

CHILD WELFARE AND THE CONSERVATION OF LATINO MIXED-STATUS

FAMILIES

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A Thesis

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

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by

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I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, brother, sister, nieces and nephews; you all are my inspiration and motivation in life. To my parents - your hard work and sacrifices throughout my life have made me the woman I am today. Thank you for your love, support, and encouragement throughout my education.

Me gustaría dedicar este trabajo a mis padres, hermano, hermana, sobrinas, y sobrino; todos ustedes son mi inspiración y motivación en mi vida. Para mis padres- todo su trabajo y sus sacrificios, me han hecho la mujer que soy hoy en día. Gracias por su amor, apoyo, e interminable ánimo durante mi educación.

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## ABSTRACT

The enforcement of immigration has dramatically increased over the past decade placing the immigrant population at significant risk for deportation (Zayas et al., 2015). Brabeck and Xu (2010) suggests that although there has been an increase in the deportations of undocumented immigrants there is limited research on the effects of immigration enforcement on mixed-status families. This study used an exploratory qualitative research design to capture the retrospective experience of U.S. citizen adult children of undocumented parents. Semi-structured interviews with eight respondents were conducted to examine the impact of parental detention or deportation on mixed-status families' well-being. Thematic analysis found that family dynamics were affected and child welfare and emotional well-being were jeopardized upon the detention or deportation of a parent or parents.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Immigration is one of the most discussed issues today as a result of our current political climate. There has been a significant increase in removals of unauthorized immigrants from the U.S. since 1990, rising from approximately 30,000 to nearly 400,000 annually today (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). Roughly 5.5 million U.S. children live in mixed-status families, in which at least one family member is an undocumented immigrant in the United States. This family member may be a parent or a sibling, therefore making them (the undocumented parent or sibling) susceptible to detention and deportation from the United States in any given moment (Passel and Cohn, 2011). Brabeck and Xu (2010) suggest that although there has been an increase in the deportations of undocumented immigrants, there is limited research on the effects of immigration enforcement on Latino mixed-status families. Effects here refers to the impact that detention or deportation of an undocumented parent (or parents) may have on Latino mixed-status families. These effects include parents with higher vulnerability of being affected by immigration enforcement. These parents often report that immigration enforcement disrupts the family's environment (parent emotional stability, hardships to provide for the family financially, and relationships with their children). In addition, effects also refer to the impact this experience has on children in these families, which include the child's mental health stability and educational performance (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). The reinforcement of immigration policy and massive deportations has led to the

detention and deportation of many undocumented individuals. Many of those who are deported are mothers and fathers of U.S. born citizen children. The researcher is interested to further analyze a variety of parental detention or deportation impacts on children and mixed-status families. These include the following: possible effects children may encounter include changes in parent and child relationships upon parental detention or deportation, the change in the relationship between children and their siblings, the emotional distress that children may experience with the detention or deportation of a parent, and overall child well-being with the immigration enforcement experience.

An impact on mixed-status families may include familial separation. Familial separation may result from a parental separation upon detainment or deportation from spouse and children. Another possibility of family fragmentation may arise from the detainment or deportation of both parents and the involvement of child protective services, and this often results in the entire family being separated. Other consequences mixed-status families may encounter as a result of immigration enforcement include financial burdens and changes in family dynamics. Lastly, the researcher was interested in investigating the impacts that immigration enforcement has on undocumented parents, such as malpractices from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or malpractices from child protective agencies, or unjust court hearings for undocumented parents with the involvement of child dependency court. The participation of a child protective agency is commonly associated with the involvement of dependency court, which has been reported to threaten immigrant parents' parental rights, to the point of parental rights being terminated (Andrapalliyal, 2013; Hall, 2011; Zug, 2011; Thronson, 2010).

Qualitative research is needed to determine the impact of parental detention or deportation on child well-being and mixed status families. This was done by capturing the narrative, first-hand experiences of these individuals.

Attachment theory suggests that the attachment between a parent and child is essential not only to social and emotional development, but for a child's overall well-being (Thompson, 2008). Immigration enforcement disrupts a child's environment in many ways. One example of this can be that with immigration enforcement, one or both parents can be removed from the home causing detrimental effects on the well-being of children by creating a single-parent family or leaving the child with other caregivers (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). Behavior issues also arise from this experience. Brabeck and Xu (2010) indicate that U.S. born children of undocumented Latino parents are affected developmentally by a variety and complex factors such as the implementation of detention and deportation laws and policies. A previous study by The National Council of La Raza (2007) examined three communities that experienced workplace raids. This study reported that the immediate aftermath of these raids affected 500 children, mostly U.S. citizens. The research indicated that the consequences for these children included: feelings of abandonment, symptoms of trauma, fear, isolation, depression and family fragmentation. Previous quantitative research, despite limitations, has suggested a link between vulnerability and experiences of deportation such as negative financial consequences and poor outcomes for parent and child emotional well-being (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). It is necessary to consider previous research findings that support the effects

that parental detention or deportation have on children, undocumented parents, and mixed-status families.

This study used qualitative methods to capture the experience of U.S. citizen adult offspring of undocumented immigrants. The study explored and analyzed the narrative, first account experiences of adult Latinos that lived through the detention or deportation of an undocumented parent while they were minors. A semi-structured interview was conducted with participants and questions determined whether the family was separated and remained separated, or separated and later reunified upon the detainment or deportation of the undocumented parent. This study explored how parental detention and deportation impacted the well-being of children and the conservation of their mixed-status families. This chapter will include background information on this issue, the statement and severity of this problem, the proposed study, any definition or clarification of terms or concepts presented, a discussion of primary research question, an elaboration of theoretical frameworks utilized, an explanation of the research design, and lastly the significance of this study.

### Background

The historic amount of detentions and deportations over the last several years in the United States cannot be ignored. There are an estimated 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants currently residing in the U.S. and one-third, 33%, live in the U.S. with a citizen child (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). Due to massive deportations and detentions, many households are being led by a single parent and left with a greater financial burden upon the detention of an undocumented parent (Brabeck & Xu, 2010;

Cavazos-Regh, Zayas, & Spitzangle, 2007; Zayas, Aguilar-Gaxiola, Yoon, & Rey, 2015). There are cases in which a family is left without both parents, and the citizen child is placed in foster care. Andrapalliyal (2013) stated that data suggests that the U.S. government removed approximately 46,000 immigrant parents of U.S. citizen children in the first six months of 2011 alone. There are currently at least 5,100 children in foster care whose parents have been detained or removed; these numbers represent a significant increase in rates of removal, prior removal proceedings reported removing 108,000 parents of U. S. citizen children from 1998 to 2007. The probability of children not reunifying with their undocumented parent is high due to the complexity of these immigration cases (Andrapalliyal, 2013; Thronson & Sullivan, 2012; The Applied Research Center, 2011). *Shattered Families*, a report by the Applied Research Center (ARC) (2011), was the first national investigation of threats to mixed-status families with the involvement of immigration enforcement. In addition, this study assessed how the intersection of immigration enforcement and the child welfare system placed mixed-status families at greater risk for fragmentation. This report also investigated how citizen children placed in foster care were prevented from reunifying with parents that were affected by immigration enforcement. Furthermore, the study also observed that the child welfare system did not seek to reunify mixed-status families that were affected by parental detention or deportation. *Shattered Families* confirmed the findings of Andrapalliyal (2013) on parental deportations at the beginning of 2011 and confirmed the number of children placed in foster care as a result from parental detention or deportation. The report estimated that if immigration enforcement rates continue at this

level, within the next five years at least 15,000 more children would enter the foster system and face barriers to reunification with their parents and families. The *Shattered Families* (2011) report also found that in counties where local police have signed 287(g) agreements with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, children were 29% more likely to have a detained or deported parent than in other counties. The *Shattered Families* (2011) report also identified at least 22 states where mixed-status families have been impacted and cases that were mentioned above have escalated within the last two years. Furthermore, the *Shattered Families* (2011) report also found that immigrant victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence are at risk of losing their children and reported that one in nine of the stories recounted in the Applied Research Center (ARC) interviews involved domestic violence. These findings should be considered when addressing immigration enforcement.

According to Jacobson and Durden (2014), there are over 33,000 men and women who are separated from their families and are held in immigration detention facilities throughout the United States. There are many cases where parents are continuously transferred from one detention facility to another without the possibility of informing family members, but most importantly their children (Hidalgo, 2013; Thronson, 2010). These transfers make the reunification process more difficult once parents are detained or deported. Lansdale and colleagues (2015) stated that parental legal status is often excluded when it comes to determining the well-being of a citizen child. Mckenna (2011) says that on a national level, the objectives of family law and immigration law conflict when parents are being deported. She claims that an all-inclusive systemic response is

necessary to prioritize family unity, while respecting the rights of U.S. citizen children who remain in the country after a parent has been detained or deported. Upon examining the current system, Mckenna (2011) identified issues with the treatment of U.S. citizen minors, or in many cases these children are overlooked upon the detention or deportation of parents or other family members. Mckenna (2011) also found that these children in these complex circumstances often suffer the consequences of a defective immigration system. Mckenna also stated that child advocacy is needed in these complicated cases. Mckenna indicated that since there is no government sector monitoring this issue, the exact number of children with deported parents versus how many actually depart with their families is unknown. Parental legal status cannot be overlooked because studies suggest that it has a significant impact on children. Severe trauma as a result of the sudden parental separation leaves many U.S. citizen minors remaining in the U.S. with behavioral changes. These behavioral changes include: changes in eating or sleeping habits, aggressiveness, crying, feelings of abandonment, poor academic performance, live in fear, and report higher levels of anxiety, just to name a few (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Gulbas et al., 2015; Zayas et al., 2015; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Mckenna, 2010). The difficulties that arise when a parent is detained or deported may contribute to the permanent separation of mixed-status families.

Brabeck and Sibley (2016) state that the lives of mixed-status families are circumscribed by over twenty years of legislation that focus on restricting opportunities for these families as well as increasing their susceptibility to detainment or deportation of their families. Thronson (2010) states that lawyers and advocates have argued that

children living in mixed-status families are indeed threatened by U.S. policies and that the enforcement of these policies endangers unauthorized parents. Brabeck and Sibley (2016) state that the lives of these families are confined by failed legislation that restricts their opportunities and heightens their vulnerability to deportation. Policies and laws further increase the vulnerability of mixed-status families and undocumented parents.

Immigration laws can provide harsh consequences if broken. For example, if an undocumented parent overstays a visa, the consequence to that would be that the parent will not be eligible to come back to the U.S. until ten years have passed. This is under the assumption that parents would be legally allowed to come back into the U.S. (Zug, 2011). Another implementation of immigration reform is Secure Communities, in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is supposed to detain and deport individuals with criminal records. Secure Communities allows the detention and deportation of permanent residents as well. If ICE finds it necessary to detain and deport a permanent resident due to a criminal record, a permanent resident, although lawfully present, can still be at risk for detention and deportation. There are times that ICE considers a traffic ticket or other minor crimes as substantial evidence to detain and deport a permanent resident (The Applied Research Center, 2011; Kohli, Markowitz, & Chavez, 2011). For example, with local authorities signing 287(g) agreements, federal immigration enforcement uses local police and jails to detain non-citizens. According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2017), the 287 (g) program is one of ICE's major initiatives that grants state and local law enforcement to work together in immigration enforcement under the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Under this

program, local authorities obtain permission from the federal government to enforce immigration laws within their jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the implementation of Secure Communities has not been followed as planned, and many innocent undocumented individuals are detained and deported constantly. Brabeck, Lykes, and Hunter (2014) stated that Secure Communities (SC) purportedly intended to deport migrants with violent criminal convictions. Kohli, Markowitz, and Chavez (2011) reported that data confirms that half of those deported with Secure Communities had either no criminal conviction or a minor conviction such as a traffic offense. These are some examples of how the application of immigration legislation further complicates the life of undocumented individuals.

Malpractices of the child welfare system, ICE, and family courts may also promote the separation of mixed-status households. The intersection of these systems with the integration of negligent practices worsens the experience for citizen children and mixed-status families. For example, there are times in which the child welfare system does not complete reasonable efforts to contact the detained parent (Dettlaff, 2012). The lack of or inability to communicate with a detained parent is because ICE does not permit the detained parent access to a phone to contact the family members, children, or the social worker that is working on their case. Due to the lack of communication from the detained parent, the court has reason to believe that parent is not interested in taking part in their child's life, which often leads to the unlawful termination of parental rights (Andrapalliyal, 2013; Thronson, 2010; Rogerson, 2012). According to Hall (2011), parental unfitness is enough for an undocumented parent to lose parental rights over their

children if a judge finds the parent guilty. Hall (2011) also states that another reason that parents are losing their rights over children is due to "immigration violations." The intersection and malpractices of these systems contribute to the undocumented parent's vulnerability and the lives of their citizen children, which often leads to family separation. The well-being of citizen children is jeopardized by parental detention or deportation and threatens the conservation of their mixed-status families. Policy and legislation were developed with the intention ease the detention and deportation of undocumented individuals. Policy and legislation often lead to the issue of sudden separation of the citizen child from their undocumented parent. Another problem this adds is that children and families lose contact with the detained parent because ICE does not allow them to communicate via telephone.

#### Definition of Terms

Child Well-Being Although U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants are entitled to the same rights of the any U.S citizen child from an American citizen, realistically children with undocumented parents may run a greater risk of having their well-being jeopardized (Yoshikawa, 2011; Phinney et al., 2001; Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). These children are placed under circumstances where they may lose their undocumented parent at any time with immigration enforcement. Phinney and colleagues (2001) state that children are influenced by messages received from family and their community. Since this community is constantly under stress as a result of their legal status, which then transmits to the parent, children are aware of their situation. Children then live in fear and have high levels of anxiety, affecting their emotional well-being

(Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). Landale and colleagues (2015) argue that children of Mexican immigrants run a greater risk of depicting internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Internalized behavior refers to fearfulness, anxiety, and being upset or sad. Externalizing behaviors included aggressiveness, talking back to parents, and acting out in school.

Anderson and colleagues (2002) point out that despite immigration policy, the well-being of children of immigrants is rarely studied. Previous studies that analyzed child well-being in mixed-status families have incorporated a child's psychological, academic, and social welfare (Gelfand & Teti, 1990; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012). Adequate development refers to a child meeting developmental milestones based on what is considered appropriate for their particular age. Other studies focus only on a child's mental health when addressing child well-being (Gulbas et al., 2015). There does not appear to be a consensus on defining child well-being of children in mixed-status families. The differences may result in the various goals of each study. However, there is a commonality of incorporating a child's psychological health when evaluating a child's well-being. Child well-being has been measured by analyzing a child's mental health, academic performance, and assessing for appropriate development. For the purpose of this research, when examining a citizen child's well-being in their mixed-status family, the following will be considered: a child's psychological health, physical health (this would include assessing for any discrepancies in development), and academic performance.

Mixed-Status Families Mixed-status families are referred to as families in which family members have mixed legal statuses within one family. These families have at least one

family member that is an unauthorized immigrant (usually the parent, but the family member may also be a sibling) and minor children are U.S. born citizens (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). Researchers often define this term as a family that consists of both undocumented and citizen individuals. Zayas and colleagues (2015) define mixed-status families as families where children are U.S. born citizens and have an undocumented parent or undocumented parents. Previous studies agree in defining mixed-status families. This study identified mixed-status families as a family that consists of individuals of mixed legal status, specifically where the parent is not legally authorized (unauthorized immigrant) to reside in the United States.

