THESIS: EVALUATING THE SUCCESS FACTORS IN THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF MIGRANT STUDENTS: THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION AND PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

Research surrounding the education of minority and disadvantaged student populations has historically been focused on the “deficit model”, the notion that examines the weaknesses of a group rather than their strengths. This study investigated the educational journey of one particular group of students belonging to an overlooked minority population, the migrant farmworker student. The educational plight of the migrant farmworker student can be characterized as collateral damage to an agricultural industry that profits from the undereducation of this group. The failure of schools to pursue the academic achievements of migrant farmworker students effectively enables continued profits for cities and the agricultural economy in the U.S. by reproducing the migrant farmworker labor force.

To discard the deficit model, this study conducted a comparative analysis of existing grounded theory-based case studies of migrant farmworker students in California and Texas to identify and evaluate the success factors of these students as they navigate through the Migrant Education Program ( MEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The results of this study identified success factors such as cultural capital, institutional agents, role models, parental involvement, academic learned capital, and fictive kinship associated with migrant farmworker student upward mobility. The intent of this study is to inform the MEP and CAMP on what currently makes these students successful to focus program objectives in the future.
Additionally, I examined the intersection of education and planning. The key findings of this research focus on identifying the mechanisms by which the field of planning includes education policy in the context of a city's infrastructure.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research surrounding the education of minority and disadvantaged student populations has historically been focused on the “deficit model”, the notion that examines the weaknesses of a group rather than their strengths. In the case of minority and disadvantaged student populations, existing research identifies learning needs and challenges, but incorrectly places these two labels under the learning disability umbrella. This misclassification results in the stigmatizing of students from minority and disadvantaged populations as learning-disabled based on the opinion of the majority society’s educational system rather than the academic performance of the group (Harry & Klingner, 2007). Although research highlighting the obstacles faced by minority and disadvantaged student populations is prominent, limited research identifying success factors in the educational achievement of this group has been conducted. Existing literature tends to focus on objective measurements of academic advancement rather than a subjective approach that looks at sociocultural, personal, and environmental factors that affect the educational achievement of these populations (Alva & Padilla, 1995). The data gap in current literature exists when looking at the family support system, individual coping strategies of resilient students, and strong work ethic and how these factors impact educational achievement.

The Migrant Student

Based on the gaps in existing research there exists a need to understand the educational journeys of these minority and disadvantaged student populations, specifically in California a majority-minority state. One particular group of students belonging to an overlooked sector of this population is the migrant farmworker student
(migrant student). The migrant student can be defined as the child of migrant farmworkers whose families are employed by agricultural and/or fisheries industries, who will move across districts and/or state lines several times during a 12-26 month period of time following the agricultural crop growing seasons (Lundy-Ponce, 2010). Often the migrant student also assumes the role of a farmworker, “a person 14 years and older who crossed county lines and stayed overnight to do hired farm work at any time during the year” (Martinez et. al., 1994, p.333).

However, unlike immigrant students who are defined as students age three through twenty-one, who were not born in the United States and have not been attending any one or more schools in the United States for more than three full school years, migrant students who are often U.S. born are more commonly defined by their constant mobilization (California Department of Education, 2020). The California Department of Education reports that there are over 102,348 migrant students eligible for migrant education programs and services in 565 school districts throughout the state of California (California Department of Education, 2020).

Coupled with constant mobilization, migrant students experience more acute poverty than other major school populations, lack English language proficiency (even though most are U.S. citizens), and come from educational backgrounds where the migrant parents have the lowest levels of educational attainment when compared to other occupational groups (Lundy-Ponce, 2010). These factors contribute to lower literacy rates and lack of school preparedness amongst this student population, positioning the migrant student on an uphill battle towards educational success and in turn making it harder to achieve the economic, health, and societal benefits that accompany higher educational
achievement and upward social mobility (Wobbekind, 2012; Garza et al., 2016). However, despite these obstacles some members of the migrant student population still find academic success. This study will attempt to illuminate how these success factors bring about positive educational experiences for migrant students.

**Success Factors**

Migrant student success has been found to be partly due to the collaboration and efforts of targeted programs like the Migrant Education Program (MEP), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and the Seasonal and Migrant Head Start Program (Lundy-Ponce, 2010). When thinking about migrant student success, it is imperative that we consider the importance that migrant parents place on education as a path to a better life for their children and how this impacts the student’s educational journey (Kindler, 2020).

Existing research shows us that student success can be attributed to the intersection of quality schools and parental involvement (Lechuga-Peña & Lechuga, 2018). In the case of migrant students, the availability of adequate grade school and college pipeline programs and parental expression about the importance of education can be seen as contributors to academic success. But these two factors alone have been successful where barriers to the education of migrant students like low literacy rates, cultural differences, and child labor do not overwhelm the efforts of the programs and parents (Wiseman, 2003). Therefore, ongoing research is necessitated to identify what other success factors are present that combat the barriers of migrant student education. Identifying these factors will help inform the development of holistic programmatic approaches.
Policy and Programs

Research informing educational policy and programs in the United States lacks an understanding of the sociocultural, personal, and environmental factors that affect the life of migrant students, as well as the success factors that lead to academic success. Available research about the migrant student tends to focus on the historically high dropout rates that are too often attributed to the lack of assimilation by this population of students to “American Culture” (Nessel & Ryan, 1995; Garza et al., 2016). The outcome of previous research efforts is often the development of policy and program recommendations that result in the categorization of migrant students into categories that perpetuate limited advancement (e.g., English as a Second Language (ESL), vocational tracks as opposed to college preparatory tracks).

However, there are programs with the intent to assist the migrant student navigate the public-school system. The most prominent grade school program (kindergarten thru 12th grade) available to migrant students is the MEP. The MEP was created in 1966 at the federal level once congress realized that the children of migratory workers had unique educational needs (Nessel & Ryan, 1995). Although created at the federal level, the MEP operates at the state level to help migrant student populations navigate changing curriculums due to educational disruptions associated with mobilization due to growing seasons. To qualify for the MEP, a migrant child must have moved with a parent or guardian within the last thirty-six-month period in search of seasonal or temporary agricultural or fishing work (Wiseman, 2003).

In addition to the MEP, there are programs like the CAMP, that offer post-grade school resources to migrant students with aspirations to pursue higher education. The
CAMP program offers financial assistance as well as counseling for college bound migrant students with the insistence that they get out of the fields and into the classroom. Additionally, support services like the Seasonal and Migrant Head Start Program offer eligible families Head Start services for children six months to five years of age on a modified schedule and timeline meeting the needs of migrant farmworker families.

**Study Approach**

This study will conduct a comparative analysis of existing grounded theory-based research by looking at case studies of migrant students in California and Texas to identify and evaluate success factors as they navigate through the MEP and CAMP programs. For the purpose of this study California and Texas were used as origin states, but it should be noted that many of the migrant students spent time in schools across multiple states. The results of this study will assist in identifying success factors associated with migrant student upward mobility to inform policy and programs intended for the success of these students.

Additionally, this study will conduct a qualitative analysis of existing literature to examine the connection between the fields of education and planning. This research will look at schools as a unique element of public infrastructure with deep equity concerns and identify best practices in planning practice that can improve these issues. The objective of identifying the connection between the fields of education and planning is to demonstrate how the quality of our cities is dependent on the quality of our educational programs (Vincent, 2006). As planners strive to develop quality equitable policies, they must position education at the forefront of this effort. And by doing so, the field of
planning can contribute an equitable planning response to mobile student populations, like the migrant student.

**Statement of Purpose**

Case studies examining the inequalities faced by migrant farmworkers and their children have focused on wage disparities, workplace safety, and lack of healthcare. This study will examine case studies of migrant students from California and Texas navigating through the MEP and CAMP programs with the intent of identifying success factors such as the cultural capital created by the family support system, individual coping strategies of resilient students, and strong work ethic created by manual labor as a child in agricultural fields. Using existing case studies from both states, this research will look at the experiences of migrant students and their families to identify the success factors associated with student academic achievement. This study will enhance the understanding of the current status of these programs, as well as the understanding of upward social mobility through educational attainment.

Additionally, this study will examine the intersection of education and planning. Using the limited existing research, this study will examine and expand the understanding of education as public infrastructure and as a driver of quality cities. The goal of this research is to identify how planning in practice includes education in policy formulation with the objective of identifying how planning handles mobile populations such as migrant students.

**Rationale**

Recent studies have provided distinct measures for identifying the benefits of education. These studies have identified benefits at both the individual and societal levels. At the individual level there is an economic benefit afforded to individuals with
higher education levels in the form of salaries twice the amount for college graduates when compared to non-college graduates. Additionally, higher education levels provide for better health outcomes since individuals are able to make better informed health decisions. Research has also shown the societal benefit of higher educational attainment in the form of statistical data showing higher voter turnout associated with higher educational level (Wobbekind, 2012).

