficiales] no te van hacer nada porque eres menor de edad. Pero le digo puede suceder que agarren a tu papa o me agarren a mi, pero no te mortifiques todo va estar bien, porque hay parte de la vida que está a nuestro favor. Y [le digo] si tenemos a alguien que nos apoye como una abogada le digo, luego sale, así que no deben de tener miedo, y ya. [Yes of course. Talk to them openly and tell them that this is the situation, but that doesn't mean that you have to allow yourself to be fearful, because in reality there is no reason to be scared. Like, telling our children, for example my daughter is okay, my son is not. So I tell him officials won't do anything to you because you are under age. But I tell him, it may happen that they detain your dad or they detain me, but you shouldn't get mortified because everything will be fine, because life is in our favor. And I tell him we have the support of a lawyer, I tell him, they will come out, so you should not be scared and that's it.]

In addition, other forms of preparation included financial planning. One participant described how she took initiative to save three months ahead in bills with her husband. This family had a parent deported and the spouse was able to care for the children and household due to the money

they had saved specifically in case of emergencies. Therefore, this preparation proved valuable to promote the well-being of children when families were separated.

Send Messages: Preparing children for their future

Another way parents protect their children from anti-immigrant legislation is by encouraging them and providing them with valuable advice. There were three underlining messages parents expressed; (a) *Lucha y estudia*: “Education is Important,” (b) *Tienes derechos*: “You have Rights,” and (c) *No andes por malos pasos*: “Be a Model Citizen.” With these messages parents aimed to promote resilience and perseverance by enhancing youths’ internal strengths in order for them to combat the negative effects of anti-immigration legislation. Parents also used such messages to inspire their children to continue to achieve their goals and dreams. Therefore, by sending their children powerful messages, parents sought to empower youth to overcome challenges and to achieve success.

Lucha y estudia: Education is Important. Participants in the study stressed the value of education to Latino youth. Parents encouraged children to apply themselves academically and to study so that they may have successful futures. One participant stated, “*creo que lo principal es...que estudien mucho, que se preparen muy bien, porque pues ya al momento de...estar bien preparado...para ellos se les puede abrir más caminos que a uno.*” [I believe that it’s the most important, well for them to study to be prepared, because at the moment, they need to be prepared...then they can have more opportunities than us.] Other parents also identified with this similar desire for their children to obtain better jobs and opportunities than they had. Parents recognized that these goals and ambitions could only be reached through education. The following quote illustrates how a parent motivates her child to prioritize his education.

Pues como le hemos dicho de que, por ejemplo hablando de, de trabajo pues, de que si...si él lucha y estudia y sigue luchando [en escuela], pues que él no vaya estar trabajando como por ejemplo como su papa, que trabaja en el sol. Entonces que él se enfoque en estudiar para que agarre un trabajo más, bien pagado donde él no esté por ejemplo a soleando. Ósea en algo, eso es lo que más le decimos al niño. [Well we have told him that, for example talking about a job, that if he strives and studies and he keeps working hard in school, well so that he won't end up working for example like his father, who works under the sun. So he should focus in school so he can get a well-paid job, where he won't be working in the heat. Like, that is something that is what we most often tell our son.]

Tienes derechos: You Have Rights. Participants felt it was essential to talk to their children about their rights as US citizens or as documented residents. As parents communicated this message they highlighted the privileges Latino youth had available to them. For example one parent talked about children's right in travelling outside of the country, "*Ustedes tienen el privilegio de tener papeles, tienen un seguro y pueden entrar para acá y nosotros no. Entonces yo he tratado de explicarles.*" [You guys have the privilege of having papers, you guys have a social security and you guys can enter here and we can't. So I have tried to explain it to them.] An additional form in which parents talked about children's rights was to inform them on their future right to vote.