Undocumented/Unauthorized Immigrant An unauthorized immigrant is commonly defined as a foreign-born individual that does not have legal status in the U.S. Many undocumented immigrants have either entered the U.S. without being stopped or detained at the border when entering the country illegally, or these unauthorized immigrants were provisionally admitted in the U.S. and failed to leave upon the expiration of their provisional visa (Center for Immigration Studies, 2016). Previous research acknowledges that unauthorized immigrants may have entered the United States through the methods listed above and often specify the form of entry in the research conducted. Brabeck and Sibley (2016) also define an unauthorized immigrant as an individual that is unlawfully present in the United States. Additionally, Zayas, Aguilar-Gaxiola, Yoon, and Rey (2015) state that undocumented immigrants entered the U.S. illegally or entered legally with visas, but remained in the U.S. upon the expiration of those visas. Previous research appears to be in consensus in defining an undocumented or unauthorized immigrant. In

this research, the terms undocumented or unauthorized immigrant will refer to an individual who intentionally entered the United States illegally, an individual who was admitted temporarily and overstayed the visa, or who entered the United States without inspection.

Voluntary Departure Voluntary departure refers to cases in which an undocumented immigrant voluntarily leaves the U.S. This method of removal may or may not have been ordered by an immigration judge. An undocumented immigrant allowed to depart voluntarily concedes removal, but failure to leave within the designated time granted can result in a fine and a ten-year ban to several forms of relief from deportation (USCIS, 2016). Previous studies have defined voluntary departure as an undocumented immigrant departing the United States voluntarily before being deported. Studies have been inconsistent in defining this term. In this research, voluntary departure will refer to an unauthorized immigrant parent leaving the United States voluntarily before being ordered deportation.

### Statement of the Problem

During a time where detentions and deportations continue to increase (Dreby, 2012), there has been a lack of empirical interest on U.S. citizen children and their experiences dealing with the immigration status of their undocumented parents. Existing literature has focused on experiences where parents voluntarily leave the country to prevent future deportation (Brabeck & Sibley, 2015). This line of research does not necessarily capture the experiences of sudden detention or deportation of an undocumented parent. One of the significant gaps within this field of study is the failure

to capture in-depth experiences of U.S.-born children's encounters with immigration enforcement concerning their undocumented parents. Dreby (2012) states that in comparison to voluntary separations, little is known about the influence forced separations have on children and their families. In addition, not much is known on how children respond to these forced separations.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of detention and deportation of undocumented parents has on undocumented parents' parental rights, the well-being of their U.S. born children, and the conservation of their Latino mixed-status families. Current research focuses on statistical data rather than capturing and thoroughly analyzing the experiences of undocumented parents and their U.S. citizen children. Much of the research indicates the gap in considering the impact and the damaging effects that detention and deportation of an undocumented parent have for their citizen children, leaving to question the well-being of these citizen children. Furthermore, current research also suggests that parental rights for undocumented parents are eliminated almost immediately due to the lack of communication these parents have with the child welfare systems in which their children are placed. Thronson (2008) states that this often occurs because ICE fails to provide these parents access to a phone or transport them to court hearings in which their children's custody is being discussed; thus, their parental rights are terminated due to their lack of participation in these proceedings.

## Proposed Study

### Primary Research Question

This qualitative research study will focus on the lived experiences of citizen children in mixed-status families. The purpose of this study is to capture the narrative and first-hand experience of citizen children upon the detention or deportation of a parent. The study also looked at the influence that the detention or deportation had on the family as a whole. Another major aspect that was assessed was the process that the parent went through during the time of detention or deportation. Lastly, a major factor that will also be considered is whether during this process the family was separated, conserved, or separated and then later reunited. The primary objective of this research was to analyze the well-being of citizen children and the conservation of their Latino mixed-status families.

### Theoretical Framework

The two theories that used in this study are Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Social Ecological Theory. Critical Race Theory addresses every aspect of an individual's life and takes into consideration any barriers that may interfere with these experiences. Critical Race Theory also considers the systems of oppression through lived experiences of individuals. Social Ecological Theory focuses on the context of an individual and analyzes how this affects the individual. Critical Race Theory and Social Ecological Theory will be further discussed below.

Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) begins with basic perceptions of reality and states that racism is normal (Delgado and Stefancic, 2013). Since CRT

indicates that racism is normal, therefore part of society. Racism is ordinary and is normalized in an individual's culture. Another component of CRT critiques liberalism and describes a deep discontent with systems within society. Delgado and Stefancic (2013) also state that one of the most characteristic approaches in Critical Race Theory is storytelling and the analysis of the narrative. The narrative is important because it demonstrates an individual's reality from their account. CRT also discusses differential racialization. Abram and Moio (2006) refer to differential racialization as "Dominant social discourses and people in power can racialize groups of people in different ways, at different times historical, social, or economic need" (p.251). Critical Race Theory is a fundamental approach when conducting qualitative research to obtain empirical data that reflects an individual's reality.

Critical Race Theory was used in this study to underline the disproportionality of the undocumented community, their U.S. citizen children, and their mixed status families. It allowed the researcher to gain better insight on the decisions made by Child Protective Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and decisions made by immigration judges and family court judges with these immigration cases. Critical Race Theory states that vulnerable populations, such as the immigrant community, face ongoing barriers in society. Malpractices on behalf of Immigration and Customs Enforcement or by Child Protective agencies with undocumented parents and mixed-status families would reflect one of these barriers. Critical Race Theory allowed the researcher to determine the oppression that is present in this community's everyday life. In addition, CRT helped acknowledge obstacles that are present for undocumented parents, citizen children and

mixed-status families. Since this research is based on U.S. citizen children experiences with the detention and deportation of their undocumented parents, the researcher incorporated the use of narratives in this study. This research acknowledged other forms of oppression that participants and their families encountered, such as language barriers, inaccessibility to adequate resources, unjust court hearings, or not being educated on their legal and fundamental rights.

Social Ecological Theory. Social Ecological Theory aims to explore an individual's environment and the effect that it has on his or her social functioning (Pardeck, 1988). Brabeck and colleagues (2014) state, from the social, ecological lens, that when a parent is unauthorized and at risk of deportation a child is impacted through other contexts affected by the parent's vulnerability. The unauthorized status of a parent may have positive and adverse effects on the child since this model can be placed in multiple contexts, from individual to societal. Brabeck and colleagues (2014) also state that children experience both risk and protective factors at different layers of context. These settings include distal (policies or the parent's work conditions) to the proximal (the family process). Through this research, these factors were assessed to determine if the parent's vulnerability influenced the child at the time of detention or deportation.

Sociological theory allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the context of the participants and their families. The researcher assessed the influence that parental detention or deportation has on citizen children and their mixed-status family. Policies and legislation were also taken into consideration when conducting this research to determine the impact on the lives of citizen children, their undocumented parents, and

their mixed status families. After addressing these factors citizen children, their undocumented parents, and their families potentially encounter, the effect these may have on their social functioning were addressed and discussed.

### Research Design

This study was a qualitative research design whose primary objective was to capture the narrative experiences of citizen children, their undocumented parents, and their mixed-status families. Mack and colleagues (2011) state that qualitative research consists of seeking answers to a question, systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to respond to the questions, collects evidence, produces findings that are not anticipated in advance, and produces results that are applicable beyond immediate boundaries of the study. Through this research, the researcher seeks to validate narratives and experiences with each of the participants interviewed. Mack and colleagues (2011) also stated that qualitative research aims to understand a given research problem or topic from the person or population's perspective experiencing the problem. Krauss (2005) states that the complexity of meaning in the lives of people has much to do with how meaning is attributed to different life events. The researcher captured the participant's individualized experiences through semi-structured interviews.

This research focused on the narrative of adult U.S. citizen children who experienced parental detention or deportation of an undocumented parent or parents while they were minors. This research was intended to improve the way certain issues are handled or addressed to provide solutions (Bradbury & Reason, 2003). The procedure followed was: get IRB approval, development of interview questions, obtaining

participants (through mutual colleagues), and conduct semi-structured interviews to collect data, and lastly analyze collected data.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to ameliorate the experiences for citizen children, their undocumented parents, and their mixed-status families. The main goal of this study was to analyze if the experience of parental detention or deportation has an impact on a child's well-being. The data included information from individuals who have experienced the detention or deportation of a parent or parents and will include their narrative. The researcher utilized their experiences to determine if their cases were handled according to the protocol that was to be followed according to child protective agencies. This would then allow the researcher to develop potential solutions to ongoing issues that are stated by participants. This study was intended to be action research, this being said, the researcher wrote letters to Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services with research findings of malpractices.

Many people or agencies will be able to use this data. Social workers, lawyers, judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the child welfare system, detention center facility staff and many others. The individuals and organizations listed would be able to use this data to gain insight into the first-hand narrative experience. This data may also help identify potential barriers for this community as well as provide more guidance on the complexity of these cases. Data can be used by people and organizations to understand, learn, and acknowledge that there is an issue with the handling of these cases

and possibly be better practitioners because of it. There are various ways in which organizations can utilize this data. Organizations may use this information to develop additional resources for undocumented parents, citizen children, and their mixed- status families. Also, this research may allow people and practitioners to be better informed about this matter and possibly advocate for this vulnerable population when necessary. This data may also be used by other students to gain better insight on this issue or perhaps conduct their research with the utilization of these findings. Furthermore, and most importantly, this data may be utilized by communities, individuals (social workers, lawyers, judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement organization, child welfare systems, non-profits, social service agencies, or training programs) to raise awareness about the severity and complexity of the difficulties of mixed-status families. Lastly, this data can also be utilized to initiate and implement change immediately to prevent further damages to this population.

The benefits for further research on in-depth experiences of children of undocumented parents may allow raising awareness about this issue. Further research may also lead to more insight on these children's experiences and the severity of the hardships they may encounter upon the detention or deportation of an undocumented parent. The experiences of their undocumented parents and the maintenance of their mixed-status families may also be recognized through these findings. Lastly, this may also provide the necessary information to possibly formulate a resource packet for mixed-status families nationwide and provide them with adequate resources. This resource booklet may be created by addressing what was needed or what could have been given to

these children, undocumented parents, and mixed-status families during their experience with immigration enforcement. Also, many undocumented parents are not informed of their fundamental legal rights or parental rights; therefore, they do not seek further legal assistance with their immigration cases or their open cases with the child welfare system. For instance, when parental rights are terminated undocumented parents believe that there is nothing they can do to gain custody of their citizen children, therefore family separation is the end result. This research may help guide undocumented parents in the case of detention or deportation and raise awareness about the severity of this issue.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter introduced and discussed the issues related to immigration enforcement. It explained how immigration enforcement not only impacts undocumented parents, but how consequences go on to affect their citizen children. Moreover, this chapter also evaluated how immigration enforcement has serious ramifications on mixed-status families. The researcher indicated that this qualitative research examined the narrative experiences of Latino adults that experienced parental detention or deportation while they were minors. Previous studies suggested that there was a lack of research analyzing parental legal status and the effects it has on citizen children.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The well-being of a child is essential for a prosperous life. Parents and caregivers form a fundamental part of the development of a healthy life (Thompson, 2008). The well-being of citizen children of undocumented parents is at risk with the increase in implementation of restrictive immigration policy. These children form part of mixed-status families where their parent(s) are undocumented. In some cases, mixed-status families also consist of siblings who are also undocumented and these siblings may be affected as well. Even though U.S. citizens are protected from these types of legal proceedings, they suffer from the consequences of portability and the actual deportation of parents and siblings (Zayas et al., 2015). The prosperity of citizen children is uncertain with the escalation of current immigration enforcement.

Anti-immigrant sentiment continues to stigmatize an already marginalized immigrant population. This stance dates to the 1920's with the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act; during this time, many people expressed their fury against Mexican immigrants (Molina, 2010). Mexicans have also been critical in maintaining an extensive, intense public conversation on immigration and being viewed as a threat to American society (Molina, 2010). Racial discrimination of immigrants in public and political discourse continues today. For example, the newly elected President targeted the undocumented community throughout his election campaign (NBC News, 2016). This newly elected President has been vocal about the implementation of new immigration

laws that would threaten the over eleven million undocumented individuals in this country along with their families. Furthermore, there has been an increasing number of deportations since 1990, due to the enactment of a series of laws that make it easier to arrest, detain, and deport noncitizens (Hagan et al., 2010). Zayas and colleagues (2015) state that immigration enforcement often leads to the detention or deportation of parents with U.S. citizen children. These U.S. citizen children are frequently disregarded when discussing immigration and the enforcement policies.

The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2015) stated there were an estimated 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants living in the United States; their share of births is higher because immigrants include a higher rate of women in their childbearing years. Jansson (2016) states, "Roughly 5.5 million children have an undocumented immigrant parent, and about 75% of these children are U.S. citizens" (p. 409). Many people fail to acknowledge that the issue of immigration is not strictly limited to those who cross the border illegally. These individuals have families that they financially support. In many cases, these immigrants are the primary source of income in their household. As already mentioned, these individuals also have U.S. born citizen children that need them as caregivers in their lives. Therefore, members in these mixed-status families are vulnerable to detention and deportation with the enactment of these exclusionary laws (Passel and Cohnn, 2011). Citizen children's well-being and the conservation of Latino mixed-status families are important aspects of immigration enforcement that should be considered in empirical research.

## Immigration and Latino Families

The immigrant population is predominantly of Latino origin (Zong & Batalova, 2016). It was found that about 70% of undocumented parents of U.S. born children are from Mexico (Warren, 2013). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2009) indicated that more than 100,000 alien parents to U.S. citizen children were removed; however, it was also noted that this is an approximate number and it is not an accurate reflection of whether one or both parents were removed from the home. The overrepresentation of Latinos in the immigrant population places Latinos and their children at risk for experiences with detention or deportation. The increase in immigration enforcement jeopardizes Latino children's well-being in Latino mixed-status families.

## Current Policy

The development and the application of anti-immigrant policy throughout the history of the United States has been indisputable. These developments and applications have proven with the development and implementation of policies that target and facilitate the removal of noncitizens (Brabeck, Lykes, & Hunter, 2014; Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). This increases the risk of detention and deportation for undocumented members in Latino mixed-status families. For instance, in 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) were signed into law by President Bill Clinton. Five years later President Bush signed the USA Patriot Act into law following the 2001 terrorist attacks (Hagan et al., 2010). These acts along with legislation facilitate the detention and

deportation process. Immigration policy in the U.S. has consistently been a contentious political issue.

During the Obama administration, the increase in detentions and deportations over the last years are evident (Dreby, 2012; Gulbas et al., 2015; The Pew Research Center, 2011). Obama added policies such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allows undocumented individuals that were brought into the U.S. as minors to be granted temporary deferred status, and obtain a work permit and driver's license. President Obama also developed Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) which also grants undocumented parents temporary deferred status (parents that have lived in the U.S. since 2010) and have citizen children. However, these two policies were challenged by Texas and another 25 states and taken to the Supreme Court, which decided to block Obama's policies (New York Times, 2016). These states have elected officials that have been vocal about their opposition to illegal immigration. Despite President Obama's attempt to improve immigration, his eight years in office have demonstrated an increase in deportations (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). The Pew Research Center (2011) reported that deportation rose to record levels under Obama; in 2009 deportations went to 390,000; in 2010 deportations went to 393,000, and in 2011 to 397,000, and in 2012 deportations increased to 410,000, according to an ICE deportation report. In the years before Obama, under the Bush administration deportations started at 117,000 and reached their highest point at 291,000 (The Pew Research Center, 2011). Under the newly elected president, who campaigned using anti-immigrant rhetoric, it is expected that more restrictive immigration policies will be created.

