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Elisabeth Valenzuela

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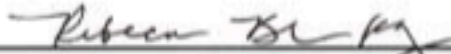
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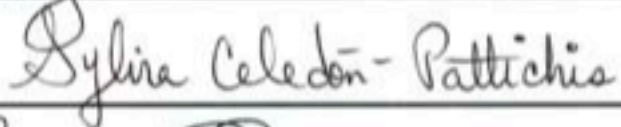


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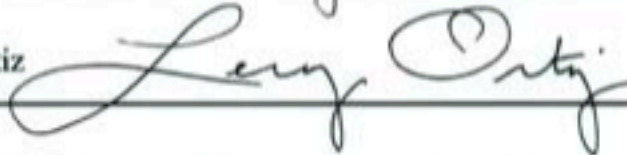
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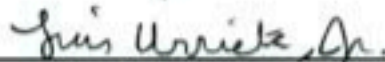
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**Challenges and Possibilities of *Emigrante*
Epistemology: Mexican Immigrants Caught in
the Crossfire of Neo-liberalism within Post 9/11
United States**

BY

ELISABETH VALENZUELA

B.S., Education, University of New Mexico, 1999
M.A., Education, University of New Mexico, 2001

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December, 2009

DEDICATION

Este a sido un camino largo de recorrer. Hoy estoy cerrando esta etapa de mi vida gracias al apoyo incondicional de mi familia. A mi familia les agradezco todo su apoyo, paciencia, y ayuda durante todos estos años. Por eso quiero dedicarles esta tesis doctoral a mis padres, Jerónima Valenzuela Pulido y José Valenzuela. A mis hermanas, Norma, Mercedes y Lucy Valenzuela. A mi madre por haber tomado la decisión de emigrar a este país en busca de una mejor vida para sus hijas. Su sacrificio no fue en vano. Mamá: mis hermanas y yo somos quien somos hoy gracias a ti. A mi padre por haber estado de acuerdo con la decisión de mamá de traernos a Albuquerque. Norma, Mercedes, y Lucy las quiero muchísimo estoy orgullosa de ustedes, gracias por aguantarme todos estos años. Y para mi primo Víctor Adrián Valenzuela que aunque hoy no esta en cuerpo presente, su amor por la vida y perseverancia me enseñó que la vida se debe vivir cada día intensamente.

A las familias Carrillo, Durán, Hernández, y Sias por haberme dado la oportunidad de conocerlos y tener el privilegio de escuchar sus historias. Las puertas de sus casas siempre estuvieron abiertas y disponibles para conversar conmigo. A través de sus historias pude comprender las experiencias que mis padres atravesaron cuando llegaron aquí en 1979. Sus historias me hicieron reflexionar sobre la situación y la vida daría de los emigrantes mexicanos en esta ciudad. Espero que haya interpretado sus historias y experiencias con exactitud. Les estaré eternamente agradecida.

Por último esta tesis doctoral, también esta dedicada a todos los emigrantes mexicanos que han tenido que dejar a sus familias para venir a este país. La vida del emigrante mexicano en este país nunca a sido fácil, los sacrificios que tienen que

emprender a diario demuestra su validez y valentía. A sus hijos, mis estudiantes que son la razón por la que me levanto todos los días, ellos son el futuro. Para mi es un privilegio aprender todo los días de mis estudiantes. En mi pensar, mis estudiante son los que pueden cambiar el rumbo de este país, haciéndolo más justo y equitativo para todos.

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ABSTRACT

The current political, economic, and social conditions facing Mexican immigrant families within post 9/11 United States have a direct effect on their daily lives. The current climate of anti-immigrant, xenophobic, and racist discourse is perpetuated through mainstream media, political agendas, and even ordinary U.S. citizens and has a direct influence on state and federal policies. This qualitative case-study used a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework and methodology to examine how Mexican immigrants make sense of the neo-liberal social, economic, and political policies through their lived and educational experiences. This study took place in a metropolitan urban center in the southwestern region of the United States.

The use of qualitative methods through in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant in order to gain their *testimonios* on how they made sense of the economic, social, and political policies through their daily lived experiences. In addition, this study attempted to look at how such lived and educational experiences were connected to transnational labor and migration within the context of neo-liberal ideology.

Finally, the formation of an *emigrante* epistemology was devised from Mexican immigrants *testimonios* and counter-stories in order to validate and privilege their experiences. *Emigrante* epistemology derives from Mexican immigrants transnational, bilingual, and bi-cultural identities having lived in a “third world” country near the U.S./Mexico border but is also influenced by the political, social, and economic conditions of the U.S. southwest. In this sense, *emigrante* epistemology is a form of counter-knowledge that is based on the acknowledgement that Mexican immigrants as a raced people employ multiple ways of seeing, reading, interpreting, and deconstructing the political, social, and economic policies through their daily lived experiences within post 9/11 United States.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Personal Story and Related Background Information

My life in the United States begins in 1979, September 30th, to be exact. Just eighteen days after my fifth birthday and on my mother's 23rd birthday, my parents made the long journey from Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, to the southwest region of the United States. My father had been a migrant worker since the 1960's; he had traveled throughout the southwest region of the United States. Upon my mother's request and in order to provide "a better" life and better opportunities for their daughters, my parents decided to emigrate with the entire family to the United States. From my hometown of Torreón, Coahuila, we traveled ten hours by car, north to the border city of Juárez. There we spent a week with some friends of my father from his hometown of Yermo, Durango. In Juárez, a 27-year-old woman who was eight months pregnant, "La Güera," had been hired to help us cross into El Paso, Texas. According to my mother, my uncle Ramon drove us to the Chamizal park in Juárez; there we embarked on the task of crossing the Rio Bravo into El Paso. Back in 1979, crossing the border was a less dangerous journey than it is today, as U.S. immigration policy has become increasingly harsh due to the militarization of the border, which has had a significant impact on immigrant deaths. (The Coalición de Derechos Humanos in Tucson, AZ reports that 1,327 migrants perished between October 2001 and September 2007 while crossing the Arizona, U.S./Mexico border.)

The day of our crossing was a sunny, warm fall day. My mother remembers that my younger sister Mercedes and I were very happy to see the water and excited since we thought that we were just coming to visit. Crossing the Rio Bravo/Grande took about an

hour. After we arrived in El Paso, “La Güera” left us at a Mexican restaurant where we waited for my father’s friend, “El Chino”. My older sister Norma, pretending to be their daughter, had crossed the border “legally” into El Paso with my uncle Ramon and his wife, a Chicana from the Southwest. Our first encounter with “la migra” happened minutes after arriving in El Paso. My mother recalls that my sister Mercedes and I were fighting over a bag of potato chips when she saw three officers come into the restaurant. She told us to settle down or else the policemen were going to take us away. At that time my mother did not know that they were border patrol agents since this was the first time she had set foot in the United States. The border patrol agents walked up to our table and stared at us. They continued to walk towards the restrooms. The border patrol agents then returned to our table and stared at us again before walking out and leaving the restaurant. While all this was happening, my father was at the counter ordering a soda, scared to death since he knew it was “la migra”.

My father, mother, younger sister, and I spent a week in El Paso with “El Chino’s” family. Finally, one fall night we boarded a small plane that flew us from El Paso to a small town 15 miles outside the city we would soon call home. My father had paid \$300 for this trip. My uncle Ramon, who had made all the arrangements for us, had found this particular individual who was providing this service during this time. During the first month in this new city, we lived with an aunt and her family in their house that was located on Bridge Street. My father later found a small apartment on Central Avenue and old Coors Boulevard where we lived for about one year before moving into a one-

bedroom apartment in the north valley section of Encantada.¹ The north valley would be where I would spend the next 17 years of my life.

My father first came to the United States in 1959 along with an uncle and one of his older brothers as participants in the Bracero Program. All three of them were taken to California to work in the fields picking asparagus alongside Filipino workers who were already there. From 1959 to 1963, my father traveled to the United States a total of ten times as a migrant worker. He worked picking cucumbers in Wisconsin and cotton in Arkansas before eventually settling in the Southwest city of Encantada in 1964. Here he worked for a while on a ranch located in the southwestern region of the city. When we arrived in 1979, my father was working for Tewa Weavers, sewing the designs on the pockets of the Levi jeans. He did this for three years. My mother also worked there for about a month, both earning about \$3.35 an hour.

My maternal grandfather had also participated in the Bracero Program in the early 1950's. I remember my grandfather telling us, his granddaughters, about the racist experience he had in El Paso, Texas. My grandfather, along with all the other Mexican men in his group, was taken to a room where he was forced to undress. The border patrol agents proceeded to fumigate them with an unknown pesticide. The White border patrol agents did this because of their racist beliefs that Mexican braceros brought here to work in the fields were disease carriers.² My grandfather only spent a month working in the cotton fields of southern New Mexico before returning to Torreón. This humiliating and degrading experience made my grandfather vow never to set foot in the United States

¹Pseudo names are used throughout this document to represent participant names and location sites.

² The recent outbreak of the "Swine Flu" in Mexico that created a whole frenzy around the world was racialized in the U.S. media. Mexican immigrant families and children were portrayed as disease carriers.

because he regarded the United States government and the “gringos” as racist individuals who exploited Mexicans for their labor. Even when his daughter brought his beloved granddaughters up north where they were separated for eight years from my grandfather, he kept his promise of never returning to the United States.

Many of the Mexican immigrants that attempt to cross daily into the United States come to this country with the eternal dream of providing their families with the opportunity for a better life. The chance at a better life means providing shelter, food, clothes, and schooling which they hope will give their children the opportunity to become financially secure in the future. This wish is rooted in their own desire to give their children what they did not have access to growing up poor in rural Mexico. The aspirations and dreams these immigrant families come with to the United States are met with many challenges which have heightened within the last 15 years as immigration policy becomes increasingly hostile and anti-Latino/Mexican. Such has been the magnitude of anti-immigration sentiment that even the simple act of obtaining a driver’s license has become an uphill battle fought by many in the Southwest. Moreover, in the 1997 Proposition 187 in California and in the 2005 Proposition 200 in Arizona, as well as the organization and presence of the Minutemen along the U.S./Mexico border during the Spring of 2005, gave legal authority for white supremacist groups to promote blatant racism and discrimination against Mexicans.³ Deyhle and Villenas (1999) state that “By

³ Proposition 187 was placed on the California ballot in 1997; it sought to deny public education (K-12) and post-secondary education and denied health care access to anyone suspected of being an undocumented immigrant. It also required that teachers and any public officials report undocumented immigrants. Proposition 200 was placed on the Arizona ballot in 2005. It asked for elimination of any public assistance programs for undocumented immigrants in the areas of education and health care. It also sought to require any public official to report undocumented immigrants to Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). The Minuteman Project was launched in the spring of 2005 by a group who considered themselves patriots

representing Latinos/ as and Chicanos/as as lazy, undeserving, and criminals, the public rhetoric justifies the real and symbolic violence committed against Latino families by immigration and police officers and through legislation” (p. 36). Furthermore, this anti-immigrant sentiment and its policies have especially targeted immigrant children by threatening to cut access to health care and education.

The United States has historically looked to their southern neighbor, Mexico, as a source of cheap manual labor. Moreover, Mexicans have looked to the north in times of economic hardship and high unemployment in Mexico. They have come in search of any type of job that will provide them with the means for a decent income in order to provide for their families back home. The first bilateral work agreement between the United States and Mexico came in 1942 with the formation of the Bracero Program. Due to the United States’ dire need for workers to replace Americans who were off fighting the war in Europe and the Pacific (World War II), the U.S. decided to engage in talks with Mexico regarding a program that would allow for the legal hiring of Mexicans to work in the agricultural business. Furthermore, the passage of the 1994 neo-liberal North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which devastated the Mexican economy and forced millions to migrate north in order to survive, needs to be part of the debate/discussion about immigration reform at the national level. According to David Bacon (2008) with the passing of NAFTA, around six million displaced people came to the U.S. from Mexico. It is essential to deconstruct the neo-liberal policies that have been implemented in Mexico through the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and U.S. Treasury Department known as the Washington Consensus, that are forcing

and loyal Americans who stationed themselves along the U.S./Mexico border in Arizona to stop the unauthorized entry of “illegal aliens, drug runners and criminals”.

millions of working class, professional, and rural Mexican citizens to look toward the north in search of an opportunity to survive.

During the last nine years (2000-present), the Mexican government has been trying to engage in talks with the United States regarding the possibility of amnesty for the millions of undocumented Mexicans currently living in the country. However, the United States government under the George W. Bush administration tried to push for a temporary work program like that of the Bracero Program of the 1940's. As of the winter of 2008, neither an amnesty nor temporary work program had been achieved. Instead, what has been achieved is the institutionalism of legal discrimination and the criminalization of Mexican immigrants with the Patriot Act and Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437).

According to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), as of January 2000 there were 7.0 million unauthorized/undocumented immigrants residing in the United States. Out of the 7.0 million, 4.8 million were from Mexico, which was an increase of 2.0 million from January 1990. Moreover, during the early 1990's this was the pattern of immigration observed from Mexico, as concluded by INS (See Table 1).

In the early 1990's there was a decline of unauthorized immigration from Mexico with an increase during 1995, a decline the following two years, and with another increase in the last two years of the 1990's. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in 2000 there were 4.68 million unauthorized immigrants from Mexico in the United States. By 2008 the number of unauthorized Mexican immigrants in the U.S. was 7.03 million. California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas are

currently the states that have the highest number of unauthorized immigrants residing in their states.

Table 1—Unauthorized Immigration from Mexico in the 1990’s

Calendar Year	Total per Year/Thousands
1990	454
1991	390
1992	380
1993	403
1994	473
1995	513
1996	450
1997	437
1998	537
1999	629

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

The southwestern state where this study is being conducted has also experienced an increase of Mexican immigrants from 1990 to 2000. In January of 1990, 50,046 Mexican immigrants resided in the state. By 1998 the number had increased to 87,909 (Garcia-Acevedo, 2000). Duran (2007) indicates recent estimates reveal that 277,000 Mexican immigrants, including children, reside in New Mexico.

In the fall of 1999, I started my teaching career working as a first-grade bilingual teacher in a mainly immigrant community in the city’s northeast quadrant. This particular area within the city was becoming increasingly inundated with immigrants mainly from Mexico’s state of Chihuahua. The neighborhood was composed of low-socio-economic apartments along with some older homes. The Mexican immigrants who arrived in this area came because of cheap rent and connections to other relatives and friends. My life

had come full circle being an immigrant child myself, new to a country, language, and culture; I found that I shared a common bond with my students and their families.

In the five years that I taught in this community, I experienced first hand the demographic change within the neighborhood and the school. When I started teaching in 1999, there was only one bilingual classroom per grade level. By the time I left, after five years, there were three bilingual classrooms per grade level. Over 80% of our student population was of Mexican heritage, foreign born and U.S. born of Mexican immigrants. This school, Cesar Chacón Elementary school offered bilingual programs K through 5th grade, as well as GED and ESL classes for parents. Furthermore, I heard first-hand accounts from many parents within this community about their daily struggles living within the U.S. as immigrants. The school had become a place where these immigrant families could find answers to their questions on immigration policy and law, as well as information on their rights as renters and information on access to health care for their children. Due to the pro-advocacy and pro-empowerment of parents stance that the school held, there had been partnerships established with other community organizations that were pro-immigrant and that were easily accessible to any immigrant families looking for guidance and help.

As an immigrant child, I had grown up hearing my parents talking about the “migra.” Whenever my mother or father spotted a border patrol agent vehicle on the street, we were told to always act calm and not make ourselves appear as “undocumented immigrants.”⁴ My family was one of the thousands of individuals who were able to

⁴ What my mother meant by this was for us not to call attention to ourselves in order to avoid the border patrol from stopping to inquire about our immigrant status.

obtain amnesty under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986.⁵ By December of 1987, my mother, two sisters, and I obtained our temporary residence cards. It was the best Christmas gift, since we were able to visit our grandparents and family in Torreón after eight long years of not seeing them. From 1987 to 1995 when I obtained my U.S. citizenship, I had become disconnected with what it meant to be an undocumented immigrant living in the United States. One of the factors for this disconnection was growing up in a predominately Hispanic neighborhood and attending school with mainly Hispanic and White students. For the most part my adolescence and young adult years had been spent being a “legal” immigrant, which guaranteed me certain privileges such as employment, education, and healthcare. In the fall of 1999 when I went to work as a bilingual teacher, I began to re-connect with the harsh realities of racist immigration policies that sought to penalize and criminalize Mexican immigrants simply because of their legal status, country of origin, language, and brown skin. It is through the stories of my students and their families that I began to understand how their lived daily experiences were impacted by their immigration status, as my family had once been.

Midpoint through my teaching within this community, I started working on my doctorate degree. It was during this time that I was introduced to critical race theory (CRT) Studies. This introduction to the works of DuBois (1996), Bell (1992), Ladson-Billings (2000), hooks (1994) Delgado (2001), Solórzano and Yosso (2002), among many more, helped me deconstruct all policy issues within education and society in general, using a critical race theory framework. Moreover, this new understanding of how state policies at the macro level have a direct effect at the micro level and are negotiated

⁵ Duran (2007) states that only 1% of all applicants for amnesty under the 1986 IRCA resided in NM.

and renegotiated through race has greatly affected my goals. It is what drives my political commitment to conduct research that seeks to challenge dominant discourses that perpetuate and demoralize marginalized communities of color. Furthermore, within the framework of CRT, I hope to provide a counter-narrative that allows for voices of those marginalized communities of color to be heard. As Solórzano and Yosso (2002) state in relation to the use of the counter-story in CRT, “the counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (p. 32).

Background of the Study

I submit that neo-liberalism has changed the fundamental nature of politics. Politics used to be primarily about who ruled whom and who got what share of the pie. Aspects of both these central questions remain, of course, but the great new central question of politics is, in my view, “Who has the right to live and who does not.” Radical exclusion is now the order of the day and I mean this deadly seriously. (Giroux, 2004, p. 1)

All aspects of a society are impacted, shaped, and altered by the shifts in economic, political, and social policy. The shifts in policy and the power dynamics that are at work at the macro and micro levels directly impact institutions and citizens. The current economic, political, and social agendas instituted in the United States are largely influenced by neo-liberal ideology. Neo-liberalism represents a set of economic policies that stress privatization and decentralization of public institutions. These neo-liberal policies have been widespread and imposed throughout the last 25 years through powerful financial organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Some of the key points of the neo-liberals’ agenda emphasize the cutting of public expenditures for social services, freeing private enterprise from government bondage, as well as government regulations that might diminish profits. In addition, the neo-liberal agenda seeks to eliminate the sense of “community” by placing total responsibility on the individual for their own solutions to health care, education and social security. Economist

David M. Kotz (2002) states that “The policy recommendations of Neo-liberalism are concerned mainly with dismantling what remains of the regulationist welfare state” (p. 65). These attitudes and beliefs condemn the poorest of the poor for their own failure based on their laziness in getting a job. The effect of neo-liberalism on education includes a powerful movement towards mandated educational standards, excessive focus on testing, accountability, and zero-tolerance policies.

Giroux (2004), Apple (2001), Lipman (2004), and Aronowitz (2003) state that neo-liberalism can be observed within all aspects of the George W. Bush administration’s agenda that has permeated the economic, political, and social policies since taking office in 2000. Giroux (2004) argues the following:

Within the discourse of Neo-liberalism, the notion of public good is devalued and, where possible, eliminated as part of a wider rationale for a handful of private interests to control as much of social life as possible in order to maximize their personal profit. Public services such as health care, child care, public assistance, education, and transportation are now subject to the rules of the market. Construing the public good as a private good and the needs of the corporate and private sector as the only source of investment, neo-liberal ideology produces, legitimates, exacerbates the existence of persistent poverty, inadequate health care, racial apartheid in the inner cities, and growing inequalities between the rich and the poor. (p. 46)

Moreover, the U.S. economy has been going through a transformation since the 1980’s. According to Sanjek (1998), the Reagan administration restructured the U.S.

economic landscape with two types of jobs: those that were high-skilled and high paying and those low-skilled, low paying. A consequence of this new job market has been a greater growth of workers needed for jobs that are low-skill and low pay, which are generally occupied by immigrants, people of color, and women. Lipman (2004) argues that the “new labor force is highly segmented and increasingly polarized” (p. 10) because of the following trends seen in the labor landscape as indicted by the following:

A downgraded manufacturing sector that has given rise to sweatshops, an increase in service jobs that are high-skilled, technical, professional, and managerial (held by white males), an increase in low-skilled jobs with little to zero benefits and retirement plans (custodians, dishwashers, waiters, cooks) increase in jobs that are part-time, temporary work done by women, people of color, and immigrants who need to work two, three or more jobs (in order to survive). (Lipman, 2004, p. 110)

The jobs at the lower end of the labor spectrum are low-skilled and low paying and are held mainly by women, people of color, and immigrants. Moreover, they are also jobs that require the least amount of education and basic skills. These are jobs that many within immigrant communities hold and struggle to maintain in order to provide for their families. The national media in the U.S. as well as in Mexico have argued that immigrants hold the jobs that many Americans refuse to do. This is problematic because it fuels interracial conflict between Mexican immigrants and working class U.S. citizens such as African Americans. Such inter-racial conflict continues to be used as a tactic of divide and conquer. As evident at a meeting of the Texas-Mexico Frozen Food Council in the western city of Puerto Vallarta, in June of 2005, then Mexican President Vicente Fox

stated, “There is no doubt that Mexicans, filled with dignity, willingness, and ability to work are doing jobs that not even blacks want to do there in the United States” (Associated Press). His comment was not well received within the African American community for its racist undertone.

This divide and conquer tactic of inter-racial conflict can also be seen within schools serving predominantly African American and Latino students. In February of 2006 an article in the local newspaper located in the city where this study is being conducted had on its front page the headline that read “Ethnic Tensions Surge at Salinas.” The article spoke of the school boosting their security after tension between black and Hispanic students broke out after a heated argument between the two groups in the school’s parking lot.⁶

However, at the same time immigrants are blamed for the draining and bankruptcy of the U.S. welfare system, the women and their children are said to be a burden on the U.S. taxpayer because they “take more than they give.” Within the last decade there has been a push within states like California and Arizona, which have a high number of immigrants, to put forth propositions that eliminate any type of government assistance for immigrants and their children when it comes to health care and education. In 2005 in Arizona, the anti-immigrant groups and proponents of Proposition 200 (Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act) alleged that undocumented immigrants cost Arizona \$1.3 billion per year, while a report by the Thunderbird School of Management in 2003 and Wells Fargo Bank reported that immigrants contributed \$300

⁶ The article stated that Black students had “complained that they are disciplined more severely than Hispanic students, while Hispanics claim they are the target of harsher treatment.”

million more than they receive in services in Arizona.⁷ Sen and Mamdouh (2008) state that “through the mechanism of taxation without return, undocumented immigrants and their employers are thought to contribute some \$7 billion to the Social Security system they never use; all immigrants together bring the figure to \$500 billion” (p. 39).

Nevertheless, despite the overt racist attacks on the human rights of immigrants in the U.S., many continue to make the long journey from their hometowns to the north in search of a better life for their families. Due to the current hostile situation and with the militarization of the border, many encounter violence, hardships, and sometimes death along the way. Once in this country, the violence, hardships, and uncertainty of their legal status continue to be of great concern to them. Under the current economic, political, and social policies that are greatly shaped and reshaped by neo-liberal ideology, it is essential to understand how Mexican immigrants make sense of these shifts in power within their daily lived experiences. Furthermore, it is essential to deconstruct how the communities that are the most impacted by these policies understand and interpret them based on their daily interactions within the institutions that implemented them. Their experiences in trying to access work, education, and health care can offer an important insight into how they survive under the current social reality of this country. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) point to the importance of storytelling and counter-storytelling of the experiences of people of color as a way to “strengthen traditions of social, political and cultural survival and resistance” (p. 33).

⁷ In May 2003 The Thunderbird Mexican Association at the Garvin School of International Management put forth an academic research project report entitled *The Economic Impact of the Mexico-Arizona Relationship*. The report sought to explore four different topics of importance in analyzing Mexico and Arizona relations. The four focus areas were Mexicans in Arizona, Commerce, Investment, and Tourism.

Another important aspect in understanding the current reality of the immigrant experience in neo-liberal America is to include the daily experiences of Mexican immigrant families within the public school system of this country. It is important to understand the educational and schooling experiences that Mexican immigrant families bring with them to the United States. It is those educational and schooling experiences that frame their understanding and critiquing of education and schooling in the United States. Many U.S. citizens believe that public schools are neutral spaces that are fair and equal to all those they serve. Until recently, they were generally seen as the only public institution where politics and politicians did not influence curriculum and instruction. However, as Spring (2001) states when looking at the educational history of public schooling, one lens that can be used to deconstruct such a myth is to see schools as a form of ideological management: “Ideological management involves the creation and distribution of knowledge in a society. Schools play a central role in the distribution of particular knowledge to a society” (p. 4). Moreover, schools and the knowledge distributed in these public spaces are not neutral and are very much influenced by the political, social and economic spheres in society. Since the foundation of public schooling in this country, there has been a struggle to establish “a curriculum” that will help educate students the “right way” to meet the political and economic interest of the United States at home as well as abroad. Kliebard (1995) argues historically since the turn of the 19th century, “the struggle for the American curriculum” has been a heated debate in terms of what would be taught and how it should be taught in accordance with the political and economic interests of the nation, thus translating to which groups’

political, social and economic interests would be served through the distribution of a particular ideology and knowledge in schools in the form of curriculum and instruction.

Apple (2000) argues that this neo-conservative, right-wing ideology has been influencing federal educational policy, curriculum, and instruction since the late 80's, all through the 90's, and thus has culminated with No Child Left Behind (NCLB).⁸ He attributes the "hegemonic bloc" as the beneficiaries behind the construction of the "official knowledge" being transmitted by schools through the creation of national curricula, assessment, accountability, marketization and privatization of education. Apple states that the rightward or conservative restoration has been the result of years of well-funded and creative ideological efforts by the "Right" to form a broad-based coalition. He terms this contemporary alliance the new "hegemonic bloc." Furthermore, it has been so successful in part because it has been able to make major inroads in the battle over common-sense. This new hegemonic bloc consists of neo-liberals, neoconservatives, authoritarian populists and the new professional middle class. Although there may be disagreement among the various aspects of the agenda, the hegemonic bloc has developed their alliance based on an ideological matrimony that serves their political, social, and economic interests. The current educational legislation under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is an example of the alliance of the "hegemonic bloc" and their political, social, and economic agenda. Moreover, the excessive push for the creation and implementation of a curriculum that meets mandated standards, high-stakes testing, and

⁸ Signed into law in January 8, 2001, NCLB is the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. NCLB seeks to promote school reform that embraces stronger accountability for results, provide more choices for parents, greater flexibility for states and districts, and Reading First programs.

“scientifically” researched-based reading programs as a means to hold schools accountable reflects the ideological influence of neo-liberalism on NCLB.

As a political strategy, NCLB mainly targets schools in communities of color by promising to hold schools accountable for the education of all its students. It promotes high standards, highly qualified teachers, and a scientifically research-based reading curriculum in order to meet NCLB goals. At the surface level this legislation appeals to a majority of citizens that perceive it to be fair, because it promises to ensure that schools provide a fair and equitable education for all students. Furthermore, the government promises to provide sufficient financial assistance to schools and to hold them accountable in order to ensure that no child will be left behind. According to the United States Department of Education, some of the goals of No Child Left Behind (Sec. 1001) are to ensure the following:

- 1) To meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in our nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance.
- 2) Close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers.
- 3) Hold schools, local educational agencies, and states accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students, while providing alternatives to students in

such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, Sec. 1001).

An in-depth examination of NCLB would uncover the problematic issues plaguing schools serving students of color, living in poverty. Such schools are the ones which have been given the least amount of financial support, where standardized testing is being used to “hold them accountable” and where the curriculum emphasizes skill drilling. NCLB can therefore be considered a racial project that does nothing more than reproduce the inequalities within society by re-articulating race in a color-blind ideology and thus redistributing resources along racial lines, ensuring that students of color continue to be given a vocational education that will prepare them for working class jobs. In addition, the current federal policy of NCLB also needs to be analyzed and deconstructed as a neo-liberal project that benefits corporate capital over students. In this sense NCLB is a policy that was implemented as a source through which public monies can be funneled into the pockets of the giant textbook corporations that supply the scripted programs and standardized tests to public schools throughout the United States. As Lois Weiner (2007) states regarding her interpretation of NCLB and neo-liberalism, “I suggest that rhetoric of increasing educational opportunity masks another purpose: creating a privatized, fragmented system of public education that has a narrow, vocationalized curriculum enforced through the use of standardized tests” (p. 159).

Lipman’s (2003) study of Chicago school policy and its impact on the education of Black and Latino youth demonstrated how the ideology of neo-liberalism impacts education policy within the context of globalization. Her study was effective in deconstructing “the role of education policies in the production of inequality and racial

oppression and the reproduction of a highly stratified, economically polarized labor force” (p. 331). Lipman’s findings demonstrate the effects of high-stakes testing as a practice of accountability measures that punish schools serving primarily Black and Latino students. This was evident in the staggering numbers of Blacks and Latinos being retained one or more years and being forced to attend remedial programs that offer the basic skills needed for manual labor. Moreover, hundreds of Chicago schools placed on probation due to low test scores were overwhelming African-American, some Latino, or mixed. The curriculums at these schools offered the basics in reading and math and were geared toward preparing students to pass standardized tests.

Differentiated schools and excessive test preparation in low-achieving schools increase the stratification of educational opportunities. A minority of students are being prepared with the cultural capital and educational experiences to become professionals and knowledge workers, actors in the information economy. The majority, overwhelmingly students of color, are being prepared for skilled and unskilled low-wage sectors or pushed out of school altogether. (Lipman, 2003, p. 342)

It is therefore necessary to interrogate the experiences of Mexican immigrant families with the public education system of this country in order to understand how these policies affect their children’s educational experiences. In addition, such experiences need to be juxtaposed with their educational and schooling experiences in Mexico.

Statement of the Problem

As a Mexican, immigrant woman of color it is extremely disheartening to have to listen to the attacks on immigrants made by the media pundits, politicians, and other U.S. citizens that complain of the enormous burden of educating and providing health care for these immigrants so that they may just come over to take jobs from U.S. citizens.

Although some may argue that it is based on ignorance, I strongly feel that it is based on overt racism and racist ideologies due to the fact that anything that has to do with immigration is linked directly to immigrants from Mexico. Moreover, the policies surrounding immigration, bilingual education, the militarization of the border, access to health care, access to driver's licenses, has always been "othered" to signify Mexican, brown people, people of color of "inferior status."

As argued above, neo-liberalism currently permeates all economic, political, and social policy in the United States. Consequently, it is impossible to not be affected by the policies put forth by the U.S. government, whether it is education, access to health care, or job availability with a decent pay. The most vulnerable and effected peoples under such inhumane state policies are women, children, people of color, and immigrants. Under neo-liberalism the state has rid itself of any social responsibility to its citizens; if it is not going to make a profit then it is not worth aiding. People are literally left to sink or swim because the state does not want to be burdened with any cost. Instead, big business and profit-making are derived from human suffering and tragedy, like hurricanes and war. Moreover, young students of color, Latinos, and African-Americans are targeted by zero-tolerance school policies that criminalize these youth instead of helping them. The message that is being sent to students, according to Giroux (2004), is the following:

Marginalized students learn quickly that they are surplus populations and that the journey from home to school no longer means they will next move into a job; on the contrary, school has now become a training ground for their 'graduation' into containment centers such as prisons and jails that keep them out of sight, patrolled, and monitored so as to prevent them from becoming a social canker or political liability to white and middle-class populations concerned about their own safety. (p. 95)

The current literature on neo-liberal ideology and its influence on the economic, political, and social policies have been problematized within education by Giroux (2004), Apple (2003), and Lipman (2003, 2004). They have focused their attention on deconstructing how such policies can be seen within the state-mandated curriculum and standards, standardized testing, zero-tolerance policies, and accountability measures. They have deconstructed how such mandated policies influence what gets taught, how it gets taught, as well as the de-skilling of the teachers and the effects on the education of students of color. These educators offer a critical lens that informs how shifts in power within the state's economic, political, and social policies are implemented and stratified throughout all aspects of society through institutions such as school and the workforce.

What is missing from this critical analysis are the voices of those who are most impacted by all these policies. Their stories are often not acknowledged or represented within their own present day reality of how these issues impact their view of themselves and their children. In addition, there is a marked absence of narratives on how they manage to survive on a daily basis, knowing the obstacles that they encounter because of their immigrant status. Therefore, it is essential to gain insight into Mexican immigrant

families' experiences with the public schooling system along with their interpretation of what it means to be an immigrant within this period of heightened hostility and patrolling of people of color. As Villenas and Deyhle (1999) argue the following:

While domination and suppression of Mexicans and other Latino peoples take the form of poverty and of physical violence in the United States as victims at the hands of the border patrol, the police, and anti-immigrant vigilante groups, Latinos suffer the violence of anti-immigrant xenophobia and the continued violence of their construction in the public discourse as other-beggars, lazy, crime-ridden peoples. (p. 418)

The purpose of this research study is to allow for the voice of the voiceless to be heard in order to gain an understanding about how they make meaning of such policies through their daily lived experiences.⁹ The research is about privileging those voices that continue to thrive and resist despite the daily macro-racial aggressions they are victims of on a daily basis.

Research Questions

Grand Tour Question: How do Mexican immigrant families make sense of their daily lived and educational experiences within the economic, political and social landscape of post 9/11 United States?

- 1) How do Mexican immigrant families and their children perceive themselves within the context of a xenophobic climate in a post 9/11 United States?

- 4) How do Mexican immigrants perceive their work experience in a metropolitan urban center in the southwestern region of the U.S.?

⁹ Voiceless here means that their stories are not always heard or at the forefront of the dominant discourse within society regarding the issues plaguing their daily lives

- 5) What are the educational experiences of Mexican immigrant families with the U.S public school system?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be to gain an insight and understanding of the daily lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families in a city in the Southwest region of the United States. As the United States becomes an increasing authoritarian state, the economic, political, and social policies it puts forth give less to those that already have least and violates the human rights of all those that are “Other.” Therefore, it is essential to understand how Mexican immigrant families and their children make sense of the shifts in economic, political, and social policies that directly affect them on a day-to-day basis. Within the last two decades, there has been an increase in the number of Mexican immigrants who have settled across the U.S. Southwest. Schools as well as state and local economies have been impacted by that growth. These local and state economies have seen an economic boost and growth due to the hard work and sweat of these immigrants. In the locale of this research project, there has been growth at an accelerated rate (within the last 15 years) in the area of construction, restaurant, and hotel businesses. This economic growth has been largely built by the hands of Mexican immigrant males who can be found in large numbers working in construction and the women working in restaurants and hotels.

As a neo-liberal ideology continues to saturate all aspects of state policies put forth by the U.S. government that has had devastating effects on the workers’ wages, education, health care, and public assistance programs, families and whole communities are left to fend for themselves. It is not uncommon to hear daily on the media the

enormous cuts made to education, and public assistance programs, while at the same time corporations are receiving huge tax breaks. In addition, in the name of national security the state pushes for the surveillance of its citizens, advocates the militarization at the southern border, and calls for national identity cards to be issued to all its citizens.¹⁰ Moreover, there is a push for a standard national curriculum that returns to the teaching of the “basics” and the selling of schools for profit-making. Corporations such as McGraw Hill can make billions of dollars from standardized tests and prescriptive reading curriculum. Concurrently, military recruiters are camped within schools that have high numbers of African-American and Latino students. NCLB opened the school doors to the military: according to Section 9528 of the act, secondary schools receiving federal funds were required to grant military recruiters access to student names, addresses, and phone numbers. Under the banner of neo-liberalism, Lipman (2003) concludes, students of color only had three choices for future career paths; they are made to choose between the military, prison, and/or the vocational track.

In 2009 the hope was that, with the election of Barack Obama, the No Child Left Behind Act would be abolished. There was hope among educators that NCLB would be revised to relieve the students, teachers, and schools from the punitive penalties of high-stakes testing, accountability measures, and school closures happening around the nation. This dream for change turned into a nightmare when President Obama named the Chicago Public Schools superintendent, Arne Duncan, as the new Secretary of Education. Arne Duncan, a non-educator from Chicago’s business sector, who has expanded charter schools in Chicago, favors performance pay for teachers based on high-stakes testing

¹⁰ In an article in the Albuquerque Journal dated October 6, 2006, a poll conducted by Research & Polling Inc., revealed that 46% of New Mexicans polled favored national ID cards for all U.S. citizens.

results and wants education to focus the “basics of reading and math” (Brown, Gutstein, and Lipman, 2009). In June of 2009, the Obama administration announced that it would spend \$350 million on new educational standards in reading and math. According to Education Secretary Duncan, the money would be spent in the development of tests that will assess those new standards.

The hope is that this study will contribute to the literature that has looked at the experiences of immigrant communities in the United States. Since there is very little research regarding the Mexican immigrant experience in this particular state (Gary Lemons, 1984 and Cristina Duran, 2007) the hope is to shed some light on their experiences and juxtapose that with what is happening at the national level. In addition, the purpose of the study is to offer an insight into how economic, political, and social policies set forth by the state at the macro level affect the daily experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children at the micro level.

Through the use of Critical Race Theory, one can deconstruct how Mexican immigrant families and their children are “Othered” by state policies that “racialize” them within the larger national context and impact their daily lived experiences. The hope is that this study will provide an understanding to the education field in regard to how Mexican immigrants make meaning of state policies within the context of neo-liberalism in a post 9/11 United States. It is about providing the education field with an understanding of the economic, social, and political factors that bring Mexican immigrants to the United States. In addition, the hope is that this study will provide educators within the field of bilingual education a better understanding of the Mexican immigrant experience in order to change policy, curriculum, and instruction to better

serve these families and their children. Lastly, one main purpose is to allow for those voices that have been historically marginalized within society to be heard, to provide a place and time for them to speak, and to allow others to hear how they survive the hardships and the injustices on a daily basis, and through it all they continue to be hopeful for the future.

Overview of Methodology

Qualitative research offers the possibility for researchers to gain an understanding of how individuals or groups make meaning of their own personal experiences or a particular phenomenon by acknowledging the important role the “natural setting” plays in the research process. According to Creswell (1998), “Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (p. 15). Therefore, this research will be a qualitative study that will allow for the opportunity to research Mexican immigrant families regarding their personal experiences with the shifts in political, economic, and social policies. This is a qualitative case study that involved open-ended individual interviews with the families (wife/husband). I also used local and regional data and statistics to develop my argument. The study was carried out during a two-year period; all eight participants were interviewed three times. The participants were all Mexican immigrant families that had one or two children attending the local middle and high school within a particular region of the city. Critical Race Methodology was used to analyze the data collected for this qualitative study.

Delimitations

No one research study can truly capture all the different variables that impact the particular social or human problem being researched. Therefore, this qualitative research will not be able to be generalizable or be representative of all Mexican immigrants based on some of the following limitations. The size of the sample consisted of four families, husband/wife, which gave me a total of 8 participants, making it a small sample. Moreover, the setting will be a specific region/community within a large urban city in the southwest United States. Another limitation to the study is the time allotted for the study: 2 years. A longer period of time would allow for more data that would contribute for greater generalizability of the results.

Definitions of Terms

Mexican Immigrant

Individual born in Mexico that emigrated to the United States as a child or adult.

Immigrant

Those who are foreign-born and those who are native born but maintain a defining immigrant identity; a population that may have been born in the U.S. but has significant familial and social networks in another country. These individuals may have cultural knowledge and cultural heritage that is transnational and thus they do not solely identify with an American sense of self (Howard, 2004).

Undocumented

Term used to identify people in the United States who are not residents or citizens of this country. According to Mila Paspalanova (2008), the United Nations 1975 and 1998 established the terms “non-documented” and “undocumented migrants” when referring to foreigners that enter a country without following the proper rules of admission.

Illegal

A negative term used by the media, politicians and U.S. citizens as a way to dehumanize individuals and groups of undocumented immigrants. Moreover, it is used to justify the violence and discrimination toward immigrants of color.

Race

Omi and Winant (1994) assert that “race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (p. 55).

Racism

“The dominant race develops a set of social practices and an ideology to maintain the advantages they receive based on their racial classification” (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 22). Under this particular racial classification structure, the subordinated race suffers systematic oppression, prejudice, and discrimination.

Neo-liberalism

“Is both a body of economic theory and policy stance. Neo-liberal theory claims that largely unregulated capitalist system (a “free-market economy”) not only embodies the ideal of free individual choice but also achieves optimum economic performance with respect to efficiency, economic growth, technical progress, and distributional justice. The state is assigned a very limited economic role. (Kotz, 2002, p. 64)

Chapter 2

Review Of Literature

The review of the literature for this qualitative study will bring together studies and theories that deconstruct the political, social, and economic policies shaping Mexican immigrants within the current post 9/11 neo-liberal state. These theories and studies include Neo-liberal ideology, Critical Race Theory and Latino ethnographic studies. In this section, I seek to critically analyze the historical experience of Mexican immigrants within the United States. Moreover, this historical context will explore their status as shaped by immigration policy, law, schooling experiences, and economic exploitation. All these areas will be further examined through the lens of a Critical Race Theory Framework. I forefront race because the United States as a nation within a capitalist system was founded on the basis of a racial hierarchy that excluded African-Americans and Native Americans from full citizenship and full human being status. At the same time, the United States as a capitalist society produced its wealth on the economic exploitation of African-Americans and Native Americans while denying them full equal human rights (Acuña, 1988, 200; Akers Chacón and Davis, 2006; González, 1999; Menchaca, 1999; Spring, 2001). The United States political, economic, and social policy and law has historically been racialized and has excluded people of color. It is from this historical frame of reference that I will document the experiences of Mexican immigrants in the Southwest from the 20th century to the present day.

Neo-liberal Ideology

Neo-liberalism, also known as neo-colonialism took center stage in the late 70's and early 80's. In the United States, Ronald Reagan's administration was known for paving the way to the establishment of neo-liberal reforms in the political, economic, and social arena during his reign as president from 1981-1989. Neo-liberal ideology derives from the belief that government interference in the market is what holds real economic and social progress back. Under neo-liberalism, the welfare state is eliminated in order to allow for a free market and free trade that will help combat poverty domestically and worldwide. Neo-liberal ideology promotes individual private property rights of transnational companies and corporations; private enterprise is seen as key to wealth accumulation and technology advancement. Furthermore, neo-liberal ideology promotes what they call "high quality standards" and accountability in order to increase productivity, which in turn will create competition that will benefit society as a whole. Responsibility and accountability under neo-liberal ideology define individual success and failure as that of the individual. Neo-liberalism seeks to privatize all the apparatus of the welfare state including health care, social security, and education. As Harvey (2005) states,

Neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (p. 2)

In turn neo-liberal policies have done nothing else than create immense social inequalities, increase the gap between rich and poor, and prolong human suffering around the world. However, under a neo-liberal ideology all these human catastrophes are seen as the failure of the individual. Within this context the blame is placed on the individual instead of critically deconstructing how neo-liberal policies have helped create such inequalities.

Under neo-liberalism the state role is to ensure the security of private property, free trade, and free markets. State intervention is essential in the creation and preservation of the institutional framework to allow for such practices. Harvey (2005) emphasizes the neo-liberal state apparatus “must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee by force, if need be, the proper functioning of markets” (p. 2).

In the next section of this chapter, I will attempt to critically deconstruct how neo-liberal ideology has permeated all aspects of the political, economic, and social policies surrounding Mexican immigrant experiences. I seek to analyze neo-liberal theory in education, immigration policy, law, and immigrant labor within the United States.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) came from legal scholars such as Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in the mid 1970's who were concerned and disappointed with the slow racial progress made in the United States after the civil rights movement (Delgado, 1995). In addition, CRT developed from the legal leftist movement called critical legal studies (CLS). CLS scholars argued that the legal systems' structures, discourses, and practices contributed to the creation and legitimization of the class hierarchies in

American society (Crenshaw, 1988). Ladson-Billings (1999) concludes that, “CLS scholars critiqued mainstream legal ideology for its portrayal of U.S. society as a meritocracy but failed to include racism in its critique” (p. 12). This failure of CLS led to the creation of CRT by legal scholars of color, like Derrick Bell and Richard Delgado. Parker and Lynn (2002) state that “CRT is a legal theory of race and racism designed to uncover how race and racism operate in the law and in society...” (p. 7). In addition, Latina/o critical race (LatCrit) theory in my view is comparable to CRT. LatCrit integrates Latino/Latina race, class, and gender experiences with other forms of subordination based on language, immigration status, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and gender (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). These different forms of subordination experienced by Latinos/as get addressed through the first CRT tenet.

The following paragraphs provide a brief description of each of the five CRT tenets and their implications to this research project.

1) *The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination.* This tenet asserts Derrick Bell’s (1992) argument of the permanence of racism in U.S. society. CRT acknowledgement of racism as a permanent factor in this society is an important realization that one must make in order to understand its historical roots and present-day reality. It is only through acknowledging the permanence of racism that there could be a possibility for change beyond what Civil Rights legislation has achieved. Through the use of CRT one can build an understanding of the relationship between race, racism, and power and how they are intertwined within the realm of political, social, and economic policies put forth by the state. Moreover, the post 9/11 political, social, and economic situation of Mexican immigrants has to be juxtaposed within a historical analysis in order

to provide an understanding of how Mexican immigrants have been “Othered” by the state. Although *race and racism* are at the center of the analysis, the connection *with other forms of subordination* such as class, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, and language is vital within CRT. The subordination of Mexican immigrants due to their immigration status, language, and class status in the United States has to be deconstructed as part of the historical and present-day context of race and racism in post 9/11 U.S.

2) *The challenge to dominant ideology*. This tenet addresses the normalization of educational institutions as fair, equal, race neutral, colorblind, and meritocratic. Omi & Winant’s (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States* helps build an understanding of the current racial project being carried out within education under No Child Left Behind. At the surface this legislation appears to be appealing to a majority of citizens that perceive it to be fair because it promises to ensure that schools provide a fair and equitable education to all students. Furthermore, the state promises to provide sufficient financial assistance to schools and hold them accountable in order to ensure that no child will be left behind. However, in-depth examination of NCLB reveals that schools with a high percentage of students of color or living in poverty are the schools given the least financial support, with curriculum that emphasizes skill drilling and where high-stakes testing is the norm. The racial project under NCLB does nothing else than reproduce the inequalities within society by rearticulating race in a colorblind ideology and thus redistributing resources along racial lines. This project ensures that students of color continue to be subjugated and subordinated into a working class education and thus eventually working class jobs. CRT allows forefronting the discussion of race and racism

that challenges the dominant ideology which proclaims schools are fair and equal to all within a neo-liberal capitalist system.

