

HISPANIC IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

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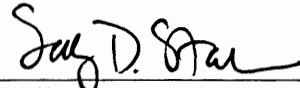
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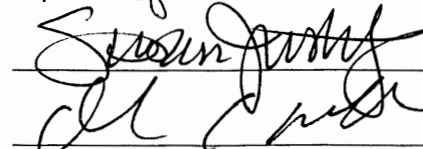
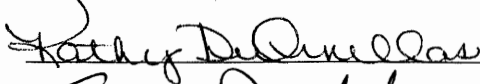
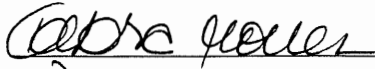
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Jacqueline Miller entitled "Hispanic Immigrant Students." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Counseling Psychology.



Dr. Sally D. Stabb, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:



Department Chair

Accepted:



Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, John Miller and Yolanda
Sosa Miller and my husband John, thank you for your everlasting love and for
always believing in me. May you rest in peace. I know you are always with me in spirit

To my three beautiful children Giovanni, Kristopher,
and Kennan, thank you for your devoted love, patience, and understanding

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ABSTRACT

JACQUELINE MILLER

HISPANIC IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

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For the past two hundred years, millions of people from different countries have immigrated to the United States seeking freedom, peace, prosperity, financial stability, and/or to enhance their education. In 2006, it was estimated that 12.5% of the U.S. population or 37.5 million individuals were foreign-born. In the last 50 years the vast majority of immigrants have come from Latin America and Asia. Due to the large increase in immigration and high birth-rates among Latinos/as, the number of immigrant children in schools has also increased dramatically. In 2004 it was estimated that there were over 4.0 million English-Language Learners enrolled in the United States. Most of these learners are Hispanic/Latino/a and, sadly, have a high drop-out rate.

Throughout the years, extensive research has been conducted on immigrants' experiences. However, most of these studies have concentrated on adults. It could easily be assumed that immigrant students face special difficulties related to their families and country of origin, their adjustment to their new homes, schools, and in general to a new culture. Yet, the majority of research on immigrant school-age students has concentrated on curriculum issues and second-language acquisition. Little is known about the personal experiences of immigrant students and their difficulties prior to and after arriving in this country. If these experiences are traumatic in nature, they can easily influence children's school performance. As the number of immigrant students increases, school administrators are continuously trying to develop programs and services that will help

these students learn English and stay in school. Learning more about the issues immigrant students face will likely help school representatives provide services that can enhance their education. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to learn more about the direct personal experiences and struggles of Latino/a/Hispanic immigrant students. An archival, qualitative analysis of anonymous counseling records is used toward this end.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Immigration Trends

Overview

Dougherty and Miller (2001) reported that a small village in China lost 80% of its men between the ages of 20 and 40; they had immigrated illegally to the West to work. The researchers discovered that the rewards for many of these immigrants were great. For example, an illegal immigrant employed as a construction worker or a waiter in California can earn \$2,000 a month, compared to \$40 a month for similar labor in China.

Over the past 200 years, millions of people from different countries have come to the United States seeking freedom, peace, prosperity, financial stability, and/or enhancement of their education. Although many laws have been implemented throughout the years to regulate entrance to this country—particularly after the terrorist attacks on New York City towers on September 11, 2001—people continue to come in great numbers seeking similar dreams.

Until the 1960s, the preponderance of newcomers to the U.S. came from Europe. It is widely known for example, that in the 16th and 17th centuries the majority of immigrants came from England and parts of Northern Europe (Terrazas, Batalova & Fan, 2007; Waddell, 1994; Weisberger, 1994). In later years, immigrants continued to arrive

from Europe, but originated from a greater variety of countries that included Eastern and Southern European regions.

Although immigrants today are more diverse than ever before, arrive from an extremely wide variety of countries, and bring with them an extraordinary range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, in the last 50 years the great majority of them have come from Latin America and Asia. This trend was largely due to a change in immigration law in 1965 (Fonner, 1998; Sierra, Carrillo, DeSipio, & Jones-Correa, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). By the 1990s, almost 45% of immigrants came from Latin America and another 31% were from Asia. In 2000, 51% of the foreign-born individuals were from Latin America (U.S. Census Bureau) and over 40% were first generation Latino/as (Sierra et al.). That is, 14.5 million, or 51% of the foreign-born people, came from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. About 9.8 million were from Mexico and Central America, 2.8 million were from the Caribbean, and 1.9 million were from South America. The remaining foreign-born individuals were from Asia (7.2 million), Europe (4.4 million), North America, and other areas (0.7 million).

Historically, available data indicate that the number of immigrants increased dramatically over the last 50 years. The number of immigrants who entered this country between 1951 and 1960 reached 2.5 million (Immigration and Naturalization Services, 2000) in the year 2000, these numbers rose to 28.4 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In 2003, 11.7% of the U.S. population, or 33.5 million people, were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau). By 2006, the foreign-born population increased to 37.5 million and became 12.5% of the U.S. population. Among them, 44.1% entered the country prior to

1990, 30.5% between 1990 and 1999, and 25.3% in 2000 or later. In the last two decades, the largest Latino/a immigrant populations have been arriving from Mexico and Central America (Terrazas et al., 2007).

The number of undocumented immigrants has also increased since 1990 when it was estimated the U.S. was home to approximately 3.5 million unauthorized immigrants (Fernandez & Robinson, 1994). By 1993-94, these numbers had risen to 3.7 million (Miller, 1997; Sierra et al., 2000) and in 1996 there were an estimated 5.0 million undocumented immigrants (Immigration and Naturalization services, 1999) living in the U.S. The rise continued into the 21st century, with estimates of 9 million undocumented immigrants in 2000 (Smith & Lee, 2003), 10.3 million in 2004 (Van Hook, Bean, & Passel, 2005), and 11.6 million in 2006 (Terrazas et al., 2007). These numbers imply an average increase of about 500,000 immigrants per year between 2000 and 2006.

Immigrant Children

Due to the significant rise in immigration and high birthrates among some immigrant groups, the number of immigrant children in the United States has also increased dramatically. As a matter of fact, first- and second-generation immigrant children are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population under age 15 (Board on Children and Families, 1995; Camarota, 2005; Landale & Oropesa, 1995; Suarez Orozco, 2001). Recent studies show that about one in five children in the United States today is either an immigrant child or the child of an immigrant parent (Shields & Behrman, 2004; Suárez-Orozco). In 1999 an estimated 88% of Asian and Pacific Islander students had a foreign parent, compared to 11% of African American students and 7% of non-Hispanic

White students. Approximately 65% of Hispanic/Latino/a students had a foreign-born parent in 1999 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

The growing number of immigrant children in the United States has contributed greatly to an increase in student enrollment in school districts throughout the country. In a snapshot look at the foreign-born population, Camarota (2005) reported that in 2005, 10.3 million school-age children from immigrant families lived in the United States. Moreover, Camarota suggested that immigration accounts for nearly all of the national increase in public school enrollment over the last 20 years.

In 2006, 52.4% of the 37.2 million foreign-born individuals age five and older were Limited English Proficient (LEP) compared with 51.0% of the 30.7 million such individuals in 2000 (Terrazas et al., 2007). Available data also indicated that there were over 4.0 million English-language learner (ELL) students enrolled in United States schools (EPE Research Center, 2004). Other research predicted that the total school-age population will grow by more than 20%, from 34 million in 1990 to 42 million in 2010. Projected statistics showed that children of immigrants will account for more than half of this growth. These statistics also showed that the number of children of immigrants will rise to 9 million in 2010, representing 22% of the school-age population (Miller, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Given that in 2006, 47.2% of foreign-born individuals were of Hispanic or Latino/a origins (Terrazas et al., 2007), the number of Hispanic students will continue to increase dramatically. As the number of immigrant children enrolled in schools continues to increase, the need for school administrators to provide new or added services for these

students has also increased. Many school districts, for example, have implemented bilingual classes, English immersion, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and new curricula designed for students who are ELLs.

Along with other selected programs, the Federal government made special provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (see Definitions of Terms at end of this chapter) for students with limited English proficiency. This law requires states to develop English language proficiency standards and to implement English language proficiency tests. These assessments are meant to be linked to state academic standards in order to ensure that student improvement in English language proficiency also results in improved comprehension of academic content (EPE Research Center, 2004).

Although it is true that curriculum and language acquisition are important, there are many other issues that may need to be addressed. It is important to realize, for example, that while these students have similar characteristics and cultural backgrounds, they are also individuals with unique differences and life experiences. Each experience will be perceived differently by each individual and create a distinctive impact in her or his life. For example, we can compare two children who would typically be grouped together under the label of “Hispanic student.” A 15-year-old student who flies from Mexico with his parents and has legal (processed) U.S. residency documents will not have the same life experiences and needs as would a 15-year-old student from El Salvador who comes by land, taking three months to make this journey and crossing the border illegally, and is seeing his/her parents for the first time in 10 years.

It is well known that Hispanic students have a high drop-out rate. In 2005, figures show that 22.4% of 16- to 24 year-old Hispanic students dropped out of high school versus 6% of non-Hispanic Whites (Digest of Education Statistics, 2006). A higher drop-out rate is particularly the case for those children who were born outside of the United States (Hernandez, 2004). Available data indicate that in 2000, 44.2% of children ages 16-24 who dropped out of school were born outside the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). This rate is more than double the 16.1% rate for Hispanic children born in the United States with at least one parent born outside the United States, and the 16% rate for Hispanic children with both parents born inside the United States.

Statistics show that undocumented immigrant youth are much more likely to have dropped out of high school than legal immigrants or natives. In 2004, 50% of unauthorized 18-24 year-old immigrants, versus 21% of legal immigrants and only 11% of natives, had dropped out of high school. Data also show that 32% of undocumented 18-64 year-olds had less than a ninth grade education, versus 2% of natives and 15% of legal immigrants (Passel, 2005). In addition, available information indicates that in 1995, more than half of foreign-born Hispanic children had dropped out of school in their country of origin and were never enrolled in a U.S. school. The majority of these (80%) spoke little or no English (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001).

Statistics also indicate that 40% of Latino/a/Hispanic children now live in poverty, the highest rate ever recorded (Camarota, 2005; Larmer, 1999). Living in poverty and not speaking English very well has been associated with placement in the “at

risk” category (Hernandez, 2004; Kominski, Jamieson, & Martinez, 2001) and with overall low performance in school (Hernandez; Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001).

Socioeconomic status has been shown to be a key factor in understanding immigrant students’ needs. In 2005, the poverty rate for immigrants and their U.S.-born children was 18.4%. This figure shows the rate of poverty as 57% less than their U.S. counterparts, 11.7% of whom live at the poverty level or below (Camarota, 2005).

In addition, children whose parents have limited education are in a higher risk of having more academic difficulties than children whose parents have a higher educational attainment (Hernandez, 2004). Recent data show that in 2006, 32.0% of foreign-born individuals lacked high school diplomas versus 12.9% of the native-born (Terrazas et al., 2007).

The dropout rate is particularly high among Hispanics, and this rate is even higher among Hispanic immigrants (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). In 2005, the dropout rate was 36% among Hispanic 16-24 year-olds who were born outside the United States. This rate was more than double that of Hispanics in the same age group who were born in the United States.

Purpose of the Study

As we have seen, the number of immigrants coming to the U.S. in the last 50 years has risen sharply and continues to rise despite immigration law changes and the tighter security measures put in place after the September 11 attacks. The majority of these immigrants now come from Latin America and Asia (Immigration and Naturalization Services, 1999; Terrazas et al., 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The

number of unauthorized immigrants has also increased in the last 10 years. In 2004, the U.S. was home to approximately 10.3 million unauthorized immigrants, of whom 5.9 million, or 57%, came from Mexico (Passel, 2005).

The primary contributory factor for significant growth in the Hispanic/Latino/a population within the U.S. is the documented upsurge in immigration (Camarota, 2005; Leigh, 1992; Zambrana, Silva-Palacios, & Powell, 1992). In addition, a significant proportion of immigrants are women of childbearing age who tend to have more children as compared with other populations (Johnson, Farrell, & Guinn, 1997). As the numbers of Hispanic immigrant families grow, the level of Hispanic student enrollment in U.S. schools has also grown. Many of these children do not speak English, yet are expected to complete their coursework and standardized tests that are timed. Sadly, statistics show that majority of Hispanic students who dropout are immigrants and do not speak English well.

Much research has shown that immigrants face a variety of stressors and many times have suffered traumatic events throughout their lives. However, little is known about Hispanic immigrant students and the personal barriers, experiences, and issues they have had in the past and continue to endure. Available programs to assist these students usually concentrate on curriculum and language acquisition issues, while emotional and psychological needs are not always addressed. Furthermore, many of these students are looked upon as similar to one another, as if they all fit into one general cultural category even though they have come from a variety of countries and have experienced distinctly unique problems.

For example, a Hispanic immigrant child who has little or no education and has Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to war-related atrocities is likely to have different needs from a child coming from the Philippines with little or no education who has been loved and protected all his/her life. Discovering the barriers and issues these students face in school will help school staff and administrators design programs to enable these students to stay in school longer, preventing students from dropping out and reducing dropout rates. Such support programs can help students improve their quality of life by increasing their future employment opportunities, and help ease the transition by teaching them different aspects of their new culture and the English language while helping them hold on to aspects of their original culture.

This study has explored the emotional and psychological issues and experiences that immigrant Hispanic students have faced throughout their lives as well as those encountered while enrolled in school. Special attention will be placed to experiences related to these students' countries of origin, families, school settings, and cultural adjustments.

Research involving detailed information about Latino/a/Hispanic immigrant students' life experiences may help school officials develop programs that can enhance their education and provide a more positive transition into the U.S. school environment. Such programs could include support groups, counseling, social skills, and technology training.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation – Culture change resulting from the contact of two or more cultural systems (Clark & Hofsess, 1998, p. 47).

Acculturative Stress – Psychological impact of adaptation to a new culture (Smart & Smart, 1995, p. 1).

Assimilation – Describes the complete integration and absorption of individuals from one cultural system into another” (Clark & Hofsess, 1998, p. 47).

Bilingual Education – Education provided to individuals who do not speak English (White, 1995).

Coyote – A smuggler who brings illegal immigrants into the United States (Encarta Dictionary; 2007).

Ethnic Identity – Self-identification as a member of a group sharing a common history and traditions (Clark & Hofsess, 1998, p. 47).

Foreign-Born – Individuals who are “not U.S. citizens at birth” (Deardorff & Blumerman, 2001, p. 2) but could become so through a naturalization process.

Hispanic vs. Latino/a – The word Latino/a or Hispanic usually describes persons whose ancestors come from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. In many cases, the word Latino/a is used to depict people from Spanish and Indian descent (Aronson, 2002).

La Migra – U.S. immigration and border patrol services, especially along the U.S.-Mexico border (Encarta Dictionary; 2007).

Legal Immigrants – New arrivals to the United States, people adjusting their migrant status to legal permanent resident (Deardorff & Blumerman, 2001, p. 4).

Migrants – “Individuals who seek work in agriculture or a related seasonal job and have moved away from his or her usual home to a temporary residence” (Clark & Hofsess, 1998, p. 47).

Natives – Individuals who were born in the United States, or in a U.S. territory such as Puerto Rico.

No Child Left Behind Act – An Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). “The overall purpose of the law is to ensure that each child in United States is able to meet the high learning standards required by the state where she or he lives” (U-46 District, 2008, p. 1).

Psychosocial Crisis – Refers to one’s psychological efforts to adjust to the demands of the social environment at each stage of development (Erickson, 1959).

Refugee – A person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of religion, membership in a particular social group, race, nationality, or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality” (Gavagan, 1998, p. 1).

Undocumented Residents – Individuals who enter and live in the country illegally (Gavagan, 1998, p. 1).

Endnote

This researcher realizes that there is not a single term that will adequately identify all individuals who have Latin American and Hispanic roots. Likewise, there is no distinct “Latino/a/a” or “Hispanic” population. To be more precise, there are distinct

groups who identify with a specific culture, language, or place (García & Marota, 1997). Many people find the term Hispanic offensive, while others feel comfortable with it (Hamilton, 2001). Some individuals may prefer the term Latino/a/a, while others may like another name for their ethnic identity. Preference for one term or another may be related to age, region, or political position (Hamilton). The researcher also realizes that some people may find either term offensive; having said this, she will use the terms interchangeably and hopes that readers will not be offended by either.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For the last 200 years, millions of people from multiple countries have come to the United States escaping wars, famine, natural disasters, and searching for freedom. Nevertheless, in all of U.S. history, less than 10% have come to this country for political or religious reasons. Recent research reveals that the great majority of immigrants have come in search of better jobs and the opportunity to create a better life for themselves and their families (Dinnerstein, 1998; Farkas, Duffett, Johnson, Moye, & Vine, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco 2000). Consequently, this chapter will address several important issues related to those immigrants who have come to the United States to improve their way of living and increase their chances of educational and financial success.

It is well known that a vast number of immigrants from multiple countries reside in the United States. Much research has been conducted throughout the years studying immigrants and the great multitude of issues they face and experience. The majority of these studies, however, have focused on adult immigration (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 2001). Not much research has focused specifically on immigrant children enrolled in schools and their life experiences. The present review will concentrate on Hispanic/Latino/a immigrants. Furthermore, the study will specifically address immigrant Hispanic/Latino/a children in schools and the issues that affect them. The major sections

will be (a) immigration history and trends, (b) immigration strategies, (c) immigrant stressors, (d) acculturation, (e) immigrant children in schools, (f) special issues that Latino/a/Hispanic immigrant students face, and (g) interventions for immigrant youth.

Immigration History and Trends

Prior to 1875, immigration to the United States was not generally restricted by the federal government (Waddell, 1998). The main cultural immigrant group living in the colonies was the English (Waddell; Weisberger, 1994). Although they were brought as slaves against their will, a number of Blacks also lived in the colonies at that time. It is estimated that between 1619 and 1807, 350,000 slaves were brought from Africa.

Another major immigrant group arrived during the 1770s when hundreds of thousands of Germans and Scotch Irish came to United States. Germans came to this country primarily to escape political and religious persecution, while the Scotch Irish fled their country due to a high increase in rents and a desire for religious freedom. During this time the British government encouraged immigration to the colonies to augment labor force and expand the British market exporting business (Waddell). Criminals and debtors were sent and transportation provided, with promises of official pardon. In addition, the colonies were used by the London government to establish residences for a growing population (Weisberger).

The first major debate on immigration policy came as a result of the German and Scotch Irish immigration. Opposition to their immigration came from concerns about the assimilation of immigrants from different cultures. Some colonists blamed the Scotch Irish immigrants for food shortages and the rise in the cost of grain as well. Government

officials, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, considered the Germans “ignorant” and “stupid” (Waddell, 1998, p. 2). There is evidence of colonists taking offense at the new immigrants’ “peculiarities and habits” (p. 2) and characterizing the Scotch Irish as disorderly and violent.

The colonial assemblies at the time tried to limit German and Scotch Irish immigration by imposing head taxes on each immigrant and posting bonds for each passenger on ships. Although the royal governors rejected this ruling, British authorities imposed special taxes, land restrictions, and voting qualifications based on religion.

The attitudes of the colonists changed by the time the American Revolution came. The end of the French and Indian War encouraged the migration of thousands of people from multiple countries in Western Europe and many thousands of slaves (Weisberger, 1994). After 1763, British authorities began to limit immigration due to fears that mass settlement would make the colonies harder to defend. In addition—and unlike previous years—the British government feared that the number of inhabitants in their country would greatly diminish in great numbers (Weisberger). Consequently, immigration was cut off entirely in 1774.

The colonists realized how important immigration was for the growth of their country and one of their complaints in the Declaration of Independence was the refusal of the crown to grant them a more liberal immigration policy (Waddell, 1998). The King of England was blamed for seeking “tyranny” over the new colonies and preventing the states from increasing their population (Weisberger, 1994). After the American Revolution, no major immigration policies were established until 1875. However, in

1798, the Federalist Party did pass the Alien Act of 1798, which stated that the President could expel any immigrant from the country if he/she was considered to be a threat to national security on the basis of treason or plotting against the country (Waddell; Weisberger). Nevertheless this law became unpopular because it did not give the immigrant involved the right to a trial by jury, (Waddell; Weisberger) and Jefferson called the bill “worthy of the 8th or 9th century” (Weisberger, p. 5). Consequently, it expired after two years and no one was deported.

From 1776 to 1830, about 375,000 immigrants from England and Northern Europe immigrated to the United States. Between 1830 and 1860, the number rose to about 4.5 million. In the period before the Civil War, the great majority of immigrants were Irish and German (Waddell, 1998; Weisberger, 1994). Rich English landlords left their Irish tenants to feed on potatoes from tiny plots. However, potato crops in Ireland failed for three consecutive years due to a fungus and mass starvation was the result. Germans fared better than the Irish, as many of them were professionals and scholars with some capital. However, they left their country for political or religious reasons (Weisberger). The main distinction between this set of immigrants and previous ones was their religion, as the majority of Germans and Irish who arrived were Catholic. Between 1810 and 1860, the U.S. Catholic population grew from 750,000 to 3 million (Waddell). Anti-immigrant feelings started to rise in the 1840s and focused primarily on the Irish (Weisberger) as a number of Protestant Americans appeared to have negative feelings towards the Catholic immigrants at the time. Consequently, many riots occurred and convents and churches were burned in such cities as New York, Boston and Philadelphia.

Although a new political party was formed during the 1850s with the specific goal of restricting immigration, it did not become powerful enough to affect federal immigration policy. Moreover, Congress passed a bill to encourage immigration in 1864 in order to provide an adequate labor supply to meet Civil War production needs (Waddell).

After 1865, industry in the United States grew faster than ever before. Consequently, thousands of people migrated to this country to take advantage of new opportunities. In the first 14 years after the Civil War, the number of immigrants arriving per year rose from 318,568 in 1866 to 459,803 in 1873 (Weisberger, 1994). In 1875, the United States passed its first law restricting immigration. The main concern at the time was over European criminals and Chinese prostitutes, and these individuals specifically were barred from admission. In 1879, another Act was implemented that prevented the introduction of contagious or infectious diseases into the United States. Of primary concern were smallpox, typhus fever, Asiatic cholera, yellow fever, and the plague (Waddell, 1998).

In 1882, the first general immigration act was implemented. This law excluded “idiots,” “convicts,” “lunatics,” and people who were likely to be an economic burden. This law also imposed a head tax of 50 cents per immigrant. The Chinese Exclusion act was implemented in 1882 as well. This law prohibited any Chinese laborers from entering the United States for a period of 10 years (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Waddell, 1998). It came about through a combination of economic and political conditions, including the economic depression of the 1870s. After the completion of the construction of the transcontinental railroad during this era there were approximately

100,000 Chinese in the U.S. and this immigrant group comprised about 25% of the population in California. However, a labor union led by Irish workers convinced Congress that the Chinese were taking jobs that belonged to them (Espenshade & Hempstead; Waddell). The Chinese were also accused of bringing gambling and prostitution to the West Coast, and of spreading diseases. As a result of the sentiment against Chinese people at the time, many states passed laws that prohibited Chinese people from owning property or from maintaining certain occupations. In 1884 the law was expanded to all Chinese people and the Chinese Exclusion Act was established; it lasted until 1943. This significance of this law lies in the fact that it extended to Congress the right to exclude the presence of foreign people who were of a different race.

In 1885, Congress established contract-labor laws that forbid companies from bringing in foreign laborers from most other countries. In 1891, Congress passed another law that excluded poor people, polygamists, people with contagious diseases, and convicts from entering the United States. This law also required the medical inspection of immigrants at the ports of entry. Those who did not pass the physical examination were returned to their country of origin. Under this law, the government started deporting people who came to the country illegally after one year. In 1903, the legislation was expanded to forbid people who were “insane,” as well as beggars, anarchists, and those with the disease of epilepsy, and in 1907, the law was further extended to cover people considered to be “imbeciles” or “feeble-minded” (Waddell, 1998, p. 6).

People from Eastern and Southern Europe dominated the last great migration wave from the 1890s to the 1920s (Pertman & Waldinger, 1998; Weisberger, 1994).

Political turmoil in some European countries, and agricultural scarcity in others, led to the migration of many seeking better opportunities (Weisberger). This great wave raised concern over immigration as these immigrant groups were considered of “inferior stock” (previous waves of immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe). Many of the earlier European Americans resented the resultant overcrowding in larger cities along with the various problems that usually occur in such cities. Consequently, newer immigrants were often blamed for such problems as crime and disease.

Eugenics placed a significant part in the proposals of further restrictions for less desired immigrant groups. In 1914, sociologist Edward A. Ross stated that some races such as the Hebrews and Slavs were an inferior race in “good looks,” “stature,” and “morality” (Waddell, 1998, p. 6). He also described Italians as having low craniums. Therefore, they could not possibly take “rational” care of themselves (Waddell, p. 6). Based on the field of Eugenics, a commission was established to study the impact of immigration to the United States. This commission released a 42-volume report on the impact of immigration on the United States, stating, among other findings, that the new immigrants were significantly inferior, and concluding that immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe should be largely reduced. Consequently, the commission instituted a literacy test for new immigrants. It was expected that the literacy test would likely reduce immigration from Southern and Eastern European countries, as natives from these countries were considered more illiterate than other immigrant groups. However, this new law did not deter immigrants from these regions. Literacy rates were higher than

expected and some countries even established schools in order to prepare immigrant hopefuls for passing the test (Waddell).

In 1921, legislation established a quota law that limited the number of immigrants allowed into the United States (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Waddell, 1998). This law was based on national origin and discriminated against people from Eastern and Southern Europe. The quota system was established on the numbers of people living in European countries who immigrated to the United States in 1910. It limited immigration from each European country to 3% of the levels recorded in the 1910 Census, which had documented a majority of immigrants from Northern and Western Europe (Greenblatt, 1995; Waddell, 1994) with fewer immigrants arriving from Eastern and Southern Europe. Consequently, the number of immigrants from this latter region was significantly reduced.

The quota system became a permanent measure in 1924. In this year, Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, which eventually became known as the National Origins Act (Waddell, 1998; Weisberger, 1994). The National Origins Act became the foundation for immigration policy for the next 40 years (Weisberger). This law discriminated against people who were ineligible for citizenship. Until 1870, only White people were eligible for citizenship; then, a few years later, people of African descent became eligible as well. However, foreigners from Asia, such as the Japanese, were declared ineligible for citizenship. “Anti-Japanese sentiment was prevalent” (Waddell, p. 8) and a “statement introduced into the Senate in 1921 referred to the steadily growing message of the Japanese; an unassimilable race who were unfit for the responsibilities and duties of

American citizenship” (p. 8). Congress endorsed this statement and it turned into law. Waddell reported that this law was “specifically aimed at the Japanese, and the law became unofficially known as the Japanese Exclusion act” (p. 8).

By 1952, when minor modifications to the quota system were made, race was no longer a factor. Instead, Waddell (1998) stated that “cultural stability” (p. 8) (individuals who were not mentally or physically ill, in good standard and had the ability to earn a living) became the deciding factor. The quota system, however, negatively affected many immigrants-to-be considered as refugees. During the Second World War, the United States refused to admit hundreds of thousands of Jews who wanted to escape Nazi Germany as a result of applied quotas and a lack of focus on the reality of refugee status. In 1939, Congress denied the entrance to 20,000 children from Germany who had families in the U.S. as well as willing sponsors because allowing entrance for so many would have exceeded the quota for Germany (Waddell, 1998). Finally, in 1948 President Truman and his administration implemented the Displaced Persons Act. This law allowed the entrance of 400,000 European refugees to the United States (Waddell). Along with obvious humanitarian reasons, motivation for creating the Displaced Persons Act included the desire to prevent Europe from being heavily influenced by communism after World War II.

In 1965, a new bill was passed that allowed conditional entrance to the United States for refugees from Middle Eastern or communist countries if they could prove they were being persecuted for their race and/or religious and political beliefs (Waddell, 1998). In 1968 the United States became associated with the United Nations protocol that

incorporated into its rules the status of refugees; thus, in 1980 the Refugee Act was implemented. However, it became readily apparent that the act was biased in its selection. Refugees from countries that were considered friendly by the United States were less likely to obtain asylum than countries that were considered unfriendly (as asylum was considered to be for people who were in danger). The Refugee Act did not change until the early 1990s when a class action suit was brought against the United States representing asylum applicants from Guatemala and El Salvador. The outcome of this lawsuit resulted in the revision of thousands of asylum applications from people in these countries. Presently, the United States admits more refugees than any other country in the world (Waddell).