Based on this research, an argument can be made that education is a vessel for individual and societal upward mobility. These findings support the need for research about the success factors of migrant students going through the MEP and CAMP programs. By conducting secondary data analysis consisting of cross case study comparisons of successful students in California and Texas this study can assist in determining deficiencies and successes in current programs.

There continues to be a disconnect between the fields of planning and education. Largely this is due to the lack of cross-pollination between both fields (Vincent, 2006). While there are programs like Youth - Plan, Learn, Act, Now (Y-PLAN) that focus on planning healthy, vibrant cities for and with young people, these are few and far between (U.C. Berkeley, 2020). Programs like these are implemented independent of planning policy and serve as a bridge to connect education and planning practice. Programs like Y-PLAN can serve as a catalyst to enhance the understanding of the effectiveness of quality education in communities. Planning practice must consider the quality of education that is being provided through its policies and processes. Schools and educational programs must be considered as an important piece of infrastructure when planning for a city, region, or state. This study will explore existing literature, public sources, and online
databases to find connections between the fields of planning and education. The results of this exploratory content analysis of existing sources will contribute to planning literature by investigating how planners can bridge the gap between planning and education, specifically when considering mobile populations like migrant students.

**Significance of Research**

While the intent of federally backed MEP is to support comprehensive educational programs for the children of migrant farmworkers, the effectiveness of the program must be assessed to determine how successful it is in breaking the cycle of poverty and undereducation of migrant children.

Current research does not provide a thorough identification of success factors and best practices that can be used as a model for the program. This lack of literature on success factors serves as an invitation to further analyze what makes a migrant student successful. While doing so, this study will consider the sociocultural, personal, and environmental factors that influence the education of migrant students. This study will look to identify the cause and effect of these factors and how they affect the academic achievement of the migrant student while identifying best practices and solutions along the way. This research will allow educators to better understand the migrant student and not just the process applied to the issue of educating the migrant student.

The characterization of the migrant student based on objective academic achievements while ignoring subjective environmental factors in the lives of these students has been synonymous in past studies. Without considering environmental factors, educators prematurely dismiss migrant students as underachieving without fully understanding their true academic potential. According to the United States Farmworker
Factsheet prepared by the Student Action with Farmworkers organization, the migrant student educational profile shows that by the time a migrant student is 12 years old, he/she could work up to 16 to 18 hours per week. A migrant student may also attend up to three different schools per year, advancing one grade level every three years. And yet the most prevalent statistic is a 60% dropout rate in 1994 which is an improvement from a 90% dropout rate reported in the 1970’s (Student Action with Farmworkers, 2020).

It is important to note, that this statistic serves as an explanation for a dropout rate perpetuating the deficit model and negative image of migrant students. This study will help reframe this approach and look at these statistics to develop appropriate educational techniques to assist migrant students through the many barriers they face including constant mobilization and work-related commitments.

This study analyzed the implications of defining a student by past conceptions of their academic achievements, while considering not only the negative but also the positive of effects of doing so. This study also provided a spotlight on the historical implications of past ambiguous definitions and subjective clinical judgements that have led to the categorization of the minority students as less capable than their white counterparts (Harry & Klingner, 2007). Most importantly, this study examined success stories of migrant students to redefine who they are beyond their academic achievements. It is important to understand that identity and culture are often misunderstood. The outcome of this research can lead to a better understanding of specific teaching methods for migrant students to combat past characterizations of their academic achievement. More so, this will allow us to develop strategies that can be taken to empower the migrant
student as an individual while building self-confidence, an important trait for success in academia (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009).

**Geographic Scope of Study**

**California**

This study focused on migrant student populations in California and Texas. The state of California is home to one of the largest agricultural producing regions in the world. California is the largest overall producer of agricultural goods by value in the country, ranking #1 in the United States (when compared to the other 49 states) with the highest agricultural receipts ($50,116,898,000) in 2019 (USDA, 2019). The agricultural industry is supported by a network of farm owners and farmworkers concentrated in the Northern Sacramento Valley and Southern San Joaquin Valley. In these regions, Tulare, Madera, Monterey, and San Benito counties have the highest proportion of farmworkers per capita (see Figure 1 below).

*Figure 1. Map of farmworkers (per 100,000 of total population) by county in California. Figure borrowed from California Research Bureau (2013).*

![Figure 1: Farmworkers (per 100,000 Total Population) by County](image-url)
Data from the California Department of Education shows that one out of every three migrant students in the United States lives in California. As of the 2015-16 school year, there were over 96,750 migrant students attending California schools during regular academic sessions and 42,570 eligible migrant students attending summer/intersession classes during that same school year (California Department of Education, 2017).

**Texas**

According to the USDA as of 2017, the state of Texas leads the U.S. with the highest number of farms in the country with 248,416 encompassing a land area of approximately 127,036,184 acres (USDA, 2017). Texas state agriculture is divided into 5 geographic regions of production that include the plains region, eastern areas, lower Rio Grande Valley, far west Texas, and the winter garden and south/central (see Figure 2 below).

*Figure 2. Map of five agricultural regions in Texas. Figure borrowed from Smith & Anciso (2005).*
The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reports that approximately 27,000 eligible migrant students are enrolled in Texas public schools. Of these 27,000 enrolled students approximately, 61 percent or 16,000 reside in the Rio Grande Valley, making the Texas MEP regionally significant (TEA, 2020).

**Farmworkers And Education**

Using data from the American Community Survey, the California Research Board reports that approximately 78% of farmworkers in the state of California do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, 21% have a high school diploma, and just over 1% of farmworkers have a college degree (See Figure 3 below). These statistics are in stark comparison to the rest of California’s population (age 25 or older), of which approximately 33.3% of the population has a college degree, 49.7% have at least a High School Diploma, GED, and or some college, and only 17% have less than a High School Diploma (See Figure 4 and Table 1 below).

*Figure 3. Figure showing bar chart of educational attainment of California farmworkers. Figure adapted from California Research Bureau (2013).*
Figure 4. Figure showing bar chart of educational attainment of California population (age 25 or older). Figure adapted from Town Charts (2020).

Table 1. Educational Attainment of California Farmworkers Compared to General Population (Age 25 or older)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than High School (%)</th>
<th>High School or GED (%)</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California Farmworkers</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Population</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table showing Educational Attainment of California Farmworkers and General Population (Age 25 or Older). Table adapted from Town Charts (2020).

Similarly, the educational attainment in the state of Texas mirrors that of California with 29.3% of the population having a college degree, 46.1% have at least a High School Diploma, GED, and or some college, and only 16.8% have less than a High School Diploma (See Figure 5 below).
Figure 5. Figure showing bar chart of educational attainment of Texas population (age 25 or older). Figure adapted from Town Charts (2020).

These statistics provide a snapshot of the educational disparities that exist within this group in California as it relates to education. It should be noted that relevant data on Texas farmworker educational attainment was not locatable at the time of this study. Nonetheless, the gap in educational attainment between the farmworker and general population requires that we ask, where do educational opportunities for our farmworker population fall off? How does the low education attainment in this population sector affect the academic outlook of migrant farmworker children growing up in this field?

**Research Questions**

This study explores the success factors of migrant students by asking:

- What is the importance of education in the migrant farmworker household? What does it mean for the parent and for the children? *This question addresses the value of education in the migrant farmworker household.*
• What practices and experiences contribute to the success of migrant students?
  
  *This question addresses the process and progress of success for migrant students.*

• How does academic success impact the identity of the migrant student? *This question addresses the impact of the American educational system on the acculturation of successful migrant students.*

By answering these questions, this study provides the perspective of the migrant students and their family on the value that they place on education as opposed to the existing research that highlights deficit educational characteristics of this group.

This study explores the intersection of education and planning by asking:

• What role does the field of planning have in education? What role does the field of education have in planning? *This question addresses the intersection of planning and of education in research, practice, and policy.*

• How does planning impact the education of migrant students? *This question addresses the impact of planning as a field of study and practice on the educational achievement of its mobile populations.*

By answering these questions, this study will provide a better understanding of the impact of quality education on our cities. We will also gain and understanding of how the planning profession can shape the quality of education that we provide our most disadvantaged communities.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Education In California

Public education in California has been a back and forth battle on who should and who should not receive a quality education based on language and immigration status. Even in a progressive state like California, the topic of education remains contentious and serves as a marker for the political climate of the time. To understand this, we must look at the history of public schools in California.

1850-1950

Prior to California becoming a state in 1850, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 between Mexico and the United States, guaranteed the use of Spanish language in education in the territories formerly held by Mexico. The intent of this was to ensure that people of Mexican descent were provided with adequate educational opportunities in a territory now held by the United States.