3) *The commitment to social justice*. This tenet calls for a liberatory and transformational answer to racial, gender, and class oppression (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is a call for the elimination of racism, classism, and all other “-isms” as well the empowerment of all oppressed people. This commitment to bring about social justice, I believe, is an important factor of conducting research in the implication it has in informing policy. I think CRT has the possibility to bring about positive policy changes that can inform curriculum and instruction so that it empowers Mexican immigrant students and their families. Yosso (2000) argues for the development of a critical race curriculum that is informed by CRT as a way of “understanding curricular structures, processes, and discourses” (p. 97). Critical Race Theory provides the framework to deconstruct and expose how racism is interwoven in the structures, processes, and discourses within the current state of education for Mexican immigrant students. One does not need to explore the issue very deeply to realize that the current political agenda under NCLB severely limits the educational opportunities for students of color.

4) *The centrality of experiential knowledge*. Ladson-Billings (2000), Delgado (1995) and Crenshaw (1995) contend that CRT focuses on the roles “voice” and experiential knowledge have in bringing about racial justice. The use of storytelling or counter-storytelling offers the ability to use stories based on lived experience to better understand how people of color experience race and racism on a daily basis. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (2000) affirms that the conditions and experiences of how people live and learn shape their knowledge and worldview. In order to understand how Mexican

immigrant families make sense of the current post 9/11 political, economic, and social policies put forth by the state, it is essential to listen to their stories. Only through listening to their stories can we understand how their living conditions and daily experiences shape their knowledge and worldview of post 9/11 United States.

5) *The transdisciplinary perspective.* This tenet expresses the importance of analyzing race, racism, and other forms of subordination from a historical and contemporary context by using research from other fields such as ethnic studies, sociology, history, law, and women's studies. The ethnographic studies of Flores-González (2002), Carger (1996), Valenzuela (1999) and Valdés (1993) provide a valuable insight to the role schools play in failing Latina/o students. These ethnographic studies give voice to Latino families and their experiences with the schooling system United States. Villenas and Deyhle (1999) acknowledge the importance of CRT in critically deconstructing how race and racism impact the education of Latina/o students and families in these ethnographies.

By using a *transdisciplinary perspective* from history, sociology, political science and ethnic studies, we can begin to understand how Mexican immigrant families' daily lived experiences are shaped by the political, economic and social policies implemented by the state. As a result of using a historical analysis of how Mexican immigrant students and families have been racialized through education policies, immigration law, and economic exploitation, we can begin to understand the current situations facing them in post 9/11 U.S. society.

I strongly believe that CRT can inform the current educational situation that our Mexican immigrant students face. Through a CRT framework one can openly challenge

the current policies for Mexican immigrant students being implemented under the No Child Left Behind Act, which continues to perpetrate racial inequalities and discrimination based on race, language, ethnicity and nationality. It is essential to deconstruct how neo-liberal educational policies currently being implemented through No Child Left Behind impact the schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant students. This analysis has to be done within the historical context of schooling for Mexican immigrant students; through the lens of CRT, one can begin to better understand why schools continue to fail our students of color.

Villenas & Deyhle (1999) assert that CRT can contribute to the understanding of how White supremacy and the subordination of people of color is created and maintained in the United States. Likewise, it is important to use CRT to deconstruct and analyze how state, political, economic, and social policy at the macro level impact Mexican immigrant families at the micro level. Such deconstruction and analysis need to take into account the language used to describe the policy put in place, which is always delivered as fair and equitable for those that it affects the most. Omi & Winant (1994) provide a helpful analysis and historical account of the racial formation of the United States during the 1960's to 1990's. Furthermore, such analysis provides a premise on which to analyze the current state of racial formation in the United States. I believe that this is essential in understanding the present state of race and race relations in the nation and how government utilizes these in the development and implementation of policy to redistribute resources along racial lines.

The current wave of anti-immigration policy and laws (Prop 187, Prop 200, and HR 4437) clearly sought out to penalize and criminalize immigrants of color; in the

southwestern region of the United States this group has historically been Mexicans. The current anti-immigration sentiment that has developed seeks to militarize the southern border in order to stop the influx of immigrants, but at the same time the United States economy depends on the cheap labor of Mexican immigrants. Therefore, it is essential to understand how the contemporary political, economic, and social policies are directly linked to neo-liberal ideology and policy and how they are negotiated and re-negotiated through the formation of racial projects across the lines of race, class, ethnicity, immigration status, and language. The next section seeks to analyze the historical experiences of schooling among Mexican immigrant students and their families.

Mexican Immigrant Families and Schooling

The U.S. schooling experience for Mexican immigrant youth has historically been one of a racialized second-class citizen. Mexican immigrant students' cultural and linguistic background has been framed throughout the 20th century as the source of deficit that has plagued their education experience in the southwestern United States. At the turn of the century, there was an influx of Mexican immigrants into the United States in search of work, thus creating for schools in the Southwest "the Mexican problem" (González, 1999). Barbara Flores' (2005) review of the educational literature of Spanish-speaking children throughout the 20th century concluded that the deficit view, or "Mexican Problem," has taken on many forms.

- 1920's as The "Problem" is "mental retardation"
- 1930's The "Problem" is "bilingualism"
- 1940's The "Problem" is "change Mexicans through education"
- 1950's The "Problems" are "dual handicap" and "language barrier"

- 1960's The "Problem" is "cultural and linguistic deprivation"
- 1970's The "Problem" is "Equal Education Opportunity for the Culturally and Linguistically 'Different' Child"
- 1980's The "Problems" are "semilingualism and limited English proficient (LEP) students"
- 1990's The "Problem" is "these children are 'at risk'"
- 2000's The "Problem is the lack of English"¹¹

Moreover, the schools sought to solve this problem by indoctrinating Mexican immigrants with the basic skills in order to reproduce the Mexican community as a whole for the sole purpose of a source of cheap labor. In order to achieve this goal, school policy sought to use IQ tests as a means to scientifically demonstrate Mexican immigrant students' lack of intelligence when compared to their counterpart Anglo children. The racist IQ testing of Mexican immigrant children that was prevalent during the eugenics movement in the United States pushed forth school policy that implemented segregated schools for Mexican children across the Southwest (Delgado Bernal, 1999; González, 1999; Valencia, 1999).¹²

Joel Spring's (2001) book, *The American School 1642-2000*, constructs an interpretative framework for analyzing and studying educational history. Spring offers four tenets that he argues help in interpreting the historical themes seen throughout the establishment of education and schooling from 1642-2000. In analyzing Spring's four tenets, I would argue that his third tenet, "racism is a central issue in U.S. history and

¹¹ For a detail analysis of each decade, see Barbara Flores (2005) Chapter Four: The intellectual presence of the deficit view of Spanish-speaking children in the educational literature during the 20th century.

¹² A movement during the first half of the 20th century that used pseudoscientific notions of White racial supremacy to justify the poor academic performance of students of color.

educational history” (p. 3), best exemplifies the establishment of education in this country as it pertains to nonwhite groups. As an apparatus of the state, schools are inherently racist because of the racial exclusion of people of color that can be observed through the power relations, social arrangements, and practices that use race to determine who is rewarded and excluded in society (Darder, 1991).

It is clear that racism was at the center of the educational and schooling experiences of Native American, Chicanos, and African-Americans. The curriculum and instruction they received contributed to their subjugation and oppression within the U.S capitalist society. Since the development and implementation of education and schooling, Whites have utilized schools as a platform to educate and indoctrinate Native Americans, Chicanos, and African-Americans to assimilate and accept an inferior racial, cultural, intellectual, and class status. Furthermore, this indoctrination has always been closely tied to the economic benefits of the United States. The neocolonial capitalist interests of the United States have been maintained by the economic exploitation of entire communities of color (Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Chicanos) since the very founding of the country. Spring (2001) argues, “From colonial times, to today, educators have preached equality of opportunity and good citizenship, while engaging in acts of religious intolerance, racial segregation, cultural genocide, and discrimination against immigrants and non-whites” (p. 5). Whites have used schooling as a weapon to remove all “savage traits” within non-whites and civilize them to take on servant positions under the White man. Thus, schools become one of the institutions through which white supremacy is maintained and reinforced on a daily basis.

By creating segregated schools for Mexican immigrant students during the 1920's and beyond, the curriculum implemented in these schools sought to Americanize the students by eliminating the cultural deficits they were perceived to possess. The curriculum implemented in segregated schools for Mexican immigrant students during the 1920's sought to Americanize them through school policies that outlawed the use of the Spanish language. Students caught speaking the language were verbally and physically punished.¹³ The acquisition of the English language for these students was via forceful immersion in the dominant language and by the annihilation of their mother tongue, Spanish. Through the use of racist IQ tests, Mexican immigrant children were tracked in a strictly industrial and vocational curriculum. The trades learned by Mexican children at schools were largely connected to the kinds of occupations available within the local economy of their communities, which included auto shops, garment factories, laundries, and cafeterias (González, 1999). It is important to note that through direct government policy, Mexican immigrant children were subjugated to second-class citizen status through the legal institutionalism of racism as executed by the school. Furthermore, such school policy through the implemented curriculum contributed to the economic exploitation of an entire community within a neo-colonial establishment.

Within this historical period Mexican immigrant parents were blamed for the cultural traits they passed on to their children. Many racist anthropologists and sociologists argued that these inherited cultural traits were biological in nature. González (1999) states that some of the cultural traits attributed to Mexicans were uncleanliness, irresponsibility, lack of ambition, fatalism, promiscuity, and proneness to alcohol abuse.

¹³ For more discussion of the policies see Gilbert G. González *Segregation and the education of Mexican children, 1900-1940* in José F. Moreno (1999) *The Elusive Quest for Equality*.

Such was the racist tone of these derogatory claims that clearly sought to racialize Mexicans by assuming inferior characteristics and traits in order to justify such inferior education, limited employment opportunities, and to “Other” them, all the while claiming the God given superiority of Anglo Saxon peoples. Spring (2001) contends that the rationale behind Manifest Destiny was greatly influenced by Anglo-Americans’ belief that they were destined to rule based on their Protestant culture and republican form of government. Moreover, Anglo-Americans’ cultural and racial superiority derived from their British ancestors. Spring (2001) states, “English belief in their own cultural and racial superiority over Native Americans and, later enslaved Africans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans...was used to justify economic exploitation and the expropriation of lands” (p. 39).

All the way through the late 1930’s, 40’s, and 50’s, Mexican American communities and leaders throughout the Southwest continued to protest the segregation and inferior education of their children within American schools. Mexican American educator, George I. Sánchez, called the segregation of Mexican children “arbitrary, capricious, and racially motivated” as cited in, (González, 1999, p. 71). During this period in time Mexican American communities, organizations, and leaders used the federal courts in an attempt to make their constitutional rights acknowledged. The 1946 U.S. district court ruling in *Mendez et al. vs. Westminster School District of Orange County* ruled that the school segregation for Mexican American students was illegal in California. Another similar ruling, *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District in Texas*, followed it. Although these were important victories for the Mexican American community, local school districts employed various tactics to avoid integration (Spring,

2001). Mexican Americans' frustration and disillusion of the prior years paved the way for the Chicano Movement of the 1960's. The leaders as well as the ideals of the Civil Rights Movement motivated Chicanos during this period of time to engage in non-violent protest and civil disobedience in order to achieve justice and equality.

The current schooling experience for Mexican immigrant youth has not changed considerably from that of the 1920's through 1970's. The ethnographic studies of Valenzuela (1999), Valdés (1996), Carger (1996), Romo and Falbo (1996) and Vásquez, Pease-Álvarez and Shannon (1994) continue to demonstrate that the educational experience for Mexican immigrant students is racialized through the use of standardized testing, vocational curriculum, and perception of cultural and language deficiencies.

In *Of Borders and Dreams*, Chris Carger tells the story of Alejandro Juarez, Jr., his family, and their struggle with the educational system in Chicago, as Mexican immigrants. Carger depicts how the educational system failed to serve the academic challenges that Alejandro is faced with. Furthermore, it demonstrates how inadequate the educational system is in serving the linguistic and cultural needs of minority children. The educational system failed to acknowledge the testing administered to Alejandro which revealed his academic difficulties in learning. Moreover, Sorrowful Mother School, which Alejandro attended, ignore the recommendations made to better meet his academic needs. Instead, the school blamed Alejandro and his family; they felt Alejandro was failing because he did not try hard enough.

More importantly, the educational system failed Alejandro by not acknowledging his culture, language, and experiences. Instead of building skills and knowledge on what he did have, the educational system tried to destroy it and assimilate Alejandro into the

mainstream culture. By doing this they contributed to his academic failure and eventually his decision to drop-out. Overall, Alejandro Juarez, Jr.'s story provides an examination into the failure of the educational system to provide a supportive environment and adequate learning opportunities for the Alejandros of the world.

Guadalupe Valdés' (1996) *Con Respeto* is an ethnographic study of 10 immigrant families that demonstrates the multifaceted cultural attitudes, values, and resources immigrants bring to this country and impart to their children. The mothers' in these 10 immigrant families reveal their rich cultural ways of knowing, educating, and raising children through the use of *consejos* and the concept of *respeto*. Their daily struggle in this country centers on surviving and maintaining the unity of their families. For these immigrants, life revolved around family; family networks provided information to resources and help in making decisions. Children are raised to value family needs over individual ones; the extended family helps and offers *consejos* on the upbringing of children. The daily practices of these mothers revolved around educating their children to be "well-educated" within their cultural beliefs. For these mothers, education meant that their children grow up to be decent, respectable, and moral human beings.

Valdés' ethnographic study of these 10 immigrant families demonstrates the unwavering and rich cultural traditions, values, resources, experiences, and knowledge immigrant children bring to school. Moreover, this cultural capital brought by immigrant students was dismissed and devalued by the school since it did not incorporate the school's notion of what constitutes acceptable and valid knowledge. Furthermore, the immigrant families' unfamiliarity with the schooling and education process of this country created a misunderstanding and miscommunication between the families and

school system. The schools' inability to take the steps necessary to understand and learn about their students' community and cultural practices promoted an environment that disempowered students and diminished their participation for an opportunity at a meaningful education.

Although 55 years have passed since *Brown vs. Board of Education* which outlawed racial segregation, the current situation of schools with high numbers of Mexican immigrants and African-Americans has created a de facto segregation situation for these youth.¹⁴ The abandonment of Whites, known as the "white flight" to the suburbs, has left big urban school districts with densely populated schools mainly serving students of color both Latino and African-American (Kozol, 2005; Lipman, 2003; Orfield and Gordon, 2001; Orfield and Lee, 2006). According to Orfield and Lee (2006) the current demographic change is another factor that has created segregation for Latino students due to the influx of immigrants from Mexico and Central America as well as the high birthrates among Latino families.

The creation of this de facto segregation among schools serving primarily Mexican immigrant youth paves the way to put forth prescriptive curricula, high stakes testing and zero tolerance policies, which racialize and criminalize Mexican immigrant youth. Schools comprised mainly of Mexicans are staffed by the most inexperienced teachers, who hold low expectation of students; these schools have few resources, materials, and textbooks, as well as deteriorating building conditions. Olivos (2007) points out that American schools "have been in the front lines of the Americanization process of immigrant children, particularly regard to language..." (p. 32). Carger (1996),

¹⁴ A study by the Civil Rights Project at the University of California at Los Angeles found that 40% of Latinos and 39% of African Americans attend highly segregated schools.

Romo and Falbo (1996), and Valdes (1996) in their ethnographic studies clearly describe the low expectations teachers held for their Mexican immigrant students as well as the unchallenging schoolwork they were given. Valenzuela's (1999) ethnographic study with Mexican immigrant youth in an inner city school in Houston discusses the "subtractive" schooling these students receive by the assimilationist practices of suppressing their language and culture and personal experiences which contrasted with the school's valued ways of knowing, those of White middle-class values.

Collectively, what these ethnographic studies demonstrated was that there was an overrepresentation of Mexican immigrant students in special education courses and the vocational and trades track, and an under representation of Mexican students in gifted education and honor classes. Jeannie Oakes (1985) argues that tracking students of color is neither fair nor accurate. Moreover, she claims that tracking entrenches "structured inequality" in schools. Oakes' research on tracking in a California school district found that seventh-grade and tenth-grade Latino students with high test scores were underrepresented in the accelerated and honors classes. Additionally, Latina/o students with test scores similar to those of Whites and Asian were also less likely to be placed in college prep mathematics classes. When the teachers were questioned about this pattern of Latina/o students being underrepresented in these classes, they stated that due to the characteristics of Latina/o student families and home life, they felt they were not able to help the students with the challenges these high-level classes required.

Solórzano and Ornelas (2004) study of Latina/o and African American students' placement in Advanced Placement courses in California's public High Schools revealed that during the 2000–01 school year, Latina/o and African America students were

underrepresented in AP courses throughout the state of California. Solórzano and Ornelas point out that “Latina/o and African American communities have low student enrollment in AP courses, and even when Latina/o and African American attend schools with high number of students enrolled in AP courses they are not proportionately represented” in these classes (2004, p. 22).

These ethnographic studies concluded that teachers and administrators used the excuse of culture and language as barriers to justify the poor academic performance of Mexican immigrant students. Even those who believe that Mexican students need to maintain their Spanish language, the overarching message sent through the curriculum and teachers is that English acquisition must be achieved in order for students to be academically successful or at least proficient enough to get a job and be productive citizens.

Furthermore, parents are also perceived as another problem. Mexican parents are marked by teachers, administrators, and the media as not caring about their children’s education (Carger, 1996; Olivos, 2007; Valdés, 1996; Villenas and Deyhle, 1999; Villenas, 2001). This characterization of parents as not participate in their children’s education is viewed in their inability to parent or simply not caring about their children. This deficit perception that teachers and administrators hold regarding Mexican families is racialized when imposing these stereotypical traits and characteristics onto these families in comparison to White middle class parents. Stuart Hall (1997) argues that stereotyping is used to predispose characteristics that establish “otherness” on individuals or groups.

Stereotyping, in other words, is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the normal and the deviant, the normal and the pathological, the acceptable and the unacceptable, what belongs and what does not or is Other, between insiders and outsiders, Us and Them. (p. 258)

This stereotyping, deficit view of Mexican immigrant parents fails to acknowledge that, under a neo-liberal capitalist society such as that of the United States, Mexican immigrant parents do not have the same time and resources needed to be “involved” in their children’s school as White upper and middle class parents. Schools under a capitalist society are institutions that are used by the dominant group to reflect its views and maintain the racial and class hierarchy. The problem with this is that “parental involvement” is narrowly defined by white middle class values as the “norm” by which all other families are measured.

The next section will critically analyze how state policies continue to shape school curriculum, instruction, and teaching in post 9/11 United States as guided by a neo-liberal ideology. Furthermore, these political, economic, and social shifts in power continue to result in oppressive education policies that generate a climate of marginalization experienced by Mexican immigrant families and their children.

Neo-liberalism and Schooling

Michael Apple (2001) states that under neo-liberal ideology, education is placed under the auspices of the capitalist market thus making it a commercial product. The push for privatization of schools is a reaction by neo-liberals who assert that the current state of education in the U.S. is failing the future workforce and draining the financial

resources of the state. This can be traced back to the educational reforms of the 1980's under the Reagan administration which sought to reform public education in order to produce a workforce that would be well prepared to meet the economic challenges of the future. In April 1983 the government published a report entitled *A Nation at Risk* which outlined all of the failures within public education. *A Nation at Risk* reported that students in public schools were not acquiring the right knowledge, not working hard enough, not scoring high on standardized tests in comparison with their counterparts in other industrial nations, and that the majority of teachers were ill prepared. Some of the findings reported in *A Nation at Risk* in the areas of curriculum, expectations, time and teaching concluded the following:

- 1) This curricular smorgasbord, combined with extensive student choice, explains a great deal about where we find ourselves today. We offer intermediate algebra, but only 31 percent of our recent high school graduates complete it; we offer French I, but only 13 percent complete it; and we offer geography, but only 16 percent complete it. Calculus is available in schools enrolling about 60 percent of all students, but only 6 percent of all students complete it (Findings Regarding Content section, ¶ 2).
- 2) In many other industrialized nations, courses in mathematics (other than arithmetic or general mathematics), biology, chemistry, physics, and geography start in grade 6 and are required of *all* students. The time spent on these subjects, based on class hours, is about three times that spent by even the most science-oriented U.S. students, i.e., those who select 4 years of science

and mathematics in secondary school (Findings Regarding Expectations section, ¶8).

- 3) Evidence presented to the Commission demonstrates three disturbing facts about the use that American schools and students make of time: (1) compared to other nations, American students spend much less time on school work; (2) time spent in the classroom and on homework is often used ineffectively; and (3) schools are not doing enough to help students develop either the study skills required to use time well or the willingness to spend more time on school work (Findings Regarding Time section, ¶1).
- 4) The Commission found that not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers exists in key fields (Findings Regarding Teaching section, ¶ 1).

Overall, the report concluded that public education was a failure and that the only way to save it would be to revamp it completely. Consequently, the proponents of school choice and vouchers claim minority parents are given the opportunity to abandon “bad schools” that are not providing the adequate education for their children. Moreover, neo-liberals contend school choice will result in competition among schools which in turn will enhance school efficiency and responsiveness for those children who have been left behind.

In attempting to deconstruct neo-liberalism influence on No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB), it is essential to remember that NCLB was a bipartisan endorsement agreed upon by both Democrats and Republicans. According to NCLB, the purpose of the legislation is to guarantee that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to achieve a high-quality education. This statement of purpose put forth by NCLB ensured that both Democrats and Republicans sold the law to citizens as a progressive piece of educational legislation. However, NCLB also serves their political and economic interests because they all hold the same ideological stance. Democrats as well as Republicans fully support neo-liberal policies and practices. These neo-liberal policies propose the creation of a global capitalist economy, through an extreme reshaping of public education's character and function.

Schooling shaped by neo-liberal ideology focuses on standardizing education by setting forth curriculum, standards and testing mandates that promote an agenda of accountability and responsibility based on schools meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). According to Lipman (2003), NCLB uses the neo-liberal discourse of rigor, efficiency, and quality standards to be measured by standardized tests in order to “rationalize teaching and learning” to serve the global economy. Under No Child Left Behind, the state rids itself of any social responsibility for the performance of schools. Instead, all responsibility is placed on teachers, administrators, students, and communities to meet the academic indicators set forth by NCLB through the use of standardized tests. Schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are placed on probation with the

potential for private take-over in the immediate future.¹⁵ *Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* which was amended in 2001 with NCLB, section 101, Statement of Problem, number 4 describes “...holding schools, local educational agencies, and states accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools that have failed to provide high-quality education to their students, while providing alternatives to students in such schools.”¹⁶ NCLB has put forth the requirement that 100% of students in public schools reach the proficient level by the year 2014, as measured by the state standardized tests scores in the areas of reading and mathematics. The only way this can be achieved is if schools cheat by providing the answers to their students or if schools “push out” the students that will not score well. These students would be students of color, English language learners, and special education students.

Moreover, NCLB was developed as a piece of legislation that sought to bring equality and justice for all children that have historically been “left behind” by schools. Those children left behind have been overwhelmingly students of color but under NCLB their situation has not changed. With NCLB calling for the disaggregation of test scores based on race, socio-economic level, language, and special education, schools having high numbers of students in these subgroups are not meeting AYP. Accountability, under the NCLB Act (2001) requires schools that do not make progress (meet AYP) need to provide tutoring or after-school assistance and if still not making adequate yearly

¹⁵ AYP is based on reading and mathematics scores based on state standardized assessments. For elementary and middle schools attendance must also be included in the equation and graduation rates for high schools.

¹⁶ See No Child Left Behind and Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 on the U.S Department of Education website (www.ed.gov/index).

progress after five years, dramatic changes must be made to the school. Therefore, schools facing this dilemma are left virtually with two options: begin take-over by private companies or face school closure.

It is important to critically understand how the neo-liberal policies in public schools have economically benefited the big corporations such as Harcourt Educational Measurement, CTB McGraw-Hill, and Riverside Publishing that produce the prescriptive curriculum and standardized tests that districts around the country are obligated to adopt in order to receive federal funding. According to Barbara Miner (2004), school districts in the United States would need to spend from \$1.9 billion to \$5.3 billion from 2002 to 2008 in order to meet all test mandates of NCLB. Miner (2004) goes on to state that:

For the nine months ending on September 30, McGraw-Hill had revenues of \$3.84 billion with net profits of \$566 million, according to Reuters. If these numbers aren't enough to make you realize that the testing business is big business, consider the pay for McGraw-Hill president and CEO, Harold McGraw: \$3.14 million in 2003 (CTB/McGrawHill section, ¶ 2)

It is evident that the neo-liberal policies of accountability tied to testing have produced great economic wealth for a few and left educational misery and destruction among great numbers of students of color. After eight years of NCLB, students of color are the ones ultimately paying the price of corporate colonialism and neo-liberal policies. In a February 2006 Hispanic Roundtable Awards ceremony, Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farmworkers Union, spoke of her recent involvement in the prevention of two school closures in California due to not meeting AYP. She talked about the racial

composition of these two schools and mentioned that they were overwhelmingly Latino and African American. Furthermore, Huerta mentioned that many of the schools being closed had names such as Malcolm X, César Chavez, and Rosa Parks.

According to an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle on January 6, 2006, school closures scheduled for the next academic school year would affect 3,204 students within the San Francisco Unified School district alone. Of the 3,204 students being affected, 30 percent were African-American and 23 percent were Latino students. No Child Left Behind has created “blame the victim” within educational and schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant families. NCLB mandates that after three years of being enrolled in a public school in the United States, English language learners must take the state standardized test in English. Across the United States, schools with a high number of English language learners, mainly Latinos, are currently under the designation of corrective action or restructuring (1,2,3) status.¹⁷ Many administrators and teachers see Mexican immigrant students as the main cause of schools not meeting AYP. Due to their “lack of English,” Mexican immigrant students are labeled as deficient by a schooling system that fails to acknowledge how the problem is systemic, structural, and ideological. As Lipman (2003) points out,

Standardized testing concretely and symbolically authorizes English as the superior language, the language of power. The lesson is clear—the price of success in mainstream institutions is the delegitimization of one’s language, identity, and sense of self. The cultural politics of delegitimizing

¹⁷ When a school reaches restructuring status, it is classified as R1 meaning year one, R2, year two, and R3, year three in restructuring status.

Spanish is to devalue Latina/o identities and specifically to devalue immigrants, whose use of Spanish marks them as “other”. (pp. 120-121)

The more things change the more they stay the same. Mexican immigrant communities continue to be schooled to reproduce the racially stratified labor hierarchy within the United States capitalist, neo-colonial society. The ideological schooling practices continue to view Mexican immigrants as racialized second class citizens whose sole purpose is as a labor force. Therefore, access to educational equality is elusive and false in order to continue to economically exploit Mexican immigrants for the economic benefit of a few capitalist elites.

Lois Weiner (2005), professor at New Jersey City University, claims that NCLB’s reorganization of education in the United States can clearly be correlated to the *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People* (WDR), published by the World Bank. One of the key elements of the WDR 2004 draft is the attention given to education. The WDR 2004 draft calls for higher tuition rates to be placed on colleges and universities, limiting access to higher education. Individuals are left with a minimum education level and basic skills only needed for manual work. According to the WDR 2004, these are “realistic” expectations to have of poor people abroad and at home. These “realistic” expectations can clearly be seen in the scripted and prescriptive reading programs (Success for All) and curriculum currently being implemented in schools throughout the United States. This influence on curricula can be traced back to the Reagan administration which started to promote the development of “education indicators” to guide curricula and testing. According to Larry Kuehn, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), an agency that works with the Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and monitors academic achievement in the United States, assessing reading is done in the following domains: reading for literary experience, reading to be informed, and reading to perform a task. These reading indicators would be used to evaluate reading in student learning. Weiner (2005) explains that neo-liberal ideology redefines education as vocational training. This can be seen in the decision to assess reading as “reading to perform a task;” an example of this would be being able to read a computer manual. In addition, Weiner (2007) connects NCLB to the expansion of global capitalism through neo-liberal education policies promoted around the world by the World Bank. She states the “reformed educational systems will allow transnational capitalism to move jobs whenever and wherever it wishes, that is, to the country with the working conditions and salaries that are worst for workers and best for profits” (p. 165).

It is evident that neo-liberal policies put forth by the United States government since the early 1980’s and culminating with NCLB, have permeated all aspects of public schooling. The neo-colonial/neo-liberal government of president George W. Bush under the stated objective of making public schooling equitable and closing the achievement gap for groups that had historically been left behind, implemented NCLB. As a punitive law, NCLB has only continued to perpetrate inequality, marginalization, and academic turmoil among students of color.

Moreover, it is essential to deconstruct the historical connection between the schooling experience for Mexican immigrants and labor. The exploitation of Mexicans and the Mexican community as a source of cheap labor has to be understood within the context of immigration and education policy. The racialization of immigration policy as

well as school curriculum and instruction has been used to meet the labor needs of the United States economy. The next section analyzes how immigration policy and law have historically racialized groups by allowing some people in and restricting others in order to serve the labor demands of the country.

Immigration Policy and Law

Mexican migration to the United States is not a phenomenon of the last 30 years; moreover, Mexicans have been coming to the southwest part of the U.S. before the United States was a country. The Southwest was colonized and settled by Spaniards during the end of the 16th century under the banner of Spanish imperialism and Catholicism. Prior to the colonization of the Southwest, Indigenous groups such as the Navajos, Apache and Pueblo peoples had been the sole inhabitants of this area. These groups had a highly developed way of life, culture, language, spirituality and government. Unlike the Spaniards, Indigenous peoples did not seek to colonize other groups of people in order to obtain material wealth or for religious conversion. Consequently, when the Spaniards set out to explore the Southwest in search of land, gold, and slaves for the Spanish crown, they soon found this area to have plenty of land and Indigenous people for converting into Catholicism. In order to achieve their goal, the Spaniards used the same tactics used under Columbus in 1492 and Cortes in the Conquest of Mexico in 1521.¹⁸ In New Mexico, Don Juan de Oñate committed the cruelest atrocity against the Pueblo peoples just months after arriving in the Southwest. In the Pueblo of Acoma, after a three-day battle in 1599 and after hundreds of Indigenous peoples were

¹⁸ See Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* and Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror* to get a historical account of tactics used by Spanish and English settlers to subordinate and conquer Indigenous people.

killed, Oñate ordered the amputation of one foot from each of 24 Acoma men as revenge for the death of his nephew.

The Southwest remained under the Spanish Crown from 1598 until 1821 when it became part of Mexico, once that county gained independence from Spain. After the colonization of the Southwest and with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Southwest became part of the United States and the Mexican peoples left in this region became U.S. citizens. Menchaca (1999), points out that “Article VIII of the treaty states that the United States agreed to extend citizenship to all Mexican citizens who remained in the ceded territories” (p. 20). The fulfillment of citizenship guaranteed under the treaty was not upheld and the rights as citizens were denied, categorizing Mexicans as a racialized people within the newly acquired territory (Menchaca, 1999).

Since the founding of the United States, or illegal settlement on indigenous lands, the government has established laws and policies that value and privilege “whiteness.” The Naturalization Act of 1790 clearly established this policy by asserting that citizenship was only for all “free white persons.” Therefore, immigration law has embodied that same notion of privileging “whiteness” as the norm to which all other groups are compared. The Alien Act of 1798 was the first law established by the United States that used the word “alien” to equate with “illegal.” The act was established to give authority to the president to deport “any alien dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States during peace time” (Rachleff, 2008, p. 1). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first United States immigration law that banned Chinese from entering the country because they were considered non-white. After being the force behind the construction of the railroad in the Pacific west and contributing to the economic

development of the California economy, the Chinese were deported. As Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) claim, “For a half century the Chinese had given their sweat and blood to build the state: now they were brutally pushed aside” (p. 31). The Johnson-Reed Act/Immigration Act of 1924 continued to exclude Asians, as well as place quotas on immigrants from central and eastern Europe, who were not considered “white” during this period. Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) state that the U.S. through this act “set up strict quotas limiting immigrants from countries believed by eugenicists to have ‘inferior’ stock” (p. 189). Even though Mexican Americans during this period held citizen status, they were never-the-less marked as “illegal” immigrants. It was during the time of the 1930’s Great Depression that many Mexican American U.S. citizens were stripped of their property and deported to Mexico. It is important to note that immigration law has been used historically to protect the rights and citizenship of “whites.” Throughout history, immigration law and policy has been adjusted to meet the economic development of the country. During times of economic hardships, depression, recession, and war, immigrants are used as scapegoats for those problems.

According to Gonzalez (1999), over a million Mexicans migrated to the United States during the period of 1900-1930. The reason for this increase in Mexican immigration to the United States during this period of time can be attributed to the political instability in Mexico, with the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. In addition, the U.S. capitalists’ need for cheap labor, combined with the economic need for employment by Mexicans, had an influence on Mexican migration to the United States. Many of the Mexican immigrants that immigrated during this time settled primarily in the southwest region of the United States. The position of these Mexican immigrants within

U.S. society became racialized in order to justify the exploitation of the population as a source of cheap labor.¹⁹ This racial manifestation developed out of the racist notion that Mexicans were physically and biologically suited for manual labor (Acuña, 1988; Gonzales, 1999). By the 1930's overt racist state policy enacted massive efforts in deportation of Mexican immigrants throughout the Southwest. The shortage of manpower created by the United States' participation in World War II caused the U.S. to create the Bracero Program. The Bracero Program allowed the legal hiring of Mexican citizens to work in the agricultural fields of the United States, mainly in Texas and California. The Bracero Program lasted for 22 years from 1942-1964. During these years, 4.5 million Mexican citizens were hired legally to work in this country.

Prior to the 1960s, discriminative and racist immigration policy placed restrictive quotas on immigration from non-white countries. However, with the Civil Rights Movement came a push for immigration policy and law that was purported to be fair and non-discriminative. According to Debra L. DeLaet (2000), legal and illegal immigration increased after 1965. This combination of legal and illegal immigration into the United States during the 1960's, 70's and 80's gave the impression to many politicians and U.S citizens that immigration was "out of control." Moreover, DeLaet (2000) maintains that the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was a restrictive legislation put forth by government in order to control the immigration crisis perceived by politicians and U.S. citizens.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which allowed amnesty to be given to all those undocumented

¹⁹ See Rodolfo Acuña *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* for more on the history of immigration to the Southwest.

immigrants who had been living in the United States continuously before January 1, 1982. According to published documents, IRCA's main objective was to control the "illegal" entry of immigrants into the United States by outlining strict sanctions for employers, increasing funds for the patrolling and monitoring of the southern border, and offering amnesty provisions. It was the first time in U.S history that the government authorized legal sanctions and penalties against employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers.²⁰ The Immigration Law of 1990 increased the number of legal immigrants allowed to enter the United States from 500,000 to 700,000. It also allowed for a lottery visa program to lure immigrants from more affluent economic backgrounds in Europe.

In 1994, California's Proposition 187 put forth by Governor Pete Wilson came as a hard blow to the humanity and dignity of immigrant communities across the nation. For Mexican immigrants in the Southwest, Proposition 187 brought to the forefront an overt wave of racism and discrimination not felt since the pre-Civil Rights/Chicano movements. This proposition sought to eliminate all state resources accessible to undocumented immigrants. Any individual who was "reasonably suspected to be an illegal alien" would be denied access to health care services, public assistance, and schooling. Moreover, Proposition 187 racialized the entire Mexican community by the simple fact of considering any one looking Mexican, brown, or short with Indian features, "reasonably" suspicious of being an "illegal alien" and therefore, a criminal (Delgado Bernal, 1999). Orfield (1999) reports that the racialization of this anti-immigration/anti-Mexican sentiment was reinforced by supporters of Proposition 187 through the use of

²⁰ See DeLaet (2000) *U.S. Immigration Policy in an Age of Rights* (Connecticut: Praeger).

the media by showing images of schools overcrowded with “non-White” students. By using such images, Wilson spent over \$2 million to run such racist advertizing campaigns, and his supporters sought to revive overt racist sentiments by specifically targeting immigrants of color, who in California, were mainly Mexicans. One campaign ad showed Mexican immigrants running into the United States at the San Diego county border. The narrator of the commercial goes on to say, “They keep coming two million illegal immigrants in California. The federal government won’t stop them at the border, yet requires us to pay billions to take care of them. Governor Pete Wilson sent the National Guard to help the border patrol, but that’s not all.” Then governor Wilson appears on the screen with the following message: “For Californians who work hard, pay taxes, and obey the laws, I’m suing to force the federal government to control the border and I’m working to deny state services to illegal immigrants. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!” (www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0f1PE8Kzng)

Overall, the aftermath of Proposition 187 has left nothing but destruction and devastation in its path. Currently, we are still feeling the aftershock effects of such a catastrophic resolution. This catastrophe is evident in the propositions put forth by California in the year following Proposition 187. The other propositions that passed were Proposition 227 and 209 that directly targeted students of color and immigrant communities.²¹ The only casualties of this turmoil are the minorities, especially minority children who are caught in this racist hurricane.

²¹ Proposition 227 outlawed the use of bilingual education within California schools. Proposition 209 eliminated the use of affirmative action programs in California.

The Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, brought about in response to the anti-immigrant sentiment of California's Proposition 187, was the Clinton administration's way of demonstrating it was "getting tough on immigrants." This law made it difficult for undocumented immigrants to legalize their status and expanded the crimes for which immigrants could be deported. Immigrants could now be deported for crimes such as domestic violence and stalking. In addition, mandatory detention was required for all those people facing deportation. It also increased the prison sentences for immigration offenses from an average of 3.6 months to 21 months. The law also contributed to an increase in the amount of border patrol agents throughout the Southwest apprehending undocumented immigrants. In continuing with the rhetoric of getting "tough on immigrants" and putting an end to the drain on public services by immigrants, Clinton also signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities of 1996, which prevented legal immigrants from having access to the welfare system, food stamps, Medicaid, and Supplemental Social Security for the elder and disabled.

Proposition 187 set an unprecedented attack on immigrant rights that had not been experienced since the mass deportation of the 1930's. Although in November 1997 Proposition 187 was declared to be unconstitutional by U.S. federal court, its effects are still lingering today. In 2005, the state of Arizona placed on their ballot Proposition 200 which targeted Mexican immigrants' rights in the same way as Proposition 187 did in California. Mexican immigrants were once again blamed for draining the state public assistance programs. Moreover, Mexican immigrants were portrayed as parasites costing the state of Arizona \$1.3 billion per year. The proposition tried to deny Mexican immigrants access to health care, schooling programs such as adult education, family

literacy, childcare, and state universities and community colleges. It also required that all state employees check the immigration status and turn in undocumented persons. The proponents of Proposition 200 went as far as alleging that undocumented Mexican immigrants voted in Arizona. The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) in their Network News publication denounced Arizona's Proposition 200 as "the White supremacists' latest platform for legal discrimination against people of color" (p. 10).

Prior to 9/11 the United States government had begun the process of militarizing the southern border due the cries from politicians, media pundits, nativists, and think-tanks that were screaming that there was a high "influx of undocumented immigrants" entering the country.²² However, after 9/11, anti-immigration became ignited and fueled by racist policy that would pave the way for the creation of the Minuteman Project, the National Intelligence and Terror Prevention Act, the Department of Homeland Security and the Sensenbrenner's bill (Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437)). The creation of all these entities seeks to racialize state and federal policy to target, criminalize, and penalize Mexican immigrants and Mexican communities across the Southwest. The Latin American Working Group in Washington, D.C. reports that the border control budget was increased since 9/11, and it is expected to increase within the next couple of years.

²² Giroux (2004) & Chomsky (2003) assert that the United States domestic and foreign policy was dramatically revamped after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. According to Giroux (2004), the United States "embraced a policy molded largely by fear and bristling with partisan, right-wing ideological interests, the Bush administration took advantage of the tragedy of 9/11 by adopting and justifying a domestic and foreign policy that blatantly privileged security over freedom, the rule of the market over social needs and militarization over human rights and social justice" (p. 2).

In the spring of 2005 the Minuteman Project was created by a White supremacist group concerned with the influx of immigrants. These so called concerned U.S. citizens seek to patrol the Arizona border against illegal Mexicans immigrating to the U.S. The Minuteman Project, with rifles in hand, stations themselves along the U.S./Mexico border, vigilant and ready to apprehend any Mexican immigrant coming into the United States. According to their website, the Minuteman Project calls on their fellow American citizens to embark on the job that Congress has not been doing.

Accordingly, the men and women volunteering for this mission are those who are willing to sacrifice their time, and the comforts of a cozy home, to muster for something much more important than acquiring more "toys" to play with while their nation is devoured and plundered by the menace of tens of millions of invading illegal aliens. Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them. (www.minuteman.project.com)

This white supremacist organization drew support from other groups across the Southwest and particularly from New Mexico and Texas.

In December of 2005, just before the end of the legislative session in Washington, the "Sensenbrenner Bill" (Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437)) was introduced by Representative James Sensenbrenner.²³ Some of the provisions the bill calls for are an expansion of border enforcement and militarization strategies. It makes undocumented immigration status a crime, expands the

²³ Lovato (200) cites that Representative Sensenbrenner held \$86,500 in Halliburton stocks, \$563,536 in General Electric and Boeing. "He also owns stocks in companies like Olive Garden restaurants, which hire undocumented workers". (p.10)

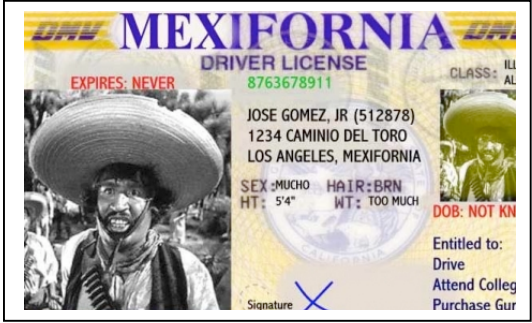


Figure 1—Anti-Mexican Immigrant Images

definition of an aggravated felony (deportable offense), includes day labor sites in the employment verification system, and demands mandatory detention for all immigrants apprehended at ports or along international borders until deportation.

In post 9/11 United States, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was dismantled to pave the way for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, which is housed in the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is currently the second largest investigative agency within the federal government with 15,000 employees and a \$5.6 billion budget. It is essential to deconstruct how neo-liberal policies permeate immigration law and policy. The current immigration policies through ICE seek to increase state repression on entire immigrant communities through raids, detention, deportation and surveillance methods. Currently immigrant detention centers have become a profit making commodity under the prison-military complex of the Department of Homeland Security. Under neo-liberalism, the people, in this case immigrants, become a profit-making expenditure for big neocolonial corporations. Lovato (2008) states “immigrants provided the Bush Administration a way to facilitate the transference of public wealth to military/industrial interests like those of Halliburton, Boeing, and others through government contracts in a kind of Homeland Security Keynesianism” (p. 4).

Historically when the United States has experienced economic recessions, the politicians are quick to blame a particular group of people. This blame has historically been placed on people of color or immigrants. During the 1930's there were mass deportations of Mexicans because the country was experiencing a severe economic depression. In the 1980's the administrations under Reagan, later Clinton in the 1990's, and George W. Bush targeted the welfare system as the cause of mass drainage on the

U.S. economy by blaming people of color, in particular women and immigrants, for taking advantage of such system. By openly denouncing people of color and immigrants as parasites on the public assistance programs, it paved the way for the welfare reforms of the '80's and '90's. Moreover, the current attack on immigration and public assistance programs once again has been racialized by targeting a particular group of people of color, in this case Mexicans. This racialization of immigration reform is currently being manifested through policy and legislation that targets Mexican immigrant communities by constructing the Mexican immigrant as a criminal and terrorist. Mexican immigrants families are seen as a parasite on the welfare system and burden on the hardworking White U.S taxpayer. Within the United States neo-colonial capitalist society, immigrants currently serve those capitalist interests as prisoners in the private detention centers that are run by corporations such as Halliburton.²⁴ In addition, Mexican immigrants are used as a source of cheap labor that helps to enrich and expand capitalism in the United States. The next section analyses the historical impact that Mexican immigrant labor has had on the development of U.S. neo-colonial capitalism.

Mexican Immigrant Migration and Labor

According to the Pew Hispanic center in 2008, 12.7 million Mexican immigrants lived in the United States comprising 32% of the all immigrants living in this country. Furthermore, 55% of the 12.7 million Mexican immigrants living in the United States today are undocumented. In the 1970's, there were 760,000 Mexican immigrants; in the 1980's, 2.2 million Mexican immigrants lived in the United States. From 1980 to 1990,

²⁴ January 2006, KBR a Halliburton subsidiary received a \$385 million contract from Homeland Security to build temporary immigrant detentions facilities. (Forrest Wilder, 2007).

and again from 1990 to 2000, the Mexican immigrant population doubled (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Since 2006, according to the center, there has been a decline in Mexican migration mainly due to the increase militarization of the border. It is important to note that the Mexican migration to the United States has existed for many decades. Mexican immigrant labor has been a vital contributor to the economic development of the United States (Acuña, 1988, 2000; Chavez, 1998).

It is important to understand that the pattern of Mexican migration throughout the 19th and 20th centuries were influenced by the economic, social, and political development occurring in both Mexico and the United States. It also should be acknowledged that both social networks and family ties established in the United States by prior waves of immigrants influenced these migration patterns. Portes and Rumbaut, (1990) state that “migration is a network-driven process, and the operation of kin and friendship ties is nowhere more effective than in guiding new arrivals toward preestablished ethnic communities” (p. 32). In addition, Portes and Rumbaut (1990), describe the early migration patterns of Mexican immigrants as being concentrated along the southwest, particular along the border. Migration along the border was fluid and seasonal; the men would work temporarily then return to Mexico. During the period of the Mexican revolution, Mexican immigrants migrated towards Chicago to work in the slaughterhouses, the breweries of Milwaukee, and the steel mills of Gary, Indiana. By the late 1980’s, the preferred destination for rural Mexican immigrants was the urban cities of Los Angeles, El Paso, and San Diego (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990).

Regarding the migration patterns of immigrants, Cerruti & Massey (2004), point out “that the first waves were defined by patriarchal patterns and gender roles” (as cited

in Machado-Casas, 2006, p. 11). Traditionally, the men would migrate to a specific location within the United States to work temporarily before returning home. They would travel back and forth while other family members followed. This created location-specific social networks in the United States for future immigrants to follow (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, Machado-Casas, 2006). According to a study by the Pew Hispanic center in 2005, out of the 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States, 58% were male. Fry (2006), affirms that “it demonstrates the extent to which migration to the U.S. is distinguished by a large and steady flow of males who enter the country and live and work outside the framework of the legal immigration system” (p. ii). Thus proving that gender continues to play a pivotal role in the migration patterns to the United States.

Mexican immigrants have historically been a source of cheap labor for the United States agricultural and industrial business. According to Acuña (2000), the United States has always actively sought employment of Mexican peoples mainly from border towns. Anglo-Americans had racialized Mexican people as a reliable source for manual and cheap labor. Moreover, Mexican laborers were categorized as “plentiful, generally peaceable, and are satisfied with very low social conditions” according to a 1907 edition of the *California Fruit Grower* magazine (Acuña, 2000, p. 166). During the turn of the century Mexican immigrants worked in the agricultural revolution that came about for the improvement of refrigerated railroad cars and food preservation techniques. However, during this period Mexican immigrants also found work in mining the railroads, which influenced their migration to cities. According to Acuña (2000), recruitment of Mexican labor by U.S. corporations goes back to the 19th century. During this period Mexicans

were recruited to work in the mining industry of Arizona, the agricultural fields of the Southwest, and as *vaqueros* in Texas.

