“LAS LUCHONAS” THAT FEED YOU: CAMPESINAS IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA

by

MARITZA Y. DURAN

(Under the Direction of EDWARD A. DELGADO-ROMERO)

ABSTRACT

Agricultural laborers in the United States (U.S.) face toxicity in their psychosocial and physical environment. The Central Valley of California is an exceptionally toxic area for these workers and their families due to exposure to pesticides, hazardous materials, heavy smog, and inaccessible drinking water. For Latinx women, this toxicity is even more pronounced. Latinx women face work instability and exploitation based on their immigration status, sex and gender discrimination, and racism in their communities and workspaces. Environmental Hazards such as California wildfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionally affect Latinx communities, exacerbates the toxicity faced by farmworking women. This study investigated the ways Latinx farmworking women are mitigating multiple barriers in their everyday lives. The researcher interviewed nine women between the ages of 18-65 to understand their lived experiences in the Central Valley of California. These qualitative *testimonio* interviews lasted two to three hours and were conducted via zoom. Through these *testimonios*, the researcher illuminated stories of resiliency and the ways that farmworking Latinx women are resisting in spite of multiple environmental and systematic barriers. This dissertation seeks to highlight the labor of love farmworking women engage in towards feeding the U.S. while existing and resisting.

INDEX WORDS: LATINX, WOMEN, FARMWORKERS, CAMPESINAS, CAMPESINXS, RESILIENCY, MENTAL HEALTH, *Testimonios*

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is for all of the *campesinas* in the U.S. who have fed us and have been unlistened for so long. Most especially to the *campesinas* who have raised me, shared their stories with me growing up and continue giving me life lessons. Ultimately, this dissertation and project would not have been possible without the *campesinas* that shared their *testimonios* with me. I was honored and humbled to be a witness to their lives.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> Over the years my parents' bodies have accumulated trauma from spending their days upside down, bent over with their hands almost buried under the hot earth, laboring from sunrise to sunset in the unforgiving fields that we call home. Maybe due to pride, maybe denial, my parents aren't the type to talk about where their bodies carry the strain. But I can't look away. I see it in their calloused hands and feet. Bruised knees. Sunburnt necks and the tops of their hands. My father's swollen ankles. The small of my mother's tense back. Everywhere I look I see evidence of bodies valued only for the labor that is slowly becoming their ruin (Rocha, 2020)

Throughout the dissertation, quotes from a blog written by the child of farmworkers will be quoted at the start of every chapter. Campesinas face multiple obstacles such as prejudice, sexism, classism, exploitation, unfair immigration enforcement, mental and physical trauma, environmental injustice, and harsh working conditions (Miererotto & Castellano, 2019). *Campesinas* also face the unique intersectionality of both living in an area that is toxic to their families and well-being and working in an industry that is 68% male (NAWS, 2018). Specifically, the Central Valley of California has a large farmworking community that is experiencing large shifts such as climate change, high rates of poverty, and has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Sahagun, 2022; Sengupta, 2020). Despite tremendous barriers, *campesinas* persevere; therefore, it is important to highlight the ways they are existing and thriving within these systems of oppression. Cisgender women

represent approximately 25% to 30% of the farmworker population and unlike cisgender male farmworkers, women are often accompanied by their children (NAWS, 2018). *Campesinas'* experiences are often not highlighted and centered; given the growing environmental concerns, poverty and long-standing unknown impacts of COVID-19 on the community, it is imperative that the voices of *campesinas* are heard in our society.

In this study it is contended that *campesinas* have unique resiliency factors that are not yet fully understood and are critical to healthcare professionals striving to better serve this population. Gaining a better understanding of the community would allow the development of more effective interventions for *campesinas* and their children and families, as well as a better understanding of how to propagate resilience. Additionally, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of their experiences, including health challenges and responsibilities as mothers and employees have shifted. For example, Mora et al. (2021) found farmworkers in Monterrey County were 4 times more likely to contract COVID-19 between June and November of 2020. Mora et al. (2020) found farmworkers experienced 39% higher death rates compared to non-farmworkers. Compounding the pandemic difficulties, farmworkers are at increased risk of losing their livelihoods due to intersecting issues and concerns such as climate change, lack of access to health care, poverty, and racism (Mora et al., 2020; Sahagun, 2022; Sengupta, 2020).

It is clear farmworking women face a broad array of specific threats to their well-being. In this dissertation study, I investigated the experiences of Latinx, mostly Mexican origin, women who work in the San Joaquin Valley in order to identify resiliency factors and explore their *testimonios*. Centering the voices and *testimonios* of *campesinas* is central to this dissertation. The San Joaquin Valley is the southern half of California's 400-mile-long Central Valley that includes the following counties: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno,

Tulare, Kings, and Kern (Huang & Lee, 2012). Counties such as Tulare, Fresno, and Kern were ranked as some of the highest in agricultural production in the U.S. At the same time, the San Joaquin Valley has the worst air quality in the U.S. and serious environmental issues such as a lack of clean water, pesticide exposure, high levels of diseases such as cancer, and frequent work injuries due to the agricultural industry (Sahagun, 2022; Sengupta, 2020). Nearly half of the people who live and work in the San Joaquin Valley are Latinx, mostly from Mexico. For these residents, documentation status plays a role in their lives since 70% are foreign born (NAWS, 2018) and are thus vulnerable to exploitation based on legal status in the U.S.