No anden por malos pasos: Be a Model Citizen. Another important message participants enforced was for Latino youth to become positive role models in society. Overall participants stressed positive behavior and encouraged youth to stay away from any wrongdoing. As one participant shared, "*Pues de enseñar también a mis hijos que no anden en malos pasos que nos bien porque también les digo a ellos...y que no deben que, que andar haciendo malas cosas sino que se porten bien.* [Well to also teach my children not to go on wrong paths, I also tell them...they shouldn't be doing bad things, to only behave.] Parents further advised children

to avoid drugs or gang affiliations and avert negative peer influences. The following quote illustrates how a participant constantly reminds her children to avoid such negative influences.

y tratar de que pues no anden metidos en malos pasos como drogas, pandillas, y todo eso. Hablar con ellos...y está bien que tengan a sus amigos, que salgan a pasear... pero que no se dejen llevar por malas amistades que los pueden meter en drogas y en miles de cosas, alcoholismo y todo eso. Yo hablo mucho con mi hija, pues yo soy la persona que estoy allí siempre hablándole. A veces me dice, “ay ya me dijiste eso mama,” pero yo le digo, “te tengo que decir mil veces para que no se te olvide.” [And to try to not be in bad paths like drugs, gangs and all that. To talk to them and to be good and have friends and to go out and hang out... but to not be negatively influenced by bad friendships that could get them into drugs and many other things like alcoholism and all that. I talk to my daughter a lot; I am the person that is always talking to her. She tells me sometimes, “you already told me this mom” but I tell her “I have to tell you a million of times so you won’t forget it”.]

Building parents’ capacity

Parents demonstrated that they were engaging in efforts to enhance their own capacity.

Two main themes were identified as parents worked on pursuing education and obtaining papers. Parents maximized their ability to provide for their children and families as they focused on their own education. Participants also worked on obtaining legal status in the United States with the goal of being able to provide more opportunities for their families. Overall parent’s felt the need to build their own capacity to be able to better protect and care for their children.

Pursue Education

In this theme participants responded that a way to protect their children from anti-immigrant legislation was by pursuing more education. Parents highlighted the importance of more education and revealed their determination to (a) return to school and learn English, and (b) learn their rights and be politically informed.

Return to School and Learn English. Parents voiced that it was important for them to return to school and learn English. Many participants in the study were actively taking classes to

earn their GEDs. Participants shared that education was the key for opening doors to better employment and opportunity for their families. With these opportunities parents would be able to support a better lifestyle for their children. Parents also described that returning to school and learning English were initial steps to maximize their eligibility for any future immigration reforms. The following quote illustrates how a participant turned to education to overcome obstacles for the wellbeing of her family and children.

Yo ya me metí ha estudiar mi GED... porque yo me quiero superar. Yo le digo a mi hijo yo para un día si nos dan una reforma o algo yo quiero estar preparado le digo. Con mi ingles que se y si agarro mi GED yo ya puedo agarrar un trabajo mejor le digo para ustedes [hijos] para ayudarles y pa' futuro. Y yo les digo a ellos les digo primeramente dios en un futuro para tener nuestra casa o para vivir mejor porque batallamos mucho. [I enrolled to study for my GED...because I want to better myself. And I tell my son that I want to be prepared in case one day they give us an immigration reform or something, I want to be prepared, I tell him. With the English that I know and if I complete my GED, I can now get a better job, I tell my son for you and your siblings, to help you in your futures. And I tell them, hopefully with God's blessing, for the future so we can have our own house or to live better because we have struggled a lot.]

The following quote further demonstrates how motivation to learn holds no limits, as a participant describes striving to develop her capacities in order to better support her children.

Pues me ha motivado de, de que yo tengo que aprender inglés y de echarle más ganas. No es nada más de que ya estoy yendo a la escuela pues tengo que aprender algo. No. Yo le echo ganas y yo voy a aprender inglés más rápido de lo que yo mismo me imagino. Y sí ya me comunico más con los maestros de mis hijos, con los doctores, en la tienda...Y pues yo quiero estudiar que lo primero es aprender inglés. Y después quiero irme a la universidad aunque sea una carrera corta pero yo tengo que ser alguien....Aquí están mis hijos que me recuerdan que que tengo que seguir para arriba, para arriba siempre. Y por ellos voy a ser alguien. [I have been motivating myself that, that I need to learn English and to put more effort into it. It's not only because I am going to school now and because I have to learn something. No. I put effort and believe I will learn English faster than I imagined. And now I communicate more with my children's teachers, doctors, in the store... And I want to study but the first thing is learn English. And then I want to go to a university even if it's a short career but I have to be someone. My children are there as a reminder that I have to always move forward, always, and I will be someone for my children.]