Like other social policies, many world events have greatly affected the Johnson-Reed Act (or quota system). The Great Depression of 1933, for example, led to a decrease in the number of immigrants who wanted to take a chance by coming to the United States during a devastating economic crisis and only 34, 000 immigrants arrived that year (Weisberger, 1994). World War II significantly impacted the very meaning of the word “refugee,” as millions of people sought escape and asylum from Nazi Germany. When China became an ally of the U.S. in 1943, the resultant change in foreign policy led to the elimination of the Chinese Exclusion Act. As time progressed and the many horrors of Hitler’s “racial science” became known around the world, our previous belief systems based on biological superiority were challenged, which in turn led to changes in the national origins quota system (Weisberger). That is, quotas came to no longer be based on the belief system that some races were biologically superior to others.

The quota system era ended when President John F. Kennedy proposed an immigration bill that eliminated a system based on national origin. It placed greater emphasis on family reunification (Waddell, 1998) along with other modifications, such as allowing entrance to people with epilepsy and updating the term “feebleminded” to the more modern and correct (for the times) “mentally retarded” (p. 9).

The 1970s and 80s saw further restrictions in immigration, however. A quota of 120,000 per year was implemented for immigrants arriving from countries within the Western Hemisphere for the first time. Eastern Hemisphere countries had a quota of 170,000, and no more than 20,000 people from any one country could obtain visas in any one year (Waddell, 1998). In 1978, the law was amended in such a way that a single worldwide quota of 290,000 was established.

Increased concern with immigration arose in the 1980s, particularly over illegal aliens coming to the U.S. Information obtained from the 1980 Census revealed that there were approximately 2.5 to 3.5 million undocumented immigrants at the time. Worries about illegal immigration contributed to the implementation of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 (Greenblatt, 1995; Suro, 1998; Waddell, 1998). For the first time, employers were required to keep documentation that proved employees held legal status within the U.S. as a condition for employment. Employers also became liable for sanctions if they hired employees without proper proof of documentation. Congress included a clause that prohibited discrimination in hiring on the basis of national origin or citizenship status. However, it also stated that an employer could choose a citizen job candidate over a non-citizen one if they were both equally qualified.

Although these new laws resulted in an initial decrease in illegal immigration, it did not significantly deter undocumented workers of Mexican and Central American origin in the 1990s. Moreover, Suro (1998) stated in his book *Strangers Among Us* that this act actually encouraged immigration growth as it allowed almost three million former undocumented aliens—the majority of whom were Latino/a (90%)—to acquire legal residence and eventually become eligible for citizenship. These illegal aliens in turn, have become hosts to about one million family members who have lived illegally in the United States while applying for legal status, as well as many others who do not have legal claim to residency.

The immigration law was revised again in 1990. Starting that year, a limit was imposed of 700,000 immigrants a year for the first three years and 675,000 thereafter (Waddell, 1998). The Immigration Act also favored family-sponsored immigration and showed the importance Congress placed on family-reunification. Out of the 675,000 visas, 465,000 were given to family-sponsored immigrants, while 140,000 were employment-based. Visas of the latter sort gave preference to those immigrants with highly developed skills and educational achievement in employment sectors experiencing a scarcity of qualified job applicants in the United States. In 1990, Congress also changed the criteria for health-related exclusions. One major amendment was the switch in terminology from “dangerous contagious diseases” to “communicable disease of public health significance” as cited in Waddell (p. 13). This was meant to include diseases such as gonorrhea, human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV), syphilis, tuberculosis, and leprosy. Alcoholism and sexual deviation were eliminated as grounds for exclusion and

people with mental disorders are now only excluded if they are considered a threat to themselves or others.

One of the most significant developments in immigration legislation was the Illegal Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996. This law emphasized the prevention of illegal immigration along with providing for the removal of criminal immigrants by making immigrants who commit crimes and certain misdemeanors subject to possible deportation. Along with this law, the 1996 Welfare Reform Act excluded permanent residents from receiving federal benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, and Social Security Income (Sierra et al., 2000; Weisberger, 1994). Additionally, Congress set a minimum household income for sponsors of immigrants, which created additional difficulties for many families (Sierra et al.).

Since 1986, Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and Congress have implemented several strategies to control illegal immigration, such as increasing the number of border patrol agents and expanding their budget for enforcement. In 1996, Congress amended the immigration law again and established the Welfare Reform Act. Immigrants who committed criminal acts and certain misdemeanors in the United States were subjected to possible deportation. This piece of legislation excluded permanent residents from participating in most social welfare programs. Furthermore, Congress set a minimum household income level for immigrants' sponsors (Sierra et al.).

Presently, more immigration bills continue to be introduced to Congress. Moreover, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 yielded some changes in immigration laws that has impacted and will continue to impact immigration policies

(McGee, 2006; Montgomery, 2002; Suro & Escobar, 2006). The section that follows details these particular changes.

Immigration Policy Changes After September 11, 2001

It is certain that immigrants have been impacted in one form or another by the policies and law changes that resulted from the events of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The year after the attacks, Mary Kritz (2002) wrote in an article entitled “Time for a National Discussion on Immigration” that international migration had taken on added significance after the attacks on September 11. She said that since 9/11, new methods had been introduced to improve border controls, visa issuances had been restricted, and there had been “an increased intelligence on terrorist networks” (p. 33).

Donovan (2002) reported that U.S. Catholic officials were concerned over reduced refugee admissions after the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Consequently, at a U.S. conference of Catholic Bishops, a representative of the U.S. bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services presented information to the Immigration Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee to show that in the first quarter of 2002 only 800 refugees were admitted to the United States, compared with 15,000 during the same period in 2001. According to Donovan, Catholic officials did not want security concerns over the September 11 terrorist attack to hinder the pledge by the U.S. government to admit 70,000 refugees each year. Interestingly, the number of refugees admitted in 2000 was 73,000, significantly more than the 41,269 admitted in 2006; these numbers also represent less than half of the 85,000 admitted in 1999 (McGee, 2006).

On November 25, 2002, the President of the United States signed into law the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA). This Act, in turn, created the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and on January 23, 2003 the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), resulted in the most significant realignment of the U.S. government in the last 50 years. On February 6, 2003, the EPA's Office of Homeland Security was established, fulfilling the Agency's need for a similar coordinating body. The Immigration and Naturalization Services Department also became part of this alignment and ceased to exist as a separate entity. Thus, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, was created within the DHS.

The CBP's purpose is to “protect our nation's borders from terrorism, human and drug smuggling, illegal migration, and agricultural pests while simultaneously facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and trade” (CBP.GOV, 2007, p. 1). Some of the plans reported by the DHS to be executed by the CBP include

1. Continue efforts to reinforce security at the border with additional personnel and infrastructure. Implement the following border security measures by December 31, 2008: (a) 18,300 Border Patrol agents, (b) 370 miles of fencing, (c) 300 miles of vehicles barriers, (d) 105 camera and radar towers, (e) three additional UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles).
2. Ensure that 1,700 more Border Patrol Agents and an additional UAV is added in 2009.

3. Seek voluntary state partners willing to share their Department of Motor Vehicles photos and records with a system called E-Verify. By allowing E-Verify access to these records, state DMV databases will help prevent illegal immigrants from using fraudulent driver's licenses in order to obtain employment.
4. Uphold a policy of "Catch and Return" for illegal aliens apprehended at the border. Instead of given illegal border crossers (from countries other than Mexico) a notice to appear in court after being detained, they will be held until they can be returned to their country of origin. The administration will also press recalcitrant countries to work with The United States to repatriate citizens who are in the United States illegally.

In addition, the Justice Department initiated regulatory action to end "Voluntary Departure" in order to prevent undocumented immigrants from settling their cases by agreeing to voluntarily depart, and then gain extra time inside the U.S. by filing a procedural motion to reopen the case. New rules clarified that filing such a motion would terminate the voluntary departure status and make the undocumented individual subject to an order of removal. They also set a \$3,000 civil penalty for failing to comply with a voluntary departure agreement (Martin, 2007; White House, 2007).

Little and Klarreich (2005) revealed that several already-implemented policies and practices in the immigration enforcement violated non-citizen human rights. Specifically, Little and Klarreich reported that enforcement efforts included (a) the use of racial profiling to identify and detain individuals suspected of breaking immigration laws,

(b) making unlawful searches and seizures based on race or ethnicity, (c) selective prosecution of particular groups of undocumented individuals based on their national origin that resulted from raids and detentions, (d) violation of the rights of children whose parents were targeted for immigration enforcement actions on the basis of race or ethnicity, and (e) enactment of ordinances and laws by state and local governments that encourage racial profiling.

Hispanic/Latino/a Immigration

A century ago, the 1890-1920 waves included few immigrants from Mexico, Asia, and the Caribbean. By contrast today, the majority of this century's immigrants have come from Asia, Mexico, and Central American countries and one out of every three immigrant children has at least one Mexican-born parent (Hernandez, 2004; Pertman & Waldinger, 1998).

The most significant source of immigration to the United States has been Mexico (Donato, 1992; Durand, Massey, & Zenteno, 2001; Immigration and Naturalization Services 1999), and Mexicans have continued to arrive in the U.S. in ever-increasing numbers. During the 1960s about 430,000 legal immigrants from Mexico gained entrance into the U.S. During the 1980's this number reached 3,000,000 and data have also shown that during this same decade about 12 million Mexicans came to the United States as temporary visitors (Durand et al.).

Undocumented immigrant rates have also been dominated by Mexicans. According to a 2003 *Fort Worth Star Telegram* newspaper report (Smith & Lee, 2003), there were approximately 4.8 million undocumented immigrants from Mexico in that

year. It was estimated that in 1996, the total Mexican population in the United States was 7.15 million, out of which 2.35 million were undocumented (Durand et al., 2001). Of the 3.2 million people who were legalized under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, 75% came from Mexico. Nevertheless, it was estimated that despite this substantial legalization, there were about a million Mexicans who remained undocumented.

Large-scale immigration to the United States by Mexicans started around 1900, when railroads financed by the United States infiltrated Mexico and connected with existing rail systems located north of the border. During this time U.S. labor recruiters who were in search of workers began to hire people from such Mexican states as Jalisco, Michoacán, and Guanajuato.

After World War I and the resultant changes in immigration, industrialists in the United States were no longer able to hire as many laborers from Southern and Eastern Europe as they needed. Consequently, the recruitment of Mexican workers intensified. The number of annual Mexican immigrants grew from 10,000 in 1913 to 68,000 in 1920, and further increased to 106,000 in 1924. It is estimated that between 1920 and 1929, 621,000 Mexican immigrants came to the United States (Durand et al., 2001).

The Great Depression followed these years, and severely limited immigration overall, resulting in fewer Mexicans making the decision to come north to the U.S. Furthermore, massive deportations took place during the same time; it appears that approximately 453,000 Mexican Citizens were deported between 1929 and 1937. It was not until the beginning of World War II that the recruitment of Mexican workers began again.

Due to labor shortages during World War II, a bi-national treaty named the Bracero Accord of 1942 was formed which arranged for temporary importation of laborers into the United States for short-term periods of farm labor (Donato, 1992; Durand et al., 2001). Under this treaty, Mexican citizens were allowed to work for approved agricultural growers for a period of six months, and then permitted to renew their visas. Many of these workers, however, stayed and joined the multitude of the illegal immigrants already in the U.S. at that time. The Bracero program continued until 1964 and for two consecutive decades, more than 4.6 million Mexican workers came to the United States.

Between 1960 and 1964, due to pressure from religious and labor organizations, the U.S. Congress brought the Bracero program to an end. Nevertheless, rather than diminishing Mexican immigration, the end of the program channeled the flow of immigrants in different directions. The number of documented and undocumented immigrants after 1960 continued to increase for two consecutive decades. Between 1960 and 1980, more than a million undocumented immigrants were detained, an approximate increase of 14% each year. At the same time, the number of annual legal immigrants grew from 32,000 in 1960 to more than 100,000 in 1981. Between 1982 and 1986 the number fluctuated between 55,000 and 70,000 per year.

In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act was implemented. This law emphasized new policies for refugee admission and family reunification (Jernegan, 2005; Johnson et al., 1997; Waddell, 1998; Weisberger, 1994) and significantly affected the number of immigrants coming from Asian and Latin countries. The 1965 Act allowed naturalized and legally-

admitted immigrants to bring in family members in a designated order of preference.

Forty per cent of the total number of visas granted was given to spouses, parents, minor children, and unmarried grown daughters and sons, while 24% were granted to siblings, and 10% to adult married children of U.S. Citizens. The rest of the visas were distributed among refugees, professionals, and skilled and unskilled laborers for occupations which experienced a great demand for or short supply of laborers (Weisberger).

When Congress imposed a limit of 20,000 immigrants per country within the Western Hemisphere in 1976, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights determined that, just as the Chinese had been blamed in previous years, Mexican immigrants were now the ones being targeted.

The Refugee Act of 1980 also affected the number of Hispanic immigrants, as 125,000 Cuban refugees came to the United States that year as a result of the opportunities to qualify for legal status that were opened up by the Act. Although Cold War politics favored refugees from Communist countries, thousands of other asylum seekers from democratic countries such as El Salvador found their way to the United States (Weisberger, 1994).

In 1986, Congress passed the Simpson-Mazzoll Act (Sierra et al., 2000; Weisberger, 1994). The bill's purpose was to identify the number of undocumented immigrants in the country at the time without violating their civil rights, and to enforce immigration limits with the expansion of Immigration and Naturalization Services (Weisberger). To deal with the first issue, the bill implemented an amnesty for all those immigrants who had come to the United States prior to 1982. To deal with the second, the

new law required all employers to check for proper documentation, and any employers found hiring illegal aliens were sanctioned (Sierra et al.; Weisberger). This bill sparked “bitter controversy” during its debate in three separate Congresses before final passage (Weisberger, p. 18). Mexican organizations, for example, argued that employers would refuse to “hire Hispanic-looking or -sounding men and women” (p. 18), while employers complained about the costs and challenges of checking proper documentation.

Weisberger proposed that although it is not common knowledge whether or not that particular law is working effectively, the trend in Hispanic immigration would not diminish because of it. Current statistics show that in fact, the number of immigrants from Latin American countries has actually increased over the years.

Hispanic Immigration Since September 11, 2001

According to Mitchell (2002), following the attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001 Latin American and Caribbean economies weakened, employment among Western Hemisphere immigrants living in the United States was reduced, and access to the United States was hindered for new immigrants. More specifically, he described the economic effects of September 11, including the impact to airlines such as Aeromexico, Mexicana, and Air Jamaica, all of which lost millions of dollars in the weeks following September 11, 2001. In addition, the Caribbean Hotel Association reported a 50% drop in occupancy for October 2001 in comparison with the same month in the year 2000, and money sent to some Latin American countries was reduced. In addition, Mitchell detailed the impact on border control policy and execution in the U.S. post-9/11, stating that immigration was

slowed and hindered to the point that legal admissions to the United States dropped by 29% between October 2000 and October 2001.

Meanwhile, arrests at the Mexico/U.S. border decreased by 54% (people were afraid to cross the border after the September 11 attacks), and the average time required for crossing the border increased from 15 minutes to 3 hours due to detailed inspections. Mitchell also concluded that 9/11 dramatically impacted new policies for immigration to the United States, particularly ones related to Mexico. Before September 11, Mexico's President Vicente Fox sought to benefit approximately 3 million undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the United States, and the Mexican economy as well, by bargaining with the U.S. over migration. To this day, negotiations have stalled and no new policies have been readily defined regarding illegal immigrants who reside in the United States, but go back and forth to Mexico.

Another key immigration issue is the amount of money immigrants send home from the U.S. to Mexico on a regular basis, the scope of which is large enough to impact segments of both economies. Peter Katel (2002) reported that legal and illegal immigrants shipped to Mexico alone an estimated \$8.5 billion in money orders in one year—a crucial source of income for millions of people in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, Katel believed the cash flow would surely diminish in the September 11 aftermath, asserting that the businesses typically employing immigrants—restaurants, hotels, and small companies—were beginning to cut back in response to a looming recession. On the other hand, many immigrants have not been able to reach the United States at all due to the increased border security. Katel suggested that the best

hope for Latin America's poor was a quick end to the U.S. recession and a concerted effort on the part of President Vicente Fox to press hard for an immigration agreement with President George W. Bush.

Meanwhile, there are signs of backlash that clearly affect Hispanic immigrant populations. Proposed legislation in Texas would collect an 8% surcharge on all money sent to Latin America and use the proceeds to help pay for the care of illegal immigrants in U.S. hospitals (McGee, 2006). Already in effect is a countrywide movement to deny government services to illegal immigrants (McGee), limited granting of legal residency status to undocumented workers (Garza, 2002), tougher deportation laws (Brooks, 2003; DHS, 2007), and all the related measures that are an outgrowth of the Homeland Security Act. Many of these actions are reflected in violations of human rights for non-citizens and racial profiling (Little & Klarreich, 2005).

Immigration Strategies

Theorists of migration practices often divide the factors involved in the process of migration into those that "push" the immigrant out of his/her native country and those that "pull" the immigrant into the host country (Castex, 1997). A classic example of the push factor is when refugees or asylum-seekers have to flee their country due imminent danger. In such a case, they are being pushed out of their country by an unacceptable level of threat to their personal safety. In this way, wars, famine, disease, and political upheaval can push individuals out of their country.

Pull factors are those things that immigrants are drawn towards, and most of the time these include political freedom, financial stability, and religious freedom. Among

refugees, a pull factor may be specific benefits that the host country can provide such as the opportunities for employment, educational benefits, and medical services found in the United States. In these cases, the perception that one can obtain such benefits may be a strong pull factor for many.

Other pull factors may be less intense, such as students seeking a superior education or entrepreneurs seeking business opportunities (Castex, 1997). These individuals may be looking for countries that will better enable them to fulfill their dreams rather than being driven out of their countries by financial distress or political upheaval.

In many cases, the means and circumstances by which an immigrant arrives in this country may have profound consequences (Castex, 1997). Immigrants who already have a family and home waiting for them will likely have very different experiences than those who come by themselves and do not know many people or have relatives to rely on. A common migration pattern has been for one family member to come ahead of the others and establish him/herself in the United States. Often called "pioneers" (Castex, p. 52), these family members communicate information to relatives and friends in their homeland after stabilizing their own situations (Suro, 1998), and, in many cases, send for their loved ones. This process, however, can take months or years, and families often feel the stressors that separation from their loved one involves.

Pioneers frequently advise family and friends concerning immigration, or even finance their trips, after they are settled in their new country. This second wave, in turn, helps and encourages others to come. Castex (1997) described this process as "chain

migration” (p. 52). With time, this process grows to involve information pathways between countries, networks between family members and friends, the development of ethnic communities and an organized flow of goods and services (Castex; Suro, 1998).

However, such migration strategies are very much influenced by economic opportunities and immigration laws. For example, at this point in time the United States gives preference to family members of those immigrants who are already citizens and/or residents; in addition, it also gives priority to directly related kin, rather than extended family members. Consequently, children and parents take precedence over brothers and sisters on the INS waiting lists (Castex, 1997). Because of this precedence for some family members over others, it is not hard to imagine that inevitably, some family members will be left behind, likely creating a negative impact on the family.

Stressors for Immigrant Families

There is extensive research on stressors that immigrants face in the United States. Some of the difficulties for immigrant families that have been identified by researchers include access to health services (Hernandez, 2004; Moua, 2002), acculturative stress (Berhman, 1998; Hovey & King, 1996; Torres & Rollock, 2007), financial difficulties (Padilla, 2000; Shields & Behrman, 2004), family conflicts (Loue & Faust, 1998; Moua), and psychological distress (Gavagan & Brodyaga, 1998; Harker & Mingliang, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 2002). More recent research shows that the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City also had a tangible impact on the immigrant experience (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). For example, Hispanics in the United States are presently feeling an array of negative effects from the increased public attention and renewed enforcement

measures associated with the growing national debate over illegal immigration (Pew Hispanic Center). In order to fully explore some of the stressors identified by current research, a brief description of the most relevant studies will be presented.

In a study of undocumented border crossings by Mexican migrants, Singer and Massey (1998) described common factors in the stories of individuals coming into the U.S. in this way. After analyzing letters, narratives and paintings from first-time immigrants, they concluded that border-crossing is a threatening, dangerous, and hostile practice. Many immigrants got lost and were at risk for death from, ironically, both drowning (while crossing the river) and thirst (in desert areas). There were reports of being robbed, beaten, raped and mistreated by the border patrol, arrested, attacked by vigilantes, swindled by coyotes (human smugglers), and extorted by Mexican police. More recent data show that since September 11, many immigrants have suffered from exposure to unsafe circumstances at the hands of coyotes. For example, in the state of Texas in 2002, 73 undocumented immigrants were found inside a refrigerated trailer among a load of rotting watermelons (U.S. Border Patrol, 2002). In another case, 21 undocumented immigrants were found inside a trailer in route to San Antonio, Texas with no ventilation, no lighting, and no drinking water (U.S. Border Patrol, 2002).

Once they arrive in the U.S., a new set of stressors come into play for immigrants. In a study of low-income immigrant Latino/a families, Aronson (2002) suggested that recent immigrants face constant culture shock. He listed several factors, including cultural differences; prejudice and discrimination; anxiety due to daily interactions with people outside their ethnic group; confusing interactions with institutions such as schools,

courts, and hospitals; constant fear of deportation for undocumented immigrants; the need to learn a new language; and for those who are refugees, coping with the aftereffects of trauma.

Economic stress is one of the most pervasive and basic problems experienced by new Hispanic immigrants. Padilla (2000) conducted research on the variations of earnings between these immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans. She found that Mexican immigrants obtain much lower earnings than Mexican American natives, with Mexican American natives earning 26.5% more than recent immigrants in 1970 and 33.9 % more by 1990. Furthermore, the earnings gap does not seem to disappear, even after many years of residence for the immigrants.

One possible explanation for this is the disparity in the educational levels of recent Mexican immigrant groups as compared to U.S.-born Mexicans. Recent immigrants from Mexico usually come with lower educational levels and socioeconomic status than previous groups from Western countries (Padilla, 2000). The proportion of Mexican and Latin American immigrants without a high school education was 40% in the 1990s while the percentage of European and Canadian immigrants without a high school education was only 20% during the same time period. Consequently, compared to European and Canadian immigrants, Mexican and Latin American immigrants have tended to work in occupations with lower educational requirements that therefore offer lower pay.

However, Padilla (2000) also reported that when controlling for factors such as background education and work experience, immigrants still earn much less than their

native counterparts. Her findings confirmed that immigrants who lived in the United States for a long time still did not earn as much as U.S.-born Mexican Americans. Specifically, living in the South and working in manufacturing companies was associated with lower earnings for immigrants but not for Native Mexican Americans. Padilla stated that while occupation, education, and metropolitan location were all positively related to higher earnings for U.S.-born workers, these did not provide any significant advantage for immigrants. Instead, only work experience in the United States was positively related to higher earnings for them. However, immigrants whose work experience was outside the United States showed lower earnings.

Sometimes the earnings differential can be quite dramatic. For example, a survey funded by the Robert Wood Johnson foundation (2000) found that more than half of those undocumented Latinos/as who completed the survey in El Paso and Houston, Texas reported family earnings of less than \$5,000 dollars a year, and 90% of them reported incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. Guendelman (1998) reported that overall, the median income of Hispanics was about 70% lower than that of non-Hispanic Whites.

In a policy brief regarding immigrant children and their families Haskins, Greenberg, and Fremstad (2004) stated that despite the fact that both parents in immigrant families, work, they are about 50 % more likely than natives to earn less than minimum wage. Moreover, 21 % of children who live with immigrant parents live in poverty compared with 14 % of those living with U.S.-born parents.

García and Marota (1997) theorized that the immigrant experience is greatly affected by an individual's legal status at the time of arrival. For instance, immigrants

who come with credentials have a much easier time acculturating than those who are undocumented. Because illegal immigrants always have to watch out for the authorities who can deport them, the pressure of having to remain invisible is a significant additional stressor.

Country-of-origin is another factor that contributes to the diversity of immigration experience. According to Leigh (1992), Hispanic immigrants have differed from each other because of the unique situations in their homelands. For example, unlike Mexican immigrants, many Central Americans have lived in the midst of civil war prior to coming to the United States. Thus, it is likely this group of immigrants experienced traumatic events related specifically to wartime conditions. Leigh suggested further that Central Americans have differed from other immigrants “fleeing civil war, such as the Vietnamese or Afghans, because Central Americans do not have the same legally recognized refugee status. They therefore have no legal claim to services that assist in the resettlement process” (Leigh, p. 244), making their transition into the country more difficult. The cumulative effect of these stressful experiences can lead to the development of negative coping mechanisms that only intensify the immigrants’ problems. Loue and Faust (1998) theorized that the numerous problems arising during immigration could have contributed, initiated, or exacerbated family violence or violence between partners. They found contributing factors could include role changes for family partners, unemployment, breakdown of extended family networks, and lack of English-speaking abilities.

Accessing health care can also be difficult for immigrants, as most health care in the United States is mediated through insurance. Available research shows that Latinos/as and other immigrant populations have tended to not have insurance (García & Marota, 1997; Shields & Behrman, 2004; Weitzman et al., 1997). In a study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2000), it was reported that use of ambulatory care services by undocumented immigrants was very low compared to the rest of the U.S. population, while rates of hospitalization for illegal immigrants were similar to other Latino/a and U.S. populations; additionally, hospitalizations for childbirth were higher for undocumented Latinos/as.

Moua (2002) reported that over 26 million immigrants have settled in the United States since 1970. She stated that although new immigrants coming every year face a variety of health issues, they also encounter a series of cultural, linguistic, and financial barriers. Moua revealed that one of the most pressing health needs among recent immigrant arrivals to the United States is treatment for tuberculosis. She suggested that the elimination of this disease is crucial not just for new immigrants, but for the rest of the population as well.

Carrasquillo, Carrasquillo, and Shea (2000) reported that in 1997, 16.7 million immigrants were non-citizens. Of these, 43% of children and 12% of the elderly lacked health insurance, compared with 14% of nonimmigrant children and 1% of nonimmigrant elderly. Nearly 50% of non-citizen full-time workers had employer-sponsored coverage, compared with 81% of native full-time workers. Immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Korea, and Vietnam were the most likely to be uninsured. Socio-

demographic and employment characteristics accounted for most of the variation in employer health insurance. Legal status appeared to play a significant role in the high number of uninsured immigrants.

As a part of his participation on the Committee on Community Health Services, Weitzman and several colleagues (1997) investigated the health care status of children from immigrant families in the United States. The Committee reported the following: (a) many new immigrant families have health problems that often go undiagnosed, including parasites, tuberculosis, HIV, and lack of immunizations; (b) children who have been internationally adopted usually come without any kind of documented medical and social histories; (c) due to the current legal system, many immigrant children have significant problems accessing health care services; and (d) due to cost, language, cultural barriers, and fear of apprehension, illegal immigrants underutilize health and preventive service

Weitzman and colleagues (1997) revealed that immigrant children may hold infectious diseases which U.S. pediatricians can be inexperienced at treating and diagnosing. These include diseases such as amebiasis, schistosomiasis, malaria, congenital syphilis, hepatitis A and B, and tuberculosis. Weitzman reported that many of these infections are possible to screen, and advised that foreign children should be looked at carefully when they present with unusual clinical symptoms. In addition to these infectious diseases, Weitzman revealed that immigrant children are twice as likely to have dental caries when compared with native-born children; in fact, as high as 75% of these youth have been diagnosed with dental diseases.

The Committee on Community Health Services (1997) headed by Weitzman reported that international adoptions have increased significantly over time. The majority of these children come from Korea, Central America, and South America without documented medical histories. The committee reported that “more than 50% of the children adopted had at least one health problem at the time of arrival in the United States.” The majority of problems reported were infectious diseases (60%) that may not have been readily evident by history or routine screening tests. Moreover, many immigrant children have not properly received their immunizations. Consequently, Weitzman (1997) recommended that health care providers ensure the proper immunizations are administered immediately.

The Committee on Community Health Services (1997) also described how immigrant children and their families undergo a unique set of stressors. These include (a) discrepancies between professional, social, and economic status in the countries of origin and the United States; and (b) ongoing grief, depression, or anxiety resulting from moving to a new culture and community, and possibly experiencing traumatic events in their country of origin. Immigrant children may also have difficulty adjusting to school. Weitzman suggested that lack of English language skills, finding themselves behind in school, a lack of previous schooling, and separation from loved ones while attending U.S. schools could all have an effect on school performance and result in learning difficulties or disabilities. Many refugees may have left their countries due to war or persecution and it is possible that children and families who fall in this category experienced severely traumatic events that can lead to PTSD (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

Disorders, Fourth Edition, 1994, p.424). Consequently, mental and health services may be needed.

Gavagan and Brodyaga (1998) reported in a study of refugee children in Buffalo, N.Y. that only 39% of these children have sufficient evidence of immunization. Common medical findings in these children included parasites, anemia, and tuberculosis. The authors reported that people arriving from Latin America, Asia, and Russia had the highest rate of infection as a result of reactivation of the disease, rather than transmission.