In 2018, the New York Times released an op-ed on the chemicals utilized to grow produce in the U.S. This piece focused on varying environmental toxicity issues that the country is facing, which was exacerbated by Donald Trump's reluctance to address the environmental crisis. The op-ed focused on Bakersfield and Arvin, CA and provided *testimonios* of the experiences of poisoning from farmworkers in the area (Lipton, 2018). In addition, the majority of the interviews conducted by Lipton and colleagues were of women who experienced poisoning due to the pesticides that are explicitly utilized in the San Joaquin Valley. According to Lipton et al. (2018), these pesticides continue to be used despite multiple studies indicating correlates of negative health outcomes for farmworkers and even more so for Latina farmworkers. Coupled with environmental factors, higher health risk factors, the COVID-19 pandemic, and familial obligations, it is clear farmworkers experience a myriad of threats to health and well-being.

Problem Statement

Research on farmworking communities often focuses on the issues that farmworking men face (Meierotto & Castellano, 2019; Quandt & et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to

highlight the unique experiences that farmworking women face. The lack of research on resiliency factors of farmworkers has been limited. When researchers have sought to investigate resiliency in farmworking communities, there is a profound dearth of evidence that considered intersectional identities. The full complexity of intersectional identities needs to be highlighted in order to develop interventions and discourse that include the fullness of their lived experiences. Furthermore, most research relevant to the mental health of farmworking communities is quantitative. Data about the resilience and lived experiences of farmworking women from a qualitative perspective is disproportionately lacking in the research literature. Due to the oppression and systematic factors that disproportionally affect farmworking communities, it is imperative that their voices are heard by researchers. Moreover, due to the current political climate, it is more important than ever to ensure that the voices of people who experience oppression guide research and interventions.

Coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic that contributed and exacerbated standing issues, the importance of highlighting the experiences of farmworking women is even more urgent. In addition, Central California has historically been an area of the U.S. that produces a substantial proportion of the produce for the entire country (Huang & London, 2012). The Central Valley of California has demonstrated its resiliency and ability to organize for workers across the country, therefore, their voices and stories are needed to highlight their dynamic existence.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the resiliency factors and lived experiences of Mexican women farmworkers in the Central Valley of California. Simultaneously, I explore the ways that farmworking women buffer their experiences working in oppressive systems. These oppressive systems include the ways that Mexican farmworkers navigate sexism in the

workplace, pesticide exposure, and sociopolitical warfare by the Trump and Biden administrations.

The following research questions guided this research study:

1. What are the stories or *testimonios* of Mexican farmworking women?
2. How do Mexican farmworking women cope with the socio-political and environmental climate?
3. What are resiliency factors Mexican farmworking women identify as a source of love, strength, and resistance?
4. What are their hopes and dreams for themselves, their families, and their communities?

Definitions

Campesinas/Campesinxs: This was a term participants utilized to identify themselves as farmworking women/farmworking people. *Campesinxs* is a gender inclusive term to speak about the community which the researcher utilized for the purpose of this study.

Migrant Farmworker: According to government agencies, there are different types of farmworkers, including migrant and seasonal. Arcury and Quandt (2007) defined a "migrant farmworker [as] an individual whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, and who for the purposes of employment, establishes a temporary home." (2017, p. 346).

Seasonal Farmworker: By contrast, "A seasonal farmworker is an individual whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis but who does not migrate" (Arcury & Quandt, 2007, p. 346).

Latinx: A term broadly utilized to move away from gender binary vocabulary in the community and provide more inclusive language that encompasses people in the community who might not associate with gender binaries (Cardemil et al., 2019).

Latina: In reference to someone that identifies as a woman in the Latinx community (Cardemil et al., 2019).

Central Valley: Spans 20,000 square miles and is in the most central position in California. It stretches about 400 miles in length and 50 miles in width (U.S. Department of Interior, 2019). The Central Valley is split into two halves, which are the Sacramento Valley (located in the northernmost part) and the San Joaquin Valley (which is located in the southernmost part of the valley) (U.S. Department of Interior, 2019).

San Joaquin Valley: The southern part of the Central Valley (U.S. Department of Interior, 2019).

Chapter 2

> My hips were tight from squatting, my eyes were itchy from the dust, bruises formed on my knees, and I was developing a headache from the constant movement. The sun, which had seemed so beautiful in the morning, was suddenly unforgiving. I felt the sun burning the back of my neck and wanted nothing more than to accept defeat and go home. But the day was only beginning… (Rocha, 2020)

Review of Relevant Literature

Farmworking women face systematic and environmental barriers navigating their everyday lives. Within this context, Latinx farmworking women are an exceptionally vulnerable population and often ignored within academic and public discourse. Our food is produced at the physical and mental expense of farmworking women with little to no recognition of their often-exploited labor. It is all the more imperative to highlight the critical, and now essential, roles that farmworking Latinx women play in our society today and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Methodologically, there is a lack of qualitative research on the experiences of Latinx farmworkers in the U.S. (Meierotto & Castellano, 2020). By highlighting the intersectional experiences of farmworking women, this study sheds light on the female farmworking narratives, which humanizes and highlights their strength and resilience in response to their everyday hardships. The production of narratives of farmworking women is also central to women studies as it highlights some of the most vulnerable women's voices and experiences domestically and globally.