What was not intended was the implementation of segregated schools for Mexican and Mexican-American children. These segregated schools implemented curriculums that were typically focused on the “Americanization” of Mexican and Mexican-American students, by teaching them the English language and training boys in manual arts and girls in domestic sciences to reproduce the manual and domestic labor force (Garcia, Yosso, & Barajas, 2012).

The result of this was the “Americanization” of the Mexican and Mexican American student population into low-status and low paying jobs (Ruiz, 2001). This concept of “Americanization” is perceived as a form of mundane racism, which is the systematic subordination of a group (Mexican and Mexican-Americans) that commonly occurred within and beyond schools (Garcia, Yosso, & Barajas, 2012).
At the time of the Great Depression (1929-1939) more than 80% of the school districts in southern California enrolled Mexican and Mexican-American students in segregated schools (Ruiz, 2001). The first half of the 20th century (1900-1950) presented a time of exponential growth for the Mexican and Mexican-American population in California. The increasing growth of the Mexican-American student population brought along with it strains to the existing public-school infrastructure in California.

**Mendez v. Westminster**

In 1946 Mendez V. Westminster would serve as a landmark case, establishing equal rights for Mexican and Mexican-American students in the California public school system. This case would also serve as a precedent to the landmark Brown V. Board of Education case that would follow eight years later.

Mendez V. Westminster came about when Silvia Mendez, the child of Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez was turned away from a California Public School for “Whites only”. This prompted her father to take legal action against four Los Angeles-area school districts. The ruling by the U.S. District Court stated that, “(t)he equal protection of the laws pertaining to the public school system in California is not provided by furnishing in separate schools the same technical facilities, textbooks and courses of instruction to children of Mexican ancestry. A paramount requisite in the American system of public education is social equality. It must be open to all children by unified school association regardless of lineage” (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, 2020).

This ruling was later affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit Court, prompting the then Governor of California Earl Warren to sign a bill that would repeal the last remaining school segregation statutes in the California Education Code.
(Wollenberg, 1974). This case was important because it not only de-segregated schools for Mexican and Mexican-American children in California but also served as a precedent for the landmark case Brown v. Board of Education that was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court of which Earl Warren was the Chief Justice. This case also contributed to social science by presenting evidence in court showing that segregation results in feelings of inferiority amongst those that are being segregated.

**1950-Present-Day**

Up until the early 1900’s, the State of California apportioned funding to counties on the basis of a census of white children ages 4 to 18 (Wollenberg, 1974). This created disproportionalities in the public-school system that brought about conflict between the white and Mexican and Mexican American population.

In 1967 Governor Ronald Regan would sign Senate Bill 53 (SB 53) allowing for instruction in languages other than English. SB 53 would be considered a triumph in California today, where the student body of K-12 public school students (2018-2019) is comprised of approximately 3,374,921 students or 54.6% of the student body of which 975,435 students or 29% are Spanish speaking English language learners (making up 81.56% of all English language learners) (California Department of Education, 2019).

However, in 1972 California law was passed requiring English-only instruction in classes (Witt, 1998). But as California’s demographic makeup has changed through history, so has its educational objectives.

In 1994 California would pass Proposition 187, prohibiting the use of non-emergency health care by undocumented immigrants and their children and making it illegal for the children of undocumented immigrants to attend public school. However,
Federal courts would later overturn this decision, ruling it unconstitutional. Proposition 227 in 1998 “the English in Public Schools Initiative” eliminated bilingual classes in public schools. Proposition 227 also limited the time Limited English Proficient (LEP) students had in special classes to one year, requiring that they move on to an English-only format if they achieved a good working knowledge of English.

Proposition 58 in 2016 would later repeal Proposition 227 and requiring that public schools ensure English language proficiency by soliciting input from parents and the community in developing immersion programs for both native and nonnative English speakers.

Most recently the implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provided protection to eligible immigrant youth from deportation and ability to obtain a work permit if they met eligibility requirements. This allowed for the continuation of studies for many high school and college students pursuing higher education. In California there are approximately 183,000 DACA recipients of which approximately 40,000 are students at a California Community College, California State University, or University of California Campus (Hayes & Hill, 2020).

**The Bracero Program and United Farmworkers Movement**

The passing of Public Law 78 during World War II was a catalyst for the migration of a labor force from Mexico to the United States (United Farmworkers, 2020). Public Law 78, also known as the Bracero Program, was a program that provided Mexican agricultural workers to growers in the United States during World War II and subsequently after World War II. The intent of the Bracero Program was to solve the labor shortage created by World War II. However, the Bracero Program did not guarantee workers’ rights.
By 1964 the Bracero Program had ended and brought with it a short-lived victory, as conditions for farmworkers had not improved to acceptable levels. State laws regarding working conditions were ignored and available housing for workers was below acceptable. Farmworkers temporary housing would be segregated by race and consisted of metal shacks with no indoor plumbing or cooking facilities. Child labor and workplace accidents were common, there was a lack of educational opportunities for the children of migrant workers, and the average life expectancy of farmworkers was 49 years. This is in stark contrast to the life expectancy of their male and females’ counterparts of all races born in the 1960’s in the United States, which was 69.7 years (Bernstein et al, 2011).

However, in the early 1960’s there was a change that arose alongside a larger civil rights movement occurring in the country. From 1960 to 1975 approximately 50,000 farmworkers would organize and mobilize their work force to be protected under union contracts.

Aided by public awareness of racism and the civil rights movement of African Americans in the south, public exposure and understanding of the farmworker struggle in California grew. The efforts of the United Farmworkers movement led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta brought wins in the form of workers’ rights and served as the precursor for the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Chicano Movement and Education

The Chicano movement of the 1960’s was a social movement focusing on the civil and human rights struggle for the liberation of Mexican American’s in the United States. The struggles that were of primary concern to the movement were the improvement of lives for farmworkers, ending Jim Crow style segregation and police
suppression, land grant struggles, struggles to improve educational opportunities, and the struggle for political representation.

The primary stage for the Chicano movement presented itself at universities, where the principal demand for university access for people of color and the advent of Chicano studies in schools gained momentum. As echoed by UCLA professor Juan Gomez Quiñonez, the advent of Chicano studies was pivotal to the movement as it provided the intellectual support for the community’s ideas and struggles. The Chicano movement strayed away from the “Anglo Model” of assimilation and began the production of knowledge by Chicano scholars about their own communities (Rodriguez, 1996). As a result of this movement, the U.S. federal government enacted the Higher Education Act of 1965, setting the stage for the availability of college preparatory and equal opportunity (EOP) programs for Chicano students (Lechuga-Peña & Lechuga, 2018).

**Public Education in Texas**

Education for Mexican and Mexican-American students in Texas mirrored patterns of segregation and unequal learning environments as those that were seen in California. By the 1940’s more than 122 school districts in Texas segregated schools for Mexican-American children. Initially school segregation was limited to the elementary grade levels, due to the high withdrawal rate of children at this stage. However, once children sought secondary schooling (middle school/high school) the state segregated facilities at higher grade levels (San Miguel, n.d.). The primary issues with school segregation in Texas stemmed from the curriculum that was thought to be developmentally appropriate for these students.
At the elementary school level, students were placed in slow-learning and nonacademic classes. If they passed on to the secondary level, they were placed in vocational and general education courses, thus perpetuating the cycle of academic and societal inequalities presented by lower academic opportunities as a result of incorrect academic expectations.

**Independent School District v. Salvatierra**

The case of Independent School District v. Salvatierra presented a unique situation were deference to an entity outside of the court was left to decide the segregation of a group of students. This 1930’s case in Del Rio, Texas was filed by taxpayers to prevent the local school board from entering into a contract to construct a school facility with the intention to continue segregating Mexican American Students.

Initially, the court ruled in favor of the taxpayers that were against segregation, mainly Mexican-Americans. However, the school district appealed the case and the appellate judge found that school authorities were not allowed, “to assign [Mexican-American students] to separate schools and exclude them from schools maintained for children of other white races, merely or solely because they are Mexicans” (Donato et al., 2020). However, the appellate judge reversed the trial judge’s decision, stating that Texas law granted school boards the authority to manage, regulate, and construct schools in locations of their choice.

Under Texas law school boards were also allowed to responsibly grade, classify, and assign students to schools. The outcome of this case shows a history of segregation based on the deference to school administrators and their expertise as deemed by the courts. The results of cases like this show the overwhelming push to segregate a
population of students by administrators who may have a predisposition to view these students as inferior.

**Migrant Education: Barriers and Best Practices**

In an attempt to understand the impact that school and educational achievement have on society, scholars have argued that schools serve as a catalyst for positive social transformation. However, scholars also argue that schools can further perpetuate the destructive patterns of social interaction that exist in society today (Sacramento. 2015).