Over the last several years, there has been an incrementation in immigration enforcement (Dreby, 2012; Gulbas et al., 2015; The Pew Research Center, 2011). Hidalgo (2013) noted that there is an intersection of state and local criminal justice systems with federal immigration enforcement. Presently, U.S. Immigration Policy is not appropriately implemented, and the violation of fundamental rights is commonly practiced (Brabeck, Lykes, & Hunter, 2014; Kohli, Markowitz, & Chavez, 2011). Some violations include intrusive police actions, racial profiling, deportation without a hearing, immigrants detained in centers that do not meet the standards of decency, or wrongfully denied benefits to solve or better their immigration situation (Jansson, 2016). Although current policies such as Safe Communities or 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act are supposed to target undocumented immigrants with criminal records, they are not being implemented using that criteria. At least half of undocumented immigrants deported under these policies don't have criminal records (Kohli, Markowitz, & Chavez, 2011). Many states have implemented anti-immigration laws whose goal is to continue to stigmatize and create further hardships for the immigrant population. One of the most recognized states that has anti-immigration policies in place is Arizona. Rubio-Hernandez and Ayon (2016) state, "in 2004, Proposition 200 implemented the mandatory verification of identity and immigration status of all applicants for public benefits and required government employees to report immigration law violation by applicants" (p.20). This policy prohibited immigrants from obtaining benefits they needed for their families. In 2010, Senate Bill 1070 permitted local law enforcement in Arizona to question an individual's legal status if there was reasonable suspicion that they were

undocumented (National Conference Legislatures, 2011). Bills such as SB 1070 may contribute to racial profiling of Latinos by local law enforcement. Laws such as these allow for discrimination and exclusion of the immigrant population from society. Arizona is not the only state that has implemented this types of laws; other states have these laws in place as well. These types of laws add to the susceptibility of mixed-status families being separated and citizen children having to experience constant trauma in their lives for simply being children of undocumented immigrants. The deficient implementation of immigration policy is noted states that target the undocumented community.

The inadequate enforcement of U.S. Immigration Policy is leading to separation of immigrant families and jeopardizing many children's well-being (Yoshinawa, 2011; Phinney et al., 2001; Brabeck and Sibley, 2016.) Immigration enforcement policy is meant to target criminals, however over half of those deported do not have criminal records (Kohli, Markowitz and Chavez, 2011). Anti-immigration policies make mixed-status families targets and make undocumented parents vulnerable to detention and deportation. Both parents and children are living in constant fear of deportation (Gulbas et al., 2015). Yet, little empirical attention has been given to the experience of mixed-status families. Lopez and Gonzalez (2013) explain that there is a need for public attention and empirical research on citizen-children with undocumented parents, during a time with heightened immigration enforcement.

## Immigration Law and Family Courts

There are clear intersections of immigration law and family courts. Thronson and Sullivan (2012) state that there is tension and possible inconsistencies with the intersection of immigration law and family law; this is due to the difference in each of their priorities. Tension is evident when immigration law develops different conclusions about an undocumented parent's parental legal rights and the decisions on the future of their citizen children. This aspect of the issue is important to consider. The inconsistency with the overlapping of immigration and family law adds to the already imposed risks of the separation of mixed-status families. The Applied Research Center (2011) makes a note of the systemic bias among child welfare personnel on reunifying children with undocumented parents once they've been deported. Are the child welfare system and juvenile dependency court honestly considering the child's best interest? A Critical Race Theory analysis states that "analysis of the law cannot be neutral or objective and stresses the recognition of and voices from the standpoint and race consciousness are essential to radical racial reform" (Abram & Moio, 2006, p.250). It is necessary to address this aspect because this may determine whether parental rights are respected, and citizen children are reunified with their parents. Xu (2005) explains that most state courts have established their guidelines for interpreting the best interests of citizen children. Brandes (1999) also states that the courts must weigh and balance the totality of the circumstances; therefore, the meaning of "best interest" is extremely ambiguous. Immigration law and family courts should acknowledge these issues and resolve them for the benefit of citizen children, undocumented parents, and for the preservation of mixed-status families.

### The Well-Being of Citizen Children in Mixed-Status Families

A citizen child's well-being is at stake upon sudden removal of his or her undocumented parents. Freud and Burlingham (1943) argue that there are serious consequences of forced and unexpected parent-child separation, even if the child is remains in a safe and nurturing environment. This being stated, although children are placed in foster care, which is considered a "safe environment," this does not necessarily ameliorate parental separation. McLeigh (2010) states that forced separation through deportations involves double or triple the trauma for children who may witness the forcible removal of the parent as they suddenly lose their caregiver. Thompson (2008) states that children who experience parental separation are more likely to suffer from separation anxiety, depression, and other psychological stressors. Unexpected and sudden removal of a parent has damaging consequences on the well-being of a child.

The lived experience of a detention itself contributes to direct trauma for citizen children. Zayas (2015) found that the actual arrest, detention, and deportation of undocumented parents only adds to complete the trauma causing a detrimental impact on the child's (or children's) mental health. Some studies have indicated that over one million citizen children have been subjected directly to the impact of immigration enforcement in the last decade (Capps et al., 2007). For example, in 2006 during a time where workplace raids took place, 900 undocumented workers were detained. These undocumented workers were parents, and therefore separated from 500 of their children (a vast majority under the age of 5) (Capps et al., 2007). According to Capps and colleagues (2007), based on accounts of social workers, teachers, parents and local

advocates, many of the children affected by immigration enforcement during these raids suffered from emotional distress. The consequences of witnessing the detention of a parent adds to the suffering of citizen children in Latino mixed-status families.

The separation of a family has adverse effects on the development of a child. Allen and colleagues (2015) add that removing a caregiver from a child may result in abnormal development, increased stress due to the loss of a primary social support and concern about the well-being of the parent. Furthermore, not only are these children at risk of losing their parents but also possibly being separated from their siblings as well (Zayas et al., 2015). Attachment theory states a child's sense of security is developed from the relationships of familiar caregivers. Security is significant for social, cognitive, and emotional development that is necessary for a healthy life. Unexpected parent-child separation may disrupt a child's security and jeopardize internalizing symptoms (depression and anxiety), externalizing behaviors (withdrawal or aggression), and social and cognitive functioning (Makariev and Shaver, 2010). Parent-child relationships are crucial for a child's development, mental health and well-being. If taken into consideration that citizen children may also be separated from their undocumented sibling, this adds to their trauma. The separation of the family plays a significant role in the well-being of citizen children.

Deportation of parents disrupts a family's environment and places a citizen children's well-being at risk. Appleyard and colleagues (2005) explain that research has indicated that children who experience multiple risks (family disruption, low socioeconomic status, high parental stress) commonly display behavioral and emotional

problems later in life. Zayas (2015) states that children of Latino immigrants are at increased risk for psychosocial problems given their higher rates of poverty, discrimination, and other social conditions that marginalize them. Suarez and colleagues (2010) also state that U.S. citizen children who experience parental deportation are more prone to suffer from anxiety and depression, attention problems, social withdrawal and inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors can be linked to emotional and behavioral problems which include substance abuse, unemployment and interpersonal difficulties with family members (Brabeck et al., 2014). Parental detention and deportation can result in significant consequences for their citizen children.

A child's mental health is endangered with the detention or deportation of a parent. Zayas and colleagues (2015) state that citizen children are at risk from suffering the psychological consequences when the family environment is disrupted and a family is separated due to immigration enforcement. As previously stated, these children live in constant fear of their parents being deported. Studies have documented the immediate consequences accompanying the loss of a parent through deportation and recent research has considered the mental health needs of this vulnerable population (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Derby (2012) and Rubio-Hernandez and Ayon (2016) conducted research on U.S. Immigration Policy and the consequences on immigrant children. This study discussed the following: high levels of insecurity, always living in fear and hypervigilance, concern and sense of responsibility for putting parents in danger of being deported, uneasiness created by media on constant stories of family separation because of parental deportations. Citizen children expressed that experiences within their community

led to them fearing authority figures, such as local law enforcement. This is because children associated local law enforcement as "bad" individuals because they were constantly seeing their role in the detention and deportation process. Experiences in the immigrant community create mental health instability for citizen children.

Local law enforcement should not be exercising the roles of federal officials. The implementation of the federal law by local officials is considered illegal, yet many people are not aware of this. Perreira and Ornelas (2011) indicated that although research is limited, some research suggests that between 10-15% of children living in immigrant families exhibit symptoms of depression. Perreira and Ornelas (2011) also suggest that to alleviate these children from symptoms of depression, it is important to understand their meaning and perceived causes of emotional suffering. The involvement of local authorities in discriminating neighbors or others in their community added to their feeling of insecurity because this led children to believe that their parents or loved ones were in danger of this same outcome. Another finding brought about by this research was concern and self-responsibility of children. Children in mixed-status families firmly believed that they exposed their parents to detention or deportation by being taken to school; therefore, citizen children did not want to attend school. The experiences within a citizen child's immediate community also contribute to the risk of these children's mental health.

Regular media coverage of stories about detention and deportation have created uneasiness for immigrant children. Media commonly focuses on the worst scenarios. Citizen children's exposure to detention and deportation through the media has created greater anxiety for them. Media also concentrates on the anti-immigrant sentiment, along

with the ongoing detentions and deportation of undocumented individuals. Many cases in the media portray undocumented parents being separated from their families because of deportation. These stories depict family members and children crying with the removal of the undocumented parent or family member. As children become aware of their parent's legal status, they continue to live in fear that their undocumented parent might also be deported. The constant anxiety of this possibility sets a context that places citizen children at risk for adverse psychological effects (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Derby, 2012). Thus, media coverage causes citizen children to live in fear of immigration authorities.

#### Mixed-Status Families and Immigration Enforcement Practices

Presently, ICE practices have not been implemented appropriately and placing greater risks of detention and deportation of undocumented parents. Jansson (2016) noted the following discrepancies: detention centers not meeting standards of decency and need assistance with finding remedies from immigration attorneys, and staff in agencies act as immigration enforcers by demanding documents and asking irrelevant questions. The inadequate presentation of immigrant rights when detained by ICE is another contradictory factor that plays a significant role in this issue (Jansson, 2016). Immigrants fail to ask for a reliable immigration attorney if ICE arrests them; therefore, immigrants are being deported without a hearing before a judge (Thronson, 2010). Immigrants are also subjected to racial profiling, including searches and seizures without sufficient cause; in addition, immigrant communities are also subjected to intrusive police actions, such as searches without probable cause, including knocking on doors in the middle of

the night to catch fugitive aliens (Jansson, 2016). During these intrusive police actions, many citizen children of detained parents are placed in foster care because ICE does not seek to find family members for these children during the detainment of their undocumented parent. Also, ICE does not allow parents to make arrangements for their children upon detainment. This is because ICE places parents in immigration centers instead of releasing them and using community-based supervisory programs (Dettlaff, 2012). Local authorities are taking part in immigration enforcement when it is only the federal government's obligation to enforce immigration law. The proper implementation of immigration enforcement is necessary to protect the rights of undocumented parents.

Undocumented parents are regularly deprived of their parental rights over their citizen children when they are placed in detention centers. ICE does not provide parents with legal assistance, and they typically do not inform them about their court hearings about the custody of their children (Dettlaff, 2012). There are also situations where a parent may be detained in one state and is then transferred hundreds of miles away from their children and families. For example, if a parent is detained in California, they may be moved to a detention center in Colorado without informing their family (Sullivan and Enriquez, 2016). The Human Rights Watch (2011) indicated that detainees on average are transported 370 miles from their place of initial detention. In addition to that, the detained parent is not given access to a phone to inform their family, which then leads to a halt in communication between the parent, children, family and the child welfare system (if involved).

The Applied Research Center (2011) states that once detained, ICE usually denies parents access to programs and visitation that are that are required to meet child welfare service plans. Due to the complete stop in communication, the parent is unaware of the court hearing that is held over the custody of their children. This then leads to the undocumented parent not communicating with the social worker on the case and not participating in the custody proceedings. This frequently results in the closure of the case due to the parent being absent, and the child is then placed in the foster care system. The Women's Refugee Commission (2010) explained that when child welfare caseworkers and attorneys were involved in the juvenile dependency proceedings, it was difficult to locate and maintain contact with detained parents. This was due to the isolation of the detention centers and ICE's unwillingness to transport detainees to juvenile dependency hearings or allow detained parents to participate in proceedings over the phone. Many family separations could be avoided with proper implementation of practices by ICE.

#### Mixed-Status Families and Child-Welfare Practices

Another factor that impacts mixed-status families is child-welfare practices, which often lead to unjust family separations and cause adverse effects on citizen children. The Applied Research Center (ARC) (2011) conducted the first national investigation of threats to families because of immigration enforcement and discussed the intersection of the child welfare system. This research found that although immigration policy is based on the principle of family unity, the truth is that once parents are detained or deported, the separation of families is prolonged for an extended amount of time by the

child welfare system. Child welfare practices also played a major role in separating mixed-status families. Consequently, this in turn contributed to the adverse effects on citizen children.

The child welfare system also fails to look for relatives, which is the first alternative that is considered before placing a child in foster care. Child welfare systems are required to make reasonable efforts to ensure that a child is placed with a relative rather than in foster care. Hidalgo (2013) explains that child welfare policies prioritize placing children with relatives when possible to maintain the family unit. Yet, in these cases child welfare agencies will not place a child with undocumented relatives. However, even though many of these children do have relatives, these relatives are also undocumented and fear for their detention and deportation if they come forward in taking these citizen children. Hidalgo (2013) conducted research that noted that the child welfare system does not complete reasonable efforts in the cases of mixed status families. In their research, the Applied Research Center (2011) estimated that if the same rates of detention and deportation continue, at least 15,000 more children will be placed into the foster care system within the next five years. The child welfare system should be attempting to place citizen children with family members and exhausting reasonable efforts prior to placing citizen children in foster care.

The Applied Research Center (2011) also noted that improper documentation on behalf of the child welfare system concerning these mixed-status cases. For example, when a child is detained the child's record does not indicate that their parent was detained or deported. This then leads to an absent parent in the case. The child is placed in foster

care because there is no record of their parent since they are undocumented and the parent is nowhere to be found. At times children are too young provide names of relatives or the name of their parents to social workers. The Applied Research Center (2011) also found that child welfare departments are uninvolved in the reunification of mixed-status families unless foreign consulates are involved with the case. Hidalgo (2013) argues that lack of proactive policies lead to permanent separation of mixed-status families. Inadequate documentation for these cases along with the lack of proactive policies within the child welfare system leads to the fragmentation of mixed-status families.

Another issue that the child welfare system encounters is the lack of communication from the detained parent. This issue results when ICE does not allow parents proper communication with family members or social workers handling the cases for their citizen children. Therefore, this leads to the parent being absent in this process and the court hearings because the undocumented parent has no knowledge of their case. Often, this leads to juvenile dependency court terminating the undocumented parent's parental legal rights over their citizen children without the undocumented parent's knowledge (ARC, 2011; Dettlaff, 2012). Kriz and Skivenes (2012) state that there are cases in which the social worker is not completely aware of this citizen child's background and fails to do the necessary research for the citizen child's parents. Child welfare departments should attempt to be more proactive and become involved with family reunification. Social workers should be proactive about completing the necessary research to find citizen children's parents.

## Immigration Enforcement and Child Welfare System

The overlapping of immigration enforcement and the child welfare system cannot be ignored. Currently, policies do not protect mixed-status families and fail to emphasize family unity. Dettlaff (2012) found that both the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the child welfare system firmly believe that citizen children are better off in the United States foster care system, rather than with their parents in a foreign country. Hidalgo (2013) explains that the placement of thousands of children in foster care has been the direct result of an undocumented parent coming into contact with immigration enforcement. He adds that there has been a notable increase with the intersection between the child welfare system and immigration detention.

Many mixed-status families are separated by immigration enforcement despite the undocumented parent's parental rights. For instance, the law indicates that "when an alien parent's child is a U.S. citizen and the child is below the age of discretion, and if the alien parent is deported, it is the parent's decision whether to take the minor along or to leave the child in this country" (Kaskade, 2009, p. 457). Research indicates that undocumented immigrant parents' legal parental rights over their children are being violated. ICE deprives parents of their rights and prohibits them from participating in the child welfare process which prevents them from getting their children back. ICE's malpractices completely ignore the child's well-being and contributes to the associated trauma for citizen children. Unfortunately, the intersection of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the child welfare system leads to many injustices against mixed-status families.