The exploitation of Mexicans as a source of cheap labor led to the poor working conditions and low wages they have endured. With their migration into the cities, the oppressive working conditions and low wages did not improve. Moreover, Mexicans were perceived by U.S. unions as enemies and used by companies as strike-breakers. With the United States entering World War I, U.S. employers recruited Mexicans to replace the void left by the U.S. citizens fighting in the war. Acuña (1988) argues that during the period of 1910 to 1920, the southwest region of the United States was still very underdeveloped, thereby, requiring a large number of migrant workers in ranching, agriculture, and railroad work. The building of the Southwest can therefore be attributed to the hard work and sweat of Mexican immigrants.

The second wave of recruiting of Mexican peoples by US employers came during World War II, when the country experienced yet another shortage due to large numbers of U.S. soldiers fighting in the war. The solution to this shortage of laborers was the creation of the Bracero Program with Mexico. The 1942 Emergency Labor Program, known as the Bracero Program, outlined that Mexican laborers would obtain transportation, housing, and fair wages.²⁵ During the period of 1942-1947, 220,000 *braceros* were imported into the United States. These provisions enacted by the U.S. and Mexican government was not well received by many U.S. growers who wanted no government intervention regulation; they disliked the 30 cents per hour minimum wage.

²⁵ Akers Chacón & Davis (2006) state that although the Emergency Labor Program was introduced as "wartime expediency" plan in reality the Bracero program "was in fact a concerted effort by agribusiness to further restructure the social relations of agricultural capitalism" (p. 140).

This dissatisfaction by many US growers prompted them to hire Mexican migrant workers that crossed over into the U.S. on their own, not those who were part of the program. Besides hiring *braceros* for farm work, in 1945 67,704 *braceros* could also be found working in the railroad (Acuña, 1988).

However, not all of the promises made on paper to the Mexican laborers under the Bracero Program were fully acknowledged and respected. There were many complaints and accusations made by Mexican laborers who reported unsafe working conditions, deductions in their wages, and substandard living conditions. Acuña (1988) reports the documentation of cases of death resulting in accidents on the railroad, sunstroke, and heat prostration. Mexicans worked 12 hours and only were paid for 8; they had unsafe transportation, unsanitary plumbing, and no heat for their homes in the winter months. Moreover, these abuses and treatment of Mexicans by their U.S. employers demonstrates the racism and discrimination experienced by many under the Bracero Program.

The Bracero Program was presented as an “emergency labor plan” due to shortage of labor in the agricultural fields of the United States because of the war. But in reality the labor shortage of the fields was due to “White, native-born labor” fleeing to the urban areas in search of better wages. The rise of unions during this period also prompted the need for neo-colonial capitalists to establish the Bracero Program. The “emergency labor plan” was a strategic move by U.S. neo-colonial capitalists to break the labor movement in fields and expand their profits by using cheap Mexican labor. Furthermore, as a way to limit labor organizing and unionizing, the United States government established individual contracts with Mexican workers and controlled and restricted their movement while working in the United States, as well.

My analysis concludes that the crafting of the Bracero Program was designed to serve, support and expand the neo-colonial agricultural capitalist interests of the United States. In order to achieve its purpose, the Bracero Program was constructed as a temporary guest-worker program geared towards recruitment of Mexican men. Since work for Mexican male laborers was temporary and seasonal, the agricultural growers were not held responsible for the schooling, healthcare, and housing of the wives and children of the men. Mexican labor was then used as temporary solution at a cheap price, ensuring that the Mexican men returned to Mexico. In order to ensure that Mexican laborers returned to Mexico, the United States stipulated in the contracts that wives and families of the *braceros* could not enter the country and that 10% of their wages would be retained until their contract had ended. According to Akers Chacón and Davis (2006), “Mexican taxpayers and Mexican workers themselves paid the initial costs of socializing, training, educating, and sustaining Mexican labor that was then inserted into the U.S. economy” (p. 141).

The contracting of Mexican immigrant labor did not end with the Bracero Program in 1964. Throughout the late 1960’s, ‘70’s and ‘80’s Mexican immigrants continued to make the long journey from many different Mexican towns to the United States in search of work. As employment reached high levels following the devaluation of the peso during this period of time, Mexicans looked to their northern neighbor for jobs. Moreover, U.S. employers took advantage of Mexican immigrants’ desperation for employment as a way to obtain their cheap labor and a way of maintaining low wages for domestic workers and prevent unionizing.

The neo-liberal economic, social, and political policies set forth in Mexico during the late 1980's and 1990's and the Presidential regimes of Salinas de Gortari and his predecessor Ernesto Zedillo lead the country into an economic recession that prompted many Mexicans to travel to the north in search of work. On January 1, 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect it “locked in the fundamentals of neo-liberalism” (Carlsen, 2008, p. 18) onto the Mexican economy. Those fundamentals included an open market, an export-oriented economy; privileges for transnational neocolonial corporations, lower wages, preventing unionizing, reduced funding for social programs, and commoditization of natural resources (Bacon, 2008; Carlsen, 2008). Mexican immigrants in high numbers embarked the journey of illegally crossing into the United States with the knowledge that they would be risking their lives due to the militarization of the border during this period. According to an article published in *La Jornada*, a Mexican newspaper equivalent to the *New York Times*, more than 2,000 Mexican immigrants have died trying to cross the border into the United States during the Vicente Fox-George W. Bush presidencies.

Mexican immigrants continue to work in the agricultural farms of the Southwest and Midwest. Moreover, due to the increase in jobs in the services sector, the immigrants who settled in urban cities occupied those positions. Mexican immigrants can be found in the fields of California, Texas, and New Mexico gathering grapes, tomatoes, chile, and strawberries. In cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, Mexican immigrants are found occupying jobs in restaurants as cooks, dishwashers, and bus boys, and in hotels as housekeepers and janitors. Furthermore, Mexican immigrants can be found in the deep South in states such as North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, and Alabama

(Kochhar, Suro, and Tofoya, 2005). In the construction business of the Southwest, Mexican immigrants have been the main source of labor that has contributed to the building of many homes in urban cities such as Phoenix and Encantada. Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) state that migrant workers makeup 24 percent of all farming jobs, 17 percent of all cleaning jobs, 12 percent of food preparation jobs, 31 percent of the overall work in the service industry, and 25 percent of construction work, all according to a 2005 Labor Department survey.

According to Lipman (2003) and Apple (2001), the flight of U.S. factories to other nations that provide the exploitation of their workers has stratified jobs in this country for the last 25 years. The current change in the job market within the United States has shifted to two extremes: jobs at one end that are high-skilled and high paying and those that are low-skilled and low paying. This stratification of jobs has created racial stratification among those who hold the high-skilled, high paying jobs-mainly White male and those holding low-skill, low paying jobs-people of color, women and immigrants. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Mexican immigrants continue to be young, male, and married more than any other immigrant group. In addition, Mexican immigrants are working in lower-skilled occupations and are “most likely to be undocumented, with lower levels of education, lower incomes, larger households, and higher poverty rates among all other groups” (Passel & De’Vera, 2009, p. 3). Historically, as well as in contemporary times, Mexican immigrants have always been used by the neo-colonial capitalists in the United States as a source of cheap manual labor and as means to maintain a racialized labor force in order to prevent unionizing.

The neo-liberal policies affecting all aspects of the daily lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families have their historical roots within the United States racial hierarchy. Immigration policy, law, economic exploitation, and schooling are rooted in the institutional racism and white supremacy. It is evident by examining the history of U.S. immigration policy and law that Mexican immigrant labor has been used to maintain, support, and expand neo-colonial capitalist interests at home and abroad. In addition, the schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant children have been based on a racist deficit paradigm, which seeks to deny any meaningful critical education. By “miseducating” Mexican immigrant children, schools continue to reproduce a cheap racialized labor force under a neo-colonial social order. Under this neocolonial capitalist order in post 9/11 United States, Mexican immigrant families serve as a source of cheap labor, as preventive measures against unionizing, as scapegoats to disaster capitalism, and as bait for the detention-military-prison complex. Within all these areas the only benefactors are the mainly white neo-colonial capitalists who have historically made their wealth and gained power through the subjugation and dehumanizing of people of color around the world.

Chapter 3

“I am a walking contradiction with a foot in both worlds-in the dominant privileged institutions and in the marginalized communities”. (Villenas, 1996, p. 714)

Research Methodology

As Sofia Villenas states in the quotation above, I feel as a Latina, woman of color schooled in the United States now involved in research within a Mexican immigrant community, that my foot is always in two worlds. My own personal experience as an undocumented immigrant child growing up in the United States during the 1980's is what drives my commitment to this research. Moreover, as a Latina woman of color working as a bilingual teacher in a highly populated Mexican immigrant community, I found myself deeply connected to the experiences of my students and their families. I have come to an understanding that all aspects of one's life are intertwined in a political manifesto that guides our actions. My ideological stance, as well as my political stance as a Latina woman of color and child immigrant from a third world country living in a western society, is closely linked to positioning my work within a Critical Race Theory and methodology framework. I clearly acknowledge that I went into this research with an understanding of how such an ideological and political stance directly affected the way I conducted this research and the analysis of my data. Connolly and Troyna's (1998) *Researching Racism in Education* prompts me to critically reflect on the political implications of conducting research. As Mirza (1998) states, “Research by its very nature is inherently political; it is about the nature of power as well as access to power” (p. 80). Due to this, I must acknowledge that my loyalty and ethical commitment were always to my participants, the Mexican immigrant families and the communities they represented.

Linda Smith's (2002) *Decolonizing Methodologies* prompts researchers to critically deconstruct research in the western construct and offers an alternative paradigm for research as it pertains to Indigenous peoples and communities. Smith states the following:

The nexus between cultural ways of knowing, scientific discoveries, economic impulses and imperial power enabled the West to make ideological claims to having a superior civilization. The “idea” of the West became a reality when it was re-presented back to indigenous nations through colonialism. (p. 64)

Smith's powerful argument encourages researchers like me to critically deconstruct research in the western paradigm and ask: What is research? Who defines research? How do political, social, and economic factors influence research? How have the historical relations among people, communities, and nations shaped research? What are the ethical and moral obligations of researchers towards those being researched? What are the assumptions that I bring or come with into the research? What is the purpose of my research? Who will it benefit? Who is the center of my research? How will my research be interpreted?

Furthermore, Foster (1994) articulates the insider/outsider dilemma. Prior to reading her argument on the insider/outsider dilemma, I was thinking only about my own perceptions on conducting research. I thought that because of my status as an insider in the community I want to research, I would not have a problem getting the information I need to obtain. I felt that being Mexican, bilingual, a woman, and a teacher would grant me entrance into the Mexican bilingual community I wanted to access. But Foster would

argue that this is problematic because this is my own perception of myself, not how others view me. Moreover, an insider may not necessarily always get to know everything. Villenas (1996) argues that “As researchers, we can be insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times” (p. 722). In addition, my own experience as an immigrant child in the 80’s, was very different from the current political situation facing Mexican immigrant families in post 9/11 United States. The more I pondered this dilemma I realized that, although I might feel like an insider, I can also be perceived as an outsider. Furthermore, I may be perceived as an insider but at times I may feel like an outsider within some contexts of the research experience. What would make me feel this way? Foster (1994) states “In matriculating into the dominant culture, we are instructed in different paradigms, tutored in new world views, and trained in correct ‘ways of knowing.’ Years of schooling teach us to rename, recategorize, reclassify, and reconceptualize our experiences” (p. 131).

In *Researching Racism in Education*, Maud Blair (1998) discusses neutrality in educational research. However, to conclude that one can be neutral is like saying that research is not political. Such belief is a misconception since all research is political and all researchers come into their research site raced, classed, and gendered. Biases run through our personas as blood through our veins. Blair (1998) states, “...we cannot guarantee neutrality in our interpretations and analyses. This is because our histories and memories are shot through with gendered, classed, racialized and ‘excluding’ understanding which gives us our particular perspectives on the world” (p. 13). Furthermore, there is a danger in stating that one is neutral especially when the research being conducted can influence policy, curriculum, and instruction. Such neutrality can

have a negative influence in perpetrating educational inequalities for students of color. I believe it is essential in research to clearly state one's positionality and how it may influence the process and analysis of the research.

My educational training and indoctrination into academia may prevent me from fully being perceived as an insider. Instead, there is the possibility that at first glance I may appear to be Mexican, bilingual, a teacher, but under the surface I can be thought of as very Americanized, due to my years of schooling, which would make me untrustworthy by those within the community. Moreover, my western schooling experiences have also indoctrinated White supremacy biases about the researcher as the "knower" of all knowledge.

As a Latina, immigrant, woman of color, this represents a real dilemma in that the way the research is conducted and data analyzed is tainted by western ways and methods. This may occur, and therefore, I am forced to critically analyze and reflect on how my perceptions and experiences have been influenced by my schooling. Are my beliefs about my own community more in line with those of the dominate culture? When conducting my research and analyzing the data, will I measure and compare the outcomes based on the dominate culture's standards? What about the power issues of the research? Whose knowledge will be more privileged? How do I ensure that I, as a colonized researcher conducting research in a marginalized community, maintain and conduct a counter-narrative political stance against White supremacy western paradigm in reference to the Mexican immigrant families living in post 9/11 United States? The next section seeks to address this dilemma by making a conscious decision to use Critical Race Theory/Methodology.

Critical Methodology

The reach of imperialism into 'our heads' challenges those who belong to colonized communities to understand how this occurred, partly because we perceive a need to decolonize our minds, recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity. (Smith, 2002, p. 23)

Smith (2002) stresses the importance of indigenous people to “rewrite/reright” their position in history in order to tell their own stories, their own versions for their own purpose. As a Latina woman of color, it essential that I use a Critical Race Methodology when analyzing the data. In using Smith’s concept of “rewriting/rerighting” “colonized group’s” histories, Mexican immigrants’ daily lived experiences, their voices, and stories get to be heard in a way that shatter the nightly White supremacy controlled media narrative. As Smith states in the quotation above, as a Latina woman of color, from a colonized community doing research in such community, it is very important that the voices, experiences, histories, and stories of Mexican immigrant families be written in way that develops their authentic humanity within the backdrop of the anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican, xenophobic post 9/11 United States.

It is through the use of a qualitative research study and Critical Race Methodology that one can gain insight into how Mexican immigrant families make sense of the shifts in the post 9/11 economic, political, and social policies through their daily lived experiences. Tate (1997) and Delgado (1988a) argue, “most minorities, in contrast to Whites, live in a world dominated by race...” (p. 219). Due to this reality that minorities must face in their everyday life, Critical Race Theory (CRT) acknowledges that racism is normal in American society. Furthermore, the use of the counter-story, which is a pillar of Critical Race methodology gives voice to the experiences of people of color that have been neglected and ignored within White dominant society (Delgado

Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, Tate, 1997; Villenas and Deyhle, 1999). Solórzano & Yosso (2002) argue, “the counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (p. 32). Through the use of the counter-story, women, immigrants, and people of color have the space to counter the “deficit,” majoritarian stories that are presented on the nightly news outlets. The use of Critical Race Methodology seeks to analyze the experiences of people of color, immigrants, and women in relation to U.S. social, political, and economic policy in a sociohistorical context. It is the exploration of how race and racism have played out in their daily lived experiences. “Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32).

The Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) used for this particular research study concentrated on the following five pillars for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories about Mexican immigrant families in post 9/11 United States. *The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*: Using Critical Race Methodology in education helps integrate the intercentricity of multiple layers of subordination based on race, immigrant status, language, gender, class, etc. *The challenge to dominant ideology*: Critical race methodology centers on rejecting White privilege, as well as “neutral” and “objective” research that has distorted epistemologies of Mexican immigrant families. *The commitment to social justice*: Using a critical race methodology seeks to expose how the multiple forms of oppression, racism, and xenophobia directed toward Mexican immigrants are met with various forms of resistance. *The centrality of experiential*

knowledge: Ladson-Billings (2009) states that “CRT recognizes the validity of storytelling and the voices of the oppressed” (p. 347). By employing storytelling as a method, it helps counter the xenophobic discourse regarding Mexican immigrant families. In addition, the lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families can be used as a source of strength. *The transdisciplinary perspective* helps to analyze race and racism in the historical and contemporary contexts. By using transdisciplinary perspectives from ethnic studies, sociology, law, and history, one can gain a deeper understanding of the effects of racism, xenophobia, sexism, and classism on Mexican immigrant families.

Methods

A qualitative research project allows the opportunity to engage in a deep analysis of a social or human problem that needs to be explored. It provides a space for the voices of individuals and groups to be heard. Moreover, qualitative research allows for individuals or groups to be studied within their natural setting.

Qualitative research is most commonly used when conducting research within the field of education. Although it has been around for years, it was not until the early 1980’s that it “gained a degree of legitimacy, and a plethora of qualitative studies and dissertations appeared” (Gitlin, 1994, p. 1). Moreover, by employing a qualitative research approach to studying educational issues, the researcher gains an understanding about the multiple realities that are interwoven with the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The use of qualitative methods helps the researcher gain a more realistic interpretation of the phenomena being studied from the participants’ points of view, because the researcher becomes immersed in the data. Therefore, in order to achieve this “immersion”

in the data, the qualitative methods utilized for my particular research had to be in line with my research questions.

Research Design and Data Collection

This research was a qualitative study that used case-study methods. It consisted of formal in-depth interviews with individual family members, document analysis of district and regional data and statistics, newspaper/electronic articles, and anecdotal notes.

Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (1994) argue that “interviews are a good tool to use when one wishes to know how a person feels about events that have happened or are happening” (p. 115). Furthermore, interviews help capture people’s stories, perceptions, and experiences (Sediman, 1998). As these stories, perceptions, and experiences were shared, it also allowed for face-to-face interactions that help capture the participants’ body movements, facial expressions, and hesitations. All these factors helped with the research process because they remained imprinted in my mind and helped as I reflected during the analysis of the data. The research was conducted during a period of two years.

All the interviews were conducted at the homes of the families. I had three 90-minute-long interviews with each participant in Spanish. All interviews were recorded, then transcribed by me. The in-depth interview questions were open-ended and based on the incidents occurring within the city or nation that relate to immigration law/policy, education, economy, job, and interviewees’ families. According to Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (1994), open-ended interviews, also known as ethnographic interviews, promote the development of “descriptive” open-ended questions, or what Spradley (1980) calls “descriptive” and “grand tour questions” (p. 119). In addition, they assert that these

descriptive open-ended questions encourage participants to express what they do, feel, and think within the context of their own lived experiences.

I was able to keep brief anecdotal notes on the interactions and conversations during my visits with the families. I also took anecdotal notes on internet articles, news, broadcasts, and videos that discussed the national debate on immigration. All this was recorded in a notebook. I also collected several articles from national and local newspapers that pertained to immigration, Mexican immigrants, and the militarization of the U.S. Mexico border. From internet sources I collected articles regarding the national debate on immigration starting fall 2006 and ending in winter of 2008.

Throughout the length of the study, I collected school documents that dealt with immigration and the educational achievement of Mexican immigrant students. I also acquired the local city policies regarding immigrants and immigration regulations. The use of archives and primary documents were very important in order to establish a historical correlation of accounts that help to understand the current political, social, and economic policies that are the focus of this research.²⁶ In addition, I reviewed the dissertation by Christina Duran (2007), *Panaderias, Peluquerias, y Carnicerias: Re-Mexicanizing the Urban Landscapes of a Southwest City* regarding Mexican immigrant businesses within this particular southwestern city that informed me on immigration policy, law, and statistics. This dissertation also helped provide a brief historical account of Mexican immigration to this urban city. All these archives and primary documents were cross-referenced and evaluated in order to establish continuity and connection with the themes emerging from the participant interviews.

²⁶ Primary documents include official records on the census, school policies, legislation actions, newspapers and magazine articles focusing on the issues of concern with this research.

Participant Selection

The selection of participants is a vital task in qualitative research that must be done properly in order to do justice to the research process. Since this research seeks to look at Mexican immigrant families, the participants were selected from a highly populated Mexican immigrant community located within the northeastern quadrant of this particular southwestern city.²⁷ When selecting the families for participation in this research, I looked for families that had children attending the local middle or high school within this particular area. Each family consisted of a husband, wife, and 2 to 4 children. All four families had immigrated to the United States within the last 10 years; their legal status was not important in the recruitment process, but important when analyzing their experiences. I knew the community and was well aware that some of the families in the neighborhood were undocumented and some were temporary residents. So, I knew I had a 50/50 chance in regards to the participant's legal status. My original plan was to interview the children along with the parents, but the young middle- and high-school age children agreed at first, but then declined. Unlike their parents, the children were not as eager to share their personal experiences with a complete stranger. Throughout the two years that this study took place, I made several attempts to interview the participants' children, but was unsuccessful.

Although I did not have the opportunity to interview the middle and high school students for this research project, I did have one conversation with the daughter of Sandra Hernández. At the time of the first interview with Sandra, her daughter Daniela was a

²⁷ The northeastern area in Encantada has historically been seen as a White, middle-class neighborhood. Although this Mexican immigrant community lives in this northeastern quadrant, the neighborhood is associated with working-class, poor people of color. This particular neighborhood is in an area labeled "the war zone."

senior at one of the local high schools in Encantada. The conversation I had with Daniela took place after she graduated from high school. Daniela had agreed to be part of the research study, but when I made a second attempt to meet with her, she declined. I also had the opportunity to interview Martha Chavez, an immigrant activist with a local pro-immigrant organization in Encantada. I met Martha at a local community forum where she spoke about the immigrant rights and policy in Encantada. I was able to have two interviews with her during the summer of 2008.

Since I am familiar with the local elementary school within this community, I enlisted the help of the home/school liaison in identifying the Mexican immigrant families that fit the characteristics outlined above. I was able to obtain three out of the four families for this research. I knew the fourth family well since one of their twin daughters had been in my first grade classroom in 1999. I had been in contact with this particular family even after I left the school in May 2004. Since I interviewed just the parents in each one of these families, I ended up having a total of eight participants.

Once I had the names of the families, I contacted them and explained my research. I also discussed the time frame allocated for the study. Once they agreed, I made sure that they were aware of their rights and protection under the law. They were all given a consent form to sign. Since all eight participants spoke Spanish, I made sure to explain all the information in Spanish. The consent form was written in Spanish. The questions for the interviews were developed in English and translated to Spanish. I allowed all eight participants to preview the questions before starting the interview (See Appendix A). Later, I transcribed the interviews. I did this a day or two after conducting the interview with each participant.

The transcribing process was long. The first step was to transcribe the interview onto a notebook (in Spanish, the language in which all interviews were conducted). Then I typed the interview that I had written in the notebook into a Word document. Listening to the participant interviews three consecutive times was very helpful during the analysis phase of the research project. The first time I conducted the interview at their home, the second time I transcribed the interview into a notebook, and a third time when I typed the written interview into a Word document. Since all interviews were conducted in Spanish, all transcripts were also in Spanish. The only time I translated the participant responses from the interviews into English was for the data analysis in chapters four, five, six, and seven of the dissertation. I must acknowledge some meaning is always lost when translating. For me, what was lost in the English translation was the spirit of the participant's stories, thoughts, and opinions.

Setting

This research took place in the city of Encantada, New Mexico located 230 miles north of the U.S./Mexico border, a city surrounded by beautiful mountains to the east that display a colorful pink hue as the sun sets in the evening. This delightful shower of colors along with a bright blue sky and big puffy clouds is what has showered many with enchantment and made them choose Encantada as their permanent residence. Moreover, the weather year-round in Encantada is warm and sunny with occasional snow during the winter. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Data, Encantada had a population of 448, 607, an increase of 15.9% from 1990. Children under the age of 5 years old represented 6.9% of the population, teens under 18 years old, 24.5%, 18 years and older, 56.6%, and those who were 65 years old, and over 12.0%. The population based on race and ethnicity

consisted of White, 71.6%, Hispanic/Latino, 39.9%, American Indian and Alaska Native, 3.9%; Black or African American, 3.1%; Asian, 2.2%; Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 0.1%, Other 14.8%. The median household income in the state in 2003 was \$36,048. In fact from 1980 to 2000 real median wages for all workers rose only 9 cents per hour.

According to New Mexico Voices for Children, a non-profit organization and advocacy agency for children, this southwestern state “has a low-wage economy.” Moreover, this agency points out the fact that this state has the “highest percentage of workers that work at or below the federal minimum wage than anywhere in the country.”

Table 2—The Projected Employment for New Mexico during 2002-2012

Sector	Openings per Year	% Total Openings
Food Preparation and Food Serving*	4,470	12.7%
Office Administrative Support*	4,310	12.2%
Sales Related*	3,880	11.0%
Management	2,310	6.5%
Education, Library	2,230	6.3%
Construction*	2,170	6.1%
* low wage sectors	19,370	55% of 35,290 jobs

Source: Fiscal Policy Project of New Mexico Voices for Children

Although there appears to be economic growth within this urban southwestern city, the growth does little to increase the income of those struggling to make ends meet. The state in 2006 battled for an increase to the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.50 per hour. Advocates argued that the increase would directly benefit low-income workers who made poverty level wages.²⁸

²⁸ The 2006 state legislation session came to end on February 16, 2006, and the Minimum Wage Bill failed to receive the support needed to raise the state’s minimum wage to \$7.50. Local organizations such as New

In regards to immigration statistics within the state of New Mexico, in 1990, 50,046 Mexican immigrants resided in the state. By 1998 the number had increased to 87,909 (Garcia-Acevedo, 2000). Duran (2007) indicates recent estimates reveal that 277,000 Mexican immigrants, including children, reside in New Mexico. Historically, Mexican immigrants who came to New Mexico were from the northern state of Chihuahua, but that has also changed; more women, men, and children are coming from other parts of Mexico such as Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacan, San Luis Potosi, and Sinaloa (See Figure 2). According to Garcia-Acevedo (2000), the jobs that have attracted Mexican immigrants to New Mexico in recent years have been in the area of agriculture, construction, and the service industry. Garcia-Acevedo (2000) explains that “Mexican-born workers are critical in picking the state’s famous multimillion-dollar chile crop. As an agribusiness employer said, “I cannot imagine what we would do without them [the Mexican immigrants]” (p. 226). Mexican immigrant labor has played a crucial part in the building of Encantada’s new housing developments throughout the city, as well as road and highway improvements. In the service industry such as restaurants, hotels, or corporate buildings, Mexican immigrants can be found doing the backbreaking labor of cleaning. As Mexican immigrants have settled in Encantada, their children continue to be enrolled within the city’s only public school district. In the 2007-2008 school year, Encantada had the 33rd largest school district in the nation with 94,580 students and 170 schools (including charter schools).

Mexico Voices for Children and ACORN petitioned the governor to call a special legislation session to discuss the matter.



Figure 2—Map of Mexico

At the macro level the education of Latino/students continues to be that of a racialized ethnic group. The high percentage of Latina/o students dropping-out of high school demonstrates the inefficiency of the school system in addressing the educational needs of this group of students. According to the *National Center for Educational Statistics* (2000), 28.6% of all 16- to 24-year-old Latinos are drop-outs, compared with 7.3% of Whites, 12.6 of Blacks, and 4.3% of Asians. Furthermore, the school system is setup to fail Latina/o students and eventually push them out. Time and time again the educational policies instituted continue to be oppressive and demeaning to Latina/o, Mexican immigrant students. For the 2008-2009 school year, the Encantada Public School District (EPS) received a “Not Met” AYP rating by the Public Education Department of New Mexico. A “Not Met” rating means that the overall performance on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment in reading and mathematics of all schools within the Encantada district was not good. According to a report titled *New Mexico Standards Based Assessment 2008 Results*, compiled by the Encantada Public School

District’s Research, Development and Accountability (RDA) English Language Learners (ELLs) in the district performed as follows:

Table 3—Percentage of English Language Learners Proficient in Mathematics and Reading on the New Mexico Standardized Assessment (NMSBA)

Grade	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	11th
Reading	24%	15%	15%	7%	11%	23%	9%
Math	21%	14%	10%	3%	4%	6%	9%

According to the **Table-3**, English Language Learners (ELLs) in the middle and high schools are not performing well on the state-mandated tests. In the Encantada district, schools located in highly populated Mexican immigrant communities are schools with a high number of ELLs. The current AYP status for these schools under the accountability measures of NCLB is Corrective Action (CA) or Restructuring 1, 2, 3. It is evident that schooling for Mexican immigrant children is failing them.

Moreover, white teachers comprise 70 % of EPS teachers while non-white teachers make-up about 29.4%. In turn the student body demographic composition in the 2007-2008 school year in Encantada consisted of Hispanic, 57%; Anglos, 32%; Native Americans, 5%; Blacks, 4%; and Asians, 2%. These figures reflect the economic and educational statistics currently found in the state where this study took place. These figures help establish an understanding of the conditions and problems facing Mexican immigrants in this particular region of the United States.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research establishing trustworthiness is a vital part of the research process. Therefore, there are important steps that must be taken prior to carrying out the research. The first step in building trustworthiness is by explaining in detail the purpose

of the study and the process involved. It is essential that all participants involved understand the purpose and the process of the research study. As part of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures, all participants must sign a consent form allowing their participation in the research study. I also made it very clear that they have the option of terminating their participation at any time during the duration of the study.

Throughout the duration of the study I made sure all participants had the opportunity for member checking the transcriptions. Thus, I offered the transcripts to the participants in order to assure that everything said by them was transcribed correctly. I also let them know that if there was anything in the transcripts that they decided they did not want, or want to retract, it would be deleted. Therefore, anything that the participants chose to delete from the transcripts was not used for the research study. I found that all participants were extremely trusting of the research they were part of. My feeling was that they trusted my ethical judgment and my commitment to do justice to their life stories and experiences. Throughout the research study I asked them if they had any questions regarding the study; they never once inquired on the trivial details of it all. I believe that all the participants were much more interested in sharing their experiences, stories, and opinions of the issues affecting them as Mexican immigrants living in the United States. I believe the factors that contributed to their unconditional trust was my being seen as an insider, a Mexican immigrant teacher who spoke Spanish and was interested in hearing about their individual and collective experiences as immigrants in Encantada, New Mexico.

Data Analysis

I started my journey with this research project in the Spring 2006. It was right around the time that HR 4437 had just been approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. I was completely outraged and saddened by the criminalization that the bill, the media, and the politicians sought to impose on Mexican immigrants. Being a Mexican immigrant myself, I felt targeted because of my brown skin, Spanish language, Mexican culture and background. I remember the conversation that took place in my presence during the spring of 2006 at a school registration among two Hispanic women and one White Republican man regarding the media coverage about immigration. The comments of these three individuals reflected that Mexican immigrants were indeed “taking resources” from U.S. citizens. Their view, based on working at a school with a high number of Mexican immigrants, was that they (Mexican immigrants) came here, had children, and got on welfare. The White male in the group also mentioned that, in his experience with Mexican immigrant males, he found they often had a wife here in the United States and one in Mexico. I remember my blood boiling and saying something (which I can’t recall), countering what they had said. They ignored my comment; I was furious and still have little respect for these three individuals to this day. It was also during the spring of 2006 that immigrant marches were taking place around the country protesting HR 4437. Then right after the marches, the backlash by the U.S. government in the form of raids began (and still continue in 2009). I remember that towards the end of the school year in May 2006, the educational assistant in our pre-school program came in to tell the principal that some of our Mexican mothers were calling her to say that they were

not going to bring the children to school for last few days. Our Mexican families were scared because of the raids that had been taking place in Encantada.

I tell these stories because as a Latina, Mexican immigrant, and woman of color working in predominantly Mexican immigrant communities, the comments, debates, and opinions on immigration are very personal. Therefore, this entire research project has been a very personal and emotional process, because through it I have had to come to terms with my own immigrant identity as a Latina, Mexicana, woman of color living within the United States as a U.S. naturalized citizen. I am fully aware that my status as a U.S. citizen has allowed me to have a “privileged” position within academia and the school district I work for. I mention this because as I heard the stories and experiences of each one of the participants, I questioned my own “privileges” as a “legal” immigrant. At times I felt helpless knowing that I had absolutely no knowledge of immigration law or policy that would be helpful to the participants regarding the questions and concerns they had about their status. Although, I felt very honored to be allowed into their homes and to hear their stories, I also felt that I was “taking” more than I was “giving.” By this, I mean, their stories and experiences were going to be part of this dissertation that at the end of the day would help bestow on me another degree. I felt like a “colonizer” and I wondered what they were getting out of this. My positionality and feelings towards this research project was also part of the data analysis process. At times, I avoided working on the dissertation because of the anger I felt towards the national debate on immigration that constantly dehumanized Mexican immigrant families and their children.

Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (1994) recommend “the first step is to put all your data together, reread your initial question, and then reread all your data, starting with

observations and then going to field notes, your journal, and interviews. Wander through the data, making notes of items that strike you” (p. 157). Although Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen make this recommendation, I began to process and digest the data as I listened to the participant’s lived experiences as I conducted the interviews. As I listened to the participants, I thought of how their lived experiences were shaped by *race and racism*. Furthermore, the participant’s stories and experiences, I felt, were a direct *challenge* to the *dominant discourse* within the United States as it pertained to Mexican immigrants. Every time I conducted an interview, I reflected on what was said, and how it was said, all within the context of what was happening at the nation level with immigration. Moreover, I thought about all that was said to me and I juxtaposed it to my own experiences as an immigrant child. My thoughts regarding the shared lived experiences of the participants also prompted me to think of how I would do justice to their experiences.

I began the formal process of analyzing the data by situating the interviews within the context of my research questions. I then proceeded to use the five tenets of Critical Race Theory, *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge and the transdisciplinary perspective*, to place the participants’ topics as they related to each one of the tenets. For example, the questions that dealt with immigration policy, militarization of the border, and a temporary guest-worker program, were placed under the CRT tenet of *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*. The participant’s life histories and experiences in Mexico were placed under the CRT tenet of *the centrality of experiential knowledge*. After doing this, I

retuned to my research questions and started to develop the written analysis of the themes that came from the data.

I have made a conscientious decision to place at the center of this research the voices and experiences of Mexican immigrant families. The participant interviews, media reports, local and national articles on immigration, (See Appendix B and C) and my own personal experiences as a bilingual educator in the Encantada school district helped with the triangulation of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that triangulation improves “the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible” (p. 305). I must admit, I found the notion of triangulation derived from a western paradigm to make the research “credible” problematic. This is problematic for me because in using CRT, I was actively trying to get away from applying a western paradigm to my research. I will therefore argue that for me, triangulation within a CRT framework is tenet five, *the transdisciplinary perspective*, which argues that race and racism must be analyzed within its historical and contemporary contexts (Delgado, 1984, 1992; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). In addition, it employs the transdisciplinary knowledge of history, ethnic studies, law, and sociology to deconstruct the impact of racism, sexism, and classism on people of color. The way I have attempted to utilize this tenet is to analyze the Mexican immigrant experience from a historical (Chapter 2) and contemporary context (Chapters 4-6) using the transdisciplinary knowledge of history, ethnic studies, law, economics, and sociology.

In order to truly honor the daily lived experiences of all the participants, chapter four was designed to provide the readers with a biography of the life stories of the participants in their own words. It is a chapter that details the participants’ lived experiences in Mexico as well as the reasons that brought them to the United States.

Chapter five uses the CRT pillar of counter-storytelling to offer insight on how the Mexican immigrant participants in the study make sense of the political, economic, and social policies through their daily lived experiences. In addition, chapter six is intended to reveal the experiences of Mexican immigrant participants with public schooling in the United States. Furthermore, the participants offer their own views on the purpose of schooling based on their experiences in Mexico. All this is then juxtaposed with my own experience as a Latina, bilingual educator working within the Encantada Public Schools. The last chapter will attempt to deconstruct the lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families within the larger context of immigration reform as it relates to the economic, social, and political policies in neo-liberal post 9/11 United States. In addition, it will try to explain the implications that this has in the educational experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children within U.S. public schools.

Chapter 4

How one views the world is influenced by what knowledge one possesses, and what knowledge one is capable of possessing is influenced deeply by one's worldview. Thus the conditions under which people live and learn shape both their knowledge and their worldviews. (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 399)

Participant Narratives

Humanity is a word that comes to mind as I listened to the life stories of each and every one of the participants in this study. As they revealed their daily lived experiences within this country, I realized that they were claiming their humanity amongst the constant dehumanizing experiences due to their immigrant status. Therefore, this chapter is about privileging their voices and humanity, which comes through in their own words. In order to truly tell the stories of those one has been privileged to interview, the stories must be told from “those who have lived it, in their language, and in codes of language, their mannerism” (Machado-Casas, 2007, p. 57).

It is important to acknowledge that immigrants choose locations that are closely linked to the settlement patterns of prior family members and/or friends. Portes & Rumbaut (1990), state “individual and family decisions, usually based on the presence of certain places of kin and friends who can provide shelter and assistance” (p. 33). The Carrillo, Hernández, Sias, and Durán family (See Appendix D) decided to settle in Encantada because of family members who had migrated earlier during the 1980's . When José, Daniel, and Pedro reached Encantada they arrived the home of either a family member or friend. As noted in chapter two, gender and U.S. destination play a pivotal role within the migration process of Mexican immigrants. It is important to note that both José Sias and Daniel Carrillo had fathers who were U.S. citizens. For various reasons,

their fathers never petitioned legalization for their children. As adults, both José and Daniel tried to claim U.S. citizenship based on their fathers' status but were unsuccessful.

C. Suárez-Orozco & M. Suárez-Orozco (2009) state that “nearly a quarter of all children in the United States today come from immigrant-origin households” (p. 327). If this is the case, then as educators, especially bilingual educators it is essential that we understand the political, social, and economic consequences that bring Mexican immigrants to the United States. It is vital that we know the background, experiences, and stories of the parents whose children sit in our classroom. Only by knowing those stories can educators begin to understand that the decision by Mexican immigrants to emigrate to the United States is difficult and many times a last option. Machado-Casas (2007) states, “Making the decision to migrate is one of the most difficult decisions a person can make. It is a decision that takes a person out of the known to the unknown. It is like cutting one's own umbilical cord. Although it is a difficult decision to make, staying home often is not an option” (p. 269). In addition, educators can begin to comprehend that the students sitting in their classrooms have families who are survivors, compassionate, and loving parents, who want the best for their children.

The Carrillo Family

Laura and Daniel Carrillo are a married couple from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. They are both medium brown in skin tone, in their late 30's, and have two children. They were both born and raised in Juárez within working class families. At the time of the interviews, they were renting a 2-bedroom apartment in the northeast quadrant of Encantada. Although at different times, they both immigrated to the United States in 2002. As with most immigrant families, Daniel being the male head of the household,

emigrated first in early 2002. He made his way to Colorado where he met up with a former co-worker and friend from Juárez. In Colorado, Daniel settled in a small town about 45 minutes north of Denver. He lived and worked there for about three months before returning to Mexico. Upon his return to Mexico he set out to find a job, but after three months of not finding any employment and with the bills continuing to accumulate, he decided to return to the United States. He has been in Encantada for five years now. Laura and Daniel made their entrance into the United States legally. They both hold visas that allowed for them to solicit a visiting permit into the United States. What now classifies them as “illegal” is that they have overstayed their visit.²⁹

Laura was not happy about having to immigrate “*al norte*” but made the journey because after months of Daniel living here alone and away from them, he could not bear the separation any longer. She made the journey north, scared, because although she had visited Encantada before, she knew that in August of 2002, it was to be a permanent move. Laura felt that being away from one’s country, family, and home language, made Encantada a very intimidating place. For Laura, those first months in the United States were very depressing, she recalls crying everyday after her husband left to work. However, once Laura started volunteering at her daughters’ elementary school, she felt more at ease.

Daniel’s life in Mexico before coming to the United States, about his family, schooling and work experience.

Daniel—Mi madre nació en Juárez, mi padre nació en Estados Unidos, en El Paso. Un hermano, tengo un hermano, hombre nada más uno y tengo 5

²⁹ According to the participants, visas are only given to those Mexican citizens who can provide documentation that demonstrates they have secure employment and income.

hermanas. Mi papá trabajaba en El Paso, él, él trabajaba como electricista en El Paso. Bueno pues, yo fui este, muy caprichoso, siempre quería a fuerza lo que quería, a fuerza lo que quería, a fueraza lo quería me entiende, y mis padres me lo cumplían, mi mamá. Y este pero, pues todo bien o sea un niño normal todo, o sea, no era peleonero, no era vago, andaba mucho de vago, pero no hacía maldades ni nada, pero andaba mucho de vago. Y pues como todos los niños jugando y esperando salí de la escuela para ir a jugar, agarra las vacaciones para andar jugando, y como todo pues, yo pienso que fue/tuve una niñez bien.

Eh, sí, o fui, terminé la primaria, fui a la secundaria, no terminé la secundaria, después me fui, agarré una carrera técnica. Y después entré a trabajar en el, 2000, me parece, 2000 terminé la secundaria, allí en el trabajo terminé la secundaria. Cuando empiezo a trabajar la primera vez, tenía creo que 16 años. A, hacía lámparas, de todo tipo de lámparas, y para carros los focos del frente de los carros. Lámparas para casas, de distintos tipos de lámparas. Ahí duré como tres meses trabajando nada más, sí como tres meses aproximadamente. Y luego después, eh, seguí trabajando, entré a otra, otra a otra empresa, era de servicios, prestábamos servicios a, a maquilas también y era de andar trabajando de mantenimiento también y duré como, será como unos, no me acuerdo pero 4, 5 meses, y luego renuncié y de poco tiempo vuelvo a entrar a esa misma empresa a prestar servicios, perdón, ya duré trabajando más de un año ahí, y luego la empresa ese que le dábamos servicios nos contrataron

a muchos de los que trabajábamos para, así en esa, en la compañía que prestábamos servicios nos contrató a, por parte de la planta, nos dieron planta, ya éramos trabajadores de la empresa, hay no, hay no dábamos servicios, si no que ya pertenecíamos a la empresa. Ya allí duré trabajando, como 11 años, en la empresa. - Era compañía americana, sí, sí era, era parte de General Motors, le hacían la parte eléctrica de General Motors, sistema, sistema eléctrico de todo, de las puertas, ventanas, focos le llaman la arnés a todo el sistema eléctrico, el arnés a, allí se lo hacían y yo trabajaba como mantenimiento.

(My mother was born in Juárez, my father was born in the United States, in El Paso. One brother, I have one brother, one male only and I have 5 sisters. My father worked in El Paso, he, he worked as an electrician in El Paso. Well, I was very stubborn, I always wanted my way, always my way, everything my way do you understand, my parents always gave me what I wanted, my mother. And, well everything was fine in other words a normal kid, I did not get into fights, I was always out and about but I was not doing anything bad just out and about. And like most kids playing and waiting for school to let out to go play, waiting to have school vacation to go and play and like everything I think it was a good childhood.)

(Ah, yes, I went, I finished elementary school, I went to middle school, I did not finish it, later I left and went and got a technical career. Later I started working in 2000, I believe, in 2000 I finished middle school, there at my job I finished middle school. When I started working the first time I

believe I was 16 years old. Ah, I made lamps, all sorts of types of lamps, for cars the light bulbs for the front of the cars. Lamps for homes of different sorts. I worked there for about 3 months only, yes approximately about 3 months. Then later I continued working, I started at another, another company that one was a service type, we offered our services to, to *maquiladoras* also and in that one the work consisted of providing maintenance also and I lasted about, it was about, I don't remember but 4 or 5 months, and then I left and in a short period of time I again began working for that same company lending my services, excuse me, I lasted working there more than a year and then the company that we gave our services to hired a bunch of us the ones that worked for, in the one in which we provided the services for, they gave us fulltime employment. In that company we no longer gave our services since we were already working for the company fulltime. There I stayed working for about 11 years in that company. It was an American company, yes, yes it was part of General Motors, they would do the electric part for General Motors: systems, everything to do with the electrical system, the doors, windows, lights, they called it the harness all of the electrical system, they did all of that and I worked as maintenance.)

I asked why he left the company

Daniel—*Porque, la, la empresa hubo, cuando hubo la recesión aquí en Estados Unidos en el 2000, entonces muchas empresas americanas sintieron la recesión aquí en Estados Unidos entonces muchas empresas*

cerraron muchas empresas empezaron a liquidar a gente porque ya era mucha, o sea era mucha gente ya no había poder. Este por la misma recesión que había pues ya el producto iba bajar, entonces nos empezaron a liquidar a, a muchas personas nos liquidaron y fue por eso que yo dejé de trabajar en esa empresa.

(Because the company, there was, when there was the recession here in the United States in 2000, then a lot of the American companies felt the recession here in the United States then a lot of the companies closed, lots of companies began to lay off and pay off their employees because it was a lot, in other words there was a lot of people and there was no power. Due to the recession that had happened the product became less so then they began to lay us off, they paid a lot of us and that is the reason I stopped working in that company.)

Laura's life in Mexico before coming to the United States, about family, schooling, and work experience.

Laura—Somos cuatro, tres mujeres y un hombre. Y mi mamá y mi papá. Pero ahorita ya falleció mi papá, nomás tengo mamá. OH no yo tuve una niñez muy bonita. Sí, tuve primaria y comercio. No, no tuve preparatoria. Comercio es, me preparé para secretaria. Poquito. Muy poquito y después empecé a trabajar en un trabajo, trabajo de la computadora. Metíamos información de los cupones por medio de la computadora.

(We are four, three women and one man and my mother and father. But now my father passed away, I only have my mother. Oh, no I had a

beautiful childhood. Yes, I did get an elementary education and also studied commerce. No, no I did not have high school. Commerce is, I prepared to become a secretary. Very little and afterwards I started working at a job, a job that dealt with computers. We input coupon information on the computer.)

When asked why they immigrated to the United States, this is what they had to say:

Laura—*O sea por mi esposo porque se le acabó el trabajo. Era cuando estaban cerrando muchas fábricas ahí en Juárez. Y él se vino primero y después me vine yo. Porque ya no encontraba trabajo porque hubo mucho tiempo en que cerraron muchas, muchas fabricás. Y se le acabó el trabajo y aquí tiene su hermana. Y la hermana fue la que le dijo que se viniera para acá y fue del modo. Pero primero se vino él y después me vine yo.*

(Because of my husband, his work ended. It was during the time they were closing lots of companies there in Juárez. He came first then I came later. Because he could not find a job it was during the time when lots and lots of companies were closed. His work ended and he has a sister here. The sister was the one who told him to come over here and that is how it was done. But he came first and then I came.)

Daniel—*Pues yo estaba así con la tentación para venirme pero no, pues no, no era, este, la posibilidad de como venirse eh, como mi papá, mi papá es americano verdad, entonces, pues un compañero en la empresa que duré 11 años trabajando a, él se fue para Colorado y una vez me*

habló y me dijo, y si quieres este cuando quieras, dice cuando quieras venirte, aquí, pues para que trabajes y sí le agarré, le tomé la palabra.