The point of contention with this train of thought lies in the methods by which education is presented to a subject population. In the case of this research, the migrant student stands to fail when educational efforts become isolated from the family and community to which the migrant student belongs to. Inclusion of interpersonal, familial, and local networks associated with the migrant student provide benefits in the form of successful academic outcomes. However, these efforts are often met with barriers to inclusion which include environmental factors such as lack of time, lack of transportation, miscommunication, and most importantly cultural differences. Efforts to improve the assimilation of migrant populations into the majority society while maintaining the cultural fabric of the migrant community have yielded examples of best practices in the form of programs.

The two most prominent programs in the United States include the MEP and CAMP program, which are the subjects of this study. This study looks to expand on the practices of these programs by looking abroad to better understand what may work in the United States from successful examples in other countries. These programs include the “Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)”, and the Programa
Escolhas. The goal of these programs is to bring parents and community members into the classroom and bring educators and administrators into the homes and the communities.

**HIPPY**

HIPPY is an early childhood development program that focuses on home based and center-based education by supporting parents as a child’s first teacher. This program targets communities in Australia that are at a social disadvantage to the larger population. The program employs paraprofessionals as home tutors to assist parents in educating children before they transition into a traditional school setting. Key to this program is the revolving tutor dynamic that allows parents who have been participants in the program to become tutors in their communities to future parent and child participants.

Effective strategies employed by the HIPPY program include:

- Intensive curriculum
- Two-year instructional period during the transition to traditional school settings
- It targets both the child and the parent
- Parents are instructed to explore new skills at home
- Provides a home and center-based linkage as well as a linkage to other support services parents may need.

Due to its success, as of 2008 the Australian Government expanded the program to 50 disadvantaged communities across the Country (Barnett et. al., 2012).

**Programa Escolhas**

The Escolhas Program is a Portuguese government sponsored program that provides parent and family-based support systems for migrant communities in Europe.
The intent of the Escolhas Program is to promote social cohesion, equity, and inclusion for disadvantaged communities through education. Additionally, the program also intends to support parental responsibility in educational processes and foster parental skills. The program incorporates a community facilitator from migrant communities to bridge the gap between the community and school. The community facilitator acts as a support system to families and students in finding resolutions to conflicts that arise in an academic setting (Nata et. al., 2019). While examining the impact of the current programs in California and Texas, this study will explore the correlation of cultural capital and how it influences the success of these programs. Also, the study will investigate how the above-referenced best practices may be influenced by cultural capital.

**Cultural Capital**

Within the context of disadvantaged student populations, cultural capital has been defined as the, “circumstances in which social power and privilege are obtained through particular mechanisms or socially acceptable behaviors” (Martinez, 1997, p. 8). Under this definition, schools operate as a system for the success of children with certain predispositions that allow them to learn successfully within the parameters that have been decided by the school program. These parameters are set by policy to perpetuate the status of certain groups in society. It is important to examine this theoretical concept because there exists an invalidation of minority group cultural backgrounds and the values they bring to the educational system, such as family support and personal determination from experiences in seasonal farm work.

In the 1970’s French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed the idea of cultural capital as being the familiarity with the dominant cultural practices in a society that are key to academic success and are misperceived by educators as signs of academic
brilliance and rewarded as such. According to Bourdieu cultural capital can materialize in three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. The embodiment of cultural capital takes form in language, mannerisms, and preferences for “highbrow” indicators. The objectification of cultural capital portrays itself in the form of cultural goods, books, works of art, and music. And lastly, the institutionalized form of cultural capital is best exemplified by educational credentials. Research has shown that it is typically individuals from high socioeconomic status that portray behavior considered valuable to the majority culture (Jæger & Møllegaard, 2017). Literature on this topic explains that cultural capital itself has no intrinsic value but requires a catalyst in the educational setting, the teacher, to be given value.

Cultural capital in educational settings has been measured objectively by looking at habits and traits of individuals. Research has sought to operationalize the measurement of cultural capital by looking at primary factors such as high-arts participation and time spent reading (Gaddis, 2012). Other measures of cultural capital that have been explored include the participation in cultural classes (Dumais, 2008; Dumais and Ward, 2010; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnel, 1999; Wildhagen, 2009; as cited in Gaddis, 2012), extracurricular activities (Cheadle, 2008; Covay and Carbonaro, 2010; Jaeger, 2011; as cited in Gaddis 2012), discussions of culture between parent and child (Jaeger, 2009; Tramonte and Willms, 2010; as cited in Gaddis, 2012), teacher perception of habits (Farkas et al., 1990; Farkas, 1996; as cited in Gaddis, 2012), attitudes towards knowledge and culture (Mohr and Dimaggio, 1995; as cited in Gaddis, 2012), and views of concerted cultivation (Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; Cheadle, 2008, 2009; Lee and Bowen, 2006; as cited in Gaddis, 2012). As previously mentioned, the value placed on these habits is
Cultural Capital and Academic Success

Literature on cultural capital provides two hypotheses on the continued valuation of cultural capital in society, the cultural reproduction hypothesis, and the cultural mobility hypothesis. The cultural reproduction hypothesis coined by Bourdieu, states that children with higher socioeconomic status are likely to achieve educational success as a result of the valuation of cultural capital because they are more likely to be in school settings (teaching style, curriculum, and school organization) that are better suited to convert cultural capital into educational success.

On the other hand, American sociologist Paul Dimaggio, states that children with low socioeconomic status are likely to have higher returns from cultural capital because they are likely in a setting where they would not face competition when showing off traits and habits considered valuable cultural capital by the majority society. This is known as the cultural mobility hypothesis. Although differing hypotheses have been formulated on who receives the benefits of cultural capital, the main empirical finding is that in either case there exists a positive causal effect between cultural capital and academic success (Jæger & Møllegaard, 2017).

Cultural Capital and the Migrant Student

When examining the effect of cultural capital on disadvantaged communities, existing research has provided findings that illustrate how a lack of cultural capital can result in academic disadvantages. The key argument is that a lack of cultural capital results in a negative outlook towards school, ultimately affecting educational
achievement. This negative outlook or disposition towards school is known as an individual’s habitus (Gaddis, 2012). It is important to understand the habitus that are created as a result of the cultural capital bias, as it can help in answering the question of whether schools reproduce the social structure, or do they provide a path towards upward mobility?

Although disadvantaged communities do transmit cultural capital that is valuable to them, it may not be viewed as valuable within the context of the majority culture. This study will identify migrant student cultural capital identified in existing studies and examine how it translates into valuable habits within educational settings. This study will also examine how exposure to what is considered culturally valuable habits associated with the majority culture influence the learning abilities of disadvantaged students. As Gaddis noted, “Exposure to cultural capital may allow disadvantaged students to better understand the workings of the education(al) system around them.” (Gaddis, 2012, p.9). This may result in a valuable outcome to disadvantaged students as they realize that the advantaged students are not necessarily more gifted but just better prepared for the educational system they are in.

**Self-Determination Theory**

As migrant students navigate the educational system in the United States they are often characterized based on their reactionary behavior towards academic instruction. What results from this is the mislabeling of these students as disengaged and unmotivated.

However, research on Self Determination Theory suggests that lack of motivation and engagement by students may not be the result of the student’s intrinsic desire for
knowledge or lack thereof, but rather a product of social environmental factors that alienate a student into disengagement. Self Determination Theory suggests that in order for an individual to have self-determination they must experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self Determination Theory for migrant students is best understood when discussing the role that role models place in the educational journey of these students and how the example that is set by these role models paints a picture of attainable autonomy, competence, and overall a sense of relatedness to success.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research for this study will involve secondary data analysis consisting of cross case study comparisons of migrant students in California and Texas. Key to this research is identifying available data across both states that illustrates a broad spectrum of educational achievements and obstacles for the migrant student population.

Secondary data analysis was chosen for this study due to the lack of resources, time, and accessibility to the children of migrant farmworkers. An additional determinant to the research design of this study was the coronavirus pandemic which included closures of schools, as well as limitations on face to face communication. Therefore, secondary sources such as case studies and statistical data were determined to be significant for this study.

Secondary data sources in this study included literary works like *Voices from the Fields* (Atkin, 2001) and *Resiliency and Success: Migrant Children in the U.S.* (Garza et al., 2016) which provided an ethnographic data source on migrant students. Demographic and statistical data was obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture, California Department of Education, Student Action with Farmworkers, and the Texas Education Agency among other sources. The intention of the demographic and statistical data review was to provide a profile of migrant populations on which to examine the ethnographic data by.

The review of the literary works consisted of reading both books and existing studies and identifying key concepts that contributed to the success of migrant students. This review of literary works also included analyzing existing interview responses that identified obstacles and coping mechanism for the academic success of migrant students.
Migrant students with exceptional academic success were identified in each of the literary works and further analyzed to validate the effectiveness of the coping strategies that they applied through their academic journey. Migrant students that experienced many moves throughout one year to different states were also identified to determine common obstacles and coping mechanisms/success factors. This method allowed for a depiction of success factors and barriers amongst students with similar circumstances.