Farmworking Communities

California accounts for more than one-third of the country's production of nuts and two-thirds of the country's production of fruits and vegetables (Fresno Bee, August 2020). Furthermore, Central California has historically been an area of the U.S. that produces a large proportion of the produce for the country (Branch & Lipton, 2018). Approximately 420,000 farmworkers in California's Central Valley account for the state's agricultural workforce. A recent farmworker study found that about 90% of farmworkers in California were foreign born from Mexico, had a median age of 38 years, and made an average of $18,000 each year (COVID-19 Farmworker Study, 2020).

Documentation status plays a role in the lives of farmworkers since 70% are foreign-born nationally (NAWS Data, 2018) and are thus vulnerable to exploitation based on legal status in the U.S. It is also important to note the role that the San Joaquin Valley plays as a place of borderlands, especially when it comes to navigating communities that are plagued by prisons (Gilmore, 2007). The importance of highlighting this is due to the large number of prisons located in the Central Valley. Highlighting the Central Valley as a place of borderlands was due to the experiences of migration that farmworkers experience as they created new ways of being within the Central Valley. The Central Valley has been known for an area that has cultivated building prisons to boost the economy in rural towns and cities that are predominately Latinx, further contributing to the prison industrial complex (Gilmore, 2007). For instance, in April of 2020, the city of McFarland, CA signed a contract to allow GEO to create a detention center in a town and area that is predominately undocumented and Latinx (Castillo, 2020). GEO is a private entity that facilitates policing and prisons in the state of California. This company is responsible for immigration detention centers and prisons in the Central Valley of California (The GEO Group, Inc, 2022).

Farmworkers encounter occupational and health hazards including "pesticide exposure, heat stress, arthritis, respiratory disease, diabetes, alcoholism and more..." (Arcury & Quandt, 1998; as cited in Meierotto & Castellano, 2020, p. 2011). Farmworking women in the Central Valley of California face the unique intersectionality of living in an area that is toxic to their families and their well-being, in addition to risking their own well-being in an industry that is 68% male (NAWS, 2018). Women represent approximately 25% to 30% of the farmworker population and, unlike male farmworkers, tend to be accompanied by their children while men are often living away from their families (NAWS, 2018).

COVID-19 Pandemic

In addition to the systematic barriers to a healthy and well life, farmworkers are now facing precarious working conditions from forest fires and COVID-19. Prior to COVID-19, farmworkers experienced backbreaking working conditions, exploitation, and systematic barriers to health care and financial assistance. Due to the nature of their work, farmworkers, including undocumented farmworkers who lacked any federal work protections, were deemed essential to the state's workforce at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, all while many remained ineligible for federal or state aid.

Nadia Lopez (2020) reported on August 17, 2020, that Latinx people accounted for 58% of COVID-19 cases in California. COFS found that many farmworkers, predominantly Latinx, were not provided personal protective equipment (PPE). Despite the lack of PPE many farmworkers were expected to work in close proximity to each other. Additionally, farmworkers live in close proximity and in multigenerational households or with roommates. The COFS study (2020) found that "pre-existing health conditions, crowded living conditions, and exposure to air pollution, have been identified as risk factors that disproportionately affect low-income,

disadvantaged populations" (p. 4). The study found that two-thirds of workers did not have health insurance. COFS (2020) further found that 46% of respondents to the study had decreased farm-work time and therefore experienced loss of income. Decreased work time was due to the employer taking precautions, less demand, and child-care needs within the farmworkers' community. Farmworkers also reported that 43% of employers did not provide appropriate face coverings (COFS, 2020). In addition to COVID-19 in the summer of 2020, wildfire smoke causes long-term health implications that makes farmworkers more vulnerable to COVID-19 (Mahoney, 2020). Many farmworkers are significantly impacted by the current fires; COVID-19 coupled with already pre-existing conditions makes them more vulnerable. Farmworkers experience high amounts of poverty and the current fires and COVID-19 make them additionally susceptible to extreme financial hardship. Farmworkers in the Central Valley are very susceptible and vulnerable to work insecurity as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, this situation is especially true for undocumented farmworkers. The summer of 2020 highlighted the unique issues that farmworkers will face in the coming years as global warming and other societal emergencies continue to be more common.

The racialized politics of the country have facilitated the exploitation of brown women's bodies at the expense of corporations and capitalism, which disproportionally affects farmworking Latinx women. This project seeks to highlight the ways farmworking women exist within the borderlands towards creating joy, love, and disruption of intergenerational cycles of poverty and trauma. This dissertation aims to deviate popular discourse away from *campesinas* as disposable labor for production and produce a narrative that demonstrates *campesinas'* agency in their everyday lives. Meierotto and Castellanos (2020) state that farmworking women are significantly under studied and there is little written about their everyday experiences. This

project aims to be on the forefront of counseling psychology by focusing on the resiliency factors, strength, and centering the lives of farmworking women rather than the centralization of their bodies in relation to production. The current COVID-19 pandemic and California fires further exacerbate the obstacles, physical and emotional risks that Latinx farmworkers must navigate to ensure their livelihoods. In light of their major agricultural contributions to sustaining and nourishing the country, it is important to address the obstacles, resiliency, and coping factors that shape the lives of the most vulnerable members of the Latinx community.