In addition, Gavagan and Brodyaga (1998) found that refugees receiving medical treatment face communication problems which could not always be solved by family members acting as interpreters. They stated that finding adequate translators is not always easy, as people from different cultures have different understandings of health issues, and may not be able to accurately translate the nuances involved in culturally related health problems. The authors suggested that on many occasions, refugees continue to function in a “crisis mode” and may not be prepared for the processes and regulations that accompany the office visits, doctors’ appointments, and reimbursement policies of the U.S. health care system.

According to Gavagan and Brodyaga (1998), PTSD was one of the more dramatic problems that physicians may have encountered. They further implied that psychological pressures and some physical conditions, such as head injuries, may have caused symptoms that included headaches, poor concentration, nightmares, insomnia, and memory loss, depression, fatigue, and anxiety. Gavagan and Brodyaga stated that children who presented with such symptoms as fear, aggression, withdrawal, and somatic

complaints may in fact have witnessed violence towards family members, or have been victims of violence themselves. They also reported that some children presented with psychological symptoms similar to those presented by adults who have been tortured.

Rural Latinos/as who may also be immigrants often lack health insurance, and face cultural and language barriers (Sherrill, Mayo, Mayo, Rogers, & Haynes, 2005). Non-Whites are less often insured and those without insurance are less likely to seek services. "Real or imagined" (Sherrill et al., p. 358) fears about deportation, discrimination, etc. stop Latinos/as from asking for employment benefits. Approximately half of the Latino/a population does not speak English well, which is one of the reasons given for not accessing health care. Language barriers "lead to difficulty in understanding symptoms, asking questions, and decreased trust" (Sherrill et al., p. 358) between client and healthcare provider. In addition, the authors suggested that religious and folk beliefs may influence the desire to seek out the acceptance of Western interventions.

Over 15 million refugees have relocated to the United States during the 20th century (Olness, 1998). The majority of refugee groups have come from countries with political upheaval and ethnic struggles. Consequently, many refugees may suffer from physical and mental trauma.

Overall, refugee camps lack adequate resources for those who need them most—children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Refugee sites are usually very crowded and not well sanitized. There is often a lack of privacy, noise is high, and there is a high risk of fire (Olness, 1998). In these conditions, men typically find ways to keep busy and conduct business by trading goods. Women, on the other hand, take care of their children,

cook, clean, wash, and carry foods. Because food can be scarce, many women from various countries with belief systems that dictate wives and mothers should eat last are at risk of malnutrition. This is particularly true for nursing mothers and pregnant women. Because there is a high birth rate among women in refugee camps, the risk for malnutrition and other diseases in unborn babies is also high.

Available health services are limited in most refugee camps. This is particularly the case for women, as basic supplies such as those needed for menstruating women are not available in many camps, not to mention adequate equipment and space for delivering babies. Furthermore, the availability of health and sex education is poor-to-none for both women and men. This contributes to the high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and AIDS. The lives of many young females are jeopardized due to cultural beliefs in some Asian and African countries that purport “a man can cure AIDS by having sex with a virgin” (Olness, 1998, p. 228).

When immigrants from refugee camps come to the United States, they have often experienced the less-than-ideal conditions described above. Some people may end up dying because of their ordeal, while others may be arriving malnourished or carrying diseases that are not readily recognizable. Some refugees may come as orphans while others may show symptoms of depression or high levels of anxiety that go unrecognized. Children from these camps who enroll in our schools may well be suspicious of authorities, and many can have psychological problems associated with past traumatic events. As a matter of fact, even by the time refugees have settled in camps, they are likely to have already experienced many traumatic stressors, including rape, torture,

imprisonment, separation and/or loss of family and friends, financial hardship, and the loss of a home (Olness, 1998).

Guendelman (1998) suggested that morbidity rates among immigrants from certain diseases such as cervical cancer and tuberculosis is partly related to the barriers Hispanics/Latinos/as face when accessing health and insurance services. Nevertheless, Guendelman stated that a paradox exists with respect to Hispanic/Latino/a health status because overall health levels among immigrant adults are better than expected, considering the barriers and disadvantages this population faces. Guendelman theorized that Hispanic immigrants are usually young with a strong work ethic and family orientation, and these factors likely protect them against unfavorable health outcomes.

Guendelman (1998) also reported that more Hispanics than non-Hispanic Whites died from accidents and homicides during their adolescence and young adult years. Hispanics also died at a higher rate than Whites from such diseases as diabetes, hypertension, cardiopulmonary problems, liver diseases, and stroke. Infectious diseases such as meningitis, viral hepatitis, pneumonia, AIDS, and tuberculosis were also higher among Hispanic/Latinos/as.

Clark and Hoffman (1998) reported that their data revealed there were twice as many Hispanics who died of diabetes than non-Hispanic individuals. These authors found the prevalence of diabetes among Hispanics was 66 per 100, compared to 31 per 100 for the total population. Moreover, the mortality rate for diabetes was about 1.5 times higher for Hispanic women who were 45 years old and older than for non-Hispanic women in the same age range. Clark and Hoffman also revealed that the mortality rate was twice as

high for Hispanic men than that of the overall population. Other medical findings of concern among Hispanic individuals included hypertension, overweight, elevated serum cholesterol, and iron deficiency.

Clark and Hoffman (1998) indicated that it is important to explore Hispanics' belief systems when treating them. For example, they found that "Women in rural Mexico believed colostrum was unhealthy for babies and that breast-feeding should start at the appearance of the true healthful milk" (p. 76). They suggested there is also a need for combined strategies to help reduce alcohol consumption in Hispanic communities, as cirrhosis is a mostly preventable disease. Clark and Hoffman proposed it is extremely important to have knowledge and be an astute observer of patients' food intake patterns. Many Mexican Americans, for example, eat a greater amount of fried food, and fewer fruits and vegetables than other populations.

It is also critical to obtain information concerning the number of years an individual has been living in the United States, according to Clark and Hoffman (1998). While recent immigrants continue to eat their traditional foods, research shows that with increasing acculturation, considerable dietary changes take place. Some of these changes include higher consumption of flour tortillas, fewer vegetables, and higher consumption of foods which are higher in fat, such as meat and cheese.

Weinick et al. (2004) used data from the 1997 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) to look at the effect of country of ancestry, length of time in the U.S., and English- versus Spanish-speaking on the rate of utilization of several healthcare services (ambulatory care visits, emergency department visits, prescription medications, and

inpatient hospital admissions). The nationally representative survey included data from over 7,500 individuals who self-identified as Hispanic. As a group, Hispanics were less likely to use any of the four healthcare services than were non-Hispanic White respondents. However, there were differences between the subgroups studied.

Respondents whose interviews were conducted in Spanish were less likely to have had emergency department visits and inpatient hospital admissions, whereas those who were interviewed in English showed no difference in these areas when compared to the non-Hispanic White population. Individuals who immigrated to the U.S. within the last 10 years were less likely to have any ambulatory care and emergency department visits and all respondents who were born outside the U.S. were less likely to have prescription medications. Data also showed some significant differences between the subgroups of Puerto Rican, Mexican, Cuban, Central American, and Caribbean, and South American immigrants. Results indicated that there were differences between several Hispanic subgroups in their use of medical services. The authors suggested that there is a need for researchers, policymakers, and healthcare service providers to recognize the heterogeneity of this population.

After the September 11th attacks in 2001, immigrants stumbled upon an additional set of stressors. Recent data show more than half (54%) of Latinos/as surveyed say they see an increase in discrimination resulting from the ongoing immigration policy debate (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007; Suro & Escobar 2006). Similarly, a little over half of all Hispanic adults in the U.S. experience fear that they, a family member, or a close friend could be deported. Almost two-thirds say the failure of Congress to pass an immigration

reform bill has contributed to a more difficult life for Latinos/as. A lesser amount (ranging from about one-in-four to one-in-eight) state the heightened interest in immigration issues has had a particularly negative effect on them individually, such as a reduced likelihood of using government services or traveling abroad, an increased difficulty locating work or housing, and a higher probability of being asked to generate documents to prove their immigration status.

As previously stated, several new or modified immigration policies have taken effect after September 11. These changes have certainly impacted the foreign-born population. It appears that many groups of immigrants have become the target of racial profiling and, consequently, have been arrested and deported. For immigrant children, one of the most negative social impacts is that of authorities' raids on their families. A study conducted by the Rights Working Group (2008), for example, showed that for every two immigrants apprehended, one child was left behind. Demographics also show that many children who are U.S. citizens have a least one immigrant parent. If this parent happens to be deported, the child will surely suffer the consequences.

Recently, a small city in Texas started participating in a Criminal Alien Program, which meant local citizens would turn over criminal immigrants to the immigration authorities. The police department turned over 1700 suspected illegal immigrants in less than a year over federal immigration authorities. According to the figures, 60 % of those individuals were only guilty of a Class C misdemeanor like not having a driver's license, or having expired license plates (Trevino, 2007). In addition, some undocumented immigrant teenagers were arrested in the same school district while on campus and

turned over for deportation for fighting in hallways, playing loud music, and marijuana possession. According to figures released shortly after the deportations took place, that same school district's enrollment has fallen by 436 students since the beginning of the school year (Unmuth, 2007)

It can easily be deducted that such policies can create added stressors to immigrants. When a spouse or child is deported to another country, the family will likely suffer emotional or financial consequences. Legal immigrants may start suspecting legal authorities, which can create additional problems in a community (i.e., higher crime for not reporting events to the police). Children who stay in the U.S. without their parents will likely suffer separation-related problems which in turn may affect school performance, income potential, future relationships, etc. If one of the goals for any child is to be successful in school and have a brighter future, these issues would certainly have to be addressed.

Interacting and entwined with immigration processes, acculturation issues are important for Hispanics. A variety of relevant aspects of acculturation are described below.

Acculturation

Acculturation can be defined as a process of change that takes place when two or more cultures interact with each other (Clark & Hofsess, 1998). Acculturation refers to the cultural assimilation or the acquirement of the cultural patterns of the dominant society (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993). However, this process is not viewed as a blind acceptance or adoption of the dominant culture. Rather, it is seen as a continuum of

adjustment in which a person will attain certain values, beliefs, and/or behaviors of the new country while retaining those aspects of their own culture that prove viable and useful to them (Esquivel, 1997). Acculturation implies change and the stimulus for this change is intercultural contact. It is basically a continuous and dynamic process (Clark & Hofstede). The following section will describe three basic models of acculturation.

Overview of Acculturation Models

Throughout the years social scientists have speculated about the process by which newcomers to the United States become integrated into mainstream culture. Consequently, different models of acculturation have been developed to explain their theories. Although variation exists, these models can still be classified into three major categories. A description of each model will be discussed briefly.

The earliest model of acculturation is considered a linear model. It can be traced to the work of sociologists in the early 20th century. In 1914, Robert Park, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, wanted to know what happened to people from diverse cultures and languages when they came into contact with one another. Park suggested these individuals were involved in a three-stage process: contact, accommodation, and assimilation (Padilla, 1987).

According to this model, contact between individuals from different cultures pushes them to find ways to accommodate to each other in order to minimize conflict. Park suggested that immigrants learned to accommodate into the dominant group, after which a process of cultural assimilation continued which eventually culminated in intermarriage and amalgamation. For Park, the process leading to cultural assimilation

was progressive and irreversible, and contributed to the culture of the United States as a country of immigrants. Park's three-stage model has in one form or another remained the foundation of our thinking about how newcomers adjust to the dominant culture following immigration (Padilla, 1987).

A second model of acculturation is based on a two-culture matrix theory (Keffe & Padilla, 1987). In this model, the immigrant's culture is seen as one axis and the new culture is a cross-cutting second axis. The un-acculturated individual identifies exclusively with her/his original culture and rejects the new culture. Acculturated individuals are those who highly affiliate with the new culture and reject their culture of origin. The marginal person does not embrace or become proficient in either culture, and the bicultural person is one who finds him/herself highly accepted and proficient in both cultures. The two-culture matrix allows for realistic variance in individual levels of acceptance and proficiency in both cultures, and assumes that a person can be best described by their fit with one of the model's 'boxes'. However, it does not allow a person to be in different boxes, so to speak, under different circumstances or settings. In this model, a person is marginal, acculturated, bi-cultural, or un-acculturated, and cannot wear more than one of these labels concurrently.

A third and more contemporary model is based on a multidimensional concept of acculturation in relation to specific traits (Clark & Hofsess, 1998). This concept was first developed by Milton Gordon in 1964. In this model, the most important dimensions are structure and culture. Gordon suggested that although an immigrant may adopt the new country's food, dress, customs, and language he/she still maintains a "structural

uniqueness” (p. 42) in marrying a partner from the same culture, residing in neighborhoods with people from their own country, and/or maintaining a specialized occupation. The immigrant may also maintain certain traits from his/her own culture such as specific child-rearing practices, native foods, musical preferences, and family organization. Since this model is multidimensional, some new traits from the new culture may be incorporated into an immigrant’s life while at the same time maintaining some traits from his/her own culture. Consequently, a bicultural person will have a mix of his/her own culture’s traits and new culture’s traits that he/she has acquired over time.

Using the multidimensional concept as groundwork, Clark and Hofstess (1998) suggested that individual acculturation depends on multiple variables that influence the immigrant’s experience. These variables include personality and choice, family influences, multicultural influences, socio-ecological influences, and social behaviors. An important aspect of this model according to Clark and Hofstess is the allowance for diverse individual acculturation outcomes based on the interaction among the variables of the model and mediated by individual choices. Consequently, an immigrant’s pattern of acculturation depends on his/her heritage as well as the importance or attractiveness attached to new traits. Depending on this importance and attraction an individual will move toward or away from traits in the dominant culture while maintaining or rejecting traits in their own culture.

Assimilation

Related to, but not to be equated with acculturation, assimilation has been described as the “complete integration and absorption of individuals from one cultural

system into another” (Clark & Hofsess, 1998, p. 47). Early views of assimilation proposed that foreign-born people and their offspring must acculturate and seek acceptance from native-born Americans as a pre-requisite for social and economic advancement. An ethnic minority group that has assimilated will participate freely and completely in the economic, social, and political life of the mainstream society. More current thinking proposes that in some cases assimilation can follow acculturation, but it is not necessarily the end point of the acculturation process. One type of assimilation is homogenous assimilation, in which the majority and minority cultures blend equally. Another type is unilateral assimilation, which occurs when the minority culture loses its uniqueness and is immersed completely into the mainstream culture.

According to Atkinson et al. (1993), assimilation is a part of the wide spectrum of an acculturation model. The authors suggested that, for Hispanics, some factors relating to acculturation consist of (a) generational status (number of years in the U.S.), (b) occupational and educational status, (c) language preference, and (d) frequency of relocation to the original country (Atkinson et al., p. 252).

The Pew Hispanic Center (2004) conducted a study on the importance of language and assimilation. The researchers in this study used a logistic regression analysis approach to control for multiple factors and isolate the role of language as it relates to assimilation. These factors included gender, citizenship, income, place of residence, age, level of education, country of origin, political party, religion, and generation in the United States. The results demonstrated that on almost all key questions related to assimilation, language played a significant role to differences in attitudes, even

after controlling for such factors. For example, the study found that 93% of Spanish-dominant Latinos agreed that it was better for children to live in their parents' home until they got married, while fewer than 71% of the English-dominant Latinos felt the same way. Moreover, after using the same analysis, it was estimated that 51% of Spanish dominant Latinos found divorce acceptable, while 70% of the English-dominant group had the same view. The same pattern was observed for the following variables: having a child without being married; abortion; the acceptability of sex between two adults of the same sex; agreeing that, in general, the husband should have the final say in family matters; and agreeing that relatives are more important than friends.

The same study (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004) also found some noticeably similar attitudes across the Spanish dominant, English dominant, and bilingual Hispanic groups. For example, while some attitudes about family varied by primary language, Latinos of all language preferences still placed more emphasis on family in specific cases than non-Hispanic Whites. For example, when asked whether they agreed that elderly parents should live with their adult children, the great majority of Spanish-dominant (76%), bilingual (71%), and English-dominant (69%) Latinos agreed that they should, in comparison to fewer (53%) non-Hispanic White Americans. The researchers consequently suggested that assimilation may not necessarily be an across-the-board occurrence, and that it is actually possible that some selective assimilation takes place.

Acculturation and Assimilation in Immigrant Youth

The stages of acculturation have not been readily identified or well-defined when it comes to immigrant children. For the most part, acculturation and its stages have been

explained in terms of adult and family experiences. The process of acculturation for both adults and children may initially involve adjustment to a new climate, a new geographic region and its environment, and other concrete factors. People coming from rural areas may have an especially difficult time adapting to a big city in their host country. Parents may be afraid to let their children go out by themselves and socialize with others their own age. These kinds of decisions are likely to have a major effect on the acculturation process for the children involved. By the same token, people coming from bigger cities to settle in rural areas of the U.S. will need to navigate through a different kind of acculturation process (Esquivel, 1997).

During the early stages of acculturation, children usually begin to learn the language and cultural roles of the dominant culture at a faster rate than do their parents (Belitz & Valdez, 1997). For the most part, children will enroll in school as soon as it is viable. While in school, they will be exposed to a new language, different kinds of food, new fashions, and new social behaviors. During this time immigrant children will also have ample opportunity to begin interacting with natives of the new country and thus learn even learn more about its culture.

Parents, on the other hand, are likely to settle in a community in which they have relatives and/or friends who speak their language well, but may or may not know English. Since earning an income is crucial to survival in this country, these adults will likely start working as soon as possible. However, since the majority of recent immigrant arrivals do not speak English, they are apt to work in settings in which there is minimal interaction with members of the new country. As a result they may acculturate at slower rates than

their children. Because of this dynamic, the roles between parents and their children can become reversed for some immigrant families. That is, children who begin to take on the role of translator or mediator with school personnel, potential employers for their parents, and any other kind of legal or formal transaction that requires someone who knows the language, end up functioning as parents to a certain extent. This role reversal in itself may create added stressors for the families, as it contributes to a shift in the hierarchy of power.

When there is a shift in the hierarchy system, parents may lose some power whereas children gain it. While this power exchange can give children a positive sense of responsibility and authority, it may also generate some anxiety for them. That is, children in this position may view their parents as being unable to take care of them and protect them from the neighborhood's threats. If these youngsters already feel vulnerable, joining a gang may make them feel safer and provide a sense of belonging as part of a family-type system (Belitz & Valdez, 1997).

At later stages in the acculturation process, families may suffer from intercultural and intergenerational conflicts (Constable, 1996; Esquivel, 1997). Many families come to the U.S. with very traditional values and belief systems. However, once their children become exposed to the comparatively nontraditional U.S. culture, they typically begin to acquire new customs and belief systems. Conflicts may easily arise from these discrepancies between the generations. For example, many Hispanic/Latino/a parents expect their daughters to fill a specific traditional role which may not include education in college. However, as these daughters progress in U.S. schools alongside girls from a

variety of cultures, their value systems may change in such a way that they strive to further their education. Consequently, a new source of conflict between parents and daughters is introduced.

Lee and Liu (2001) found that for ethnic minority children, intergenerational family conflict was often exacerbated by cultural differences in lifestyles and values between children and parents. They reiterated that immigrant parents were likely to acculturate and adjust to the new culture at a slower rate than their children. The difference in this acculturation process was marked by the parents' beliefs and practices. Lee and Liu suggested that many immigrant parents wanted their children to abide by their own cultural values, lifestyles, and traditions, while children of immigrant parents, on the other hand, were more likely to have taken on westernized values and beliefs that often clash with their parents' expectations. These cultural differences tended to accentuate typical intergenerational conflict during adolescence and young adulthood, leading to even greater conflict and misunderstanding.

Baptiste (1993) pointed out that when families emigrate to the U.S., it is because the adults have decided to leave their country of origin. However, this does not mean that their children want to leave as well. He reported this as one factor contributing to the intergenerational conflict often experienced between immigrant children who turn into adolescents in the United States and their parents and grandparents. Baptiste identified certain transitional problems commonly expected to affect the ability of immigrant parents to deal successfully with their adolescent children. The problems often found between immigrant teenagers and their parents are listed next.

1. Changes in familial and generational boundaries. Many immigrant families hold certain cultural beliefs with strict and tightly regulated familial and generational boundaries. Children of some countries such as Nigeria, Mexico, and Kuwait, for example, are expected to obey, honor, and respect the advice of their parents and other elders. Adults in these cultures retain significant power and authority. In addition, if there is any conflict between an individual member's interests and the well-being of the family, the family's welfare is given priority. However, as these children grow up in the United States, they begin to think and behave in more individualistic ways. This attitude and behavior, in turn, creates family conflict as these violate the family's value system. When conflicts arise, the parents often tighten their boundaries and increase further the restrictions placed upon their children.
2. Generational Boundaries. Baptiste (1993) stated that immigrant families tend to maintain and enforce the pecking order, including separation of the generations, in a rigid manner. Consequently, when adult immigrants are required by the conditions in their new country to violate these boundaries, they may experience severe dissonance. On many occasions, children learn English at a faster rate than adults and typically, one of them is chosen as an interpreter for the family. When this happens, a role reversal often occurs because as the designated family interpreter, a child is often exposed to information commonly reserved for adults, confounding the generational line between children and adults.

3. Lessening of parental authority over children. Baptiste (1993) stated many immigrant parents believe that "...governmental agencies such as states' welfare agencies are more interested in helping children usurp parental authority than in helping them to respect such authority." (p. 348). Numerous such parents feel the culture in the U.S. is quite permissive and accepting of a child's right to defy parental authority. They complain that their "Americanized" children often defy their authority, mock their values, and ridicule them for holding onto their native country's values.
4. Loss of authority to discipline children. Similarly, many immigrant parents believe that they can no longer use the same methods of discipline they used in their native country. They complain that living in a new country forces them to develop new value systems and role expectations that frequently disturb the family's "...rules for interaction such as disciplining children." (Baptiste, 1993, p. 349). A large number of parents were accustomed to using severe punishment in their native countries when disciplining their children, but find themselves acting more cautiously in the U.S. for fear of deportation or breaking the law.
5. Loss of authority to select children's mates. Many cultures bestow parents with the authority to choose whom their children will date and marry. Consequently, immigrant parents from such countries as India where this is a common practice, insist that their children follow these same rituals in the United States. However, once they are in the United States, many adolescent

immigrants claim the right to choose their own dates and marry whom they want. Many parents resent this reduction of authority in the crucial area of choosing future daughters- or sons-in-law, and worry about their children's ability to make a good marriage.

6. Fear of losing the children to the new culture. Because children are likely to acculturate more readily than their parents, there is a powerful fear of potentially losing their children to the new culture. Parents often feel that their children's efforts to separate from the family, pursue their own goals, and individuate away from their family-of-origin is actually a sign of rejecting the family itself. Although the majority of immigrant parents came to the United States in search of a better life for their children, they frequently resist the children's acculturation in the new culture, unsure that this will indeed lead to an improved future. Children, on the other hand, are often placed in a bind. They are frequently reminded by their parents that education is extremely important, and are pushed to make new friends and learn English. However, to do all these things puts them at risk for becoming alienated from their parents.
7. Un-preparedness for change and conflict as part of the immigrant experience. Various immigrant families are not aware that the migration itself, along with the acculturation process, may be the source of the stressful experiences that often result in family conflicts. Moreover, many parents blame the family conflicts not on the move itself, but on U.S. culture, seeing it as playing a significant role in corrupting their children.

8. Discrepancy between the expectations and the realities of immigration. Many immigrant families come to the United States without accurate information about the country and thus hold certain, sometimes unrealistic, expectations. However, after some time in the new culture, it becomes obvious that these expectations are not being met. The consequent discrepancy between their original expectations and the realities of living in the U.S. often leads to dissatisfaction, with the parents blaming the U.S. culture along with those family members most involved in it—typically the teenagers, who then become the recipients of parental expressions of frustration.

Acculturation's Impact on Immigrants

Acculturation seems to affect immigrants in different ways. Smart and Smart (1995) theorized that different cultural groups react to the acculturation process in diverse ways. They stated that Hispanic immigrants experience and sustain acculturative stress in such a manner that it hinders their progress through the stages of adjustment. Smart and Smart suggested there are six unique characteristics that differentiate Hispanic immigrants from other groups. These are

1. Discrimination on the basis of skin color. Smart and Smart (1995) observed there is a tendency in U.S. culture to rapidly and superficially dichotomize people into the categories of “colored” or “White,” and discriminate against individuals on the basis of their color. Moreover, the label “colored” tends to carry a negative connotation that creates a tendency to distance and devalue. Consequently, light-skinned European immigrants have a different

acculturative experience because they do not have to encounter the immediate discrimination that usually accompanies darker skin color.

2. Unique Hispanic emphasis on social and family ties. Smart and Smart (1995) stated that the Hispanic culture usually stresses strong intergenerational family ties, along with cooperation. The pain due to separation from loved ones may be especially sharp for Hispanics because their culture emphasizes a sense of the collective versus the individual and their cultural mores stress affiliation and cooperation over competition and confrontation. Consequently, Hispanic immigrants can experience a clash of cultural values when they encounter a United States culture that emphasizes separation and independence from the family.
3. Illegal Immigration. Many Hispanics enter the United States illegally, and coming to the U.S. under these circumstances may be particularly stressful. Furthermore, illegal immigrants do not have full access to education, social benefits, and jobs while simultaneously facing the constant fear of deportation. Hence, these Hispanic immigrants may be subject to working under poor and below-market wage conditions due to their legal status.
4. Geographic Proximity. According to Smart and Smart (1995), the geographic proximity of Latin American countries, and Mexico in particular, allows for more constant travel between the new and original cultures than immigrants from European and Asian countries can expect or arrange. Since Mexico and the U.S. share a border, there is a natural tendency to travel back and forth,

especially for seasonal migrant workers, who can temporarily leave their jobs between seasons without losing them. Smart and Smart concluded that this migration pattern actually hinders the acculturation process because there is not a lasting breaking-away.

5. The Legacy of Armed Conflict. Mexican Americans did not initially become part of the United States by “voluntary immigration” (Smart & Smart, 1995, p. 393). Just like the American Indians, Mexican Americans became members of an ethnic minority as a direct result of the conquest of their homeland. Smart and Smart suggested that consequently, the legacy of the Mexican American history also plays a significant part in acculturation.
6. Hispanic reliance on physical labor. According to Smart and Smart (1995), immigrants in the past could get a job anywhere without knowing the English language because of the need for physical laborers. As the United States is now more affected by the global economy and employers in general are requiring higher levels of education, work limited to physical labor alone may not be as accessible for Mexican immigrants.

Leybas, Nuño and Garcia (2005) conducted a study of the effect of acculturation and income on Hispanic women's health. This study used a questionnaire that included segments on demographics, health coverage, access to care services, utilization, prevention orientation, and acculturation. It also asked about general health, breast cancer, mammography, cervical cancer, and sexual history. The purpose of the study was to provide insight into differences in health care access, utilization, and prevention beliefs

among those with different acculturation levels and income. Four groups were compared (a) low income/low acculturation, (b) high income/low acculturation, (c) low income/high acculturation, and (d) high income/high acculturation. Findings suggested that acculturation is associated with provider preference while income is associated with health care utilization behaviors. Extremely low-income women were less likely to purchase prescriptions and less likely to visit a provider than somewhat higher-income women. In this study, a large proportion of participants showed preference for female, Latino, and/or Spanish-speaking providers. Consequently, it appears that acculturation may play a more prominent role than income with respect to the provider preference of women in the study.

In a study on locus-of-control among Mexican American youth, Guinn (1998) suggested that higher levels of acculturation were related to a higher incidence of unhealthy behaviors. Guinn reported that highly acculturated Mexican American teenagers are more likely to be involved with alcohol and substance abuse, have higher rates of HIV, and be more sexually active than their less acculturated counterparts. Guinn revealed that adolescents who identified more with their own culture (Mexicanism) tended to have the belief that their health was controlled by something more powerful or knowledgeable than they, whereas adolescents who identified with either the U.S. culture or with both cultures believed they could control the direction of their own health. Consequently, locus-of-control became more internal with higher levels of acculturation. Guinn suggested that programs designed to reduce risky behavior in adolescents should take into consideration acculturation status when developing their interventions.

The Pew Hispanic Center (2002) reported that as Latino immigrants acculturate to U.S. society, they adopt the diet and behavior patterns of mainstream culture. The report revealed for example, that as Hispanics acculturate, there is a decreased consumption of fiber. In addition, there is an increase of alcohol and cigarette consumption.