As a result of utilizing secondary data analysis, information was grouped based on lived experiences as opposed to identifying factors like names and respondent ID’s. This was critical to maintaining the integrity of the study. It should be noted that four studies were identified as appropriate for this research. These studies were chosen because they represented the target population of MEP and CAMP program students in the states of California and Texas which demonstrated academic success.

**Secondary Data Analysis**

According to Ruggiano and Perry (2017) secondary data analysis is defined as research that involves investigations where previously collected data is analyzed either by the same researchers or different researchers to explore new questions or use different analysis strategies that were not used in the primary analysis. Secondary data analysis allows for multiple approaches to produce meaningful results as follows:

1. Secondary data analysis allows for research to focus on a different unit of analysis from what was previously examined in the primary study.
2. Secondary data analysis allows for a more in-depth investigation of themes from the primary study.
3. And lastly secondary data analyses allow for newly collected data to be applied to and refine the results of pre-existing data sets from the primary study.

Benefits of a secondary data analysis approach includes answering new questions and increasing sample sizes resulting in increased statistical power (Ruggiano & Perry, 2017). Additionally, secondary data analysis removes the emotional connection that accompanies data collection typical of a primary study, effectively making the research more objective. Advantages to secondary data analysis also include the ability to access hard to reach participants as well as providing a voice to those individuals whose cultural, social, or political thoughts and ideas may have been devalued in the larger society at the time of the primary study (Chatfield, 2020).

Secondary data analysis was utilized for this study because it provided the ability to re-examine pre-existing studies to inform program administrators and educators about migrant student education. The need to re-examine these studies was necessary to deviate from the deficit model that seems to have overtaken much of the research available on this topic to date. Key to secondary data analysis is to determine whether the primary study on which the re-examination of data is based on answers the research questions of the secondary data analysis. This will ensure sufficient variation in the subsequent analysis to support new findings.

The most adequate data for secondary data analysis is typically that which is based on a grounded theory model which utilizes coding to extrapolate concepts and results. Benefits of using secondary data allows the researcher to arrive at new
conclusions with similarities, differences, and connections to the primary data that were not previously examined (Medjedovic & Witzel, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, all primary studies selected used the grounded theory model with structured or semi-structured interviews to collect data. Studies were chosen that provided results identifying obstacles and barriers to the academic achievement of migrant students. Additional studies were examined that identified coping mechanisms of successful students navigating the MEP and CAMP programs.

**Critical Race Theory**

This study will be conducted under the lens of critical race theory to demonstrate cultural capital within migrant farmworker families and challenge previous deficit-informed research (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In education critical race studies can be defined as the critique of racism as a system of oppression and exploitation that explores the historic and current construction of race in our society and how it is expressed in schools (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Critical race theory was utilized in this study to further expand our understanding of race, racism, and power in our academic institutions and provide a counter story to the narrative of academically underachieving student populations of color.

**Inductive Manifest Analysis**

This study will conduct an inductive manifest analysis of literature providing information on the connection between the fields of education and planning. Due to the lack of available literature an inductive approach was chosen to identify patterns and develop a correlation theory between the two fields. A manifest analysis approach will be utilized to examine what has been said in existing literature and compare it to other
sources. This analysis will include the collection and review of existing literature on the intersection of planning and education followed by the identification of common connections across literary works. This methodology will allow the study to extrapolate common terms and themes to inform future research on which topics to continue to develop (Bengtsson, 2016).
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Study #1: Bridges to Success in High School for Migrant Youth (California)

by Margaret A. Gibson and Nicole D. Hidalgo

The findings of this study focused on four years of ethnographic research at one Northern California School. This case study is unique because 80% of the Mexican-descent migrant students documented in this research completed 12th grade. The methods of research for this primary study consisted of observation and interaction with students and teachers at the subject school and comparative interviews with migrant education resource teachers from four other schools. The key findings of this study focus on the support system provided to migrant students by these teachers who act as mentors, counselors, advocates, and role models for these students as they navigate through their academic journey (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009).

Study #1 provided ethnographic research consisting of observation and interviews at a northern California high school. For the purposes of this analysis and as described in Chapter 3 of this study, the name of the school and participants was omitted from this analysis. Schools and participants are identified by their geographic region and other non-individually identifiable characteristics of their migrant student population (i.e., number of students, program involved, country or state of origin, migration patterns). The duration of the study was four years (1998-2002).

Research was conducted with 160 students, their parents, and teachers who participated in the MEP at one high school. Additional interviews were conducted with teachers from 4 other schools with a population of migrant students and a migrant student program in place. The effectiveness of Study #1 was largely due to the four-year span
that allowed the researchers to follow students across multiple grades and gain insight on how their academic journey developed over time. To analyze and identify barriers as well as success factors within this student population this study will dissect the following responses from teachers, students, and parents individually.

**Migrant Teacher**

“*Sometimes you’re a teacher, sometimes you’re a counselor, sometimes you’re a social worker, sometimes you’re a health consultant. It is so rewarding and the beauty of this job.*” (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009, p.684)

– Migrant Education Resource Teacher

Study #1 provides the viewpoint of migrant education resource teachers as institutional agents for migrant students. Institutional agents are those individuals who have the knowledge and commitment to pass on institutional resources or opportunities (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009) These institutional agents provide access to the social relationships that migrant students often lack, and which aid academic success. By providing guidance as a teacher, counselor, social worker, and health consultant the migrant teacher is able to fill the gap that social scientists have opined makes the difference between the success of economically advantaged and disadvantaged students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Coleman, 1988; Dika & Singh, 2002; Lareau, 1987; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; as cited in Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009).

**Teacher Student Relationship**

A key observation of these remarks is the identification of a barrier to success of migrant students, which is the successful or unsuccessful teacher-student relationship. Scholars have stated that a successful relationship between a teacher and student can
result in positive school experience while a lack there of often results in frustration and/or alienation (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995; as cited in Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009).

This has been found to be particularly important for migrant students who often rely on school personnel to provide the knowledge and resources that otherwise would be provided by family members. This then reveals the importance of the teacher-student support system as a success factor to the academic success of migrant students. As shown in Study #1, migrant student success can be achieved via the inclusion of institutional agents that can undertake several roles in the lives of the migrant students. The key to the positive impacts of this success factor on the migrant student is the malleable nature of the teacher and the consistency and dedication to the student over time.

**Migrant Parent**

“I’m sad that her grades are low now because I wish for [she paused], since I have had to work in the fields I don’t want her to have to settle for the same. That’s why I always tell them [her children] to study and to do well in school. So that they can get a different job than mine...I tell them to better themselves and to try to secure a career for themselves, working in an office so that they could at least avoid working in the fields ... I want her to study so she can have a career, a small one, so she won’t work like us ... I will support her. Before I never used to wash her clothes, because it was all she did [around the house], or she would pick up the kitchen because I worked long hours, I’d work in the field from 7 a.m. and I wouldn’t get home until 7 p.m. Now I help her...so that she can do her schoolwork. I try to help her.” (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009, p. 698)
Study #1 presented a counterargument to the idea that the parents of migrant students do not take part in the educational success of their children. This idea intersects with the concept of cultural capital but through a new lens. In this particular response from the parent of a migrant student we see two characteristics jump out, strong work ethic and familial support. As defined by Bourdieu these two are not traditional indicators of cultural capital. However, if we frame these characteristics through the eyes of the migrant parent we can see that working from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. sets an example of work ethic that is transferred to the migrant student. Additionally, the familial support of this parent helping with the house chores so the migrant student can focus on schoolwork also provides the migrant student with a form of encouragement and support that expresses the importance of education from parent to child.

**Cultural Capital: Work Ethic and Familial Support**

It is imperative that the cultural capital like work ethic and familial support, that is inherited by the migrant student be valued in an academic setting. Previous research has indicated that migrant parents are endowed with different forms of cultural capital that shape how they parent and influence their children’s educational opportunities (Bargklowki, 2018).

As explained by Modood (as cited in Bargklowski, 2018), the current interpretation of cultural capital theory fails to recognize the high educational aspirations of migrant farmworkers independent of their class position. This theory also fails to recognize why some students from disadvantaged communities do better than predicted.

The devaluation of the inherited cultural capital of migrant students by the educational system can lead to disengagement and low self-esteem. This results in what
has been coined by researchers as the Cultural Discontinuity Theory, which is the lack of cohesion between what the migrant student is taught at home and what is learned in the classroom. This creates an additional barrier to learning for the migrant student that stems from the recognition and valuation of migrant cultural capital and not “objective” academic standards.