Learn Rights and Be Politically Informed. Parents additionally stressed the importance of being educated about their rights as immigrants as well as being politically informed. In this subtheme, parents studied or attended classes to learn rights and how to defend themselves in case they were asked for their papers. One participant stated, “...yo pienso que [tenemos que] estudiar porque así puede darse uno cuenta de que uno puede luchar y que uno tiene derechos.” [...I believe we have to study because then you can learn that one can fight forward and that we have rights.]. Another participant shared, “Educarnos, pienso que educarnos y conocer si, si hay leyes...en las que nosotros tenemos derecho de... de expresarnos. Pienso que eso es bueno.” [Educate ourselves, I believe that we have to educate ourselves and learn about laws that allow our right to, to express ourselves. I believe that is a good thing.] Participants also discussed the importance of learning their rights in order prepare for their family in case they were deported.

Participants also elaborated that they should be educated on legislation and which laws were supportive towards immigration views. The following participant shares his experience in attending classes to learn about voting and political candidates that were supportive towards the immigrant community.

... más que nada involucrarse más en todo ese en la comunidad y...educarse. Educarse más...para estar muy bien informados y...votar porque eso es...lo único que alomejor puede cambiar que no metan tantas leyes de esas [restrictivas], verdad...yo ahora que estoy ahí en la escuela he ido a diferentes clases de educación para padres, a de la comunidad y dan clases un padres e hijos también. En la comunidad este dan mucha información sobre, sobre los candidatos...vienen las votaciones y todo eso hay mucha información que, que éste candidato es así y así y él otro es piensa de esta forma de otra y ahí es donde uno debe de, de involucrarse y y, y conocer que es él lo mejor, qué candidato es el mejor para la comunidad en general, verdad. Y y de ahí pues sí habría cambios tal vez más. [...more than anything get involved more in within the community and to educate yourself. Educate yourself more to be better informed and to vote since that's the only thing that can make a change to not let so many restrictive laws...right now I am in school and I have attended different classes for parents, of the community,

and they teach classes for parents and children also. In this community they give lots of information over, over candidates, over politics, and when voting gets near there's lots of information that discuss candidates' beliefs in this and others think in another way. That is when one should get involved and be able to recognize who is the best candidate, what candidate is better for the community in general, right. And from there, well there could be changes maybe more.]

Obtain Papers

Many parents responded that a way to protect their children from anti-immigrant legislation was by obtaining papers and legal status. Participants recognized the value in filing for undocumented parents as a form of fostering Latino youth well-being.

File for undocumented parents. The main reason participants filed for documents was to provide their children with a better future. By gaining legal status participants shared that they could pursue better employments and opportunities to support their families better. Participants gave examples of how they were filing for papers under DACA, U-Visa, or were preparing themselves in order to qualify for any future immigration reforms. One participant stated, *“Aplicar con eso...de los dreamers...para arreglar para poder trabajar mejor. So de allí trabajando ya uno mejor ya tienes más posibilidad de ofrecerles más cosas a los niños. Una mejor casa.”* [To apply for that...of the dreamers...to be able to fix and be able to work better. From there one works better and has more possibilities to offer more things to our children. A better house.] This quote demonstrates how participants focused more on the positive impact children would experience in having documented parents.

Be Proactive: Engaging in change efforts

In the final theme, parents responded that a way to protect their children from anti-immigrant legislation was by being proactive. Parents who displayed proactive responses advocated taking action for change in policies and in their communities. When referring to anti-

immigrant policies one participant affirmed that parents should, “*Pelearlas, sea lo que sea.*”[Fight them, whatever it takes]. Parents described two ways they could engage in opposing anti-immigrant legislation; (a) unite and march and (b) increase communities’ political involvement.

La union hace la fuerza: Unite and March.

Parents discussed the importance of uniting as a community to support changes in anti-immigrant legislature. They emphasized the need to unite to fight forward for change, primarily through participating in marches for immigrant rights. The following quote illustrates an example of the proactive mentality participants embraced.

...yo pienso levantar la voz, la verdad. Eh, yo pienso que como padre tienes que, que rasguñar y ver de dónde y levantar la voz y hacer que este gobierno haga algo por las personas que no tienen papeles porque si, si es triste, si es duro... Yo pienso que tiene que ver una unión de todas esas personas y echarle para delante para poder conseguir algo. La unión hace la fuerza. [...I believe in raising our voice, right. I believe that as a parent you have to seek and realize how to raise one’s voice and to act so the governor can do something for people who do not have papers, because yes it is sad, and it is hard... I believe that there has to be a union amongst all these people, and to fight forward to be able to gain something. The union builds strength.]

Another participant highlights the need for parents to take action and matters upon themselves.