(Well I was feeling tempted to come over here but the possibility to come here was not there, like my father, my father he is an American, correct, then a coworker from the company I worked in for 11 years he went to Colorado and once he called me and said that whenever I wanted to come to the United States so that I could work and so I took his word.)

He goes on to describe the job he did once he got to the United States for the first time.

Daniel—*Ahí trabajé, andaba, era una compañía, que distribuía aparatos eléctricos, refrigeradores, estufas, microondas, a lavadoras, secadoras. Las llevan a apartamentos, este, es que trabajaba en ese mismo lugar pero yo en la parte donde se encargaban de todo el material nuevo y había trabajadores que llegaban a diferentes partes de Colorado, cambiaban a las casas los muebles, los aparatos entonces los viejos los, los llevaban en el área donde nosotros estábamos trabajando, entonces nosotros ya seleccionábamos lo que estaba bien, lo que estaba mal lo tirábamos al yonque, lo que estaba bueno lo guardábamos. Y allí duré trabajando como tres meses y luego ya me regresé otra vez para acá. Y estuve un tiempo, eso fue a finales de diciembre y en diciembre pues no, buscando trabajo, no había, no, había metido muchas solicitudes no había nada de trabajo y aquí estaba, está una hermana viviendo en Encantada y le dije que si me daba este oportunidad de estar con ella mientras yo me*

establecía para poderme venir, me dijo ella sí vente y sí me estuve con ella como un año, estuve con ella cuando ya me decidí traerme a mi familia.

(I worked there, I was doing, it was a company that distributed electric appliances: refrigerators, stoves, microwaves, washers, driers. They take them to apartments, I worked in the same place but I worked in the area where they were responsible for the new material and there were workers who went to different parts of Colorado, they would change furniture at homes, the old appliances, they would take them to the area where we were working, then we would select the ones that were good, whatever was no good we would throw away at the junk yard. Those that were good we would keep. I worked there for about three months and then I came back here again. And for a while, it was around the end of December well looking for a job, but there were none, nothing, I had submitted lots of applications but there were no jobs and here I was. There is one sister living in Encantada and so I asked her if she would let me stay with her while I established myself and so that I could come here. She told me, “yes come here” and so I lived with her for about a year and that is when I decided to bring my family.)

The Hernández Family

Sandra and Alberto Hernández are both from the state of Chihuahua. Sandra was born and raised in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and Alberto in the rural part of the state of Chihuahua in a small town named Cuauhtémoc. They are both light skinned *Mexicanos*

in their mid-30s living in their own four bedroom house in the northeast quadrant of Encantada. Alberto came to the United States at the age of 10. His father had abandoned his mother, so she was forced to immigrate to the United States, leaving her children in the care of her parents. Three years after settling in Encantada and marrying a U.S. citizen, his mother sent for Alberto and his three sisters. For Alberto, as a ten-year old, the first years in the United States were very traumatic and terrifying. He recalls the hardships in learning another language as well as the difficulty in communicating and understanding English. There was also the discrimination he experienced by being called a “*mojado*” (wetback). He missed the community-oriented life he had in Mexico as well as his connection to the land, the farming, harvesting, and mostly the entire agriculture experience.

The circumstance that brought Sandra to the United States, besides marrying Alberto, a naturalized U.S citizen, was the terrifying violence that has infested Ciudad Juárez within the last two decades. Sandra married her first husband at the age of 15 and she had three children. She was a stay-at-home mother until age 27 when her first husband disappeared. She believes he was murdered, but his body has never been found. Sandra and her husband owned a convenience store but after being constantly robbed they sold the store. Her husband went to work as a security guard at a restaurant/bar business owned by a drug trafficker. After only two months of working there, he disappeared along with other employees who worked at that place. When she and other family members went to inquire about their loved ones, they were told not to ask any questions if they wanted to live. The other violent experience Sandra had in Juárez was the attempted kidnapping of her oldest daughter as they were heading back to their home

after shopping at a local shopping center. These two incidents prompted Sandra to escape from Juárez with her children to a safer place in the United States.

Here is Alberto's story in his own words.

Alberto—De una ciudad que se llama Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua. OK, ah mi mamá se vino a Estados Unidos cuando yo tenía siete años, eh tengo 3 hermanas y yo me quedé con mis abuelos hasta la edad de diez años y emigré a Estados Unidos a la edad de 10 años. Sí, a los 10 años. A mi madre desgraciadamente nuestro padre, el esposo de ella, mi papá nos dejó cuando estábamos chiquitos. Se vino para Estados Unidos dizque para tener una mejor vida pero se olvidó de nosotros porque se casó aquí y ya nunca regresó. Sí nos mandaba cartas y dinero de vez en cuando pero no ya jamás lo volvimos a ver como padre. Yo tenía como un año cuando él se vino entonces la situación estaba muy difícil para mi madre y decidió venir para Estados Unidos para darnos una mejor vida. Mi tío Salva (no puedo decir nombres) mi tío, él vive en Estados Unidos y le, le dijo que si quería venir a trabajar a su casa a cuidarle los niños a ellos y allí empezó todo. Ella se vino y le gustó más la vida como se vive en Estados Unidos y allí empezó la, que nos quería traer para Estados Unidos para tener una mejor vida. Emigró aquí hasta Encantada. Como en el ochenta y dos, más o menos 81, 82. Yo tenía como siete años 6 o 7 años. Sí, sí me acuerdo de todo. Dijo que, que se iba tardar en regresar y nomás iba hacer unos cuantos meses para, para pues, yo tenía 7 años para darnos juguetes o equis cosa y así empezó. Sí, ya como ella se empezó a establecer más aquí en Estados Unidos y también como ella se

volvió a casar conoció a una persona que lo queremos como si fuera nuestro padre porque nos dio lo que necesitábamos y se volvió a casar ella y él era un ciudadano americano y así fue como nos trajeron para acá para Estados Unidos.

(From a city named Cuauhtémoc in Chihuahua. Ok my mother came to the United States when I was seven years old, I have three sisters and I stayed with my grandparents until I was ten years old and I immigrated to the United States when I was ten years old. Yes, at ten years of age.

Unfortunately for my mother, her husband, my father abandoned us when we were very young. He came to the United States supposedly for a better life but he forgot about us because he got married here and never went back. Yes, he would send us letters and money every once in a while but we never again saw him as a father. I was about a year old when he came and so the time was a difficult one for my mother so she decided to come to the United States to give us a better life. My uncle Salva (I can't say names) he lives in the United States and he told her, he said if she wanted to come work at their house to take care of their kids and that is how everything started. She came and liked the way of life here in the United States and that is where it started. She wanted to bring us to the United States for a better life. She immigrated here to Encantada. Like in '82, around '81 or '82. I was about six years, six or seven years old. Yes, yes I remember about everything. She said that, that she was going to take a while to return and that it was only going to be for a couple of months for,

for at that time I was about 7 years old to give us toys or things and that is how it began. Yes, since she began to establish herself here in the United States and since she got married here she met a person whom we love as a father because he gave us what we needed and so she remarried and he was an American citizen and that is how they brought us to the United States.)

He speaks about his life in Mexico:

Alberto—Trabajábamos la tierra porque bueno más bien la ciudad es Cuauhtémoc que hay un rancho que se llamaba Nuevo Zaragoza y allí fue donde pasé la mayor tiempo de mi niñez y allí trabajábamos la tierra barrichabamos, cultivábamos y cosechábamos que es el maíz, el frijol, la avena y casi todo que tiene que ver con agricultura. Sí, era para uso personal pero también para, sí, sí como allí sembraban lo que sembramos era temporal, lo, lo que nuestro padre Dios nos daba, que si llueve cosecha si no llueve no cosecha mucho entonces si tocaba buena temporada de que había mucha agua levantaba mucha cosecha. Mi abuelo agarraba mucho frijol y el frijol era el que se vendía más, el maíz casi lo dejábamos para el ganado para poder alimentar el ganado y para que trabajará mejor en la labor.

(We worked the land because, well, the city is Cuauhtémoc and there is a small town that is named Nuevo Zaragoza and that is where I spent most of my childhood and that is where we worked the land, cultivated and harvested the corn, beans, oats and almost anything that has to do with

agriculture. Yes, it was for personal use but also for, yes, yes, we planted, what we planted was seasonal, whatever our Father God gave us, if it rains harvest if it does not rain there is hardly any harvest but if there was a good season where there was a lot of rain then we would pick a large crop. My grandfather would harvest beans and the beans were the ones that sold the most, the corn we would leave for the cattle to feed the cattle and that way they would work better in the fields.)

Here is Alberto's school experience in U.S. public schools as a child:

Alberto:—La mera verdad hasta que estaba en el 11, hasta que empecé a madurar un poco más porque cuando llega uno a este país todo mundo lo humilla, lo tratan de destruir como quien dice, le van destruyendo la mente entonces trae mucho coraje y se pelea mucho se mete en pandillas porque se quiere defender porque empezamos a ver al americano como un enemigo y pero a la misma vez nos estamos haciendo nosotros mismos enemigos de nosotros mismos y eso o sea hasta que empecé a comprender que el verdadero era el que está adentro de mí por el coraje que tenía de las humillaciones y aparte pienso que también la educación que recibe uno en la casa es muy importante y en ese tiempo no la estaba recibiendo. Estaba, había muchos maltratos mentales y también el alcoholismo estuvo muy presente.

Lo tenía a uno en clase con los anglo americanos como se les diga pues eran puras clases de inglés y a uno como que lo tenían en un rincón escuchando y después iba alguien y le explicaba, era una clase y luego

después tenía una clase donde nomás se dedicaban a enseñarle los colores, ESL lo que se llama ESL. Sí había, sí había pero no era completamente bilingüe eran clases regulares y aparte una clase sola, clase que le enseñaba ESL.

(The truth is that it wasn't until the 11th grade when I started to mature. When one comes to this country, everyone humiliates you, they try to destroy you, they destroy your mind and then you build up a lot of anger within yourself. You fight a lot and get into gangs because you want to defend yourself. You begin to see Americans as your enemy. But at the same time, you begin to see that you are your own worst enemy and it was then when I began to understand that all of the anger that I had within because of the humiliation I experienced. Besides, I think that the education one receives at home is also very important, and at the time I felt I wasn't getting the proper home schooling. There was a lot of mental abuse and also alcoholism.)

(They had me in classes with Anglo-Americans (I think that's what you call them), it was just an all-English classroom, they had me in a corner just listening, and someone would explain to me later. Then I had another class where all they did was teach me the colors, what you call ESL. There was bilingual classrooms, but it wasn't what you call a true bilingual class. It was just an ESL class.)

Sandra's life in and experiences in Juárez:

Sandra—De ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Mi mamá es de Aguascalientes y mi papá de Chihuahua. O mi niñez siempre fue muy triste porque mis padres siempre estaban trabajando los dos, tenía, tuvieron nueve hijos y tuvieron que trabajar mucho, tenían una tienda y no, no tenían el tiempo de darnos tanta atención porque siempre estaban trabajando vendían abarrotes, este tortillas, pan, leche, tenían, o este sopas, maíz, todo. A la primaria, a la secundaria nada más hice, no porque saliendo de la secundaria me casé y ya no pude estudiar. Nada más ama de casa hasta los 27 años. O murió mi esposo lo secuestran y yo tuve que trabajar para mantener a mis hijos. Cuatro hijos. O él se fue a trabajar y ya no regresó. No, porque desapareció, se desaparecieron como alrededor de 6 a 10 personas más con él. Y las autoridades no hicieron nada para buscarlos como que tenían miedo. Yo pienso que sí lo mataron porque el dueño donde trabajaba él era un narcotraficante. Sí todo mundo sabíamos que era, porque era un restaurante/bar caro y todos sabían que toda la gente que él era narcotraficante pero nosotros pensábamos que nosotros no teníamos nada que ver con él, simplemente él era un trabajador. Él era, el jefe de seguridad. Dos meses. Nosotros teníamos un súper, teníamos una tienda pero nos asaltaban mucho y decidimos quitarlo y le ofrecieron ese trabajo y acababa de entrar allí. Entró el 24 de diciembre y él desapareció el 27 de febrero. O fue muy difícil porque en México no hay ninguna ayuda para los niños, ni quién le dé comida ni nada y la escuela es bastante cara y yo tuve que trabajar para mantener a mis hijos.

Empecé a traer ropa de Nuevo León y después ya no me fue suficiente el dinero y fui a Guadalajara a traer joyería. Y ahí me fue muy bien y después cuando junté bastante dinero fui a Los Ángeles también por ropa, así que, en veces cada mes viajaba tres veces.

(From the city of Juárez, Chihuahua. My mother is from Aguascalientes and my father from Chihuahua. Oh, my childhood was always sad because my parents were always working the both of them. They had, they had nine children and they had to work a lot, they had a store and they did not have the time to pay attention to us because they were always working. They sold lots of things in their store such as tortillas, bread, milk. They had soup, corn, everything. I finished elementary school and middle school because I got married and I could not continue studying. I was only a homemaker until I was 27 years old. My husband died, he was kidnapped and I had to work to raise my kids. Four kids. Well he went to work and never returned. No, he disappeared, about 6 to 10 people plus him disappeared. And the authorities did nothing to look for them, sort of like they were afraid. I think that they killed him because the owner of the place he worked at was a drug dealer. Yes, the whole world, we all knew he was because it was an expensive restaurant/bar and everyone knew that he was a drug dealer but we thought that since we had nothing to do with him he was simply an employee. He was the head of security. Two months. We had a little store but we got robbed all the time so we decided to close it and so they offered him that position and he took it he had just

started working there. He started working there December 24 and he disappeared February 27. Oh it was very difficult because in Mexico there's no assistance for kids or feed you and the school is quite expensive and I had to work to support my kids. I started by bringing clothes from Nuevo Leon but later the money was not enough and so I went to Guadalajara to get jewelry. And with that I did very well and later when I saved enough money I went to Los Angeles also for clothes, therefore, sometimes I would go three times a month.)

When asked about how long after her husband's disappearance she came to the United States and how she felt leaving Juárez, this is what Sandra had to say:

Sandra—Para mí fue unos de los días mas felices de mi vida yo no quería estar en México porque yo tengo una hija grande y, y en ese entonces estaba mucho la desaparición de las muchachas y veía que las autoridades no hacían nada por buscarlas, por averiguar quién las estaba matando y yo no quería que a mi hija le pasara eso. Ellos también se querían venir para acá o sea fue nuestro sueño dorado venirnos para acá. Estar más seguros. Fueron casi 4 años. A porque mi esposo, el que es ahora mi esposo fue para Juárez y él nos ofreció venirnos para acá y este nosotros estábamos, yo vendía joyería y me iba bien allá no estábamos mal económicamente pero sobre todo como le digo queríamos la seguridad por eso nos venimos para acá en cuanto él nos dijo. Y a parte el estudio porque allá es muy caro el estudio y yo tenía 4 hijos en escuelas diferentes y allá cobran una cuota por entrar a la escuela más a parte los uniformes y todo, yo ya no iba a poder aunque ganaba bien yo no podía

mantenerlos en la escuela y acá la escuela es gratuita a parte yo siempre tuve el deseo de estudiar y en México no se puede es carísimo para un adulto estudiar y aquí estudio gratis.

(For me it was one of the happiest days of my life since I did not want to be in Mexico because I have an older daughter and, and during that time it was common for girls to disappear and I saw that the authorities did not do anything to look for them to find out who was killing them and I did not want that to happen to my daughter. They also wanted to come over here. In other words, it was our golden dream to come over here. To have more security. It was almost 4 years. Oh, because my husband, the one that is now my husband, he went to Juárez and he offered us to come over here and we were, I sold jewelry over there and financially it was fine but overall, like I tell you, we wanted safety. That is the reason we came over here once he told us to come. And also schooling because over there schooling is very expensive and I had 4 kids in different schools and over there they charge a fee for registering in school and also the uniform fees plus other school related expenses. I was not going to be able to support them even though I earned good money. I was not going to be able to pay their schooling and over here the school is free of charge and I also had the desire to study but in Mexico it is very expensive for an adult to study and here it is free.)

The Sias Family

José and Sofía Sias are both in their early 40's, light-skinned Mexicanos; they have three children, two boys and one girl. The first time they came to the United States was back in 1986. They lived here in Encantada for a few months before returning to Mexico. Their second attempt to return to the United States was in 2000 and they have been here ever since then. The Sias lived in their own four bedroom house that they were currently remodeling. José was born and raised in the city of Chihuahua, the capital of the state of Chihuahua. His mother was from the Mexican state of Durango and his father from Los Angeles, California. Sofía was born and raised in rural Chihuahua in the small town of Maniquipa. Sofía and José married young, she was 18 and he was 19. After José completed middle school, he went on to study a technical career and ended up working in a *maquiladora* that made parts for the Ford Motor Company. He worked there for about 1 year and a half before immigrating to the United States with Sofía in 1986. Since both Sofía and José held visas, they were able to get a permit to enter the country. Both Sofía and José believe that being so young and inexperienced did not help their living situation here; therefore, after their oldest son was born in Encantada in 1986 they decided to return to Mexico. Then Sofía and José would later regret this decision because after returning to Mexico, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed. IRCA gave amnesty to undocumented immigrants as long as they could prove they had been living in the United States since 1980.

After returning to Mexico in 1986, José started working for the railroad; he worked there for about 10 years before being laid off. José attempted to find work in one of the *maquiladoras* but was not successful; he attempted to establish a business but was

robbed, and that was the final straw that drove him to look north for a job. Now that their oldest son has turned 21 years old, the Sias are in the process of legalizing their situation through their son who was born here in Encantada in 1986, the first time they came to the United States.

José's life and experiences in Mexico, in his own words:

José—De Chihuahua, Chihuahua, um, mi mamá es de Durango y mi papá es de Los Ángeles, Cali, California. Um, no fue muy, muy feliz, no fue, no fue tampoco muy drástica pero pues no muy feliz. Muchas carencias. Dos hermanos y una hermana. Ah, los dos trabajaban un tiempo. Mi papá trabajaba en el ferrocarril y mamá pues hacía labores domésticas. No, sí trabajaba para alguien más. Fui a la primaria, a la secundaria y empecé pues la educación superior pero, no, pues no se, se terminó por falta de recursos y a parte pues por algunos otros problemas más pero esto pues sí fue un poco a raíz de falta de recursos. Um, bueno en aquel tiempo estaba estudiando una carrera técnica pero no era lo que yo quería. Bueno, pues pienso que, quería ser doctor. Cuando dejé la escuela, trabajaba en una fábrica de motores para la Ford Motor Company. Duré un año y medio y luego ya de allí fue la primera vez que venimos aquí a Estados Unidos por un año estaba muy duro y nos fuimos otra vez para México después allí trabajé en el ferrocarril por 10 años. Se acabó la empresa. Nos liquidaron y tuvimos que volver a emigrar para acá. De operador técnico de una máquina de señales. Yo fabricaba los, la parte para los motores. Era un trabajo muy bonito, era muy buen trabajo, muy bien pagado pero pienso yo que la inexperiencia de, de joven lo dejé para venir acá, a Estados

Unidos, que la verdad no necesitaba venir para acá. Estaba mucho muy bien allá.

(From Chihuahua, Chihuahua, um, my mother she is from Durango and my father is from Los Angeles, California. It was not very, very happy but it was not very drastic just not very happy. We had to do without a lot of things. I have two brothers and one sister. Ah, both worked at some point. My father worked in the railroad and my mother did domestic chores. No, yes she/he worked for someone else. I went to elementary school and middle school then I started higher education but no I don't know that ended for lack of financial resources and also because of other problems but yes it was mostly due to money issues. Um, well at that time I was pursuing a technical career but it was not what I wanted. Well, I think I wanted to be a doctor. When I left school, I was working in a motor fabrication company for Ford Motor Company. I lasted a year and a half and then from there it was the first time we came to the United States for one year it was very hard and so we went back to Mexico and later I worked in the railroad for 10 years. The business ended and they liquidated us and we had to immigrate here again. I was the technical operator of a signal machine. I was the one who made the parts that for the motors. It was a nice job, a very good job, very well paid but I think that the lack of experience of being young, I left it to come over here to the United States because I really did not need to come over here. I was really well off over there.)

When I asked why he emigrated from Mexico for the first time in 1986, this is what he said:

José—Pues la ilusión del sueño americano que en realidad no, fue la primera, fue el primer gran mal paso, la primera mal decisión que hice en mi vida, dejar el trabajo en la compañía, todas las personas que estaban, que siguen estando allí ahorita están mucho muy bien económicamente. Yo fui de las primeras personas que entró de los primeros grupos que entraron a trabajar a esa compañía.

(Well, the illusion of the American dream that in reality it was not. It was the first, the first big bad step, the first bad decision that I made in my life to leave the job in that company all the persons that were there, that are still there now they are very well off financially. I was one of the first persons who started there I was in the first group of persons that started working in that company.)

He goes on to talk about life in Mexico when he returned in 1986:

José—Por ejemplo ya en ese tiempo cuando yo me salí de, cuando me liquidaron del ferrocarril yo ya tenía 20, ya tenía 30 años, después ya de 30 años, ya tenía 31, 31 años, 32 y después de ese tiempo ya, la edad promedio para alguna maquiladora, y cualquier empresa, cualquier fábrica, cualquier planta de lo que sea, de producción ya con 28 años para arriba ya no es, ya no tiene derecho a, es muy duro, allá agarran pura gente joven, muy seleccionada. Ya con 30 años ya (hay mucha) discriminación de edad. 30 años y ya no fue fácil. Quise entrar a una

maquiladora para, nada más para tramitar las visas para venir para acá, Estados Unidos ya no me dieron en ninguna parte. Recorrí todas las empresas en todo Chihuahua y no me daban trabajo, hasta que en la última empresa que fui este resultó que un amigo de la secundaria, un compañero de la secundaria era el gerente de relaciones públicas allí y me conoció y por eso me dio trabajo pero no por, hizo una excepción, o sea no porque por méritos propios me correspondería entrar. Y él me ayudó a entrar a esa empresa nomás para tramitar mi visa y cuando tramité la visa renuncié y me vine para acá. Era la empresa Champion, la que fabrica la ropa deportiva. Hacía, yo manejaba una máquina láser que cortaba la tela para los, para el estampado y ese era mi trabajo. Sí porque no era muy bien pagado. Creo que 700 pesos a la semana, eran turnos repetidos, 4 días de descanso por 4 días de trabajo de 12 horas. Estaba muy bien el turno y el ambiente estaba muy bonito. No estaba tan mal pagado pero no era suficiente para sobrevivir en él. No, eso lo decidimos un año antes de venirnos cuando empecé a buscar trabajo en una maquiladora nomás para tramitar las visas para venir. Ya estaba decidido. (Wife joins in) Sofía “Él tenía una carpintería y le robaron toda la herramienta. Porque la herramienta es carísima.” Pues trabajaba en la empresa, en la maquiladora y por mi cuenta haciendo carpintería, trabajos....es muy difícil salir adelante. Ya teníamos los tres hijos que tengo. En cuanto me dieron mi visa tramité el permiso e inmediatamente, 30 días y me vine. No, yo me vine, yo me vine en julio, el 27 de julio y mi

esposa se vino el 21 de diciembre, casi medio año de diferencia. Yo tenía que empezar aquí, trabajar para rentar y todo.

(For example when I left the job when I was paid off from working in the railroad I was already 20 years old, I was already 30 then after 30 years old I was 31 and after 31 years old, 32 and after that time the average age for someone to work in the *maquiladora* or any other company in any production company at 28 years or older it is not, you don't have the right to, it is difficult over there they only get young people they are very selective. At thirty years old there is (over there) a lot of age discrimination. At thirty years old it was not easy anymore. I visited all the companies in Chihuahua and I was not hired in any of them until the last one that I went to it ended up being that a friend from middle school was the manager of public relations there he remembered me and so he gave me a job but not because, he made an exception, in other words not because of my own merits was it that I was allowed to start a job there. He helped me get into that company just so that I could start the paperwork for my visa and so when I started the paperwork I resigned and came over here. It was the Champion Company, the one that makes the sports clothes. I did, I used the laser machine that made the designs that was my work. Yes because it was not very well paid. I think it was \$700 (pesos) a week. The shifts were repeated, 4 days of rest and 4 days of work for 12 hours. The shift was nice and it was a good working environment. It was not badly paid but it was not enough to survive on. No, that we decided a

year before we came I started to look for work in a *maquiladora* only to start the paperwork for the visas to come here. It was already decided. (Wife joins in-- Sofía. He did carpentry and they stole all his tools. Because the tools are expensive) Well I worked for the company, in the *maquiladora* and on my own doing carpentry work, it is very difficult to get ahead. We already had the three kids we have. As soon as they gave me the visa I started the paperwork on the permit and immediately 30 days and I came. No, I came, I came in July, the 27th of July and my wife she came December 21, almost half a year later of difference. I had to start here, I had to work to rent and all that.)

Sofía's story and life experiences in Mexico.

Sofía—Soy de un pueblito llamado, Maniquipa, Maniquipa. Oh, mis papás, sí son de allí. Tengo, cuatro hermanas y dos hermanos. En Chihuahua, pues muy tranquila porque era en un rancho. No tenía uno que andar, allí cerquitas puede andar y nunca pasaba nada. Ni secuestros ni nada de nada, no que aquí tiene uno que tener los niños muy protegidos. Ya ve cuantas cosas pasan. Yo recuerdo que no pues jugaba afuera, me iba con mis primos, íbamos al río, así, andábamos a caballo yo, todo tranquilo, no, no había tantos peligros como ahora. A primaria y secundaria fui a otro pueblo más grande, allí cerca y después fui a Chihuahua. Estaba estudiando para secretaria pero me casé y ya no terminé (laughs) me faltó un año nada más. Tenía, casi 18 años, 18 años, sí.

No, bueno vivimos unos meses nada más allí. Y luego nos venimos para acá. Estuvimos aquí y este aquí nació mi hijo el mayor. Aquí nació también nada más duramos unos meses porque no nos fue muy bien y nos regresamos. Y llegamos y mi esposo entró a trabajar en el ferrocarril y nos fuimos a vivir, no sé si haya escuchado Las Barrancas de Cobre, allí vivíamos como a diez minutos. Allí vivimos como unos 6 años y luego nos fuimos a Chihuahua porque mi esposo compró casa allí y nos fuimos. Y en Chihuahua vivimos como unos, otros seis años y luego decidimos venirnos. ¿El que sería 86 yo creo? Porque mi esposo tenía un trabajo en la Ford y conoció un tío que vivía aquí y le platicó que bien suave acá y que no sé que y nos venimos y pues no, no nos fue tan suave (se ríe) Nos, nos regresamos.

(I am from a little town named Maniquipa, Maniquipa. Oh, my parents, yes they are from there. I have four sisters and two brothers. In Chihuahua, well very quiet because it was in a small town. We did not have to be, you could be there close by and nothing ever happened. No kidnappings or anything like that, not like here that we have to have the kids well protected. You see how many things happen. I remember that well we played outside, I would go with my cousins, we would go to the river, that is how we were on horses, me, everything really quiet, no, no, there weren't so many dangers like nowadays. For elementary and middle school I went but in another larger town nearby and later I went to Chihuahua. I was studying to be a secretary but I got married and I did not

finish (laughs) I only needed one year. I was almost 18 years old, 18 years, yes.)

(No, well we lived there only for a couple of months. And then we came to live here. We were here and here is where my oldest son was born. He was born here, we only lived here for a couple of months because it did not go too well for us and so we returned. We got there and my husband started working for the railroad and so we went to live over there. Have you heard about Las Barrancas de Cobre? We lived about ten minutes away from there. We lived there for about 6 years and then we went to Chihuahua because my husband bought a house there and so we went there. And in Chihuahua we lived for about another 6 years and then we decided to come back here. I believe it was in '86? Because my husband had a job with the Ford and he had an uncle that lived here and who talked to him about how nice it was over here and I don't know what else and so we came and well no, it did not go so smooth (laughing). We, we went back.)

Sofía speaks of their experience in the United States when they came for the first time in 1986, and the reasons they had to return in 2000.

Sofía—Aquí Encantada. Mi esposo empezó a trabajar con mi tío, él es contratista y no lo trataba bien le pagaba \$4.00 dólares la hora así que nos iba muy mal. Y pues yo estuve yendo por mi embarazo al Lovelace y pues él nada más sacaba para pagar porque estábamos pagando nada más sacaba para pagar la cuenta. Y dijo pues vamos que estamos

haciendo aquí. Y nada más esperamos a que naciera mi hijo y nos fuimos. Fue la amnistía como una semana después (laughs) y ya pues ni modo. ¿Qué duraríamos?, unos 7 meses, 6 o 7 meses duramos. Sí ya venía embarazada. Y luego ya que nació mi hijo nos fuimos. Nos hizo regresar que mi esposo trabajaba mucho y pues no, no nos alcanzaba para vivir y a penas pagar la casa. Y él puso una carpintería y él siempre me decía, Sofía vamos, no y vamos y todo el tiempo estuve, no, no nos vamos. Y le robaron, le robaron el día de su cumpleaños todo, toda la herramienta que allá es carísima comprar la herramienta y le robaron todo pues ahora sí ya me voy bueno pues vete y se vino. Y este, estuvo que estaría unos tres meses él solo y entró a trabajar en el, cuando andaban construyendo el Big I, allí entró a trabajar. Y este ya tenía como una semana trabajando cuando yo vine para acá, y ya este...

(Here to Encantada. My husband began working with my uncle, he is a contractor and he did not treat him well, he paid him \$4.00 dollars the hour so it did not go well for us. And I had to go to Lovelace because of my pregnancy and so he earned only enough to make those payments, only enough to pay that bill. And so he said let's go what are we doing here. And we just waited until my son was born and we left. Amnesty was given like a week later (laughs) and so forget it. How long did we last, 7 months? We lasted like 6 or 7 months. Yes, I was pregnant when we came. And after my son was born we left. What made us return was that my husband worked a lot but it was not enough to live on only to make the

house payments. And so he started a carpentry business and he would always tell me, Sofia, let's go, let's go all the time and I would say no, no we are not going. And so they stole, they stole everything on his birthday all the tools that are very expensive to buy over there and so he said now I am going and I said well fine go ahead and go and so he came back. And so he was here for about three months then he began working when they were constructing the Big I, which is where he began working. He had been working there for about a week when I came.)

The Durán Family

I met Alma and Pedro Durán during my first year as a bilingual teacher in the fall of 1999. That was the year they arrived in the United States from the state of Chihuahua with their twin daughters. Both Alma and Pedro are in their late 30's, with a medium brown skin tone. One of their twin daughters was in my first grade bilingual classroom. Alma was very well known at school, she was always volunteering in her daughters' classrooms, befriending other mothers, staff, and teachers. She was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone who asked.

The Duráns came to the United States believing that their stay would be short. Their hope was to work for a while in order to save enough money to help them finish the house they had started building in Mexico. Alma and Pedro also hoped that during this time their daughters would learn English so that when they returned to Mexico they would have an advantage over all other students. Unfortunately, 10 years have gone by and the Duráns have not been able to save the money they need to finish building their house in Mexico. During those ten years they both have returned to Mexico once but at

separate times. Alma went back to renew her passport two years after being in the United States and Pedro about five years ago when his father passed away. During the ten years they been in the states, Pedro and Alma had a third child, a boy who is currently in 1st grade, the same age their twin daughters were when they arrived in Encantada in 1999. The Duráns are still living (renting) in the 2-bedroom apartment where they arrived to 10 years ago.

Pedro spoke about being disillusioned with the possibility of ever being able to save enough money to finish building his house in Mexico. If it was up to him, he would gather his belongings and return to Mexico immediately, but his wife and girls refuse to return. On the other hand, Alma is hopeful that with the new Obama administration in power there will be some type of amnesty that will allow her to return to Mexico this Christmas (2009). Furthermore, now that their twin daughters are in high school, they seem to be disappointed with the educational system of this country and are left wondering if they will have the opportunity to finish high school and make it to the university.

Alma, in her own words, about her experience in Mexico:

Alma—De Chihuahua, Chihuahua Pues era tranquila, era tranquila, poco, pocos problemas pero saliendo adelante, trabajando y estudiando. Eh, son nueve conmigo diez nada más que mis abuelos me dieron, me adoptaron o sea que ellos vendrían siendo mis tíos pero, madre más mi hermana. Ella ya falleció hace 4 años y ella se dedicaba a la florería. Sí, sabía pero nunca la vi como mamá siempre como hermana o sea como que, como que comprendí o sea no sabía realmente lo, que era lo que

pasaba como que realmente me, o sea ya cuando me decían ella es tu mamá, ella es tu mamá y pero nunca le pude decir mamá porque ella ya siempre vivía en otra casa y yo con mis abuelitos. Primaria, secundaria y hice un, un curso de bachillerato pero no lo terminé y de allí hice un curso de secretaria ejecutiva de un año y sí lo terminé. Pues como no tenía experiencia ni nada me fui a una, a una tienda de ropa era de un cuñado y allí me dieron la, la oportunidad de trabajar pero era la que llevaba los pagos no contabilidad, sí contabilidad pero de los, de los clientes como era donde fian ropa y todo era lo que yo me encargaba de cuando iban a dar un pago de pasar todo en una carpeta y todo para ir dando salidos y todo eso es a lo que yo me dedicaba. Allí duré casi como, seis años, siete años duré allí. Pero nomás duré un año haciendo eso de lo, de los clientes, de los pagos y ya después me dediqué a vender ropa allí mismo o sea me pasé al departamento de ventas allí fue donde ya duré pues ya casi 8 años duré allí. Eh, eh, eh, sí, me salí como por un año, un año y medio me casé y luego ya regresé otra vez. Sí volví a trabajar. Él ya trabajaba era repartidor de cerveza, trabajaba en la compañía de Chihuahua y él andaba en un camión repartiendo donde hacían fiestas él llevaba, llevaba la cerveza.

(From Chihuahua, Chihuahua. Well it was peaceful, it was peaceful, few, few problems, but always trying to get ahead, working and studying. Eh, there are nine with me there are ten only that my grandparents they gave me, they adopted me in other words they (the people who raised her) were

my uncles but my mother and also my sister. She passed away about four years ago and she had a flower shop.)

(Yes, I knew, but I never saw her like a mother, always like a sister it's just that well I understood I really did not know what was going on it's just that when they would tell me she is your mother but I could never call her mother because she always lived in another house and I with my grandparents. I did elementary and middle school one, I also did a high school course but I did not finish it and from there I did an executive secretary program for a year and that I did finish. Well since I did not have any experience and nothing else, I left to go to a store that sold clothing. It belonged to a brother-in-law and there they gave me a chance, the chance to work but I was responsible for payments but not really accounting a bit like accounting but the job was receiving payments from customers since they had a layaway type of plan. Each time a client went to make a payment I would put it in that customer's file and I had to keep all those payments correct until they paid the bill off that is what I did. I was there for almost six years, seven years I was there. But I only lasted about a year handling the client's accounts and afterwards I began selling clothes there at the same store. In other words, I went to the sales department and that is where I lasted almost eight years. Eh, eh, eh, I left for about a year and a half, I got married and then I returned once again. Yes, I came back to work. He already worked, he distributed beer, he worked in the company

from Chihuahua and he drove around in a truck distributing the beer wherever there were parties he would, he would take the beer.)

I asked what made her immigrate to the United States:

Alma:—Pues unas de las razones por las que venimos es porque allá estábamos construyendo una casa pero como no había dinero suficiente no había los medios para juntar tanto dinero entonces se vino primero mi esposo y luego él iba eh, se suponía que él iba a juntar dinero pero nos íbamos a venir juntos pero no se pudo y luego ya como al mes y medio nos venimos nosotros pero esa es la razón por la que nos venimos nomás para juntar dinero para poder techar la casa. Sí, eso era la, el plan de nosotros y que, y la posibilidad de que como no estábamos bien económicamente una de las razones también era que, pensábamos que nuestras hijas al agarrar el idioma, el inglés y otras cosas iba a ser mejor futuro para ellas, es lo que pensábamos o sea en cierta manera venimos a la escuela y que ellas se refuerzan un poco con el inglés y que agarran más oportunidades ellas, era lo que pensábamos.

(Well some of the reasons why we came over here it is because over there we were building a house but there was not enough money we did not have the resources to gather so much money so then my husband came first and then he was going to eh, supposedly he was going to raise money but we were going to come together but it did not happen that way and then a month and a half later we came but that is the reason we came only to raise money to put a roof on our house. Yes, that was our plan and

since, there was a possibility that since we were not financially stable another reason was that, we thought that our daughters by learning the language, English and other things, it was going to be a better future for them, that is what we thought, in other words, we came for their schooling and so that they learn English and that way they could have more opportunities, that is what we thought.)

Here is Pedro Durán's life story in Mexico:

Pedro—Soy originado de Chihuahua México, Chihuahua, Chihuahua, allí nací. Mi niñez pues, eh fuimos cuatro hombres y tres mujeres de familia, mis padres aparte. Y este fuimos una familia muy unidad, nunca tuvimos problemas ni nada, pues mi padre nos pudo, es que nos quiso dar lo mejor que, que él pudo darnos y vivimos bien es lo que, pues en la escuela normal igual que todos, cualquier niño, asistiendo a clases y todo y, um, pues, es lo que tengo que decir. Mi papá trabajaba en este, en las plantas de gas era supervisor. Pues bueno cuando yo tengo uso de razón, yo sabía que trabajaba en el gas mucho antes trabajaba este con acarreando material así para construcción y como piedra, arena y todo eso era su trabajo de joven y ya después fue cuando se integró al, el equipo de las plantas de gas y eso. Sí, mi mamá siempre fue ama de casa siempre estuvo este atendiéndonos a nosotros porque pues puros chavalos y luego casi todos uno tras otro (laughs) era ama de casa, es hasta la fecha. Sí, fui a la escuela primaria y secundaria fue lo único que tuve. Pues este no la verdad no fui muy bueno para la escuela entonces este mi papá nos quiso

dar estudio a todos, él si queríamos estudiar él estaba dispuesto a pagar lo que fuera para que siguiéramos estudiando nomás que no salí muy bueno para la escuela entonces pos ya me dedique a trabajar. Bueno, no que fuera bueno si no que ni bueno ni malo pero como que no me llamaba mucho la atención, como que no tenía una meta fija o sea estaba nomás viviendo el, el momento y, y estudiando nomás la pura secundaria y todo, no quise seguir estudiando preparatoria.

(I come from Chihuahua, Mexico, Chihuahua. I was born in Chihuahua. My childhood well, eh, we were four men and three women in the family, and my parents. And we were a very united family, we never had problems or anything, well my father could have, it is just that he wanted to give us the best, that he could have given us and so we lived well, at school everything was normal the same as others like any kid attending classes and all that, um, well that is all I have to say. My father worked in, at the gas plants he was a supervisor. Well ever since I can remember, I knew that he worked there and a long time before that he used to deliver construction material such as rock, sand and all that was his job as a young man and then later that is when he started with the gas company and all that. Yes, my mother was always a homemaker she was almost always taking care of us well because we were all youngsters and then one right after the other (laughs) she was a homemaker, even to this day. Yes, I did go to elementary and middle school that is the only thing I had. Well, truthfully I was not real good at school so then my father he tried to give

us schooling, if we wanted to study he was more than willing to support us and pay for whatever career we wanted to follow it's just that I was not really good at school so then I just decided to focus on working. Well, it was not that I was not good it's just that I was neither good nor bad but it really did not grab my attention it's just that I did not have a fixed goal in other words I was only living the moment and studying only in middle school and everything, I did not want to continue with high school.)

Here is what he said when asked why he immigrated to the United States:

Pedro—Pues este yo cuando me vine para acá, precisamente en esta casa en donde estoy tenía un hermano donde vivimos, no, no, bueno se llama Juan Durán él, él vivía en esta casa, entonces yo ya estaba haciendo mi casa allá en México y pues me faltaba echar la loza y para conseguir el dinero allá para la losa, en México si lo hubiera podido conseguir pero este me dijo mi hermano vente para acá que acá lo consigues muy rápido entonces yo me vine. Pues yo ya había empezado hacer la casa y eso y lo único, la levanté y todo y me faltaba echar la loza, la loza viene siendo el techo. Entonces me dijo mi hermano que me viniera para acá que acá estaba bien fácil que aquí podía conseguir muy rápido el dinero y pos la verdad no se me hace tan fácil. Y no total que me vine para acá y mi hermano se fue nos quedamos solos aquí y hasta la fecha hemos estado solos aquí pos trabajando tampoco a faltado pero tampoco a sobrado.

(Well so when I came to live over here, precisely in this house where I am I had a brother where we lived, no, no, well his name is Juan Durán, he, he

lived in this house, so I was already building my house over there in Mexico and well I needed to lay down the slab and to get the money for laying down the slab in Mexico I could have gotten it but my brother told me come over here, over here you will get the money quickly and so I came. Well I had already started to build the house and that was the only thing, I built it and everything but I needed to lay down the slab, which is the roof part. So then my brother told me that I should come over here that everything was easy here and that I could quickly get the money and to tell you the truth I do not think it is that easy. And no, well finally I came over here and my brother left we stayed here by ourselves and since then we have been alone here well working, we have not gone without work but not a lot either.)

The life histories, *testimonios* of the Hernández, Carillo, Durán, and Sias families, contribute to the collective stories of immigrants of color historically and in contemporary times.³⁰ I have repeatedly been asked what does all this have to do with education? The more I ponder this question the stronger I feel that as a Latina, Mexican immigrant woman of color and a bilingual teacher in a place like in Encantada, it has everything to do with education. If we acknowledge that two-thirds of the 46 million Latinas/os living in the United States are immigrants or the children of immigrants (C. Suárez-Orozco & M. Suárez-Orozco, 2009), then we can begin to understand how the life stories and *testimonios* of Mexican immigrant families, should matter to all educators.

³⁰ I use *testimonios* as defined by Smith (2002) “a form through which a voice of a “witness” is accorded space and protection” (p.144)

Through the life stories and *testimonios* of Mexican immigrant families educators can begin to understand that the migration process is a painful and traumatic experience. Furthermore, the adjustment process for Mexican immigrant families once in the United States is difficult and painful. Educators also can begin to critically deconstruct the dehumanizing discourse about Mexican immigrants in the media. In addition, they can begin to see how dehumanizing discourse transfers to schools in the form of racial stereotyping and deficit perceptions of Mexican immigrant families and their children. As a result of listening to the life stories and *testimonios* of Mexican immigrant families, educators can begin to educate their children from an emancipatory/liberatory paradigm. An emancipatory/liberatory paradigm would entail curriculum and instruction that builds on the Critical Race Theory tenets of *the commitment to social justice* and *centrality of experiential knowledge* (This will be further discussed in chapter seven). In order for educators to teach from this emancipatory/liberatory paradigm, they must critically comprehend the historical and present-day context of the relationship between the United States and Mexico.

Mexico/United States Region Analysis

As Mexican immigrants continue to be the targets of the racist and xenophobia attacks in the United States immigration debate, it is essential to contextualize the place of origin of the participants within the larger global, neo-liberal narrative. Furthermore, in order to have a better understanding of the impact of the neo-liberal policies and their affects on the daily lived experiences of the Mexican immigrant participants in this study, it is important to analyze the region in Mexico they come from and compare, contrast that to this region of the United States where the study took place. Consequently, it is also of

equal importance to examine the neo-liberal narrative of the region in the U.S. they chose to reside in. Overall, the following section is an attempt to critically analyze the effects of neo-liberalism/neo-liberal ideology on the political, social, and economic policies on both sides of the border. It is also vital to give the historical context and relationship between Ciudad Juárez and Encantada, NM.

Ciudad Juárez

Ciudad Juárez is located in the Mexican state of Chihuahua and it was founded in 1659 as Paso del Norte. It was not until 1888 that it received the name of Ciudad Juárez. It is a border town; it sits across from the U.S. city of El Paso, Texas. Currently the population is an estimated 1.3 million people. Ciudad Juárez is well known for being one of the first border cities where U.S corporations established *maquiladoras*, which brought many Mexican citizens from other states and regions to the U.S./ Mexico border area. According to Alejandro Lugo (2008), Ciudad Juárez is not only "...one of the largest industrialized border cities in the Americas but in the world" (p. 1). Given its proximity to the United States and its border identity, Ciudad Juárez's growth and industrialization are the results of the economic, political and social needs of its neighbor to the north. Up until 1881 Ciudad Juárez's economy was agriculturally based. It was not until the late 19th century that American investment and capitalist interest in the development of the railroad lines to provide access to Mexican mineral mines, mainly copper and silver, did their agricultural economy change (Lugo, 2008). During this period there was an increase in internal migration of men from northern Mexico to Ciudad Juárez who came to work on the railroad and agricultural fields of the southwestern United States.

With the establishment of the Bracero Program in 1942 Ciudad Juárez became the port of entry for Mexican male workers coming into the agricultural industry of southern New Mexico and west Texas. As a result, the city's population growth during this period was a direct consequence of the "cheap" labor demand for the capitalist interest of the southwestern United States. Lugo (2008) points out that Ciudad Juárez ended up becoming a "labor depot" for the United States. With the end of the Bracero Program in 1965, a large number of Mexican laborers were left unemployed roughly-around 200,000 in the border region alone (Lugo, 2008). In order to combat the high unemployment rate in the border region in 1965, the Mexican government implemented the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) that established the *maquiladoras* in Ciudad Juárez. According to Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) this shift by the Mexican government moved the industrialization process from state control to foreign capital investment.

The Border Industrialization Program was initially justified as a means to absorb displaced agricultural workers after the end of the Bracero Program... Aside from the benefit of major tax breaks, the BIP allows for the hyper-exploitation of Mexican workers, who are paid a fraction of the wages earned by workers north of the border. (pp. 115-116)

For many, Ciudad Juárez has become an extreme example of neo-liberalism, where corporate interests and profits are placed above the social needs and rights of everyday people, workers, children, and women. The *maquiladoras* in Juárez signify the enormous capitalist interests of U.S. corporations by keeping workers' wages down and unions powerless on both sides of the borders. According to Lourdes Godínez Leal (2008), "More than 225,000 of Juárez residents, nearly half the city's labor force, work in

the *maquiladora*, most of them women under the age of 30” (p. 32). In 2005 the *maquiladora* industry along the U.S./Mexico border produced \$113 billion worth in goods, and its profits benefited U.S. corporations such as GM, Dupont, and Dow Chemical (Akers Chacón and Davis, 2006).

Within the last couple of decades Ciudad Juárez has been plagued with extreme violence. Just in 2008 alone an estimated 1,400 people were murdered. In the last decade Ciudad Juárez has made national headlines due to the murder and disappearance of hundreds of young women who worked in the maquiladoras. Godínez Leal (2008) states,

Over the past 15 years, some 400 women have been murdered, and hundreds more have disappeared in Ciudad Juárez. The victims, most of them teenagers, have typically been abducted, raped, strangled, and left in empty lots, often on their way home from work. (p. 31)

According to the Ciudad Juárez *El Dario* newspaper, 136 people were murdered within the first 19 days in June of 2009. For the citizens of Ciudad Juárez the ongoing violence in the form of murders and kidnappings is the ever-present daily occurrences that they must endure on a day-to-day basis. *El Dario de Juárez* and the *El Paso Times* both reported on June 22, 2009 that in Ciudad Juárez there are currently 7,500 soldiers along with 2,300 federal police officers attempting to combat the drug cartel violence infesting the city.