**Migrant Student**

“[T]hey’ve been in the spot, they’ve been in the same place you are. They did not have a lot of money when they grew up. They were [the children of] migrant workers. They are like the symbol that you can do it too. When I see them, I think, “They did it, why can’t I do it?”” (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009, p. 696-697)

- Migrant Student

Study #1 touches on the impression that a role model has on a student. In this response by a migrant student, you can see the effectiveness of shared experiences highlighting the themes of teacher-student relationships and cultural capital. By looking further into the response, you can see that there is a trust that the migrant student finds in someone who has gone through life in similar footsteps. Similarly, the migrant student teacher/advisor serves as an institutional agent for the student to help him convert their inherited cultural capital into academic success.

**Role Models**

According to Self-Determination Theory, for an individual to achieve positive self-motivation they must have a sense of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. In the case of the migrant student in Study #1 it was important that they view academic and professional success amongst one of their own, another migrant. This example serves as a
role model that empowers the student to believe in his or herself to get further involved in school, achieve good grades, and continue onto college. The self determination to succeed that is achieved by a lived example is a catalyst for these students to seek opportunities that look beyond the agricultural fields that surround them.

**Summary**

Study #1 provided the perspective and experiences of migrant teachers, parents, and students in the MEP at a California high school. This case study highlighted three success factors in the educational journeys of migrant students that include: teacher student relationships, cultural capital, and role models. This study also identified barriers to academic success which revolved around cultural misunderstandings that lead to alienation of students and ultimately disengagement in school. It should be noted, this study has led to the understanding of the importance of culture and lived experience as primary contributors to the success of migrant students in their academic journeys.

**Study #2: Against All Odds: Lessons from Parents of Migrant High Achievers (Texas)**

by Robert E. Trevino

Like the authors of Study #1, Robert Trevino (2004) focused this case study (Study #2) on examples of migrant children that achieved high levels of academic success during grade school years (kindergarten thru 12th grade). However, Trevino (2004) focused his research on the nature of parental involvement and its impact on the academic careers of migrant children.

The results of this study represent the success of parental involvement in five families and how they produced 41 highly successful migrant children, all of which
attained a college or university degree. The study’s geographic scope was five regions in Texas which included Pharr, in the Rio Grande Valley; Hereford, in the Texas Panhandle; Baytown, 30 miles outside of Houston; Loraine, a small town of 731 people in West Texas; and San Antonio, a city with a population of 1.1 million. The methodology employed in this study included semi-structured individual interviews, field observations, and field notes.

The results of this research provided a comprehensive overview on the positive effects of parental involvement in the academic careers of migrant students. Key findings from this research show that successful parental involvement consisted of parents taking the role as the migrant student’s first teacher; graduating from high school or college as being a non-negotiable achievement; education being a priority above all other work and extracurricular activities; work ethic as being critical; respect as being of utmost importance; and corporal punishment as being ineffective and unnecessary (Trevino, 2004).

**Migrant Parent**

The following list of themes were derived from responses to 18 open-ended questions by the parents of migrant students who participated in Study #2.

**Themes**

1. It all starts with a vision
2. Parents are the first teachers
3. Graduating from high school and college is not negotiable
4. Education is the top priority
5. Being Self-Sufficient
6. Respect
7. Pride
8. Faith
9. No Corporal Punishment

Below is summary of the actions that migrant parents took in the upbringing of their children to ensure academic success. Based on this study, the results of these actions led to the migrant children meeting the expectations of their parents as well as surpassing those of their educators.

1. Migrant parents made sure that their oldest children were high achievers and could serve as mentors or role models for their other children.
2. Migrant parents made sure to involve themselves in school activities by advocating for their children in school.
3. Migrant parents minimized school interruptions for their children.
4. Migrant parents valued school personnel as critical resources for their children.

**Parental Involvement and School Personnel**

In a 2010 study conducted by Dr. Mary Ellen Good at the University of Colorado, meaningful parental involvement was defined as “the role parents play in supporting the academic success of children through both home and school-based activities” (Good, 2010, p.33). Trevino’s (2004) study (Study#2) like Good’s research, looked at meaningful parental involvement in the MEP and how it impacted the academic success of migrant students.
Previous research conducted in the field of education has found that in order for meaningful parental involvement to be effective there must be a sense of parental self-efficacy. Parental self-efficacy is defined as the parent’s belief that they can successfully take part in and influence a child’s academic career. Research has also noted several factors that influence parent self-efficacy which include cultural background, personal academic ability, and invitation. Of these three factors, invitation to become involved in a child’s schooling has shown to play the most significant role in whether a parent becomes involved.

This concept of self-efficacy as related to parental involvement is key to Trevino’s (2004) study because it provides an explanation for the actions that parents took to ensure the academic success of their children. Specifically, the valuing of school personnel as critical resources for the success of their children. By doing so, the parents in this study opened themselves to the invitation that created a relationship between the home and the school, thus making their relationship building efforts with school personnel effective conduits for their children’s academic success.

Trevino (2004) reported that these relationships resulted in immediate positive returns in the form of scholarships for schools such as Rice and Harvard, that would have not otherwise been attainable without the help of school personnel. Furthermore, school personnel were able to expand the vision of migrant parents in this study past high school diplomas and into college and university degrees for their children.

Role Models and Academic Learned Capital

Like Study #1, Trevino’s (2004) findings also resulted in the acknowledgement of role models playing a key part in the academic success of migrant students. However,
Study#2 resulted in a different theory consisting of development of older children in the family as role models for the younger children as opposed to migrant teachers/advisors serving this role as shown in Study #1. Similarly, the role models had a positive effect on the migrant student by utilizing their academic learned capital to help the younger siblings navigate grade school and eventually college. The academic learned capital of the older siblings allowed the parents in this study to pass some of the responsibilities associated with their parental involvement to older siblings in the family which included help with homework, assistance and advise with high school courses, college admissions, and financial aid. This served a double purpose as it gave an example for the younger siblings to continue to pass on this academic learned capital and freed up the parents so that they could provide other forms of support and involvement in their children’s academic careers.

**Summary**

Study #2 provided the perspective of parental involvement in the academic careers of migrant students across five geographic regions in Texas. This case study highlighted the effectiveness of parental involvement techniques, school personnel as a critical resource, and the importance of academic learned capital passed on by role models within the family to the success of migrant students.

This study also identified ways in which school personnel could facilitate and encourage parental involvement. Key to this invitation to become involved is an understanding of the non-traditional efforts that migrant parents make to become involved in their children’s education. This study also highlighted the importance of empowering migrant parents with knowledge, skills, and attitudes by which they can
communicate and engage with school personnel to further their children’s academic success. This study has led to the understanding of the positive outcomes associated with effective parental involvement, cultural understanding on behalf of school personnel, and academic learned capital. These three factors have shown to be highly effective in the success of migrant students. We must also note that barriers to parental involvement mainly exist due to a lack of connectedness with school personnel which leads to alienation of the migrant child’s first advocate, their parents.

**Study #3: Student Reflection on the College Assistance Migrant Program Experience**

by Anna Escamilla

Study #3 provided insight on the educational experiences of college students from farmworker families in the CAMP program at a private, non-profit university in the southwest of the United States. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, Escamilla (2019) utilized qualitative methods to conduct a content analysis of interviews that were conducted with five migrant students. The author noted that finding subjects for this study was challenging due to several factors including the researcher not being a farmworker themselves.

The study asked 10 open-ended questions to allow the interviewee to express areas of importance to them that may be outside of the realm of the researcher’s study purpose. Participants expressed their desire to assist the CAMP program with their involvement in this study. Based on responses provided by study participants, it was determined that respondents were from different regions in Texas; therefore, defining the
geographic scope of the study. Themes were developed from interview responses, with persistence being the most prevalent for migrant farmworker college success.

**Migrant Student**

The following list of themes were derived from responses to 10 open-ended questions by the migrant farmworker college students who participated in Study #3.

**Themes**

1. Family support
2. Support from other than family
3. Overcoming problems while in school
4. Thinking about leaving or quitting school
5. Knowledge about the CAMP program in high school prior to applying for admission

Below is a summary of responses that migrant college students provided giving insight on the importance role and importance of family support, support from others, overcoming obstacles, quitting school, and CAMP program Knowledge (Escamilla, 2019).

**Camp Program Knowledge**

“my older brother was actually the first one to go to college and he went through the CAMP program.” (Escamilla, 2019, p.6)

- Migrant Student

Similar to the Study # 1 and 2, Escamilla’s (2019) research yielded responses that highlighted the importance of the role model, academic learned capital, and institutional agents for migrant student success. In this response by a migrant student his older sibling
served as a role model that was able to pass on his academic learned capital to his younger sibling so that they could effectively utilize available resources to their benefit. Similarly, other responses noted the importance of school counselors at identifying eligible students to apply for and participate in the CAMP program. These occurrences touch on the subject of institutional agents with a knowledge base to open doors to resources that migrant students may not be aware of.