Mental Health

Three-quarters of farmworkers stated that Spanish was their primary language in the U.S. There were also indigenous Central and South American languages reported by people who were bilingual in other languages other than Spanish and English. Furthermore, the average education completed was the eighth grade (NAWS, 2014). Therefore, *campesinas* represent the majority of farmworkers in terms of ethnicity, but they are a minority in terms of gender and language (NAWS, 2018). Language barriers can add to acculturation stress within the community (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Acculturation stress refers to the "stress that directly results from and has its source in the acculturative process…acculturating individuals experience varying levels of acculturative stress, and that high levels of acculturation stress may result in high levels of anxiety and depression" (Hovey & Magana, 2000, p. 110). Due to the issues that come with immigrating to the U.S., farmworkers are at risk of developing mental health issues due to their intersectional identities and experiences. These issues include but are not exclusive to exploitation, low socio-economic status, educational obtainment, stereotypes, and other derogatory statements made by Donald Trump and his administration.

According to Arcury and Quandt (2007) "recent research on the mental health of farmworker has found that nearly 40% of workers studied reached threshold for depression, and 30% for anxiety (p. 349). Arcury and Quandt (2007) also stated that stressors increased for farmworkers due to the heavy work they engaged in, the unstable housing due to their transient experiences, and lower social support. The intersectionality and vulnerable experiences that farmworkers encompass make them more vulnerable to developing mental health issues. The stressors stated by Arcury and Quandt (2007) are "linked to lower self-esteem and limited social support, as well as to more frequent feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, depression, and suicidality." (p. 349).

> Hovey and Magana (2007) also identify mental health issues and stressors such as: social support found within the new community; support from immediate and extended family support networks; socioeconomic status (SES), remigration variables, such as adaptive functioning (Self-esteem, coping ability), knowledge of the new language and culture, and control and choice in the decision to immigrate (voluntary vs. voluntary; cognitive attributes, such as expectations for the future (hopeful vs. non-hopeful) (p. 120).

These additional aspects regarding acculturation can greatly impact the mental health of farmworkers. These factors can also place people at a higher risk of developing mental health issues once they have arrived in the U.S. The dominant discourse regarding immigration is not centered on the mental health of people who immigrate to this country, their reasons for immigrating, and how these factors can impact their well-being once they arrive to the U.S.

Providing mental health status of farmworkers has been difficult due to multiple factors. Georges' et al. (2013) highlight the barriers encountered while attempting to find a literature

review of the status of the mental health of farmworkers. Georges' et al. (2013) found that "farmworker mental health is an understudied yet potentially important factor in understanding the health care utilization" (p. S8). Georges et al. (2013) indicated that farmworkers with depressive symptoms had higher rates of going to a medical doctor. Their study found that this was due to somatic symptoms that were comorbid with their mental health issues. Georges' et al. (2013) found that 20-50% of farmworkers encounter some issue with their mental health during the agricultural season. They further highlight that much of rural America is not equipped to screen Spanish speaking farmworkers and also in providing mental health services to them (Georges et al., 2013). Georges et al. (2013) further state that 1 out of 10 farmworkers experience depressive symptoms. It is important to discuss that there is a shortage of providers that are able to provide culturally competent services to Latinx farmworkers which is main finding of Georges et al. (2013). Furthermore, Georges et al. (2013) highlight that there was not accurate information on the status of the mental health of farmworkers. In addition, many studies were conducted in different Midwest states and are now outdated. Georges' et al. (2013) further discuss the difficulty if assessing mental health of farmworkers due to their transient nature, measures that might not be culturally relevant, and the lack of resources to mental health services that are often available to farmworkers.

Beard et al. (2012) found a positive correlation of pesticide exposure and depression amongst the wives of agricultural workers. This study focuses on all wives rather than specifically Latinx women, but it is significant to state that pesticide exposure can increase the rate of depression amongst families who live in farming communities or engage in farming practices.

Arcury et al. (2018) state that in the country 30 percent of farmworkers are Latina. Furthermore, Alderete found that lower incidence of mental health diagnosis was a lower indicator of alcohol and substance abuse in California farmworkers (Alderete et al., 2000; as cited in Arcury et al., 2018) Arcury et al. (2018) state "31.3% of these women, compared with 9.3% of the U.S. female population, experienced significant depressive symptoms" (p. 90). Higher depressive and anxiety symptoms in employed farmworking Latinas than unemployed Latinas has been found. In addition, employed farmworking Latinas have higher rates of depression and anxiety compared to employed farmworking men (Arcury et al., 2018). These findings are critical towards assessing what factors contribute to the mental health of farmworking Latina women. Furthermore, assessing mental health outcomes differ based on locations. Many studies on farmworkers are concentrated in specific states and due to the demographic shift in the U.S., it is important to be aware of the differences. In addition, enclaves and social networks and acculturation impact the mental health of Latina farmworking women and must be taken into account when conducting studies with this population.