## Conclusion

Overall, evidence shows the adverse effects of parental detention and deportation on the well-being of citizen children and undocumented parents. Family unity is jeopardized by the intersection of malpractices in the child welfare system and by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Further research can help acquire further knowledge about the complexity of the effects on citizen children. This would provide better services for citizen children, undocumented parents and Latino mixed-status families. It is important to advocate for mixed-status families and the well-being of citizen children to maintain mixed-status families together. Through education and advocacy, this issue can be addressed and hopefully be eliminated in the future. The immigrant population is simply trying to provide a better future for themselves and their families, due to the inaccessibility of this better future in their native country.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research study aimed to capture the experience of citizen children in Latino mixed-status families. The focus of this study was to provide further insight on the well-being of citizen children and the conservation of mixed-status families. Through this research, the researcher explored the narratives of Latino adults and their family's experience through the process of parental detention or deportation while they were minors. This chapter provided more details on how the researcher conducted this qualitative research study.

#### Research Design

The study used a qualitative action research design. This study design is in alignment with the critical research paradigm. The critical paradigm is ontologically based from historical realism, which views reality being shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethics and gender values; realities are socially constructed entities that are constantly influenced (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm was applied to the study of the experiences of mixed-status families coming into the United States system because individuals in mixed-status families experience everything much differently. This is due to the various legal statuses of the family members that make up their families. Cohen and colleagues (2007) state that critical research must recognize the entire context (culturally, historically, and politically) and promote dialogical relations of

equality between the researcher and participants. This thorough examination of context allowed the researcher to gain a well-rounded analysis of the participant's experiences.

Furthermore, Cohen and colleagues (2007) also state that critical research must create an agenda for change or reform to further enhance the lives of participants. The primary goal of this study was to raise awareness on this issue, with the intention to implement change for citizen children, mixed-status families, and future generations that may encounter this problem. Crotty (1989) states that critical methodology is directed at interrogating values and assumptions, which then exposes hegemony and injustices. Through this, conventional social structures are challenged, and engagement in social action is implemented. The critical methodology aims to emancipate the disempowered and prevent any further injustices. Through this research, the researcher identified injustices and communicate findings to ICE and child welfare agencies by writing them a letter.

This research utilized a cross-sectional approach to data collection. Each interview was conducted at one particular point in time. Mann (2003) states that cross-sectional data collection can study multiple themes. Upon the completion of data collection through semi-structured interviews the researcher then proceeded to analyze the data. According to Gilman (2000), semi-structured interviews are predeveloped questions that may be modified based on the interviewer's discretion on what seems appropriate for the participant being interviewed. Also, question-wording can be changed, and explanations can be given during the time of the interview. Inappropriate questions for participants were omitted, or additional questions were included. Semi-

structured interviews are useful to capture and explore views of a person of an experience. Kvale (1996) also indicates that the strengths of semi-structured interviews are as follows: they are well suited for exploring attitudes, values, beliefs, and motives (they could be beneficial to discuss sensitive topics or areas), nonverbal indicators could assist in evaluating truthfulness, validity, and urgency, it may facilitate getting every question answered, and could potentially increase the response rate. This is how the cross-sectional approach was applied to this research.

### Participants

The sampling method utilized was purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a sample of participants that are thoughtfully, purposefully selected or recruited to fully answer a research question. Since the researcher worked with several colleagues to obtain the participant sample, the sample was specifically tailored to meet the needs of this research. Patton (1990) states that the key and significance of purposeful sampling resides in selecting appropriate cases that contain diverse information for the study of depth. By obtaining information-rich cases, Patton (1990) refers to cases from which one can learn a great deal from about issues of crucial importance to the purpose of research.

The population of interest is adults that are U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents. This study examined the narratives of Latino adults that had experienced family separation due to the detainment or deportation of at least one parent when they were minors. This population was appropriate to further analyze the impact of immigration enforcement and practices of the child welfare system on Latino families, undocumented parents, citizen children (now adult participants), and the conservation of Latino mixed-

status families. This is because these participants are some of the primary individuals being affected by this issue. The narratives of these participants allowed the implementation of first-hand experiences for this qualitative study.

The demographics of this sample was Latino adult (18 or older) U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents. These adults had experienced the detainment or deportation of their undocumented parent(s) while they were minors. Participants were recruited from Los Angeles County areas. The participant sample consisted of 8 participants. Unique considerations that were considered for participants were language accommodations such as translation of materials and interview questions where needed. The researcher translated all recruitment materials and semi-structured interview questions to accommodate participants with language barriers when necessary.

Participants were selected through professional colleagues. These colleagues are human right activists for the undocumented community, directors, and executive directors of nonprofits that assist the immigrant community. These colleagues helped with recruitment by selecting participants that met the requirements for this study. This is referred to as purposeful snowball sampling. Noy (2008) states that snowball sampling is a repetitive process when the researcher assesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants.

### Materials

The materials for data collection were a set of semi-structured interview questions. There was a semi-structured interview guide with questions that allowed the researcher to gain more knowledge on several aspects of the citizen child's experience.

The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to get a better sense of each participant's experience with parental detention, the process of deportation, or in some cases both. This then allowed the researcher to determine what needs to be addressed and changed to prevent further issues with mixed-status families in the future.

This portion provided detail on the semi-structured interview. For the purpose of this study, the semi-structured interview questions were in both English and Spanish. Please refer to Appendix A for the English semi-structured interview guide. Please refer to Appendix B for the Spanish semi-structured interview guide. Major topics explored included family background, the age (of the participant) at which the parent was detained or deported, and the impact that detention or deportation had on the participants and their families. Other questions assessed other significant aspects of their experience such as their placement when parents were detained and deported, communication with their parents during the time of detention and deportation, and services provided to their family during this time. The semi-structured interviews provided a better understanding of these experiences and the impact of immigration enforcement on citizen children and mixed status families.

### Procedure

Approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB), allowed participants to be recruited through purposeful, snowball sampling. This was done by contacting the human right activists, directors, and executive directors of nonprofits located in Los Angeles County that focus on improving overall conditions for the immigrant community. Flyers were created in both English and Spanish providing some background and the reason

behind this study. Please reference Appendix C for the English flyer. Please reference Appendix D for the Spanish flyer. Colleagues assisted in recruiting potential participants by providing them with the flyer and ask them if they are interested in taking part in this research study. Colleagues developed a list and then provide the list of potential participants. The researcher contacted participants via telephone and provided them with a consent form. Potential participants were given about a week to confirm their participation in this research. Once participation was established, the researcher set up interview appointments with each of the confirmed participants.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This allowed the researcher to ask questions. These questions could be in any given order, and the researcher could add or omit necessary questions based on the participant's experience. The length of the interviews ranged from about 30-45 minutes long. The researcher advised participants to set aside an hour when the interview was scheduled upon received consent. However, the researcher also let participants know that the interview may not take up the entire hour period. The data was organized and prepared for analysis based on similar experiences or themes of participants. The researcher provided participants with gift cards upon completing the interview. Once the collection of data was finalized, if participants gave consent to record the interview, the interview was transcribed.

### Analytic Strategy

The analytic strategy utilized to analyze the data was thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in a dataset. Joffe (2012) indicates that it illustrates which themes are

important in the description of the phenomenon under study. This research seeks to take into consideration important aspects of experiences for citizen children upon parental detention or deportation. Upon the completion of data collection, the researcher noted similarities in the data. The proposed analytic strategy allowed the researcher to take into consideration similarities of experiences. Thematic analysis is the best analytic strategy for this research. Joffe (2012) states that the result of thematic analysis should highlight the most salient meanings present in a dataset. Once data was collected, predominant themes within the data will be identified and highlighted.

The researcher utilized Critical Race Theory and Social Ecological Theory to analyze data. Critical Race Theory was used to address the various identities of participants and members of the mixed-status family. For example, if the father is undocumented and was deported, various aspects of his identities will be considered when analyzing data such as he is a minority, undocumented male in a mixed-status family, living in a low-income household. This same concept was then applied to all members of the families for which is data collected. Social Ecological Theory will also be used to analyze the participant's environment and context and the same was applied to the family's circumstances during the time of detention and deportation.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This qualitative research study set out to capture the experience of citizen children in Latino mixed-status families to provide further insight on the well-being of U.S. citizen children in Latino mixed-status families. The analytic focus of this study examined how immigration enforcement experienced during childhood affected the respondent's well-being. The interview analysis explored the narratives of citizen adult children and their family's experience through the process of parental detention and deportation while they were minors.

This chapter will discuss the process of data collection. First, the researcher reflects on the role of her positionality in the research project. Second, the chapter will discuss participants' demographics and the researcher will provide a short biography of each participant. The researcher will also describe the data analysis process, including the development of the codebook used to code data. Lastly, the thematic findings are presented to illustrate the hardships and potential risks for deportation of the undocumented community, experiences with immigration enforcement, and the repercussions of parental detention and deportation on children and mixed-status families. This research provided insight into the narratives of children, their undocumented parents, and mixed-status families.

### Researcher Positionality

In this section, the researcher will further discuss her positionality on this research. England (1994) states that research represents a shared space, shaped by both the researcher and participants. Thus, it is to be expected that my presence in the research space will have shaped 1) the development of this project, 2) engagement with participants during the interviews, and 3) analysis of research data. As a developing social worker who will be working in a child protection agency, this research was developed due to my longstanding concern and identity as the daughter of Mexican immigrants and as a developing social worker. Hall (1990) stated that there is no enunciation without positionality and argued that an individual must position themselves somewhere before saying anything at all. For this reason, the researcher is upfront about her intent to advocate for these children, undocumented parents, and the conservation of the mixed-status families. Freire (2000) argues that although we strive to remain objective, as researchers we must be mindful of our subjectivity by acknowledging who we are as individuals, and as members of groups and resting within and moving within social positions. As an educated Latina, daughter of immigrants, and developing social worker, the aim is to advocate for these families for the researcher understands the experiences of these families too well. Additionally, the researcher would like to raise further awareness of this problem in society.

The researcher identifies as Latina, specifically Mexican. The researcher is a U.S. citizen born in Ventura, California and the daughter of immigrants that came to the United States to provide a better future for their growing family. The researcher has

experienced the hardships and injustices of immigration enforcement with her family. The researcher's parent was almost deported along with her older sibling due to fraud and lack of knowledge on behalf of her parents. The researcher recalls many years in which she and her family struggled to legalize her parent and older sibling. Fortunately, many years and thousands of dollars later, the researcher's family was able to obtain legal status for her parent and older sibling. However, the researcher recognizes that at any given point her family could have had the same outcome of some of the participants interviewed. For this reason, the researcher seeks to put forth the voices and experiences of these children and their families.

The researcher's stance in this study is of substantial concern for U.S. citizen children, their undocumented parents, and the preservation of their mixed-status families. As a daughter of immigrants who lives in a city with a large immigration population, I have observed how immigration enforcement has become one of the greatest concerns for the undocumented community. The current political climate, which includes a series of executive orders that target undocumented immigrants and refugees, is one that places the immigrant community at risk for deportation with all the new policies that support excessive immigration enforcement (Bennett, 2017). However, it is important to mention that the issue of immigration enforcement and criminalization of undocumented parents is not a recent occurrence. Legal scholars, civil rights activists and the general public have exposed federal law enforcement practices towards Latinos as racialized immigration stops, abusive searches, and harassment as ongoing processes honed over a century of citizen inspections, specifically for Mexicans (Romero, 2006; Molina, 2010).

Citizen children, their undocumented parents, and families have had these ongoing experiences for years; the only difference today is that this issue is getting more media coverage and people are becoming more aware of it. For example, over the last several days, there has been an onset of immigration home raids that have led to the detention of over 160 undocumented individuals by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from Los Angeles County up to Santa Barbara County (Rubin et al., 2017). Immigration enforcement coupled with malpractices from both ICE and child protective agencies further jeopardizes children and undocumented parents of these mixed-status families. The intention behind this qualitative research is to shed light on the experiences of these participants and their families. The voices of participants are valuable because they provide first-hand experiences of what mixed-status families are going through. Also, first-hand experiences with immigration enforcement are valuable to qualitative research since these can then demonstrate other aspects that can be missed in quantitative research such as the change of family dynamics with a deported parent or barriers that mixed-status families encounter as a result of having undocumented family members.

Bourke (2014) states that to be an ally and advocate, the researcher's work has to reflect the voices of those who participate in the research. Although the researcher is concerned for these children and mixed status families, the researcher intends to highlight participant's views and experiences. The researcher finds it imperative to place the experiences of vulnerable groups at the center of discourse. Vulnerable groups, such as the immigrant community, encounter varied experiences that others may not necessarily

be aware of or understand. For example, U.S. born citizens will not be able to comprehend what it is like to be living in fear every day of being deported. Other experiences include struggling to maintain employment, not having enough to eat, or children losing a parent because their parent was undocumented.

The researcher identified closely with the life experience of participants as the daughter of Mexican immigrant parents. The researcher was able to relate to the participant's experiences of living in a mixed-status family because the researcher learned early on that her parents were undocumented. However, the researcher did not experience parental detention or deportation like the participants did. The researcher was able to recruit participants that were more vocal about their experiences with parental detention or deportation because previous colleagues had informed participants that the researcher was attempting to capture the experiences of the immigrant community and mixed-status families with parental detention or deportation. A majority of participants were social justice minded and understood that their family's experiences could have been avoided. This is because now participants knew that if their parents were adequately informed about their basic rights, their experiences might have been different. Moreover, the researcher did have difficulty obtaining participants. The researcher found that when her experiences were disclosed, potential participants agreed to participate in the study.

The researcher has some shared experiences with participants and the immigrant community. This being stated, the researcher is looking for better treatment of the undocumented parents, their children, and families. The researcher understands that not all experiences with immigration enforcement are negative, but seeks to advocate for the

cases in which there is unjust treatment. The researcher's intention is to present the narratives of her participants to take part in the scholarly dialogue of the immigrant community. It is the researcher's belief that by sharing the stories of the immigrant community, social science scholarship will have a greater understanding of the lived experiences of mixed-status families. The researcher understands that she is potentially in a position where she can inform others of her findings to create change for these children and mixed-status families. The researcher would like to contribute to the scholarly discourse of this community, not only by presenting narrative experiences but to also implement some change for this community in the future.

#### Respondent's Demographics

Adult children of undocumented immigrants who had experienced the detention or deportation of a parent as minors were recruited for this study. The researcher utilized snowball sampling to recruit participants through mutual colleagues. The researcher intended to recruit at least ten participants for this research study. However, due to the current political climate, the researcher was not able to recruit as many participants as originally proposed. Participants were skeptical about participating in a study that asked them to disclose their parent's immigration experiences during this critical time. Due to the difficulty recruiting participants, the researcher extended interview invitations to siblings of respondents who had already participated in this study. Ultimately, the study sample included eight interview participants, including two sets of siblings. One sibling set consisted of three individuals, a sister and two older brothers, and another sibling set of two consisted of an older sister and younger brother. The remaining three participants

stated that their siblings did not want to participate in this study. Further details about the relationship between respondents will be provided with the two sets of siblings under qualitative reports in Table 1. The table also provides demographics information for all participants that took part in this research study.

These respondents shared retrospective accounts of their personal and their family's experience with immigration enforcement. This qualitative research study elicited information from eight interview participants between the ages of 24-33 years old. All eight participants identified as Latina/o. The respondent's nationality of origin included various parts of Mexico such as Jalisco, Morelos, Guerrero, Mexicali, and Puebla. It is important to note that all respondents reported that parents came to the United States from Mexico; other Latin American countries were not represented in this sample. The study recruited cis-gender men and women. Five (62%) of the eight participants that participated in this research study were men, and the remaining three (38%) were women. Five participants (63%) reported that only one parent was deported, and in each of those cases it was the father that had been deported. One participant (12%) reported that one parent was detained, then later deported, again the father in their particular case. The remaining two participants (25%) reported that both parents were deported at the same time.