...y aparte yo pues pedir seguir pidiendo por una reforma migratoria ir a las marchas. Y apoyar porque pues así como yo que por ejemplo dice uno hay no sí que la reforma pero si no apoyamos, si no nos sumamos. No nos podemos quedar sentados en el sillón esperar que otra gente haga por nosotros lo que nosotros queremos para el bien de nosotros. [...and also well to request, continue requesting for an immigration reform by going to marches. And support because well for example others talk about the immigration reform but we do not actually support if we do not work together. We cannot stay seated on the couch waiting for others to do it for us, accomplish what we want for ourselves, for our own good.]

In addition, parents also shared how they included their children in marches and taught them the values of communal support and union. The following participant addresses how the inclusion of Latino youth can promote the expansion of unity.

...yo diría si todos nos juntaron lograríamos algo pues porque no todo el tiempo va siempre el mal, el mal ósea. Tener nosotros también tenemos que poner nuestra parte, tenemos que luchar para lograr algo...podríamos uhm enseñarles a ellos[niños] a que también como ellos son una nueva generación a que también a, a como le puede decir. A que también nos apoyen y ya seríamos mas nosotros. Seríamos más gente pues más unida. [...I say that if we all joined each other we would be able to accomplish something, because not every moment will be bad. We have to, we also have to put in our part, to be able to fight for something... we can show youth that they are also a new generation, as you can call it, to also support and we would be more. We would be more people, more people united.]

Political Involvement

Participants felt it was necessary to be more actively involved in politics in order to effectively make progress. In addition to being educated and aware of policies and candidates, parents responded it was important to engage in more proactive approaches. Participants reported that they took more direct measures of political involvement to promote changes in anti-immigrant legislation. Examples of proactive involvement were shared by participants as they encouraged people to vote for supportive candidates, called senators to give voice to the community and to take steps to advocate towards changing laws. The following participant highlights the need to vote in order to act and change restrictive policies and demonstrates more political action.

...para empezar hay mucha gente que puede hacerse ciudadana y no se hace ciudadana. Entonces yo por ejemplo trato de las personas que yo conozco a que se hagan ciudadanos y pueden ejercer su derecho al voto. Y entonces de esa manera nos apoyan a los que no, no tenemos la documentación legal...apoyar también cuando [comunidades] están haciendo alguna manifestación...con el gobierno [para demostrar] de que estamos aquí, de que queremos un cambio...he ayudado...dar apoyo mandando cartas y mandando cartelones. Cuando dicen que hagan llamadas a los senadores para dejar mensajes también lo he hecho [...for starters there are many people who are eligible to become citizens and have not become citizens. For example with the people I know, I try to encourage them to become citizens so they can exercise their right to vote. Only then, in that way they can support those, who do not, do not have legal documentation ...also support when communities are making any manifestation... with the government to demonstrate that we are here, that we want a change...I've helped...to support sending

letters and sending posters. When they say to make calls to senators to leave messages, I've also made them.]

DISCUSSION

Given the political context in Arizona of restrictive immigration policies in the past decade, the purpose of this study was to explore the emotional impact of these policies on Latino children. Informed by ecological theory, this study focused on Latino immigrant parents' perceptions on how they believe their children are being emotionally impacted by anti-immigration policies and how they believe they can protect their children from the negative effects of these policies. Overall, participants perceived that anti-immigration legislation and sentiment had an emotional impact on Latino youth. Parents indicated that they engaged in protective measures to counter the negative effects of these policies.

Emotional Impact

Parents perceived that Latino youth were emotionally impacted due to exposure to anti-immigrant social-political context. Participants observed a range of behavioral changes in their children, informing the following themes: concern and sense of responsibility; fear and hypervigilance; sadness and crying; and depression. Emotional impact from immigration enforcement and family separation has been noted in research that reported equivalent behavioral changes in Latino youth including excessive crying, increase in fear and anxiety (Chaudry et al., 2010) and fear, stress, and depression due to the threat of deportation (Capps et al., 2007). Consistent with previous research, participants in this study reported that youth cried due to being concerned about their family's situation, cried after family members were arrested, and experienced strong concern, sadness, and fear about being physically separated from their parents (Chaudry et al., 2010; Capps et al., 2007; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Dreby, 2012).