Encantada, NM

The city of Encantada is located in the southwestern state of New Mexico in the United States. Encantada is the largest city in the state with an estimated population of 518,271 (U.S. Census Data, 2007). Encantada is located 230 miles north of Ciudad

Juárez, about 4-hour drive by car. Within the last 10 years Encantada has not only increased its population but it has also expanded geographically towards the west. The construction of new homes, and businesses as well as the city's infrastructure have been mainly built by Mexican immigrant labor. Furthermore, in the last 15 years, immigrants from Mexico have been settling in Encantada; their presence can be seen in the construction, restaurant/hotel, and small business industry. Duran (2007) states,

Many recognize that new housing construction in Encantada in particular would come to a screeching halt if not for *Mexicano* laborers. Small groups of men, young and old, can be observed in pick-up trucks in the morning rush hour traffic, on their way to a landscaping job or to the construction site. (p. 71)

The Encantada Public School system has also felt their presence in the dire need for bilingual/ESL certified teachers. In 2000, 28,447 Mexican immigrants were living in Encantada and this was an increase from the 11,254 in 1990 (Duran, 2007). In the midst of the immigration debate within the United States borders, Encantada can be seen as a safe haven for immigrants due to Resolution 151 passed by the Encantada City Council in 2001, which designated Encantada as an "immigrant friendly" city. The Resolution in a sense marked a victory for Mexican immigrants residing in this city because it acknowledges their presence as well as their labor in building Encantada. In June of 2009, a robbery and murder of a Denny's restaurant cook ignited a controversy regarding Encantada "immigrant friendly" status.³¹ The current Republican mayoral candidate, in

³¹ The three suspects in the robbery and murder of a Denny's restaurant cook were said to be illegal immigrants from El Salvador. One had been deported but re-entered the U.S. "illegally".

the November 2009 election renamed the resolution from “immigrant friendly” to a “sanctuary city” for “illegal” immigrants. He promises, that if elected mayor of Encantada, "...will get rid of the so-called sanctuary city policy that the current Mayor has put in place that prohibits officers from asking suspects in crimes about their immigration status” (Eyewitness News 4, June 24, 2009). The current Mayor responded by saying that Encantada is not a “sanctuary city” and it has never been.

In order to understand the political, economic, and social manifestations of the neo-liberal narrative about Encantada, it is essential to deconstruct the historical complexity of New Mexico’s identity within the U.S. capitalist system. New Mexico did not obtain statehood and entrance into the Union until 1912. The struggle to obtain statehood (1850-1912) was the result of racist, White supremacist ideology because after the conquest of the Southwest and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, New Mexico had the largest population of Mexicans residing in U.S. territory. This denial of Congress to give New Mexico statehood was racially based as evidenced in the comments made by Senator Calhoun who suggested that “Mexicans were more ‘savage’ than Indians and, therefore, were incapable of governing themselves or white Americans” (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, p. 53). This belief of the racial inferiority of Mexicans/Nuevomexicanos in New Mexico was not only voiced by Calhoun but also shared by a majority of White Americans who felt that Mexicans were the result of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, and who had inherited the worst traits of both races (Duran, 2007). It is within this historical backdrop that the emergence of a Spanish American identity and rejection of “lo Mexicano” that Hispano people of New Mexico used to distance themselves from

incoming Mexicans, which also was a mechanism used for self-preservation. According to Nieto-Phillips,

During the last half of the nineteenth century, most of New Mexico's Spanish-speaking population variably referred to themselves in Spanish as Nuevomexicanos, vecinos, mexicanos, neomexicanos, or hispanoamericanos. By the twentieth century, however, many had begun to refer to themselves in English as "Spanish Americans." (2004, p. 53)

Mexican immigrants have made their way to New Mexico since the nineteenth century, working and contributing to the local economy. During the period of 1910-1920 Mexican immigrants were farm workers in the southern part of the state. During the Mexican Revolution many Mexican citizens fled north to escape the turmoil of this civil war. In 1920 2,000 Mexican immigrants lived in Encantada. Throughout the 1920's and 30's Mexican immigrants worked in the mining industry of the southern part of New Mexico. Moreover, with the passage of the Bracero Program in 1942, Mexican immigrant labor was once again recruited to work in the cotton fields of southern New Mexico. In 1980 the Mexican consulate offered an informal number that reflected 10,000-12,000 legal and 15,000 undocumented Mexican immigrants resided in New Mexico. By the end of the 20-century New Mexico capitalist interests once again required Mexican immigrant labor in the areas of agricultural, construction and service-related industries (Duran, 2007). The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions Economic Research and Analysis Bureau Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) in 2009 reported the following wages for the various occupations in Encantada: In construction, drywall workers made anywhere from \$11.51 to \$20.85 per hour; insulation workers,

\$11.35-\$17.00/hour; dishwashers, \$7.00-\$8.50/hour; janitors, \$7.75-\$10.70; housekeepers, \$7.00-\$9.50/hour; and landscaping grounds workers, \$7.80-\$10.39 the hour. As Garcia-Acevedo asserts, “Currently, in New Mexico as elsewhere in the United States, Mexican labor has become institutionalized and is no longer invisible. Many sectors of the New Mexican economy are fully dependent on Mexican workers” (2000, p. 233). In addition, the dissertation study conducted by Cristina Duran in 2007 regarding Mexican presence in Encantada demonstrated that there were “approximately 285 Mexican immigrant businesses and/or storefronts in the city” (p. 158).

Globalization/Neo-liberalism

While attending the Border Social Forum in Ciudad Juárez in the fall of 2006, I heard the following comment: “Ciudad Juárez was a modern day neo-liberal experiment” because of the extreme poverty and violence it has experienced. This comment has remained with me ever since, as I think of the way in which the extreme poverty, violence against women, and drug related murders have infested this border city. Neo-liberalism/neo-colonialism/corporate capitalism seek to privilege corporate interests, profits, the market, and favor deregulation, privatization, and consumerism over the social well being of entire populations (Akers Chacón and Davis, 2006; Giroux, Macedo & Gounari, 2006). This economic model is responsible for what is happening in Ciudad Juárez because within this neo-liberal ideology human misery, racism, violence, and poverty are blamed on the individual and not acknowledge the result of these neo-liberal policies that breed such inequality. Macedo and Gounari (2006) state, “In addition to the characterization of otherness in order to devalue other human beings, neo-liberal policies implement racist practices by largely excluding millions of people from equal

participation in the economic world (dis) order it imposes” (2006, p. 12). Furthermore, these extreme neo-liberal policies that are responsible for the infestation of poverty, violence, and human misery in countries like Mexico, and that force entire populations to immigrate north are also present in United States.

It is vital to understand the effect that neo-liberal policies such as NAFTA have had in the rise of the narco-economy and drug war in Mexico. Mexican agricultural, small rural farming was destroyed by one of NAFTA’s provisions that eliminated subsidized prices by the National Popular Subsistence Company (Conasupo).³² This provision allowed the big U.S. agricultural corporations to dump their agricultural products into the Mexican market; Mexican small farmers could not compete. The destruction and privatization of Mexico’s “*ejidos*” (communal peasant lands) have given rise to the growing of opium and marijuana, which in turn has produced the narco-economy saturating Mexico (Akers Chacón, 2009). The abandonment of the social pact with the Mexican people by their government has allowed the narco-economy to expand as the only source of employment for Mexican people. Once in the United States, Mexican immigrants are confronted with neo-liberal policies through the constant dehumanizing manifested through the media, policy, and second- class citizen status.

Lipman (2004) states that global cities are “defined by gentrified neighborhoods and redeveloped downtowns for upscale living, tourism, and leisure alongside deteriorated low-income neighborhoods” (p. 24). New Mexican economy has been

³² Mexico’s 1982 debt crisis led the government to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The conditions were to help Mexico but only if they agreed to a “structural adjustment plan.” This plan meant that Mexico would cut government spending in education, health care, and other social programs. At the same time, Mexico’s economy would need to be privatized and deregulated in order to allow for foreign investments and corporations. Thus, the neo-liberal policies began which culminated with NAFTA in 1994.

dependent on its tourism, military-industrial association such as The Airforce Base and The Labs, both in Encantada. Within the last 10 years Encantada has begun to project the characteristics of a global city. Its downtown area has been transformed “from a declining core to an attractive, lively center for business, culture, entertainment, and urban living” (Encantada official city website). This redevelopment of the downtown area can be seen in its million dollar federal, state, and district courthouses and its half-a-million lofts and business building outlying the downtown area. In addition, at the state and local level filming has become a booming industry. Encantada Studios is a 28-acre development recently constructed in the city’s southeast mesa. According to Encantada’s official city website, filming in the city requires very few permits “which makes producing a project here easy and cost-effective.”

Encantada, like anywhere else in the United States, is no exception. Here Mexican immigrants are used as a source of cheap labor to build the capitalist interests of a few, and although this is an “immigrant friendly city,” ICE raids are not uncommon here. Border patrol vehicles are seen around the city in communities where larger numbers of Mexican immigrants reside. In 2005, even our so-called proud bilingual, Hispano Governor Bill Richardson declared the New Mexico/Mexico border a “state of emergency.” According to Richardson, evidence of an increase in drug smuggling and undocumented immigrants had convinced him to make such a declaration.

Even the public schools have not been immune to such presence; in the fall of 2004 the Border Patrol entered Cerrillos High School and apprehended three Mexican students. In an article by the local newspaper titled *Encantada working on New Migrant Student Plan*, it stated that the school district’s policy was to change: “The policy

changes are part of the district's negotiations with lawyers for three Cerrillos High School students from Chihuahua, Mexico, who were detained by the U.S. Border Patrol outside their school in March 2004" (April 7, 2006). One should not be surprised at such incidents, since after all New Mexico's claim and privileging of their Spanish American identity (racially White and European) has been a direct correlation of rejecting "*lo Mexicano*" within the context of "othering" the Mexican.

The next chapter delves into the social, political, and economic lived experiences of Mexican immigrants within the context of immigration policy, law, and reform post 9/11. The Sias, Hernández, Durán, and Carrillo families expose their opinions, views, and knowledge about these issues based on their own daily lived experiences in Encantada.

Chapter 5

CRT helps to raise some important questions about the control and production of knowledge—particularly knowledge about people and communities of color. (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 424)

Making Sense of U.S. Policies Post 9/11

In Critical Race Theory, counter-storytelling is the use of stories based on lived experiences in order to better understand how people of color experience race and racism on a daily basis. Counter-stories are essential as a means to view Mexican immigrant families as educated, informed individuals while at the same time shattering the stereotype of “illegal,” “alien,” and “peon,” the image constructed of immigrants within the racist U.S. capitalist society. The daily lived experiences of Mexican immigrants allow them to construct a world-view of their situation in the United States rarely acknowledged by the mainstream media, politicians, or U.S citizens. The stories of the participants in this study provide an insight into how they make sense of the political, economic, and social policies put forth by the state through their daily lived experiences.

After the horrific events of September 11, 2001 that prompted the so-called “war on terror,” the lives of many immigrants and people of color in the United States were transformed. The U.S./Mexico border and Mexican immigrants became synonymous with criminality, criminals, terrorism, and terrorists. Along with Arab and Muslim males, Mexican immigrants became targets of state terrorism carried out by the media, politicians, neo-vigilante groups, and conservative Americans. As Tram Nguyen states, “The domestic war on terrorism jeopardizes real security for millions of people in the United States, primarily people of color and immigrants” (p. 153). Villenas’s (2001) CRT

analysis of Latina mothers and the “benevolent racism” they encountered in a small North Carolina town is essential in challenging the dominant ideology which seeks to label Latino families as the “problem” and “deficit.” Furthermore, Villena’s (2001) research seeks to privilege the voices and experiences of those Latina mothers in contesting that “deficit” paradigm while representing them as “educated” women. Similarly, this chapter uses the following critical race theory tenets: *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination* (language, immigrant status, ethnicity, class), *the challenge to dominant ideology* and *the centrality of experiential knowledge* to analyze the perceptions and interpretations of the people at the center of it all, Mexican immigrant families. In addition, the *experiential knowledge* of all the participants is about demonstrating their “educated” identity based on the formation of their *epistemology* as third world *emigrantes* living in post 9/11 United States.

Globalization/Neo-liberalism/Neo-colonialism

Within the context of immigration reform there are many narratives that become universal truths that mainstream Americans gravitate towards in order to justify their overt and covert racism towards Mexican immigrants. The mainstream narrative in the United States for why Mexican immigrants cross the border into the U.S. is in search of the American way of life, the jobs and endless benefits along with universal liberties this country has to offer. Moreover, this narrative is heard from the mainstream media but also in the classrooms of our public schools throughout the nation. Sen and Mamdouh (2008) state that, “Also missing from the debate is any discussion of what drives immigration in the first place, and the role that the United States plays in both encouraging neo-liberal economic policies that increase the gap between rich and

poor...” (p. 161). However, if you ask Mexican immigrants why they left their country, they will say because the economic situation in Mexico got so desperate that they had no choice but travel north in search of a job in order to provide for their loved ones back home. The decision by Mexican immigrants to pick up their belongings one day after being laid off from their job(s) and make the life-risking journey to the United States is deceptive. Each and every one of the participants that I interviewed again and again led me through their journey of making every effort to find another job in their country and after many attempts, being left with no other alternative than to cross the border into the United States. This effort is clearly illustrated by Daniel Carrillo, who after 11 years of working for SEL, an American *maquiladora* in Juarez that made parts for General Motors, was laid off in 2001.

Ya con el tiempo busqué trabajo, el trabajo con unos electricistas pero ya el salario era muy bajo. En es tiempo se aprovechaban mucho de que pagar lo que ellos querían con tal, o sea lo que quiere uno era trabajar no importaba lo que le pagaban a uno. Entonces, eh, ya este, pues empecé a trabajar ahí, y ahí duré como unos seis meses, como seis meses trabajando y luego me fui a otra compañía a trabajar y allí me pagaban un poquito más. Y allí duraría como unos seis meses en esa empresa.

(And with time I looked for a job, with some electricians but the salary was very low. During that period they took advantage of one and paid whatever they wanted, because what one wanted was a job regardless of what they paid. So I started working and I worked there for about 6

months, so I worked there 6 months then I went to another company that paid a little better. And I worked at that company for about 6 months.)

David Bacon (2008) reports that, “As the Mexican economy, especially the border maquiladora industry tied to the U.S. market, Mexican workers lost jobs when market for the output of those factories shrank during U.S. recessions” (p. 25). Another participant, Sofía Sias, revealed how her husband (after leaving the *maquiladora* he worked for and coming to the United States in 1986 for a brief period and then returning to Mexico) made every attempt to find a job in order to be able to survive economically.

Nos hizo regresar que mi esposo trabajaba mucho y pues no, no nos alcanzaba para vivir y a penas pagar la casa. Y él puso una carpintería y él siempre me decía, Sofía vamos, no y vamos y todo el tiempo estuve, no, no nos vamos. Y le robaron, e robaron el día de su cumpleaños todo, toda la herramienta que allá es carísima comprar la herramienta y le robaron todo pues ahora sí ya me voy bueno pues vete y se vino.

(What made us return was that my husband worked a lot and well no, it was not sufficient for us to live on, just enough to pay the house. He put a carpentry business and he would say Sofía let’s go, I would say no and all the time I would say no we are not going. And they robbed us, they robbed us on his birthday, all the tools, tools that are very expensive to buy so they took everything so then he said now I’m leaving, so I said go and he came.)

Another vital discussion missing from the immigration debate is the direct impact the United States neo-liberal economic policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have had on Mexico's economic system.³³ Moreover, deconstructing the direct correlation between NAFTA and its affect on Mexico's economy helps explain the increase of Mexican immigrants embarking in a long, brutal, and often death-sentence journey to the United States. Within a year of the adoption of NAFTA, Mexico lost one million jobs; the *maquildoras*, the foreign-owned American assembly plants began to decline in 2001, and the companies, of course, went to China, since China offered corporations tax breaks and a cheap labor force. U.S. corporations now control 40% of Mexico's formal jobs, Wal-Mart being number one. Nineteen million more Mexican citizens live in poverty today in Mexico than in 1994. The U.S. agribusiness now controls Mexican agricultural production that has contributed to the displacement of about 2 million small, local, and family farmers from their land. As Bill Fletcher Jr. (2008) states in regards to NAFTA, and immigrants, "Contrary to the xenophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric many of us have heard, it was not because '...everyone wants to be in America...' but rather as a direct result of policies initiated by the USA and their allies in Ottawa and Mexico City" (p. 2). The connection between NAFTA and Mexican migration to the United States was clearly addressed in the personal experiences of Daniel Carrillo and Sofia Sias. Daniel explains the impact the economic recession in the United States had on the *maquiladoras* in Juárez in early 2000.

³³ The North American Free Trade Agreement was a trade agreement signed by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, that went into effect January 1, 1994. "NAFTA was designed to facilitate trade and business development within and among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and it reduced tax burdens for business that wanted to relocate, getting rid of tariffs for traded goods" (Sen and Mamdouh, 2008, 126-127).

Porque, la, la empresa hubo, cuando hubo la recesión aquí en Estados Unidos en el 2000, entonces muchas empresas americanas sintieron la recesión aquí en Estados Unidos entonces muchas empresas cerraron muchas empresas empezaron a liquidar a gente porque ya era mucha, o sea era mucha gente y ya no iba poder. Este por la misma recesión que había pues ya el producto iba bajar, entonces nos empezaron a liquidar a, a muchas personas nos liquidaron y fue por eso que yo dejé de trabajar en esa empresa.

(Because, the, the company, when in 2000 the United States had a recession, then many American companies felt the recession here in the United States then many companies closed, many companies began to lay off people because there were too many, too many people and they would not be able to. Because of the recession the product was going to be sold at a low price; therefore, they started the lay offs; they laid off a lot of people and that is why I stopped working at that company.)

Moreover, Sofía describes the devastating consequences of NAFTA on her family's main source of food and financial means in rural Mexico.

Ellos vendían frijol, maíz cuando empezó el libre comercio empezaron a llevar de aquí más barato y ya ellos no les compraban se les quedaba todo. Y otra cosa que empezaron a sembrar semillas de aquí, este y que muy buena se que y pues dicen que les enfermó la tierra porque ya no levantaba como antes y ve que aquí les echan muchos químicos y no se que tanto. De hecho, si usted come aquí frutas en Estados Unidos no

saben como en México como allá tiene más sabor y aquí como desabrida naranjas todo. Y dicen que por tanto químico, los pesticidas.

(They sold beans, corn but when NAFTA started they began to take crops that were very cheap and they no longer bought from them so they were left with all of it. And another thing they started to plant seeds from here (USA) because they were said to be “really good” but they said that sicken the land because they did not harvest like before and here in the USA they put a lot of chemicals and other things. In fact, if you eat fruits from the United States they do not taste like they do in Mexico, over there they have more flavor and here the oranges are sour. And they said because of all the chemicals and pesticides.)

The direct impact that the United States economic policies have had on Mexico’s economy can be seen in and heard in the stories of the millions of Mexican immigrants currently living in this country facing an astonishing anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment as well as overt racist actions and policy from the government and the American people. At one end, they blame all their economic, social and political problems on them, and, at the other end, greatly benefit from their labor as seen in the overrepresentation of Mexicans doing manual work, farming, construction, hotel and restaurant services. Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) observe:

The subordination of Mexican capitalism to U.S. imperialism and the global institutions of neo-liberalism set the stage for further economic convulsions. Out-migration served as a release valve for the socially dislocated. The by-product was welcomed by a U.S. market to absorb not

only Mexican imports, but also its reserve armies of labor, since immigrants could be paid less and leveraged against unionized workers.

(p. 11)

Within the neo-liberal policies that drive Mexican immigrants north there are also the same policies that they encounter once they arrive in the U.S. to a racially stratified workforce. Mexican immigrants understand this “reserve of armies of labor” since they acknowledge that once in this country, the jobs available to them are mainly in construction, the restaurant/hotel industries, and agriculture. Alberto, José and Daniel all felt that there are many types of jobs available to Mexican immigrants, that they were capable of doing any type of work, but also realized they were tracked into jobs that had to do with construction and cleaning due to their "undocumented" status in this country.

Alberto: Um, tipos de trabajos para los inmigrantes hay bastantes pero creo que mayormente en la construcción y en los restaurantes. Casi de trabajos que se dice de profesional o con título es muy duro para un inmigrante bueno allá donde trabajo yo nunca. Yo soy el único mexicano que, que es completamente mexicano que trabaja ahí en, de mecánico técnico.

(Um, types of jobs for immigrants there's lots of but I think that mostly in construction or restaurants. Almost any type of job as in professional jobs that require a degree it is very difficult for an immigrant to get well over there where I work never. I am the only Mexican who, who is completely Mexican working there as a mechanic.)

Daniel: Pues de todo, ahora que yo veo hay de todo o sea, uno puede realizar cualquier trabajo no hay impedimento claro, o sea Ok ciertos trabajos donde uno necesita sus papeles legales verdad para poder trabajar. Pero en realidad yo he mirado de todo, todo tipo de trabajo. Sí la mayoría en la construcción o sea en trabajos como la insolación, o sea allí, sí, en la insolación la mayoría mexicanos sí claro porque son trabajos muy pesados y es un trabajo muy sucio y aparte la comezón o sea la picazón que da la insolación es terrible o sea sí, sí es muy feo.

(Well everything, now that I see there's every type in other words one could do any kind of job there is no impediment but of course in other words O.K. certain jobs where one needs papers to be able to work in. But in reality I have seen all sorts of things, all types of jobs. Yes in the majority like construction in jobs like insulation, there doing insulation work the majority are Mexican yes really because they are really hard jobs and it is a dirty job and besides you get really itchy because of the insulation it is terrible yes, yes, it is really ugly.)

Although José first acknowledges that Mexican immigrants do the work Americans do not want, he feels that given the opportunity they can carry out any job but feels that, overall, jobs for Mexican immigrants are underpaid.

José—¿Aquí? Um, pues todos los trabajos que no quieren los americanos, limpieza, construcción, restaurante. Bueno hay todo tipo de trabajos y cualquiera de nosotros puede desempeñar cualquier trabajo si, se nos da la oportunidad pero en general lo más fácil lo que no quieren aquí porque

no hay demanda, no hay mucha demanda de los americanos por un trabajo de lavar platos, de limpieza de construcción ellos no lo quieren hacer quién lo va hacer, nosotros. Pues de los restaurantes no está muy, muy bien, ni de la limpieza tampoco pero la construcción es, es bien pagada, yo no, yo veo que sí es bien pagado si alcanza para, pues alcanza para vivir.

(Here? Um, well all the jobs that Americans don't want: cleaning, construction, and restaurant. Well there are all sorts of jobs and any one of us could do any kind of job if given the opportunity but in general the easiest what they don't want here because there is no demand there is not much demand by the Americans for a dishwashing job, cleaning or construction they don't want to do it so who is going to do it, us. Well the restaurants it is not really, really good nor is the cleaning neither, the construction it is well paid, I see that it is well paid because it does help to survive.)

Sofía, Laura, and Alma felt the jobs that were available to Mexican immigrants were the hardest jobs and the ones that “Americans” did not want. Moreover, they had internalized the narrative that immigrants who come to the United States take the jobs not wanted by U. S. citizens. In addition, through their own experiences within this racially stratified labor force, Laura, Sofía and Alma understood the hardship of the jobs at hotels, cleaning offices, and houses. Furthermore, through their work experience they knew that most of the people doing those types of jobs were Mexican immigrants like them.

Laura—Pues nomás la limpieza porque sí le digo una persona por ejemplo allí donde yo trabajo sí se me hace muy pesado el trabajo que hacemos. Yo sí digo si yo tengo papeles yo no hago ese trabajo.

(Well, only cleaning because if I tell you that a person for example there where I work yes I do think it is really hard the work that we do. I say that if I had papers I would not do that job.)

Sofía—Pues los que no quieren hacer los americanos. Pues porque en la compañía ese ABM es a nivel nacional y este pues conoce uno que es mi pariente de Phoenix trabaja allí, y comentamos eso que si tiene un compañero americano claro que no, ninguno puros mexicanos les limpiamos todo Estado Unidos.

(Well, the ones that the Americans don't want to do. Well because at the company I work the ABM is a national company and I know someone who is a family member from Phoenix who worked there and so we were talking that if we have a fellow American worker that of course not one, only Mexicans we clean all of the United States.)

Alma—No pos aquí lo único que haya es los más pesados, viene siendo la construcción y, eh, pues el trabajo que no quiere hacer el, el gringo es el que nos deja a nosotros, o sea el más pesado. Pero realmente trabajos se ha visto ahora la construcción, donde agarran a nuestros esposos.

(No, well here the only thing that we find is the most strenuous and that is construction and well it is the job that nobody wants to do, the gringo it is what they leave us to do the hardest of jobs. But in reality the jobs that we see nowadays it is construction where they hire our husbands.)

What these narratives neglect to analyze is how corporate capitalism/neo-liberalism operates to create a racially stratified labor force that will work for low wages, with no benefits and no unionization because of the immigrants' legal status. Moreover, these divide-and-conquer strategies keep immigrants, people of color, and working class citizens from coming together to challenge the corporate elites.

President George W. Bush began his first term by discussing the possibility of a Temporary Guest Worker Program for Mexican immigrants. Mexicans and pro-immigrant groups viewed this Temporary Guest Program as a ghost from the past with a new name. The Bracero Program brought 4.8 million Mexican workers from 1942-1964 to the United State as a source of cheap labor and then later deported them to Mexico after being used and abused and no longer needed. Having this historical context as part of their experiential group knowledge, Mexican immigrants felt that this Temporary Guest Program would only continue to benefit corporate America by providing them with a source of cheap labor that could be used and abused for their own profit and wealth, but in a legal sort of way and backed by the United States government. Sandra Hernández believes this program is a trap for Mexican immigrants. "*A mi se me hace que es una trampa para nosotros porque ellos sólo nos quieren utilizar un tiempo y después mandarnos a México.*" (For me it is a trap because they want to use us for a certain time then send us back to Mexico.) Sofia Sias believes that the program will only take young

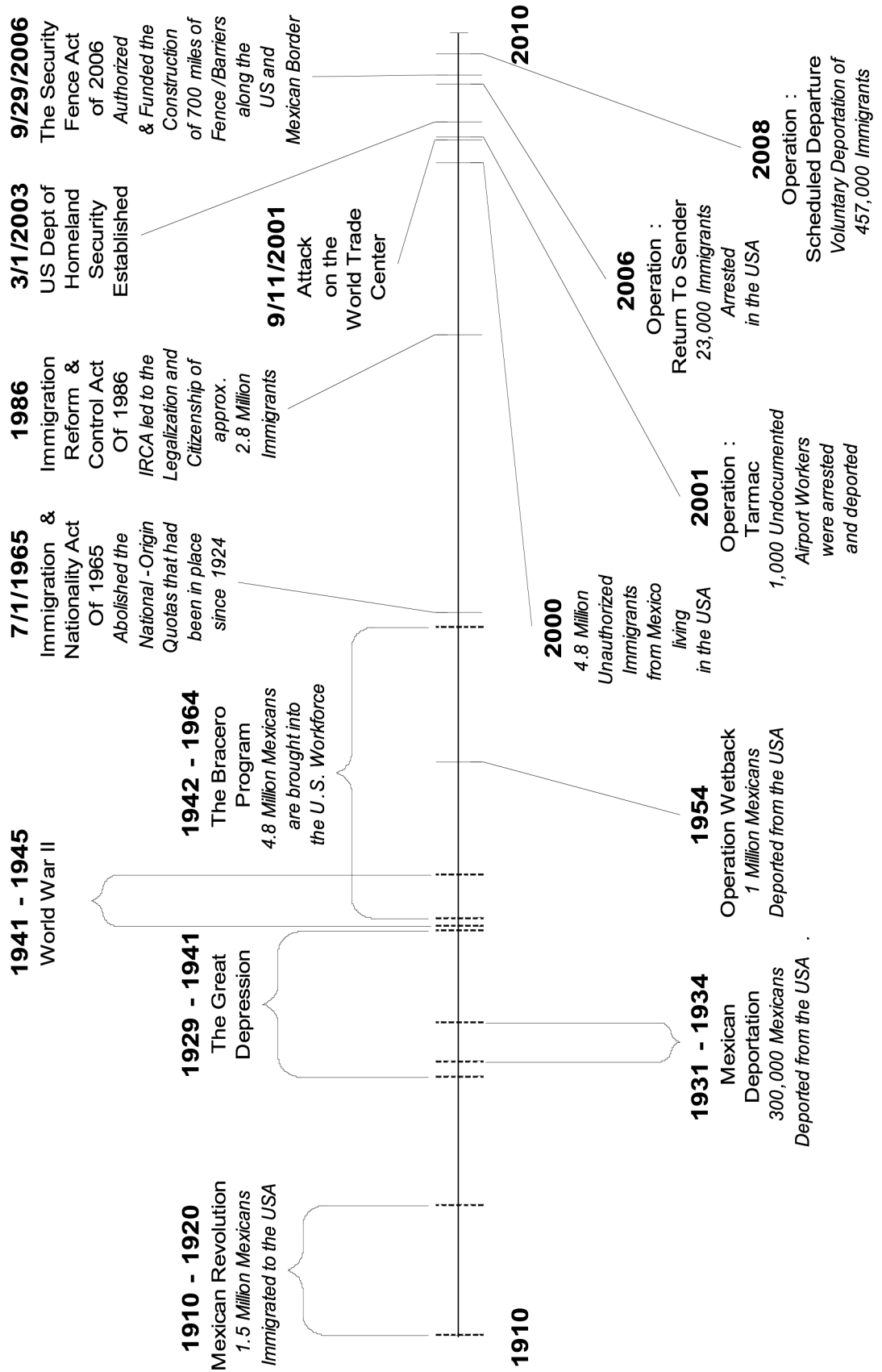


Figure 3—U.S. Immigration Policy and its affects on Mexican Immigrants

men, use and abuse them for their youth and strength. Besides, she feels families will be greatly affected due to separation.

Que es terrible para mí porque les va a dar trabajo a los hombres a los que puedan trabajar, ¿verdad?, joven van a venir, van a trabajar pues que 20 años si están jóvenes 15 años, cuando ya estén viejos y enfermos no les van a dar permiso. Y lo otro van a venir los hombres, van allá a dejar a los niños y las esposas solas. Y pues van a separar a las familias digo yo, cuando ya no les sirvan ya no les van a dar permiso claro está y qué van a hacer en México ¿de qué van a vivir?

(For me it is terrible because it is going to give work to the men that can work, young, they will come to work for what about 20 years if they are young 15 years, when they are old and sick they will not get permission. And the other, the men will come and leave their children and wives alone. And I say well they are going to separate families, when they are no longer useful they are not going to be given permission it is clear, and what are they going to do in Mexico, what are they going to live off?)

Pedro also felt that the program only sought to exploit Mexican labor through its youth and strength, but as they got older they would be left without anything, whether in the U.S. or in Mexico. He goes on to stress that the fair policy to implement would be an amnesty.

Se me hace que no es justo eso como va uno a venir aquí por ejemplo, su vida o su juventud o algo y luego de repente regresar a México y no tienes

nada ni aquí ni allá entonces pues yo creó que lo más justo o sea como una amnistía.

(I don't think that it is fair how is someone going to come over here for example, their life, their youth, there strength and then all of a sudden return to Mexico then you have nothing here nor there so I think the fair thing to do would be like an amnesty.)

Daniel Carrillo felt that the Temporary Guest Worker Program's limitation on the amount of time allowed to work legally in the United States would have an impact on a guest worker's being accustomed to a certain way of life, therefore making it difficult to return home.

Pues, no yo diría que no. No, no, no es un buen programa. Porque, pues iba estar un poco de tiempo uno trabajando legalmente verdad. Y, pero al paso de no sé 3 años ya tiene uno que regresarse a su, a su país de origen. Entonces, pues sea lo que sea en el tiempo que llevaba uno aquí en los Estados Unidos es este, pues ve que es un poquito más el progreso que lleva uno, esta, en sus países. Aquí es un poquito mejor o sea no, nos va un poquito mejor que en nuestros países. Entonces se impone uno a, a ese cierto nivel de ganar ese dinero, entonces pienso yo que sería muy problemático para toda esa gente que, que regresa a sus países, en ese caso de que son trabajadores huéspedes.

(Well I say no. No, no, no it is not a good program. Because well one will only be here for a short period working legally. But with time, I don't

know about 3 years one has to return to your country of origin. Therefore, well regardless of the time that one has lived in the United States well you see a little bit of progress you have made in comparison to your country. Here it is a little more, we are a little better off here than in our countries of origin. Then one becomes accustomed to that level of pay then I think it will be problematic for all those people to return to their countries of origin in the case they become temporary guest workers.)

All participants believed that the best solution to the immigration reform debate was the opportunity at amnesty. Alberto Hernández, when asked about the Temporary Guest Worker Program, felt that amnesty should be the route the government should take. *“Um, yo pienso que de, debe de irse un poquito más lejos y hacer, otro, un amnistía. Pienso que eso resolvería muchos problemas que ahorita como está la nación le conviene tener.”* (I think that, that it should go a little further and give another amnesty. I think it would resolve a lot of the problems this nation has right now.) This sentiment was also echoed by Laura Carrillo who says no to a Temporary Guest Worker Program because what she feels best benefits immigrants is an amnesty. Laura believes people will not want to return to Mexico after being here, even if it is temporary.

Pero le digo pues que no. Usted cree que la gente se va a querer ir para allá, pues no, a mí esa no, a mí me gustaría que entrara la amnistía y le dieran los papeles a uno para estar ya bien aquí, así como dice mucha gente no se va a querer ir a México, porque mucha gente ya tiene casa comprada muchos años viviendo aquí en Estados Unidos, como para de

repente irse para allá, yo digo si se va uno para allá, yo digo, ya no les van a ayudar arreglar papeles.

(But I tell you no. Do you think that people are going to want to return, well no, for me no, I would like an amnesty and that they would give the papers to us to be good here as he says many of the people will not want to return to Mexico, because lots of people already have bought a house and many years living in the United States for all of a sudden to pick up and return, I say if one returns, I say they will not help us to be documented.)

According to a 2007 study by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the United States already has a guest worker program in place for unskilled laborers described by some as “legalized slavery.” According to the study, the H-2 guest worker program does more abuse than good, even though it offers some basic protections to laborers which are mainly just on paper. On the other hand, the abuses are abundant and range from being cheated out of wages, inhumane living conditions, and no medical benefits for on-the-job injuries. Thus, the Southern Poverty Law Center study concurs with the perceptions that Mexican immigrants have in regards to a temporary guest worker program and their belief that the program will only continue to use and abuse immigrants.

David Harvey (2005) states that: “Neo-liberalism has in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive affects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated in the common-sense way in which many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world” (p. 3). As Harvey remarks, neo-liberalism has penetrated all aspects of the social, political, and economic policies in the U.S. and abroad to such an extent that it has become part of our “common sense”. Although all facets of Mexican

immigrants' daily lived experiences were intertwined with neo-liberal ideology, the discourse has been normalized. This was evident when I asked the participants if they knew what the term neo-liberalism meant. The participants mentioned that they had heard the terms but did not know what it meant. This is very evident among the general public in the United States and Mexico. People in the United States and abroad who are "leftist" and involved in social movements and unions are very aware and conscious of neo-liberalism affects on the social, economic, and political policies in the United States and abroad. This was evident in conversation that I had with Martha Chavez, a local Mexican immigrant advocate for immigrant rights in Encantada. When I asked her definition of globalization, she had the following to say:

Eli- Como definiría usted la globalización?

How would you define globalization?

Martha- Consecuencia del neo-liberalismo (se rie) bueno,

It is consequence of neo-liberalism (she laughs).

Eli- Me puede dar un ejemplo de eso?

Can you give me an example

Martha- Sí (riendose) más o menos lo que yo creo (se rie) la globalización viene con los gobiernos, con las firmas de tratados de los gobiernos, tratando pues uno de ayudar a su pueblo dice y el otro también pero cual se benéfica el, el, el que llevaba el capital, el, el capital es el que, el que a final de cuentas va a mover todo esto, el, el llegar a, a tener un acuerdo

entre países e, para el benéfico de, de su pueblo pues creo que es, es en buena, creo que cuando hacen esos tratados tiene buenas intenciones aquí lo que yo no comprendo muy bien es si es con toda buena intención el, los tratados de libre comercio por ejemplo el, el, el los tratados que hay para llevar las empresas a otros pueblos, si es ve, verdaderamente benéfico de los pueblos o benéfico para el capital? Es, yo creo que más bien um, la, la globalización ha venido a si a llevar progreso en, a, a los pueblos pero por determinado tiempo porque al final de cuentas quienes se beneficiaron de todo no fueron más que los grandes consorcios, los capitalistas de todas maneras eso es lo que yo pienso.

(Yes (laughing). I believe that globalization comes from the government, with the free trade agreements between governments, trying to help their countries or at least that is what they say but who really benefits is capital, capital at the end is what moves things. To have an agreement between countries that benefits one's country, I feel it is good, I think that those free trade agreements are done in good faith. Free trade agreements, for example, that take companies to other countries, is it really a benefit for the country or is it a benefit for capital? I think that globalization has brought some progress to countries for a certain amount of time, but at the end those who have benefited the most are the corporations, the capitalist, that is what I think.)

Martha is able to articulate the connection between globalization and neo-liberalism through the establishment of free trade agreement. In her view, although the

free trade agreements may have been developed out of “good faith” and may have brought “some progress” to developing nations, at the end they have only benefited the big corporations and foreign capitalists. Martha goes on to express the strong impact neo-liberalism, globalization, and NAFTA have had on Mexico.

Martha- Yo creo que a México lo impactado de una forma muy fuerte, muy fuerte porque yo considero que cuando se hicieron los tratados de libre comercio e, sé pienso en una ayuda tal vez para sacar adelante la, la pobreza que se tenía en muchas zonas, yo siento que, que ha afectado tanto, tanto el, la globalización a, a mi país al grado de que como le comentaba la otra coacción han quedado pueblos fantasmas donde solo habitan niños y ancianos porque ya ni mujeres la fuerza laboral que sé está viendo a Estados Unidos ya no nada más ese de hombres la, el, a tenido que venirse las mujeres a seguir porque ya, o porque no alcanzan a vivir o porque es necesario porque se acostumbraron e con, con la puesta de empresas en sus regiones se acostumbran a otro medio de vida que al cierra esas empresas ya no se dieron adaptar las personas tampoco a vivir, a vivir sin trabajar la mujer entonces por, e, que afectado tanto la emigración esta situación la a impactado e, en el aspecto de que tiene mucha gente sin trabajar dentro de su propio territorio aunque no emigran están afectados en, en que los cinturones de miseria de las grandes ciudades cada día son más grandes y son más.

¿Quién es culpable de la emigración a este país? ¿Quién la está provocando? Los mismos que la están atacando. Entonces yo creo que el

impacto más fuerte que, que ha tenido mi país ese es, es el hecho de que tuvo, ha tenido grandes empresas de consorcios extranjeros que han cerrado y han dejado sin trabajo a tanta, a tanta gente entonces a mí me duele que mi gobierno no haga algo para evitar ésto que al contrario sigue alimentando el. Que promete el, el, el los tratados de libre comercio esta globalización de, que, que está acabando con, con la gente de clase media y clase baja y con todo, todo nuestro campo nuestras tierras están abandonadas e, e, es como yo siento que ha afectado a, a México todo esto.

(I think that it had a very strong impact on Mexico real strong because I consider because when the free trade agreements were made maybe there was some thought about relieving extreme poverty in some areas of the country, but I feel that globalization has had such an impact on my country to the degree. Like I mentioned last time, there are towns that are like ghost towns because all that are left are children and old people because not even women are left because the labor force that has migrated to the United States is no longer just made up of men because women have been forced to migrate since they can no longer survive or because they grew accustomed to another way of life because of the transnational companies in their regions, they grew accustomed to a certain way of life and their economic level. When the transnational companies closed, they could no longer afford the women not working that is why this situation has affected the migration, there is so much unemployment within Mexico that

even if people don't migrate it still had a great impact on Mexico to the point that everyday the growth in extreme poverty that affects all the big cities.)

(Who is responsible for all the immigration of people to this country? Who is causing it? The same people who are attacking it. I feel that the hardest impact it has had on my country is that the big corporations, which closed their factories, have left lots of people unemployed and it hurts me that my country has not done anything to prevent it. Instead, they have contributed to it all. What does free trade agreements, this globalization promise? That it is doing away with the middle class, the working class, with everything, with our agricultural, our lands are being abandoned, that is how I feel that it has affected Mexico.)

Immigration Policy, Militarization, Criminalization and the Wall

Ball (1994) asserts that “policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended” (p. 10). In December of 2005, when a piece of legislation, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437), was introduced right before the end of the Congressional session in Washington, immigrants around the country all of sudden found themselves at the center of an immigration debate that once again labeled them as criminals. HR 4437 was a bill that wanted to make being in this country as an undocumented person a crime. Therefore, this policy, in other words, wanted to equate immigration with criminality, it intended to represent immigrants as

criminals. In addition, this policy intended to criminalize immigrants in order to justify the detentions and raids by the government in immigrant communities.

To a great extent, those who stand to gain more from the immigrant labor publicize this negative view in mainstream media debates, discussions, and opinions on immigration reform. These entities seek to halt and continuously dehumanize immigrants by portraying them as “aliens,” “illegal aliens,” “invaders,” here only to take advantage of this country’s public services. Yet the voices of those most effected by the debate and who are targets of state policy are rarely heard on mainstream media. The truth is that the affects of neo-liberalism/globalization have a face, a human face, that despite the constant attacks on their humanity and that of their loved ones, has something to say regarding U.S. immigration policy, the militarization of the border, and the building of the wall.

The Carrillo, Sias, Durán and Hernández families all have a distinct view of these issues and it comes from their daily lived experiences as Mexican immigrants in this country.

The immigration debate, for Laura, centered on her desire for some type of amnesty or legalization program. From what she had heard on the news, at times she felt hopeful that something might happen, and at other times disappointed because the discussion on legalization had ceased. Instead, what she was hearing on the news was the anti-immigrant backlash in states such as Arizona that were passing laws seeking to prevent landlords from renting to immigrants.

Pues no yo estaba muy emocionada cuando empezaron a decir que se iba hacer una amnistía y todo eso yo tenía mucha fé, pero ahorita ya no ya perdí las esperanzas. Pues como ya no escuché nada y no se ha dicho

nada entonces yo digo no pues no va a pasar nada, y como hemos visto que en otros lados ya no les están dando trabajos a los ilegales ni rentando o sea yo lo sé eso uno ve y dicen no se va hacer, nada. Entonces yo de primero cuando oí lo de la amnistía dije hijola mi esposo sí puede entrar porque él ya tiene más de los cinco años aquí.

(Well, I was very excited when they started to talk about a possible amnesty and I had a lot faith, but now I've lost all hope. Well because I haven't heard anything else on it, I say nothing is going to happen and because we see that in other states they are not hiring undocumented immigrants or renting to them, one sees that and says nothing is going to happen. When I first heard about a possible amnesty, I said, my husband qualifies because he has more than five years here.)

Sandra felt that too many obstacles were being placed on immigrants in order to pressure Mexican immigrants to return to Mexico. Furthermore, she understood the narrative of Mexican immigrants as “invaders” coming here to take the land that once was theirs, but she made it clear that they were only here for a chance at a better life for their children.

***Sandra**—Um, nomás sé que nos están poniendo más barreras cada vez para que nos regresemos a nuestro país. No nos quieren ayudar para legalizarnos. Anteriormente yo pienso tienen miedo de que volveríamos a apoderarnos de lo que era nuestro, de nuestras tierras, pero yo pienso que nosotros no buscamos eso, lo que buscamos es el bienestar para nuestras familias y poderles ofrecer algo mejor por eso nos venimos para acá.*

(Um, I only know they are putting more barriers so that we can not return to our country. They don't want to help us legalize our situation. I think they are afraid that we will reclaim and take over our lands, but that is not what we seek to do. What we seek is the well being of our families in order offer them something better, that's why we came here.)

Alma felt too many promises were being made to immigrants but nothing ever materialized. In addition, she felt the rejection and hatred of Americans because of the perception they had of them as invading their space.

Alma—Pues mucho, mucho, no sé nomás por lo que oigo cuando veo las noticias y es lo mismo o sea, o sea no nos quieren o sea la política tampoco nos quiere o sea ellos hacen todo, nos dan, nos ilusiona con que va haber esto, va haber lo otro, pero realmente no hacen nunca nada por nosotros, ellos piensan igual que venimos nomás a, estar en donde no nos corresponde estamos ocupando un espacio que es para ellos.

(Well, lots, I don't know, just what I hear and when I see the news and it is always the same, in other words they don't want us nor the politics they don't want us they do all sorts of things they raise our hopes that they are going to do something that they are going to do this or that, but in reality they don't do anything they think the same that we come here just to, to be where we should not be, that we are occupying a space that is theirs.)

José and Sofía became more informed about immigration policy when they attempted to legalize their own situation since José's father was a U.S. citizen. Since that

path had not worked out for them, they kept informed about the immigration debate to see what might happen. Furthermore, Sofia obtained her information regarding immigration policy by speaking to others at her children's school and through the Spanish media.

José—Pues hace siete años um, pues no estaba muy enterado de absolutamente nada que concierna a la reforma. Ah, um, en ese tiempo pues yo empecé a, a tratar de arreglar, de agarrar una solución porque como mi papá nació aquí, entonces yo um, um, por ejemplo, me hice un poquito caso lo de que podía haber reformas o no pues porque yo tenía un poquito de, de oportunidad de arreglar mi situación migratoria por mi papá. Pero ya después, vi que no se pudo porque era mayoría de edad y estaba casado y todo eso. Entonces este pues ya empezamos a ver eso pero, a pero no en realidad, no había ninguna oportunidad que, pues que nos beneficiara algo de algún tipo de reforma, algún tipo de ley en realidad no había y hasta ahorita pues no la hay, no entonces no. Hemos estado muy pendientes de eso y pues no.

(Well it has been 7 years, um, well I was not really informed about anything to do with the reform. Ah, um, at that time I began to try to legalize my situation to try to fix, to figure out a solution because like my father was born here well then I um, for example I paid a little attention about the fact that there might be a reform or no well because I had a little bit of an opportunity to fix my migratory situation because of my father. But later I saw that it could not happen because I was over the age limit

and I was married and all that. Then so we started to see that but there was really no opportunity that would benefit us of any kind of reform some kind of law in reality there was nothing and even now there is nothing so no. We have kept up to date on that but nothing.)