Consequently, a growing proportion of U.S.-born Latinos are departing from some of the protective health behaviors of the immigrant generation. In contrast, Rebhun (1998) stated that the use of drugs and psychoactive substances is an overwhelmingly social act among humans. He reported that in many cultures mind-altering drugs are used in religious practices, and other drugs such as marijuana, alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine play an important role during social events. When people move from one country to another, they may bring their drug-use habits with them. Other immigrants may start using drugs as a medication process to mitigate their stress, depression, or anxiety that are usually associated in the process of acculturation. Many immigrants find the experience of immigration a stressful event and they may find themselves lonely, depressed, poor, discriminated against, etc., which may increase the risk for substance abuse.

Marshall and Orlando-Rand (2002) studied the relationship between acculturation and peri-traumatic dissociation in Latino survivors of community violence. Participants with Latino heritage were selected from among those admitted to a large Level I trauma facility in Los Angeles for treatment of physical injuries resulting from community violence. Results indicated that individuals of Latino background were more likely than their more acculturated counterparts to report experiencing dissociative reactions during a traumatic event. These findings held true even after controlling for other possible

influences on dissociation, including intoxication preceding the assault, characteristics of the assault, and prior exposure to trauma. Marshall and Orlando-Rand discovered that acculturation was a significant, negative predictor of dissociation. Consequently, they proposed that higher levels of acculturation were associated with lower levels of peritraumatic dissociation, while lower levels of acculturation were related to a higher incidence of the same.

Torres and Rollock (2004) studied the relationship between acculturation, coping, and intercultural competence in predicting acculturative distress. Hispanic participants were selected from a medium-size city in the Midwest. Ninety-six Hispanic individuals completed surveys. Results indicated that intercultural competence (abilities within the traditional culture that are needed for success in the new environment) strongly predicted acculturative distress. General coping was also correlated with acculturative stress. There was no evidence of a correlation between acculturative distress and acculturation level or demographic variables (time in U.S., income, generational level). Findings supported past research that suggests that the more passive problem solving styles often found in Hispanic culture may not be considered as competent as active problem solving in the dominant culture and are therefore not adequate for adjustment. The authors suggested that clinicians should work to help clients reduce acculturative stress by improving skills relevant to the dominant U.S. culture while persevering traditional skills.

In summary, multiple studies on the impact of acculturation have been conducted. Some research suggests that higher levels of acculturation are related to negative outcomes (i.e., gang involvement, drug abuse, parent-child conflict, and unhealthy diets).

Other studies propose that lower levels of acculturation result in a higher incidence of negative effects such as acculturative stress and post-traumatic stress.

Immigrant Children

In the year 2000, approximately one in six, or 11.5 million children, lived with a foreign-born head of a household. Of this group, 8.9 million of these children were U.S.-born, and 2.6 million were foreign-born. In contrast, the vast majority of all the children living in U.S.-headed households were also U.S.-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The majority of the children (89.4%) living in foreign-born households were the head of household's own child. The rest of the children were, in the majority, related to them.

Most of the research on immigrants has been conducted on adults (Esquivel, 1997; Portes & Rumbault, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001); however, some studies have been performed on immigrant families as a whole, or on their children.

In a study of demographic changes and the life circumstances of immigrant families, Hernandez (2004) discussed how children today are more likely than not to be a member of a minority group (ethnic or racial), and/or to have immigrant parents. He stated that official poverty rates for children of immigrant parents are much higher than their native-born family counterparts (21% versus 14%). Hernandez declared that parental educational attainment is the most important feature of family circumstances regarding the overall well-being and development of a child, regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin.

Nightingale and Fix (2004) described how labor and economic trends in the United States affect the well-being of employees and their families. The authors

concluded that the workforce in the United States, like the population, is more diverse than in the past. They stated that more workers have families that include both non-immigrant and immigrant individuals, and revealed that although the demand for highly skilled labor continues to rise, two-thirds of all employment in the United States does not require high level skills, or high levels of education. However, these kinds of job opportunities for unskilled workers pay the least, and immigrant employees are over-represented in this category. Nightingale and Fix declared that almost “half of the foreign-born workers have limited English proficiency and 45% have less than a high school education” (p. 53). These variables have an impact on income potential, and thus many immigrant families fall within poverty levels. The authors further stated that children under 18 years of age have the highest poverty rate of any other age group. Moreover, “poverty rates for minority and immigrant children are more than double the rates for White non-Hispanic children” (p. 55). Nightingale and Fix suggested that policies be implemented to help the legal status, education, and training of undocumented employees.

Fuligni and Hardway (2004) stated that foreign-born Latino/a adolescents: (a) have more difficulty than other teenagers “completing school at each stage of the educational pipeline” (p. 99); (b) who do not attend college (age 18 and over) have more difficulty finding employment than non-Hispanic Whites with similar levels of education; and (c) along with other minority adolescents, are more likely to be involved in high-risk behaviors than non-Hispanic White teenagers. They suggested that “whether adolescents from immigrant and ethnic minority families will make a successful transition to

adulthood hinges on their educational achievement, their acquisition of employable skills and abilities, and their physical and mental health” (p. 99).

As a clinician, this researcher got to know several immigrant students from multiple countries throughout the years. Available research and personal experiences with immigrant children show that there is great diversity among them. They may arrive alone after many years of separation with their families, or they may come as a family unit. They may have citizen, refugee, residence, or temporary status of documentation (Castex, 1997). On the other hand they may have no form of legal documentation. As previously noted, if this is the case, their journey to the United States may have been more difficult, as many children have used many dangerous forms of transportation and exposed themselves to robberies, assaults, rapes, etc.

Although there is great diversity among immigrant children, many common patterns exist among them as well. Graciela Castex (1997) described some of the patterns immigrant share. These include (a) all immigrants move from one country to another, which for many is a traumatic event in itself, and many of them have also moved from a rural area to a metropolitan area, which makes the adjustment even more difficult; (b) many immigrants do not know the English language when they arrive; (c) all of them have to adjust to a new culture and find a new home, job, and/or school; and (d) most, if not all, have left someone they loved behind. Some other stressors immigrants may face are a dramatic change in financial/social status, difficulties in communicating with their families, and changes in family roles.

Psychosocial Stress for Hispanic Immigrant Children

Separation from loved ones and re-location from one city to another or to a new country are often stressful, if not traumatic events. When you add other pressures such as financial problems, change of cultures and countries, and lack of ability to speak English, those stressors can escalate tremendously. Luis Laosa (1990) is among the relatively few investigators who have conducted research on the psychosocial stressors of Hispanic immigrant children and studied their coping mechanisms under these stressors.

According to Laosa (1990) some immigrant children have adapted quite well to their new environment, despite difficult circumstances. These children may even do better than their native counterparts in school and surpass them academically. However, other children may not adapt as well to their new environment and school. This lack of adaptation may further complicate their fragile status and limit their opportunities for the future.

Laosa (1990) posited the question, “Which forms of experience associated with immigration and settlement are likely to influence the course of adaptation, adjustment, and development of Hispanic immigrant children?” (p. 40) and found that the answer can only be found using a multidimensional approach.

Basically, Laosa (1990) suggested that two types of variables are important (a) variables that occur before the immigrant leaves his/her country of origin, and (b) variables that occur during and/or between the immigration and the settlement in a new country. Some variables Laosa discussed include the characteristics of the community the immigrant came from, the characteristics and lifestyle the family and the child had before

and after emigrating, the life changes that child and family had to endure, the new community characteristics, the accumulation of life changes, the characteristics of the school setting of both the country of origin and the receiving country, the family's cultural belief system, and the child's and family's perceptions, cognitive and otherwise, of everything related to their particular situation and immigration circumstances. Other variables mentioned by Laosa include psychosocial and environmental factors that occur over time, such as temperament, locus of control, expectations, and legal status (legal versus undocumented).

Ann Kennedy (2000) designed a study combining quantitative and qualitative methods in order to learn more about cross-cultural patterns of 54 at-risk students from Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean. In this study, Kennedy also studied the students' behaviors, expectations, and value systems. Throughout her explorations, Kennedy learned about the patterns of cumulative trauma that these students had experienced in life. Four major patterns were discovered in her study and will be described below.

1. War and Violence. Although Kennedy (2000) included 57 immigrant students who were considered at-risk in her study, 11 focal students were interviewed at length and case studies were described in detail out of these interviews. Out of the 11 focal students, 9 of them experienced war in their countries of origin. Many of them also suffered the loss of close family members.
2. Influence of Earlier Education. Through the data collection and interviews, Kennedy (2000) discovered that 9 out of the 11 focal students had interrupted

their education to some degree. For many, school standards was not as strict as we know it and many suffered the consequences later on as they were not on par with other students who had completed the same grade, but with higher standards of education. Spanish literacy was low compared to others of the same grade level. Kennedy also discovered that many of these students suffered through the schools' practices of corporal punishment. The majority of students stated that they had experienced corporal punishment on a daily basis. In addition, most of these students' educational experience was interrupted by war and violence. Some of them literally had to walk through bodies to get to school.

3. Separation of Mother and Child. Kennedy (2000) reported that 9 of the 11 focal students had been separated from their mothers for a period of time and later reunited with them. In general, the themes that developed out of being separated from their mothers indicated resentment and contained traumatic memories. The students showed signs of difficulty adjusting to their families again and in some cases to the new siblings or stepparents. Along with these stories, there was also a recurrent theme of leaving behind someone they loved who was generally the person who helped raised them in their country of origin.
4. The New School Culture. As it can easily be assumed, all 11 students had to adjust to a new school culture. Continuous confusion was demonstrated regarding the number of grades completed and/or the age of arrival in this

country. Many discrepancies were found between the students' reports of educational background and the data in the students' records. Many students exhibited confusion over rules and regulations regarding grades and grade promotions. As an example, some of the students did not understand how failing grades were related to the number of absences.

Esquivel (1997) suggested that school adjustment is one of the major sources of stress for immigrant children. She reported that school adjustment problems have been related to such issues as violence, family, conflicts, low self-esteem, and poverty. Nevertheless, Esquivel suggested that many of these difficulties may be more closely related to the discrepancies in cultural expectations between the school setting and the home, and the limited understanding of the immigrant children's learning styles, behaviour, and language characteristics.

Low achievement in school has generally been associated with low self-esteem, special classroom placement, and dropping out of school (Esquivel, 1997). Although there has always been variety in immigrant levels of education, more recent arrivals (particularly from Latin American countries) appear to have more limited knowledge of the English language, and fewer years of formal education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), creating, therefore, more challenges for academic achievement. Additional stress may be added to those children who received little or no formal education at all in their native country. Many may have come from rural areas with few if any modern facilities and attended school on a part-time basis. These children will likely have limited literacy skills in their own language and little or no knowledge of the English language.

It is important to note that there can be a high degree of discrepancy between what teachers expect and students' learning styles. Teachers may have set ideas about what they want the students to learn regardless of their culture. Nevertheless, it is widely known that people learn in different ways and those ways do not always mimic the one of the majority culture. Native American children, for example, tend to learn through patterns of non-verbal communication (Esquivel, 1997). Children from many cultures are taught early on that looking an adult in the face is disrespectful. However, verbal communication and looking at the teacher in the eyes while being taught, is many times the standard way of instruction in the United States. Thus, the discrepancy that exists between students and teachers may result in poor learning and low academic achievement (Esquivel).

As in the case of verbal communication, differences in behavior may lead to a misunderstanding between school and home (Esquivel, 1997). In many cultures, children are taught that they need to respect their teachers, as they are considered the experts. Consequently, children must remain quiet and defer to adults instead of actively participating in class. Many teachers may attribute the lack of response from students to a lack of initiative. This belief may exacerbate the problem of children being confused as to what is expected of them. Another important difference lies in the ways that the U.S. culture usually strives for competitiveness and individualism, while other cultures strive for togetherness and group work. When children have been taught all their life that family and group cooperativeness is very important, these children may not understand why they have to compete so much on an individual basis in school.

In a qualitative study on educational barriers for New Latinos in a south-eastern area of the U.S., Bohon, Macpherson, and Atilas (2005) discovered six primary barriers to Latino/a educational achievement (a) low parental school involvement, (b) lack of understanding of the United States educational system, (c) lack of residential permanence among the Latino population, (d) little or no incentive for the continuation of Latino education, (e) lack of sufficient support for Latino students' needs, and (f) barred immigrant access to higher education.

In a study on immigrant generations, assimilation, and well-being Harker and Mingliang (2001) used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Education and Adolescent Health to examine the relationship between immigrant generation and adolescent psychological well-being. The authors' findings suggest that first-generation immigrants experience less depression than their native-born counterparts, as well as greater positive well-being. Second-generation immigrants did not differ significantly from native-born youth in terms of psychological well-being. A number of factors help first-generation immigrants maintain higher levels of well being. These include parental supervision, lack of parent-child conflict, religious practices, and social support. Assimilation among first generation immigrants, as measured by age at the time of arrival did not significantly affect their positive well-being.

The Impact of Immigration on Children

Traditionally, the process of immigration has more often been seen as a trauma that negatively affects views regarding the host society, an individual's happiness, self-esteem, and overall sense of identity (Burnam et al., 1987; Kataoka et al., 2003; Portes & Rumbault, 1996). Even under the best circumstances, most people would consider moving to a new country a stressful event. Children wonder about basic changes such as where will they be going to school, what school will be like, what the food will be like, who will play with them, etc. Adjusting to new living conditions, learning a different language, learning how to move from one place to another, making new friends, eating different food, among other things easily creates stress for both parents and children.

The present researcher has observed the impact of immigration on children firsthand. For families who have been separated for long periods of time there was additional stress, as new adjustments with the families were made. As a clinician working with immigrant families, this researcher discovered that many problems arose after the arrival of children or loved ones. Oftentimes, the adolescents that were seen had not seen their parents for several years and had been raised by other relatives such as aunts, uncles, or grandparents. In their view, their parents were those who raised them and not those who sent for them after many years of separation. Their parents, on the other hand, believed that they had made several sacrifices in order to give their children a better opportunity for their future and education. They believed that their children should be thankful and appreciate what had been done for them. These beliefs often resulted in conflict. Children were resentful of their parents because their perception was that their

parents had abandoned them when little and had yanked them from their loved ones at a later time. Although, in many cases, it appears they left their country of origin in to improve their way of living and would send for their children many years later. In addition, conflicts arose because parents expected to be obeyed and respected while children asked the question," Why should I? You didn't raise me!"

Treatment/Interventions with Immigrant Students

There is little information on interventions available in school settings for immigrant students who have suffered traumatic events. However, some authors and clinicians have developed innovative methods to help students who are from different cultures and speak languages other than English.

Domenico Maceri (1999) suggested that doing without bilingual education programs in school districts does not actually help the children. He argued that the reports of children learning English are superficial and do not provide adequate information about the students' educational achievements. According to Maceri, education is a long-term process that involves a lot more than just learning the English language, and learning English is not enough unless it is taught along with other subjects.

Maceri (1999) also suggested that many people in the United States have conversational English skills, but still cannot obtain good jobs. He believes the role of schools is to prepare all students for life by teaching them appropriate skills and bilingual education does this by teaching children different subjects in their native language, while at the same time teaching them English. Consequently, if immigrant children are

immersed in an English-only program from the beginning of their U.S. education, they will lose several years due to their great initial confusion.

Maceri (1999) stated that the old sink-or-swim approach has not worked, as asking children who have never spoken English to compete with children who have been in the United States will inevitably yield distorted results. He argued that bilingual education is successful, and backed this up with research conducted by George Mason University and the National Research Council indicating that children in bilingual programs did better in reading and writing than those immersed in English-only classes from the start of their schooling. Nevertheless, Maceri revealed that bilingual education is not perfect and could not address all the problems of disadvantaged children. That is, bilingual education cannot change the educational and socioeconomic status of immigrant children and their parents, nor can it eliminate the poverty in which many of these children live, suggesting that these were important variables in the children's educational attainment. Furthermore, Maceri suggested that bilingual education should only be seen as one tool to help children learn, and that teachers should take into consideration the student's diverse needs.

Gonsalves (1992) conducted a study on Latin American refugees in which he described the psychological stages involved in the refugee process and suggested a number of therapeutic interventions. According to Gonsalves, refugees go through three phases: pre-flight, flight, and resettlement. In the preflight phase, refugees experience political events beyond their control while they are in their homeland that can play out in such occurrences as threats to their lives, the outbreak of war, or individuals'

disappearances. During this stage, refugees are already experiencing the stresses of migration and report feelings of heightened anxiety. During the flight phase, refugees experience psychological trauma. The intensity, duration, and number of traumatic incidents all contribute to determining which refugees are at a higher risk during resettlement. In the resettlement phase, refugees go through a complicated combination of cultural, social, and psychological experiences as they adopt some of the new culture's traditions, language, and general way of living. The resettlement phase itself contains five stages, listed below. Each one of these stages is characterized by different behaviors, symptoms, and interventions.

Stage One – Early Arrival: During this stage many refugees are confused and disorganized, and continue to behave almost as though they were still in their country of origin, rather than their new host country. Refugees report reactions that range from a sense of abandonment to total despair, to feelings of excitement and relief. The most common symptom during this stage is depression, but many refugees also feel guilt for leaving behind others who continue to suffer in their homeland. Gonsalves (1992) suggested that interventions during this stage should heavily rely on primary prevention strategies such as familiarizing refugees with their surroundings and reducing psychological confusion. Some of these interventions can be carried out by people within the refugee community who come from the same culture and who can orient new arrivals to supermarkets, physicians, dentists, and houses of worship in which the refugees' language is

spoken. The immediate goal of such interventions is to provide a “bridge for the transition from the homeland to the host country” (p. 384).

Stage Two – Destabilization: In this stage, refugees describe their experiences as painful and stressful. Many become hostile and resistant to the new culture.

Because of the pressing need for financial survival, it is crucial for refugees to begin to learn more aspects of their new home so they can move forward in accommodating the culture. During this stage, marital disputes often arise due to spousal role reversal or a dissonance between expectations of the new country and actual reality. Many refugees may deny having personal problems, and as some cultures discourage the discussion of intimate problems outside the family.

Mental health professionals who deal with refugees during this stage may continue in their teaching role, but can additionally start to make specific therapeutic interventions. According to Gonzalves (1992), such basic interventions as English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons and job-training classes can normalize, to some degree, the distresses of the destabilization stage.

These classes can help couples deal with the double impact of the loss of a supportive network of family and friends, and adjusting to the different gender roles couples take on in the host country. Exposure to other refugees who have adjusted to the new culture and to others who are living in the new country may help offset the sadness and loss that are many times associated with migration. It can also function as a role model for successful transition into the new country.

Mental health professionals should also be aware that the refugees might not

readily reveal many of their symptoms. Moreover, among some people these symptoms may be disguised by complaints that are very much culturally related. In some Hispanic cultures, for example, refugees may complain of “susto” (fear) or “ataque de nervios” (nervous attack). These conditions may include symptoms that include apathy, fear, anxiety, insomnia, depression, panic attacks, headaches, stomachaches, dizziness, and shortness of breath. As these symptoms can be related to anything from PTSD to marital discord, it is important for the therapist to address not only the symptoms, but the flight experiences reported and any arrival issues, as well.

Stage Three – Exploration and Re-stabilization: This stage typically occurs three to five years after arrival to the host country. During this stage, refugees often complain of isolation. Since some of the refugees have achieved some economic stability, and many have moved away from other refugees in order to identify with the new culture, alienation from other refugees and friction with new North American neighbors may arise. Marital conflicts may continue to occur as women and men acquire different behavioral patterns through identifying with the new culture. Child-rearing problems may also arise, as the children of new refugees tend to acculturate at a much faster rate than their parents. Therapists during this stage should be highly supportive in their interventions to help battle feelings of anxiety and failure that go along with the central changes in refugees’ lives. Therapists can also function as “a major source of information about North American values, behavioral cues, and norms,” (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 386). Family

therapy may also become necessary in order to help refugees avoid becoming stuck in rigid marital and family expectations.

Stage Four – Return to Normal Life: The main characteristic of refugees at this stage is their ability to efficiently learn the behaviors and beliefs of the new culture. Refugees have chosen the values and beliefs of their native culture that they want to keep and have also come to understand the values and beliefs of the new country. Gonsalves (1992) suggested that refugees who seek help during this stage may present with very similar symptoms to the ones presented by North American families. However, it is also possible that some refugees may exhibit signs of a delayed grief reaction. During this stage, therapists function as supportive professionals. It is possible that some refugees might totally reject the new country's customs and want to maintain their homeland's traditions; however, the opposite might also occur, and refugees may over-identify with the new country's culture. If refugees become stuck within either one of these positions, they may need help in acquiring the flexibility necessary for learning and accommodating to new cultures. Another potential problem is the intergenerational conflict that can occur when refugees try to cope with children who forget or refuse to engage in their native customs or language. If intergenerational conflict arises, family therapy may be required.

Stage Five – Decompensation: Most, if not all, refugees experience this stage to some degree. However, only a few reach a completely de-compensated state. Refugees in this stage seem to be overwhelmed by the demands of their reality,

and they are unable to manage successfully in the host country. Complete decompensation may occur as the result of the demands imposed on refugees by all the choices and changes that they have to make. Relationship failure or the inability to find work can lead to grief and an episode of major depression. These stressors can also lead to drug and alcohol abuse, and/or suicidal ideation. It is also possible for psychotic symptoms to emerge. Refugees in this stage are most often found in crisis centers or emergency rooms. Therapeutic interventions vary, depending on the immediate need. Serious decompensation may require hospitalization and/or medication, while less severe decompensation can be treated with therapeutic interventions to help refugees normalize their symptoms and behaviors.

After conducting an in-depth study of accumulative trauma for immigrant students, Kennedy (2000) suggested several interventions to facilitate immigrant students' transition. While cautioning that these suggestions were applicable specifically to her findings in her study with 76 immigrant students, she outlined four principles that serve as the basis for the interventions. These include

Principle 1: Cultivate organizational relationships

Principle 2: Provide access to information

Principle 3: Cultivate human relationships

Principle 4: Provide multiple and flexible pathways into, through, and beyond school

In Principle 1, Kennedy (2000) suggested that students have a need for services outside the school, including counseling through community mental health services, job internships at community businesses that can help these students make a connection between work and school, and the combined efforts of their school and local colleges or universities to help overcome the financial, legal, academic, and social challenges related to achieving a higher education.

In Principle 2, Kennedy (2000) addressed her finding of high levels of unrealistic expectations shared by the students in her study. Kennedy suggested that it would be very helpful for school intake centers, parent workshops, and counseling sessions to guide immigrant students to more realistic expectations. This kind of intervention should also help minimize the frustration levels expressed by many immigrant students. Kennedy also recommended that teachers and counselors who work with at-risk immigrant students receive information specific to the needs and experiences of these youth so they will be better able to understand and deal with them.

In Principle 3, Kennedy (2000) spoke of the importance of maintaining a good relationship between students and teachers. She also addressed the need for adolescents to develop and maintain a strong relationship with their families.

In Principle 4, Kennedy (2000) discussed the critical role of alternative programming at schools, in which English as a Second Language is taught. She stated the benefits that immigrant students obtain by being enrolled in alternative ESL program include individualized attention and lower students-teacher ratios.

In addition to the principles mentioned above, Kennedy (2000) also elaborated on the need for staff and school personnel to understand and address the connection between trauma and learning difficulties. She suggests that traumatic events can interfere with learning in many ways; for example, some students may appear as lacking in motivation, when actually they are emotionally numb due to previous traumatic events. Trauma can also interfere with concentration, attention, and memory, and cause sleep problems and/or recurrent nightmares. If students have suffered traumatic events in their past, it is highly likely they will have at least some emotional problems that interfere with learning. Consequently, their academic performance and school behavior may not be at its best.

In a study of Central American immigrant families, Leigh (1992) found that informal support helped immigrants a great deal while also diminishing their interaction with the larger community. Leigh reported that Central Americans differ significantly from other Hispanic groups, such as Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, because they experienced war in their region or country of origin prior to coming to the U.S. Moreover, Leigh suggested that Central Americans also differ significantly from other groups fleeing civil wars, such as the Vietnamese or Afghans, because “Central Americans do not have the same legally recognized refugee status. They therefore have no legal claim to services that assist in the resettlement process,” (p. 244). Leigh suggested that many factors are likely to affect Central American immigrants’ adjustment, including individual traits, the immigrant group’s political power, the economic structure of the new country, and the availability of informal networks of support in the new country.

Unfortunately, current data show that children and families from other cultures tend to under-use available mental health services (Esquivel, 1997). According to Atkinson et al. (1993), the primary reason for underutilization of mental health services is the perception by minority groups that these services are incompatible with their notions of mental health and healing methods. Consequently, Esquivel suggested that immigrant children should receive services which are culturally acceptable and take into consideration a client's culture as well as the variety of experiences clients bring with them.

Esquivel (1997) also suggested that group intervention may be a natural therapeutic path to take, since many cultures place an emphasis on families, groups, and a collective environment. She theorized that group interventions can generally lead to cohesiveness, cooperation, and interdependence, and will highly reflect the group and extended family practices of some cultures. While Esquivel reported that many cultures share similar beliefs, she also stated it is important to recognize the differences that exist among and between group members. Consequently, she suggested the group approach be conducted using a multicultural perspective. According to Esquivel, "The primary purpose of multicultural group interventions is to remediate and prevent, in a culturally appropriate manner, the stressors and resulting adjustment problems experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse children and adolescents" (p. 253).

Kataoka et al. (2003) conducted a pilot study to test a school mental health program targeting Latino immigrant students who have suffered some form of community violence. They provided an eight-session course of cognitive-behavioral

group therapy in Spanish, facilitated by bicultural/bilingual school social workers. This therapy was manual-based, and the teachers and parents of participating students were eligible to receive psycho-educational and support services. The quasi-experimental study showed some decline in participants' trauma-related mental health issues and offered concrete support for implementing and evaluating the program in school settings.

A number of other interventions have been suggested. For example, as an outgrowth of their work with Mexican-American male gang members, Belitz and Valdez (1997) suggested that immigrant families receive therapeutic interventions related to parent-child conflict issues, children's anxiety levels, feelings of vulnerability, and identity issues. Rousseau and Heusch (2000) implemented an art program designed for children in a multi-ethnic classroom to help them deal with their immigration experiences. It involved drawing and storytelling to help 25 refugees and immigrants attach meaning to their experiences of immigration. In this task, children were asked to produce drawings or stories from three main themes—family, friends, and myths. The authors suggested that family represented continuity of values and attachments, friends represented the human environment of their host country, and myths of the homeland provided a framework for emotions and experiences. Rousseau and Heusch suggested that art therapy could help immigrant children deal with psychological distress and adjust to existence in a bicultural world. Nevertheless, these authors also found their time sequence analysis of the children's story-telling suggested an absence of solid ties to the past which prevented them from imagining a future for them.

Using a case study example, Ellen Bogolub (2002) offered a vignette written by an eight-year-old boy from Central America following the terrorist attack of 9/11. In this vignette, the child described how the strongest building in America fell down and although his parents had told him he would be safe in this country, he no longer felt safe. He wrote that the government could have prevented the “bad guys” from doing this damage and he also elaborated on how a number of grownups were mad or sad because they could no longer keep their jobs and take care of their families. After providing this example, Bogolub suggested that immigrant children who are fearful could be exposed to the following ideas to assuage their fears (a) everyone could work to strengthen the nation; (b) adults can actually protect children most of the time; (c) democracy does not mean blind faith in the government but the expression of productive ideas; (d) through the help of adults, civil rights and first amendments will be maintained; and (e) the government will help those who lost their jobs. Finally, Bogolub concluded that if all the above is explained to children, they may feel safe in this country again.

While focusing on pediatricians, Weitzman et al.'s (1997) recommendations are highly likely to be relevant to mental health practitioners as well. Their suggestions included

1. Pediatricians should be in opposition to denying needed services to any child who resides in the United States.
2. Pediatricians should become well-educated to achieve a better understanding of immigrant children and their families' culture, increase their knowledge of the family's belief systems, values and attitudes, and be able to educate

parents on safety and health issues in a way that complements, rather than replaces, existing beliefs and practices.

3. Pediatricians should accept and respect differences in attitudes and approaches to child-rearing while at the same time maintaining an awareness of possible traditional practices that are clearly harmful to children and reportable under federal laws.
4. Pediatricians should be aware of the special health problems for which immigrant children may be at risk such as hepatitis, syphilis, tuberculosis, poor nutritional status, poor mental health, school problems, parasitic infestations, poor dental health, and diseases targeted by immunization.
5. Pediatricians should be educated on the particular stressors that immigrant children and their families face. They should also obtain adequate information about local resources that can be helpful to these families.
6. In communities where immigrant families are abundant, health service providers should acquire culturally and linguistically appropriate services that are attune with public health services and schools.
7. Academy chapters should work with state legislators to evaluate the local impact of legal changes concerning immigration and welfare services, and encourage measures that assure medically needed services for all children, including catastrophic illnesses or injuries.
8. Pediatricians should be encouraged to support and participate in community-based activities that increase access to health care for immigrant children.