Additional findings have been consistent with other research, as parents identified that children and families were further impacted by financial insecurity, community fear, family fear, social isolation, discrimination, and arrests and deportation (Chaudry et al., 2010; Capps et al., 2007; Androff et al., 2011; Ayón et al., 2012; Capps et al., 2004; Dettlaff, Earner, & Phillips, 2009).

An important finding revealed that some parents reported that symptoms of sadness and crying intensified to the point that they believed their children were depressed. This is a significant finding in light of research that states that Latinos tend to hold a stigma towards mental health disorders (Capps et al., 2007; Aguilar-Gaxiola et al., 2012). In order to meet the needs of their children parents are moving beyond the stigma held for mental health problems. This is a necessary step in order to secure the wellbeing of their children.

Findings indicate that emotional impact of anti-immigrant policies was observed among children whose parents had been deported as well as those who feared the threat of deportation. While children whose parents are deported may be impacted in more ways, such as through the loss of economic security and absence of an additional caregiver, children whose parents were not deported also exhibited similar behavior changes. This finding suggests that Latino youth are emotionally impacted by the threat of deportation alone. Dreby (2012) also found that the threat of deportation affected children in Mexican immigrant families as they consistently worried about the stability of families and fears of family separation, regardless of legal status or their family members' involvement with immigrant authorities. However, Dreby (2012) expanded that the mere threat of deportation further impacted communities as a whole. Latino immigrant communities nationwide are impacted by this threat as they are compiled of members with different legal statuses (Dreby, 2012). Moreover, this finding suggests that the threat of

deportation has ripple effects as it impacts all children in immigrant families regardless of whether the threat of deportation is imminent or not.

Participants further reported that children's fear manifested into fear of authority figures. Parallel fear towards law enforcement authorities has been noted in literature (Chaudry et al., 2010; Dreby, 2012) as children feared that law enforcement officials would return to arrest their family members and children do not understand the difference between immigration officials and policemen. Parents reported that children who were aware of parents' undocumented status, experienced increased fears (Chaudry et al., 2010). Research has also shown that Latino youth grow to fear police officers due to the impact of discrimination and racial profiling from anti-immigration legislature like SB1070 (Ayón & Becerra, 2013).

Two key findings in this study that have not been well developed in previous literature were children's hypervigilance and sense of responsibility toward their family. Parents reported that children's fear manifested into a state of hypervigilance. Children exhibited hyper-vigilance as they persuaded their parents to reduce leaving their home as much as possible and sought to protect for their parents (e.g., hiding under a table). Children engaged in these efforts in order to ensure the safety and well-being of their parents and families. With hopes to maintain family well-being, parents reported that children further demonstrated a sense of responsibility towards their family. Children sought out ways to help parents to have the same opportunities as they are privy to; for example, by helping their parents obtain legal status or "fix their papers." Children's sense of responsibility and efforts to protect their parents may stem from Latino cultural *familismo*, which treasures strong family values and support (Molina & Alcántara, 2013). The threat of deportation places their family at risk, thus contradicting the cultural value of strong family unity. This finding illustrated how cultural values are deep rooted and

transferred to children at a very young age. Due to the threat of family separation, Latino youth may be experiencing hypervigilance and sense of responsibility as they struggle to protect their own family.

In addition, Mexican immigrant families live with the risk of trauma (Salas, Ayón, & Gurrola, 2013). The findings in this study suggest that Latino youth in immigrant families may experience emotional trauma. Similarly Salas and colleagues (2013) found parents linked the effects of immigration legislation to children's trauma in the form of fear, intense nervousness, and depression (Salas, Ayón, & Gurrola, 2013). Previous literature focused on the impact of war and catastrophes, has reported that children experience emotional trauma in the form of excessive crying, intense fear and insecurity, nervousness, anxiety, recurrent fear, and intensification of specific fears (Williams, 2006) and symptoms of anxiety and depression (Werner, 2012). The results in this study show that Latino youth in immigrant families are exhibiting similar symptoms, as they suffer from the hardships of family separation, family migration, and live in a constant state of uncertainty. The parallel in symptoms is alarming and stresses the need for policy change and social intervention.

Parent Responses

Findings indicated that parents are taking efforts to protect Latino youth from the effects of anti-immigration legislature. Specifically parents aimed to improve the situation of youth and their families by enhancing protective measures in the three focal areas including securing/promoting children's safety and wellbeing (i.e., *let children live their childhood, be prepared, send messages*); building parent capacity (i.e., *pursue education, obtain papers*); and engaging in change efforts (i.e., *be proactive*). These results are important because it demonstrates that Latino parents are concerned for the well-being of their children and do not

wish for them to suffer from the negative consequences from policies. Similar to previous research, parents aimed to and worked towards securing their children's futures (Chavez, Lopez, Englebrecht, & Viramontez Anguiano, 2012).