Sofía—Segunda vez que viene al principio no sabía mucho porque no salía um, mis niños ya estaban grandes se iban a la escuela y donde se enteraba uno es platicando con los demás. Muy poco, lo que salía en la tele pero pues nada más lo de las noticias de que había redadas de vez en cuando se me hace que más ahora, de más gente ahora agarran a más gente y pues nada.

(The second time because at the beginning I did not know much because we did not go out much, um, when my kids were already older and they would go to school and that is where one finds out while talking to others. Very little, only what came out on TV but well only what was on the news that they had rounded up more people and now it seems like it happens more often more people are being caught and nothing else.)

Another point of dispute within the immigration debate is whether undocumented immigrants should have rights. The construction of Mexican immigrants as “criminals,” “terrorists,” “illegals,” and “aliens” seeks to frame them in such a way that it deprives them of their humanity and human rights. Furthermore, due to their experiential knowledge based on their own daily lived experiences, the Carrillo, Sias, Durán and

Hernández families had a deeply critical understanding of their rights as immigrants that extended beyond immigration policy.

Daniel and Sofía knew that they were entitled by law to certain rights even though their immigrant status wasn't "legal." Daniel had heard in the news the procedure he had to follow in case of ever being stopped by the border patrol.

Sí, sí, sí, sí he escuchado de que si estamos en un caso de que nos llega a parar inmigración, eh, eh, he, escuchado de que uno nomás debe de decirle el nombre de uno y nada más, no, no, no decirles el estatus que tiene, ni como llegó aquí, sino que nomás eso y guardar silencio que es siempre lo primordial que tiene uno que guardar silencio para que no le afecte en caso de que llegara hacerse un juicio o algo para no perjudicarse uno.

(Yes, yes, yes, yes I have heard that if we are in such a situation in which we get stopped by immigration eh, I have heard that we should only tell them our name and that is it, no, do not tell them your status or how you got here, only that and keep quiet because that is essential that we have to keep quiet so that it will not affect you if there was a case brought against you or something that way you would not say something that can be used against you.)

Daniel was the only participant who had been threatened with being deported when stopped by the Encantada police on his way home from work. A co-worker was driving above the speed limit when stopped by the police. The police officer asked to see the driver licenses of all individuals in the car. When Daniel didn't produce a driver's

license and the police officer asked if he was undocumented, Daniel said “yes.” Then the police officer said he was going to call the border patrol. Although Daniel knew the police officer should not ask for his legal status and that he had the right not to give any information, his nervousness got the best of him and so he disclosed his legal status to the officer. According to an article in a local newspaper regarding when it was appropriate for police officers to call immigration on immigrants, police chief Ray Schultz states, “Officers shall not inquire about or seek proof of a person’s immigration status, unless the person is in custody or is a suspect in a criminal investigation for a nonimmigration criminal violation and the immigration status of the person or suspect is pertinent to the criminal investigation” (September 5, 2007).

Sofía knew of her rights but felt she might be overtaken by fear if stopped by the border patrol because of the perception that if she acted on her rights, something would happen to her.

Pienso que sí, pero a veces le da a uno miedo pues porque ya ve siempre la corrupción que si uno reclama sus derechos pues le puede pasar algo.

(Well, yes, but sometimes fear overcomes one and because of corruption, if one claims their rights something can happen to them.)

Alma felt that immigrants were entitled to many rights such as the right to work, to healthcare, and insurance. Although she knew that immigrants were entitled to such rights, she felt that, when trying to act on those rights, excuses were going to be made by the authorities and those rights were going to be violated.

Sí, yo digo que sí. Pues tenemos el derecho de trabajar, de tener servicio médico, de tener alguna aseguranza aunque sea a bajo costo yo sé que

hay algunas pero al momento que uno quiere hacerlo realidad siempre le ponen pero, pero sí tenemos yo sé que debemos de tener muchos derechos.

(Yes, I say yes. Well, we have the right to work, to have medical services, of having some kind of insurance, even though it is at a low cost. I know that there are some, but at the moment we want to claim our rights, the reality is that we are always given an excuse. But we do have some, I know we must have lots of rights.)

According to Pedro, the rights he felt immigrants had came from his understanding that if you worked and paid taxes, than you were entitled to have rights.

Pues este, pues uno dice que sí porque a uno si está trabajando le quitan impuestos o algo así, yo pienso que, que al momento de que le están quitando a uno éste, impuestos o algo pues puede tener uno derechos o ¿no?

(Well, I say yes, yes because if one is working they take taxes or something like that and I think that at that moment they are taking taxes from you or something well then we should be able to have rights, correct?)

José and Alberto felt that immigrants in the United States did not have rights. Their interpretation of immigration policies was based on their daily lived experiences. Since José considered himself a realist, he felt the reason immigrants did not have rights was due to the fact that they were not citizens of this country. He felt he would not even

try to claim any rights and that maybe, if anything, immigrants might have the right to some considerations, but not to any concrete rights.

Ay Dios, pues yo soy una persona muy, muy, muy, muy realista y honestamente yo quisiera que tuviéramos derechos pero yo sinceramente, yo sé que me afecta a mí mismo pero yo pienso que pues no. No porque no pertenecemos aquí tal vez tenemos algunos derechos universales como seres humanos pero pues no. No tendría yo ni siquiera la facultad para exigir algún derecho aquí, yo estoy conciente que no es nuestro país. Yo pues la verdad quisiera verdad que me beneficiara algún derecho pero pues no, yo estoy conciente 100% conciente pues, que no. O sea yo no estaría, yo honestamente sinceramente, yo diría que no tengo ninguna oportunidad de exigir ningún derecho aquí, la verdad que no. O sea, hubiera pudiéramos tener algunas consideraciones porque venimos a trabajar y todo en trabajos que aquí no los, pues la verdad los hacemos mejor nosotros que algunas personas de aquí.

Pero no tanto como derechos, derechos no, a la mejor alguna que otra consideración para alguna, como digo ahorita, como para alguna no sé, um, como digo ahorita. De la, la, de la reforma algo, algo, algo que beneficiara una reforma migratoria pero, pero la verdad no, yo pienso que no tenemos derechos.

(Oh God, well I am a very, very, very realist person and honestly I would like to have rights, but truthfully I know that it affects me personally, but I think that we should not. No because we don't belong to this place maybe

we have some universal rights as human beings but no. I would not have the knowledge to ask for some kind of rights because I am conscious that this is not my country. Truthfully, I would like that one of my rights gave me benefits, but I am 100% knowledgeable that no it can't. In other words, I would not, honestly and sincerely say that I do not have any opportunity to demand any kind of rights here, really I can't. We could be given some considerations because we come to work and in jobs that here no one, well that truthfully we do them better than people from here.)

(But not so much as for rights, rights no, maybe some type of consideration like I am saying right now like something like I said just now. In regards to the reform something like that which would benefit an immigration reform but, but the truth no I do not think we have rights.)

Alberto understood that rights and access to benefits were intertwined and that therefore, immigrants who were not legal residents were not entitled to any type of benefits.

No, no tiene. ¿Los emigrantes sin residencia? No, no tiene. Ah, porque he oído casos de que si no tiene una residencia o un número social, les niegan la, les niegan estos beneficios, les niegan ayuda, ayuda de económica o cual quiere cosa, de salud.

(No, they don't have. The immigrants without residency? No, they don't have. Ah because I have heard of cases that if you do not have residency or a social security number you cannot, you cannot get any benefits, you

cannot get any assistance, financial assistance or anything else also healthcare.)

The portrayal of the United States/Mexico border as being out of control by the racist, White supremacist organizations and groups such as the Minutemen Project and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) along with the mainstream media outlets, FOX and CNN, is extremely demoralizing. This has prompted an endless advocacy by these entities for the deportation of “illegal” immigrants as well as the militarization and building of a wall along the USA/Mexico border to keep Mexicans out and secure the border. As of 2007, the construction of a 500-mile long wall along the USA/Mexico border began. What is left out of the debate on immigration in the mainstream media and American homes are the stories and experiences of Mexican immigrants themselves, their analyses and perceptions of the militarization and construction of the wall along the USA/Mexico border. Leo Chavez (2008) asserts, “However, the discourse of invasion, loss of U.S. sovereignty, and representation of Mexican immigrants as the ‘enemy’ surely contributed to an atmosphere that helped justify increased militarization of the border as a way of ‘doing something’ about the perceived threats to the nation’s security and the American way of life” (p. 133). According to the Mexican immigrant families I spoke to, each one made the connection of “the wall” to that of the Berlin Wall built during the Cold War Era in order to divide a people. When asked about the militarization and building of the wall along the USA/Mexico border, José Sias spoke of the economic desperation of those who cross the border in search of jobs and compares it to the desperation felt by eastern Germans attempting to cross into west Germany. He acknowledges that when people are desperate

they will cross any wall or barrier in order to survive. Moreover, he believes it will only create more problems and it will not stop people from crossing.

Pues también es otra estrategia política, es definitivamente algo que, es un problema que se va hacer muy grande, es nomás un problema que, que va acarrear más problemas porque en mi caso pienso como mexicano y si yo sé que en cierta parte hay una mejor vida, o ya la probabilidad de una mejor vida, yo voy a tratar de llegar a esa parte, hagan lo que hagan. Por ejemplo he visto documentarios de Alemana donde, como desesperadamente la gente trataba y pasaba de la Alemana occidental a la Alemana orienta como pasaban éste y era mil veces peor de lo que están haciendo ahorita o sea no van a detener a la gente.

(Well it is another political strategy, it definitely something that, it is a problem that is going to become even bigger, it is problem that is going to bring on more problems, in my case I think like a Mexican and if I know that in a certain place there is a chance at a better life, I am going to try to make it to that place, regardless of what is done. For example, I have seen documentaries on Germany, how desperately people would cross from East Germany into West Germany and there it was a million times worse than what they are trying to do today, they are not going to be able to stop people.)

Alberto Hernández spoke of the discrimination and humiliation that the wall inflicts on immigrants. Furthermore, he makes the comparison with the Berlin Wall and

the building of a similar wall in the southern border and the more than likely consequence it will bring.

Yo pienso que eso es lo único que está haciendo es, um, discriminar más al inmigrante lo esta humillando, lo está a acorralando y entonces cuando eso, como cuando si usted acorrala una fiera se va a tratar de defender entonces yo pienso que no muy, no es necesario de hacer debe de haber otra forma de, de si quieren proteger los bordos (borders) porque eso lo que esta haciendo es más bien otra Alemana en el tiempo de que mataron muchos judíos, um es lo mismo que, es para el rumbo que va llevar eso. Es un muro como el muro de Berlín.

(I think that the only thing it is doing is, discriminate even more immigrants, it is humiliating, it is besieging, then when, like when you besiege a beast it is going to do whatever it needs to do, defend itself and I think no, no it is not necessary to do that there should be other ways, if they want to protect their borders because what they are doing instead is another Germany during the time they killed many Jews, um it is the same, it is the route this is taking. It is a wall like the Berlin Wall.)

Daniel Carrillo makes the connection between the historical context of the Berlin Wall and the current policy of the United States in its justification for building the wall. He offers an analysis of the situation by citing the United States' past mistakes as a consequence for the current situation in which this country finds itself. Furthermore, he describes the economic differences between the two countries along the border, one being a wealthier nation than the other.

Y estamos volviendo a los tiempos atrás a lo que pasó en las alemanas dividiendo los países y todo era un contraste fue un país que en parte que tiene dinero y en otra parte que tiene pobreza. Así que se miraba la diferencia al igual ahorita no necesita tener muro para que se vea la diferencia de los dos países, verdad. Pero eso de construir muros a parte de que van a gastar mucho dinero, quieren yo digo buscar la manera de cómo, como yo, justificar los errores que han tenido sobre los problemas que ha tenido antes los Estados Unidos sobre las guerras, el terrorismo que dicen que pasó porque pudo haber sido gente que emigró de otros países que llegaron a Estados Unidos a hacer sus cosas. Yo digo el mal que tiene es por los errores que ellos, que ellos han cometido y quieren hacer eso para ganarse la gente americana de que si, ok si están haciendo algo por querer tener asegurado el país.

(And we are returning to the past to what happened to the Germans, when two countries were divided and everything was a contrast, one country that had money and the other had poverty. The differences were visible just the same as today there is no need to have a wall to see the differences between the two countries. But to build walls besides the fact that a lot of money will be spent, they want to I believe look for a way to, to, justify the past mistakes they have had with the problems that the United States has had with its wars, terrorism that they say happened because it was people who emigrated from other countries and came to the United States to do those things. I say the bad that they have is because of their past

mistakes that they have committed and they want to do that to win over the American people to say yes, OK yes something is being done to secure the country.)

Sofía Sias acknowledges that the building of a wall will not stop Mexican citizens from attempting to cross into the United States. She also makes the comparison of the building of a wall along the USA/Mexico border with that of the Berlin Wall. Moreover, she is conscious that the economic situation in Mexico is severe and that people are desperate and will do whatever it takes in order to survive.

Van a buscar otras formas siempre las han encontrado y va a seguir igual....para que la gente no se venga haciendo un muro no va detener a la gente van a estar como allá, como en el muro de Berlín que se van a meter como puedan. Pues porque tienen hambre, tenemos hambre y pues arriesgan la vida.

(They are going to look for other ways they have always found them, it's going to be the same... so that people won't come building a wall is not going to stop the people they are going to be like over there like the Berlin Wall they are going to come in however they can. Because they are hungry, we're hungry and we have to risk our lives.)

Alma Durán also feels that Mexican immigrants will continue to cross regardless of the wall along the border. She expressed that the construction of the wall was useless. In addition, she attributes all the deaths of immigrants at the border to the construction of the wall.

Pues yo pienso que están gastando de oquis porque en cierto, de un modo o otro de todos modos la gente de México va a pasar siempre, yo pienso que es algo que no va a parar. Yo pienso que están haciendo un gasto inútil y haciendo que la gente batalle más porque o sea ahora que, ahí que están haciendo ese muro se ha visto de cierto modo que hay más muerte que hay mucho, o sea, o sea como hay allá gente que les quiere ayudar ponerles agua y todo pero mucha gente no sobrevive y yo pienso que están mal y están haciendo algo inútil.

(I think that they are making a useless expense because in a certain way, in one way or another the people from Mexico will continue to cross, I think it is something that can not be stopped. I feel they are making a useless expense and they are making it harder for the people because now that they are building the wall to a certain point there has been more death, you see there are people trying to help by placing water and even then many people don't survive and I think that they are doing bad they are doing something useless.)

Another horrendous consequence of the militarization and building of the wall that the participants acknowledge is the deaths it will continue to claim. These deaths will be the results of Mexican immigrants being pushed into desert areas that are less patrolled by the border patrol. This point was clearly articulated by Sandra Hernández when asked about the consequences this militarization would bring about.

Pienso que va a traer consecuencias muy graves porque muchas personas van a meterse más hacia el desierto para poder pasar. Pienso que va a ver

más muertes para los emigrantes. Pero aún así no van a dejar de tratar de pasar para acá.

(I think it is going to bring startling consequences because many people are going to attempt to cross through the desert areas. I think there is going to be more immigrant deaths. But even with that they are not going to stop trying to cross over here.)

Sandra’s perception of the situation along the southern border corroborates what many immigrants’ rights groups have been publicly declaring. According to Mazón and Weinberg (2005), the militarization or “border security,” along the United States/Mexico border from 1996–2006 has been directly responsible for the deaths of more than 4,000 Mexican citizens.

MUERTES EN LA FRONTERA

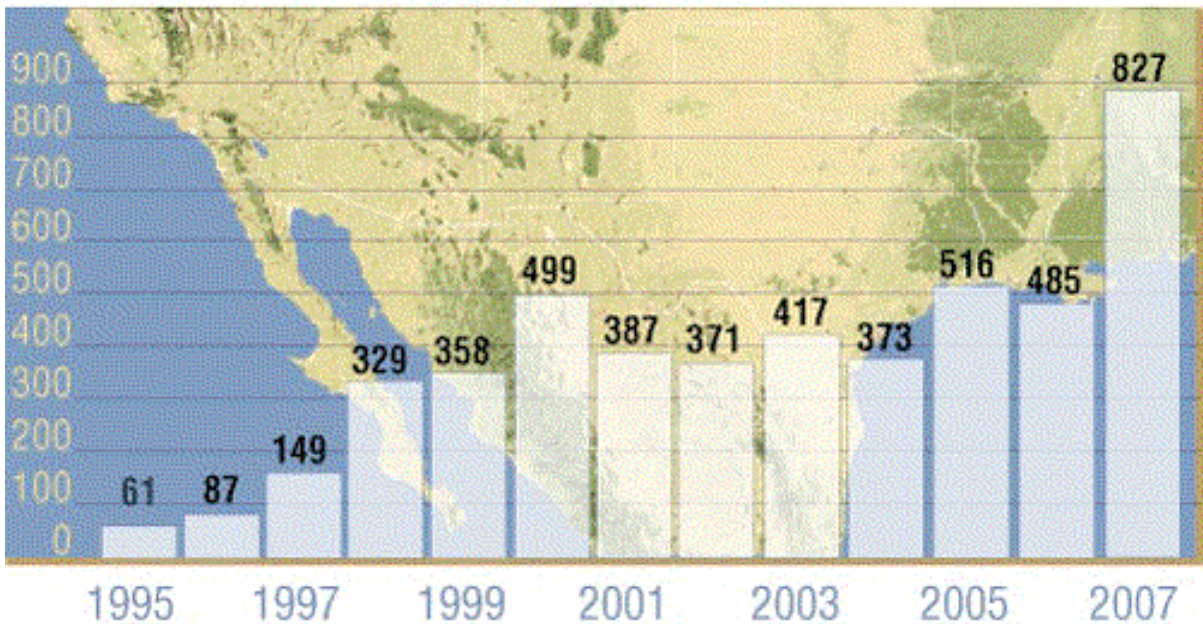


Figure 4—Deaths at the Border 1995-2007 (Source La Jornada)

José, Daniel, Sandra, Sofia and Alberto contextualized the militarization of the border and the building of the wall within their historical memory of the Berlin Wall. The Berlin Wall was built because of the U.S. imperial domination and interests to control the spread of communism into the Western world. It is within this historical frame of reference that the participants comprehend that walls fail in their attempt to restrict the crossing over of people. All participants acknowledged that the economic situation in Mexico has forced people to immigrate to the United States at any cost and that a wall will not stop this migration north. Since they themselves have crossed the border in search of a better life, in order to survive and provide for their children, they too understand and have experienced such desperation, and they know that a wall will not hold people in dire need of crossing into the United States, even if it means losing one's life in the attempt.

Racializing Mexican Immigrant Families

The racialized language of anti-immigrant xenophobia (e.g., wetback, illegal alien) facilitates the dehumanization of Latino families (Bartolome and Macedo 1997) and justifies equally violent legislation, including English-only laws, the dismantling of bilingual education in California and Arizona, and the post-1997 immigration laws that severely limit the process and possibilities of permanent residency. These laws serve to create second-class citizens and reinforce the subordinate status of Latinos/as in this country. (Villenas, 2001, p. 5)

Amongst this dehumanizing rhetoric is where Mexican immigrants begin to explore their feelings and perception of who they are as a people through their daily lived experiences. They frame their understanding based on their interpretation of why they are perceived in such a way. Although Alberto had immigrated to the United States as child and was now a naturalized citizen, immigration and the Mexican immigrant experience is deeply connected to his past, present, and future. When asked about the perception most U.S. citizens had toward Mexican immigrants, he said he felt sad because of all the

negativity directed at them. Alberto proceeded to tell me about a recent experience he had at the shopping center near his home one December day in 2007. He encountered two Mexican immigrant men who were on their way to Denver and had been walking for days. Through this experience Alberto acknowledges the heartbreaking situation of Mexican immigrants escaping the economic crisis in Mexico. Moreover, his humanity and empathy towards these men are intertwined with his frustration of not being able to help them with more.

Pues, yo me pongo triste inclusive, pues yo, si yo le digo a todo mundo si, o sea todo mundo que está tratando de salir adelante verdad y ya sabemos que en México, pues es muy difícil salir adelante para ciertas personas y este, inclusive el otro día me dio mucha tristeza con unos señores que me encontré en Wal-Mart y me pidieron ayuda iban a Denver y como uno acostumbra a traer siempre tarjeta de crédito o “debit card” entonces y les ofrecí que un café y algunos centavos que traía en la bolsa. Pero me hubiera gustado poderles ayudarles un poquito más, inclusive contratarlos aquí para que me ayuden a limpiar la casa o algo, pero sí da tristeza, a, yo pienso que pues todos somos humanos y debe de haber un arreglo un acuerdo entre México y Estados Unidos para que salgan de la miseria donde se encuentran. Estos muchachos que me encontré, caminaron, se pasaron por, creo que por Palomas y venían cansados, los, los zapatos los traen sucios andaban apenas y pues sí da tristeza.

(Well, I get sad, well like I tell everyone, well everyone who is trying to get ahead and we all I know that in Mexico it is really difficult to get

ahead for certain people and so the other day I got really sad because I met a couple of men at Wal-Mart who asked me for assistance because they were on their way to Denver and you know how now we are used to only carrying credit or debit cards well then I offered them some coffee and some change that I had in my pocket. But I would have liked to have helped them with a little bit more even hiring them to help me clean the house or something but yes it does make you sad. I think that we are all human beings and that there should be some type of agreement between Mexico and the United States so that we can get out of the misery that we are in. These guys that I met had walked I think they crossed over by Palomas and they were tired, the shoes that they had were dirty they could hardly walk and so yes it is sad.)

Daniel believes that the perception that U.S. citizens have of Mexican immigrants is related to their belief that they came here to steal their jobs. This understanding came from a conversation he had with a fellow “American” co-worker. Daniel feels that the perception his co-worker had came from the anti-immigrant rhetoric on television. Furthermore, Daniel emphasized that immigrants came to this country to work in order to provide a better future for their families. Based on his experience, Daniel attempted to dispel some of the myths that the right-wing conservative politicians and media pundits use to divide and conquer working class U.S. citizens and immigrants. First, he established that immigrants come here to work and that the work available is for anyone willing to work. Second, Mexican immigrants are not here to take back the lands that

once belonged to them; they are here escaping the economic situation in their countries of origin.

Daniel—Pues venimos a robarles el trabajo. Que venimos a invadir espacios de ellos y que trabajamos por lo que nos pagan no por lo que es justo, sino por lo que nos pagan trabajamos y eso es lo que yo hablé con un muchacho americano, yo trabajé con él y me decía no es que ustedes trabajan por poco dinero, nos vienen a quitar trabajo. Y o sea, yo no digo que quitarles el trabajo no, porque si cualquiera, el que va a trabajar, va a trabajar en lo que sea, no importa como sea el trabajo y es la diferencia del emigrante, cualquiera que sea, todos venimos a trabajar o sea el trabajo que sea y no le quitamos el trabajo a nadie.

No, yo pienso, es que se dejan guiar por algunos. Algunos reportajes que ven en televisión que, ya ve horita como está todo eso de anti-emigrante y todo eso y creen que si o sea creen que muchos que venimos a invadir a Estados Unidos para quedarnos con sus tierras porque entre comillas es de nosotros. Pero no, no yo no lo veo así, verdad nosotros venimos a trabajar porque en nuestros países no tenemos la oportunidad de, de no de ganar lo mismo que aquí pero de ganar bien de vivir bien este por eso venimos a trabajar o sea para superarnos un poquito más que en nuestros países de origen.

(Well, that we came to steal their jobs. That we came to invade spaces that were theirs and that we work for whatever they pay us and not for what is right that we work for whatever they give us, that is what I talked about

with to an American guy I worked with him and he would tell me it's just that you guys work for such little money and you come to take our jobs away.

And I say not that we don't take their jobs but because anyone who wants to work will work in anything it does not matter what kind of a job it is and that is the reason it is different for an immigrant any immigrant we come to work any kind of work and we don't take jobs from anyone.)

(Some of the news reports that are shown on TV like now everything is anti-immigrant and all of that and they think yes they believe that we come to invade the United States to keep their lands because it is "ours." But no I don't see it like that yes it is true we come to work because in our countries we don't have the opportunity to earn the same as here but to earn good money and to live well that is why we come to work in other words to get a little bit ahead more so than in our countries of origin.)

Based on what Laura had seen and heard, she understood that Mexican immigrants had contributed a lot to the United States. In her worldview, this was due to the fact that Mexican immigrants did the jobs Americans choose not to do. Furthermore, she felt that Mexican labor is what the United States took advantage of from "illegal" immigrants. Laura's experience working for a cleaning company made her aware that the only people working there were Mexicans.

Pues no sé que pensarán pero yo me supongo como yo veo y oigo como le digo yo escucho, nosotros hemos hecho mucho por aquí, por Estados

Unidos los mexicanos. Porque hacemos trabajos que los americanos no quieren hacer. Y yo me supongo que eso es una ventaja que tiene Estados Unidos con uno de ilegal. Así, porque por ejemplo, en esa compañía donde yo trabajo no hay ningún gringo. Y es compañía grande, yo le digo porque cada vez que voy a cobrar no se ve nadie que sea un gringo. Somos casi puros mexicanos estamos por nuestros cheques.

(Well I don't know what they thought, but I suppose like I see and hear like I tell you I listen, we have done a lot for this place for the United States, we the Mexicans. Because we do the work that Americans do not want to do. And I suppose that is an advantage the United States has with one being an illegal. Like that because as an example in that company where I work there are no whites. And it is a large company I say this to you because every time I go get my paycheck you don't see anyone that looks white. We are all mainly Mexicans who are there for our checks.)

Sandra felt there were people who treated Mexican immigrants nicely and others who did not. In her lived experience she had encountered discrimination and bad treatment from Hispanic people; she felt that they did not want them here. In addition, she sensed Hispanic people did not feel Mexican immigrants deserved anything and that they had no education. Sandra understood how race relations play out within the racially stratified U.S. capitalist society that pits people of color against each other.

***Sandra**—Pues es que hay de todo, hay gente que nos tratan bien pero hay gente que no. En veces hay gente que en donde trabajamos, los mismos hispanos son los que nos tratan más mal. La verdad no sé, discriminación,*

o no quieren que estemos, nada más quieren ellos estar aquí, ya no quieren que vengamos para acá. No, pero lo he visto en muchas personas. A veces pienso que no piensan, que no nos merecemos nada, venimos a robarles su dinero, no tenemos educación.

(Well there all sorts, there are people who treat us fine but there are people who don't. Sometimes there are people where I worked the ones who are Hispanic they are the ones who treat us badly. The truth I don't know, discrimination or they don't want us here they are the only ones who want to be here, they don't want us to come here. No but I have seen it in lots of persons. Sometimes I think that they don't think we deserve anything, that we come to steal their money and we are not educated.

Sofía also felt that Mexican immigrants were undesired in this country, that their presence made the United States look bad. Moreover, Sofía understood that race was a key to the perception U.S. citizens had towards Mexican immigrants because of their brown phenotype.

Um, pues una parte piensan que les estorbamos, que hacemos que se vea mal su país. Le digo a mi esposo, si fuéramos güeritos a lo mejor no nos despreciaban tanto (se ríe). Pero como nos ven tan feitos, yo creo por eso. Y otra, si hay una parte que sí nos aprecia por lo que hacemos y sí piensan que venimos a trabajar.

(Um, well some believe that we are only in the way, that we make their country look bad. I tell my husband if we were blonde maybe they

wouldn't dislike us so much (laughs). But they see us really ugly I think that is the reason. And I think there are others who do appreciate us for what we do and they think we come here to work.)

Pedro felt that Mexican immigrants are seen as if they were from another planet, but felt that not all "gringos" felt this way. Moreover, he was not sure if the ones who did feel this way were racist or just felt Mexicans immigrants weren't capable of working. Pedro felt that solution was language, that if Mexicans learned English then they could communicate with the "gringo."

No sé, pues será que lo ven a uno como si fuera de otro planeta, no sea que, bueno pues no todos los gringos son así, bueno algunos que piensan así pues no sé si sean racistas o piensan que uno no está capacitado para hacer el trabajo, yo pienso que es lo que, que por eso, es bueno si, si uno es mexicano y habla inglés se puede dar a entender con el gringo...

(Well I don't know maybe it is that they see us like belonging to another planet well but not all gringos are the same, well some think that way, but I don't know if it is racism or that they think that we are not capable of working I think that is what it is because of that well if one is a Mexican and speaks English we can be understood by the whites...)

The Sias, Hernández, Carrillo, and Durán families' *emigrant epistemology* came from their daily lived experiences as Mexican immigrants living in the United States post 9/11. The political, social and economic policies developed within this context had a direct effect in their lives because of (*the intercentricity of race with other forms of*

subordination) their immigrant status, ethnicity, class, and language. Their *emigrant epistemology* helped them read and deconstruct the immigration debate and reform from the margins. Although they themselves were at the center of the debate, as Mexican immigrants, their voices and stories are always left out. The “majoritarian” stories in the media from media pundits, politicians, and U.S citizens portray Mexican immigrants as “criminals,” “aliens,” “terrorists,” and “illegals” that have no right to speak. However, as seen through the Sias, Carrillo, Hernández, and Durán families *emigrantes mexicanos* have an epistemological frame from where they are able to describe, critique, and analyze immigration policy and reform as they experience it on a daily basis. Their experiences help counter and challenge the dominant ideology and discourse of Mexican immigrants.

Ladson-Billings (2003), defines epistemology as a “system of knowing” that has both an internal logic and external validity” (p. 399). She continues by emphasizing that this “system of knowing” is based on one’s “worldview” which is shaped by the conditions and experiences people endure. For Mexican immigrant families living in the United States post 9/11, this means that their epistemology was shaped along the lines of a “raced” group who’s immigrant status, language, ethnicity, and class influenced their daily experiences. It was among these daily lived experiences that their *emigrante epistemology* took shape in ways that they were able to read, describe, critique, and analyze the social, political, and economic policies put forth by the state. Through their *testimonios*, Mexican immigrant families were claiming their humanity, demonstrating their resistance and resiliency.

The *emigrante* epistemology is a form of counter knowledge and liberating tool used against the dominant discourse that seeks to dehumanize Mexican immigrants by

constructing them as “criminals,” “terrorists,” “aliens,” and “illegals.” As Anzaldúa’s (1987) *mestizo* consciousness and DuBois’s (1903; 1953) double consciousness, the *emigrante* epistemology acknowledges that Mexican immigrants as a “raced” people who employ multiple ways of “seeing,” interpreting, constructing, and deconstructing the current political, social, economic, and educational policies put forth by the United States within post 9/11. The *emigrante* epistemology centers on Mexican immigrants whose status as “undocumented” and as transnational workers intersects with their lived and educational experiences because of their language, shared history, culture, and racialized identity (a deep analysis of *emigrante* epistemology will be developed in Chapter 7).

From a CRT paradigm the *emigrant epistemology* of Mexican immigrant families contributes to their “educated” identities that should be valued and acknowledged by educators and schools. Olivos (2006) stated, “there is a strong consensus among in the field of education that involving parents in their children’s formal education is beneficial to student success, particularly if the students come from historically disenfranchised groups” (p. 107). If that is the case, then educators and schools must have an understanding and acknowledgement of the experiential knowledge of Mexican immigrant families in order to establish parental involvement programs that build on that knowledge. If educators and schools became aware of the multi-faceted *emigrant epistemology* of Mexican immigrant families at their school sites, they would be pushed to re-think the racist ideologies and discourses disrespecting Mexican families and their children. In addition, they will be forced to critically engage in self-reflection of how those racist ideologies permeate the schools’ policies, curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. If educators were to employ this re-thinking and engage in a

dialogue with immigrant parents, then this would “provide the space, voice, access, and the democratic participation of subordinate communities in the process of education” (Olivos, 2006, p. 104).

The next chapter deals with the Sias, Carrillo, Hernández, and Durán families and the education and public schooling system in Encantada. Their experiences with the Encantada Public Schools are intertwined with those of their children. Through their interactions with the schools’ teachers, counselors, principals, and personnel they have formed an important critique and analysis of education and schooling in the United States. The critical critique and the analysis are based on their own educational and schooling experiences in Mexico.

Chapter 6

Despite the scientific refutation of race as a legitimate biological concept and attempts to marginalize race in much of the public (political) discourse, race continues to be a powerful social construct and signifier. (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 8)

Educator Narrative

As a child, my mother always told me that one of the reasons our family emigrated from Mexico to this country was so that my sisters and I could have the opportunity to get an education (access to schooling). My mother would use herself as an example of someone who, because of lack of schooling, was now destined to manual work. At that time she was a janitor at a local health club. She would say, “You better study and finish school if you don’t want to end up like me.” My mother’s *consejo* helped link school (K-12) completion with future economic success (Valdés, 1996). This motivated me to “try hard” at school. So at a very young age, I bought into meritocracy.³⁴ Throughout my K-12 schooling experiences, I worked very “hard,” my teachers liked me for being a “good” and “hardworking” student. But my K-12 schooling experiences were also impacted by my status as an immigrant student, an English Language Learner (ELL), by my culture, race, and class. In a sense my schooling experiences were influenced by *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*.

One of the many critical incidents that demonstrate how race and racism covertly operate in the schooling of students of color occurred during my tenth-grade year in high school. During my tenth-grade year, the high school I attended decided to do away with

³⁴ Delgado & Villalpando (2002) conclude “...the notion of meritocracy allows people with Eurocentric epistemology to believe that all people—no matter what race, class, gender or sexual orientation—get what they deserve based solely on their individual efforts” (p. 171).

their enriched English reading classes. This meant that students could only be placed in a regular English class or an honors English class. I had taken enriched English reading during ninth grade, but because of this change for my English class in tenth grade, I was placed in a regular class. I was not happy about this, so I went to speak to my counselor about changing my regular English class to the honors class. I told my counselor that I knew honors English would be challenging, but that I was willing to “work hard” and felt capable of being able to handle the work. I was told that because of my “low” score in reading on the state standardized test, I could not be changed to an English honors class. I was furious because I did not understand why, if I was willing to “work hard,” I was not being allowed to take the honors class, and my friend Anna who never did her work and was always ditching was in that class. The reason was that Anna was white, like 95% of the students in the honors class and I was a student of color (like the 95% of students of color in the regular English class).

I begin this chapter with a personal story because storytelling is an essential part of critical race theory and because it helps to illustrate how *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination* is an overt and covert factor in the schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children. In addition, *the centrality of experiential knowledge* within CRT acknowledges that the lived experiences of people of color are central in *challenging the dominant discourse and ideologies* found within the schooling experiences of students of color (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, Tate, 1997; Villenas and Deyhle, 1999). Those lived experiences allow for an understanding of how *race, racism and other forms of subordination* are manifested within the schools, policies, curriculum, instruction, and

assessment practices (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Tate, 1997; Yosso, 2002). Furthermore, those real-life experiences promote an understanding of how multiple forms of oppression against Mexican immigrant families and their children are met with multiple form of resistance. Lastly, the lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children also serve to *challenge the dominant ideology and discourse* found within schools and in society.

Historically, the schooling experience of students of color within the United States has been that of second-class citizens (Acuña, 1988; Flores, 2005; Gonzales, 1999; Spring, 2001). Mexican students have not achieved academic success, which has prompted educators and politicians to blame Mexican students' failure on their race, language, culture, and families (Carter, 1996; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999, Villenas and Dyhle, 1999). This deficit narrative of poor academic achievement has historically been used to justify institutional racism within the curriculum, practices, and discourse of the schools, which operate within a white supremacy ideology. This deficit discourse has not changed much within the last century; instead, it has become more prevalent under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Hall and Parker, 2007; Lipman, 2003). Since the implementation of NCLB and high stakes testing, schools serving primarily students of color, English Language Learners (ELLs) have been labeled as failing. Olivos (2006) points out that the deficit discourse fails to contextualize the real issue that is the school itself "we are challenged to consider these issues as a product of the socioeconomic and racial histories of our nation, or more specifically, the systems of capitalism and white supremacy" (p. 42).

As a bilingual educator working for the largest public school system in the state of New Mexico, I have had the opportunity to attend many meetings and workshops regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment. At these district meetings and workshops, there are teachers, administrators, and district personnel discussing how they can implement all the district initiatives when they have so many obstacles such as high numbers of ELL students on free and reduced lunch whose “parents don’t care” about the education of their children. This coded language (Yosso, 2005) keeps reinforcing the deficit paradigm that explicitly blames students and their families for failing to achieve academically set standards. What I heard through this coded language is that Mexican immigrant students fail because of their “lack of English” (Machado-Casas, 2007), “lack of schooling” experience, lack of interest in school, their families, culture, and race. Yosso (2005) states that, “indeed, one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools is deficit thinking” (p. 75). This deficit paradigm within a racist society has serious consequences on the daily lived experiences and identities of Mexican immigrant students within the public school system. I think of the stories I have heard from other colleagues regarding the daily racial aggressions Mexican immigrant students are subjected to by uncaring, racist educators.

Last school year my sister, a Spanish Language Arts teacher at a middle school located in a predominately immigrant community, was “covering” the group of another teacher during her prep period since that particular teacher was busy catching up with some paperwork. The students were Mexican immigrant emergent bilinguals. These students described to her how this teacher would not teach them anything, the assignments they were given were not explained to them, and that he was constantly

telling them they were stupid, and he would even go as far as to write “burros” on the board. They asked for my sister’s advice on what to do, and she told them to have their parents come to the school to talk to the principal. A few weeks later one of the girls who had asked for advice, came up to her and said “Ms. Valenzuela, we took your advice.” The students had used their cell phones to record the teacher saying belittling remarks to them and went to talk to the principal with their parents.

In the fall of 2007, I was visiting an ESL/Spanish Language Arts teacher at a middle school near the university; she mentioned that this year they did not have a bilingual science class because the teacher had left. He had been asked to leave because he had been caught saying derogatory remarks to students. He would refer to students as “mojados” (wetbacks) all the while not teaching them anything. Another very painful story that a close friend and colleague of mine, Lucia, recently narrated to me occurred when she was conducting a teacher observation at the new high school located in the southwest part of town. It was a ninth grade ESL class composed of Mexican immigrant students. As soon as she walked into the classroom, the teacher started to bombard her with derogatory comments about the students. The teacher remarked that “her special education students could do better,” and “that these ELL’s couldn’t learn anything” and “that they don’t want to learn.” Meanwhile, the students were saying, “Well, if you would teach us...” When the teacher stepped out of the classroom, the students turned to Lucia and said “*Vaya y dígale a su jefa como nos trata para que la cambien porque no nos enseña nada*” (Go tell your boss so that they can change her because she doesn’t teach us anything).

Daniela Hernández, Sandra's daughter, who had attended the local high school, also felt that she was tracked into ESL classes that did not teach her any English, much less any academics. In her experience at this local high school, ESL students were given crossword puzzles to do or they would watch movies while the teacher was out roaming the halls. Daniela said that the English she did learn was from working and from her stepfather, not from school. Valdés (2001), qualitative study of four middle school immigrant children found that many times they are tracked into ESL classes, like the one Daniela experienced at the local high school in Encantada. She states, "ESL students become locked into a holding pattern in which they enroll in sequences of more and more ESL courses and in 'accessible' subjects such as art, cooking, and physical education" (Valdés, 2001, p. 17).

These racial aggressions demonstrate how the schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant students in Encantada are influenced by *the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*. Through their *testimonios*, we are able to see how race and racism are central factors in their schooling experiences (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Smith, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is also evident how teachers, staff, and administrators within public schools serving Mexican immigrant students in Encantada internalize the deficit paradigm. This deficit paradigm helps such educators in our public schools justify the poor, non-rigorous education of Mexican immigrant students who are tracked into mainly ESL or special education classes that do nothing more than prepare them for low-wage service jobs. In addition, these *testimonios* help us understand the multiple forms of resistance Mexican immigrant students engage when faced with oppression and discrimination within schools in Encantada.

Mexican Immigrant Families Shattering the Deficit Paradigm

To the contrary, the relationship between Latino parents and the school system is a micro-reflection of societal tensions and conflicts in the area of economic exploitation and institutional racism. (Olivos, 2004, p. 31)

An important tenet of Critical Race Theory is the *challenge to the dominant ideology and discourse* within the public school system that seeks to define families and students of color as “deficient.” In addition, acknowledging the *centrality of experiential knowledge* of Mexican immigrant families within the public school system in the U.S. helps shatter many of the myths of the deficit paradigm.

First myth: “Parents don’t care about the education of their children.”

Second myth: “Mexican immigrant parents’ schooling experience is limited.”

Third myth: “Mexican immigrant children come with nothing to school.”

These myths need to be deconstructed to show how the racist dominant ideology and discourse, found within the deficit paradigm permeating public schools, work to marginalize and disenfranchise Mexican immigrant parents and their children in Encantada. This chapter seeks to privilege the *testimonios* (Smith, 2002) of the Carrillo, Sias, Durán, and Hernández families whose children attend public schools in Encantada. Those *testimonios* help counter the dominant ideology and discourse of the deficit paradigm that portrays them as uncaring, non-involved parents with very little schooling. It is also essential to acknowledge how their own schooling experiences in Mexico influence the critical critique of the curriculum and quality and rigor found within public schooling in the United States. Their *experiential knowledge* embedded in their *testimonios* helps us understand how they experience race and racism in their interactions with school personnel, but also how they resist the discrimination and oppression they encounter.

Among the reasons that immigrants leave their countries of origin is the possibility of providing their children with the opportunity to have a chance at an education. Contrary to the discourse that attributes the academic failure of students of color, as their parents not valuing and not supporting the education of their children, the Mexican immigrant families in my research were very involved in the education of their children. Overwhelmingly, the Mexican immigrant parents I interviewed said that they believed that at the elementary level there was a good relationship and communication between them and their children's teachers. When asked about his experience with communication at the elementary level versus middle and high school, José Sias commented that, "*Como que es un poquito más buena, más elemental, más chiquitos.*" (Like it is a little more better, at the elementary, with the little ones.) His wife Sofia mentioned that the relationship with the teachers at the elementary level had been good. "*Ok, en la primaria mi hija está en Chacón y con los maestros ha sido muy buena siempre.*" (Ok, at the elementary level, my daughter goes to Chacón and with the teachers everything has been good thus far). Sandra Hernández also agrees that her experience with the teachers at the elementary level has been very good. *En la primaria sí fue muy, conviví bastante con los maestros...ponen mucha atención, platican con nosotros de los niños.* (At the elementary level it has been, I have had good communication with the teachers. The teachers pay a lot of attention, they speak to us about our children). Alma felt that the experience with her daughters had been very good at the elementary level.

Bueno en la primaria con mis hijas este con ellas tuve una experiencia muy diferente con ellas estuve cinco años estuve hasta de voluntaria, y me

servió mucho o sea se sentía uno mucho, como que se sentía uno en casa y lo apoyaban a uno, le daban bastante información.

(Well at the elementary school with my daughters, I had a very different experience. I was with them for five years, even as a volunteer and it helped me a lot, I felt, I felt at home, they supported and gave us a lot of information.)

Alma, Sandra, José and Sofía considered themselves to be very involved in the education and schooling of their children at the elementary level. Besides attending the bi-yearly parent teacher conferences, they also spoke to their children's teacher on a daily or weekly basis. Furthermore, Sofía, Sandra, and Alma had attended the ESL and parent classes offered through the school, as well as the informational meetings that dealt with different topics such as immigrant rights, healthcare, and education.

For Laura and Daniel Carrillo, the experience with the education system of this country has been very disappointing. Their experience with public education has mainly been at the middle- and high-school levels. Their experience within the middle- and high-schools has mainly been with special education since they have a 15-year-old daughter who has Down Syndrome. The Carrillo's said that in Mexico Dulce was taught basic reading and writing skills and that she had to do homework everyday requiring her to practice these skills. Daniel commented that his observation of the poor quality of education his daughter has received here as compared to Mexico.

No era lo que esperábamos a, en cuestión de educación no porque, de la, de donde venimos nosotros, nosotros mirábamos a la niña que ahorita que tenemos dos niños y la niña es la que está yendo a la escuela ahorita este.

No, no, no de hecho a, se ha ido para atrás porque ella cuando, venía, estuvo allá en, en la escuela en México, este ella le encargaban planas, ya, ya escribía, ella llegaba muy contenta porque le encargaban tarea de la escuela y aquí, no ha sido nada o sea aquí se ha ido para atrás.”

(No, no, no in fact she has not advanced because when she came, she was in school in Mexico and over there she was given homework. She knew how to write she would come home happy because she had homework and here no homework, here she has gone backwards in her education.)

Based on his experience with the schooling system in Mexico as a student and parent himself, Daniel felt that his daughter had regressed instead of making progress. In Mexico his daughter would be assigned homework in writing and mathematics, and here she was never given any academic homework.

The Sias and Hernández families encountered a disconnection between themselves and schools at the middle- and high-school levels. José Sias felt the relationship was cold, *“con los jóvenes más grandes ya es un poquito más, más fría la relación ya como que ya no se interesan mucho..(with the young adults and teenage kids the relationship is more, more cold, like they are not as interested in them)*. Sandra Hernández simply stated that she had not ever visited her children’s middle and high school. Sofía felt that parents were not involved at the high school level like they had been at the elementary level. She states *“acá en Salinas pues extrañamos mucho porque ahí no nos incluyen en nada ya es cosa aparte”* (over at Salinas we miss that relationship a lot but there they do not include us in anything it is something separate). For Alma this disconnection that occurred at the middle school was due to language.

Pues allí sí se me hizo como que un cambio muy diferente porque yo he notado que en las escuelas, por ejemplo mis hijas estuvieron en la Lincoln y de allí se fueron a la Ford y se me hizo muy, muy diferente y muy pesado porque como que allí no hay mucha gente que habla español.

(Well there it was a change, very different because I noticed that in the schools for example my daughters attended Lincoln, than went to Ford and it was very different, it was hard because there aren't many people who speak Spanish.)

When I inquired about the quality of public education they felt their children were receiving, both the Sias and Carrillo family felt that it was of lesser quality in comparison with that of Mexico. They felt that especially at the high school level, students were given too much liberty to do as they pleased. They felt it was not rigorous enough and that students were not given sufficient challenging homework. Moreover, the Sias and Carrillo family felt very disappointed with the quality of education this country had to offer their children. They were convinced that education in Mexico was very rigorous, and that teachers there had higher expectations than the ones here in the United States. Both José and Sofia spoke of the amount of homework given to students in Mexico, which was a large amount and very intense. José also mentioned that teachers in Mexico were very strict because students had to turn in the homework, no excuses.

No se compara, no se compara a la, el, el, no sé, no sé como será aquí yo creo que protegen mucho al estudiante pero eh, al protegerlo lo están, lo están echando a peder porque, por ejemplo en México um, el nivel allá como sea el nivel de educación no, no, no se compara absolutamente en

nada simplemente aquí no encargan ni tarea y allá (chi) a veces que no duerme uno con, haciendo trabajos y trabajos y aquí no, aquí yo a mis hijos nunca los he visto estudiar, yo nunca los he visto estudiar, nunca no sé si serán nomás los míos pero no, no, no aquí yo no veo nada.