Smart and Smart (1995) theorized that the acculturative experiences of Hispanic immigrants are different from those of Asians and Europeans. Consequently, mental health professionals need to take these differences into consideration. In particular, the following issues need to be given close attention

1. **Accurate Assessment of Stress Level.** As previously described, the acculturation process of Hispanic immigrants is different than that of other groups in that it tends to be intense, pervasive, and of long duration. Thus, mental health professionals need to accurately assess the stress levels of Hispanic Americans. Smart and Smart (1995) suggested that this assessment can be performed in a variety of ways and referred professionals to Axis IV of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* for a scale that can be used in such assessment. Examples and descriptions of varying levels of severity in psychosocial stressors are given, as well as tips on cultural sensitivity. Smart and Smart further suggested exercising caution when assessing immigrants, as it is possible that some of them may be experiencing PTSD due to traumatic events such as rape, sexual exploitation, etc.
2. **Unique Language Needs.** Smart and Smart (1995) recommended that care be taken to provide services in the language chosen by the client. If mental health professionals are not fluent in the Spanish language, proficient translators must be provided.
3. **Needs for Social Support and New Social Skills.** Immigration generally entails the loss of some social support systems such as family, friends,

schools, religion, etc. Smart and Smart (1995) suggested that the pain of these losses are particularly difficult for Hispanic immigrants, and significantly add to their level of stress because their sense of relationship tends to be oriented more to a more personal level than is their Anglo Americans counterparts. The authors stated that one way to combat stress is to increase social support and obtain new social skills; thus, mental health professionals should pay close attention to the initial rapport-building phase in the counseling process in order to assure a strong level of trust. Once this is accomplished, other interventions aimed toward problem-solving can be employed, including assertion training, social skill building, self-esteem building, stress self-monitoring, and information-seeking techniques.

4. Familiarity with Immigration Law. It is important for mental health professionals who work with undocumented immigrants to be familiar with basic immigration laws. Immigration laws can be very complex and dictate, to a certain degree, eligibility for public services. For example, although illegal immigrants are not eligible for food stamps, they are eligible for emergency medical care services under the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. This program provides services that include food and formula for children. Additionally, children of undocumented immigrants who were born in the United States are eligible for several educational and public services, whereas their foreign-born siblings are not. In addition to understanding some of the basic laws, mental health professionals should understand the

acculturative stress that Hispanic immigrants suffer as a result of these regulations.

In summary, the number of immigrant students has increased over the last 50 years despite September 11 terrorist events. The majority of these immigrants are from Latin America and Asia. The number of undocumented immigrants, the majority of whom are from Mexico, continues to rise over time despite increasing border security measures. It is widely known that immigrants suffer stressors related to acculturation or assimilation in a new country and these stressors have only increased since September 11, 2001. Immigrant children also suffer stressors that have been potentially augmented by the events of 9/11. The majority of students who drop out of high school are Hispanic, and drop-out numbers are higher for undocumented immigrants.

The number of immigrant children enrolled in schools has also risen. The majority of studies on English Language Learners have focused on English language acquisition and academic curriculums. These programs may be useful in some academic settings and for some newcomer students. However, they may not be adequate for schools whose immigrant students have previously experienced traumatic events and additional stressors, or must deal with significant gaps in their education, among other issues. Most school settings implement ESL curricula across the board to all English Language Learners without knowing much about the immigrant students' history and experiences. Moreover, most schools expect all students to make academic progress and pass state-developed tests as described in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Rationale for the Proposed Study

The American Psychological Association has articulated clear policy regarding the need for advocacy, research, training, and intervention in the service of immigrant youth and families. Following detailed documentation of the issues involved, the APA Resolution on Immigrant Children, Youth, and Families stated:

Therefore be it resolved that the American Psychological Association, an organization that is committed to promoting the psychological well-being of children, youth, and families:

1. advocates for the development of a scientific database concerning the adaptation, development, education, health, and mental health, as well as the social impact and contributions, of immigrant and refugee populations;
2. supports efforts to increase funding for research about the adaptation, development, education, health, and mental health of diverse immigrant children, youth, and families;
3. promotes and facilitates psychologists' acquisition of competencies, including relevant cultural knowledge, attitude, and skills in providing services to and conducting research on immigrant children, youth, and families;
4. advocates and promotes efforts to increase the availability of and access to educational, health, mental health, and social services for immigrant children, youth, and families; and

5. promotes and supports public policies that recognize and provide for the psychosocial needs of immigrant children, youth, and families (2008).

It is in the spirit of this resolution that the researcher conducted an archival qualitative study to explore the life experiences of Hispanic immigrant students. A qualitative study of this magnitude (84 students over six years, all in counseling) had never before been conducted, and adds to the scientific knowledge base related to the mental health issues of these students and how they responded to counseling. Given significant and ongoing ties to the community and school in which the data were collected, the investigator has planned to give feedback to school district officials and to remain involved in advocacy for the types of services that seem desirable based on this and previous research. It is hoped that such programming would increase the likelihood that students would achieve higher academic success and in turn, become role models for the next generation when the time comes.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter will detail the sampling, procedures, and analytic strategies employed in an archival, qualitative study of the experiences of Latino/a adolescents in a major metropolitan public school district. In keeping with standard qualitative methodology, a section of the Method chapter includes a detailed description of researcher qualifications and bias, presented so that readers may make informed decisions about how such variables may or may not have influenced the products produced (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Sample

Patton (2002) reported that “what people say is a major source of qualitative data” (p. 21). He suggested that qualitative methods typically produced a wealth of in-depth information about smaller samples of people and cases. Because this researcher conducted a study of a select group of immigrant students and provided a detailed exploration of their personal experiences, a qualitative method of inquiry and a purposeful sample was used. Purposeful samples are “information rich cases—cases from which one can learn a great deal about matters of importance and therefore worthy of in depth study” (Patton, p. 242). This study used one of the many types of purposeful samples, a criterion sample. All participants met the following criteria for inclusion: (a) be between 14 and 18 years of age, (b) had Spanish as their first/native language and

English as a second language, and (c) had not been born in the United States. The sample was also classified as an intensity sample. Intensity samples are composed of "...cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely, for example, good students/poor students; above average/below average" (Patton, p. 243). This sample qualified for this classification because all students in the sample have struggled with immigration concerns. No student whose adjustment had been free of difficulty was brought to the attention of the researcher. The majority of students had serious problems in their transition to the United States.

The archival data for this study was originally collected from personal stories as told by 84 Hispanic immigrant students with age ranges between 14 and 18 years of age. There were 40 girls and 44 boys represented in the sample. In order to maintain the criteria for purposeful sampling, the following students were not included as part of the study: students who were younger than 14, students who were not Hispanic, students who did not speak Spanish as their first language, and students who had such severe disabilities they were unable to function in a regular classroom setting without being referred for special education assessments.

All students in the sample were enrolled in a school with a specialized curriculum. This curriculum involved English as a Second Language classes for foreign-born students who were not up to par with their designated educational level. That is, in order to attend this particular school, students had to be foreign-born, non-English speaking, and have had a gap in their school enrollment for two or more years. Students attended this school for a period of six months to one year, during which time they were

supposed to develop readiness for meeting the expectations of their assigned educational level. After being in this program, the next step for these students was to enroll and remain in their corresponding typical-population schools. Although students from many different countries attended the school, the great majority of them were from Mexico or Central American countries. All of the students in this category spoke Spanish. Specific demographics for all students in the sample were not possible to obtain retrospectively; however, variables such as age, gender, family structure in the U.S. and illegal versus legal status were tracked where available.

The school district from which this researcher obtained the data for this study and where she worked for several years with immigrant students is located in an urban area in the Southwest region of the United States. The majority of the District's population is low SES status. Presently, this district's has 33, 233 students enrolled in its school campuses. The district provides Language Services to nearly 12,613 students who represent 63 Countries. Its student population currently consists of 12.6 % African American, 0.3 % American Indian, 4.2 % Asian, 14.8 %, and 68.1 % Hispanic students (<http://www.irvingisd.net>, 2008)

This researcher started working for the school district during the same period in which the administration initially opened a program designed for recently-arrived foreign students. This alternative campus differed from the others in a number of ways: first, the program was first of its kind in the district as it was designed to provide additional support to English Language Learners who were significantly behind academically. Consequently, in order to attend this school, students had to have a minimum gap of two

years in their education. Second, this program had a low teacher-pupil ratio as the number of students enrolled in a typical school year ranged between 70 and 100. Third, the role of the school counselor at the time differed from others in that she did not have to perform typical duties such as create master schedules or develop graduation plans. Moreover, the counselor spent about 90 % of her time providing direct supports services that included (a) serving as a liaison between the parents, school officials, and community agencies when possible; (b) providing individual counseling sessions; (c) facilitating transition and curriculum based group counseling; and (d) making curriculum-based guidance presentations in the classroom.

Instrumentation

Instruments for the proposed research project consisted of six notebooks containing personal notes taken by this researcher during her role as a bilingual counselor for immigrant students between 1995 and 2001. Although the annotated information inside the notebooks related to the students' life experiences, it was not part of their educational records, accumulative folders, or counselor files. Accordingly, it did not include identifiable information such as social security numbers, school ID numbers, telephone numbers, or addresses. Notebook information was never seen by school staff or any other individuals. Since the all information was recorded between 1995 and 2001, and since all students were aged 14-18 at that time, it can safely be assumed that all students involved are no longer in high school. Federal law requires that students can only be enrolled in public schools up to age 19. An exception to this rule is that students in special education can attend school up to age 21. However, school districts' guidelines

and ethical procedures in general did not encourage referrals to special education for immigrants or foreign-born students until a minimum of two years had passed since their arrival (unless qualifying criteria are readily evident). Because the students referred to this researcher's services were immigrants and non-English speakers, the number who held special education status was almost non-existent. Counseling notes included student gender and age; ethnicity and country of origin were also known for each student. No formal measurement of SES was included, although comments about financial situation of students and their families were often noted.

In addition to the measures noted above, the researcher considered other ethical aspects of using archival data (Taube & Burkhardt, 1997). Because consent for record review was not feasible to obtain retrospectively, extra precautions were taken. For example, no one outside of the researcher ever saw or ever will see the original counseling notes from which the data are drawn. The researcher was already employed by the school that students also attended, thus no data were released or made available to outside entities. In the present write-up, all identifying data were removed in the presentation of the results. The original proposal was sent to the University's Institutional Review Board, who reviewed and accepted it.

The main purpose of taking notes during this six-year time period was to help the counselor keep track of topics and issues presented by students. For example, information presented during group sessions focused on immigration transition issues was documented by jotting down a list of main issues presented by the students during each session.

The school district in which this researcher worked with immigrant students at the time the data were collected presently has a student enrollment of approximately 33,000. It is situated in a large metropolitan area of the Southwest.

Since the school campus was a special setting designed for recently arrived foreign students, the number of students enrolled in a typical year ranged between 70 and 100. As a school counselor, one of the main roles of this researcher at the time was to provide support services to the students. Most of these services took place in the counselor's office. Because the majority of enrolled students spoke Spanish, the majority of sessions were conducted in this language. For ethical purposes, students who spoke languages other than Spanish were assessed by the counselor to ascertain their level of English language understanding before they were assigned to group sessions. Whenever possible, curriculum-based presentations on social skills and transition issues were presented in the classroom. Additionally, appropriate referrals to other agencies were made on an as-needed basis.

In general, the transition groups consisted of six to eight members and met for six to eight weeks. Group sessions lasted about 45 or 50 minutes and were semi-structured. Although specific topics were addressed in each session, other important topics usually emerged and were discussed as well. Individual sessions with students usually took place when a student was referred by a teacher, the nurse, or the principal. However, on many occasions transition and curriculum-based groups provided an effective avenue for identifying students to be seen individually. For example, a student who indicated he or she wanted to share more personal information with the counselor after being in a group

would subsequently be seen on an individual basis for a few sessions. Appropriate referrals were also made as necessary.

After each individual and group session, the counselor recorded notes about issues presented by the students. For example, a group session topic might be the students' school experiences in their countries of origin as compared to the United States. Students generally shared their own experiences and discussed similarities, patterns, and themes that emerged. The after-session notes were handwritten in 8 ½ X 11" spiral notebooks. The notebooks provided a rich source of spontaneously-generated material regarding immigrant students and their experiences in life; thus, they made a significant contribution to the current body of literature on this topic.

Procedure and Analysis Plan

Since data are archival and thus already present (i.e., there are no additional data collection procedures or instrumentation to discuss), this section will focus primarily on analysis issues. Patton reported that

Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. Interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. Data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis includes studying excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical program records; memoranda and

correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys. (2004, p. 4).

Consequently, information in this study was based on document analysis; however, it should be noted that the documents are records of both counseling interviews and direct observations of the researcher. Content analysis is the main form of data reduction and examination that was used. Mayring (2000) stated the object of qualitative content analysis could be any type of recorded communication, including transcripts of interviews, videotapes, documents, and dialogue. For this study, the six years of notebooks described in the previous section were the primary source of data for this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) reported that coding “is the heart and soul of whole-text analysis” (p. 274). They recommended that when working with coding analysis, a number of important tasks need to be completed. These tasks are associated with the following: (a) sampling information, (b) identifying themes, (c) building codebooks, (d) marking texts, (e) determining relationships among codes, and (f) testing these models against empirical data.

For this study, the first step in the analysis was reading all notebooks line by line and assigning codes to meaningful units of text. Each code created was recorded in a codebook; thus, the codebook built up as analysis proceeded. After the initial coding categories emerged, a second pass through the data was conducted with the goal of developing conceptual links between codes. The codebook was examined to determine if codes that represented overlapping meanings could be collapsed, or if codes that were

broad needed to be further subdivided. Codes were re-ordered to make better conceptual sense. When such changes were made, they were mapped out visually and/or clustered based on logical grounds. Using the revised codebook, the second pass through the data was conducted. Once the second step was complete, the construction of matrices to organize data assisted in organizing themes and recognizing similarities and differences among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The final stage of analysis involved developing a workable model that fits the data and represents the findings as a whole.

Taken together, these analytic procedures were in keeping with steps (a) through (e) of Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) coding process and also roughly coincided with the analytical steps typical of grounded theory work (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Through coding analysis, the researcher attempted to answer 16 questions. These questions were based on her previous working experience with immigrant students. Because she was able to work closely with them for long periods of time, she noticed that some of them encountered similar difficulties. In order to learn more about possible patterns, similarities, and/or differences about the issues the students presented at the time, the following 16 research questions were analyzed:

1. What was the journey like to the United States?
2. What were the major issues students brought into group sessions?
3. What were the major issues students brought into individual sessions?
4. What types of significant traumatic events were reported by students and when did those events occur?

5. Which of the issues presented were related to family members (i.e., separation from loved ones, generational conflict)?
6. Which of the situations related to the comparison between country of origin and the U.S. appear to have been the most difficult?
7. What were the most frequent issues presented in relation to previous and current schools?
8. What were the primary identifiable reasons given for coming to the United States?
9. What were the most cited expectations students expressed after arriving in the U.S. and to what degree were they fulfilled?
10. What were some of the most positive and negative statements made by students concerning their experience of their new school and country?
11. Were any positive or negative statements made related to individual and group counseling sessions?
12. What statements, if any, were made related to the counselor's bilingual language usage?
13. What patterns of student resilience are identifiable?
14. What gender differences, if any, exist in the responses to these exploratory questions?

15. What relationships between students' life experiences and their school success at this particular school can be identified?

16. For those students who did better academically, what worked well?

These questions formed the basis for some of the coding labels, and/or became variables used in presenting data. However, not all the research questions were able to be answered. This researcher used these questions as an initial framework for her study. She used her past working experience to delineate these questions, but recognized that it was possible that not all questions would necessarily be completely answered, and that emergent trends in the data might lead to a different set of final conclusions. As she used a rigorous code analysis procedure she only listed the themes that actually emerged in presenting the results. Some of these themes were very closely related to the initial research questions, but others were not.

Establishing Rigor in Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative researchers have repeatedly been called upon to substantiate the rigor of their methods to an often hostile quantitatively-oriented scientific community. Noted authorities in the field have provided clear guidelines to address this challenge. Patton (2002) suggested that "...any research strategy ultimately needs credibility to be useful" (p. 51). He proposed that for such a strategy to be credible, the researcher has to maintain a neutral stance in regards to the study in question and does not set out to manipulate data or prove a theory. The investigator should instead realize that qualitative studies will reflect the understanding of the world they are studying as data analysis develops, and

should be true to their findings as they arise. Finally, researchers should report all evidence, whether it confirms or disconfirms their findings.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that validity in qualitative work is established by: (a) description—what happened in specific situations, (b) interpretation—what does the information mean to the people involved, (c) theory formation—concepts used to explain actions and meanings, and (d) evaluation—value of actions and meanings. In terms of reliability, Miles and Huberman proposed that it can be seen in terms of quality control. That is, that procedure and the process of a study must be conducted with equitable care. They proposed that qualitative studies' reliability is interconnected with (a) clear research questions; (b) an accurate description of the researcher's role; (c) meaningful parallelism across informants, context, and times; (d) clearly specified theoretical and analytical constructs; and (e) appropriate data quality checks.

In their classic work, Lincoln and Guba (1986) noted that the quantitative standard of internal validity can be understood in qualitative work terms as "credibility." This is established by prolonged engagement with the data/participants, cross-checking information via different sources, active searching for negative cases or rival explanations, and the processing of researcher bias. Similarly, the quantitative standard of external validity is addressed by the qualitative process of "transferability," which means that data, procedures, and analysis are described in such a level of detail that the investigation itself could be accurately reproduced by another. Reliability in quantitative

methods is paralleled by "dependability" and "confirmability" in qualitative work; these involve careful tracking of analytic processes and cross-checking of resultant products.

Patton (2002) noted that rigor is established in qualitative work through credibility and trustworthiness in three domains: techniques, the researcher, and the paradigm itself. While the entire qualitative/quantitative paradigm debate is beyond the scope of this method section, credibility and trustworthiness in techniques and in the researcher are addressed in further detail in the next two sections.

Credibility and Trustworthiness in Techniques

Patton (2004) stated that "one way to increase the credibility and legitimacy of qualitative inquiry among those who place priority on traditional scientific research criteria is to emphasize those criteria that have a priority within that tradition" (p. 545). Consequently, just like the generally emphasized characteristic of objectivity, qualitative inquiry emphasizes procedures in order to minimize bias. One way to operationalize this idea is by performing triangulation. The term triangulation originated within fields related to land surveying. It was created to describe the procedure that entailed taking three measurements to determine an exact position in a landscape. Patton stated that "knowing a single landmark only locates you somewhere along a line in a direction from the landmark, whereas with two landmarks (and your own position being the third point of the triangle) you can take bearings in two directions and locate yourself at that intersection" (p. 247). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that triangulation refers to the process by which an investigator seeks to verify his/her results by demonstrating that independent measures are in agreement with those results, or at the least do not contradict

them. Miles and Hubberman differentiated between five types of triangulation in qualitative research: (a) triangulation by data source, which is data collected from different individuals, from different places, or at different times; (b) triangulation by method, which is the use of a combination of interviews, observations, and/or documents; (c) triangulation by researcher/analyst, which is the comparison of results by two researchers in the same study; (d) triangulation by theory, which is the use of different theories to explain the same set of results; and (e) triangulation by data type, which is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

In order for this study to be more trustworthy and credible, this researcher performed triangulation by data source. Specifically, information related to services that immigrant students were receiving were sought through school district websites and publications. If data on services that were in place 7-13 years ago weren't available, the researcher examined current services. Five major school district sites were examined for this purpose. These sites and publications provided information regarding the number of immigrant students in the district, along with descriptions of the kinds of programs that were or are in place to support them. If program evaluation data were available on these services (e.g., ESL education programs), it was accessed and reported. These documents were cross-examined in light of the study data to determine if services were or are meeting the needs and concerns of immigrant students as identified in the primary analyses of this investigation. Since interest in and information about immigrant needs has only grown in the last decade, it would be logical to assume that services have likewise kept pace. When examination of past and current services proved otherwise, this

was considered to be important to report. All information related to the analysis of the school websites in order to strengthen the study through a triangulation method will be discussed in the results section.

As a final consideration in establishing the rigor of this project, the researcher actively sought negative cases/disconfirming data during analysis. She carefully detailed all analytic steps and decisions with a written record or log (analytic memos; Patton, 2002).

Credibility and Trustworthiness in the Researcher

Patton (2002) suggested that while “validity in quantitative research depends on careful instrument construction to ensure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument” (p. 14). The credibility of qualitative research, consequently, depends to a great extent on the level of competence, skill, and thoroughness that characterizes the person doing the research. Credibility and trustworthiness in the researcher stem from both professional and personal qualifications. Additionally, potential researcher bias and expectations are acknowledged explicitly.

Qualifications: Life experience and training. Having come to the United States from Mexico 17 years ago, this researcher eventually realized that owning a car, speaking English, gaining an education, and becoming a legal citizen were not the only necessities involved in becoming a successful and happy resident of this country. Her first experiences in trying to obtain a job were not exactly the most pleasant ones! Most companies would not grant her an interview, as her work experience was basically from

Mexico and consequently could not be verified. This researcher could not really understand what it was exactly that they were looking for; this researcher had completed four years of college, did not have a criminal background, was bilingual, and sought an entry level position. The researcher had come from a well-educated family and wanted to prove that she was a good, hard-working employee. However, after three months of intensive searching, the only job that the researcher was able to find was as a receptionist in a warehouse at \$3.35 dollars an hour with no benefits. After working there for six months, it became possible to move to a better company that paid \$8.00 dollars an hour and provided benefits. At that time this researcher was living with some family members, which was really helpful as there was no way to have afforded other living arrangements on that salary. During this time the researcher started thinking that perhaps she needed to continue her education. After getting married, this researcher chose to go back to college to obtain her B.A. in Psychology from an accredited university in the United States. Later on, she completed a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology, followed by entrance into a doctoral program in the same area.

As a result of this professional academic training, this researcher has gained experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Her qualitative training includes a graduate level course in qualitative research, and a master's thesis that involved a qualitative study in spousal support for married college women.

Concurrent with her educational experiences, this researcher has worked with immigrant students and students from various cultures in the public school systems (three school districts) for 11 years as a bilingual counselor and student evaluation specialist,

and as a licensed specialist in school psychology. This researcher has noticed that a great majority of these students have experienced significant traumatic events in their country of origin. Most of the students in the school have had serious difficulties in adjusting to the United States, to their school setting, and in some cases to family members whom they had not seen in many years. At the same time, this researcher has also noted that school officials usually grouped immigrant students as if they all belonged in neat categories. For example, due to school district policies, all students were placed in grade levels according to their age regardless of the number of years they had previously attended school. Consequently, a 14-year-old student would be placed in 9th grade even if he/she had only attended elementary school for three years. In addition, all students were expected to follow certain school, state and federal guidelines regarding curriculum, attendance, discipline procedures, and standardized state assessments. Once again, the researcher observed that this practice took place regardless of a student's country of origin, previous number of years in school, or spoken language.

After providing support services to immigrant students and their parents for several years, it became apparent that although culture and country of origin varied, many of these families presented with similar issues which significantly impacted their lives. Moreover, regardless of demographic differences, immigrant students often gave the impression of having comparable difficulties in adjusting to their new culture and way of living. For instance, many students had come into the country illegally and during their journey had encountered serious problems related to finances, health, safety, and general well-being. Other students had experienced episodes of violence, both at home and in

their country of origin. A number of them reported having trouble adjusting to food, housing, and new family members. Numerous students stated they had never talked to anyone about their personal or traumatic experiences, other than possibly sharing them with a family member; they added that disclosures of this kind often resulted in ostracism by the family. For many of these young people, talking about their experiences with the school counselor was the first time they had ever shared this kind of information with a professional, yet they seemed to appreciate the experience.

When working with students in various schools, this researcher observed that while all immigrant students were expected to follow school regulations concerning language acquisition and academic progress, school personnel provided little or no support for students managing the consequences of the disturbing experiences they had encountered in their country of origin, or for resolving issues arising from their transition into their new country. Overall, school districts concentrated on providing a standardized program of instruction for foreign-born students that included English as a Second Language classes, bilingual classes, and a modified curriculum. On some occasions, students were sent to another facility in which smaller groups had been established. However, the main purpose of this action was to better prepare the students academically in order to transfer them back to their main high school campus. The majority of time, school policies allowed these students to be enrolled in such programs for a maximum of six months to a year.

One particular school campus provided this researcher with seven years of enriched experience regarding immigrant students. This campus was an alternative

setting specifically designed for non-English speaking immigrant students with two or more years of interruption in their education. This school implemented a modified academic curriculum, had a low teacher-student ratio, and had a limited number of enrollees (around 100). After working for several years with immigrant students on this particular campus, this researcher theorized it might be possible to improve the rate of school success and to ease student adjustment through providing support, transition, and intervention programs. Although not empirically proven, anecdotal data indicated that students were generally eager to tell their stories and share their experiences in a group. This researcher also found that on her campus, school attendance rates were near 100%, dress code violations were minimal, and behavior-related issues were always handled in house. Moreover, for the period of time that she worked there, the campus atmosphere felt generally positive and no referrals for behavior problems were made to alternative disciplinary campuses.

Nevertheless, when students left to go to their main campuses, it seemed that attendance, behavior, and dress code would all begin to deteriorate. Although anecdotal, some evidence to support these patterns was obtained via monthly counselors' meetings in which individual campus statistics and overall student population-related issues were shared. These data included attendance records; number of discipline referrals according to gender, race, grade, and age; and state assessment concerns.

Because this researcher worked in the same district for several years, she has had the opportunity during these meetings to observe that after leaving the alternative program and being in the U.S. for awhile, students' school attendance and behavior began

to lag. Moreover, the propensity for immigrant students to fail standardized tests and subsequently drop out of high school was a topic of discussion on multiple occasions during counselor meetings.

Bias of the researcher. As an immigrant student herself, this researcher can attest that the journey is a difficult one. She has encountered several obstacles related to family, health, and financial issues. Consequently, she acknowledges it is important to realize that some unperceived bias on her part may have occurred when she selected the topic of this study, and may also play a part in her analysis of the data. Nevertheless, she is committed to extending her utmost effort in taking every appropriate measure to minimize potential bias.

One step in this process has been for this researcher to acknowledge what she expected to find. These expectations are based in her prior experiences. She is predisposed to believe that Hispanic immigrant students (a) have suffered significant traumatic events, (b) have encountered difficulties in their journeys if they came to this country illegally, (c) have experienced difficulty in their adjustment and transition to this country, (d) have had their education interfered with due to these events, and (e) as a student population, are not likely to have their needs met because current services are likely to be inadequate to serve the needs of this student population.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

In this section, a brief description of the analytic process is noted as it pertains directly to the emergence of the results. Following this, the main coding categories are presented.

A total of six notebooks with personal notes written by the researcher were analyzed for content using a qualitative method approach. These notes were written in English, but all of the issues presented to the counselor at the time by the students were narrated in Spanish. All data provided at the time were translated into English for the present analysis. Each notebook had entries reflecting various students' data. Each entry represented one session at the counselor's office. One identification number was assigned to each student regardless of how many sessions the student had. Thus, if a student attended more than one session and multiple entry notes were written, the same number assigned to him/her at first continued to be used. This method facilitated the process of tracking students' issues in a chronological order and in analyzing data. Entry notes were taken for a total of 84 female (40) and male (44) students, ranging in age from 14 to 17. Group counseling notes were assigned different numbers to differentiate them from individual sessions. Each entry note was meticulously reviewed and assigned suitable codes. These codes were examined multiple times and were eventually grouped into

themes. Some of these themes map directly onto the original research questions for this study, while others surfaced during coding as new themes. This is a common occurrence in qualitative work, and one of its strengths (Patton, 2002).

Detailed coding of the data resulted in eight major themes. These are (a) journey struggles, (b) family difficulties, (c) traumatic events, (d) school challenges, (e) drug concerns, (f) gang issues, (g) finances and work, and (h) relationships. Each theme is described below with a key story and additional supporting examples. Key stories are in-depth narratives that serve as detailed case examples of each category. Supporting examples are shorter snapshots of related material from other students. There is some range in the length of both key stories and supporting examples due to the naturally occurring variation in the amount of data available from students seen multiple times versus those seen only once or twice. In order to further protect confidentiality issues, all names listed below were changed to pseudonyms. Some stories are supported by verbatim quotes from notes, while others are synthesized by the researcher depending on the quality and depth of the original notes from which the stories are derived.

The Eight Major Themes

Theme 1: Journey Struggles

Journey struggles were typically disclosed by individuals traveling by land from El Salvador or Mexico to the United States. As could be expected, all reporting cases regarding journey difficulties were made by those without legal residency or working documents. While the majority of the students did not have legal documents, not all of them gave details about their trip to the United States. Out of the 84 individuals in this

study, 12 reported having legal documents and these students reported few, if any, difficulties with their actual journey. The most frequent challenges mentioned were: length of time traveled, inability to meet basic necessities, frequent open exposure to nature's elements, cost of travel or coyotes' fees, and constant fear of being caught by immigration officers.