**Support from the Family**

“They missed me a lot, but preferred me to be here than over there…and they wanted a better life for me…I guess compared to what we were living like they had migrant work, they didn’t want that for me. They actually didn’t want me involved in migrant work so at a young age, I went to school, I didn’t work at all.” (Escamilla, 2019, p.6)

- Migrant Student

Responses provided in this study looked at family support differently than the parental involvement that was described in previous studies. In the case of Study #3, family support did not involve parental involvement in the solution of problems that migrant college students face, but rather as a form of encouragement. This was likely due to the lack of knowledge on problems that college students face on behalf of the migrant parents.

**Support from Others**

“I had a family friend who lived in Austin…he’s somewhat of a mentor.” (Escamilla, 2019, p. 8)

-Migrant Student
Support from others with similar backgrounds was discussed in Escamilla’s (2019) study. What is understood from migrant college students in this study is that they welcome mentorship from individuals they consider friends and those they respect in the institution they are studying in.

**Quitting School**

Thoughts about quitting school were presented by one student in this study. It should be noted that this student had a parental death which created an unusual circumstance. This circumstance was met by support from friends in continuing the student’s education.

**Overcoming Obstacles**

“We were taking college remedial classes so we would start on time or on the same level as other students.” (Escamilla, 2019, p.8)

- Migrant Student

The respondents showed a persistent drive to level the playing field when it came to academics. Work ethic, likely inherited via cultural capital from their parents, allowed the migrant student to not be overwhelmed by the idea of extra coursework to be at the level that they needed to be even if it meant additional years of instruction. Statistical data in this study showed that graduation rates for the general population when compared to CAMP participants favored CAMP participants in extended five- and six-year programs as shown in Table 2 below.
Table 2. Graduation rates of general population as compared to CAMP students (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4 YEARS</th>
<th>5 YEARS</th>
<th>6 YEARS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Population</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMP</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table showing the graduation rates of CAMP students and General Population. Table adapted from Escamilla (2019).

What these graduation rates indicate is a higher rate of persistence within the CAMP student population. This is likely due to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation developed by joining the CAMP program and having the support of parents, family, friends, and CAMP program staff.

Summary

Study #3 provided the perspective of students on the CAMP program and the external factors that lead to success with the program. This case study examined a small student population at a Texas University highlighting the concept of persistence on behalf of migrant college students. Escamilla (2019) highlighted the impact of family support, support from others, overcoming obstacles, attitudes toward quitting school, and knowledge of the migrant education program. Key findings in this study show that parental involvement may not always be proactive as showcased in Study #1 but may be just as effective in the form of encouragement. Support from others may not always come from family or school administrators, but rather new friends that are encountered within the CAMP program. Overcoming obstacles is misunderstood by parents due to lack of knowledge on the challenges that migrant students face during their academic careers. And lastly, importance should be placed on the accessibility and advertisement of available programs for migrant students when thinking about migrant student success.
Study #4: An Investigation of the Factors Contributing to Successful Completion of Undergraduate Degrees by the Students Enrolled in the College Assistance Migrant Program

by Anna Escamilla and Nicole Guerrero Trevino

Study #4 consisted of a qualitative pilot study that looked at perceived deficits of college students enrolled in the CAMP program in a southwestern university and how they were converted into assets. This study utilized 10 open-ended interview questions to allow for the exploration of themes that were brought up during interview sessions. Finding migrant college students enrolled in the CAMP program to participate in this study presented a challenge to the researcher. The study identified the lack of relationship between the researcher and interviewees as a primary cause of this limitation. Interview responses were analyzed using a content analytic approach. The results of this study identified three themes: fictive kinship, family relationships, and social cultivation (Escamilla & Guerrero Trevino, 2014).

Fictive Kinship

Fictive Kinship is defined as a type of relationship “based not on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals or close friendship ties that replicate many of the thoughts and obligations usually associated with family ties” (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000, p.189). Student responses reflected the importance of having a kinship with those available to them as represented by the interview response below.

“I think that’s very important, that we have some way to communicate our struggles, our issues and our background and help each other in pushing ourselves. I think the best
people to do that are our peers and maybe even alumni, CAMP students have been through...and can say hey it can be done.”(Escamilla & Guerrero Trevino, 2014, p.165)

- Migrant Student

Within this study fictive kinship served as a conduit for academic learned capital to be transmitted from one CAMP student to another. It also allowed CAMP students to establish role models from the available CAMP program advisors to navigate through obstacles in their academic careers.

**Family Relationships**

Family was a reoccurring theme throughout interview responses. It is important to note that family in this study is defined as blood ties with parents and siblings; however, many of the responses revolved around the parent’s relationship with the migrant student. Respondents stated that family support was most prevalent in the form of encouragement. Since the majority of the participants parents did not have much schooling, the support that they could provide was moral, but still valuable to the migrant students.

**Concerted Cultivation**

Concerted cultivation as defined as the kind of parenting that middle-class parent’s practice. It acknowledges the behaviors of attending after-school activities for and with your child, stressing achieving the same or better level of education as the parent, and in general preparing a child for white-collar jobs (Laureau, 2011).

Concerted cultivation is synonymous with cultural capital in the case of farmworker parents. With this theme we find the perpetuation of the deficit model that fails to acknowledge the cultural capital that gets passed down form migrant farmworker...
parent to migrant farmworker child. This study illuminated several examples of inherited cultural capital as represented by the interview response below.

“I had no concept of options...I felt that I had to finish. I was bright, hardworking, [and I wanted a] better salary.” (Escamilla & Guerrero Trevino, 2014, p. 170)

- Migrant Student

This response exemplifies the cultivation of work ethic that is learned and passed on to the children of migrant farmworkers. There is also the value of family that is carried on my migrant college students. The value of family here is better explained by the responsibility of the migrant college student to provide better opportunities for the family through education. The weight of this responsibility drives these students to surpass expectations and succeed in their academic career.

Summary

The results of Study #4 served as a preliminary exploration of the factors influencing student success when participating in the CAMP program. The study found that migrant college students created their own support networks through fictive kinship that provided emotional and academic support throughout their academic careers. This study also touched on the concept of cultural capital. The results indicated that migrant students inherited cultural capital in the form of work ethic and responsibility from experiences of working in the field and their responsibility to support the family with their academic success.
CHAPTER 5: PLANNING AND EDUCATION

The fields of planning and education have historically been seen as two separate institutions in theory and practice. However, planners in cities across the world are beginning to look at schools as infrastructure and amenities that serve as attractions for families, as well as catalysts for growth.

Like planners, educators are also beginning to see that educational outcomes are influenced by student experiences outside of the classroom. These experiences outside the classroom are often related to what planners call “Place”: where you live, who or what is nearby, as well as what you bring from that “Place” into the classroom (Gallagher & Burnstein, 2015). Although literature on this topic is limited, organizations like the Urban Institute have begun experimenting with the convergence of both fields.

The Urban Institute has hosted meetings between community development agencies, foundations, universities, school choice advocates, and parents to inform themselves on areas of future collaboration. Their collaborative efforts have yielded several areas of inquiry for the convergence of these two fields which include:

1. Residential segregation undercutting the transformative potential of schools.
2. Economically integrated classrooms may result in more integrated communities in the future.
3. Cooperation between the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Education can help create a holistic environment benefitting students at home, school, and in their community.
These topics of discussion should be at the forefront of literature in both planning and education, especially at a time where we are beginning to see a population exodus from inner cities to suburban communities offering “better” schools.

**Urbanization’s Need for Education**

The urbanization of more than half of the global population has brought with it challenges in the form of development of holistic cities and skills development for new populations of migrant youth and adults. The implications resulting from the lack of educational opportunities for these new migrant populations results in class, health, and representation disparities (Benavot, 2017). A recent report presented at the United Nations Habitat III conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development presented five distinct ways in which education can help the field of planning achieve inclusive and sustainable city goals. These strategies are presented below:

1. Providing equal education for all can even out inequalities in urban areas.
2. Education serves to improve employment opportunities for all, reducing the numbers of those working within informal work environments.
3. Trained educators can serve to challenge stereotypes and discrimination in schools with the goal of inclusivity.
4. Education creates an informed populace that know their rights and can access services for the betterment of health and representation.
5. Education on the environment can lead to more sustainable cities.