The researcher made accommodations for Spanish-speaking participants by translating consent forms, interview questions, and recruitment flyers whenever necessary. The researcher completed two interviews in Spanish; the remaining participants were all bilingual. Interviews ranged from about 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

Table 1. Respondent demographic and childhood experience with immigration enforcement

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender (Age)</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>No. of Siblings</b>
Juan (JO)	M (28)	Parent arrested, detained, and then deported	Guerrero, MX	1
Anthony (AS)	M (33)	Parent detained, then deported	Guerrero, MX	3
Lily (LM)	F (24)	Parent arrested, then deported	Mexicali, MX	2
Jose <sup>a</sup> (NA)	M (33)	Parent immediately deported	Jalisco, MX	3
Natalie <sup>a</sup> (NA)	F (30)	Parent immediately deported	Jalisco, MX	3
Samuel <sup>a</sup> (SA)	M (26)	Parent immediately deported	Jalisco, MX	3
Lizeth <sup>b</sup> (LT)	F (32)	Parents immediately deported	Puebla, MX	4
Michael <sup>b</sup> (MT)	M (27)	Parents immediately deported	Puebla, MX	4

*Note:* a. Three participants (one woman, two men) are siblings. Table created by the author of this thesis.

b. Two siblings who are brother and sister.

Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondent. A biography of each participant is provided below.

Juan is a 28-year-old male that was born and raised in Long Beach his entire life. Juan's mother is from Morelos and his father from Guerrero, Mexico. Juan is one of two children and is the oldest. Juan has a younger sister. He obtained his bachelor's in Sociology from California State University, Los Angeles. As a result of his experience with immigration enforcement, Juan is now an immigrants' rights activist and is seeking

to help the immigrant community to provide them with the adequate resources. Juan stated that he would like to prevent other families from sharing his own family's experience with family separation. His father immigrated to the United States first, and his mother came a couple of years after in search for better opportunities. Juan was born shortly after, about four years later in the city of Long Beach. His parents wanted to come to the United States to provide their children with better opportunities that they knew they wouldn't be able to have if they remained in Mexico. Juan's father was deported when he was thirteen years old, and his younger sister was eight. This left his home as a single parent household that was led by his mother, who had never worked and had been a housewife, and had to work full-time upon the deportation of his father. Juan stated that his father never returned after he was deported; his father still lives in Mexico.

Anthony is a 33-year-old male and was born in Guerrero, Mexico. At the age of 2 years, he immigrated to California with his parents and older siblings. He was raised in Los Angeles County for most of his life. Anthony is one of four children, with two older siblings and a younger sister. Anthony has two older siblings, an older brother (41) and sister (37). Anthony's older siblings were also undocumented like his parents. Anthony's younger sister is 30 years-old. Anthony obtained his Masters in Social Work in Los Angeles County. Anthony stated that his father immigrated to the United States first to make sure it was safe for his family to cross over illegally. Anthony said that his father came and went from the United States to Mexico regularly to visit his grandparents that were ill. Anthony stated that on one occasion when his father was attempting to return to the U.S. he was caught at the border and detained and after a month was deported back to

Mexico. His father was detained when he was six years old; he stated that his older brother was fourteen years old, his older sister was ten years old, and his younger sister was three. Unfortunately, this situation also caused his home to be led by a single parent, his mother. Anthony's father found means to return back to the U.S. to reunite with his family.

Lily is a 24-year-old female that was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley. Her mother is White, and her father is Mexican, from Mexicali. She is working on her graduate degree at California State University Bakersfield. She plans to graduate in the spring (2017). Lily is the youngest of three children. She has an older brother (37 years old) and sister (30 years old). Lily's father used drugs and alcohol throughout his life. Also, domestic violence was common in her household when she was growing up. In her case, her father was a permanent resident for about ten years. In 2000, his legal residency was revoked when he was arrested due to his extensive criminal background. He was later deported to Mexico. Lily's mother was left to care for her and her siblings, and her father never returned after he was deported.

The first set of siblings includes Jose (33), Natalie (30), and Samuel (26). Jose is the oldest of four siblings, followed by Natalie, Samuel, and another younger sister that is now 20 years-old. These three siblings experienced their father's immediate deportation through a "redada" (immigration raid) that was done at his place of work in 1997. An immigration raid refers to a situation where ICE goes to a location where they know or were informed that there are undocumented immigrants. In the case of these siblings, this immigration raid took place at their father's place of employment. Although their father

attempted to hide, he was caught by ICE and deported immediately. The family struggled financially with their father's deportation, and Jose was forced to work at the age of 14 to help their mother financially.

Jose (33) is Natalie's older brother, and he is the oldest in the family. Jose was born in Mexico. Jose currently works in construction and has his own family. Jose did not choose to pursue an education like his younger sister. Although he can communicate in English using simple terms, he prefers to use his native language, Spanish. Jose still resides in Compton. Jose added that with his father's deportation, his role in the family changed.

Natalie (30) was born and raised her entire life in Compton with her older brother and younger brother and sister. Natalie obtained her bachelor's in Child Development from California State University, Long Beach. Natalie stated that her parents were from Jalisco, from a small town called Chalela. Natalie said that her father came to the United States before her mother immigrated. Natalie stated that her older brother and her mother came shortly after her father had found a place to live in the United States. Natalie explained that when her father was deported, she cared for her younger siblings.

Samuel (26) is Natalie and Jose's brother younger brother. He was born after Natalie and was seven at the time of their father's deportation. Samuel, like his older brother Jose, also works in construction and has his own family. Samuel also continues to reside in Compton and lives close to his parents.

The second set of siblings includes Lizeth (32) and Michael (27). In their case, Lizeth was 17 years of age and Michael was 14 years old when both of their parents were

suddenly deported. Lizeth and Michael are two of a total of five siblings. Lizeth and Michael had three younger siblings at the time of their parents' deportation. These were the ages of the younger siblings: their younger sister was 8 years old, and their two younger brothers were age 4 and two months old.

Lizeth (32) was the oldest of five siblings and was born in Puebla, Mexico. She did not obtain a degree of any kind but is currently working for a financial company in Los Angeles. Lizeth currently resides in Los Angeles.

Michael (27) is the second oldest of the five siblings and was born in Los Angeles. Michael obtained his degree in engineering from California State University, Los Angeles. He is currently working for an architectural firm in Irvine. Michael currently resides in Long Beach.

### Data Analysis

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to add or omit questions when needed depending on each participant's experiences. Interviews were transcribed to examine and compare the narrative responses of these participants. Six interviews were not audio recorded because participants did not feel comfortable being recorded with the information they'd be disclosing. For these interviews, the researcher actively took notes during the interview and then transferred notes to a word document after the interview was completed. This allowed the researcher to capture direct quotes during the two interviews that were not audio recorded.

The transcriptions and interview field notes were coded using a deductive coding process (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006). The preliminary codebook was informed primarily by Critical Race Theory and Social Ecological Theory (Layder, 1998; Earls & Carlson, 2001; Pardeck, 1988). DeCuir-Gunby and colleagues (2011) stated that data-driven codes were derived from the data. A data-driven codebook was created, and thematic analysis was used to identify and further analyze emerging patterns of meaning in the dataset. These theory-driven codes were initially used to review and become acquainted with the data (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011). Each of the codes developed were then placed under a theory category accordingly. Social Ecological Theory would indicate that due to immigration enforcement and parental legal status the environment for children in mixed-status families are affected (Pardeck, 1988). Critical Race Theory and Social Ecological Theory were utilized as code categories as opposed to having their individual codes. For example, the Critical Race Theory category had codes related to identifying the racial and ethnic disadvantages faced by the undocumented community, and their mixed status families. Codes within this theoretical category included: language barriers, struggling to maintain employment, lack of education on basic rights, and many others. The initial codebook may be found in Appendix E.

In order to determine patterns within the data, the researcher reviewed all transcriptions and interview field notes using an inductive coding approach. Inductive coding allows one to condense raw data into a brief summary and generate data-driven codes (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011). Data-driven codes are the process

of reducing raw data into smaller units such as categories or themes (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011).

The codebook was revised to include the data-driven codes and eliminate or modify any unsubstantiated theory-driven codes. The researcher developed three major data-driven and theory-driven themes based on findings which included the following: barriers, immigration enforcement, and impact of detention or deportation of undocumented parents. The secondary codes developed under the first theme barriers were: perceptions of undocumented status, discrimination, difficulty maintaining employment, language barriers, not being informed of basic and legal rights, and lack of social services.

The codebook was also revised to modify theory-driven codes informed by Critical Race Theory and Social Ecological Theory. Critical Race Theory stated that marginalized communities have encountered more obstacles in society. Romero (2008) says that in the review of U.S. immigration laws, cases, and trials CRT has examined the social construction of immigration status and the role that race plays in maintaining and controlling immigrants and other minority citizens. Thus, secondary codes under immigration enforcement included lack of resources and malpractices. Critical Race Theory would state that malpractices and lack of resources are a result of the experiences of being part of a vulnerable population. CRT would also indicate that the social construction around the undocumented community further increases these experiences for this community. The last coding scheme included the impact of detention or deportation;

secondary codes identified were: change in family dynamics, familial separation, financial burden, child well-being, and emotional distress.

During the initial coding process, the researcher eliminated various secondary codes related to the child welfare system, court hearings, and parental rights. Child protective agency malpractices and the child welfare system were removed from the preliminary codebook because although these findings were reported in the literature, the researcher did not have any participants that had these shared experiences; therefore, a perspective on how child welfare agencies handle such cases was not possible. The involvement of a child welfare agency would include court hearings for parents obtaining custody of their children if they were placed in the foster system at the time a parent was detained or deported. Previous studies have stated that undocumented parents have unjust court hearings over the custody of their children (Mckenna, 2011; Lansdale et al., 2015; Thronson, 2010). Furthermore, unjust court hearings may result in termination of parental rights for undocumented parents, again none of these experiences were reported by any of the participants.

The thematic findings resulted from an iterative process of coding, sorting, and memo-writing (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The researcher identified three major themes that emerged from data analysis. The researcher used the method DeCuir-Gunby and colleagues (2011) suggested of labeling sections of the interviews that displayed a variety of themes. The first theme is barriers that were identified as challenges that came about as a result of being undocumented in the United States. These barriers were specific to experiences before parental detention or deportation. The second theme identified was

immigration enforcement, which describes the experiences with the immigration enforcement process, either detention or deportation by the undocumented parent. Finally, the last theme identified was the impact of detention or deportation of undocumented parents that is defined as the consequences of children and families after experiencing parental detention and deportation. These findings will be presented and explained more thoroughly below.

### Thematic Findings

The aim of this study was to capture the narrative experiences of adult children that experienced parental detention or deportation while they were minors. For this reason, the researcher will provide quotations from participants to demonstrate their various experiences with undocumented parents when they were minors. Themes developed are presented in chronological order to depict the experience of mixed-status families before, during, and after facing immigration enforcement. One of the major themes developed was *employment discrimination and social services exclusion for undocumented parents and families*. The next theme was *communication barriers infringe basic rights when parents face immigration enforcement*. Finally, the findings discuss *the parentification of older children* as an impact of each of these themes and will be discussed individually in the section below.

#### Prior to Immigration Enforcement: Employment Discrimination and Social Services Exclusion

Undocumented parents worked in various industries. Juan let the researcher know that his father worked with predominantly Latinos and his father used to work for a

construction company. Anthony explained that his father worked at a carpentry company owned by a family. Lily reported that her father worked in agriculture. Natalie responded that her father worked in *fabricas* or factories. Natalie stated that his type of work in these factories varied, but explained that she remembers her dad working in a factory that made dental tools. Samuel explained that his mother worked in housekeeping at a local hotel. Lizeth replied that her father worked as a mechanic in a company that consisted of mainly Latinos as well.

Prior to parental detention or deportation, participants also reported that their undocumented parents encountered many setbacks and barriers. In particular, employment discrimination was discussed by six participants. Juan also explained that his father worked long hours and was not provided with any breaks. Participants reported that their parents worked in terrible conditions:

"My dad was working as a carpenter, he would leave early in the morning, like 5 I think; he didn't get home until nine at night." -Anthony

"My dad worked in *fabricas*, that's all he would say. He would always tell my mom that he had trouble breathing at work. He stated that the chemicals they used filled the rooms they worked in." -Juan

"My dad told me of a time when his boss threatened to fire him when he said he didn't feel well and wanted to go home." -Lizeth

Participants acknowledged that their undocumented parents faced inequities at their place of employment. These excerpts demonstrate the illicit working conditions of undocumented parents.

Many participants believed that managers took advantage of their parents' undocumented status. For example, Jose reported that his mother would work long hours because her manager was aware of her legal status. The authority of managers over undocumented parents allowed them to exercise unlawful labor practices. Undocumented parents were aware of their illegitimate working environments. Anthony reported that his father would tell them that although he knew that his working conditions were illegal, there wasn't much he could do about it. Anthony reported that his father would say, "I need this job, it's better not to look for any problems." Anthony's father believed that advocating for himself in his place of employment would jeopardize not only his employment but possibly run the risk causing him to be deported. Juan stated that his father feared talking to his manager about this issue since he was afraid of losing his job. Juan added that his father always said his boss would always tell his workers that "they (the workers) weren't irreplaceable." This manager let his employees know that he always had someone to replace them and ready to work.

In addition to discrimination in the workplace, employment instability was also common. All participants reported that their parents lacked steady employment. Samuel explained that his father was suddenly laid off from his previous job. Samuel added that the day his father was detained in a *redada* he had been working at his place of employment for about a week. Natalie disclosed that when her father was detained, he was at work, "*La migra* just showed up at his job out of nowhere; my dad tried to hide from them (ICE), but they found him." *La migra* generally refers to ICE. Michael stated that his father also worked in construction temporarily and often changed employers

because he was always being laid off. Michael answered, "My dad was always changing jobs, he couldn't help it, though, he was always laid off."

In one case, financial and employment insecurity was so severe that the father felt compelled to engage in drug trafficking to earn money. A participant stated that his father was constantly being laid off and had trouble maintaining stable employment to provide for their family. The situation was so severe for this participant's father that his last resort to having an income and providing for his family was turning to illegal means of obtaining an income. This participant reported that their father agreed to transport an amount of drugs to another state to have an income and have food on the table for his family. The participant indicated that he understood his father's decision, he always saw his father struggling to maintain employment. This participant stated that once his father had gotten a job, he was soon laid off due to his legal status.

Another participant reported that his father had difficulty maintaining a job as a result of his legal status. One day his father was laid off once again; this time however his father did not have any luck obtaining another place of employment. This participant stated that their financial situation was so severe that his father resorted to drug trafficking with a family member that was affiliated with a drug cartel. The participant said that to this day he is unsure of what this affiliation meant exactly, but all he knew is that his father had agreed to transport some drugs from California to Arkansas. In the drive to Arkansas, his father was pulled over and arrested for drug trafficking. The participant reiterated that his father was not a criminal; he simply did this as a one-time thing to obtain money and provide for their family. This participant stated that his father

served his time in jail and was going to be released, but when the judge found out that his father was undocumented, he ordered for him to be transferred to a detention center in Louisiana for two months before being deported.

Lily reported her father also had an extensive criminal record. His criminal record was due in part to drug addiction and domestic violence. Lily cried, "My dad was always in and out of the house. My parents were always fighting because my dad was addicted to drugs. He wasn't a bad person, drugs just changed him into a violent person, and he was put in jail for always hitting my mom." Domestic violence was common in her household when she was growing up. Her father's criminal record became so extensive that the last time he was arrested, his privilege of legal permanency was taken away from him. When his permanent residency was revoked, he was deported immediately.

Despite financial hardships and employment insecurity, participants' families did not seek out social services. Anthony shared that before the deportation of his father, his family didn't seek social services or monetary assistance even though they were financially struggling. Juan explained that his father didn't believe he had the "privilege" of benefiting from social services. Anthony's father would say, "...what for, we won't be getting the services anyway, we don't have those privileges here". This participant stated that his parents thought that as undocumented individuals in this country they were not entitled to those benefits. This participant reported that it was not only his parents that had this perception, but his extended family was under this impression. Undocumented parents concluded that their legal status made them ineligible for social services.