Key story: Juan. The following story shows in detail the harsh conditions that can be experienced by men and woman alike during their journey by land into the United States. At the time he was seen by the researcher, Juan was a 15-year-old male who was born in El Salvador.

Juan revealed that at age 5 his mother "abandoned" him and he had not seen her since. A short time later, his father came to the United States and left him under the care of relatives. Juan stayed in El Salvador and lived with his aunt for almost ten years. When he turned 15 years old his father sent for him. Juan describes part of his life prior to his trip.

Juan reported he had been taken out of school during fourth grade for getting into a serious fight with another boy. His aunt decided at this time to put him to work in the agricultural fields and help support the family. Juan suggested work was hard and the days were long, and there was not much time for recreational activities.

After ten years, Juan was told by his aunt that his father had finally sent for him. Juan reported he was excited at the time, but did not know what to expect. He had not seen his father in a long time and did not remember him well. Consequently, he knew it was going to be like going to live with a stranger.

Within a couple of days and in the early part of the morning, Juan revealed the coyote arrived looking for him. He was told to dress in layers and wear two sets of clothes as he could not bring any big packages. The journey, he was informed, was going to be arduous and involved a lot of walking and climbing. Juan only had a few minutes to say goodbye to his aunt and the family he had known so well and had lived with for so many years, knowing that it may be the last time he would see them. As he was saying goodbye Juan noticed that they were not traveling alone, as a group of strangers were waiting along with the coyote.

Juan started his journey to the United States by riding a bus to the border between Mexico and Guatemala. He was informed by the coyote during this ride that he needed to learn a few important names and historical facts from Mexico. In response to Juan's puzzled look, the coyote explained that he needed this information in case the Mexican immigration department stopped them and tried to determine their country of origin by the answers provided to a group of typical questions. It was essential that he and others in the group convinced authorities that they were Mexican citizens, as if it was discovered that they were from El Salvador, they would be sent back to their country and would not be allowed to enter Mexico.

Juan survived the first part of the journey without much difficulty, but was not prepared for the next part of the journey. After crossing the border of Guatemala, Juan and his group were directed to a bus that looked like a regular passenger bus but in reality had two hidden layers. He and his group were told to get into the fake bottom compartment and lay down next to each other. With some hesitation, Juan and the rest of

the group entered the small compartment and followed instructions. The group was told that it was of utmost importance to travel like this in order not to get caught by immigration, and that they were not going to travel like this for long. However, Juan later discovered that this part of the journey was to take three days and nights without food or water provided. He recalled people managed to relieve themselves by using any type of bottle or can available, but by the end of three days, the smell from human waste was nonetheless revolting.

When they were finally let out of the bus, the coyote took them to a small hotel and asked them not to leave the room for any reason. Juan did not really know where they were, or what to expect next, but did as he was told. During this portion of the trip, the group stayed in the hotel for two weeks and was brought food daily from someone apparently connected to the coyote.

Juan remembers people getting impatient and tempers flaring while waiting to depart again. But finally the day came when they left their hotel and continued with the next portion of their journey. This time, Juan and the group were told that they were crossing the border into the United States and they were to travel by foot. Once again, Juan was not prepared for what awaited him.

During this portion of their journey, Juan reported, he and the group had to travel day and night through the mountains; always making sure the migra (U.S. immigration representatives) were not detecting their moves. He revealed that after spending so much time walking and being constantly exposed to cactus, thorns, and bushes, people were

bleeding from their feet and/or hands. Furthermore, they had little to eat or drink at this time.

Juan declared that at one point during the final segment of their trip, people in the group started scattering and running in different directions. He recalled people yelling out "The migra are coming!" At this time, he hid behind a bush and was not discovered by the immigration representatives. Others, he remembered, were not as fortunate. By the time the group was reunited at a pre-established point, many people were crying because they had been separated from their loved ones. Juan stated that many had been seized and taken away by the migra. He had been one of the lucky ones!

After several weeks of traveled, Juan finally made it to the United States to reunite with a father he had not seen in almost ten years and a newly blended family he did not know. He had at last finished the journey he had started, what seemed to him, a long time ago. Juan was now beginning a new journey in life with a new family, a new school, a new language, and a new country.

Supporting examples. Three additional examples are included below for the theme of journey struggles. The first is from Antonio, a 15-year-old male from El Salvador indicated that the trip to United States was "very hard." This is his story:

Antonio reported that it took him about four months to get to the United States. He stated that his traveling group took a bus from El Salvador to Guatemala and then another one to cross Mexico. This part of the trip had been long, but not very bad. According to Antonio the really bad part started when they reached the border. He had to

stay in a hotel for weeks and never really understood why. Then one day, without notice, the coyote told his group they were leaving and were going to have had to make the rest of the trip by foot. Antonio described how they had to walk for days and nights through the hills and mountains. When it was time to rest, they had to sleep out in the open terrain. He stated there was never enough food or water to eat. They were constantly suffering from hunger and thirst. The whole time they were traveling, he and his group had to be on constant lookout for the migra or robbers. So, they were never really able to rest or gain their strength back. To make things worse, Antonio reported that after going through all of this suffering, his father still had to pay a total of \$5,000.00 dollars for the trip.

In a similar vein, a 16-year-old female student from El Salvador described her journey this way:

Lourdes was raised by her grandma. Her mother came to this country because they were very poor and she wanted something better for her family. Lourdes stated that her mother had to save money for a long time to pay a coyote to bring her into the United States. But, her mother was told that the coyote would be less expensive if she started her trip in Mexico. Since Lourdes had an aunt in the south of Mexico, her mother thought she could stay with her until the coyote came to get her. Lourdes recalled that she had to take a bus by herself into Mexico and be picked up by her aunt at the bus station. She had been told she was to stay at her aunt's house for a short while and then leave with the coyote. But apparently things didn't work out as planned

Lourdes stated that things started going wrong when it was discovered that her mother had been ripped off by the coyote. She had been told she needed to pay half of the money at the beginning of the trip and the other half after Lourdes arrived in the United States. But the coyote never came. Lourdes reported that he had just kept the down-payment and was never heard from again. She stated that her mother didn't have enough money to pay another coyote so she had to stay with her aunt in Mexico for awhile. According to Lourdes, at the beginning, her aunt was understanding and nice to her. But as weeks went by, she felt that she had become a burden. She reported that the situation at her aunt's house started getting tougher. Lourdes reported that her aunt started to be "mean" and told her how she needed to work and help out with the expenses. Consequently, she went to work in a tortilla factory and gave her aunt money to help out. But, things did not get better. Lourdes revealed that everything she did began to bother her aunt. She stated that her aunt told her on numerous occasions that she, Lourdes, was not her responsibility. Meanwhile, Lourdes's mother was trying to borrow money to send for her again. By this time Lourdes had left the tortilla factory and had found another job as a baby-sitter for a teacher.

Lourdes continued her story and reported that one day her aunt kicked her out of the house. She stated that her aunt put her suitcase in the street and told her not to come back. She described how she had been scared, but was helped by the teacher where she had been babysitting and ended up living at her house. Lourdes stayed with the teacher who helped her until her mother collected enough money to send for her again. The

coyote came to pick her up at last, and after picking up some other people, she started the trip north again.

Lourdes stated that at this time, her group took a bus from the south of Mexico to the border. Then they had to continue their journey over the border by foot. According to Lourdes, it was a hard trip. They had to walk all day and sleep on the ground at night. They, like others before them, were on constant lookout for the migra, hoping not to get caught. However, Lourdes stated, her group was not so lucky. One day, she heard people screaming and saw them running in different directions. She tried to run too, but, the migra caught up with her and detained her. Lourdes reported how scared she had been as she did not know what was going to happen to her. She stated that the border patrol officers had taken her and some of the others in her group to a house. This house had other teenagers who had also been caught by the migra. Lourdes revealed that she was told she couldn't leave until her mother came to get her. She had to give them her mother's address and phone number.

Her mother finally came to get her and had been told that because Lourdes was a minor, they were not going to deport her at that time. The border patrol officers also told them that she was going to have to go to court in about six months from that day and how she faced possible deportation. This was the first time Lourdes had seen her mother in years. Their meeting had been stressful and emotional and she described how much they cried during this encounter. Shortly after, Lourdes and her mother left that house and Lourdes went to live her mother. At the time this story was narrated, Lourdes's court date

had not taken place and she was very concerned about her possible deportation. However, she stated she did not want to go back to El Salvador.

Another example involves a 14 year-old female student from Mexico who reported the following story:

Elisabeth stated that it took her parents and her one month to get to the United States. She revealed that they traveled by bus from her hometown in Mexico to the border. After they arrived there, they had to stay in a small hotel. Elisabeth reported that they had to share the room with many others and this was very uncomfortable. Little did she know the trip was about to get a lot worse. When the coyote said it was okay to leave, they all left in a group and started walking. The trip was tough. They had to walk for several days with little food and water. She described how people in her group were crying and how some had even gotten sick. Elisabeth stated that she stayed by her parents the whole time. They had to sleep on the ground just with what they had on. They couldn't bring very much so they only had the clothes they were wearing with them. After walking for a few days, her legs got scratched by the bushes. Her shoes broke and her feet started bleeding. It was hard to walk. Her parents had to help her. It took them about four weeks to get here from their hometown. Her parents want to go back and get her brothers, but Elisabeth didn't know if they could do this because her brothers were even younger than she was. It was a very hard trip.

Theme 2: Family Difficulties

All participants revealed concerns regarding family members. However, among these concerns, the ones cited most often were related to: leaving loved-ones behind, repeating intergenerational patterns, adjusting to estranged parents and half-brothers/sisters, relating to new step-parents and step-siblings and/or resenting their presence and having perceptions of not being treated equally to other children in the home; living through parental separation or divorce, and parent-child conflict. Many of the difficulties presented in this theme are intertwined with topics disclosed in other themes. Nevertheless, for clarity purposes, the following examples will be presented as a segment of the family-related issues theme. The following stories represent some of the major issues disclosed by participants:

Key story: Anna. Below, I start with a detailed story depicting a 17-year-old female from Mexico. Though born in the United States, Anna returned to Mexico soon after her mother's divorce and remarriage.

According to Anna, she and her family lived in a border town that was known for being a city with very high crime. This town was also known for having maquiladora factories in which a large number of young females were hired frequently and worked under dismal conditions. Anna revealed that these young ladies worked there because they had little or no education and could not find a job any other place. Moreover, she stated, many young girls who had been known to work for these factories had been found dead or had disappeared all together throughout the years. Anna also revealed that many gangs had recently developed in this city and drug use, thefts, and shootings were not an

uncommon occurrence. Because all of these issues, Anna's mother was worried about her daughters' future and wanted something better for them. Consequently, when Anna turned 16 years old, her mother told her it would be best if she went to the United States and get a better education. Anna's sister was 13 years old at the time and her mother thought she was too young to send her away. Although Anna was scared of leaving her family, she followed her mother's advice and came to live with her aunt in the United States.

Anna started school and was enjoying meeting new friends. She got along well with her aunt and her family, and started adapting to her new environment. However, she still missed her mother and would often get homesick. Anna revealed she had always been very close to her mom, but this closeness had intensified since her parents' separation.

When Anna's parents separated, her father had stayed in the United States and she had not seen him since then. So when suddenly Anna was told she was going to see her father, she became very excited and looked forward to see him. According to Anna, the joy did not last her long.:

Anna reported that as soon as she saw her dad after not seeing him in 8 years, he started saying all these bad things about her mom. All he did during the time they were together was criticize her mother and tell her what a bad woman she was. He said many other nasty things and Anna started getting mad. She stated she had become very disappointed, so she started yelling at him and telling him what a bad father he had been and argued for the whole time.

Anna reported their encounter as a really bad one and had been very upset about it. When Anna's mother found out about what had happened, Anna reported her mom started telling her many bad things about her father, which led into an argument with her mom. According to Anna these encounters had really distressed her. She had not been able to concentrate on her schoolwork and had not been sleeping well. A few days later, she was told her father had tried to commit suicide and Anna started feeling guilty about everything she had told her father on her last meeting with him. She stated "I don't want to remember my dad with us yelling at each other and me telling him what a lousy father he had been." Anna's father recovered, but left town soon after with some relatives, so Anna was not able to see him again after that and talk to him about what had happened.

Soon after her dad's visit, Anna revealed that her mother had called her to say her 13-year-old sister had first run away and then shortly after was arrested and put in jail for dealing drugs and being in a gang. A few days later, her mother revealed her younger daughter had gotten pregnant by a 20-year-old man. Anna stated her mother was devastated, but wanted to force her sister to marry the young man, and since Anna was in disagreement, they had gotten into a heated argument. At this point, Anna reported she felt very depressed. She had gotten another phone call from her mother stating that not only had her sister suffered from a miscarriage, but that her stepfather had died over the weekend while driving a truck in an accident. Anna said her mother was absolutely devastated.

A few days after her stepfather's death, Anna noted that she and her mother had always been more like friends. She had always given her mom advice on boyfriends,

clothes, and how to do her hair. Her mom had also told her everything about her own life and even asked her for advice. She stated she really felt helpless being so far away, and unable to help her mom and her sister.

Anna decided to stay in school in United States. She reported she did not want to go back to Mexico to live, but was trying to convince her mother to come to live to United States with her sister. Anna also revealed that she also had a boyfriend and was enthusiastic about him, but after everything she had been through, she had realized she wanted to finish high school and get a better job.

Supporting examples. The next example typifies intergenerational family patterns. These patterns were often seen in individuals coming from El Salvador. The following story is about a 15-year-old female who was born in El Salvador and was raised along with her sister by their grandma.

When Maria was a few months old, she was left with her sister in the care of their maternal grandmother. Her mother had decided to take a chance and try to make a better living in the United States, as the family could not survive on the small income she received in El Salvador. Although, she had four children, Maria's mother knew she could not take them all to the United States. Consequently, she decided to bring her two oldest sons with her and leave her two daughters in the care of her mother.

Since she was little, Maria remembered receiving severe beatings by her mother's sister. She recalled "being pulled by the hair and hit with whatever was within my aunt's reach." Although her grandmother was sympathetic about these experiences and scolded

her daughter for doing this, Maria's aunt did not stop. For many years, Maria stated this was the main kind of discipline she received.

Maria reported she was told on several occasions her mother would send for her and her sister. However, she did not know if this was ever going to happen as many years had passed. When she turned 12 years old, her 14-year-old sister got pregnant by her boyfriend and gave birth to a baby girl. Her grandmother had actually raised them and continued to take care of them with money sent by her mother every month. Therefore, coming to the United States and be with her mother and brothers again was an unimaginable dream.

Shortly after her sister had her baby, Maria reported that she had been raped by an 18-year-old friend's acquaintance. She decided not to tell anyone as she was afraid they would not believe that the young man she had known had forced himself upon her. Although she had attended school for a few elementary years, she reported she really did not know much about the reproduction process. She stated that a few weeks after she got raped, she started getting nauseous, throwing up, and gaining weight. She did not know much about missing periods or pregnancy symptoms, so it was a long time before she discovered she was actually pregnant. It was actually her aunt who began to noticing these symptoms and told her she was pregnant.

Maria revealed that when people at her house learned she was expecting baby after her 13th birthday, the whole house went into turmoil. Her mother phoned from the United States and called her a slut, telling her she was a disappointment to the whole family. According to Maria, her aunt made sure everyone knew she was having an

illegitimate baby and she was forced to leave school. Maria reported that one believed her, when she told them she had been raped. She stated even her 14-year-old sister who had already given birth had turned against her.

Maria reported the birth process was not much easier. She stated when her baby was ready to come, she did not know what to expect. No one prepared her for what was about to happen. She did not know the kind of pain she was yet to endure. The baby finally came and she was told she had to take care of it. She had gotten pregnant so it was her responsibility. She did not know what to do, but she was determined to treat that baby right and love him like nobody had ever loved her before.

After seeing the baby, it turned out the young man came to believe Maria's claim that he was actually the biological father, and he recognized the baby boy as his son. He admitted she had gotten pregnant by him and decided to help her financially. According to Maria, his family had more money than hers and could afford to help her.

Maria continued to live at her grandmother's home with her baby. She allowed the baby's father to be actively involved in her life until the day she received the news from United States: she had received her visa! She was to come to the United States and live with her mother without her baby.

Maria noted that she did not know what to think or do at this time. Her mother told her she could not bring the baby with her. She loved her baby, but she also knew she could not give him a good life in El Salvador without a proper education and a good income. If she stayed, her mother would never forgive her. Her grandmother could not support her and was getting old. Maria was torn, but realized she had to leave her baby

behind in order to give him a better life in the future. She decided to leave her baby with the father and his family. Maria did not know if or when she would ever see him again.

She stated that although she knew she was young, she loved her baby. Leaving him was the most difficult thing she had ever done in her life!

When Maria arrived in the United States she was informed by her mother she was not to discuss the baby's existence with anyone. She was also told she was not going to receive any financial or moral support to bring the baby to the United States. If she wanted to have her child with her she was going to have to do it totally on her own.

Theme 3: Traumatic Events

Nearly all individuals reported suffering from some form of a traumatic event. Not surprisingly, psychological distress was often associated with these traumatic events. Throughout the stories, it can be seen that students mentioned such symptoms as having nightmares, obsessive thoughts, and an inability to concentrate and/or pay attention in class. These symptoms were mentioned in several of the themes, but play a central role in this theme. This theme is distinguished from others through the sub-codes of physical abuse, sexual abuse, family violence, other forms of violence, and complete parental abandonment. While there is some potential overlap between this category and others such as Family Difficulties, the narratives coded under trauma are of a different (higher) intensity.

Key story: Laura. This story depicts the extreme case of a student who suffered multiple traumatic events, representing a particularly vivid illustration of the theme. This story will be followed by additional supporting examples. The story was revealed

throughout several sessions by a 17-year-old female born in El Salvador. She was left in the care of her dad and paternal grandmother until her mother sent for her. Her case is presented below.

Laura reported her mother came to the United States to find better opportunities in life. Her mother was separated from her father at the time. However, she decided to leave Laura and her brother in the care of their father and grandmother. Laura was eight years old when her mother left.

Laura described her father as a mean person who used to hit her for minor incidents such as not coming to him right away when she was beckoned. She portrayed him as a drunk and a marijuana addict and a person who never showed any signs of affection. Laura stated he was constantly yelling, getting drunk, and hitting her. She stated she had to stay with her father until she turned 15 years old. Her brother had gone to the United States a couple of years earlier.

Although Laura's mother was ready to send for her daughter, she wanted her to have the traditional coming out 15-year-old birthday party (quinceañera) in El Salvador. Laura stated her mother wanted her to celebrate this special occasion with her friends and family before coming to the United States. However, Laura stated she did not want to have a party. She revealed that instead, she had been planned to kill herself on her birthday as she just wanted to die.

According to Laura, she had been planning to take her life on her 15th birthday, because she could not deal with her pain any longer. Her life for the last seven years had been a nightmare. Her mother did not have any idea what Laura's life had really been like

since she had left her daughter under her ex-husband's care. Laura revealed that a turn of events prevented her from ending what she had considered a life of shame and misery. She stated that she had planned to commit suicide on her birthday. She had gotten tired of the abuse she had never been able to never stop. She revealed she started thinking about the method she was going to use to end her life when suddenly her grandmother came into her room and told her about her father's death.

Laura continued to disclose how it all had started:

She stated that she had learned early on that her father was dealing drugs. She described how people were always coming in and out of her house with odd packages. Her father constantly looked around him as if he was afraid someone was following him. During those days, she noted she remembered him yelling at her all the time and hitting her at will, but it was not until she was 11 years old when the real horror began. One night when her father was drunk he came into her room and raped her. Laura stated she cried for help, but that only made him angrier and provoked him to hit her even more. She did not know that this night was just the beginning of a series of cruel attacks on her body. After that night, he would beat her up if she denied his sexual advances. She threatened to tell her mother who at this time was in the United States. But, he threatened her that if she told anyone, he was going to kill her. Laura believed him, so she remained silent for four long years.

When she was 14 years old, her mother asked her if she wanted a 15-year-old birthday party. She told her she did not really want one, but after some coaxing, she agreed. Laura described how, on her birthday as she was sitting on the bed with her

beautiful white dress, she began to think what steps she should follow to end her life. She stated she looked at her dress and was aware white represented the color of purity. But, she revealed that she knew she was not pure as her father had taken that away from her. Laura reported that she felt so much hatred for her father that day for doing such damage to her that she just wanted to die. While she was thinking about all of these issues, her grandmother walked into her room and told her she had some bad news. She told her that her father had been killed. They had discovered his body in a remote place.

Laura continued her story and stated that when she heard the news she started crying. She cried like she had not done in a long time. She described that she cried until there were no more tears. Laura also stated that it had not been until then that she told her grandmother everything. She had not told anyone until that day all that she had suffered under her dad's control.

Laura declared everything turned into chaos after she revealed her secret. Her mother called from the United States and was told about the abuse. Her mother and grandmother could not believe their ears. How dare she not tell them what had happened? Why did she wait all these years? Why had she remained silent?

Laura stated she soon discovered she was not ever going to be able to convince her family she had not told anyone because of her fear. Her father had threatened her with her own life, but her mother did not believe her. Consequently, Laura started to feel she had done something wrong. Her mother had insisted that it was her fault for not telling anyone about it.

Laura finished her story by reporting her mother sent for her to come to the United States a few months after she turned 15. She came by land like many others before her. When she arrived, Laura's mother enrolled her in school. She had paid thousands of dollars for her daughter's trip. She reminded Laura of all she had sacrificed in order to send for her. Laura stated that she any time her previous abuse came up during a conversation, her mother and she would argue. According to Laura, her mother continued to blame her for not stopping his sexual advances.

When Laura started school in the United States she began to have nightmares and crying episodes. She reported she could not sleep. She could not concentrate on her classes. She had nightmares about the abuse. Her mother still did not believe her. Laura stated it was very hard to stay in a school under those circumstances. However, Laura, like many other Hispanic students, was expected to pass state exams and follow through with her educational curriculum.

Supporting examples. The next example refers to a 15-year-old female named Gaby who was born in Mexico. She had recently traveled to the United States by land with her parents. She had not attended school since she was 11 years old. This young lady was enrolled in school by her parents after arriving in this country. The following story was developed from notes taken during several counseling sessions.

Gaby reported her parents had used drugs and alcohol when she was younger. She stated her mother had always been physically abusive, while her father acted as if the abuse was not taking place. Gaby's mother left when she was five years old "to go with another man," only to come back soon after that. According to Gaby, her mother had

done this a couple of times and had always come back to her father. Gaby described her mother as a “mean person who has hurt me since I was little.” She revealed her mother had hit her with many objects throughout her life. She explained for example, how on one occasion, her mother had hit her with an iron cord until she started bleeding.

In addition to the physical abuse, Gaby reported how her parents had forced her to marry at age 11 to a man much older than she. As the laws in Mexico were not readily enforced in her small town, she explained, her parents gave their consent for her marriage against her will. According to Gaby, this man had also been physically abusive, had given her a venereal disease, and had not provided medical treatment during a miscarriage. She had been forced to cook and clean for him as well as be “available for him at his will and desire.”

Gaby stated her mother had gotten tired of her early in life and Gaby never felt loved by her. She also mentioned how she did not understand her mother, because when her mother found out how abusive her husband had been she went to rescue her. It was a short time after this that her parents decided to move to the United States.

After Gaby started school in this country, she continued to have conflict with her parents. She reported they were constantly arguing with each other. She also revealed instances of physical abuse. On one occasion her mother scratched her and left marks on her arms and neck. On another occasion, Gaby’s mother assaulted her and threatened to kill her with a knife. After CPS and police intervention, Gaby was removed from her house. However, Gaby was returned to her parents a few weeks later. Gaby withdrew

from school after this incident. Her parents changed residences. Several efforts were made to locate her. Sadly, all attempts to find her proved futile.

The next example is from Miguel, a 15-year-old male who was born in Spain. He came to the United States with his mother by airplane. While they traveled to the U.S. through a tourist visa, they decided to stay once it expired.

Miguel narrated they stayed in the United States because his mother wanted to make a better living for them. Although his mother had a friend here, all their family members were back in Spain. His parents had separated a few years back, but he still felt close to his father. Miguel stated that his father had stayed in Spain. When he went to tell him about his trip to the United States, his father told him it could be the last time he would see him. Miguel's father had recently found out he had cancer and had only a few months left to live. Miguel's father died a couple of months later. Miguel was not able to go to the funeral due to financial constraints and lack of legal documentation.

Theme 4: School Challenges

School struggles were usually related to discipline, adjustment to school, conflict with peers, and pressure to leave school for financial or relationship reasons. As with other themes, some issues are intertwined with others. The following cases reflect the ones that are most closely related to school.

Key story: Juana. The following case involves a case of extreme resiliency by a 15-year-old female from Mexico. It is followed by additional relevant examples.

Juana reported she was a typical happy child living in a small town in Mexico. She got along well with her parents and siblings and attended school regularly. However,

Juana stated her whole life changed when she was eight years old. The following is her story:

Juana stated that in Mexico, the laws were not like in the United States. When she was a young child, she used to live out in the country with her family and it was typical for families to take rides on the back beds of their trucks, as they could not all fit inside the cab. Juana described how on one occasion her dad was driving the pickup truck while she and several other kids were riding on the back. Suddenly, something happened and her dad had to make a quick turn. Since, she was not secured to anything she went flying out of the back of the truck and her head hit a rock on the dirt ground. Juana said that this was the last thing she could remember and then she lost consciousness. When she woke up she could not see any more.

Juana revealed she went to see many doctors and hospitals but was told she would never see again. It was then that Juana stopped going to school. She stated that her parents felt very guilty. It had been an accident, but somehow they thought it could have been prevented. Her mother kept her at home with her and Juana learned how to do things around the house like washing dishes or sweeping, but she never went back to school. Since her father had legal papers to work in the United States and she had been born here, her parents decided to start a new life in the US a few years after the accident.

Juana reported she had only gone to school up to the third grade and she was 15 years old when her parents decided to bring her to the U.S. and enroll her in school. She quickly became acclimated and started receiving services from special education services for the visually impaired. She started getting excited about learning Braille and making

trips to the grocery store to learn how to orient herself. Her mother described her as a smart, quick-tempered, impatient, and a stubborn young woman. Juana agreed with her mother's description of her. She continued to make progress in school and learned English.

Juana stated that when she was in Mexico she stayed in her house most of the day. She helped her mother at home, but never went back to school. She never thought she would be back in school learning how to read with that system (Braille) and learning English.

A few months later Juana reported she met a young man and started to date him. She revealed that although she sort of fell in love with him, she did not trust him. Nevertheless, she continued her relationship with him and after a while she got pregnant and he moved in with her and her family. Juana noted that her family was devastated, but could not do anything about it. She was going to have a baby and she wanted to try to make it work. She stated she knew he was cheating on her because he would come home late or not at all. Sometimes his clothes would smell like perfume. Moreover, soon after he moved in with her, she noticed that she started developing some unusual symptoms and after going to one of her doctor's visits she realized that she had contracted an STD from him. Juana reported he had tried to deny it at first, but admitted it when she told him he had to get treated, just like she had, or he could get sick or die. According to Juana he seemed remorseful at first, especially after she had a miscarriage. He said he wanted to marry her. At first, her parents wanted her to do it, but somehow she felt he just wanted to marry her to get his legal papers. Juana believed that since she had been born in the

United States, he had realized he could get working documents if he married her.

However, she did not want to get married.

Juana got pregnant again and had a baby boy. She reported that her relationship with her boyfriend improved some after she had her baby. She was happy that she had had a baby. However, her joy did not last very long as she stated that her boyfriend did not change much. He started cheating on her again. Juana finally decided to kick him out. Her parents realized it would have been better for her not to marry him. She noted that they became very supportive of her and her baby boy. Her boyfriend didn't come back, but it Juana said that it did not bother her as much as she thought it would. She realized she had family who was supportive of her. Consequently, she decided go back to school. Juana believed that the best thing she could do for her baby was to provide him with an education. She decided she wanted to graduate. She was going to be the first one in her family to finish 12th grade. A couple of years later Juana was true to her word and fulfilled her dream. She graduated from high school.

Supporting examples. Two supporting examples are provided, both from boys. These school stories reveal the strong links between academic and family issues.