Participants aimed to protect children by sheltering children from fear and alleviating existing fear. In addition, parents communicated constant reassurance of youths' safety, family safety, and reassured youth not to fear law enforcement. Youth were told that authority figures were positive figures that could be trusted for ensuring safety and protection. However, participants reported difficulties in explaining these complex issues since there was a reality that law enforcement can deport parents. Challenges in communicating such complex issues may be influenced by children's cognitive thinking. Participants in this study had children ages 7-12, and these ages fall into the concrete operational stage in Piaget's theory. According to Piaget's developmental theory, children in this stage begin to think logically about concrete events but have difficulty understanding abstract concepts (Ashford & Lecroy, 2010). Therefore, children may have trouble understanding such complex situations in immigration, due to their cognitive level and concrete thinking.

Parents further alleviated fear by accessing both internal and external supports. Internal support was seen in parents that promoted spiritual coping by discussing faith in God with their children. Evidence suggests spiritual coping is positively associated with health outcomes in adolescents (Cotton, Zebracki, Rosenthal, Tsevat, & Drotar, 2006), and additional research found that religious beliefs and spiritual faith serve as protective factors to moderate the impact of emotional trauma in children (Werner, 2012). Parents sought out external support such as mental health professionals and psychologists to help alleviate fear in children. Parents recognized that their families' situations and circumstances heavily impacted the mental health of their children

and saw a need for mental health services. This finding supports research that shows how Latino immigrant families' identify the need for mental health care and preventive services within an anti-immigrant climate (Ayón, 2014). It also contradicts previous research describing the general reluctance of Latino immigrants seeking mental health care and how stigma prevents Latinos from seeking mental health services (Capps et al., 2007; Aguilar-Gaxiola et al., 2012)

Participants also worked on securing and preparing for children's well-being in case of parental deportation. Consistent with research, participants embraced *familismo* as they relied on family networks to care for children during arrest and detention and for emotional support and assistance (Chaudry et al., 2010; Capps et al., 2007). A finding that has not been well developed in research was the method of using *cartas de poder*, letters of power, to protect children.

Participants used letters of power to place their children in the care of trusted family members in case parents were deported. The finding of letters of power is important to research because it highlights the great lengths that parents are taking to ensure the safety of their children. Parents reported that they were compelled to write these letters due to the fear of having their children taken away from them by the government.

Parents also prepared their children by informing them of their situation and the plans in place in case they were deported. We observed that parents have different perspectives in terms of disclosing their documentation status. Some parents believed that preparing children and informing them about their situation was essential, while others wanted to shelter youth and protect them from learning about these realities. A reason for this difference may be that parents who choose to prepare and inform youth, are aware that children are constantly exposed to the effects of policy outside of the home. They understand that children are still likely to learn about their documentation status and potential risks. Parents who selected to protect and shelter their

children, by not talking about their situation, may think their children are too young to be exposed to such information, may not understand the powerful influences their children are exposed to outside of the home, and may find it difficult to process such topics with their children.

In addition, parents sent important messages to their children to encourage them. These messages carried a common theme of preparing youth for their futures, by encouraging youth to value education, know their rights, and be model citizens. Such messages were used to promote and enhance children's internal strengths, to build more resilient traits against the negative effects of anti-immigration policies. Participants may have also provided these messages to focus on building their children's self-esteem and self-worth as they face external challenges. Research has shown that parental involvement and encouragement is critical to the process of child development of self-esteem and personal identity, and that positive parenting allows children to reach their full potential (Nystul, 1984). For example, a previous study found that maternal support (e.g., warmth, affection, sense of being valued) was positively associated with Latino adolescents' self-esteem, while maternal monitoring was positively correlated with boy's self-esteem (Bámaca, Umaña-Taylor, Shin & Alfaro, 2005).