This belief that mixed-status families do not have right to obtain social services related to the general exclusion of undocumented immigrants from social services. For example, undocumented parents attempted to apply for social services and were denied the opportunity to do so. Natalie stated, "This is what I don't get social services are supposed to help struggling families, but we didn't qualify. That's the part that I don't get." Natalie reported that her mother went to a local office, and she was immediately denied as soon as the worker saw that her mother was undocumented. Natalie explained that her mother came home crying that day since she was hopeful that additional assistance would help their family. On another account, Lily stated that her mother also attempted to apply for welfare since her family was living from paycheck to paycheck. Her mother was told that she made too much money to qualify for welfare; her mother was a U.S. citizen. Lily stated that she asked how it was possible that she did not qualify if she barely afforded to support her family financially; the worker simply told her that she "made too much" Lily explained, "I feel like the person helping her wasn't fair, I don't know why, though, how were we not eligible. My mom said the lady helping her was White, so maybe that had something to do with it."

Facing Immigration Enforcement:  
Communication Barriers Infringe Basic  
Rights

The following theme describes how communication barriers infringed on basic rights as families faced immigration enforcement. That is, this section refers to the experiences that undocumented parents encountered during the process of detention and deportation. Limited fluency in English was a general communication and language

barrier for all parents. Although some participants reported that one parent spoke broken English, participants stated that this parent could not effectively communicate in the language. Juan said, "My dad spoke basic words in English. He spoke enough to get by, but not enough to communicate and have a full conversation." All participants stated that they translated for their parents in many cases, such as at school meetings or with their managers at work. Language barriers were common among parents, but particularly detrimental during the time parents were deported or detained.

There was one participant that acknowledged malpractices when his father was detained. For example, Anthony's father did not speak or understand English; therefore, he was not able to understand what he was being told and he could not communicate with immigration officials. Anthony's father was detained by ICE and because his father did not speak English he didn't understand what he was being told. The participant said that his father let ICE officials know that he didn't understand or speak English, but the ICE officials didn't care. This participant stated that his father told him that ICE officials simply laughed at him when he shrugged at everything he was told. This participant also reported that his father overheard several ICE officials speak Spanish at one point, but none of these spoke a word to him in Spanish. Malpractices during the detention or deportation process were reported by all participants, whether it was not providing a phone call, not providing legal assistance, or failing to inform undocumented parents of their legal rights.

Misinformation about civil liberties was another communication barrier that shaped the parents' experience with immigration enforcement. All the participants

interviewed indicated that their parents were unaware of their basic rights when they were detained or deported. Participants stated that their undocumented parents were under the impression that being undocumented meant that they were not entitled to the same rights as citizens. Lizeth said, "My parents didn't know what their rights were. They were just taken from the office and immediately deported to Mexico; it was all very sudden." Michael added that his father told him, "I couldn't do anything; I don't have any rights; I wasn't born here." Participants reported that the detained or deported parent was not offered any form of legal assistance upon detainment or deportation, which further limited their knowledge of their basic rights. Juan said, "I'm pretty sure my dad wasn't offered legal assistance when he was detained. Now that I think of it I wish I would've known what I know now to explain things to my dad." Lack of communication on undocumented parents' civil liberties upon detention or deportation was reported.

Lack of access to a personal telephone call was another communication barrier parents faced when detained. All participants stated that their parent was not offered a phone call to communicate with the family or anyone when detained. Anthony reported that his father was unable to communicate for days while he was detained and his whereabouts were unknown to the family. Anthony said, "My dad had gone to Mexico and was supposed to be back after two weeks, but we didn't hear from him." This worried the family very much in the two weeks that they knew nothing about the father. This participant reported that it wasn't until the father was finally deported to Tijuana that he was able to communicate by borrowing money from a stranger. Anthony also said that when his father was detained, his family did not know anything about him for over a

month and they feared something had happened to him while crossing back. Deprivation of personal phone calls prevented communication from the detained undocumented parent with their family.

Lastly, Lizeth and Michael reported that when their parents were coming into the U.S. illegally, they were detained and questioned at the border. Their parents were having check-ins at the local immigration office and following all instructions that were given to them by immigration officials. Michael stated that his parents were given a court date. Michael stated that his parents were fearful of being deported and missed the court date they were given. However, after regretting missing their court appointment, their parents went to inquire at a local immigration office. Michael and Lizeth's parents were deported back to Mexico that same day. This was because they had an order placed for their immediate deportation after missing their court date.

#### Impact of Immigration Enforcement: Parentification of Older Siblings

This theme refers to the consequences of parental detention and deportation on the family structure and dynamics. There were two reported cases in which the family was permanently separated. The remainder of participants indicated that their deported parent eventually came back to the U.S. to reunite with the family after some time. Samuel stated that after a year, his father returned to the U.S. illegally to reunite with the family. Samuel stated that this was the only choice because his father had attempted to obtain legal status while in Mexico, but the estimated time for that was at minimum ten years and on a first come first serve basis. Samuel stated that his father told him there was also a wait list to get assistance with the process. His father became impatient and came back

to U.S. illegally to help the family and reunite with his family. Three participants, from three different families, reported that their families were still separated as a result of their parent's deportation. The remainder of participants indicated that their parents were able to come back into the country through illegal means since that was the only option for the family to be reunified. Lizeth reported that after a year and a half, her parents came back into the United States illegally to reunite with their children. Lizeth stated that during the time that her parents were in Mexico, they attempted to do things legally to prevent deportation in the future, but her parents told her that the wait for legal status was over a ten-year wait. Anthony stated that his father attempted to come back to the U.S. legally for over two years and was unsuccessful. After being disappointed by this process, his father became frustrated and returned to the U.S. illegally to reunite with his family after almost three years of being separated.

Lily stated that when her father was deported, he attempted to come back into the U.S. and was unsuccessful. Lily stated that he did not try to come back into the U.S. legally because he was aware of the wait that would require. Lily reported that her father never came back and her family was never reunified, and she stated it had been over 17 years since her father's deportation. Juan also stated that his father was unable to come back after he was deported. He said that he did attempt to return to the U.S. legally and was also unsuccessful. Juan stated that after 15 years his family was not reunified after his father's deportation.

One of the major aspects influenced by parental detainment/deportation was family dynamics. Specifically, older children in the family were forced to take on greater

familial responsibilities. All eight participants reported that the older child took on the role of the parents. This is referred to as the "parentification" of a child, which for the purpose of this research states that the older child takes on greater responsibilities, typically those that belong to the parent as a result of parental detention or deportation.

The eldest child was often forced to take on caretaking and parental roles in the absence of the detained or deported parent. Juan stated that he was the "man" of his house when his father was deported. Juan stated, "...with my dad gone, not only did I have to take care of my sister when my mom worked, but I became the man of the house too." Juan stated that he took care of his younger sister while his mother worked. Michael stated that he felt it was his obligation to be the man of the house since he was the oldest and it was what his dad expected of him when he talked to him. Michael stated, "In the year and a half that my parents were gone, Lizeth took on the role of being our 'mother.' She dropped out of school to work, and she cooked and cleaned for us." Lizeth explained, "Michael and I took care of the little ones when our parents were gone." Lizeth stated that she did not have a choice since she was the oldest and her parents were now gone. Participants also reported that as the older siblings they were in charge of watching the younger siblings while the other parent worked. Older siblings reported feeling stressed out with the added responsibility of a parent or parents when a parent was detained or deported.

After parental detention or deportation, child care changed for some families. Natalie stated that she had to help care for her younger siblings when her mother worked. Natalie said that her parents made arrangements for her father to work during the day

while her mother cooked and set everything up for the children and their father. Natalie said, "My dad worked during the day when we were in school. She would cook our food and have our things ready. My dad would pick us up from school, and my mom would be working by then. My parents made arrangements for this so we would never be left alone; my dad didn't want anyone babysitting us." By then her father would arrive, and her mother would go to work. Her father cared for them while her mother worked. But this changed when her father was suddenly deported. Child care was affected by parental detention and deportation.

Another change in family dynamics was that families went from being two parent households with two incomes at times to single parent households. This, in turn, led to participant's families having a significant financial burden. All participants reported that before parental detention or deportation their family was already struggling financially. Natalie stated that her mother had to leave them alone. Natalie's mother let the neighbor know that the children were home alone, the neighbor would occasionally check on them while her mother was at work, but for the most part, the children were left alone. Anthony stated that when his father was detained his mother was the only one working and their family struggled even more financially. Juan also reported that his mother, who had never had to work before his father's deportation, had to work, but her income did not come close to what his father was previously earning due to her lack of experience. Liz also reported that with her father's deportation, her family's financial situation became worse since her family was already living paycheck to paycheck. The elimination of her father's income made it more difficult for her family. Additionally, many of the

participants that were the oldest of the siblings reported working at an earlier age to contribute to the family income and lessen the financial burden on the remaining parent. Upon the detention or deportation of a parent, participants reported that their families struggled even more financially.

Parental detention or deportation led to older children working at younger ages. Both Jose and Lizeth explained that they had to work when their parent was deported. Juan also reported that as soon as he became of age and was able to work, he started working to provide financially in the household as well. Jose said that his life changed drastically since he began working at the age of 14. Jose also stated that he started working at fourteen to help his mother. Jose stated that it was his responsibility as the older male child to help his mother during this difficult time. Lizeth stated that because of her parent's deportation, she was forced to drop out of school at 17 and work full-time to support her siblings while her parents were in Mexico. Anthony also reported that his two older siblings had to start working. In addition, Anthony's older siblings also took care of the younger siblings while their mother worked. Anthony stated that this was a significant change for them. Older children in mixed-status families had to resort to working at an earlier age to help the remaining parent financially.

#### Impact of Immigration Enforcement: Child Well-Being and Emotional Well-being at Risk

Child well-being was placed in jeopardy with the detention or deportation of a parent. Participants reported being left alone at home while the remaining parent left worked. Although some participants reported being watched by a neighbor, they were

essentially left alone to care for themselves while the remaining parent worked. In the case of Lily she stated that, "My siblings and I were left on our own when my parents were deported. I mean we had family nearby, but my siblings and I lived alone in our house for that year and a half." Lizeth did state however that she had her extended family's support when needed, but financially she was on her own at 17 with four younger siblings. Lizeth explained, "My dad had barely gotten the house after many years of saving, we couldn't lose it. So, I worked to pay it while they were gone."

Coupled with child well-being, emotional distress was reported by all participants as well. In this research, emotional distress refers to a negative emotional reaction, which may include fear, anger, anxiety, or suffering due to parental detention or deportation. Participants reported living in fear of deportation (of the parent that was left) after one parent was deported. This fear was also linked to the possible deportation of others in the family. Lily disclosed that she never got to see her mother after her dad was deported and stated that it was as if she lost both parents. Juan reported the same feeling, and he stated that he felt abandoned and left to care for himself. Juan said that he always had his mother available before his father's deportation. He stated that with his father's deportation he felt that he could only count on himself since his mother was always gone because she was working. Feelings of fear and abandonment were reported amongst all participants when their parents were detained or deported.

The sense of sadness was also prevalent. Samuel reported feeling sad and disappointed when his father was deported. Michael recalls that it was difficult to contain his emotions in front of his siblings because he was affected by his parent's deportation

himself. Lizeth disclosed that she was also sad when her parents were gone, but had to hold it together for her four younger siblings. Samuel stated that although this was a painful experience, he said that his mother was a "strong woman" and did everything she could to provide for him and his siblings. Samuel explained that although he didn't feel that his father's deportation impacted his schooling, he felt sad when he got home and realized that his father was still gone and no longer with the family. Samuel added that his father's deportation made their family's bond stronger, but also made them suffer drastically. Natalie remembers missing her father and being sad. She stated that roles in her family shifted with her dad gone. Jose stated that this experience changed his life drastically, he stated that once his father was deported he had to work. Jose stated that he remembers being tired and upset about his father being gone at school. Anthony responded that when his father was in Mexico, he observed that his mother was always crying. Anthony recalled that when he would ask about his father his mother would begin to cry and walked away in frustration, he believed. Anthony reported that this made him feel even more upset and sad during the time that he felt he had lost his father forever. Anthony stated that his father's detention and later deportation affected his family emotionally; he stated everyone in his family was so sad all the time when his father was gone and indicated it was a terrible experience.

Participants also reported that although parental detention or deportation impacted them significantly, it took a greater toll on their younger siblings. Lizeth explained that it was difficult to see her siblings crying when they would tell her that they missed their parents; she stated that she felt "helpless" and it was a feeling that she did not ever want

to encounter again. Lizeth added that although she dropped out of school when her parents were in Mexico, she was able to go back to school and complete her high school education, "I mean yeah I dropped out of school, but I went back to school eventually." Additionally, Lizeth stated that she was glad that someone was brave enough to let others know about the experiences of the undocumented community. "I think it's great that someone is taking on a project like this one; people need to know what is going on here," Lizeth explained that she would hate for other young children and their families to live through a similar experience, although she recognizes that it is now inevitable with the current President. Michael also stated that he felt it was difficult to convince his younger siblings that everything would work out with his parents. Michael reported that it was difficult to see his younger siblings cry and ask for their parents. Juan also reported that his younger sister had a difficult time with his father's deportation since she was attached to him. Juan reported that he felt horrible seeing his younger sister cry and he tried to comfort her.

### Conclusion

In closing, this chapter provided a brief description of the adult citizen children that were interviewed for this study. The primary focus of this study was to assess children's well-being and the impact that parental detention and deportation had on these adult participants as children and their mixed-status families. The study also considered the parental experience with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Lastly, the study also determined if the families were separated or if families were separated and later reunified. The researcher acquired the participants' narratives and captured their

individualized experiences with parental detention or deportation. Participants discussed family background, their families experienced with detention or deportation and described the impact that parental detention or deportation had on them.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This research study investigated the consequences of parental detention or deportation on citizen children and the impact it had on their mixed-status families. The aim of this research study was to capture the first-hand experiences of Latino adults who experienced parental detention or deportation while they were minors. This qualitative research study is an initial step towards communicating and highlighting the narrative experiences of citizen children, their undocumented parents, and their mixed-status families. The analysis focused on the difficulties and social complications brought about by immigration enforcement.

A qualitative research design was used to capture the narrative experiences of these Latino adult participants. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of the retrospective accounts of parental detention or deportation by adult children of undocumented immigrants. The interviews examined how immigration enforcement affected participant's well-being and the stability of mixed-status families. The thematic findings determined the impact of parental detention or deportation.

#### Finding Summary

Parental detention or deportation has shown to affect family and children's well-being. In this study, the findings suggest that parental detention or deportation shaped the

well-being of mixed-status families, especially among young children. This supports previous studies on the impact of detention or deportation on children and mixed-status families. For example, the National Council of La Raza's (2007) study of workplace raids found that when parents were deported, children demonstrated feelings of abandonment, symptoms of trauma, fear, isolation, depression, and family fragmentation. Brabeck and Xu (2010) reported that there is a link between vulnerability and experiences of deportation for parent and child emotional well-being. Mckenna (2011) states that on a national level, consensus on the objectives of family law and immigration law when parents are deported is necessary. She explains that a general systemic response is needed to protect the family unit while preserving the rights of U.S. citizens who stay in the U.S. after their parents has encountered immigration enforcement. Thronson (2010) states that lawyers and advocates have argued that children living in mixed-status families are indeed threatened by immigration enforcement since it is associated with family fragmentation. Other studies that analyzed child well-being in mixed-status families have indicated that a child's psychological, academic, and social well-being is affected by immigration enforcement (Gelfand & Teti, 1990; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012). These studies suggest that children were significantly affected with parental detention or deportation.