Health

An additional barrier that farmworkers face is the lack of access to culturally competent healthcare for various reasons such as documentation status, low SES, a lack of health insurance, and backbreaking labor. According to the NAWS 2013-2014, farmworkers were asked if in the last two years they had received any medical services. The farmworkers surveyed that had health insurance had a 79% higher chance of seeking health services (2016). In addition, "approximately four in ten workers" paid their fees for health services out of pocket (2016, p. 45). Farmworkers are paid minimum wage and pay high rates for healthcare and other services if they decided to access them. Within the NAWS 2013-2014, it was reported that about some

farmworkers sought out indigenous healers known as a *curandera/curandero* (2016). The average life expectancy of farmworkers is 49 years of age in the U.S. (Castaneda & Zavella, 2003; Center for Farmworker Families, 2014). It is important and critical that research and in addition, it is important to highlight that statistics that were discussed in 2003 have not improved and the life expectancy for farmworkers continues to be 49 years old (Center for Farmworker Families, 2014).

The need for culturally competent services for farmworkers is imperative due to their social isolation, back breaking labor, and acculturation issues. These issues can exacerbate and create large barriers that do not allow them to flourish and adjust to the U.S. Farmworking women face very specific health barriers and issues due to their intersectionality. In addition to health, it is important to highlight the Latino Paradox (Hayes-Bautista, 2002). The Latino Paradox reflects findings that Latinx people live longer than White counterparts despite significant social and environmental hazards. It should be noted that recent research indicates that the mortality advantage found in the Latino paradox has been erased by disproportionate elderly deaths of Latinx elders due to COVID-19.

Further epidemiological research is needed in order to find more specific reasons why Latinx people are living longer (Acevedo-Garcia and Bates, 2008). It is critical that when talking about resiliency and health that the Latino Paradox is discussed. There is a theory that people are living longer regardless of SES due to social factors, which are essentially related to mental health and social support (Acevedo-Garcia and Bates, 2008). This is a critical aspect in which Latinx community's resiliency factors are affecting their health and how long they live. Furthermore, Delgado-Romero et al. (2018) discusses the Latino health paradox which deems that Latinos experience better health outcomes despite their experience of social determinants of

health that typically lead to poorer health outcomes. This is an aspect of resiliency that is unique to immigrant and Latinx communities and therefore it is important that these factors are highlighted when conducting research and working with the Latinx population. In addition, Delgado-Romero et al. (2018) state that Latinx communities are less likely to seek mental health services than their White counterparts. It is also important to highlight language barriers and transportation barriers, even more so in rural populations. In addition, it is important to highlight the cultural strengths that rural farming communities face due to the close cultural enclaves that can form.

Environmental Justice Issues in the Central Valley

In the Central Valley of California, there is a transference of poverty from rural areas of Mexico to rural California (Martin & Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, Martin and Taylor (1998) discuss the high poverty rates for immigrants who settled as farmworkers in the Central Valley of California. They highlight the high amounts of poverty and farmworkers' ineligibility to apply to welfare programs due to their immigration status (Martin & Taylor, 1998). The Central Valley is a unique area in which poverty and other environmental issues

Minkoff-Zern (2012) states "although farmworkers in California labor in some of the most productive agricultural regions in the world, they are largely food insecure. Food insecurity is striking in rural and semi-rural areas of California, where the poorest populations are laboring to produce fresh food shipped elsewhere" (p. 204). Minkoff-Zern (2012) posits that farmworkers are actors in the ways they are resisting food insecurity in their communities and are not helpless to their situations. This framework of writing and discussing farmworkers in the Central Valley is unique place where farmworkers are resisting their oppression in their own ways towards building lives that are resilient. It is important to shift the farm work and dialogue when writing

about the lived experiences of farmworkers. Minkoff-Zern (2012) further states, "much of the literature concerning farmworkers livelihoods focuses on ways that economic, political, and social structures render farmworkers powerless" (p. 204). Much of the written literature poses a deficit structure, most especially when farmworkers are discussed in regard to oppression despite of the historical evidence that farmworkers have been advocating and organizing in the Central Valley specifically towards the betterment of their lived experiences. Furthermore, Minkoff-Zern (2012) discusses that 93% of indigenous farmworkers in Salinas, CA reported food insecurity.

The South-Central Valley, more specifically Bakersfield, California has the dirtiest air in the country (American Lung Association, 2016). Other cities like Visalia, Porterville and Hanford are ranked after Bakersfield in regard to most people at risk (American Lung Association, 2016). Furthermore, Kern County is the top county that has the most people at risk by Short-Term Particle Pollution (American Lung Association, 2016). Other South Central Valley cities are top ranked within these varying sections in regard to air quality. It is important to note the consistent negative rankings for specific farmworking communities in California that are exceptionally vulnerable to health issues due to their intersectionality as farmworking women.

Furthermore, Mills and Shah (2014) state, "a previous report on cancer incidence in a farmworker labor union between 1987 and 1997 found increased leukemia, brain stomach, and uterine cancer rates in this working population" (p. 737). Mills and Shah further state that between

> 350,000-700,000 farmworkers are engaged in agricultural labor throughout the state and experience exposures to numerous hazardous working conditions including excessive heat, ultraviolent radiation from the sun, diesel fumes, welding fumes, and toxins in

> pesticides and fertilizers as well as traumatic injury. More than twenty million pounds of pesticides containing chemicals suspected to cause cancer are applied throughout the state of California (Summary of Pesticide Use Report Data, 2010; as cited in Mills and Shah, 2014, p. 737).

The study found that the diagnosis was not as soon for farmworkers (Mills and Shah, 2014).