Parents further engage in efforts to protect youth by engaging in efforts to enhance their capacity (i.e., seeking more education and obtaining papers) and change their communities (i.e., proactive behaviors). They modeled hard work and perseverance to children by pursuing their own education, learning English, learning their rights and by being politically aware. Parents also worked towards obtaining papers for their undocumented children and for themselves. Participants additionally advocated for their families' well-being as they engaged in proactive behaviors to make positive changes in policies and in their communities. Many joined marches

that fought for social justice where immigrants voiced concerns for national immigration reform. Consistent with other research, participants indicated that they marched with their families for their human rights and their right to live and work in the United States (Cordero-Guzmán, Martin, Quiroz-Becerra, & Theodore, 2008).

Some participants voiced the importance of families marching together, as their children marched with them. It is estimated that up to a million children and adolescents participated in immigrant rights marches in 2006 (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008). Family participation in immigrant marches has been noted in research to unite family members of different generations and legal statuses and to reinforce family bonds (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008). Immigrant marches have also held strong emotional importance for families with close parent-child interaction and in youth who express personal concern for their parent's legal status (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008). Research further shows that families learned about immigrant marches within their communities in work, church, ethnic media, school, youth groups, and peers (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008).

In general, participants stressed the need for healthy communication with children. Parents felt it was important to provide their children with explanations to the questions they raised about their social situation. This finding is consistent with a previous study where Latino immigrant parents identified the need and importance of family communication to promote family well-being (Ayón & Quiroz, 2013). In efforts to provide youth with answers to their questions, some participants reported that they struggled and had difficulty with explaining such difficult topics with children. For example, participants found it difficult to explain the concept of papers, deportation, and discrimination. Consistent with other research, parents struggled with the challenge of explaining the deportation of a family member, and may have left some children unsatisfied with their explanations (Capps et al., 2007).

Overall the ecological systems theory highlights how participants targeted the different systems in children's lives as they focused on protecting youth in the areas of children, parents, and the environment. Within the systems, parents protected youth in both direct and indirect ways. In the family microsystem, parents' interactions with their children focused on promoting their children's safety and wellbeing (e.g., *Let children live their childhood, Be prepared, Send messages*). In the mesosystem and exosystem, participants directly and indirectly protected youth by reaching out to external supports, and by aiming to *Obtain Papers* and *Pursue Education*. At the exosystem and macrosystem, parents continued to use indirect ways to protect children in their fight for changes in communities and policies, as they strived to *Be Proactive*.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, it cannot be generalized to describe all immigrants' experiences due to the study taking place in the Southwest and under the unique political context of the state of Arizona. Secondly, this study was based on parents' perceptions of their children's emotional impact and children were not interviewed. This study suggests further research be done with youth participants to gain more knowledge on how Latino youth are emotionally impacted. Another limitation is that the majority of participants were female leaving unexplored gender differences on the perception of emotional impact of children. Yet this study has several strengths to contribute to the research literature. This study adds important knowledge about how immigrant families in the Southwest are impacted by anti-immigration policies. Specifically, these findings help gain more insight on how Latino youth are being emotionally impacted by immigration policies. In addition, this study provides the opportunity to learn from the stories of hardworking immigrant parents who are engaging in efforts to protect their children from the negative effects of anti-immigration policies.

Social Work Implications

The findings in this study are important and relevant to social work practice. Latinos are the largest ethnic population in the United States; thus it is highly probable that social workers will encounter Latino immigrant families in their practice. For this reason, it is essential for social workers to be well informed on the strengths and needs of immigrant families, in order to better serve and advocate for their well-being. The findings inform social work practice by highlighting the emotional toll anti-immigrant climate takes on children and the resiliency and strength parents exhibit in their efforts to protect their children. The emotional impact can be detrimental to Latino youth's well-being and this study suggests the need for social work intervention at the individual level, family level, and community level. Specifically, there are implications for social work intervention in the areas of mental health services, parenting services, community services, social policy, and future research.

Mental Health

At the individual level, there is a need for social work clinical practice to serve Latino youth in immigrant families through mental health services. To begin, parents indicated that the children exhibited a range of behavioral changes (i.e., crying, sadness, fear, concern) as they feared family separation and parental detainment/deportation. Additionally, parents believe their children are traumatized and exhibiting symptoms of depression. These findings suggest that efforts are needed to extend services to children in immigrant families. Moreover, social workers in immigrant dense communities need to be aware of the challenges such families experience and the emotional needs of these children. Training is needed to ensure that services provided to these families are culturally informed and contextually situated (i.e., accounting for the political climate). Preventative efforts should also be supported by conducting educational

workshops in community based agencies that serve Latino/immigrant populations. Educational workshops could identify behaviors parents should look out for, provide guidance for what parents would do in mild cases, and provide resources for more extreme scenarios.