These strategies can be seen as an idealist approach to the convergence of both fields. However, unless they are put into practice we will not be able to find out if they can be successful.
The Case of Medellin, Colombia

An example of the successful convergence between community planning and education is seen in Medellin, Colombia. The city of Medellin created a program titled “la mas educada” (the most educated) to tackle crime and discrimination. The program utilized an integrated urban planning approach in the poorest areas of the city that included converting innovative buildings into learning spaces, constructing 120 new public schools, and nine library parks. The results of this effort resulted in a dramatic drop in crime and violence over the past two decades (Benavot, 2017). Examples like this have the potential to demonstrate to planners and educators the effectiveness of education in making urban development less about the built environment and more about inclusivity for the people.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

International Institute For Educational Planning (IIEP)

UNESCO’s IIEP has developed a program in 2018 titled “Local challenges, global imperatives: cities at the forefront to achieve the Education 2030 Agenda”, with the goal of identifying ways in which ministries of education and cities can achieve the Education 2030 Agenda. This study is slated to take place between 2018 and 2021. The Education 2030 Agenda is part of UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals that from a program for sustainable, universal, and ambitious development for the people in collaboration with UNESCO.

The goals of the Education 2030 Agenda look to require access to quality education as a way to empower people with knowledge, skills, and values to live in dignity, build their lives, and contribute to their societies (UNESCO, 2019a). Preliminary
results of this research have found that education is most successful when its planning involves a wide range of stakeholders. Collaboration between the national education system and city officials are essential in ensuring access to quality education for every child (UNESCO, 2019b).

**Youth - Plan, Learn, Act, Now (Y-PLAN)**

Programs like Y-PLAN are great examples on how the planning field can begin to embed itself in education. The intent of this program is to create agents of change amongst high school students. The program introduces students to projects in their communities that will improve public transportation, access to greenspace, public art, as well as healthy living. The program is headed by the institute of Urban and Regional Development at the University of California, Berkeley and has proven to be regionally significant (U.C. Berkeley, 2020). The intended outcomes of this program at the intersection of education and planning are collaboration and participation on behalf of cities and schools. Programs like these are a great example of how planning with the classroom in mind can yield positive outcomes.

**Summary**

Planners must open the doors of their profession to help find solutions to problems that are outside of their expertise. What research and examples like the ones presented here have shown is that planners or educators individually do not have all the solutions, but through collaboration a middle ground seems to yield positive feedback.

This presents the intent of this study, to inform the fields of education and planning about the lack of collaboration between the two fields. It is essential that planners and educators begin to discuss how these two fields can produce equitable
learning environments for their constituents. Planners and educators must begin to
discuss the importance of place and education for mobile populations like migrant
farmworkers, that year after year return to support the cities who neglect their needs for
amongst many things, an education.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & LIMITATIONS

The results of this study indicate that research on the success factors of migrant farmworker students in grade school (MEP) and higher education (CAMP) is limited. As shown in previous studies, the academic careers of migrant students have been framed using the deficit model, choosing to discuss the weaknesses of the group while failing to acknowledge their strengths (Harry & Klingner, 2007). The literature review identified several historical contributors to the unequal treatment of minority students in California and Texas. Court cases like Mendez v. Westminster were crucial in understanding the plight of the minority disadvantaged student population. This case presented social science evidence in court that showed how feelings of inferiority arise in a group when they are segregated and classified as different (Wollenberg, 1974). The implications of social science in this court decision serves our understanding of a biased school system towards the educational attainment of minority students. Court cases like Independent School District v. Salvatierra provided an example of how deference to school administrators by the courts can lead to more implicit bias towards minority students (Donato et. al., 2020). Similarly, social scientists in the past have used their “objective” views shaped by institutions that hold these same implicit biases to frame minority students and their difficulties in academia as a cultural problem deriving from dis-interest and lack of engagement. This has led to the development of counter-stories, like this study, under the lens of Critical Race Theory to re-define cultural capital and concerted cultivation of people of color.

The literature review identified cultural capital as well as self-determination theory via the examples of role models to be effective contributors to the academic
The results of this study indicate that these factors have a positive correlation with the educational achievement of migrant students. The following is a discussion of the cumulative findings of this study as it relates to the success factors identified in the literature review and additional contributors to the success of migrant students in the MEP and CAMP programs identified in this study.

**Success Factors**

**Cultural Capital**

This study reinforced the counterargument to the theory that parents of migrant students are willfully disengaged from the education of their children. In actuality, this study found that parental involvement in the education of migrant students is often set by example and support. The migrant parents in this study labored long hours and took care of the students’ chores so that they could focus on school. This work ethic and sense of family helped the students follow thru with their education and in turn support younger siblings. Although previous research has indicated that migrant parents are endowed with different forms of cultural capital that shape how they parent and influence their children’s educational opportunities, studies have not fully identified all that migrant parents do to support their children (Bargklowki, 2018).

**Institutional Agents**

Findings of this study indicate that migrant teachers and advisors acting as institutional agents are crucial for the success of migrant students. Institutional agents are those individuals who have the knowledge and commitment to pass on institutional resources or opportunities (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). This is similarly related to the
discussion on cultural capital as viewed by the majority culture. The institutional agents provide the migrant students with access to social relationships at academic institutions that play a role in their success. By doing so, the migrant teacher and/or advisor is filling the gap that social scientists have opined results in the success of economically advantaged versus disadvantaged youth (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Coleman, 1988; Dika & Singh, 2002; Lareau, 1987; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; as cited in Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). Although this is helpful for the migrant student, it does not change the current practices implementing majority culture values on this unique population of students and marginalizing them as not having the cultural capital that academic institutions value for success.

**Role Models And Self Determination Theory**

According to Self-Determination Theory, for an individual to achieve positive self-motivation they must have a sense of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. In this study we found the role model to be an important factor in the motivation perspectives of migrant students. Migrant students in this study identified with role models with similar background and looked at them with a sense of hope and admiration when pursuing academic achievements. Previous research did not indicate role models as playing such a crucial role in the development of migrant students. Future research should focus on the actions taken by role models that influence the developing migrant student.

**Parental Involvement and Academic Learned Capital**

Meaningful parental involvement for the academic success of children must be undertaken at home and in schools (Good, 2010). This study identified aspects of migrant parental involvement in the educational success of migrant students that indicated the
nature of this effort is more dynamic than previously thought. Previous research looked at indirect parental involvement in the form of cultural capital that consisted of help with chores and exemplary actions that children inherited. This study found that migrant parental involvement can be more direct in actions and attitudes towards academic institutions. This study found that parental involvement focused its direct efforts in developing older children to aid in the development of younger siblings. Also, parental involvement included attitudes towards school personnel that made them appear as valuable and critical resources to their children. These actions and attitudes yielded great returns in the form of academic learned capital. With the direct assistance of their parents and valued school personnel, the older siblings were able to gain academic learned capital that included techniques to navigate administrative and academic issues in a foreign school system. This academic learned capital then served as a resource for younger siblings who at that point did not need to depend on parental involvement for such help.

**Other Factors Identified**

This study also identified other factors that were helpful for migrant student success which included knowledge about the available programs and fictive kinship. Fictive kinship is defined as a relationship that is not based on blood or marriage but rather a close friendship that replicates the thoughts and obligations that traditional family ties would (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000). For migrant students knowing about the programs available was the first step to success. Secondly, being able to cultivate fictive kinships with other migrant student going through the same obstacles served as additional support to in their existing support network of parents, institutional agents (teachers and advisors), and role models (migrant college graduates and older siblings).
What Educators and Planners Can Do

The findings of this study indicate that educators and MEP and CAMP program administrators must:

- Acknowledge and give value to the **Cultural Capital** that migrant students inherit from their family and experiences in the fields;
- Act and provide access to **Institutional Agents** as advisors and representatives for migrant students;
- Highlight and include successful migrant students in their programs to serve as **Role Models** to current migrant students; and
- Enhance program services by offering extended hours and childcare resources to include **Parental Involvement** in migrant student education.

The findings of this study indicate that planners must begin to investigate the intersection of planning and education as it relates to mobile populations such as migrant farmworkers. There is a need to understand how education plays a role in the participation of the farmworker in the “Place” they call home even if it is just for the growing season.

Limitations and Future Research

This study presented several limitations including the lack of available literature discussing success factors associated with migrant student education. In addition, the data analyzed in this study was limited to pre-existing primary studies due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and the limitation on travel and in-person interviews. It should be noted that the home states for this study were California and Texas, but students included in the primary studies could have moved to different states during the growing season.
Strengths of this research included finding the value in previously unexamined migrant cultural capital that has been considered a deficit by social science researchers in the past. This study also provided a compilation and analyzation of data from a previously under-researched population. This study may also assist future research in identifying success factors for other minority and disadvantaged populations, as well as help new researchers step away from the traditional deficit model and reframe their studies to investigate the value of other culture in education.

The results of this study can be used as a platform for future research to begin the exploration of cultural capital theories in migrant student education. This study illuminated the importance of academic advisors and mentors in the academic careers of migrant students. Futures studies should focus on identifying how the MEP and CAMP programs can ensure that migrant youth have access to role models and mentors, via mechanisms like alumni associations, who have the capacity to serve as institutional agents for this unique population.
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