In addition, Mills and Shah (2014) overall "found that farmworkers experience proportionally more cancer for several cancer sites" (p. 746). It is also important to note that men that are farmworkers experience higher cancer incidence rates than women farmworkers (Mills & Shah, 2014). The unique positionality of environmental issues that farmworkers face is notable and their intersectionality of receiving services is also notable. It is important to note the racialized implications of farm work, and more specifically for women farmworkers in California. Due to the presented information, and rates of environmental issues that reach national rankings tied with demographics to not infer that these issues also carry radicalized issues when it comes to farmworking communities. The lived experiences and issues that the farmworking community and more specifically women need to be investigated. Their resiliency factors are important to note despite of the environmental issue they confront in every aspect of their lives.

It is critical to discuss the risks that farmworkers expose themselves to feed the U.S. There is a lack of dialogue in connecting the intersectional factors that disproportionally affect farmworkers and their families. This is environmental racism that disproportionally affects Latinx people in the U.S. Arcury et al. (2014) further state the large health impact that pesticide exposure can have on the overall health and the negative impacts on their social determinants of health (2014).

Environmental Stressors and Factors

An additional stressor that impacts farmworkers is the high exposure they experience to pesticides in their workplace. Due to the high amounts of chemicals that are used in the U.S., farmworkers face significant health risks such as cancer. This study remarks that "Hispanic migrant agricultural workers' exposure to pesticides and other agrichemicals places them at increased risk for a variety of acute and chronic conditions, including cancer. As a socioeconomically disadvantaged group, migrant workers also face many barriers to effective cancer control" (Lantz et al., 1994, p. 512).

In addition to cancer, this population has other health risks because of their lack of access to services due to documentation status, socioeconomic status, proximity, language, and cultural barriers (Lantz et al., 1994; Mills & Shah, 2014). They are extremely vulnerable to a lack of access to healthcare and preventative care. Farmworking women's higher risk of cancer incidence coupled with their occupation makes them additionally vulnerable in society. Lantz et al. (1994) discuss the lack of knowledge in the community regarding pesticide exposure and proper intervention when cancer symptoms are arising. The lack of intervention was a major factor that affected how and when farmworkers were able to access care.

Lantz et al. (1994) conducted exhaustive interviews and focus group. During the focus groups, farmworkers discussed the ways that they were psychologically impacted by pesticide exposure such as getting big spots on their bodies, headaches, vomiting, and bloody noses. During the interviews, most of the farmworkers were more concerned with the immediate side effects of becoming exposed to toxic pesticides rather than the long-term effects of pesticide exposure on their bodies (1994). Within the study, the participants had a fatalistic viewpoint toward cancer but also towards pesticide exposure which is also a cultural factor (Baron,1994;

Lantz et al., 1994). The people interviewed felt powerlessness towards their exposure to pesticides due to the dire need to be employed in the U.S. (Lantz et al, 1994). The powerlessness and necessity to work has made it difficult for farmworkers to choose a profession that affords them mobility. Quantitative data supports the qualitative work in more recent work. Other studies exist that attest to the additive risk to cancer incidence that farmworkers experience but do not center their voices in this way (Mills & Shah, 2014). Subsequent studies support the claims that farmworkers expressed in Lantz et al.'s (1994) study.

Mills and Shah (2014) found that farmworkers who experience pesticide exposure experiences higher rates of specific forms of cancer compared to non-farmworkers. Mills and Shah (2014) focus on data from the United Farmworkers Union and cancer incidence within the union. In addition, Mills and Shah (2014) found that between 350,000 and 700,00 farmworkers in the state of California are exposed to various toxins, which affect their health outcomes. In addition, they found that an estimated "twenty million pounds of pesticides containing chemicals suspected to cause cancer" are used in California each year (2014, p. 737). Therefore, farmworking communities are also disproportionally exposed to these chemicals because many farmworking communities are situated in areas where pesticides are used therefore, not limiting exposure to farmworkers but also their families.

Furthermore, Arcury et al. (2013) found that farmworkers also experience pesticide exposure in their homes and is a significant health issues among farmworkers. Arcury et al. (2013) state, "Extensive analysis of Agricultural Health Study data as linked lifetime pesticide exposure to increased risk for cancer, neurological conditions, respiratory and reproductive problems amongst farmers and their spouses" (p. 777).

McClure et al. (2015) highlights the importance and differences of acculturation and historical enclaves on the effect on mental health. McClure (2015) highlights that acculturation factors and social supports differ in states or places where Mexicans have larger social networks which in turns impacts their mental health. This aspect of conducting studies on immigrant's mental health is imperative due to the large impact social networks have on the well-being of immigrants. This is an important consideration due to the strong cultural and Mexican enclave that the Central Valley of California and for this study.

The issues that farmworkers face and the stressors that are involved with their work is very high. Many farmworkers are also very vulnerable due to their immigration status, being an immigrant to the U.S. despite of documentation, low economic status, language barriers and other systematic barriers that make it difficult for people to feel like they have control and autonomy over their well-being in their U.S. Due to the multiple and dynamic stressors farmworkers face, it is imperative that more attention to their health and mental health be addressed in the U.S. Due to their rural location coupled with language; farmworkers are a population that is often overlooked when it comes to culturally competent mental health services and research.