(It does not compare, there's no comparison, I don't know, I don't know how it is here I believe that they protect the student a lot but, eh, by protecting him they are spoiling him because, for example in Mexico, um, the level over there, the level of education no there is absolutely no comparison in anything here they never give homework and over there sometimes one doesn't sleep doing homework or projects and here nothing. Here I have never seen my kids study, never, I don't know if it is only my kids but no here I don't see anything.)

José's experience here in the United States with his older children was that he never saw them bring home the rigorous work he thought should be given to high school students. When he inquired regarding the situation with his children's teachers at the high school, he was told that students here in the United States did whatever they wanted, that they couldn't be forced to do their work, attend classes, etc. José found this to be very disappointing and frustrating. Sofía had the same critique about the quality of schooling in the United States. When I asked if she felt her children had received a good education, she said "yes" but did not sound too convinced. She felt maybe her children hadn't taken advantage of it because, comparing it to schooling in Mexico, in the U.S. it was easier. Sofía spoke of how in Mexico students would receive so much homework that you would have to start doing the homework as soon as you got home until late at night.

Hijola, o sea por, ¿por el sistema? Pues sí (no muy convencida) pero yo pienso que no la han sabido aprovechar porque en México la escuela es muy pesada, por ejemplo va uno a la escuela y llega uno de la escuela come y se tiene que sentar desde que llega hasta en la noche hacer tarea o sea le encargan mucha tarea, mucha tarea y te exigen mucho y aquí no, aquí la escuela es fácil, no les encargan tanto ni les exigen tanto y por lo que comentan en clase también no es así tan estresante como en México. Y yo para mi forma de ver es bueno porque se les hace más fácil la escuela y pueden avanzar más, menos estresados y en México los estresan a uno mucho y muchos se salen de la escuela, yo pienso que por ese motivo yo digo que el sistema de aquí si es bueno pero los míos no lo han sabido aprovechar (laughs).

(Oh, wow, because of the system? Well yes (not too convinced) but I think they have not been able to take advantage because in Mexico the schooling is very hard. For example, one goes to school and then get home from school and you eat and you have to sit down since you get home until night time to do homework you have a lot of homework and they require a lot of you and here they don't, here school is easy, they don't ask for so much homework and they don't request a lot of you and from what they say in class it is also not as stressful as it is in Mexico. From my perspective I think it is good because it is easier for them and they could advance and they are less stressed and in Mexico they stress them a lot and

a lot of them dropout I think that because of that one thing the system here is good but my kids have not taken advantage of it (laughs.)

Both José and Sofía mentioned the lack of communication that exists between parents and teachers at the high school level. They spoke about a situation they had had with one of their children, whom they discovered was failing one of his classes three months before the end of the school year. They both were very disappointed that they had not received a phone call from the school to let them know that their son had not been turning in his work and was most likely going to fail the class. They both felt that it was the school's responsibility to make them aware of the situation; they made the assumption that, because they hadn't heard from the school, their son must be doing well.

José—De uno de ellos me enteré como a los tres meses que no, que no entregaba trabajos ni nada hasta los tres meses. Um, no me acuerdo a que altura pero o sea como me acuerdo bien que, después de tres meses nos mandaron decir que o ya tiene tres meses sin, faltando mucho tiempo y no llevando nada. Esa vez yo fui y les dije cómo puede ser posible que en tres meses o sea que no haya un control, no dice es que aquí ya, aquí ya ellos hacen lo que quieren, si quieren ya nadie los va a obligar es pues de eso no, no estoy muy de acuerdo. Con que viene por correo o sea pues suponía yo que si no nos mandaban hablar que, que todo estaba bien.

(About one of them I found out 3 months later that he was not turning in coursework or anything three months later. Um, I don't know at what point but I do remember after three months they told us that he had been missing class and not turning in any work for the last three months. That

time I went and told them how could it be possible that in three months that there is no control, no they said, here they do whatever they please, here no one is going to make them do anything, well I do not agree with that. They said it was a mailed notification and I thought that if we did not get called then everything was fine.)

When José finally went to the school to get information regarding the situation, he asked why he hadn't received a phone call or letter. Moreover, he asked why it had taken the school three months before calling him. The school officials took no responsibility. Instead, they told him that at the high school level, students did whatever they wanted, they could not be forced to attend school or do work.

Sofía—Mi hijo el segundo, tengo dos de, que salieron de Salinas y el segundo iba mal y nunca nos enteramos ya hasta al último, no nos hablaban de la escuela, al último que fuimos ya mi esposo oiga pues avisenos si falta, si esto, no si y no otra vez venía con las notas bajas, oiga quedamos que nos iba avisar um discúlpenos que allí le avisamos así terminamos el año batallando.

(My son the second one I have two, that graduated from Salinas and the second one was not doing well and we never found out until at the very end. They never called us from the school at the end we went and my husband told them that next to let us know if he missed school, yes they said and again he came with bad grades and so we went again I thought we had agreed that you were going to let us know and again they said

forgive us we will let you know and that is how we ended that year
fighting.)

Sofía acknowledged that although her husband asked the school to call them if their son was ditching, the situation continued and they never received a call throughout the school year.

The Carrillo family felt very frustrated with the lack of education their special needs daughter was getting at Salinas High School. They felt she had not made any gains, but instead they felt she was regressing academically. They felt they had fulfilled their responsibilities as parents and that the school was failing to do their part. Instead, they were accused of not being good parents because they were perceived as not addressing the “behavior problems” their daughter had at school.

Laura—Nomás me mandan decir si se porta bien o se porta mal.

(They only let me know if she is behaving well or if she is behaving badly.)

Daniel—Es lo único, Dulce se portó bien, Dulce hizo esto, Dulce no hizo esto pero nunca dicen...

(That is the only thing, Dulce behaved, Dulce did this, Dulce did not do that but they never say...)

Laura—Dulce trabajó muy bien o ahora aprendió esto nunca me mandan decir nada así pero para darme quejas sí me hablan porque hasta me hablan por teléfono pero es como yo les dije una vez por qué me hablan

nomás para darme quejas y nunca me hablan para decirme, sabe que Dulce estuvo hoy muy bien o sea hay que escuchar de los dos lados porque no siempre se va a portar mal, porque no se porta mal bueno le digo aquí en mi casa ya allí es responsabilidad de los maestros.

(Dulce worked really well or now she learned this, they never let us know anything like that, but they only give me complaints that is all they are good for they even call me on the telephone but it is like I told them once because they only called to complain and they never call to tell me, you know Dulce did really well today in other words we need to hear about both things because she is not always going to misbehave, because she does not misbehave well not here at home once over there that is the teacher's responsibility.)

Daniel—*Es que ya es responsabilidad de ellas ya en la escuela es responsabilidad de ellos.*

(It's just that it is their responsibility; once at school, it is their responsibility.)

Laura—*Yo como, yo le digo yo no tengo oídos o ojos para estar oyendo y escuchando lo que haga la niña o deje de hacer ese ya es trabajo de la maestra, llegó a mi casa es mi responsabilidad estar con ella y enseñarle pero yo la mando a la escuela es responsabilidad estar con ella y enseñarle pero yo la mando a la escuela responsabilidad de los maestros de todo.*

(Like I tell you I do not have ears or eyes to be hearing and listening what my girl does or does not do—that is the teacher’s job, she gets home and it is my responsibility to be with her and teach her, but I send her to school, it is their responsibility to be with her and teach her but I send her to school, it is the teacher’s responsibility of everything.)

Since there was no academic progress nor reporting to Laura and Daniel, it seemed their daughter was being tracked to learn survival/life skills so that when she completed high school she could find a job and be independent. She never had any homework and was taken on too many field trips.

Laura—Es que acá en la, en la Salinas sabe que, allí tiene muchas actividades para salir afuera de la escuela, ellos se enfocan más en eso para cuando ellos salgan de la secunda, de la Salinas, de la high school ellos hay sepan más o menos cómo van a hacer esto, cómo van a hacer lo otro, salen mucho, mucho a pasear casi es a diario cuando no la llevan al mol, la llevaban a la pizza, la llevan al Wal-Mart y todo eso. Que, que se enseñe a comprar cosas, la suben al camión para que sepa andar en los buses públicos y todo eso porque no los llevan en el camión de la escuela por ejemplo el Wal-Mart que está cerquitas se van caminando.

(It’s just that over here at Salinas you know, they have a lot of out of school activities they focus more on that so that when they get out of middle, of Salinas, of high school, they will know more or less how to do certain things, they go out on lots and lots of field trips almost daily if they

are not going to the mall they take her to get pizza, they take her to Wal-mart and all that. That she needs to learn to buy things, they get her on the buses so that she knows how to ride on the public transportation and all that because they don't take them on the school bus. For example, the Wal-mart that is close by they go there walking.)

Although her parents attended all required IEP meetings, the school officials were never able to give the mother information on the academic achievement of Dulce.

Daniel—No, no pues es que ella no es que no tiene nada.

(No, well no, it's just that she does not have anything.)

Laura—O sea no sé qué, qué es lo que le enseñan.

(In other words, I don't know what it is that they teach her.)

Daniel—No sabemos realmente que es la educación que le están dando

(No, in reality we do not know what type of education they are giving her.)

Laura—O sea no sabemos que es lo que le enseñan a ella o sea yo no sé como trabajan, a mí me dicen una cosa, pero yo no le veo nada, ella que traiga algo a veces que si lo que hacen son arreglitos como para el día del papá que es Navidad hacen cosas manuales todo eso, pero que yo vea que mi hija traiga tarea, un papel para trabajar, eso todas esas cosas mejor lo miraba más en la Tyler que ahora que está en la Salinas. En la Tyler la

ponen como a contar que contara le ponen en un círculo uno, dos, tres bolitas y luego tenía que poner Dulce, contaba Dulce tiene que poner el número así pero no, a mí no me gustó muy bien este año allí en la Salinas, no quedé muy conforme con ellos.

(We really don't know what they teach her, I don't know how they work, they tell me one thing, but I don't see anything for her to bring something. Sometimes what they do is she brings little arrangements like for father's day, for Christmas they do a lot of hands on things they do things like that but that I see my daughter bring homework a piece of paper that she needs to do, I saw more of that at Tyler then now at Salinas. At Tyler they would have her count, she had to count and then put a circle, one, two, three little balls and then she had to write Dulce, Dulce counted she had to put the number like that but well I didn't like it this year very well there at Salinas. I was not very satisfied with them.)

The boiling point came when at the end of the 2008 school year, the Carrillos had one last meeting with the principal, teacher, and educational assistants because they were extremely dissatisfied with the poor education Dulce was receiving. At the meeting they were vocal about their dissatisfaction with Dulce's academic progress, and they told those present of the better quality of education their daughter had received in México.

***Daniel**—Es lo que nosotros le decíamos, le decimos yo tuve una oportunidad de ir con ella la acompañé para una junta con ellos y es lo que le decíamos, en México eran 18 o 20 niños y una sola maestra y*

sabían más los niños, aquí son 4 con dos ayudantes y la maestra y los niños están atrasados o sea ¿cómo es posible eso?

(That is what we told them, we told them, I had the opportunity to go with her, I accompanied them to one of the meetings and it is what we told them, in Mexico they had about 18 or 20 kids and only one teacher and the kids know more. Here there are 4 assistants plus the teacher and the kids are behind, how is that possible?)

Laura—*Yo creo los agarramos así de sorpresa porque en ese momento no, nos pudieron decir nada o no se esperaban que nosotros les íbamos a decir eso, pero nosotros lamentablemente o afortunadamente venimos de otro lado y así se dan las cosas y hace uno las comparaciones o sea.*

(I believe that we took them by surprise because at that moment, no, they could not say anything or they did not foresee what we were going to tell them that but unfortunately or fortunately we come from the other side and that is how things happen and we do the comparison.)

Daniel—*Nos dicen ellos, no es que eso fue en otros años no es mucho la diferencia hace tres años, ya para tres años yo digo si mi niña estuviera allá en México quizás a la mejor ella supiera escribir oraciones ya sola y aquí fue, no aquí fue para atrás, se fue para atrás y allá no allá le encargaban y empezaba aflojarse, a soltar más la mano por estar escribiendo y todo y ahora aquí la vemos ella agarra un libro, agarra algo.*

(They told us that it was because that was in other years there aren't that many years it was three years ago, it has been three years and by this time my daughter would be over there in Mexico maybe by now she would know how to write some sentences by herself and here it was like she went backwards, backwards and over there they assigned work and she was beginning to loosen up, to loosen up her hand because she was writing and all that and now here we see her get a book, get something.)

This comment took the schools' administration by surprise so much so that they did not know what to respond. After this meeting, the Carrillos were so frustrated with the entire situation and lack of support on the part of the school that they kept their daughter at home the last couple of days before the end to the school year.

Alma also felt very disconnected from her daughter's education experience at the high school level; she acknowledged that the situation there was worse than at the middle school. Moreover, she felt that at the high school level students were seen just as a number, because every time she had an inquiry about her daughter, they always asked for their student ID numbers, not their names. Alma viewed this as a cold and uncaring way to deal with students; she felt the school didn't care about the students.

Eh, no en la preparatoria esta peor (se ríe) es igual porque, no, no sé yo con la preparatoria yo, son unas de las cosas que yo digo y pienso porque no o sea, o sea allí no toman a los hijos como, como un alumno los toman como un número... pero no siento o que, que agarren a los hijos a ellos como que no les importan los ven como un número de serie.

(Eh, no at the high school it is worse (she laughs) it is the same because, no, no, I know that at the high school I, it is one of the things I say and I think because, there they don't take our kids as, as a student, they consider them a number...but I do not feel that they, they get our kids, they don't care about them they see them as a serial number.)

Alma's daughters had not been attending some of their classes so the only type of communication she was having with school officials was in regards to this situation. She was in contact with the attendance clerk who spoke Spanish, and it was through the attendance clerk that Alma was able to communicate with some of her daughters' teachers. Alma felt that the school rules weren't always followed through since every time her daughters skipped classes, they were put on probation and threatened to be kicked out of school. Alma and her daughters were made to sign papers every time they were put on probation, but her daughters would skip classes again and nothing would happen.

Entonces yo he tenido experiencia con mis hijas que he tenido pocos problemas, pero me las ponen en provecho o que se salen y se van de pinta y me hacen firmar papeles y les hacen firmar papeles también a ellas de que si se vuelven a salir las van a correr pero no es cierto o sea se han salido se han vuelto a salir y los provechos y las reglas que ponen no las siguen.

(Well then I've had the experience with my daughters, I've had some problems but they put them on probation or they leave school and ditch and they make me sign papers and they make them sign papers also and

supposedly that if they ditch again they are going to be kicked out of school but it is not true, they have ditched again and the probation and the rules they imposed on them are not followed.)

When I asked Alma about the difference she noticed between schooling in Mexico and the United States, she mentioned that in Mexico they pay more attention to the student as a person. Additionally, through her conversations with family members in Mexico, many of her nieces and nephews who were the same age as her daughters, were further along in their education and better prepared.

Aquí no, no sé como que, que sé, como que allá le ponen más interés a la persona y lo tengo, le digo, porque hablo con mi familia y casi todos mis sobrinos ahorita ya van en una carrera, ya están estudiando para algo y casi de la misma edad de mis hijas, a allá van en grados diferentes y con cosas diferentes, (mis sobrinos) hacen preguntas y se quedan mis hijas, eso a mi todavía no me lo enseñan, eso sí pienso yo allá le ponen más atención.

(Here no, I don't know it's like, like over there they are more interested in the person and I have I tell you because I talk with my family and almost all of my nieces and nephews right now they are pursuing a career they are studying for something and they are almost the same age as my daughters over there they are in different grades and with different things, they ask questions and my daughters say that they have not been taught that yet, that I do think that over there they pay more attention.)

Alma's interactions and experiences with the U.S. schooling system has made her feel that, at least at the high school level, there was disconnection between the home and the school (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). The communication that did exist was mainly about attendance issues and very little had to do with the academic achievement of her daughters. The only way she knew about her daughters' academic standing was through the report cards she got in the mail. In addition, Alma's frame of reference from her own schooling experience in Mexico prompted her to perceive the high school system in the United States as uncaring and uninterested in the students they served. The sense of community that she experienced in Mexico did not exist here.

The Sias and Carrillo families were disgusted with the quality and non-rigor of education their children received. Rigor for them was equated with the amount of homework students received. They felt that in Mexico, the curriculum was more advanced and very rigorous since the amount of homework took them a very long time to complete. They thought that the U.S. schooling system needed to be a little stricter with students. Although the women were the ones who had more experience and interactions with the schools their children attended, they kept their husbands informed. Moreover, the husbands would attend any meeting when necessary. The schools' response at the middle and high school level was to say that here "...students did whatever they wanted and couldn't be forced to do the work or attend classes, etc." All the families believed that at the high school it was essential to have "good communication." In addition, high schools needed to involve the parents more because of the age of the students (teenagers)—at this age, students need all the support available in order to be pushed academically.

The *intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*

establishes that racism plays a central role in the structuring of schools' practices, discourses, and ideologies (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Olivos, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, Tate, 1997; Villenas and Deyhle, 1999; Yosso, 2002).

Through the *testimonios* of the Sias, Durán, Carrillo, and Hernández families provide the evidence that shows how the ideologies, practices, and discourses of racism worked to marginalize and exclude Mexican immigrant parents in Encantada Public Schools.

Marginalization and exclusion of the families and their children occurred through the lack of communication by the school. Although the parents made the effort by contacting the school, as in Alma's case, the only person she had communication with was a school attendance clerk. In the Sias case, although Mr. Sias spoke to a counselor about his concerns regarding the curriculum and its lack of rigor, his concerns were met with "teenagers in the U.S. do whatever they want, they can't be forced to study." By dismissing Mr. Sias's concerns, the counselor was "washing his hands" of any responsibility for the education of Mexican immigrant students at the high school.

Another example could be seen in the lack of rigorous curriculum, as in the case of the Carrillo's daughter, who in the special education class was learning "survival" skills such as going to the bank, riding the bus, and grocery shopping. Tracking and low teacher expectations were also seen in Daniela's enrollment in an ESL class where all they ever did was work on crossword puzzles and watch movies (Valdés, 2001) As stated by Villenas and Deyhle (1999) in their analysis of seven ethnographic studies regarding Latino schooling and family education, "The voices of Latino parents reveal how, despite the school rhetoric of parent involvement, parents are really 'kept out' of school by the

negative ways in which they are treated...and by the ways in which school-conceived parent involvement programs disregard Latino knowledge and cultural bases” (p. 415).

The *testimonios* of the families regarding their experiences with their children’s school demonstrated their active involvement and participation in their education. The Sias, Durán, Carrillo, and Hernández families’ *testimonies* shattered the deficit paradigm that seeks to portray Mexican immigrant parents as uncaring, uninvolved in their children’s education. It is through their experiences and interactions with the schooling system of this country that they form their critique of the curriculum and quality and rigor of public schooling. Based on their *experiential knowledge* with their own schooling experiences in Mexico, these parents are able to compare the quality, rigor, and curriculum that their children are being exposed to and articulate how there is something inherently wrong with the system. Although they have been vocal about their feelings and perceptions, their interactions with school personnel left them disillusioned and frustrated. As Olivos (2006) mentioned, “Immigrant parents also realize very quickly that the school system in the United States functions much differently than in their countries of origin, often presenting a contradiction with their personal experiences of how schools functioned in their native countries” (p. 64). It is evident that the Sias, Durán, Carrillo, and Hernández families’ concerns, feelings, and perceptions have been patronized and/or ignored by the schools that serve their children.

Mexican Immigrant Families Resistance and Resilience

In the fall of 2008, while attending a district workshop regarding how to promote data analysis and dialogues among K-5th grade teachers, I became upset with usage of the word “alien” made by a principal. The facilitator, who was a white man from the East

Coast, asked the group present (principals, instructional coaches and district personnel) about some of the “required” demands placed on the schools by the district that could possibly interfere with schools having the time for data dialogues. The facilitator made a list as the participants named district required training, and when one of the elementary principals mentioned the “alien training,” my principal, our Spanish literacy teacher, and I were shocked, and offended. We spoke among ourselves how demeaning that word was, then I looked up and presenter had written the word “alien” on his list. I immediately raised my hand to let him know that I found the word “alien” offensive and to please remove it. I went on to say that I, myself, was an immigrant and therefore felt the word “alien” was insulting. The principal who used the word “alien” fired back at my statement by saying that she herself was an immigrant and did not find the word offensive. This may have been the case since she is white and the word “alien” within the mainstream media and society is used to refer to Mexican immigrants. The facilitator apologized and acknowledged my concern and asked for the correct title of the training.

I tell this story because it illustrates how words such as “alien,” “illegal,” and “wetback,” are used in the media to dehumanize and justify overt and covert violence against Mexican immigrants and their children and are internalized by administrators and teachers teaching in our public schools. In addition, it demonstrates how such words used to describe Mexican immigrants and their children are normalized to the point that a white administrator did not find the word “alien” offensive, even though she considered herself an immigrant. This speaks to the historical framing of white European immigrants as “good” and desirable and the current immigrants of color from so called third world countries as “bad” and undesirable. Villenas and Deyhle (1999) state, “in the schools, the

colonization of the mind is continued through the instilling of historical amnesia that renders Latino/indigenous people as “immigrants,” foreigners who have no claim to the Americas, while European Americans are constructed as the natural owners and inheritors of these lands” (p. 421).

This section seeks to understand how Mexican immigrant families’ resistance and resiliency is expressed through their daily interaction with the schools serving their children. Although the Encantada school district has a policy and required training on the right to an education for “undocumented” students, it is important to see manifestation in schools.

In 2007–2008 administrators, teachers and all staff employed by the Encantada Public Schools had to attend training on the district’s policy and procedures in regards to undocumented students. This training came about after an incident that occurred in March of 2004 when the U.S. Border Patrol outside the school detained three Mexican immigrant students from Cerrillos High School. An Encantada police officer had called immigration officials because he suspected the students’ identification was false. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund sued the Encantada Public Schools, the Encantada Police Department and the U.S. Border Patrol on behalf of the students, arguing that their education rights had been violated. This is based on the fact that in 1982, the U.S Supreme Court ruled that it is illegal to deny school age children a right to an education based on their citizenship status. Some of the key points of the training included the following:

- Schools must enroll students regardless of their immigration status or perceived status (APS, 2007, slide 6);

- cannot ask students or parents questions about their immigration status since that might disclose whether or not they are legal residents (APS, 2007, slide 7);
- must enroll students even if they do not have a social security number (APS, 2007, slide 8);
- should be careful not to do anything to restrict undocumented students from enrolling in school (APS, 2007, slide 9) and
- must not discuss a student's or a family's immigration status with government immigration officials (APS, 2007, slide 10).

The Carrillo, Durán, Sias, and Hernández families knew that schools could not ask them for their immigration status; they had heard of the districts' policy through the news (Spanish network) and/or meetings they had attended through the different community organizations they were involved with. They were also aware that the principal was not allowed to give any information to Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agency if they came to school.

Daniel—Todo es confidencial emigración no debe meterse no sé, ya estando en esa situación no sé como lo maneje ya el gobierno o la escuela, ya no sé si ellos puedan dar información.

(Everything is confidential immigration does not need to get involved, I don't know, when one is in that situation I don't know how the government will handle it or the school, I don't know if they can give information.)

Laura—O el director porque de hecho aquí en la Chacón una vez estuvo migración y hasta cerraron las puertas porque este, Alma nos dijo que no debía de estar, no tenían que estar emigración no sé cuantas de distancia de una escuela.

(Or the director because as a matter of fact here at Chacón once immigration came and they even locked the doors because, Alma told us that they should not be there they had no reason for being there immigration I don't know how far away from the school.)

Daniel—10 millas creo, 10 millas de distancia.

(10 miles I believe it is a 10 mile distance.)

Laura—No, no, no. No ahí de la calle, una camioneta de emigración. O yo creo que como hace qué, um, como más de un año. Mucha gente tenía hasta, miedo porque estaba cerquitas de la escuela.

(No, no, no. No, there from the street, a border patrol truck. Or I think that they do, um, like a year ago. A lot of people were scared because it was very, very close to the school.)

José—No, hasta donde yo sé no. No pues yo lo he oído en las noticias pero o sea veo que es como debate porque hay unas escuelas que sí y hay otras que no pero, pero no yo sé que no, que no deben de preguntar. Que yo sepa no se les tiene que dar absolutamente dar nada de información eso también en las noticias yo lo he oído.

(No, from what I know, I know that no. No, well I have heard it on the news but I see that it's like a debate because there are schools that this happens to and there are others that it does not happen, but, but I know that it should not happen, that they should not be asking. From what I know we do not have to give them absolutely any information that I've also heard in the news.)

Sofía—No, que yo sepa no. Y, no permitirles entrar porque no pueden, no. Um, de allí en la iglesia que está junto a la Chacón ahí hay un grupo que se llama Más Mamá y allí llevaban gente que nos informa sobre cosas de emigración de médicas y de todo que necesitamos saber para la educación de nuestros hijos.

(Not from what I know. And also not to let them in because they are not supposed to do that. Um, there at the church that is next to Chacón there's a group called More Mother and there they take people that give us information about immigration, about healthcare and about other things that we need to know for the education of our kids.)

Alma—No hasta que yo sé no nos pueden preguntar, o sea ni nos pueden preguntar ni tampoco intimidar con esas cosas si tienes papeles o no, pero nunca se ha dado el caso. Hasta donde yo sé no. No esta permitido y hasta donde yo sé ni la directora ni nadie debe dejarlos entrar a ellos. Una vez hace como cuatro años sí pasó en ésta escuela Chacón, sí empezaron a ver a que estaban llevándose a gente cerquitas nosotros la misma

directora empezó a decir que tuviéramos cuidado que había gente, que estaba gente recogiendo migración que tuviéramos cuidado que nos esperáramos en rato en la escuela. Pero sí supimos que estábamos apoyados por la directora anterior.

(No, from what I know they cannot ask us, they cannot ask us nor intimidate us with those things if you have papers or not but it has not come up. From what I know it has not happened. It is not permitted and from what I know not even the principal or anybody else is supposed to let them in. One time about 4 years ago, it did happen here at Chacón , they started seeing that they were taking people nearby and the principal told us to be careful, that immigration was rounding up people and that we should be careful or that we should wait a while at school. But yes we did know that we were supported by the former principal.)

Laura mentioned that she had heard through friends that the border patrol had been spotted close to the school (Chacón) and that the administration had to place the school on lock-down as a safety precaution. Alma also spoke about the time the border patrol was near the school picking up people, and how the principal, at that time, had been very supportive, something she could not say about the current principal.

Sofía Sias was the only participant that related her experiences and her son's with another public education institution, Encantada Community College (ECC), when asked if public schools could inquire about one's immigration status. She acknowledged that they shouldn't but that at ECC they did. She went on to relate her experiences while attending ECC for ESL classes, including the racism she had been exposed to by the

older women, mainly Hispanic, at the registration desk. At first she felt that it may be because they were just having a “bad” day, but after speaking to other classmates she learned they had similar experiences.

Pero sí tratan mal en el ECC y es que muchas veces dice uno bueno a la mejor tenía mal día o nomás a mí me trató mal o algo. Yo he estado llegando a tomar clases en el ECC y cada vez que me voy a inscribir a donde se inscriben los mayores, adultos, es otro lugar aparte, hijo, verá como nos tratan mal, digo porque pues, pues son puras señoras hablan español pues supongo yo que son chicanas, ¿verdad? y ahí nos tratan muy mal a uno, son muy racistas. O sea es el trato, ¿me entiendes? Por ejemplo, tú llegas dices me voy a inscribir y te hacen fea cara y le contestan feo y ahí uno se siente muy mal pues ¿qué daño le hace uno? En serio que la piensa uno de verdad que y pues yo ya tengo que tanto dos años yendo, algo así y ya ve que son los cursos chiquitos y cada vez que voy a inscribirme pues ahí y un día sí le dijimos(a la maestra), otra señora le dijo a la maestra allí en ECC, dijo deberás le dice si estas (las mujeres) quién sabe qué (se ríe) estas señoras y luego dijo ella (la maestra) y ¿quién más?, no le creyó (a la compañera) su experiencia y le digo, maestra yo también, yo he tomado este curso varias veces y cada vez que voy, dice pero ¿cuál? todas, todas bueno eso es ahí en el salón nosotros de inglés.

(But yes they do treat you badly at ECC and a lot of the times we say maybe it is because they are having a bad day or maybe they just treated

me badly or something. I have been taking classes at ECC and every time I go to enroll, where the older people go to enroll, the adults, it is a different place, man you should see the way they treat us, well they are all older women they speak Spanish well I suppose they are Chicanas, correct? And there they treat us really badly, they are very racist. It is their treatment. For example, you get there and tell them that you are going to enroll and they make a face and they answer you in a bad manner and one feels really bad well because what kind of harm are we doing to them? Seriously one has to think twice really well I have been going there for two years something like that well you know they are the short classes and every time I go to enroll there and one day we did tell them another lady told the teacher there at ECC she told her yes who knows what is wrong with these women (she laughs) but she did not believe her so she asked who else has had this experience and so I said teacher it has also happened to me I have taken this class several times and every time I go, and so she asked but who? All of them, who were there in our English class.)

Moreover, Sofia's son's had similar experiences when attempting to register for classes at ECC. Her older son, who is a U.S. citizen, went to register and had been waiting for a long time once he turned in his documents. Another lady noticed he had been waiting for a long time, so she went to inquire about his situation. She returned to tell him that the lady helping him did not believe that his birth certificate was legitimate. Her younger son, also when attempting to register, was asked if he had "papers." When he said no, he was informed that he could not register, that people who didn't have

“papers” could not study. After coming home and relating the story to Sofia, she made him go back because she told him that ECC could not inquire about his “legal” status. He returned and was registered by a black man. But the examples of the mistreatment and discrimination experienced by Sofia and her son’s didn’t just end there. Sofia spoke of the several of her son’s friends who also happen to be Mexican and who experienced similar treatment and discrimination at ECC. She goes on to discuss the experience of one particular friend of her younger son. His mother related the story to Sofia about how her son was humiliated by the clerks at ECC; moreover, she spoke of how she cried and kept asking her son to leave. He was told he couldn’t study because he didn’t have “papers,” and the forms he was given to fill out were thrown at him. He persisted because he wanted to study.

Y cuando fueron mis hijos a inscribirse tuvieron la misma experiencia pero ya para los alumnos, los dos por ejemplo el grande es ciudadano americano y cuando se estaba inscribiendo no, él ya había ido a inscribirse una vez y no fue si no que volvió al siguiente periodo y se fue a inscribir llevó sus papales y todo y la señora se fue y luego, “lléname éstos” y se volvió a ir y bueno no lo inscribía y allí fue, y pasaban y pasaban hasta que llegó otra y le dijo “por qué no te has inscrito? Ya tienes rato aquí?” “Sí.” dice, “la señora me está inscribiendo” y fue la señora para atrás hablar con ella y volvió y le dice que le dijo “es que ella no cree que estos papeles son tuyos.” “Porque?” dice. “Estos papeles, ella piensa que no son tuyos.” “Sí son míos, le dice, si yo nací aquí en tal parte y todo.” No dice, “yo te inscribo.” Y bueno ya va el otro

y también le tocó que lo trataron mal porque no tenía papeles, que le preguntaron y “sí” que le dij. Y le dijo “pues sabes que no puedes estudiar.” Y él le dijo “¿por qué no?” “Pues, porque no tienes papele.” Y le dijo “no yo sé que sí puedo.” “No” le dij. Si no que él se vino y me dijo, le digo eso no es cierto, Lalo, tú puedes estudiar no le hagas caso, ve otra vez y te va tocar otra persona y volvió a ir y ya dice que le tocó un negrito muy amable y él sí lo inscribió, pero la otra no, bueno pasó con mi hijo y después fueron los amigos, como siete mexicanos pues también a todos los trataron mal a todos, entonces fue uno que salió de ROTC él, él era el comandante más machín de allí como van por nivel como si fueran soldados de verdad y el fue a inscribirse fue con su mamá porque su papá se había muerto...pobrecito se le murió en sus brazos de un derrame y sí terminó muy bien, porque es muy inteligente y fue a inscribirse y dice la mamá que los trataron muy mal y dice que ella lloraba, que le decía “vámonos mi hijo.” “No mamá,” que le decía. “Yo quiero estudiar.” Entonces ya que le dijo “que no tienes beca?” (la mujer de ECC). No sabía y le dijo “no, no tengo.” “Toma” y que le aventó la hoja. “Aplica, ve allá con la muchacha aquella y aplica, a ver si te dan.” Y que le decía la mamá “no, ya vámonos mi hijo, ya no.” Porque le dijo cuanto era para estudiar, dijo “yo no puedo pagar eso oiga.” “Pues si tienes beca estudias, si no, no tienes no.” “No tengo.” Y pues le aventó una hoja, pues ve allá con aquella.” Que llegaron con aquella, “ve tú mi hijo, yo ya no quiero ver que te traten mal.” Y dice que entró y que le platicó después el

muchacho que también le aventó la hoja. Y “apúntate allí haber si te dan algo.” Y ya dice que se apuntó y se salió, dice que cuando iba saliendo otra se quedó chequeando y no sé que y le habló y que le dice “má a cada me están hablando o no, no, no ya no quiero yo ir, aquí me espero, ve tú.” Que le dijo “haber que te dicen.” Ya se metió y salió llorando y que dijo (la mamá) “ah que le dirían a mi hijo, pobrecito.” Alguien le pagó la universidad, entonces yo digo que ROTC se la pagaron. Dice “quién sería, Sofía, ¿usted no fue?” No le digo nombre pues si tuviera yo le juro que se la hubiera pagado porque yo se que él es un bueno niño y ahorita terminó un año de, está en psicología y le tiene pagado todo.

(And when my sons went to register they had the same experiences but yes as students, both of them, for example the older one he is an American citizen and when he went to register, he had already gone to register once and he did not go until the next session so he went to register. He took his papers and everything and the lady left and said, “you need to fill out all these papers” and she left again and anyway she would not enroll him and others kept on passing until someone else came and asked why he had not registered and said, “you have been here a while.” “Yes,” he said, “the lady is registering me” and so this other lady went into the back offices to talk to the other one and came back saying that the other lady did not believe that those were his real papers. “Why?” She believes that these papers are not yours they are mine he tells her I was born here in such and such place and all that, well I will enroll you. Then the other one goes to

register and they also treated him badly because he does not have papers they asked him and he said no well without papers you cannot study. He came back and told me about it and I said Lalo yes you can study without papers don't pay attention go once again and you are going to get another person and so he went back and he said that a really nice black man helped him register. Then his friends went he has about seven Mexican friends well they were all treated badly and so another one went, one that did ROTC he, he was a commander very high rank since it is based on level as if they were real soldiers and so he went to try to register, his mother went with him because his father had passed away...poor thing, his father died in his arms from an aneurysm and yes, he did finish school because he is very intelligent and so, he went to register and his mother said that they treated them really badly and that she cried and kept telling him to leave. "No, mom," he would say to her, "I want to study" and so they asked him if he had a scholarship but he did not know and he said, "no" so they threw the application papers at him and said, "go over there with that girl and apply" and that his mother kept saying, "let's leave because..." he told her "No" because he wanted to study. And he was told the cost of tuition and he said, "I can't pay for that." "But if you have a scholarship then you can study, if you don't, then no" and so she threw the papers at him and told him to go see the other woman. They went to the other woman and she told him to go in by himself because the mom did not want to go with him to see how badly he was treated. Afterwards, he told

his mom that the other lady also threw the papers at him and said, “Let’s see if they give you anything.” So he registered and one of them started checking the paperwork and they called him back again and he said, “Mom, they are calling me again.” “Well, go see what they want. I don’t want to go anymore. I will wait here for you.” So, he went inside and then he came back out crying and so she was thinking, “I wonder what they told my poor son.” Someone had paid for the university so I thought it was the ROTC, they paid it. The mom thought maybe it was me and said, “Was it you?” “No,” I said, “but if I had any money, I promise that yes, I would have paid for it.” Because I know what a good boy he is and now that he finished his first year, he is in psychology, and everything is paid for.

Sofía’s description of racism was based on her understanding of it in the way she was treated and spoken to (actions, mannerism, and tone of voice). José and Sofía Sias’ overall experience with the U.S. schooling system had been good at times and not so good at others. They both felt that the teachers and counselors they had come into contact were generally good, but the communication at the middle-and-high school levels could have been better. Their only complaint was in regards to the front office staff at their daughter’s elementary school. When they spoke about the interaction they had had with the staff, they believed them to be racist. When I inquired about the ways in which they were racist, they stated that it was in the treatment towards them. They both stated that their mannerisms, the way they spoke to them, made them feel that they disliked them because they were Mexican. José states “*el personal sí son un poco más, muy racistas,*

mucho muy racista...en todo, en todo, déspotas y cortantes y muy poca información eso sí? (the personnel, yes they were racists, very, very racist, in every aspect, despots and they cut you off right away, very little information), Sofía goes on to comment “*En Chacón ahí sí, sí es lo que también estábamos comentando que hay unas dos señoras que no en serio o sea somos puros mexicanos y se le nota que, que está molesta que el racismo yo siento...sí pero llega uno y le hace la cara y sí pues uno siente el racismo..*” (At Chacón , yes, yes, we were just commenting that there are two women that seriously in other words we are a lot of Mexicans and you can tell that she does not like it, the racism I feel...you get there and she makes a face and yes well we feel the racism.)

Daniela, Sandra’s daughter, also spoke about several incidents while at Salinas where she felt that because of her ethnicity and language (Mexican, Spanish) she was the target of overt racism. She spoke about a time in her English class teachers did not teach much and no learning was going on. One day when they were watching a movie for English (ESL) class (a movie that had nothing to do with English and the teacher was out of the room) a student came in running to hide in that classroom. Seconds later, security guards walked in and asked Daniela to come with them, she was accused of ditching, she was made to state her name, show ID, and she agreed to do what she was told, but every time she expressed objection she was told not to resist. She told them over and over again that she was not ditching. She was escorted to the office by several security guards. She was told to speak in English while answering the questions; she refused and objected to the mistreatment. Finally, when she arrived at the office the one and only counselor who knew her, helped her. Daniela felt that she was targeted because of being Mexican. The second incident occurred when she wore a low cut blouse that showed her back. She wore

it because she felt her long black hair would cover it, but she was stopped by security for not wearing the proper dress code and taken to the office. They made her change into another t-shirt, one she describes as being old, big and dirty. She never got her blouse back. She went on to express that only Mexicans were targeted when not following the dress code. She mentioned that the “gringos” were never taken to the office even when they wore low-cut blouses and shorts. Daniela felt those students got away with not following the dress code, ditching, and leaving campus for lunch. She says that if they wanted to leave for lunch to get a burger, they were not allowed. In her experience, Mexicans experienced discrimination and racism because of their ethnicity and language. Daniela spoke about how Whites “gringos” were treated differently from Mexicans in all aspects of school life (academics, extra-curricular activities).

Although both Alma and Sofia had good communication with the teachers at their children’s elementary school, there were issues with the current administration.

Sofía—No deja o sea ella nomás se encierra en su mundo no por ejemplo van ha pedirle cita para algo y nunca tiene tiempo, nunca tiene tiempo para atender los problemas, como una señora, una amiga mía tiene una niña que está enfermita y el frió le hace mucho daño en tiempo de frió y este invierno no le importaba si estaba nevando los echaba para fuera pues es injusto, fue ella le dijo es que mi niña no puede estar afuera por razones médicas, pues ésto y otro y el otro día que nievó la echaron para afuera y se enfermó y le dijo ese no es mi problema. Como una directora le va a contestar así y así, entonces sí estamos viendo a ver si se puede hacer algo.

(She does not let us, she just locks herself up in her own world. For example they go and ask her for an appointment and she never has time, she never has time to handle problems like a woman, a friend of mine she has a little girl that is sickly and the cold is very bad for her during the cold season and this winter she did not care if it was snowing or not she would throw the kids outside, well I don't think that is fair she went and told her that her daughter was not supposed to be outside due to medical reasons and so the other day it snowed and she was thrown outside and she got sick and she (the principal) told her that it was not her problem. How is a principal going to answer like that also other things but we are currently seeing how we can do something about it.)

According to Alma and Sofía, the current principal at their daughters' elementary school distanced herself from the community. They perceived her to be cold, rude, and unwilling to meet with parents when they had concerns. Moreover, the principal has made many changes that Alma and Sofía did not agree with: for example, students were not allowed in the building until the bell rang, parents had to check in the office before going to their child's classroom, and many of the before/after school programs had been cut as well as classes for parents.

Alma—Pues eh, tan sólo que eh, eh, han quitado muchos programas, ya no hay tantas actividades, ya no puede uno andar tanto allí en la escuela para todo, todo tiene uno que pedir permiso o sea son muchos cambios que, que no sé, no sé, ...pues quitaron los de después de escuela, quitaron las actividades de fútbol, había antes manuales para los padres para que

se juntaran y ya no hay incluso para clases que uno quería de inglés o algo pusieron reglamento.

(Well, only that they have taken away lots of programs, there are not that many activities, one cannot be there at the school so often, for everything we have to ask for permission, in other words there are a lot of changes that, that I don't know, well they took away the ones after school, they took away the soccer activities, before they had workbooks for parents and they don't have them anymore, even English classes that we wanted something like that or there are rules to follow.)

Furthermore, the parents were aware of the dissatisfaction between many of the teachers at the school and the principal because of the new changes. Sofia and Alma were aware of the division within the school among teachers that supported the principal and those that questioned her actions. Sofia and Alma were well aware of the organizing among parents within the community to see what could be done to have the principal removed. Sofia was actively involved with organizing parents; they were meeting to make this happen. Another example of tension between parents and the principal was the principal's intimidation tactics towards parents with police and immigration.

Alma and Sofia reported that after a monthly community meeting, a group of parents stayed outside the school talking and the principal was not happy about this, so she threatened to call the school police if they didn't remove themselves from the school grounds. During an evening meeting between the principal and the parents to organize a PTA at the school, it was rumored that the principal had threatened to call immigration. This was intended to keep parents from attending the meeting where they were supposed

to vote on who would serve on the school's PTA board. It was also known that the principal would threaten parents with immigration when they became too vocal about their discontent with her policies.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) state that one of the CRT's tenets is the *commitment to social justice*. One of the goals of a *commitment to social justice* is for the empowering of subordinated minority groups. It is a call for the analysis of the multiple forms of resistance and resiliency people of color employ when they encounter oppression and discrimination. The Mexican immigrant families in this study employed both resistance and resiliency tactics when confronted with various discriminatory practices in education institutions. The Sias, Carrillo, Durán, and Hernández families understood that, as immigrants living in the United States post 9/11, their daily experiences were impacted by state policies. They understood that they needed to be informed regarding any policies that might have impact on theirs and their children's lives. The Encantada school district policy regarding "undocumented" students was important for them to know in order to ensure that their children received the education they were entitled to. In a sense, being informed and knowing their rights as immigrants was in essence like having an "immigrant knowledge toolkit" that could be used when confronted with discrimination in a public institution, such as a school.

This type of resistance is evident in Sofia's *testimonio* regarding her experiences with the local community college when enrolling for ESL classes. Although she felt discriminated against and humiliated by the registration clerks, she knew that she had the right to take those classes. In addition, by sharing their common discriminatory experiences with the ESL instructor, Sofia and her classmates were able to understand

that those experiences were real. From that sharing of experiences with her classmates, Sofia was able to develop a stronger resistance to the discriminatory behavior. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) point out that people of color “become empowered participants, hear their own stories and the stories of others” (p. 27). Sofia was also able to pass on this resistance and resiliency to her son when he encountered discrimination at the same community college. When Sofia’s son came home after not being able to register for classes because of his immigrant status, Sofia made him go back and make a second attempt. She told him that he had the right to take those classes and that the registration clerks did not have the right to ask for his immigrant status. Sofia’s own experiences as well as her son’s and his friends’ with the local community college validate that the discrimination they encountered was true and based on them because they are Mexican immigrants. But those experiences all demonstrated their resiliency and resistance to the dehumanizing circumstances they are facing with public institutions in Encantada.

Another example of the resistance and resiliency of Mexican immigrant families in Encantada can be seen in Alma’s and Sofia’s *testimonios* regarding the principal at their children’s elementary school. They were both unhappy with the changes the principal had made as well as her attitude towards parents. Sofia and Alma were also aware of the parent organizing that was going on to try to have her removed from the school. As parents they knew that they had rights that needed to be respected, that their concerns and voices needed to be heard. They felt the principal was not doing all of these things, but instead she was using imitation tactics like threatening to call immigration officials (ICE agents) in order to suppress any power they might have as parents. Alma and Sofia refused to succumb to the tactics and continued to organize and even went to

the districts superintendent's office to have the principal removed. The parents were successful and the principal was relocated to another elementary school in December of 2008.

Daniela's resistance is also evident as a Mexican immigrant student at one of the local high schools. Instead of just passively accepting the accusations made by the security guards, Daniela repeatedly stated that she had not done anything wrong. In addition, Daniela articulated how being Mexican and speaking Spanish at Salinas High school made her the target of discrimination practices not experienced by Whites. Having an understanding of this oppression made her able to resist and demonstrate her resilience.

The Sias, Carrillo, Durán, and Hernández's families' *testimonios* demonstrated how their daily lives and educational experiences are impacted as Mexican immigrants living in Encantada. Their *testimonios* show the multiple forms of discrimination and oppression they encounter for being Mexican, speaking Spanish, and their immigrant status. What their *tesimonios* also illustrate is the multiple resistance and resilience tactics they utilize when confronted by such oppressive and discriminatory practices. Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) state that through transformational resistance:

Student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and desire for social justice. In other words, the student holds some level of awareness and critique of her or his oppressive conditions and structures of domination and must be at least somewhat motivated by a sense of social justice. (p. 319)

In a sense, these families are claiming their humanity amongst the dehumanizing ideologies, discourses and practices found within the public educational institutions in Encantada. The next chapter seeks to provide concrete recommendations regarding policy, curriculum, and instruction in order to better serve Mexican immigrant families and their children.

Chapter 7

Language such as “border rats,” “wetbacks,” “aliens,” “welfare queens,” and “non-White hordes,” used by the popular press not only dehumanizes other cultural beings, but it also serves to justify the violence perpetrated against subordinated groups. (Macedo, 2000, p. 15)

Conclusion

The more things appear to change, the more they stay the same. This is especially true for Mexican immigrant families who continue to be the target of U.S. state and national policy that criminalizes them all the while benefiting from their labor. As Mexican immigrants are criminalized and racialized for apparently entering the border as “illegals,” it is important to contextualize the meaning of a “border,” for “borders” are defined and created by imperialist and nationalist governments in order to control and regulate the flow of people coming in and going out. The U.S./Mexico border has been defined, created, controlled, and operated solely by the United States government. It is the U.S. government that controls who is allowed in, and defines the process which Mexican citizens must go through in order to be allowed entrance to the country. If the U.S./Mexico border is contextualized as a product of U.S. imperialism, it can be argued that the border is illegal. It can also be argued that the U.S. colonization of the southwest was illegal, and can be framed as an illegal settler occupation. Therefore, it is essential to reconceptualize the fact that the U.S./Mexico border is illegal and not the Mexican immigrants who come to the United States.