Parenting

At the family level, there is a need for social work practice to work with immigrant families and parents. The exploration of parents' efforts to protect their children from anti-immigration policies is critical for promoting strengths based practice in social work. The results indicated that parents are finding direct and indirect ways of protecting youth and are accessing internal and external supports. Such information reveals the numerous strengths that parents possess in protecting their families. Social workers can utilize this information to further promote and foster the strengths and resilience that Latino families have in facing anti-immigration policies. For example, social workers can promote these identified strengths through individual counseling, family counseling, in parenting classes, or in support groups.

At the same time, findings expose the obstacles and struggles that some parents experience as they strive to protect their children from the negative effects of anti-immigration policies. Some parents found it challenging to talk about difficult and complex immigration related issues with their children. This finding has implications for social work to increase education on healthy communication styles, on child development, and children's cognitive functioning. Nonetheless, the results in this study show that many parents are choosing to talk to their children about these difficult topics. Whether parents are prepared or not, children have questions about immigration and documentation issues. Thus, parents need to be prepared to engage their children in conversations about these issues.

The majority of parents also disclosed that they were prepared and had a plan in place in case a parent was deported. For instance, parents reported that they were learning their rights as immigrants, writing letters of power, preparing their children, and relying on family supports. The finding in this study highlights that parents are taking preventative measures to protect their children. Implications for social work call for further family interventions and awareness to inform parents of their rights and ways they can protect their families and children in case a family member is deported.

Community

The results in this study have social work implications to promote more community intervention and awareness. Parents in this study identified that the threat of deportation alone can emotionally impact children, and Dreby (2012) further expanded that the mere threat of deportation further impacted communities as a whole. This highlights that the effects of anti-immigration policies are impacting immigrant families and greater communities. Therefore, there is a need for social workers to advocate for and serve immigrant families in fostering community education, community building, and community support. Social work intervention at the community level, allows for promoting community empowerment to decrease the oppression experienced by immigrant families. For instance, social workers who work in community centers can create programs focused for the Latino immigrant population. These programs can address education on mental health in families and the impact of external stressors, such as anti-immigration policies, on families and youths' well-being. Such programs can promote social supports within immigrant communities and promote steps for healthy family and community building. In addition, these programs can allow members of the community to support and motivate one another as they face and overcome obstacles as immigrants. The results in this

study may also be applicable and beneficial towards improving social work practice with other immigrant groups and immigrant communities.

Social Policy

The emotional impact on Latino youth found in this study stresses the need for comprehensive immigration reform. Anti-immigration policies and sentiment are taking an emotional toll on children of immigrants, most of whom are U.S. citizens; thus, placing their health and wellbeing at risk. These experiences can have long term consequences as children may not be able to focus in schools and thus limit their educational aspirations and ability to contribute to society as an adult. Efforts are needed to educate lawmakers on the emotional impact that these policies have on Latino youth. Policy changes are needed that take into account the unintended consequences, such as the emotional suffering innocent children are experiencing.

Future Research

Future research is needed to examine parent-child communication in immigrant families on difficult topics such as deportation, immigration status, and discrimination. Overall, parents disclosed that Latino youth raised questions about their social situation. Many parents expressed it was important to provide their children with explanations to their important questions. This finding highlights the need for more research to explore how children's important questions are being addressed in Latino immigrant families. There is also a need to explore appropriate and healthy steps parents should take when addressing difficult topics. The findings showed that some parents decided to shelter their children from fears by not talking about the implications of documentation in the home. Meanwhile others felt it was essential to prepare their children and be open with them about the consequences of anti-immigration policies. Findings would help

guide future interventions that promote healthy parent-child communication to ensure Latino youth well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to social work research aimed towards advocating for oppressed Latino youth and immigrant families. Pérez (2004) emphasized that it should be a national priority to ensure the well-being of Latino youth in the United States. In approximately 10 years, around 35% of Latinos who are currently children will be contributing to the nation as workers and taxpayers and they will be impacting the future economy (Pérez, 2004). It is also estimated that by 2050 there will be more Latino school aged youth residing in the United States than non-Latino white youth (Fry & Gonzalez, 2008). These estimates stress the great influence Latino youth will have in America's future and the importance of promoting their well-being. In order to ensure the well-being of Latino youth, social workers must address the barriers and policies that impact this population today.

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