Resiliency

Singh and colleagues state "the construct of resilience has been defined as a set of learned behaviors evolving from an individual's system of beliefs that precedes one's ability to cope" (Jew et al., 1999; as cited in Singh et al., 2011, p. 21) Furthermore, Singh et al. (2011) state resiliency pertains to the resources an individual has available to be able to deal with stressful situations" (p. 21). Resiliency is a construct that focuses on strength perspectives that have not been widely applied to farming working women in the U.S. Yet, farmworking women exist

within the U.S. context and their numbers in the field are growing. It is imperative that as the number of women working increases, the field of psychology identifies their resiliency factors to better improve health outcomes.

Consoli et al. state "resilience has been defined as the ability to make normal developmental achievements despite obvious adverse social and environmental barriers" (Garmezy,1993; Rutter, 1987; as cited in Consoli et al., 2011, p. 351). Consoli et al. (2011) further state resiliency "has been related to gains of improved self-efficacy, sense of mastery, more meaningful relationships, involvement with religion, heightened appreciation of life, increased awareness of strength, changes in life priorities, and awareness of new possibilities" (O'Leary & Ickovice, 1995: Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; as cited in Consoli et al., 2011, p. 351). Furthermore, Consoli et al. (2011) highlight that resiliency in regard to Latinx people has not been relatively studied and is a notion that is mostly applied to their white counterparts. Resiliency within Latinx people looks differently and different strengths are applicable due to their unique relationship to cultural values such as *familismo* (Consoli et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Singh (2013) discusses the importance of the shift in the discussion of resilience within communities. Singh states "many resilience factors are also described as those that are innate and equip individuals with the ability to navigate adversity in their lives" (Luthar and Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar et al. 2000; Masten 1994, 1991, 2001; as cited by Singh, 2013). Singh (2013) highlights that resiliency is shifting to address community factors that contribute to resiliency within communities. Adding a community perspective is imperative when discussing the experiences of Latinx people and more specifically farming communities that are collectivist in essence.

It is important to situate the Central Valley further as an area of small towns that are predominately Mexican. Castaneda and Zavella (2003) stated that there is a Mexicanization of rural California, which is shifting the demographics. This is important to note because this highlights the ways farmworking communities in rural California are resisting assimilation and building intricate social networks that are similar to Mexico (Castaneda & Zavalla, 2003). Castaneda and Zavella (2003) further state "predominately Mexican communities are also vibrant social places where cultural expressions often resemble those in Mexico" (p. 128). These are critical factors towards highlighting the resiliency of rural farmworking communities in the South-Central Valley. Communities are resisting by continuing their traditions as if they continued in Mexico. It is important to note the positive linkages of positive mental health and resiliency in communities that continue traditions.

Gender Issues in the Fields

As a result of a lack of internal migration in farmworking communities and long-term settlement in communities across the U.S., farmworking communities in the U.S. have experienced a feminization, or an increased number of women working in agriculture. (Meiererotto & Castellano, 2019). Consequently, the demographics of the farmworking community have seen a significant increase in women farmworkers in the last ten years, making this research all the more urgent and timelier for women farmworkers (Miererotto & Castellano, 2019). Feminization of agriculture has also brought additional concerns for women farmworkers such as additional work expectations of home duties (Miererotto & Castellano, 2019). Meiererotto and Castellano (2019) found that women farmworkers in their study in Idaho faced food insecurity and trouble accessing childcare due to low wages and the rural nature of their work. Furthermore, Miererotto and Castellano found the deterioration of working conditions are

in line with the trend of feminization of the work-place due to the lower wages' women make and the perception of women's work as temporary in agriculture (2019). Researchers from Boise State University found that nationally, Latina farmworkers make on average $20,000 per year (Spacek, 2020).

Women face the unique challenge of receiving protective equipment that is too large for them or made for men, which disproportionately exposes them to pesticides and toxins (Spacek, 2020). Wasserman (1999) found that pesticide protective equipment is often made for men therefore it does not appropriately protect women from pesticide exposure. Studies have further demonstrated that globally, farmworking women experience increased work hazards due to equipment, protocols, and protections being built and designed for men (Meierotto & Castellano, 2019). Meierotto and Castellano (2019) discuss studies that are specific to regions of the U.S. that have found higher rates of organophosphates metabolites in Latinas compared to the National Health and Nutrition Examination (NHANES). This finding indicates that pesticide exposure varies and depends on the time of year the data is collected, what crop was being harvested, and geographical location (Meierotto & Castellano, 2019). Therefore, national data may not accurately depict the amount of exposure that Latina women in the U.S. are facing. Devastatingly, pesticide exposure makes women susceptible to poisoning, reproductive issues, terminal illnesses, cancer, chronic conditions, premature births, birth defects in their children, and other health-altering conditions known to be caused by exposure to pesticides (Arcury & et al., 2014).

Sexual Assault Among Campesinas

According to the National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc. (2018), 24% of farmworking women "sexual harassment, sexually suggestive dialogue and inappropriate

touching are commonly experienced" (p. 5). It is imperative to emphasize that a quarter of farmworking women report sexual harassment in their workplace. This is a critical aspect of their environment that jeopardizes their safety and well-being within essential areas of their lives such as in the workplace.