This reconceptualizing of an illegal border brings to mind a popular saying among Chicanos that states “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us.” Indeed the U.S. illegal creation of an artificial border was the result of their thirst for land and their quest

to expand a neocolonial capitalist system for their own monetary enrichment. This colonialization was achieved through the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the complete ravaging of their lands, the subjugation of Mexicans, and the enslavement of Africans (Acuña, 1988, 2000; Zinn, 2003). It is within this historical context the current debate on immigration, post 9/11, needs to be deconstructed.

The Mexican immigrant families that I interviewed spoke of the different circumstances that brought them to the United States. The neo-liberal/neocolonial policies imposed by the United States on countries such as Mexico have created economic hardships on working class people around the world. David Bacon (2008) argues, “Adopting rational and humane immigration policies to reducing the fear and hostility toward migrants must begin with an examination of the way U.S. policies have both produced migration and criminalized migrants” (p. 23). The U.S policies that force such migration north is what has historically built and expanded capitalism in this country. Mexican immigrant labor in the 19th and 20th centuries is what helped developed the agricultural, railroad, and mining industries of the United States Southwest. On the eve of the 21st century, Mexican immigrant labor continues to build and expand corporate capitalism in the U.S.

All the same, immigration policy continues to deny the humanity of immigrants as it seeks to raid, criminalize, and detain immigrants on the basis of having entered the U.S. “illegally.” Neo-liberal policies have instituted legalized discrimination, criminalization, and detention of immigrants. Furthermore, such policies have produced overt racism against Mexican immigrants as can be observed and heard from the rhetoric of politicians, media pundits, and U.S. citizens. It is important to deconstruct the

connection between the criminalization and detention of Mexican immigrants as a source of capitalist profit for corporations. In a deeper analysis it is essential to understand that immigrants under a neo-liberal/neo-colonial agenda are used as a source of cheap labor, but also a disposable population that can be detained for profit. Forrest Wilder (2007) points out that “Detaining families is the logical, if extreme, result of U.S. immigration policy” (p. 3).

The neo-liberal/neocolonial agenda implemented by the U.S. trickles down to the schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant families through the lack of education and/or *mis-education* their children receive.³⁵ Within this context Mexican immigrant families and their children are seen and judged from a deficient paradigm and Mexican immigrant families are compared to middle-class White families who are held as the standard by which all other families are measured. Mexican immigrant children are seen as “lacking” in their education and knowledge of English. Their parents are framed as “uninvolved” and “uncaring” in the education of their children. It is against these racialized perceptions that Mexican immigrants must struggle when interacting with their children’s schools. Olivos (2007) states, “Immigrant parents must come to terms early on in their children’s educational experience that their physical presence is expected at the school, lest they be considered uncaring parents” (p. 63). The lived experiences of the Mexican immigrant families I interviewed tell another story of their perception of schooling within the United States. Furthermore, their critiques and analysis of the schooling practices are very much founded on their own schooling experiences in Mexico.

³⁵ See Carter Woodson the Mis-education of the Negro.

Another important analysis of Mexican immigrant families within schools must be framed in the ways schools perpetuate the racial and class inequalities found in a capitalist society. The schooling experiences of Mexican immigrant children must be deconstructed to expose how the education of or lack thereof, through curriculum, instruction, and standardized testing seeks to portray immigrant students as deficient. If they are seen and treated as such, then it is “acceptable” to track them into less challenging coursework and low-wage jobs, which help expand neo-liberal capitalist profits for a few. Gándara and Contreras (2009) state “low-income and minority students are less likely to gain access to college preparatory, honors, and Advanced Placement classes than other students...” (p. 31).

The Neo-colonial State Post 9/11-Immigration and Terrorism

As my family gets ready to embark on our 30th year of living in this country, it is important to acknowledge that the militarization of the border, criminalization and detention of immigrant families, and the dehumanizing neo-liberal policies affect all of us. With the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), my family, as many others, were able to obtain amnesty, but in exchange the militarization of the border began. Today the militarization of the border has done nothing more than cause the death of thousands of immigrants (See Figure 4 in Chapter 5). The lost of human life and the pain it inflicts on families is devastating. Currently within the neo-colonial structure of this country, all aspects of state policy, thought, opinion and ideology have no disregard for the suffering of others. Instead, profit-making as part of an individualistic mindset is seen as the ultimate goal to reach. Macedo and Gounari (2006) state that, “In the current global disorder people are ‘free to be excluded’ without anybody feeling the moral and

ethical responsibility to intervene to change this reality” (p. 14). A report published by the National Network for Immigrants and Refugees (NNIRR), *Over-Raided-Under Siege* (2008), documented over 100 stories of human right violations from across the United States during the period of 2006-2007. The stories told about the on-going state terror on immigrant communities through raids, as well as the death of migrants along the U.S./Mexico border. The report made the following conclusions:

- 1) The raid strategy by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) uses immigration sweeps as a political response to immigrant rights efforts.
- 2) Immigrants are being incarcerated at increasing rates, becoming the fast growing prison population.
- 3) The DHS is intensifying workplace enforcement by using employers as enforcement agents through Social Security No-Match Letter and other measures.³⁶
- 4) The humanitarian crisis at the border has reached new heights as migrant deaths hit record numbers and the federal government pours billions of dollars into further militarizing the region.
- 5) Local and state collaboration with ICE severely undermines community safety and further marginalizes immigrants (p. vi-viii).

³⁶ Letters sent to employers that state employee social security numbers did not match the person employed.

It is evident that neocolonial practices of state terrorism on immigrant communities are a state tactic to control and repress entire communities. Although many abuses towards immigrants existed before 9/11, it is essential to analyze the linkage the U.S. government has made with immigration and terrorism, post 9/11. The current raids, militarization of the U.S. border, and detention of immigrants at increasing rates are all tied to the creation of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and its housing under the Department of the Homeland Security after 9/11. Furthermore, the U.S. Patriot Act of 2001 paved the wave for the current state terror tactics on immigrant communities because it allowed for the wiretapping, searching, detaining, and jailing of citizens and non-citizens without a probable cause. In a nutshell, it allowed for the violation of civil rights and liberties of all people residing in the United State, and abroad. Lovato (2008) analyzes how the state terrorizing tactics on immigrant communities is in essence a “normalizing” form of national security war on all U.S. citizens. He states,

The historical record provides ample evidence of how national security experts, politicians, elected officials, bureaucrats and other managers of the state have used immigrants and anti-immigrant sentiments and policies as a way to normalizing and advancing militarization within the borders of the United States (the “homeland”) (p. 3).

In a 2009 Harvard Educational Review article, C. Suárez-Orozco & M. Suárez-Orozco exposed that one of the many challenges for the Obama administration is meeting the educational needs of Latina/o immigrant children in the U.S. This challenge of educating immigrant children is closely linked to U.S. immigration policy. C. Suárez-Orozco and M. Suárez-Orozco (2009) state, “While family reunification has been the

bedrock of U.S. immigration policy, some 5 million children live in mixed-legal limbo, where citizens' children (at least 3 million) are growing up alongside undocumented children (approximately 2 million) in households headed by unauthorized immigrants” (p. 328). As educators it is important to begin to understand that immigration reform being debated in congress will shape the present and future educational experiences for immigrant children in our classrooms. Therefore, it is an urgent matter that educators understand the current policies and discourse around immigration reform. It is essential that they are able to deconstruct such policies and discourse to reveal how these affect the lives of the Mexican families and children living in the communities they teach in.

Schooling and Education: De-skilling and Surveillance

Daniel Carrillo expressed his sentiment about the public education system of the United States by saying “*No era lo que esperábamos*” (It isn't what we expected). José Sias states “*No se compara, no se compara*” (It does not compare, there's no comparison). Both Daniel and José were expressing a critique of the public education system based on their experiences with their children's schools. This critique was also grounded on their own experiences as students in the Mexican public school system. The Hernández, Sias, Carrillo, and Durán families perceived their relations with the middle and high schools as non-existent, having no communication and complete disregard for children at that crucial age. Alma Durán expressed her feelings regarding how high schools perceived students.

Alma—...pero no siento o que, que agarren a los hijos a ellos como que no les importan los ven como un número de serie.

(...but I do not feel that they, they get our kids, they don't care about them they see them as a serial number.)

Daniel and Laura Carrillo's experience with their special needs daughter at the high school level had also left them disillusioned with public education in this country. Daniel's disillusion with the system even left him wondering if his daughter's education would have been better if they had remained in Mexico.

He states...yo digo si mi niña estuviera allá en México, quizás a la mejor, ella supiera escribir oraciones ya sola y aquí fue, no aquí fue para atrás, se fue para atrás.

(...by this time my daughter would be over there in Mexico maybe by now she would know how to write some sentences by herself and here it was like she went backwards.)

These stories regarding the interaction within schools in the United States counter the negative stereotyping of Mexican immigrant families as “uncaring” and “uninvolved” in their children's education.

Villenas & Deyhle (1999) state that “...under a CRT lens, an analysis of Latino schooling experiences cannot take place without addressing the racism behind the anti-immigrant, anti-Latino xenophobia of this country and the exploitation of transnational labor and migration” (p. 441). It is, therefore, important to problematize the connection between neo-liberal policies in U.S. schools through their curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices and how they are tied to exploitation of Mexican immigrant labor. As established in chapter six, Mexican immigrant students in the Encantada Public

Schools are the targets of daily macro-racial aggression by teachers who use degrading racist language to attack student's intelligence, self-esteem, and humanity. This dehumanizing of Mexican immigrant students can also be seen in the lack of education they receive through a scripted curriculum that emphasizes skill drilling and mastery of English. In the past four years the Encantada public school system has spent thousands of dollars in language arts textbook such as Avenues and High Point for schools that have a high number of English language learners (in Encantada, Spanish speaking students). As a result of NCLB policy, our Spanish-speaking children, mainly Mexican immigrant students, are tested in English after three years of being enrolled in a public school in the United States. NCLB high-stakes testing has caused Mexican immigrant students to be subjected to curriculum, instruction, and assessments that label them as "deficient." A report put together by the Encantada Public School district's Research, Development and Accountability, titled *New Mexico Standards Based Assessment 2008 Results*, demonstrated that English Language Learners' proficiency in reading in grades 6 through 8 ranged from 7% to 23%, and in the 11th grade, it was 9%. The report went on to state that: "secondary students who are ELL have less educational experiences in their native country and are less proficient in academic English." This statement contributes to the majoritarian narrative that Mexican immigrant students are to blame for their own academic failure. It also blames the academic failure of ELL on their "lack" of academic English. As Lipman (2003) states in regards to NCLB and public schools and Spanish-speaking immigrant students, "They are being taught that their lived experiences, the language and culturally embedded meanings embraced by their families and

communities, count for little in a school system governed by one-size-fits-all standards and tests based on mastery of English and dominant discourses” (p. 343).

In addition, middle and high school Mexican immigrant students in the Encantada district are being punished for not meeting proficiency in the state standardized test in reading and math. Mexican immigrant students lose their elective classes and are required to attend summer. They are also being forced to take an extra reading and math class that emphasizes both rote learning and skill-and-drill. The emphasis on skill-and-drill along with the lack of critical education serves to reproduce Mexican immigrant students as a surplus of cheap labor for the capitalist interests of the United States. No critical analysis of schools as the problem is allowed because all blame is placed on the students, their families, language, culture, background, and race. Furthermore, in the Encantada school district, as around the nation, Mexican immigrant students are being put under surveillance and patrolled under the auspices of zero tolerance policies. A visit to any of the local high schools in Encantada, especially those located in communities with students of color, one can observe security cameras, security fences/gates, and security guards patrolling the grounds and students. Giroux (2007) states, “In addition, as schools abandon their role as democratic public spheres and are literally ‘fenced off’ from the communities that surround them, they lose their ability to become anything other than spaces of containment and control” (p. 11), as Daniela described her experience with the security guards at her high school when accused of ditching school. The treatment by the security guards in requiring she state her name, show her ID, and not resist, and then being escorted to the office by several security guards, and told to speak in English while

answering the questions demonstrated the linkage between schools policies/rules and those of prisons.

Emigrante Epistemology

The four families that I interviewed in detail revealed the consequences that brought them to the United States in the late 1990's. Both the Carrillo and Sias families made the decision to emigrate north when Mexico's economy collapsed due to the U.S.-imposed neo-liberal policies. The Durán family came with the hope to raise enough money to be able to finish the construction of their home in Chihuahua. Sandra Hernández came in search of some sense of security, trying to escape the violence that has infested Ciudad Juárez. Her husband, Alberto, came as a child, after his father abandoned the family and his mother was forced to look to "el norte" in search of a "better life" for her children. Each participant spoke about sadness they felt having to leave their families and their way of life in México. They spoke about being afraid of coming to a country where they did not know the language and the culture. Daniel Carrillo spoke about the physical and emotional effect of being separated from his wife and children the first time he came to the United States. Sofia Sias shared what she felt on the day she left to meet up with her husband, and about how she hasn't had the opportunity to return to Mexico.

Daniel—O, no olvides fue algo terrible, este me adelgacé como no tengo idea, bastante que me adelgacé . Nomás tres meses que me fui para Colorado a adelgacé bastante, bastante no me sentí mal o sea yo quería estar con mi familia y no fue imposible por mí, yo por eso duré nada más

poquito tiempo allá porque no aguanté más, no aguanté más estar sin mi familia.

(O, no forget it, it was something very terrible, I lost a lot of weight like you wouldn't believe. Only three months I was in Colorado and lost a lot of weight, I felt very bad, I wanted to be with my family and it was impossible for me, that is why I only lasted very little over there because I could not handle it any more, could not be without my family.)

Sofía—El día que me viene muy asustada (se ríe) sí porque haber como nos iba, sí muy asustada, ...y quién sabe cuando iba a volver y hasta horita desde que venimos no hemos vuelto para allá.

(The day that I came I was really scared (she laughs) yes because I did not know how it was going to be, very scared...and I did not know when I was going to return, until today we have not returned.)

As revealed in my last interview with Sandra Hernández, she was also afflicted with not seeing her father who was critically ill in Juárez. Her daughter, Daniela, was also very saddened regarding her grandfather's illness, since her grandparents had helped raise her after her father disappeared. One of the most dehumanizing experiences Mexican immigrant families are confronted with is their inability to travel to México when a family member is ill or has passed away. With an increasing militarization of the border, Mexican immigrants are faced with the heartbreaking decision to risk their lives attempting to cross back into the United States if they make the choice to go see their loved ones. Daniela spoke about a fellow co-worker that was an "undocumented"

Mexican immigrant who had recently lost her father, but was not able to travel to México to say goodbye or to attend the funeral services. This is the price she said that the “*emigrante*” must pay in order to live in this country.

It is against these experiences that Mexican immigrants must continue to struggle, along with the daily racist and xenophobic attacks made by the media, through government policies, that seek to criminalize and deny them their humanity. Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) state that,

By engineering a siege atmosphere, in which immigrants are demonized in the media and openly derided by a chorus of government officials, the anti-immigration movement has provided an ideological defibrillator for politicians seeking to resuscitate moribund political careers. (p. 222)

At one extreme, Mexican immigrants are used as a source of cheap manual labor by the government and corporations that seek to maintain low wages and no unions for all workers. And at the other extreme Mexican immigrant, brown bodies are seized and detained as a profit-making business for the United States military-detention-industrial complex. According to a report by the National Network For Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), *Over raided, under siege*, immigrants are being incarcerated in detention facilities at an alarming rate. In October 2007 there were 14, 764 immigrants in detention centers throughout the nation.

The Sias, Carrillo, Heranandez, and Durán families also acknowledge that another consequence of the increasing militarization of the U.S./Mexico border has been more deaths. They all acknowledge the Mexican migrants will continue to attempt the life-treating journey to the United States because it is the last resort in order to “survive,” as

Sofía Sias commented, *Pues porque tienen hambre, tenemos hambre y pues arriesgan la vida*. (Because they are hungry, we're hungry and we have to risk our lives.) Joseph Nevins (2008) commented that,

The U.S./Mexico boundary involves killing of people from both sides of the line (and it always has)—most especially low-income people of color given the inextricable ties between the making of the United States, the production of a whole host of deeply unequal social relations along axes of race, class, nation, and gender within the United States and across the globe. (p. 4)

As mentioned earlier in chapter five, the concept of *emigrante* epistemology is based on Ladson-Billings (2003) claim that a “system of knowing” is closely linked to worldviews that are influenced by the conditions and experiences people endure. *Emigrante* epistemology builds on the work of Anzaldúa (1987) *mestiza* consciousness which emphasis the “breaking down of paradigms...straddling of two or more cultures” (p. 102) as well as Du Bois (1903; 1989) notion of double consciousness, which relies on the awareness of one’s self and the awareness of the perception others, have of one (individually and collectively) based on the society one lives in. Du Bois states “this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others...One ever feels twoness.—American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts...” (1989, p. 5). Delgado Bernal (2006), describes Anzaldúa’s *mestiza* consciousness “is both born out of oppression and is a conscious struggle against it” (p. 117). Anzaldúa and Du Bois both developed epistemological stances based on their

“ways of knowing” and “worldviews” that were influenced by their racial, gender, and class identities within a specific historical time and place.

As Delgado Bernal (2002) notion of critical raced-gendered epistemologies, in which students of color are recognized as holders and creators of knowledge, I argue that it is vital that *emigrantes Mexicanos* be recognized as creators and holders of knowledge because their experiences are closely linked to a distinct worldview. This distinct worldview allows them to see beyond the one-sided discourse on immigration policy and reform in post 9/11 United States.

Emigrante epistemology is a liberating tool against the dominant discourse that seeks to dehumanize Mexican immigrants by constructing them as “criminals,” “terrorists,” “aliens,” and “illegals.” Moreover, *emigrante* epistemology is a counter discourse that privileges *emigrantes Mexicanos* experiences and knowledge. *Emigrante* epistemology is based on an understanding that *emigrantes Mexicanos*’ transnational and bi-cultural identities were shaped through their cultural, linguistic, educational, and schooling experiences having lived in a “third world” country near the U.S./Mexico border. As *emigrantes Mexicanos*, their identity, culture, language, experience and traditions were influenced and shaped by the historical and contemporary contexts of the southwest race, gender, and class hierarchies.

In developing an *emigrante* epistemology I drew heavily from the work of Anzaldúa (1987), Delgado Bernal (2002; 2006), Du Bois (1903; 1989), and Yosso’s (2005). Their work influenced my formation of *emigrante* epistemology as it emerged from the Sias, Carrillo, Durán, and Hernández’s transnational, *emigrante*, bi-cultural, bilingual identities living in post 9/11 United States. *Emigrante* epistemology is more

about how these identities are negotiated, contested, and created through their cultural knowledge, practice, language, and politics (Delgado Bernal, 2006). The following is an explanation of how the transnational, *emigrante*, bi-cultural, bilingual identities support the *emigrante* epistemology I am proposing.

1. *Transnational identity* centers on Mexican immigrant knowledge and experience of having lived in two different countries. The Sias, Carrillo, Durán, and Hernández families worked, attend school and lived for most of their lives in México. Their identity as *emigrante mexicanos* was developed through their cultural, language, education, and lived experiences living in a “third world” country near the U.S./Mexico border. Norma Ojeda (2008) states that “the ‘transnational’ can be understood as the multiple interactions and links that connect people and institutions between borders, geographically defined spaces and borders between nation states” (p. 17). In addition, *emigrante mexicanos* continue to have close relationships and communication with their families back in México. Their *transnational emigrante* identity is informed and shaped by their daily lived experiences here in the United States but is also influenced by the economic, political, and social conditions in México. Trueba (2004) states “the phenomenon of transnationalism consists of a unique capacity to handle different cultures and lifestyles, different social status, different roles and relationships, and to function effectively in different social, political, and economic systems” (p. 39). All these factors have an immense impact of their ability to use their *emigrante* capital to operate and integrate themselves when “border crossing” (Giroux, 1992; Reyes and Garza, 2005) to the United States all the while maintaining strong family relationships and

communication with their relatives in México.³⁷ In addition, their children bring this *emigrante* capital (strong source of knowledge) with them to schools as they themselves become immersed in the experiences, stories, histories, cultural traditions and networks of their families back in México.

2. *Emigrante identity* refers to the experiences that shape Mexican immigrants because of their status in the United States as “undocumented” immigrants. Due to their different perspective and frame of reference, *emigrantes mexicanos* have the ability to see and read things in ways others cannot. This ability allows for *emigrantes mexicanos* to hold a strong critical perspective regarding the policy and discourse around immigration. Their frame of reference centers on their ability to articulate, analyze, and critique immigration policy and discourse based on their experiences and identities as *emigrantes* and *transnational* citizens. Their children also bring with them to schools this understanding and source of knowledge in regards to the policy and discourse around immigration since their families’ experiences are centered on such factors.

3. *Bilingual identity* centers on the skills and abilities of Mexican immigrants to communicate in more than one language and/or style (Yosso, 2005). This bilingual identity also centers on *emigrantes mexicanos* maintaining their language styles and multiple literacies (oral storytelling, *cuentos* [stories], songs, *dichos* [proverbs]) (Delgado Bernal, 2006; Valdés, 1996; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Yosso, 2005) and passing these on to their children. For *emigrante mexicanos*, it is very important for their children to maintain the Spanish language as a way to maintain their cultural traditions. At the same time, they expect their children to learn English in order to function in the U.S. society.

³⁷ Giroux (1992) defines border crossing as “recognition of those epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power, and difference” (p. 28).

Children will often hear their parents say, “el que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos” (one who knows two languages is worth double). It also demonstrates the language abilities of Mexican immigrants as they attempt to learn English as adults. The perception that Mexican immigrants do not want to learn English is a myth. Out of the eight participants in this study, four were enrolled in English as a Second language class, two knew enough of the language to be productive in their jobs, and two, even though they had a limited ability to speak the language, had enough understanding to be successful. Furthermore, all the participants acknowledged the importance of knowing the English language within the society. All these factors are crucial in understanding and acknowledging the *bilingual* identity of *emigrantes mexicanos* and their children. It is vital that educators acknowledge that bilingual wealth and that they build enriched, challenging curriculum, instruction, and practices that help in the development of critical intellectual, bi-literate, bi-lingual students.

4. *Bi-cultural identity* is developed from the *Mexicano* culture, history, traditions, and language that construct the ethnic identity of Mexican immigrants. These factors are always seen as a deficit and as an impediment to progress among *emigrantes Mexicanos* and their children. On the contrary, these same factors hold an immense value to the resistance of Mexican immigrant families within the public institutions they must navigate. Delgado Bernal (2002) points out that “the application of household knowledge, specifically in the form of bilingualism, biculturalism, and commitment to communities, interrupts the transmission of ‘official knowledge’ and even helps students navigate their way around educational obstacles (p. 113). Furthermore, this *bi-cultural* identity is additive and fluid in its relation to Anglo, Chicana/o, Hispanic/Hispano

cultural ways, traditions, history, and language modes and styles found within the United States southwest region. It is this *bi-cultural identity* that the children of *emigrantes Mexicanos* bring to school and that educators must build on through curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that validate the immense knowledge they possess.

Emigrante epistemology is built on the acknowledgement that everyday life experiences of *emigrante Mexicanos* are a valid source of knowledge. Their distinct worldview is influenced and shaped by their *transnational, emigrante, bilingual, and bi-cultural* identities that allow them to see, read, critique, and experience the economic, social, political, and educational policies through a different filter. In addition, borrowing from the “borderlands” (Anzaldúa, 1987; Elenes, 1997; Delgado Bernal, 2006) body of work, Elenes (1997), “refers to the geographical, emotional, and psychological space occupied by *mestizas*, and serves as a metaphor for the condition of living between spaces, cultures, and languages” (as cited in Delgado Bernal, 2006, p. 123). Reyes and Garza (2005), identify “border crossing” within the borderlands as a “process that challenges existing boundaries of knowledge and attempts to create new ones” (p. 154). In essence, *emigrante epistemology* is about recognizing that the knowledge, strength, and resistance of *emigrante Mexicanos* comes from living within the “borderlands.” Mexican immigrants’ daily lived experiences demonstrate the actions they undertake in order to challenge the xenophobic and oppressive practices and discourse they encounter in the United States post 9/11 due to their language, immigrant status, class and ethnicity. By recognizing these oppressive practices and discourses, Mexican immigrant families are able to cultivate oppositional discourse and practices that they then pass on to their

children. This resistance is forged from their *transnational, emigrante, bilingual, and bicultural* identities.

Recommendation for Education and Teacher Education

*To teach as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn.
(bell hooks, 1994, p. 13)*

This study was intended to look at the daily lived and educational experiences of Mexican immigrant families in post 9/11 United States. It used a Critical Race Theory framework and methodology to interrogate how their daily lived and educational experiences were shaped among the heightened anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican, racist, and xenophobic social, political, and economic policies put forth by the state. It also looked at the neo-liberal policies influencing the educational experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children. The framing of Mexican immigrant families as “lacking” and “deficient” serves as an excuse to “mis-educate” Mexican immigrant students. Moreover, it serves to funnel Mexican immigrant students into a pool of cheap labor and/or disposable population to be incarcerated for the U.S. capitalist interests of a few.

An implication for education is to *re-think* and *re-construct* the entire schooling system because, as an apparatus of the state, it continues to institutionalize inequality, racist structures, and discourses that prevent Mexican immigrants from being fully liberated. Olivos (2007) states, “The fact that the school system is not a value-free, sterile institution but rather a system of reproduction which has functioned to maintain, reproduce, and legitimize the inequalities in our society” (p. 34). If as educators we come to terms with this reality than we must acknowledge that schools are not failing our students of color but instead they are carrying out exactly what they are intended to do as apparatus of the state (Duncan-Andrade, 2006; Olivos, 2007). When educators and

teacher education programs acknowledge this truth, then their approaches to the schooling and education of Mexican immigrant students dramatically changes. In addition, the relationship toward Mexican immigrant families becomes more humane. The deficit view changes among educators, from the “students and their families” being the problem to the school structures, process, and discourses being what needs to be revamped.³⁸ From this angle educators can begin to teach from an emancipatory and liberating paradigm that allows Mexican immigrant students to use their own life stories as the point of reference from which to begin to counter the social inequalities in society and how to collectively change them for all of humanity.

As a bilingual teacher, it is important that bilingual education not be just about teaching the same euro-centric curriculum in Spanish that fails to explore the race, class, and gender hierarchies in a capitalist society. It is essential, that as bilingual educators teaching predominately Mexican immigrant students, that we understand the U.S-imposed neo-liberal policies that drive Mexican families north. In addition, we must also understand how the criminalization and detention of Mexican immigrants, the militarization of the U.S./Mexico border are intertwined within the larger narrative of capitalism and racism in the United States and abroad. An example of a curriculum in which to begin discussing these issues is from *Rethinking Schools* book, *The Line Between Us: Teaching about the border and Mexican Immigration*. Bilingual educators must examine the different ways in which such neo-liberal policies affect the daily lived experiences of Mexican immigrant families. We must undo the negative and deficit perception of Mexican immigrant parents as “uninvolved,” “uncaring,” and “uneducated”

³⁸ Yosso (2002) explains that CRT needs to be used “to analyze and challenge racism in curriculum structures, process, and discourses” (p.93) inherent in public schools.

and acknowledge the different forms of knowledge and rich education practices within the Mexican immigrant community.

Duncan-Andrade (2009) puts forth the concept of “critical hope” that entails that educators be able to “connect schools to the real, *material* conditions of urban life” (p. 187). For Mexican immigrant families and their children this means curriculum and instruction that examines the dehumanizing policies, actions, and discourse against Mexican immigrants. Only through this painful examination can we truly begin to pave the way to social justice. It is also necessary that as bilingual educators we construct curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that promote an emancipatory/liberatory education for Mexican immigrant students and their families. An emancipatory/liberatory curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices would take into account the Mexican “*emigrante*” *epistemology* of transnational, emigrant, linguistic, bi-cultural, and resistant capital. The emancipatory education would acknowledge and validate the following:

- The stories, experiences, education and networks Mexican immigrants families and their children have as transnational citizens.
- Mexican immigrant families and their children’s daily lived experiences are shaped and linked to U.S. immigration policy.
- The linguistic (bilingual) and literacy capital of Mexican immigrant families and their children possess.
- The culture, traditions, history, and language of Mexican immigrant families and their children are shaped by the culture, traditions, history, and language modes and styles (Spanish and English) of the U.S. Southwest.

- The resistance capital that Mexican immigrant families employ and pass on to their children is a form of claiming their humanity and their quest for social justice.

Re-thinking, re-imagining and *re-constructing* better schooling and education for our Mexican immigrant students and their families is possible. It is possible because in pockets throughout the United States educators are engaged in developing education opportunities for their students that counter the hegemonic structures, processes, and discourses in public schools. In October 2006, I had the opportunity to attend a presentation by Dr. Jeffery Duncan- Andrade regarding highly effective teachers teaching in urban schools that have a high number of students of color in Los Angeles, California. The five teachers Dr. Duncan-Andrade identified were teaching their students from an emancipatory and liberating paradigm. Teaching for these teachers became about creating *Critical Counter-Cultural Communities of Practice* (Duncan-Andrade, 2006), where learning was tied to the “material conditions of their lives” and how to actively engage students on changing those conditions. It was clear that these teachers understood that the school structures, process, and discourses was what was inherently wrong with the schooling and education of students of color within urban schools. This was deeply rooted in how they perceived their students. According to Dr. Duncan-Andrade, when asked why they taught, each one of the teachers responded that they believed that the particular group of students in their classes would be the ones who could change the world. If one truly believes as an educator that the groups of children, teenagers, or young adults that sit in our classrooms are the ones that will make the world a more humane and equitable world, our ways of teaching them will also change.

Another example of educators, *re-thinking, re-imagining, and re-constructing* schooling and education for Mexican immigrants students and their families, came from educators in Tucson, in conjunction with the Mexican American Studies and Research Center at the University of Arizona. Their partnership was with three local high schools in communities with predominately Mexican immigrant and Chicano students. The Social Justice Education Project: Racism, Praxis, and Transformation helped develop a critical core curriculum during the students' junior and senior years that engaged them in critical identity development through Mexican American and Chicano history, literature, language, and culture. In their senior year students engaged in using a critical race theory framework to engage in a critical analysis of the social, political, and economic factors plaguing their communities. One of the student-led projects was the creation of a magazine, which featured student voice, articles, and art and poetry, related to issues affecting their lives in Tucson. Jesus Romero, a student in the program writing regarding the work of Coalición de Derechos Humanos in Tucson, wrote the following,

In one of southern Arizona's most devastating years for migrant deaths in the desert, the bodies of over 200 human beings were reported dead along U.S./Mexican Border. Derechos Humanos is well known in and around the State of Arizona, as well as nationally and internationally, for the amazing coalition of fearless humanitarians who have exposed the deaths, inhumane treatment, and the failed U.S./Mexico border policy that the United States government has forced upon the indigenous migrants of the continents of the "Americans". (p. 3)

This in my view is what critical emancipatory education and schooling should be for all students. The entire magazine is written in both English and Spanish. Through these two examples it is possible to *re-create* alternative forms of schooling and education for all students of color and their families. In order for this change to happen, teacher education programs also have to be *re-created*, *re-imagined* and *re-constructed*.

As a bilingual educator who participated in the teacher training program within this university, I was never engaged in a critical analysis of schools as institutions of the state that engage in reproducing the inequalities within our society as they pertain to race, class, gender, ethnicity, immigrant status, etc. It was not until my doctoral program that I was introduced to the works of Derrick Bell, Joel Spring, bell hooks, Paulo Friere, Daniel Solorzano and Tara Yosso and began to study the historical schooling experiences of people of color. It was then that I critically understood that public schooling in the United States was about destroying the culture, language, self-esteem, and family structure of people of color. Schooling was about reproducing the race, class, and gender hierarchies as they exist in a neocolonial capitalist society. These issues are avoided in many of the teacher education programs throughout the nation. There are two reasons why I make that statement. First, as a bilingual teacher who has taught nine years in the Encantada public schools, I have attended many professional development trainings and meetings that continue to see Mexican immigrant, Chicano, Native American, African American, and working class families as the “problem” for why their children are “failing” academically. The majority of the teachers at these meetings/trainings hold no critical critique of the structures, process, and discourses in place in our public schools that create this “academic failure.” The second reason is that as a graduate student for the past five

years, I have had the opportunity to teach a course entitled *Teaching the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Student* for undergraduate, pre-service teachers who are in their first semester of student teaching. During the first semester, they take their reading, science, and math methods courses along with this required class (since they are not getting their ESL or Bilingual endorsement).

Through the different semesters that I have taught this course, I have attempted to engage the students (mostly white females) in readings about the schooling and educational experiences of students of color. Getting the students to re-think schooling practices along the issues of race, ethnicity, and language has been a struggle. For the most part, they have a difficult time with the material presented. They are unable, and sometimes unwilling, to critically analyze the structures, process, and discourses in schools that perpetrate the racial, class, and linguistic inequalities in our society. The majority of these pre-service teachers want a formula on how to teach “these culturally and linguistically diverse children.”

The teacher education program framework I propose would need to consist of the following objectives and goals:

- Engagement of pre-service education students in a critical analysis and reflection of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, etc. as it pertains to schools and the schooling and education for our students of color
- Discussions and dialogue to exploring the historical context of schooling as it pertains to whites and people of color

- Engagement of pre-service education students in examining the *political and ideological dimensions* of their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001)
- Constructing an understanding of how the currently implemented education policies are shaped by race, class, gender, language, and ethnicity
- Deconstruction of the deficit paradigm, curriculum, instruction, and assessments in education as it pertains to students of color
- Acknowledging the immense Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1992), and *Emigrante Epistemology* of families and students of color.

I also recommend the bibliography of books, articles, and resources that can be found in Appendix E. This material can be used in teacher education programs to promote the objectives outlined above.

Future Research

The goal of this research was to understand how Mexican immigrant families make meaning of the social, political, and economic neo-liberal policies through their daily lived experiences within post 9/11 United States. Due to the increasing anti-immigrant, and anti-Mexican discourse in the mainstream media, by politicians and by U.S. citizens, it was essential to analyze the connections among immigration policy/law, racism, and capitalism. It was important to provide the space for Mexican immigrant families to share their stories and experiences within this particular urban city in the southwest. Nevertheless, one research project is not enough to address all the complexities of immigration, racism, neo-liberalism, globalization, and capitalism as it

pertains to Mexican immigrants. For example, one of the voices missing from this research was that of Mexican immigrant students, who are the ones impacted by the neo-liberal education policy of NCLB. Therefore, a future research project would entail speaking to Mexican immigrant youth at middle and/or high schools about their daily lived experiences within the climate of high-stakes testing, scripted curricula, and zero-tolerance policies. In addition, the research would also address the Mexican immigrant students' understanding of immigration policy/reform/law as it impacts their lives. This research would also seek to get the perspective of teachers and administrators working with Mexican immigrant students and families. This would be necessary in order to understand their own ideological perceptions and how those are manifested in their treatment and teaching of Mexican immigrant students.

Another suggestion for future research would be the problematizing of U.S. imperialism and its construction of the U.S./Mexico border as it relates to Mexican immigrants. This would require a critical analysis of Mexican immigrant people as indigenous to the territory stolen by the U.S. during the U.S.–Mexico War. This analysis would involve deconstructing who can be identified as indigenous as it pertains to Mexican people. Another important aspect of this research would be a deconstruction of race within Mexican society.

Lastly, a future research project would be analysis of immigration of people of color from a global perspective. Global migration of people from formal colonized countries such as northern Africans immigrating to Spain, Algerians to France, and Eastern African people to England. The analysis would look at the historical context of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and how the global neo-liberal

social, political, and economic policies continue to be directly linked to issues of race, capitalism, and white supremacy. It would be an attempt at connecting all immigrant struggles around the globe in their quest for human dignity and rights.

Epilogue

As I reflect on my own experience as an immigrant woman of color living within post 9/11 United States, I acknowledge that my experiences have been shaped by the social, economic, and political conditions of the 1980's. The demographics of neighborhoods and schools that I attended during the 1980's were very different from what they are today. The area I grew up in was located in a middle-class Hispanic community. Most of my classmates were either third or fourth generation Hispanos and/or White. Unlike today, the demographics of the community have changed dramatically with significantly more Mexican immigrants attending the same schools. My family was also able to obtain amnesty under the Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986. Therefore, by the time I completed high school, I had legalized status and did not need to worry about access to higher education. The neighborhoods I grew up, the schools I attended, and the fact that I became a legal resident turned U.S. citizen opened up many opportunities for me. Although some may be quick to label my story and experience as the realization of the "American Dream," I reject such determination because it contributes to the individualistic and neo-liberal ideology that "success and failure" are the sole responsibility of individuals. Moreover, it completely dismisses the role of institutional racism that prevent the deconstruction of existing structures that "keep" entire communities of color, immigrants, working class people, and women from

advancing politically, economically, and educationally within a neo-capitalist society such as the United States.

The reason I make this point is that I recognize that my life could have been completely different based on changes in policies and economic structures. The situation for Mexican immigrants in post 9/11 United States is very different from when I was growing up. By listening to the media coverage on immigration reform one will often hear the dehumanizing discourse against *Mexicanos*. I believe that it is important to understand that the current daily life experiences of Mexican immigrant families and their children are shaped by the economic, social, and political conditions of a racist, anti-immigrant, and xenophobic climate in post 9/11 United States.

Appendix A–Interview Questions

Pre-United States

Where are you from?

How was your childhood? (Parents, siblings, etc.)

What factors made you decide to immigrate to the United States?

How did you feel about having to leave your family and country?

United States

Tell me about your journey from your hometown to the United States?

What made you come to this city?

What did you know about this city before arriving?

Tell me about your life in the United States when you first arrived?

How did you feel? What problems did you encounter?

How do you feel now? How have things changed?

How is life different here then it was back in your country?

Family/Children/Schooling

Tell me about your family? About your husband (or wife), and children?

How do they feel about living in the United States?

Work

What jobs have you had since your arrival to the United States?

How many hours did you work?

How much did you get pay?

Did you have any benefits?

How did your supervisor and co-workers treat you?

What kind of jobs do you believe are available for immigrants?

What perception do you feel U.S citizens have in regards to Mexican immigrants?

Why do you think they have these perceptions?

Immigration Policy

What do you know about U.S. immigration policy?

Do you feel that you have rights as an immigrant?

How do you feel about the militarization of the Mexico/U.S border? The U.S. building a wall along the border?

What do you think of the Temporary Guest work program Bush proposed?

What do you know about the current immigration reform debated? How about HR 4437?

Do you feel that this immigration policy and reform targets Mexicans specifically?

Why?

How do you feel when politicians, U.S. citizens, etc. say that there are too many Mexicans crossing the border?

Appendix B—Newspaper and Internet Articles on Immigration Reviewed

Author	Date	Title	Website/Source
Akers Chacón, J.	April 2, 2009	The government's surge at the border	SocialistWorker.org
Beirich, H.	January 1, 2008	The Teflon Nativists FAIR Marked by Ties to White Supremacy.	SPLCenter.org
Carlson, L.	May 8, 2008	The Bush Administration Has Put Its Proposal to Militarize Mexico into the Upcoming Iraq Supplemental Bill.	Americas Program, Center for International Policy (CIP)
Domínguez-Lund, D.	May 2, 2006	'Yes, we can' Thousands in N.M. Participate in Marches to Call Attention to 'A Day Without Immigrant'	Albuquerque Journal, A1
Dossani, S.	December 1, 2006	Walls, Amnesty, and False Choices	Foreign Policy in Focus
Fletcher, B.	July 30, 2007	Another Side to Race and Immigration.	BlackCommentator.com
Fletcher, B.	March 15, 2008	NAFTA, Immigrants and the Discussion That is Not Happening.	BlackCommentator.com
Guzman, G.C.	May 2, 2006	Governor Proposes Border Reforms.	Albuquerque Journal, A1
Hua, V., Johnson, J.B. and Knight, H.	April 11, 2006	Huge Crowds March For Immigration Reform	San Francisco Chronicle, A1
Kolodner, M.	July 19, 2006	Immigration Enforcement Benefits Prison Firms	The New York Times, nytimes.com
Lovato, R.	March 6, 2006	Envisioning Another World: <i>Integración Desde Abajo</i>	The Nation, p. 18,20
Lovato, R.	2008	One Raid at a Time: How Immigrant Crackdown Build the National Security State.	The Public Eye, 23 (1).
Lovato, R.	May 15, 2008	Juan Crow: The Deep South's New Second-Class Citizens	The Nation
Lynch, D. & Woodyard, C.	April 11, 2006	Immigrants claim pivotal role in economy	USA TODAY, 1B
Nevins, J.	July 27, 2008	Death as a Way of Life: Esequiel Hernández Jr. and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands	ZNet
Marosi, R.	May 7, 2008	Border busts coming and going	Los Angeles Times
Miller, A. & McKay, D.	April 11, 2006	'This Is Worth It' New Mexicans Call for Immigration Law Reform	Albuquerque Journal, A1
Page S. & Kiely, K.	April 11, 2006	Public divided over how to treat illegals	USA TODAY, 1A
Parker, L.	April 11, 2006	Immigrants, backers demand citizenship	USA TODAY, 1A
Powell, M. & Garcia, M.	August 22, 2006	Pa. City Puts Illegal Immigrants on Notice 'They Must Leave' Mayor of Hazleton Says After Signing Tough New Law.	Washington Post, A03
Preston, J.	July 20, 2008	Immigrant, Pregnant, Is Jailed Under Pact.	The New York Times, nytimes.com
Rachleff, P.	July 26, 2008	No Human Being is Illegal	ZNet
Santos, J.	March 23, 2006	Brown Skin/Yellow Star: Turning the Corner Toward Fascism	Dissentvoice.org
Santos, J.	March 30, 2006	Immigration and White Racism: The Ghost of George Wallace	Counterpunch
Truax, E.	May 1, 2006	Hora cero para el 'gan boicot'	La Opinión Digital
Vargas, T.	March 13, 2007	Anonymity of Death Echoes Life for Undocumented Latino Immigrants Unidentified Bodies are a Growing Challenge for Authorities.	Washington Post, A01
Watanabe, T. & Gorman, A.	March 25, 2006	More Than 500,000 Rally in L.A. for Immigrants' Rights	Times

Appendix C—U.S. Media Coverage of Immigration 2006-2009

Source	Date	Title
CNN	April 20, 2006	Immigration roundup: Hundreds of alleged illegal workers and some bosses were rounded up.
CNN	May 5, 2006	Immigrant health care: CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta reports on the growing costs of free health care for illegal immigrants
CNN	May 17, 2006	Battle for the border : CNN's Lou Dobbs and L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa have a spirited talk about illegal immigration .
CNN	June 22, 2006	Illegal immigrant crackdown: Hazelton, Pennsylvania, is a test city in battling illegal immigration . Bruce Gordon of WTXF reports.
CNN	May 1, 2007	Anger over immigration: California Attorney General Jerry Brown and CNN's Lou Dobbs debate the controversy over illegal immigration .
CNN	August 21, 2007	Illegal immigrant deported: CNN's Carol Cosiello reports on immigration activist Elvira Arellano. She was deported to Mexico as controversy surrounds her and her child.
CNN	November 9, 2007	Illegal immigration crackdown: CNN's Rick Sanchez talks to Maricopa County, Arizona, Sheriff Joe Arpaio on illegal immigration .
CNN	February 4, 2008	La Raza takes on Lou Dobbs: Janet Murguia from National Council of La Raza challenges CNN's Lou Dobbs on his reporting on illegal immigration
CNN	March 3, 2008	Dobbs on illegal immigration: CNN's Lou Dobbs talks to a New Jersey political leader about the impact of illegal immigration on workers in his state.
CNN	May 19, 2008	Broken Borders: Busted budget illegal immigration is partly responsible for California's budget crisis.
CNN	May 12, 2008	Broken Borders: Nebraska's attorney general joins Lou Dobbs to discuss the actions he's taking against illegal immigration in his state
CNN	December 22, 2008	Costs of illegal immigration: Texas finds that illegal aliens cost roughly \$700 million dollars a year in health care costs.
Democracy Now!	April 3, 2006	"A Silent People Will Never be Heard"—Tens of Thousands March for Immigrant Rights in New York
Democracy Now!	April 11, 2006	Immigrant Rights Protests Rock the Country: Up to 2 Million Take to the Streets in the Largest Wave of Demonstrations in U.S. History
Democracy Now!	April 21, 2006	Immigration Crackdown: 1,200 Undocumented Workers Detained Across U.S
Democracy Now!	May 16, 2006	Militarizing the Border: Bush Calls For 6,000 National Guard Troops to Deploy to U.S.-Mexican Border
Democracy Now!	January 25, 2007	Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration.
Democracy Now!	February 23, 2007	Human Rights Groups Call for Closure of Texas Jail Holding Undocumented Immigrants
Democracy Now!	December 4, 2007	Fact-Checking Dobbs: CNN Anchor Lou Dobbs Challenged on Immigration Issues
Democracy Now!	December 5, 2007	FBI Statistics Show Anti-Latino Hate Crimes on the Rise
Democracy Now!	September 12, 2008	Increased Raids and Checkpoint Arrests Endanger Undocumented Immigrants Threatened by Gulf Coast Storms
Democracy Now!	November 26, 2008	As Obama Considers Napolitano for Homeland Security Chief, a Look at Her Immigration Policies as Arizona Governor
Democracy Now!	February 18, 2009	Arizona Sheriff Faces Civil Rights Probe, Allegations of Undermining Law Enforcement with Controversial Focus on Immigration
Democracy Now!	April 27, 2009	Major Protest Planned Against Arizona Sheriff Famous for Parading Undocumented Prisoners
Democracy Now!	April 27, 2009	Arizona Public Defender Blasts Militarization of Immigration Enforcement, Criminalization of Undocumented Workers

Appendix D—Overview of Mexican Immigrant Families

<p>The Carrillo Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura and Daniel • Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua • Two children (A girl and a boy) • Both in their late 30's • Emigrated 2002 • Daniel worked in construction 	<p>The Hernandez Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra (Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua) • Three children from a previous marriage and one child with Alberto • Emigrated in 2001 • Alberto (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua) • Emigrated as a child in 1982 • Worked as a technical mechanic • Both were in their mid-30's
<p>The Sias Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jose (Chihuahua, Chihuahua) • Sofia (Maniquipa, Chihuahua) • Three children (2 boys and 1 girl) • Emigrated in 1986 and 2000 <p>Jose and Sofia were self employed doing tile work for newly constructed homes</p>	<p>The Duran Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alma and Pedro • Chihuahua, Chihuahua • Both in their late 30's • Three children (Twin girls and a boy) • Emigrated 1999 • Alma worked cleaning house • Daniel worked as a groundskeeper

Appendix E—Recommended Reading for Teacher Education Programs

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