The undocumented community encounters many societal barriers. Findings indicated that mixed-status families encountered many barriers as a result of their parent's legal status. These barriers included the following: financial hardships, parents believing that they were not entitled to social services, discrimination, and poor working conditions

in their place of employment. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to underline the disproportionality of the undocumented community, their U.S. citizen children, and their mixed status families. Critical Race Theory highlighted the oppression that is present in this community's everyday life and acknowledged barriers that exist for undocumented parents, citizen children and mixed-status families (Layder, 1998). These findings are consistent with reports of the strong association between parents' undocumented status and social hardships such as poverty, discrimination, parental distress, and poor physical and mental health of their children (American Psychological Association, 2002). These studies indicate the disparities encountered by mixed-status families.

Financial burdens for mixed-status families were reported in the findings. Mixed-status families already face financial hardships because undocumented parents work low paying jobs due to their legal status (Kalil & Chen, 2008). The current findings indicate that parents were working low paying jobs with long hours in deplorable conditions as a result of legal status. Another indicator for this may be due to a parent's lack of education or language barrier. Ayon and colleagues (2012) reported that immigrant families encounter financial hardships, which in turn impacts their ability to cover living expenses and often leads to crowded living conditions. Kalil and Chen (2008) also stated that children of immigrants are living in conditions and children are also more likely to experience food insecurity. The findings demonstrated hardships encountered by mixed-status families were directly connected with parental legal status.

Examination of experiences when facing immigration enforcement indicate that language communication barriers limited undocumented parents' rights. Findings

showed that parents were not aware of their basic and legal rights at the time of detention or deportation. Findings also suggested that when parents were detained or deported, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials did not provide parents with information about their rights or personal phone call upon detainment. Dettlaff (2014) stated that due to discrepancies with detention and deportation proceedings completed by ICE raised heightened attention to immigration raids because guidelines were not developed when detaining undocumented immigrants with children. Immigration enforcement included not providing services to the detained or deported parent and malpractices by ICE according to the participants interviewed.

These studies may suggest that ICE did not adequately inform parents of their rights at their time of their detention. Findings indicated that although parents did not disclose to participants what was signed at the time of their detention, participants believed that parents signed their deportation order. Also, all participants reported that their parents did not receive any form of legal assistance when they were detained or deported. A possible reason for the lack of awareness of legal rights may be that participants' parents could not afford legal counsel. Sullivan and Enriquez (2016) explain that even if undocumented parents could obtain legal assistance, they would not be able to afford it due to their socioeconomic status. These findings suggest that immigration enforcement is not being implemented accordingly with undocumented parents, therefore separating mixed-status families.

The impact of parental detention or deportation on children and mixed status families was also investigated. One of the significant consequences that resulted from

immigration enforcement was a change in family dynamics. It was reported that the older male siblings took on the role of the "man of the house" if the father was deported. On the other hand, a woman in the study took on the role of the mother while she worked after a parent was detained or deported. Once one of the parents was detained or departed, participants reported that the older siblings took care of the house chores and watched younger siblings in the absence of the parent that was working. For example, participants who were the oldest children reported having to work as young adolescents. Participants explained that this occurred immediately after parental detention or deportation since the income of the deported parent needed to be replaced. Several studies have indicated that children in immigrant families have excessive household responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, running errands or caring for the younger siblings and providing financial support (Orellana, 2001; Orellana et al., 2003). It appears that within mixed-status families, children have added obligations with immigration enforcement.

It is not surprising that the findings suggest that familial separation resulted from parental detention or deportation since Thronson (2008) indicates that immigration enforcement was creating the destabilization of immigrant (mixed-status) families. Hagan, Eschbach, and Rodriguez (2008) have shown that since 1990, the U.S. has enacted a series of laws that facilitate the deportation of noncitizens and in turn separating families. Thronson (2010) states that lawyers and advocates have argued that U.S. policies indeed threaten children living in mixed-status families and that the enforcement of these policies endangers unauthorized parents. It was also noted that

several families were permanently separated as a result of parental detention or deportation.

Another significant consequence that came about due to parental detention or deportation were the effects that it had on the children's well-being. Previous quantitative research, despite limitations, has implied a correlation between vulnerability and experiences with immigration enforcement. Some of these consequences include negative financial consequences and poor outcomes for parent and child emotional well-being (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). All participants reported living in constant fear after their parent was detained or deported. Phinney and colleagues (2001) state that children are influenced by messages received from family and their community. Since this community is constantly under stress as a result of their legal status, which then transmits to the parent, children are aware of their situation. Emotional distress was also reported among all participants. Children then live in fear and have high levels of anxiety, affecting their emotional well-being (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016). The National Council of La Raza (2007) conducted a study and reported that the consequences for children with deported parents included: feelings of abandonment, symptoms of trauma, fear, isolation, depression, and family fragmentation. All participants stated that with the detention or sudden deportation of their parent or parents they were left distraught and upset with the circumstances.

Extreme trauma from parental separation leaves U.S. citizen minors to express behavioral changes such as changes in eating or sleeping habits, aggressiveness, crying, feelings of abandonment, poor academic performance, fear, and higher levels of anxiety, to name a few (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Gulbas et al., 2015; Zayas et al., 2015; Brabeck

& Xu, 2010; Mckenna, 2010). Based on significant accounts from participants, the researcher's findings support previous literature and suggest that the child's well-being and emotional distress are affected with parental detention or deportation.

### Limitation of Research

There were several research limitations to acknowledge. One of the limitations was the small sample size. The sample size consisted of eight participants from Los Angeles County. If the sample size had been larger, the researcher might have been able to obtain more diverse accounts of experience with immigration enforcement. There was a lack of diversity in the participants that agreed to participate; participants might have been from other parts of Latin America such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, or Venezuela for example. All participants identified as Mexican only. Moreover, the researcher would have liked to have recruited participants that had child welfare agencies involved upon parental detention or deportation. This would have then allowed the researcher to gain some insight on cases in the child welfare system and where parents were detained or deported. Participants with this experience would have enabled the researcher to better see and understand the process of child welfare agency involvement in these cases the outcome of the mixed-status family.

Recruitment issues limited access to an independent sample. Participants' hesitation to participate in this research was a result of the current political climate. Potential participants let the researcher know that they were skeptical about the study and feared that it was a scam. Due to the limitation of participants the researcher had to resort to interviewing siblings of the participants that were already interviewed. This limited the

types of experiences with Immigration and Customs Enforcement reported by participants. For instance, none of the participants interviewed expressed having experiences with the child welfare system. The researcher desired to capture the experiences of mixed-status families in the child welfare system. Unfortunately, recruitment issues limited the investigator's ability to do so since these experiences were not available with any of the participants interviewed. Direct involvement with a child welfare agency, at the time of parental detention or deportation, should have been required criteria for participation in this study. This would have allowed the researcher to further analyze undocumented parent's experiences with the child welfare system at the time of their detention or deportation.

Lastly, the data collected for this research was also limited by the exclusion of the accounts of undocumented parents. Undocumented parents' narratives might have provided valuable perspectives on the effects of parental detention or deportation on their children and families. Although this research study represents the accounts of eight individuals with shared experiences of parental detention or deportation, it highlights the importance of their narrative to bring forth and raise awareness about the experiences of these children and their mixed-status families. The complexity of each experience provides a glimpse of diverse differentiated experiences of these children, undocumented parents, and families.

#### Future Research Directions

The researcher suggests that future research continues to capture more in-depth narrative experiences of this vulnerable community. This study intended to capture the

narrative experiences of adults that experienced parental detention and deportations while they were minors. However, examining the perspective of children in mixed-status families is only one side of the story. Future research would be beneficial to capture the undocumented parent's experiences with parental detention and deportation and the effects that it had on their children and families. Also, some participants were not able to communicate their parent's experiences when ICE held them in detention centers. Therefore, that information was limited to that aspect as well. Additionally, future research may also want to compare and contrast the experiences of children and undocumented parents to see how they may be similar or contradict one another. Addressing injustices or malpractices that undocumented parents go through should be included in future research. Again, due to a limited number of participants and criteria required to participate in this study, experiences with the child welfare system with parental detention or deportation were not captured. Future research may include child welfare agency involvement with the detention or deportation of a parent as a requirement to participate in the study. This would allow further research to analyze these experiences in more depth. Providing further educational research on this would help lead to potential solutions as to how social workers can handle these complex cases.

### Implications for Social Work Practice

The study demonstrates the need to further assist mixed-status families before, during, and after facing immigration enforcement. Findings illustrate that mixed-status families face financial struggles and perceive barriers to public assistance. One of the reasons mixed-status families experienced financial hardships was because one or more

parents experienced job insecurity. Previous studies indicate that approximately 30-40 % of undocumented parents earn lower wages than that of their authorized counterparts (Bernhardt & colleagues, 2009; Yoshikawa, 2011). Rogerson (2012) adds that an undocumented status often leads to unemployment due to lack of education or necessary skills. Social workers may develop educational sessions that informs the undocumented community of labor laws and explain to them that they are not excluded because of their legal status. This may help prevent undocumented parents from working in these illegal conditions. Advocacy for undocumented workers may also ameliorate poor working conditions.

Securing public assistance for mixed-status families may help alleviate some financial stressors and would contribute to a better household environment. Yet, findings suggest that mixed-status families were unaware of their eligibility for social services that may have helped ease financial burdens. Many participants reported that parents believed that as undocumented individuals they were not "entitled" to these services. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2017) non-citizens, including undocumented individuals, may receive public assistance such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid and Children Care Insurance Program (CHIP) if they meet eligibility criteria. Generally, some of the basic criteria for eligibility of these services includes income, assets, age restrictions, and employment requirements. Although undocumented parents may be ineligible, they are still able to apply for benefits on behalf of their citizen children who are entitled to the rights of all U.S. citizens. As a developing social worker,

it is important to take these aspects into consideration. The undocumented community needs to be informed on what financial services they can obtain to provide financial assistance for their families if necessary.

Moreover, various categories of immigrants are also eligible to receive different types of benefits. Immigration status determines eligibility of social services and presented the following statuses: refugee, asylee, parolee, immigrant, temporary resident, and undocumented person (Drachman, 1995). For example, according to the Refugee Act of 1980, refugees are entitled to special assistance aimed at economic self-sufficiency. These services include relocation assistance, financial aid, medical care, English language training, and employment assistance. In addition to these services, refugees are also entitled to the same services available to U.S. citizens including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC, currently known as TANF), Medicaid, and food stamps (currently known as SNAP). Eligibility for programs for undocumented individuals varies from state to state; however states can receive federal funding for TANF, Medicaid, and CHIP to serve qualified immigrants (National Immigration Law Center, 2017). Drachman (1995) explains that undocumented individuals and service providers alike are often unfamiliar with rights associated with legal status.

During the detention and deportation process, undocumented parents may need assistance getting informed about their basic rights. Findings also indicate that undocumented parents were not informed of their basic rights either in their place of employment or when detained by ICE officials. Educational workshops for

undocumented parents that inform them of their basic rights are essential to avoid further violation of this community's rights. These findings support previous research demonstrating that undocumented parents often believed that they did not have any rights based on their legal status (Rogerson, 2012). To address this issue, community organizations such as The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) provide workshops informing the undocumented community of their basic and legal rights and providing them with free or low cost legal assistance (CHIRLA, 2017). It is important to inform the undocumented community that although they may not have a legal status, they still have basic rights as everyone else. When social workers begin to work with these families, the social worker may be the first linkage to connect parents to immigration specialists that can inform them about their rights (Pine & Drachman, 2005).

These findings also have implications for graduate education that prepares social workers to help families navigate immigration enforcement. Social workers should be educated on the rights of undocumented parents and provided more training to help maintain mixed-status families together. These trainings are also beneficial to become more educated on these immigration issues as social workers. If social workers are better educated on these rights, then they can advocate for detained parents when necessary. For example, in the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, there is a specialized unit called the Special Immigrant Status (SIS) unit that specializes in these types of cases (Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, 2017). To illustrate, when a social worker is assigned a case with an undocumented

parent, the worker gets additional assistance from this specialized unit to better assist these families. Another potential approach would be to have this specialized unit facilitate general training sessions for child welfare workers. Social workers should be informed about Immigration and Customs Enforcement procedures and basic immigrant rights to better serve mixed-status families.

As advocates in the immigration policy sector, social workers may work to prevent the detention and deportation of parents (Jansson, 2015). Additional support services may also include forming community groups that educate undocumented parents on their basic rights when they are detained or deported. Informing parents about directives that are in place when detained by ICE is necessary to help maintain their families together. For example, in August of 2013, ICE released the Parental Interests Directive, which ensures that detained (or in the process of deportation) parents or legal guardians make decisions in their child's best interest. In addition, these parents or legal guardians are able to maintain contact with their children and participate in child welfare proceedings. Participation in these proceedings can make a difference in the conservation of parental rights. Lastly, under this directive, parents are to remain in detention facilities that are reasonably close to their children whenever possible (First Focus, 2013; Butera, 2013). Social workers need to advocate for the development of these support services for undocumented parents and their children.

In the aftermath of parental detention or deportation, social work practice should also focus on child well-being. This may be done with an assessment of the child's mental health upon a parent's detention or deportation. This would then allow social

workers to take appropriate measures with these children and make sure that they obtain therapy during this difficult time if needed. An example of this is providing therapeutic services for children at school or in the community. A variety of interventions can be put in place to assist children as well as parents. Brabeck, Lykes, and Hunter (2014) found that with the psychological impact of detention and deportation, cognitive behavior therapy and group therapy could be beneficial for children and families. These methods of intervention may be a good way to deal with the trauma for these children and families. Parents whose partner has been detained or deported, also need additional support. Referring these parents to therapy or counseling resources in their community would be beneficial for them.

Another alternative would include providing support group for family members. Participating in support groups allows for the discussion of shared experiences. Support groups allow the discussion and development of coping mechanisms to confront hardships (Hepworth et al., 2012). Support groups may empower parents to develop coping mechanisms with the sudden detention or deportation of their partners. Furthermore, these groups may also help educate parents on ways that they can talk to their children about their parent's detention or deportation. Children may also benefit from having support groups in school that would include other children with similar experiences. Children's participation in support groups help validate their feelings during emotionally difficult times (Hepworth et al., 2012). Support groups may also help children feel less lonely and provide additional support from peers that are going through a similar experience. This support group at school may help a child develop alternative

coping mechanisms to deal with the separation of the deported parent. As social workers, it is our responsibility to design and implement community-based services that are suitable for children, undocumented parents, and their mixed-status families.

There are already services in place for mixed-status families. As social workers working with these families, providing undocumented parents with free or low cost legal assistance may be beneficial for their situation and informing these parents that they can apply for services on behalf of their citizen children. Additional support services may include informing undocumented parents about their local food bank and providing them with the resources that they are eligible for regardless of their legal status. Supporting the needs of mixed-status families is evident and undocumented parents are not educated on the services that are available to them (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012). Sullivan and Enriquez (2016) have noted discrepancies with immigration enforcement that contributed to family separation. The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (2017) has developed a family preparedness plan for mixed-status families. The plan help families plan ahead in case that a parent or both parents are deported. The Family Preparedness plan allows parents to think of a child care strategies, finding out about immigration options, and it includes information on basic rights. Social work advocacy for undocumented parents and their mixed-status families would also make a difference in their lives and would further prevent unjust experiences.

### Conclusion

This research aimed to capture the experiences of the undocumented community and raise awareness about their experiences. The current political climate has brought

much attention to the undocumented community, and they are currently living in fear. It is important to consider that the deportation of a single individual may impact an entire family, a wife or husband and their children. This research along with previous studies, indicates that immigration enforcement has consequences on mixed-status families, specifically minor children. This study focused on the effect of children's well-being upon parental detention or deportation and analyzed how immigration enforcement affected the preservation of mixed-status families.