Randy is a 16-year-old who was born in Honduras. He had legal documents because his mother had gotten them for him after being here for several years. At first he revealed that he was just trying to adjust to school and his new blended family. He stated he wanted to get along with everyone and did not report any major issues. A few days later Randy started to get discipline referrals related to peer conflict, sexual harassment, and absenteeism issues. On one occasion he reportedly threw gang signs while he was on

the school bus. However, he denied participation in any misdoings. On another occasion, he was referred for making inappropriate comments to female peer students. He stated that he did not think he had done anything really wrong as that was what he did in his hometown. Every time he was referred, he was extremely polite, denied any troubling issues, and would apologize profusely to the parties involved. Nevertheless, he continued to have behavior-related problems, and started to have absences. A little while later Randy ran away from home and took a bottle of liquor and some jewelry with him.

Randy came back to school after his mother found him in one of his friend's houses. After this episode, Randy opened up more and narrated the following story through a few sessions. He had been raised by his grandmother, and his mother had left him at a very young age. He stated that his mother left when he was very little and he had never forgiven her for leaving them. Randy used to have an older brother. He described how his father had been a drug dealer and an alcoholic. According to Randy, his father had been very abusive. Randy reported that they lived with his grandmother for several years, but when his brother was older he was shot and killed. He was angry at his mother as she did not send for them for many years. He was also very angry at his father for everything he had done while being a drug dealer. Randy stated he did not see his father again after his brother was killed. Randy noted that his mother had left him and his brother for many years and yet she still wanted him to love her and accept her new husband. He stated that life did not work that way and that his mother could not tell him what to do. She had not raised him. Randy believed she did not have any rights to tell him

what to do. However, he stated he did not want to leave school. Consequently, he decided to go back home and live with his mother again.

Randy and his mother continued to have conflicts with each other. A few weeks later Randy was kicked out by his mother. He continued to come to school and lived with a friend. He revealed he wanted to continue with school and graduate. Eventually, he went back to live with his mother. Since she had a small store in town, he began to work for her in the afternoons after school. Randy was eventually transferred to his home campus to continue with his studies.

The following example is about a 14-year-old male student who was born in Mexico. His father, who was in the U.S., had sent for him after a few years of separation. Jose revealed that he had left his mother and siblings in Mexico. His parents were separated and his dad was living with another woman and her children. From the beginning, Jose stated his desire to work. He had always helped his family financially and did not want to stop now. He stated he had worked for several months in construction prior to enrolling in school. Jose tried to find work in the afternoons, but as he did not have legal papers, he had found this task very difficult. He started missing school to look for a job during the days. However, attendance policies were strict and his father was contacted. Jose's father stated his son wanted to work and he could not force him to come to school, even after he was informed of the legal consequences. Jose came to school and tried again. At this time he revealed that his mother was very sick in Mexico. She could not work and had other children to support. Jose stated his father was not helping her

anymore because he had become involved with someone else. His brother was leaving his father's house because he was getting married and could not help his mother very much anymore. Jose wanted to know, what was he supposed to do? He believed that he could not abandon them. Jose stayed in school for about a year. He went to his home campus, but dropped out soon after.

Theme 5: Drug Concerns

The most relevant issues that emerged in this theme were related to the consequences associated with drug and alcohol abuse. While some of these consequences are easy to conceive, the stories presented add a new twist as they involved distinctive circumstances that some immigrants encountered.

Key story: Eduardo. This student was a 16-year-old male who was born in Mexico. His parents had separated early on and he was living with his sister and mother. Eduardo came to the United States by car, but did not have legal documents. He revealed throughout several sessions that his life had not been easy. He stated he had drunk alcohol often and taken drugs frequently. Eduardo admitted to having been incarcerated in Mexico for a few months due to fights and drug use. However, when he came to the United States, he promised his mother that he was going to start anew and not create more problems. During the first few sessions, Eduardo stated he wanted to do well in school and was not referred for any discipline issues. He admitted to drinking from time to time, but denied any drug use. However as time went by, he started to arrive late or not come at all. At one point he admitted to using cocaine and marijuana on a regular basis.

He stated he had not been able to stop and needed help. Eduardo had said as much to his mother the night before. Consequently, she came to the school asking for help for her son. Nevertheless, this task did not prove easy.

Eduardo and his family did not have any insurance or legal documents to live or work in the U.S., nor did they speak English. Finding a drug and alcohol rehabilitation or counseling agency that had bilingual staff was highly problematic. The family was also unable to pay big fees, so the any type of help provided was going to have to be free or very low cost. After several attempts, an agency willing to take him was found, but someone had to bring him and help with translation. Eduardo stayed there for three days. He had severe difficulties conveying all the information in English and they simply did not have the needed bilingual staff. He returned to school and found a job in the afternoons. Eduardo attended group counseling in school with other individuals who had been involved with drugs. He used it as a support system. His family was highly supportive and monitored his activities closely. He eventually transferred to his main campus. It is unknown if he graduated.

Supporting examples. The next story involves three males who met at school and became good friends, Javier, Marvin, and Elvis. Javier and Elvis were both 17 years old and born in El Salvador. Marvin was a 16-year-old and was born in Mexico. None of the three had legal documents and all of them had traveled by land and faced some difficulties while crossing the border. They had a common bond as two of them had been raised by their grandmothers and none of them had grown up with a father. Moreover, the

three of them claimed to have been involved in gang activity in their country of origin as well as exposure to drug and alcohol use.

The three young men were known in school for having discipline problems and not showing proper respect for authority. They revealed that they had never been told what to do and that teachers had been afraid of them in their countries. These young men joined counseling groups at school. In these groups, several relevant issues related to drugs, alcohol, gangs, weapons, and violence were discussed. Although they participated actively and shared their stories, their attitude continued to be as if they were able to do what they wanted and not get caught.

A few weeks later, school staff was informed that these three young men had been arrested and were in jail for carjacking while under the influence of cocaine. Because two of them had reached the age of 18 at that point, they had been tried as adults, and were facing possible deportation. At age 16 and the youngest of the three, Marvin was put in jail, but let go under probation and put under strict parental supervision. He was required to attend school regularly and not miss or he would go back to jail.

After enrolling back in school, Marvin revealed that he, Javier, and Elvis had gone out on a Saturday night and started drinking. Then Javier suggested snorting some cocaine, which they did. Marvin described how, as the cocaine rushed through their blood, they decided it would be fun to perform a carjacking. After drinking and snorting some more, he said they felt brave enough and continued with the plot. However, Marvin reported their plan did not last very long. Shortly after, the police showed up and they were arrested. Because they had used a gun, the charges were worse. Marvin noted he

had been very lucky, because he was a minor. He stated he had learned his lesson. He was going to do everything that the legal enforcement officers had told him to do. Marvin did not want to go to jail again.

Javier and Elvis never came back to school. Their parents were devastated. Their mothers had waited several years to save enough money to send for them. Now they were in prison and were facing deportation. Marvin continued with school and did well. He learned English and was transferred to his home campus. However, he had gotten his girlfriend pregnant and while he intended to marry her, he reported this as a stressor that could potentially affect his studies.

The next example involves Alfredo, a 17-year-old male who was born in El Salvador. He had come to the U.S. by land after his mother sent for him. Alfredo was now living with his mom after many years of separation.

Alfredo reported he had been raised by his grandma. He did not know what to expect when he arrived here. He had been in a gang in El Salvador and had used some drugs, but stated that he wanted to change. According to Alfredo his mother did not make it easy on him. She drank every weekend and he believed she was an alcoholic. She lived with her boyfriend, but they fought all the time. Alfredo did not want to stay there. He wanted to move in with his sister. He described how on one occasion, his mother had kicked her boyfriend out for getting in a bar-fight. He got mad and broke all the windows in her car. He went to jail after that. Alfredo noted that something was always going on at his house. He could not sleep. He was always fighting with his mother. He never knew

how she was going to react or when she was going to drink. Alfredo wanted to find a job and move out, but he stated it was hard because he did not have any legal papers.

Alfredo continued to have conflicts with his mother. She eventually kicked him out, and he went to live with his sister. He found a part-time job and remained in school. However, he continued to resent his mother for her drinking habits and not being supportive to him.

Theme 6: Gang Issues

Gang related issues and violent events often go together. While most of the individuals in this study did not claim gang affiliation, a noticeable minority did, either at the time they were seen in counseling or previously. Gang involvement was coded in a variety of ways, including previous gang involvement, present gang involvement, victims of gang violence, or witnessing gang violence.

Key story: Oswald. Oswald was a 17-year-old male who came from El Salvador via land. His mother had saved money for a long time in order to send for her son through a coyote. However as soon as Oswald enrolled in school, he started to get in trouble for being disrespectful to teachers.

Oswald quickly started to boast about how he had been a gang leader in El Salvador. Oswald also stated this gang was internationally known and had members in Mexico and the U.S. While he denied being in a gang, he reported most of his friends were affiliated with one. Oswald usually displayed a superior attitude towards others and had a quick temper. He got involved in fights often and believed no one could touch him

because “his friends had his back.” Although Oswald enrolled in one of the counseling/transition groups, it was soon evident that he was not benefiting from it as much as others. When he talked about his experiences he usually boasted about his previous gang activities, drug use, and violent encounters. Other group members did not relate well to him. Oswald continued to state that he could do what he wanted. When his mother came in for a school related conference, Oswald’s dominance over her was evident by the way she averted her eyes when he would speak to her. He also directed her as where to sit down, when to talk, and when to be quiet. His mother quietly followed his commands as if being afraid of him.

A few months into the semester, Oswald was incarcerated. He was charged with assault with a deadly weapon. His mother revealed that because he had turned 18 years old he had to be tried as an adult. He was also transferred to another state, so his mother was not able to visit him. He never came back to school and faced deportation charges as soon as his sentence was completed.

Supporting examples. Two supporting cases are presented. Both had been involved in gangs while in their home countries, prior to U.S. immigration.

The first story is from Carlos, a 16-year-old male born in Mexico. He currently lives with his father. Carlos arrived by land and did not have legal documents. He was raised by his mother before coming to the United States. He stated that his mother had really never known what he had been like. She also was unaware of the kind of activities he had been involved in.

Carlos stated that he had been in gangs since the age of 11. When the gang members were together, they used to drink, steal, and use drugs. They usually met in an abandoned building and discussed the plans for the day. His mother never suspected anything. But as the group members grew older, Carlos stated they got braver and started drinking more and stealing more things. The police finally caught up with them and they were arrested. He was incarcerated for a few months. When they let Carlos out, his mother decided to send him to the United States. She did not want him to be involved in any more problems.

Carlos enrolled in school and generally followed school policies. He denied participation in gang activities in the U.S. However, on one instance he was caught with some pot close to his home, and while he received a ticket for possession, Carlos was able to return to school.

Joaquin provides the second supporting example for the theme of gang issues. He was a 16-year-old male from Mexico. Joaquin used to live with his mother in Mexico, but like others before him had been sent to the United States. Joaquin reported his mother decided it was better if he went to live with his brother and sister-in-law in the United States, which he did.

Joaquin stated his mother had gotten tired of the continuous trouble he had gotten into in Mexico. He reported that while in Mexico, he had belonged to a gang and been in several fights. He said that while he was in the gang he drank alcohol, skipped school, and defied authority. Joaquin denied using drugs, but stated several of his friends in the

gang had used drugs often. He reported that he wanted to change his life and did not want to get into more trouble. Joaquin stated he had seen several violent episodes such as shootings and fights, and decided that it was not going to help his future. However, he also reported he was having trouble adjusting to school as the rules were a lot stricter in the U.S. Joaquin had a few discipline related referrals while he stayed in our school program. He transferred after two years to his home campus. It is unknown if he graduated from high school or not.

Theme 7: Financial Issues

Most of the participants in this study were of low SES and had financial difficulties. Many of them have had their U.S.-based parents send for them from Mexico or El Salvador. The trip charges ranged from \$3000 to \$ 7000 at the time depending on the country of origin (Mexico was less because of the shorter distance). Some parents were still paying for the trip while others were pressuring their children to help pay for it. Many of these families were sharing housing with others and space was limited.

Key story: Pedro. This story is about a 16-year-old male born in El Salvador. At the age of two, his father decided to come to the United States to make a better life, as they were experiencing extreme poverty. His father had made arrangements for Pedro to come and meet him when he turned 15. Sadly, Pedro's father died before Pedro could join him.

Pedro reported that he did really didn't remember his father. He had been very young when his father left. When he was 15, his father sent for him and Pedro became

very excited about seeing him again. When he heard he was going to meet his father in the States, he thought this was the opportunity he had been waiting for. All of his life, he and his family had had to struggle. Pedro described how they were so poor that many times they did not have enough money to buy food or take care of basic needs. He thought that maybe he could work in the U.S. and send some money to his mother and help support the family. His brother was in the United States and helped out some, but according to Pedro it wasn't enough. His dad had remarried and had stopped sending them money.

Pedro started his trip and like many before him, crossed Mexico by land. He traveled by buses and stayed in hotels that had been selected by his leader in the group. According to Pedro, everything had gone as planned until he arrived at Mexico City. He reported that was where his problems really started. The coyote told him to stay in one place at the bus station while he made some arrangements. However, there were so many people that he lost his group and never saw them again.

Pedro realized he was all on his own. He had little money with him and knew it would not last very long. He had to find a way to survive. Pedro started by asking people where the train station was located. He had heard that many people had traveled to the United States by freight train so he decided to try that. He found the train station and started the trip again, but this time he was all alone.

Pedro stated there were many things that happened on this trip had made him a different person. He described how they were times he had to beg for money to eat. Sometimes he had to sleep on the streets. He revealed how he had gotten sick a couple of

times and had been not able to walk anymore. Many times he asked people to let him work for food. Sometimes he got was lucky, but other times he did not.

Pedro stated when he was on top of the freight trains, he saw many bad things. Once he saw a man being thrown from the train while in motion because he refused to give his belongings to the gang members who had taken command of the train.

When I asked Pedro what kept him going, he stated: "I started something. I wanted to finish it." Pedro accomplished his goal. After overcoming many obstacles, Pedro reached the U.S. and got a job in a Mexican restaurant. His boss was a kind man and helped him find his brother who had come to the United States many years before. Pedro found his brother and that was when he discovered his father had died. His brother helped him enroll in school. Pedro wanted to learn English so he could get a better job. He stayed in school for over a year and sent money to his mother every month. Although he enrolled in his main campus, Pedro eventually dropped out of school.

Supporting examples. The following two examples demonstrate the strong pull for immigrant adolescents to help their families financially, even if that means struggling in school or dropping out of school. Students were sometimes directly told they had this responsibility, while at other times they assumed it themselves.

Lydia is a 16-year-old female from Mexico. She reported her mother was not very supportive of her going to school. She disclosed that her mother wanted her to leave school and work full time. Her mother told her she had paid a lot of money for her trip here and that Lydia needed to pay for it. Lydia stated her mother did not understand that the rules here were different. She had told her she could go to court if Lydia did not go to

school. But her mother insisted, saying she needed to go to work. School personnel discussed attendance policies with Lydia's mother a few times. However, Lydia continued to have arguments with her mother over household expenses.

Another example involves Leonel, a 17-year-old male student who was born in El Salvador. At first, Leonel discussed how much resentment he had accumulated towards his father due to the physical abuse inflicted on him throughout the years. He stated his father had hit him with cords to the point of bleeding. His father had also made him kneel on bird seed for hours for punishment. Leonel revealed he could not sleep or concentrate because he was constantly thinking about his father's abuse. While he was closer to his mother, he reported resenting her for not stopping the abuse.

After working throughout these issues for some time, Leonel reported his mother had gone to El Salvador for a visit. Sadly, while she was there, a major earthquake hit the country and she was one of the victims who died. Leonel was devastated after hearing the news. He stated he felt very guilty for having been upset at his mother. He believed he had to help his father financially as there were no longer two incomes supporting the family. His father was alone now. Leonel did not mention anything related to the previous abuse again. He stayed in school for a while, but after he turned 18 he dropped out without graduating.

Theme 8: Relationships

Relationship issues usually involved situations regarding pregnancy, communication, or marriage/co-habitation. Some of the stories presented previously

overlap with this theme and are also closely related. Consequently, only a couple of examples will be presented.

Key story: Lorena. The main case example presented below will be followed by one supporting example. Lorena is a 14-year-old female who was born in Mexico. She came by land with her parents and has no legal documents. She enrolled in school soon after arriving to the United States. She stated she had never really liked school.

While in school, Lorena met a 16-year-old male who was also from Mexico. Marvin had attended school briefly, but had gotten into serious trouble for carjacking charges while under the influence of cocaine. Marvin had gone to jail for a short time, but was let out under probation for being a minor. When Lorena met him she believed that he was a nice guy who had repented his actions. He was following all his probation officer's instructions and attended school regularly. Lorena and Marvin started a relationship. Soon after, Lorena got pregnant. At this time, she was offered all the educational facilities provided to pregnant students. However, Lorena refused to continue with school. She went to live with Marvin and his family under both families' blessings. They were planning to marry soon. Lorena ended up marrying the young man and dropped out of school. She never came back.

Supporting example. Kathy is a 17-year-old female from El Salvador. She already had a baby. Kathy reported, however, her mother had not been very supportive of her so she had been living with a friend. Kathy had to work multiple hours and couldn't see the baby much. The baby's father had not been very involved in the baby's life and argued constantly with Kathy. However, he saw the baby on occasion.

In one instance, the baby's father took the child with him for a visit for the day. A short time later Kathy, received a phone call informing her of her partner's plans to take the baby to El Salvador. As a matter of fact, she was told, he was already on his way to the airport. Kathy reported that she had panicked at the time, and had rushed to the airport. Indeed, she stated, he was standing with the baby at the ticket counter. Kathy had to call the police in order to stop him from taking the baby. Apparently, according to Kathy, he had falsified a letter giving her authorization to take the baby out of the country. Allegedly, his plans were to take the baby to his mother to El Salvador and live with her there. Kathy was able to prevent her baby from leaving, but she stated this event had left her very vulnerable. She was trying to take care of her baby while going to school. She reported she could not do it all on her own anymore. Soon after, she revealed she was working things out with the baby's father and had moved in with him. Kathy eventually married him.

Group Counseling Results

Information obtained from group notes was used to support results obtained from individual counseling sessions. This information provided additional data for the eight primary themes identified previously. No new themes emerged from the group data. However, it is worth mentioning that although there was not a separate emerging theme, all data obtained from the individual and group notes provided some information regarding acculturation and assimilation issues. Some of these issues can be easily seen throughout the stories as students discussed the difficulties in their journeys and adjustment to their new school, home, and country. Other acculturation and assimilation

related issues were evident by students' discussions on the differences between their country of origin and US regarding laws, regulations, customs and schools. It was also evident by statements made by some students on their preferences of food, fashion, music, in country of origin and new country during these sessions. Overall, a preference for country of origin's food and television programs seemed to be present. In addition, it was noted that students showed some desire to dress like US teenagers and listen to their music. Group related information will be summarized briefly in the next paragraphs.

Groups were run by this researcher while she worked as a counselor. The alternative school program was the first one of its kind in the school district and was designed to help immigrant students who had two or more years' gap in their education and were not succeeding academically in their main campus. As the principal of this program had worked as a teacher for many immigrants previously and noticed they were having significant signs of emotional distress, she wanted to hire a counselor who would work individually with the students and help them with personal as well as academic related issues. This alternative program was designed to have a low teacher student ratio and a sheltered curriculum. Consequently, it did not hold any more than a 100 students at the time. For all these reasons, traditional school counselor work responsibilities were not required at the time (e.g., master scheduling, course selection, graduation planning, etc.)

The counselor had enough freedom to delineate a program that included curriculum based class presentations, individual counseling, group counseling, and conflict mediation in a manner that followed ethical, legal, and school district guidelines. Consequently, she was the one who decided with the principal's approval how to run the

groups. Typically the groups were closed and had 6 to 8 members in them. They were homogenous in nature and were composed of either females or males. On many occasions, groups were based on specific issues disclosed by various students while in individual counseling sessions. For example, if there were a significant number of students who reported drug/alcohol abuse a group would be formed with these students as members. However, this researcher tried to the best of her ability to have each student in at least one group to address transitional related issues. All groups were run weekly and lasted approximately 8-10 weeks.

Over the course of the six years during which notes were accessed for this study, there were 15 groups run for females and 11 groups conducted for males. The groups included such topics as transition issues, family conflicts, physical and/or sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, gang involvement, relationships and communication issues, gang related issues, and non-family trauma.

Results for Triangulation Analysis

As per the initial proposal, regional school district websites were examined to determine what types of policies and programs were in place for immigrant students. These sites were examined in detail to determine what current services were available. A total of 5 of the largest school districts websites located in a major metropolitan area in the southwest part of the United States were searched and examined for content. The main purpose of these searches was to obtain specific information about available services to immigrant students and/or English Language Learners. The five sites examined were:

1. <http://www.dallasisd.org/>
2. <http://www.fwisd.org/Pages/Default.aspx>
3. <http://www.aisd.net/>
4. <http://www.mansfieldisd.org/index.htm>
5. <http://www.irvingisd.net/>

It was in one of the above school districts that this researcher worked at the time. However, in order to further maintain confidentiality for the participants in the study the name will not be disclosed. After studying the content of the school websites, this researcher found that all of the sites had information about programs regarding English as a Second Language Curricula and Bilingual Education. All of the websites listed mission statements and goal objectives for the students in these particular programs. All of the sites had content noting that their districts were in compliance with laws related to English Language Learners education, with reference to the No Child Left Behind Act (U-46 District, 2008). However, it was notable that this researcher did not find any information about services specifically for immigrant adolescents related to adjustment, transition difficulties, or psychological issues.

Procedures for foreign student enrollment were also available on all websites. These procedures were typically cited in the general web link designed for parents. It usually listed steps to follow for student enrollment. Information about how to enroll a child whose first language was not English was also posted. Four out of the five websites listed a newcomer center designed for newly arrived students'. However, most of its description was related to curriculum, academic, and language acquisition issues. None of

the websites provided additional information regarding specific services for immigrant students. That is, this researcher did not find and links that offered special programs for immigrant students in terms of counseling, transition issues, or related concerns. School websites had links to counseling and testing services, but no services specific to immigrant students were evident. This researcher also discovered that while the program designed for at risk immigrant students was still in place, no specific information of the services she had implemented and provided in prior years were listed.

Finally, it is worth noting that three out of the five websites offered information in Spanish. However, this information did not always match the notations in English. That is, the information provided in English was always much more detailed than that presented in Spanish. It was also noted that one had to know precisely what to look for in relation to English Language Learners, Bilingual Education, or immigrant students. The links were not always clear in its content and it became complicated to follow one after the other in order to obtain the necessary information. This became even more evident when the links were presented in Spanish.

Summary

As can be seen, all the stories provided give a vivid picture of the circumstances to which immigrant students were exposed. Many of them had extreme difficulties in addition to their academic curriculum. Issues presented by students were often intertwined. For example, students may have mentioned issues related to school adjustment on the first session. However, after establishing trust and rapport with the counselor, during later sessions much more serious issues were discussed. These issues

included, for example, physical abuse, sexual abuse, drug abuse, nightmares, pregnancies, depression, and somatic symptoms. Consequently, these problems revealed how many students were encountering multiple stressors that did not fit neatly into one theme.

In addition, this researcher saw firsthand the difficulty in obtaining help sources to address some of these needs. Although the school was located in a city with high numbers of Hispanic individuals, very few mental health agencies had bilingual professionals. The few agencies that did have them had such high demand and so few resources that many times they did not have openings for several weeks.

Another important observation was the fact that services that required specialized training were hardly available or non-existent for those without insurance. If services were available for them, they likely did not have bilingual providers. Consequently, many of the students did not have access to other mental health providers when seriously needed (i.e. drug rehabilitation), which in turn raised their level of frustration. On multiple occasions, this researcher was not able to provide appropriate referrals even after a thorough inspection of what was available. She remembers countless times researching available resources only to discover they were limited or non-existent.

To put these results in perspective, the final chapter of this dissertation includes a discussion of the implications of these results for practice and future research, as well as noting how the present work fits in with previous literature. In particular, some of the interventions provided by this researcher while working as both an individual and a group

counselor will be introduced as they relate to recommendations from prior research as well as current school programs.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In the following discussion, the results obtained in this study will be summarized and then integrated with literature previously reviewed. Implications for practice and for future research will be covered. The limitations of the study will be noted, researcher bias revisited, and concluding comments will pull together final thoughts on the work.

Summary of Major Findings

The content of personal notes from six notebooks taken between 1995 and 2001 while working as counselor for immigrant students was analyzed. This researcher found eight primary themes. These themes spoke to the overlapping difficulties that Latino/a immigrant children face in coming to the U.S. and adjusting to the schools in this country. These themes—journey struggles, family difficulties, traumatic events, school challenges, drug concerns, gang issues, finances and work issues, and relationships—present an interlocking picture of challenges for these young people. While there were numerous variations on the core story, a typical narrative involved leaving one's homeland, often spurred on by poverty or the trauma of war, with families split apart and youth making an illegal, physically dangerous, and emotionally exhausting trip to the U.S. Once here, adjustment to new or estranged families and conflict between parents and children was commonplace. Already struggling with second language issues and the stresses from the immigration and family adjustment process, school often became an

additional source of problems. For many, issues of dire financial need, familial abuse, substance abuse, gang involvement, sexual trauma, or pregnancy were either brought along from country of origin or arose in the context of the multiple pressures exerted in the U.S.

The students were receiving counseling services because of their psychological distress; still, there were also important examples of resilience and success that emerged from the data. Many students overcame numerous obstacles and reached goals that had previously been considered unimaginable.

Lastly, in addition to the individual and group counseling data, five large school district websites were analyzed for content related to services offered to English Language Learners and immigrant students. All of the websites listed services related to curricula or legal policies for English as Second Language students. However, it was notable that this researcher did not find any information about services specifically for immigrant adolescents related to adjustment, transition difficulties, or psychological issues.

The integration of these results with previous work in the field will be discussed next. Following that, implications for practice and further research are noted.

Integration with Previous Literature

As was documented earlier, waves of Latino/a immigration have permanently changed the landscape of the U.S. and its schools (Camarota, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 2000; Terrazas et al., 2007; Waddell, 1998). As a nation, we struggle to determine effective immigration policies, but these are moving targets (Fonner, 1998;

Sierra et al., 2000). Meanwhile, our schools work to handle the large influx of second language learners (Camarota; Digest of Education Statistics, 2006; EPE Research Center, 2004; Terrazas et al.).

Immigration Strategies

While a specific theme for immigration strategies did not emerge in this study, overall results confirmed what others have found. For example, in a study regarding immigration factors, Castex (1997) reported immigrants could come to the United States because of pull factors or push factors. Pull factors included financial stability, political freedom, and religious freedom. They could also be more specific as better employment, educational benefits, and medical services found in the United States. Push factors on the other hand are those that push individuals out of their country and included wars, famine, disease, and/or political upheaval.

The results from this study also found that the majority of the students who had been separated from their families had been pulled into this country by their parents to improve their education, provide better housing, increase income, and in addition to reunite with them. By the same token, some of these parents had been previously pushed out of their country due to political upheaval or wars (e.g. civil war in El Salvador).

Stressors for Latino/a Immigrant Adolescents

Results obtained from this study reinforce findings in other studies about immigrant stressors in general. A few of the struggles for immigrant families that have been documented include: access and availability to health services (Carrasquillo et al., 2000; Iveris & Pokras, 2006; Martinez & Carter-Pokras, 2006; Moua, 2002; Weinick et

al., 2004), acculturative stress (Aronson, 2002; Esquivel, 1997; Weitzman, 1997), financial difficulties (Haskins et al., 2004; Padilla, 2000; Shields & Behrman, 2004), family conflicts (Loue & Faust, 1998; Moua), and psychological distress (Gavagan, 1998; Harker & Mingliang, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 2002). More recent research shows that the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City also had a tangible impact on the immigrant experience (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). All of these stressors were noted by adolescents in this study at some level.

Health services related stressors. Moua (2002) suggested that access to health services was difficult for immigrants to obtain. Carrasquillo et al. (2000) reported 50% of non-citizen full-time workers had health insurance compared to 81% of native full-time workers. The study found that legal status appeared to play a significant role in the high number of uninsured immigrants. Martinez and Carter-Pokras (2006) revealed that in comparison to non-Latino Whites, Hispanics received lower quality of care and had less access to several medical services. Some of the problems encountered by Hispanics included lack of written information in Spanish, absence of trained personnel who spoke Spanish, and lack of insurance. Weinick et al. (2004) reviewed data on the utilization of health services by self-identified English-speaking and Spanish-speaking Hispanic patients. As a group, Hispanics were less likely to use any of the four healthcare services than were non-Hispanic white respondents. However, there were differences between the subgroups studied. For example, respondents whose interviews were conducted in Spanish were less likely to have an emergency department visits and inpatient hospital

admissions, whereas those who were interviewed in English showed no difference when compared to the non-Hispanic White population.