With an increase in immigration enforcement, it is imperative that as developing social workers we advocate for the immigrant community. Current efforts by legal and social advocates to assist the undocumented community and mixed-status families with encounters with immigration enforcement are being made (Los Angeles Times, 2017). Undocumented parents in mixed-status families continue to report lack of education on their rights and the services available to them. Education of this community will provide them with the tools to prepare them when facing immigration enforcement. In addition, further education on the services available for this community is also necessary to ameliorate living conditions. Furthermore, based on the responses of this research and previous studies, it is strongly recommended that further examination be conducted regarding how undocumented parents and mixed-status families are currently being treated. Again, increasing awareness and advocacy to address any current or ongoing infringement of basic human rights against this community must continue.

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## APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for meeting with me today. I know that you have experienced parental detention and deportation. I am interested in your experience to gain further understanding of what you and your family went through during this difficult time. This study will look at the well-being of citizen children and the conservation of Latino mixed-status families. The overall purpose of this anonymous study is to learn about your experiences with the child welfare system and the immigration system. In specific, I will ask you to talk about your relationship with your parent before and after the detention and deportation process.

Before we start, I would like to let you know that some of these questions may be difficult to answer or some questions may be obvious. There are no right or wrong answers. Nothing you say will be taken offensively, therefore feel free to answer everything honestly. You have the right to skip any question without explanation or stop the interview at any time without penalty. Please feel free to ask for any clarifications.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
  - a. where did you grow up?
2. Can you please provide your background of your family?
  - a. where did your parents grow up?
  - b. can you tell me what your family life was like as a child?
  - c. do you have any siblings? how many?
1. At what age were your parents or parent detained/deported by ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement)?
  - a. can you walk me through what happened when they were detained/deported?
  - b. what were your thoughts or feelings at the time?
2. How did your life change after your parent(s) was/were detained or deported?
  - a. What was your relationship like with your mom/dad before they were detained/deported?
  - b. What was the relationship with your siblings like before and after your parent was detained/deported (did you remain together/ lived separately)?
  - c. What was your schooling experience before and after your parent was detained/deported?
  - d. What was your overall well-being before and after parental detention/deportation?
2. What was communication like after your parent was detained/deported?
3. What resources were available to you or your family at that time?
4. In the case that both parents were detained/deported, were you (and your siblings, if any) placed in foster care or with a relative?

5. During the time in which your parent or parents were detained or deported, were you and your family provided with adequate resources to assist you with this situation? If so, who provided them for you? Were they helpful?
  - a. Do you know if your parents were provided with lawyers to assist them with their case? Do you know if their parental rights were terminated during this time?
  - b. Do you know if the child protective agency (if involved) made reasonable efforts to contact your parents to assist them with reunification services?
2. If you were given the opportunity to recreate the sequence of events and the way in which this matter was handled, would you? If yes, please describe how?

## APPENDIX B

### ENTREVISTA SEMIESTRUCTURADA: PREGUNTAS DE INTERROGACIÓN

## ENTREVISTA SEMIESTRUCTURADA: PREGUNTAS DE INTERROGACIÓN

Gracias por tomar tiempo y participar en esta entrevista. Usted me comentó que tuvo una experiencia con la detención o deportación de un padre. Me interesa mucho su experiencia y me gustaría entender y aprender más sobre la experiencia que tuvo usted y su familia durante este tiempo tan difícil. Esta investigación investigara más sobre las experiencias de hijos ciudadanos con padres indocumentados en familias mixtas. El propósito de esta investigación anónima es para aprender más sobre su experiencia con el sistema del bienestar infantil y el sistema de inmigración. En específico, le voy a preguntar sobre la relación con su padre antes y después de su detención o deportación.

Antes de empezar la entrevista, le quiero avisar que unas preguntas serán difíciles de contestar, o pensara que algunas preguntas tienen respuestas obvias. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Nada de lo que diga me ofenderá, por lo tanto, responda libremente y con toda honestidad por favor. Usted tiene no tiene que contestar todas las preguntas y puede omitir la pregunta que sea o terminar con la entrevista en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalización. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta, no dude en preguntarme.

¿Usted está de acuerdo en participar en esta entrevista?

1. Me podría describir como es usted?
  - a. en donde creció?
2. Me podría platicar de sus antecedentes familiares?
  - a. en donde se crearon sus padres?
  - b. Cómo fue su niñez?
  - c. tiene hermanos o hermanas tiene? ¿cuántos?
3. Qué edad tenía cuando su padre/madre o ambos padres fueron detenidos o deportados por inmigración (ICE)?
  - a. me podría explicar que paso cuando detuvieron o deportaron a su padre/madre?
  - b. que fueron sus pensamientos durante este tiempo? ¿Cómo se sintió?
4. Como le cambio la vida con la detención o deportación de su padre/madre o ambos padres?
  - a. como era su relación antes y después de detener o deportar a su padre/madre?
  - b. como era su relación con sus hermanos/hermanas antes y después de la detención o deportación de su padre/madre?
  - c. cómo fue su experiencia escolar ante y después de la detención de su padre/madre?
  - d. como era su bienestar en general antes y después de la detención o deportación de su madre/padre?
- 5 ¿. Se pudo comunicar con su padre/ madre o padres durante su detención o proceso de deportación?
6. ¿Qué recursos tenían usted y su familia cuando detuvieron o deportaron a su madre o padre?

7. Cuando detuvieron o deportaron a su padre/madre o padres, a usted (y a sus hermanos) los ingresaron a un orfanato o con otros familiares?
8. ¿Durante el tiempo que su padre (padres) estuvo detenido o en proceso de deportación, se les dieron recursos necesarios para asistir a usted y a su familia en esta situación? Si se los dieron, ¿cuáles fueron? ¿Los recursos le fueron útil? 5. ¿Usted sabe si a sus padres les asignaron abogados para asistirlos con su caso? Usted sabe si los derechos legales sobre usted (su hijo/hijos fueron terminados o finalizados durante su detención o detención?
  - a. ¿Usted sabe si a sus padres les asignaron abogados para asistirlos con su caso? Usted sabe si los derechos legales sobre usted (su hijo/hijos fueron terminados o finalizados durante su detención o detención.
  - b. ¿Usted sabe si la agencia de protección de niños (si es que se involucró en su caso) cumplió con los esfuerzos necesarios para mantener comunicación con sus padres durante este tiempo y los asistió adecuadamente para unir a su familia?
9. ¿Si usted pudiera la oportunidad de recrear esta experiencia y la manera en que su caso fue manejado, cambiaría algo? Si usted cambiaría algo, por favor de describir qué cambiaría.

APPENDIX C

ENGLISH RECRUITMENT FLYER

## ENGLISH RECRUITMENT FLYER

# **PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!**

## **RESEARCH ON THE EXPERIENCES OF DETENTION AND DEPORTATION OF LATINO FAMILIES**



**WHEN**  
**December 2016– January 2017**

**WHERE**  
**Location will be discussed and  
accommodations will be made**

**AGES 18 AND OLDER**

**VOLUNTARY  
PARTICIPATION**

**PARTICIPANTS  
NEEDED MUST BE  
WILLING TO  
DISCUSS THIS  
ISSUE**

**INTERVIEWS WILL  
LAST FROM 1-2  
HOURS**

- Times will vary with each participant
- Accommodations will be made in advance and will be tailored to participant's schedule

**COMPENSATION**

- Gift card will be given upon completion of the interview
- Contact: [ltorres118@toromail.csudh.edu](mailto:ltorres118@toromail.csudh.edu)

**YOUR  
PARTICIPATION AND  
CONSIDERATION IS  
GREATLY  
APPRECIATED !**

APPENDIX D

SPANISH RECRUITMENT FLYER

## SPANISH RECRUITMENT FLYER

**SE SOLICITAN  
PARTICIPANTES  
INVESTIGACIÓN  
SOBRE LAS  
EXPERIENCIAS DE  
DETENCIÓN Y  
DEPORTACIÓN  
ENTRE LAS  
FAMILIAS LATINAS**

**CUANDO**

**Entre diciembre 2016 - enero 2017**

**DONDE**

**El lugar se discutirá y la comodidad del participante será la prioridad**

**MAYORES DE 18  
AÑOS**

**PARTICIPACIÓN  
VOLUNTARIA**

**PARTICIPANTES  
DEBERAN DE ESTAR  
DE ACUERDO EN  
DISCUTIR ESTE  
TEMA**

**LAS ENTREVISTAS  
DURARAN ENTRE  
UNA Y DOS HORAS**

- El tiempo será diferente para cada participante
- Arreglos serán hechos por adelantado y el
- horario del participante será respetado

**COMPENSACIÓN**

- Una tarjeta de regalo se le dará a cada participante al completar la entrevista
- Para más información: [ltorres118@toromail.csu.dh.edu](mailto:ltorres118@toromail.csu.dh.edu)

**SU PARTICIPACIÓN Y  
CONSIDERACIÓN SE LES  
AGRADECE POR  
ADELANTADO**

APPENDIX E  
PRELIMINARY CODE BOOK

## PRELIMINARY CODE BOOK

## Theory Driven Code Book

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Theory (Category)	Descriptor	Example
		Critical Race Theory	Underline the disproportionality of the undocumented community, their U.S. citizen children and their mixed status families; gain better insight on the decisions made by Child Protective Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and decisions made by immigration judges and family court judges with these immigration cases; determine the oppression that is present in this community's everyday life and acknowledge barriers that are present for undocumented parents, citizen children and mixed-status families; language barriers, inaccessibility to adequate resources, unjust court hearings, or not being educated on their legal and basic rights.	
<i>Barriers of the undocumented community</i>			Challenges that came about because of being undocumented in the United States	
	Employment; difficulty maintaining a job		Lack of employment; difficulty finding or maintaining employment; being laid off as a result of legal status	"Since I had already mentioned that my dad struggled finding jobs, and was continuously getting laid off."

				“My dad got caught in a redada de trabajo at the factory that he was working at. ICE suddenly showed up to the workplace and got many of its worker since most of them were undocumented, it was my dad’s third day working there. He had trouble having stable jobs.”
	Language barrier		Barriers in communication; lack of understanding what is being communicated in another language	“My dad didn’t speak any English. He spoke broken English, but it wasn’t enough to communicate.”
	Not educated on basic and legal rights		Undocumented parents are unaware of their legal and basic rights when detained or deported	“My dad didn’t think he had any rights because of his legal status.”
				Did not have any participants go through this, but it is listed in chapter 1
	Parent/child vulnerability; impact on family and minors	Also, Social Ecological Theory- affects social functioning	Family/children living in constant fear of detention/deportation	
<i>Disparities of the undocumented community</i>			Unequal opportunities of this community as a result of legal status	
	Inaccessibility to resources/social services		Undocumented parent was unable to obtain services needed due to legal status	“My mom applied to get social services, they told her she didn’t qualify because of her legal status.”
	Impact on children		Automatically placed in	Did not have

	when undocumented parent is detained/deported		foster care; parent is not considered because it is believed that the child is better in this country rather than with their own parent in another country	participants go through this experience, however it is listed in chapter 1
	Lack of available Bilingual (Spanish) services		Latino parents unable to receive services needed due to language barrier; prevents access to services in their native language	
	Unjust children custody court hearings	Also, Social Ecological Theory-policy/legislation not followed	Undocumented parent is not acknowledged in their child/children's custody hearing	Did not have any participants go through this, but it is listed in chapter 1
	Impact of detention/deportation on family conservation		Due to the legal status of parent(s) families are more likely to remain separated	
	Parental rights		Due to legal status, undocumented parents are more likely to have parental rights terminated due to unjust court hearings; the social worker on the case not making reasonable efforts to communicate with parents; ICE agents not allowing parents to participate in child custody hearings	This was not reported by any of my participants
		Social Ecological Theory	aims to explore an individual's environment and the effect that it has on their social functioning; child is impacted through various contexts (policies, parents working condition, family process) affected by the parent's legal status and vulnerability; Policies and legislation were also taken into consideration when this research was conducted to determine the impact on the lives of	

			citizen children, their undocumented parents, and their mixed status families	
<i>Impact of detention or deportation of undocumented parent(s)</i>			Consequences of children and families as a result of parental detention and deportation.	
	Parentification of older child		Older child takes on greater responsibilities, those that belong to the parent	<p>“I watched my younger sister when my mom worked. I always had my mom available when I needed something, with my dad gone she wasn’t there anymore.”</p> <p>“I had to work at 17 and drop out of high school, with both of my parents gone I didn’t really have a choice.”</p> <p>“My life changed very much, I had to go to work at 14.”</p> <p>“A few years after, I worked as soon as it was legal for me to so that I could help my mom financially.”</p> <p>“It changed a lot, I had to take care of my siblings but my brother who was 14 at the time was of great help. We supported one another through all of this, we stayed strong for our younger siblings and let them know</p>

				<p>that everything would be ok.”</p> <p>“My older brother took on responsibilities. He was now the man of the house in a sense with my dad being gone.”</p>
	Financial Burden		Indication that family was financially affected by their experience with immigration enforcement	<p>“My mom was forced to work when my dad was deported. She had never worked before, then as soon as I turned 16 I also began to work to have an additional income in the home, my little sister was only 8 at the time.”</p> <p>“I had to work at 17 and drop out of high school, with both of my parents gone I didn’t really have a choice, both of my parents were gone.”</p> <p>“My mom was the only income in our home now, we were already struggling financially with my dad’s income. Sometimes we didn’t have anything to eat.”</p>
	Child-Welfare		The protection, care, and healthy development of a child, this should be provided by a parent and in a child’s environment (NASW, 2016).	<p>“After my parents were deported we stayed at home, family would check up on us but we remained at home without my</p>

				<p>parents.”</p> <p>“I watched my younger sister when my mom worked. I always had my mom available when I needed something, with my dad gone she wasn’t there anymore.”</p> <p>“We would call my parents and my younger siblings would cry when we would need to hang up. I could see that my older sister held back her tears, I did too. We were all upset and missed our parents.”</p>
	<p>Emotional Distress</p>		<p>A negative emotional reaction, which may include fear, anger, anxiety, or suffering due to parental detention/deportation</p>	<p>“I feel that this affected my younger sister more, she appeared to be more upset. I was upset too, but she was younger and attached to my dad.”</p> <p>“I was sad and disappointed. I didn’t have trouble in school when my dad was deported. But when I got home I realized he was gone and became sad.”</p> <p>“We would call my parents and my younger</p>

				<p>siblings would cry when we would need to hang up. I could see that my older sister held back her tears, I did too. We were all upset and missed our parents.”</p>
	<p>Fear</p>		<p>Reports of living in fear of deportation (of the parent that was left) after one parent was deported; fear also included the deportation of others in the family.</p>	<p>“We didn’t get any resources when my dad was deported. It was probably because my mom was too scared, I think we were all scared after this happened.”</p> <p>“We didn’t get any resources, no one except family and close friends knew what happened. We were too scared to let people know. What if another family member would be next?”</p> <p>“There weren’t any resources available. Mother was too proud to receive any government aid, she prided herself in working hard for her family. No one was aware that dad was deported, only close family and even then, people feared to seek resources since they feared for themselves and their situation as</p>

				well.”  “Uh yeah no we weren’t provided with any resources, no one really knew what had happened to my dad. We were too scared for other family members.”
<i>Malpractices</i>			Malpractices by child welfare agencies or Immigration and Customs Enforcement against undocumented parents, children, and families.	
	Malpractices from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)		Inappropriate practices that prevent a detained parent from their basic rights or prevents them from participating in their child’s custody hearing	“My dad was detained and officers were laughing at him when they were handing him the phone. My dad didn’t speak any English and he didn’t now that he was given the phone to make a call, he didn’t understand. He said they were just laughing.”  “At the time that my dad was detained he wasn’t offered any legal assistance.”

	Malpractice from Child Welfare Agencies/Child Protective Agencies		Social workers not making reasonable efforts to contact detained or deported parent; the social worker does not make reasonable efforts to find detained or deported parent or contact the citizen children's family and is placed in foster care and separated from family	None of my participants had child welfare agencies involved during parental detention or deportation
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