In concurrence with the above findings, the results from this study showed that immigrant students had serious difficulties accessing health care. As an example, one of the stories presented in the result section described the case of a student who had a drug abuse problem. After some counseling, he admitted as to having a serious difficulty with frequent drug use and had not been able to stop on his own. At this time, he requested some help. However, after much effort the school counselor realized how challenging it was to find any counselor or rehabilitation center that could offer him services. Most of the agencies were not able to accept him due to lack of insurance or bilingual personnel. When an agency finally accepted him, he had to be released soon after due to lack of insurance and bilingual services. While a theme did not emerge from the analyzed data, a significant percentage of the students indicated during individual or group counseling difficulties in accessing health services. Many students reported how they or their parents struggled to find doctors or clinics with bilingual personnel or affordable medical services.

Acculturative stress. Immigrants often suffer from stress related to acculturation issues. Aronson (2002) suggested that recent immigrants faced constant culture shock that resulted in acculturative stress. Factors contributing to this stress included cultural differences; prejudice and discrimination; anxiety due to daily interactions with people outside their ethnic group; confusing interactions with institutions such as schools, courts and hospitals; constant fear of deportation for undocumented immigrants; the need to

learn a new language; and for those who are refugees, coping with the after effects of trauma. Weitzman (1997) described how immigrant children and their families undergo a unique set of stressors that included discrepancies between professional, social, and economic status in the countries of origin and the United States, as well as ongoing grief, depression, or anxiety resulting from moving to a new culture and community.

Weitzman suggested that immigrant children could also have difficulty adjusting to school due to lack of English language skills, being behind in school, and separation from loved ones.

The present study revealed that all students had some difficulties adjusting to school rules and policies as well as to the community in general. Some of the specific issues presented in school included discipline referrals for talking back to teachers, inappropriate behavior, sexual harassment, peer conflict, and school truancy. When confronted, many of these students stated they were not used to the new school policies or rules. They also reported that in their country of origin rules and laws were usually more lax.

Financial stressors. New Hispanic immigrants often suffer from severe economic stress. Padilla (2000) found that overall Mexican immigrants obtained much lower earnings than Mexican American natives. Moreover, the salary gap did not disappear, even after many years of residence for the Mexican immigrants. Haskins et al. (2004) reported that even when both parents in immigrant families worked, they still were about 50% more likely than natives to earn less than minimum wage.

One of the emergent themes in this study was related to financial stress and work difficulties. This was evident by their statements on having to share their homes with other families and living under crowded conditions. In addition, some of the students reported that they had to help their parents pay for the traveling expenses and coyote charges. These trips cost between \$3000 and \$7000 dollars at the time depending on their point of departure. Moreover, some parents had to pay additional money due to unexpected expenses or being cheated by coyotes. Some of the challenges presented by students and their families was their inability to find suitable or higher paying employment due to lack of legal documents. Many students reported feeling a strong sense of obligation to work and help out their families financially, often to the point that the need to earn money took precedence over education, and students dropped out.

Family conflicts. Lee and Liu (2001) reported that for ethnic minority children, intergenerational family conflict was often exacerbated by cultural differences in lifestyles and values between children and parents. Lee and Liu suggested when parents expected their children to abide by their own value system, intergenerational family strife was likely to rise. These cultural differences tend to accentuate typical intergenerational conflict during adolescence and young adulthood, leading to even greater conflict and misunderstanding. Baptiste (1993) identified several transitional problems commonly associated with conflict between immigrant parents and their adolescent children. These problems included changes in familial and generational boundaries, lessening of parental authority over children, loss of authority to select children's mates, fear of losing the children to the new culture, un-preparedness for change, and discrepancy between the

expectations and the realities of immigration. In a study on cross-cultural patterns of 54 at-risk students from Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean, Kennedy (2000), reported that students who had been separated from their mothers for a period of time often showed resentment and had traumatic memories. The students demonstrated difficulty adjusting to their families again and in some cases to the new siblings or stepparents.

Results from this study concurred with what was found in the literature. Intergenerational conflicts often arose between adolescents and their parents when they had been separated for a significant amount of time. Moreover, many times these students resented their parents for having them left behind in the care of others. Several students complained about their parents' authoritative style in ordering them what to do. Individuals stated they did not believe they should obey their parents as they had not seen them in several years and had not been the ones who had raised them. Issues of split family loyalty were thus evident, as students felt connected to care-givers who were often non-parental relatives, and then torn when reunited with their biological parents.

Another conflict disclosed by participants was about their difficulties in adjusting to new or blended families. That is, students were having a difficult time relating to step-parents, step-siblings, or half-brothers/sisters. A few of them resented their stepmother or stepfather. Some of them perceived that they were not been treated equally to the other offspring in the house.

Psychological distress. As could be expected, psychological distress in immigrants is almost a given. Gavagan (1998) reported that Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder was one of the more serious problems medical doctors encountered in treating immigrants. Moreover, he implied that psychological strain could cause such symptoms as headaches, poor concentration, nightmares, insomnia, and memory loss, depression, fatigue, and anxiety. García and Marota (1997) theorized that the immigrant experience was greatly affected by an individual's legal status at the time of arrival. Because illegal immigrants always have to watch out for the authorities who can deport them, the pressure of having to remain invisible is a significant additional stressor.

Results in this study suggested that immigrant adolescents experienced psychological distress over several of the issues already presented. Some students presented with symptoms that included concentration problems, nightmares, depression, insomnia, and obsessive thoughts. These symptoms were usually seen in various themes and overlapped with each other. Family conflicts, traumatic events, journey struggles, and financial distress were some of the themes in which psychological distress symptoms were most often found.

Stressors after the terroristic attacks on September 11, 2001. After the September 11th attacks in 2001, immigrants stumbled upon an additional set of stressors. A recent study indicated that over 50% of Hispanics surveyed saw an increase in discrimination after the debates in immigration policies occurring after September 11 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Likewise, Hispanic adults in the U.S. experienced additional fears of being deported (Suro & Escobar, 2006). Research conducted by the Rights Working Group (2008), for example, showed that for every two immigrants apprehended, one child was

left behind. It would not be hard to imagine the devastating effects this event would have on children.

Because the data were collected prior to 2001, results from this research are not applicable to the additional stressors discussed in the literature. However, findings in this study showed significant amounts of distress displayed by the students in multiple areas. It would not be hard to envision that in addition to the experienced stressors, immigrants could suffer from additional distress resulting from immigration law changes and an increase in border security that came into place after the events on September 11.

Acculturation and Assimilation for Hispanic Immigrant Adolescents

Acculturation. Different models of acculturation have been developed to explain the immigrant adjustment process. Although variation exists, these models can still be classified into three major categories.

First, Padilla (1987) described a linear model of acculturation. This model involved the contact, accommodation, and assimilation that immigrants go through as they acculturate to the new country. Secondly, Keffe and Padilla (1987) explained acculturation in terms of a two-culture matrix. In this model, the immigrant's culture was seen as one axis and the new culture as a cross-cutting second axis. This model allowed for individual levels of acceptance and proficiency in both cultures, and assumed that a person's acculturation can fit into one of four categories: marginal, acculturated, bi-cultural, or un-accultured. Third, Clark and Hofsess (1998) discussed acculturation in terms of multiple dimensions. Since this model was multidimensional, some new traits from the new culture may be incorporated into an immigrant's life while at the same time

maintaining some traits from his/her own culture. Consequently, a bicultural person will have a mix of his/her own culture's traits and new culture's traits that he/she has acquired over time.

This researcher found that participants' acculturation process was most in line with the multidimensional model. After analyzing data, it was discovered that neither students nor parents fit into just a single level of acculturation. This was readily evident by disclosures of participants during counseling sessions. As a simple example, many individuals reported their preference for their country of origin's food and T.V. shows, while at the same time indicated a better liking for this country's fashion and music. It could be said that since all participants were recent arrivals, the whole process of acculturation could not yet be fully determined. However, student disclosures also involved stories related to their parents, many of whom had been here for several years. These disclosures confirmed the acculturation process was multidimensional.

Assimilation. Conceptually closed related to acculturation, assimilation processes have also been detailed in the literature. Clark and Hofsess (1998) described one model as unilateral in which individuals' assimilation involved a full incorporation and integration from one cultural system into another. Another model described by these authors was homogenous assimilation. In this model the majority and minority cultures blended equally. Atkinson et al. (1993), described assimilation as a part of the spectrum of acculturation model. They suggested that assimilation in individuals depended on number of years in the U.S., occupational and educational status, language preference, and frequency of relocation to the original country.

Results from this research suggest that assimilation cannot really be described in linear terms. Just like as in acculturation, student and parent information (revealed through the students) suggested a multidimensional process of assimilation. However, given that occupational and educational status of students in this study tended to be low, that the preferred language for most students was still Spanish, and that none of the students in the study were able to relocate back to their country of origin, levels of assimilation for these students could generally be assumed to be low.

Acculturation and assimilation in immigrant youth. The stages of acculturation have not been well-defined when it comes to immigrant children. For the most part, acculturation and its stages have been explained in terms of adult and family experiences. However, Esquivel (1997), Belitz and Valdez (1997), and Lee and Liu (2001) suggested that acculturation for both adults and children may initially involve adjustment to a new climate, a new geographic region and its environment. For the most part, children enroll in schools as soon as it is viable. While in school, they are exposed to a new language, food, dress fashions, and new social behaviors. During this time immigrant children also interact with members of the new country and learn more about its culture. Adults on the other hand, do not usually have these opportunities. As a result, parents may often acculturate at slower rate than their children. Because of this dynamic, the roles between parents and their children can become reversed for some immigrant families. That is, children who begin to take on the role of translator or mediator with school personnel and other community members. This role reversal in itself could create added stressors as it contributes to a shift in the hierarchy of power. Consequently, conflicts could easily rise

from the discrepancies between the generations. These differences can exacerbate common developmental tensions between parents and their children during adolescence. Results from this study suggest that students showed signs of the beginning process of acculturation. Students often discussed and compared the differences between their country of origin and this country's United States' music, food, fashion, technology, social expectations, etc. In addition, it was noted many of them started adopting idioms and phrases typically used by adolescents in the United States.

Summary

This research supported findings from various studies related to immigrant stressors, family conflict, psychological distress, and intergenerational problems. Results also adhered to the multidimensional concepts of acculturation and assimilation processes. However, this study provided enriched and detailed information from the students' perspective and not their parents regarding their life experiences, traumatic events, school and community adjustment, and other themes already mentioned. It is also worth noting that this researcher discovered elements of resiliency in students who experienced extreme difficulties and obstacles throughout their life. Implications of these results for practice, policy, and research will be discussed next.

Implications for Practice and Policy/Advocacy

While previous literature (Esquivel 1997; Kataoka et al., 2003; Kennedy, 2000; Schwarzbaum 2004) has documented some interventions for Hispanic immigrant youth, the current results indicate that additional services other than curriculum and English as a Second Language programs are needed. Students demonstrated a significant degree of

distress in several areas that if not addressed could contribute to more academic difficulties as well as longer-term chronic problems in vocational, personal, and interpersonal adjustment. Changes and expansion of present programs are clearly needed. A description of previous interventions and recommendations extrapolated from the present research are listed below.

Individual and Group Counseling

After conducting an in-depth study of accumulative trauma for immigrant students, Kennedy (2000) suggested several interventions to facilitate immigrant students' transition. While cautioning that these suggestions were applicable specifically to her findings in her study with 76 immigrant students, she included the following: (a) Cultivation of organizational relationships, defined as a collaborative effort between school settings and other agencies to help overcome the financial, legal, academic, and social challenges related to achieving a higher education. The services that were suggested included counseling through community mental health services, accessing job internships, and efforts of their school and local colleges or universities; (b) Provision and access to information, including recommendations to teachers and counselors who worked with at-risk immigrant students to acquire information specific to the needs and experiences of these youth so they could better understand and deal with them; (c) Cultivation of human relationships, which consisted of maintenance and development of good quality relationships between students and teachers as well as children and their parents; and (d) Provide multiple and flexible pathways into, through, and beyond school. This intervention described the critical role of alternative programming at schools, in

which English as a Second Language is taught. She stated the benefits that immigrant students obtain by being enrolled in alternative ESL program include individualized attention and lower students-teacher ratios.

Esquivel (1997) also suggested that group intervention may be a natural therapeutic path to take, since many cultures place an emphasis on families, groups, and a collective environment. She theorized that group interventions can generally lead to cohesiveness, cooperation, and interdependence, and will highly reflect the group and extended family practices of some cultures. She suggested the group approach be conducted using a multicultural perspective. According to Esquivel, main purpose of multicultural group interventions is to help in a culturally appropriate manner, with the stressors and resulting adjustment problems experienced.

Counseling Services in the Study's Schools and Other School Settings

This researcher did not find many studies that discussed specific counseling services in schools. However, one of the studies in the literature was conducted by Kataoka et al. (2003). The authors conducted a pilot study to test a school mental health program targeting Latino immigrant students who had suffered some form of community violence. They provided an eight-session course of cognitive-behavioral group therapy in Spanish, facilitated by bicultural/bilingual school social workers. This therapy was manual-based, and the teachers and parents of participating students were eligible to receive psycho-educational and support services. The quasi-experimental study showed some decline in participants' trauma-related mental health issues and offered concrete support for implementing and evaluating the program in school settings.

While working as a school counselor in an alternative school setting for immigrant students, this researcher performed many individual and group therapy functions, as well as doing psycho-educational work. This included giving curriculum-based classroom presentations on important topics related to alcohol and drug consumption, family violence, gangs, and social skills; offering individual counseling to self-referred students as well as students who had been referred by teachers and the principal; and providing group counseling sessions on an on-going basis. These groups included topics similar to the ones presented in classrooms, but permitted much more interaction between students in a confidential setting. Other group topics included transition related issues such as past and present school experiences and comparisons in belief systems, culture, legal system, and social expectations between country of origin and United States.

Recommended Counseling and Intervention Services

In addition to the aforementioned interventions, other authors have proposed further services. These will be briefly described below.

Gonzalves (1992) conducted a study on refugees and suggested that they go through different stages as they come into contact with the United States. Each one of these stages is characterized by different behaviors, symptoms, and interventions. Although clear-cut behaviors and interventions were not expected, he suggested that in the early stages refugees could benefit from primary prevention strategies such as familiarizing them with their surroundings and to reducing psychological confusion, whereas in middle stages refugees could benefit from such basic interventions as English

as a Second Language (ESL) lessons and job-training classes. During these stages he also recommended exposure to other refugees who have adjusted to the new culture and to others who are living in the new country to help offset the sadness and loss that are many times associated with migration. In later stages (three to five years after arrival), refugees could benefit from individual therapy to help battle feelings of anxiety or loss that go along with the changes in refugees' lives. He also suggested that family therapy could become useful in order to help them avoid becoming stuck in rigid marital and family expectations. Finally, Gonzalves suggested that during the final stages, therapists could function as supportive professionals as refugees present with new needs.

In a study on the perspectives of family therapists working with Latino families, Taylor, Gambourg, Rivera, and Laureano (2006) suggested the following: (a) use of family therapy; (b) assess folk beliefs and use of native healing practices; (c) act as an advocate for the family with other social service agencies, schools, etc.; (d) pay close attention to the immigrant experience; (e) provide counseling professional bilingual personnel (Spanish); (f) respect family hierarchies according to the clients' cultural views; (g) do separate interviews with the different family subsystems; (h) do not force changes in family relationships; (i) give concrete suggestions; and (j) engage clients from the beginning with warmth and personalismo.

Schwarzbaum (2004) reviewed the literature on the history of explanations of Latino dropout from counseling services, barriers to services, and effective interventions. The author suggested that it was the relationship between the client, the counselor, and the organization providing services that affects dropout. She stressed the need to consider

multiple layers of barriers: language, SES, level of acculturation, education, geographic origin, etc. Therapists and organizations need to be flexible in techniques and interventions, be accessible, have bilingual-bicultural staff, and have multicultural competency in order to increase service utilization and reduce dropout in the Latino community. Service providers may try using several different models and strategies, including the agency as a multipurpose center, group counseling, cuento therapy (a narrative modeling technique), family counseling, and/or pre-therapy orientation and psycho-education.

While focusing on pediatricians rather than psychologists, Weitzman et al.'s (1997) recommendations could be effectively extrapolated to counseling interventions and to the training of all types of mental health professionals. Some of their more relevant ideas included giving health professionals a better understanding of immigrant children and their families' culture, belief systems, values, and attitudes; provision of education to parents on health issues in a way that complements, rather than replaces, existing beliefs and practices; acceptance and respect of differences in attitudes and approaches to child-rearing while at the same time maintaining an awareness of possible traditional practices that are clearly harmful to children and reportable under federal laws; awareness of the special health problems for which immigrant children may be at risk, including poor mental health; awareness of the particular stressors that immigrant children and their families face; and acquisition by health service providers of culturally and linguistically appropriately services that are attuned with public health services and schools.

In discussing supervision practices for bilingual counselors and given the growth in both immigrant/bilingual populations and bilingual counselors, Fuertes (2004) stressed the need for “counseling training programs that attend to issues of culture and language as part of their curriculum training and supervision” (p. 84). Fuertes suggested that professionals follow the guidelines provided by the American Psychological Association (APA) for providers working with culturally and linguistically diverse clients (APA, 2008).

The author stated that regarding linguistically diverse clients, the guidelines clearly indicated that the client should be offered services in the language of preference and when not possible, the counselor should refer the client to a professional who spoke the client’s language. Fuertes (2004) suggested that a properly trained translator with the same cultural background as the client would be an appropriate way to work with a client who spoke a different language than the provider. However, APA’s guidelines also cautioned against the use of interpreters who had dual relationships with the client such as family members or coworkers. Bilingual clients were hypothesized to benefit from having a provider who was also proficient in the same languages so the client could discuss “experiences in the language in which they occurred” (p. 88) as this may be “more psychologically beneficial to clients” (p. 88).

The author emphasized that language fluency doesn’t necessarily equal cultural fluency. For example, a person who spoke English as a first language may learn Spanish but would not necessarily know the customs and cultures of the various Latin countries. Also, an immigrant to the U.S. may know English fluently but “choose to limit their level

of acculturation to American culture” (Fuentes, 2004, p. 89). Fuentes indicated this last consideration was an important one not only for therapists working with bilingual or immigrant clients but also for supervisors with supervisees.

After reviewing the literature and conducting the study, this researcher proposes that immigrant adolescents would benefit either directly or indirectly from the following: (a) increased incentives in order to attract more bilingual counselors. These incentives may be provided through stipends or the forgiveness of school loans after working in an agency or school setting; (b) provide detailed information on programs that can adequately teach Spanish to future mental health professionals. This information could include data about immersion programs in other countries that could also function as an incentive; (c) provide English as a Second Language classes, basic computer training, community orientation sessions, legal, health, and mental health referral information to parents in schools. School is the first formal engagement with mainstream culture for immigrant children, and while this is not the same case for parents, schools would be an excellent starting point for adults to become more proficient and knowledgeable about the English language and the community. These services in turn could help reduce student absences as children would not have to miss school in order to help parents translate during doctor’s appointments or other important engagements; (d) provide more APA-approved internship programs in schools with high numbers of English Language Learners. If schools obtained more help from professional mental health professionals without surpassing budget expenses, students as well as teachers could benefit. With proper interventions, discipline referrals, low academic performance, somatic symptoms,

etc, could be reduced; (e) design specific transition programs for immigrant students and recent arrivals. These programs could be implemented through didactic presentations, transition group counseling, individual counseling, and basic community orientations. Ideally, these interventions should be provided in the students' language of preference; (f) information about these programs should be available in Spanish on district websites, with clear and easily accessible links to all relevant services; and (g) given the great number of pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, especially among the youth, school officials should consider providing accurate and comprehensive health and sex education to students. By offering these program interventions, school and community adjustment difficulties could be significantly reduced.

Policy and Advocacy Recommendations

Fix and Capps (2005) suggested that the most noticeable and controversial of recent education reforms has been the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The reforms not only require schools to identify and serve Limited English Proficient (LEP) and immigrant students, but hold teachers and schools strictly responsible for ensuring these sheltered populations make progress in learning English as well as in their reading, math, and science skills. The authors summarized the NCLB act as one that:

1. Compels schools to report scores on statewide standardized tests separately for LEP students as well as those of low-income, minority, and disabled students;

2. Allows students in schools that do not meet state standards in terms of student test performance for more than two years to transfer or receive additional instructional services;
3. Forces schools to close or restructure after several years of poor performance;
4. Requires that every classroom — including those with LEP students — have a "highly qualified" (i.e., full certified and properly educated) teacher; and
5. Requires schools to notify parents — in the languages they speak — of their children's academic performance, their schools' progress toward meeting NCLB goals, and, in the case of LEP students, the type of language instruction they are receiving (p. 2).

Fix and Capps (2005) stated,

...one pattern that has emerged at this relatively early stage in the implementing of NCLB's accountability standards is that these high-LEP schools are disproportionately failing to meet state standards and are being subjected to sanctions. Recent Urban Institute research has examined these high-LEP schools and found that they are more heavily urban and larger than schools with few or no LEP students, and their principals and teaching staffs are less experienced. (p. 5)

They further reported,

It is hard to write off these students' poor academic performance—or those of students nationwide—to simple demographic change. As we have shown, over half of LEP secondary school students were born in the United States and have grown up in U.S. schools. Their lack of progress suggests they have not been well

served by U.S. schools and reinforces the deep logic of increased accountability in NCLB. (p. 6)

While the authors' statements are important points to consider in the education of English Language Learners, this researcher believes that NCLB act guidelines still ignore the emotional/psychological component of the students in this category. The results of this study and others show that immigrant students suffer from multiple stressors. Moreover, it is highly possible that these stressors have an effect on academic performance. If education laws such as the NCLB continue to ignore the fact that many of these students present with emotional issues and/or psychological distress and no proper interventions are made, it is likely that these students will continue to show a lack of academic progress. This researcher suggests that when implementing new school education policies for English Language Learners, officials consider the emotional component of the students' situations. It is also suggested that adequate programs that incorporates this important aspect be developed in school settings.

Summary

In summary, a great expansion of current services is needed for Latino/a immigrant youth to be effective in adjusting to their new home. The recommendations above span a wide range of levels of intervention. All are important. However, providing bilingual services and information for both parents and students, increasing the number of well trained bilingual mental health professionals, and developing enriched programs particularly designed for immigrant students and recent arrivals are considered particularly important by this researcher.

In addition to direct services, policy, and advocacy, additional research would help us understand what is needed and what works for immigrant Hispanic adolescents. The next section addresses these concerns.

Implications for Research

Much research is still needed regarding immigrant students. More studies are needed in order to learn if generalization of the findings in this research is possible to other school populations such as Hispanic immigrant students who are not considered at risk, and immigrant students from other countries. In addition, longitudinal studies offer enriched information about these students' educational goals and performance over the years. The complex relationships that likely exist between immigrant students' life experiences and their academic performance need to be explicated to determine which factors are most influential. If there are schools that are having success in retaining and graduating immigrant Hispanic students, these schools should be studied to see what they are doing.

Since there is already some research to support the types of therapies that might be well-received by Latino/a clients (Taylor et al., 2006), these interventions should be tried with Hispanic immigrant adolescents and assessed for effectiveness and efficacy. Given the level of trauma noted by this researcher, it would also be good to study what types of therapies work best for trauma with this population, and how/if current models for trauma treatment need to be modified in some way to be useful. In addition, it would be worth investigating the possible correlation between psychological distress and academic performance in immigrant students.

Having reviewed the potential areas for future research, we turn now to limitations of the current research project. In the section that follows, researcher biases and forms of triangulation will be revisited.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that the limitations of this research. First, the sample involved, while large for a qualitative study, would still be a relatively small sample from which to make generalizations. Most of the students were from just two countries, El Salvador and Mexico, so it is possible that the experiences of Hispanic immigrant adolescents from other countries are not equivalent. Similarly, immigrant students who are not Hispanic may have different experiences. The students in this study were considered educationally at risk, had a gap of two or more years in their education, and were all in an alternative program to address these concerns. Students with different educational histories would likely have shown a different pattern of results.

The method of the study contributes some additional limitations. It would have been ideal to have had an additional researcher or team of researchers to cross-code data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) for example, or to have had the time to assess if the archival data reflected concerns that still exist for immigrant Hispanic teens today via individual interviews or focus groups. Likewise, interviews with bilingual and English-only speaking mental health professionals who work with immigrant Latino/a youth would have been interesting and a triangulating data source (Patton, 2002). The triangulation method used in the present study—to examine school websites for the nature and extent of services they provide to immigrant Hispanic students—may not reflect programs or

policies that were in place at the time the data were originally collected. While this researcher has insider knowledge of district changes, the time lag between the study data and the website documentation remains a limitation. It should be noted that some of the limitations noted above could also make for interesting further research.

In terms of personal bias, as an immigrant student herself, this researcher can bear witness that the journey is a difficult one. She has encountered several obstacles related to family, health, educational, and financial issues during her years of residence in this country. In addition, findings in this study were obtained from personal notes taken while working as school counselor with the involved participants. This researcher got to know the majority of the participants in-depth for three reasons: (a) she was the only provider of individual and group counseling sessions, (b) the program had a maximum of 100 students at any given time so daily encounters were common, (c) these students stayed in the program anywhere between six months and two years and thus received counseling services for longer periods of time. As daily conversations transpired over long periods of time, possible preconceived notions may have started forming about these students' life experiences. For these reasons, it is highly possible that unperceived bias could have occurred when she selected the topic of this study. Before starting her research, this researcher was predisposed to believe that students in this study: (a) had experience significant traumatic events, (b) had overcome serious challenges during their journeys if they came to this country illegally, (c) had struggled with their adjustment and transition to this country, (d) had academic difficulties partly due to these painful or traumatic events, and (e) were not likely as a student population to have their needs met

due to the lack of adequate and/or affordable bilingual services. Results obtained from the study supported this researcher's preconceived assumptions. Although precautions and a rigorous procedure in the analysis of the data were followed, the aforementioned bias may still have played a part in her findings. Nevertheless, as it often happens in studies of qualitative nature emerging elements of surprise are common. One such unexpected theme was the one of resiliency. This researcher found that some students were highly resilient regardless of the continuous amount of obstacles encountered throughout their life. A good example of this resiliency was that of a female student who had become blind after an accident at the age of eight years old. After her accident this student continued to encounter multiple difficulties that included several years of school interruption, pregnancies, miscarriage, giving birth, venereal disease, family conflict, and relationship problems. Nevertheless, she was able to graduate from high school and supersede all of her obstacles.

In spite of these limitations, the current study offered an in-depth exploration of Latino/a adolescent immigrant issues, with a number of relevant implications. A qualitative study of this magnitude has not been previously conducted to this researcher's knowledge.

Conclusion

By being an immigrant herself, working with immigrant students throughout time, and learning more about their lives and needs through this study, this researcher believes that a great deal of work remains to be done. Much discussion has taken place on immigration laws and the pros and cons of having undocumented immigrants in this

country. Sadly, many people in the United States assume that these immigrants are a nuisance to society and readily accuse them of being lazy, uneducated, and being individuals who either want to be on welfare or take jobs that belong rightfully to others, and make these assumptions without any real knowledge about their lives. It is beyond the scope of this paper discuss what is right or wrong regarding number of immigrants, their legal status, and their educational and employment abilities. However, the fact remains that immigrants with and without documents continue to come to the United States every year and that the numbers have grown (Camarota, 2005) even after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and after all the changes in immigration laws and education policies that followed. Numbers of immigrant students and foreign language speakers continue to rise in schools every year. It has been shown that Hispanic students have a higher dropout rate than other groups and that this rate is even higher for Hispanic immigrant adolescents (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004). Several studies have demonstrated that immigrants suffer from multiple stressors (García & Marota, 1997; Moua, 2002; Shields & Behrman, 2004).

This researcher is unaware of any qualitative study that had reviewed such a large sample of immigrant students over such a long period time. Some of the students' developmental changes were able to be tracked due to the requirements of the school's program. Consequently, special attention was placed on the themes that emerged after analyzing the data. This study in particular found that immigrant students have encountered and continue to encounter several long-term obstacles as well as stressful events in their everyday lives. It can easily be seen that their needs are many. If students

and their families suffer from financial difficulties due to lack of legal documents and cannot find decent employment, they could very well drop out. If they cannot concentrate on their lessons because of psychological distress caused by traumatic events, they will likely have low academic performance. If they do not find access to mental health facilities to address their drug problems after actively looking for help, they are likely to return to their drug habits and do poorly in school, drop out, and even find illegal ways to support their habits. For all these reasons, this researcher believes that professionals working for government agencies, health care establishments, school districts, and other relevant organizations consider helping immigrants and collaborate with each other by establishing fair immigration laws, particularly for students who want to continue their education, providing better training for personnel who work with immigrant populations, developing programs in schools that include mental health services, and offering on the job training and employment internships throughout school settings.

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