Castaneda and Zavella (2003) state, "after they migrate, Mexican women are enmeshed in the processes of racialized, gendered sexuality that constitutes what Rayna Rapp calls a 'political economy of risk'" (p. 127). It is important to note the high-risk women farmworkers endure by participating as farmworkers in the U.S. Castaneda and Zavella (2003) further discuss the racialization farmworking women face due to their social positionality that makes them vulnerable due to documentation status and racial identity in the U.S. Women farmworkers have an infant mortality rate 25% higher than the national average which is due to the high levels of stress, pesticide exposure and other poor health outcomes that heavily contribute to their unique positionality (Castaneda & Zavella, 2003). Farmworking women have a high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases by farmworking men which is disproportionate in comparison to non-farmworking women (Castaneda & Zavella, 2003)

Castaneda and Zavella (2003) discuss that farmworking women had to restructure how they performed being a woman within an industry that was predominately male. Farmworking women found themselves needed to perform very strict gender roles to not invite unsolicited sexual advances, such as wearing perfume and wearing specific clothes to work (Castaneda & Zavella, 2003). Women in the fields not only cover their bodies to protect themselves from pesticides but also from sexual advances within the workplace (Castaneda & Zavella, 2003). This portrays the multiple ways that women farmworkers find themselves utilizing strategies

towards surviving toxic workplaces that can be physically and emotionally toxic for their well-being.

In 2013, Frontline released a documentary called “Rape in the Fields,” in which women who have worked in agricultural settings discuss their experience with sexual exploitation and sexual assault (2014). This documentary highlights the unique issues farmworking women face when working due to the intersectional issues of poverty, documentation status, and working in male-dominated spaces. This documentary highlights the positionality of Latinx farmworking women. Furthermore, there has been media coverage of the #metoo movement and considering making it more inclusive of farmworking women.

Borderlands

Anzaldúa (2007) discusses that much of the land that is now the Southwest was an area of the world in which *mestizos* often migrated periodically since the 16th centaury. This is incredibly important due to the current border enforcement that currently takes place in the Central Valley of California. The ancestors of the women who currently work as farmworkers, migrated freely before the creation of the U.S. Anzaldúa (2007) discusses the historical context of what she refers to now as the borderlands due to the colonization by the U.S. It is critical, to acknowledge the historical implications and the shift that has occurred for mestizos over the course of the last four hundred years (Anzaldúa, 2007).

The U.S.-Mexico border is an open wound that continues to be pillaged by the U.S. government (Anzaldúa, 2007). This is critically important due to the mass deportation and detention that has been enacted through the Biden, Trump and Obama administration, and the psychological warfare that has been declared on Brown and Black people in the U.S. Anzaldúa (2007) further states, “A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional

residue of an unnatural boundary" (p. 25). Anzaldúa coins a borderland as an emotional state of uncertainty that is often narrated by the race undertones that are often declared by the white majority. It is critical to discuss the borderlands when discussing farmworking Mexican women due to their unique intersectionality, which Anzaldúa (2007) also deems as a type of borderland. Therefore, it is critical to integrate liberation psychology when discussing the experiences of Farmworking women in the borderlands. Liberation psychology was utilized in this study by creating space for farmworking women to identify their resiliency factors, experiences and identifying the ways they have faced obstacles in their lives.

Liberation Psychology

It is imperative that when discussing Latinx communities, Liberation Psychology and Martin-Baró (1971) are discussed to highlight the unique positionality of the experiences of people from Latin America. Latinx people cannot be discussed without addressing the core foundation of the founding of Latin America through violence and colonization by Spain, Portugal, Holland and England. Each place in Latin America has a unique history with colonization; this is important when discussing history when it comes to what Latin America is today, including what coping mechanisms and resiliency factors have been developed by different people from different countries. Martin-Baró called for psychologists to work toward ensuring liberation within Latin American countries. Martin-Baró (1971) further called for new epistemologies that led toward the liberation of Latinx communities rooted in the awareness of history and the unique oppressive structures that Latinx communities live under. Therefore, it is important to also bring into account the unique personal aspects that come with many Latinx cultures that call for psychologists and researchers to implement a new way to do research. This is an ideal approach that aligns with LatCrit due to the importance of addressing the importance

and uniqueness of Latinx communities. Furthermore, Martin-Baró (1996) calls for the usage of people's "virtues," which is a shift towards resiliency, most especially when working and researching the Latinx community.

Theoretical Framework Literature

In this study, *testimonios* were utilized to allow women farmworkers to be the creators of their own experiences of resilience. Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) state that testimonios have origins in Latin America and have been utilized in the U.S. by people of color as a liberationist methodology. The use of *testimonios* is a critical component toward allowing farmworking women to discuss and define their own experiences for the researcher. Lillian Comas-Diaz and other renowned psychologists (2018) utilized testimonios in their book to depict their experiences as becoming psychologists in the borderlands. This is a powerful methodology, and this book is an example in which testimonios were utilized in order to create knowledge from an experience that is not widely discussed by academia. This approach would be incredibly effective towards re-writing and defining the narratives and experiences of farmworking women.

Testimonios have been utilized interchangeable with narrative and other terms historically (Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012). Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) posit that "there is no perfect term for the topic of *testimonios*" (p. 530). *Testimonios* are in themselves political in that they are meant to shed light on oppression and the experienced of who have been marginalized. *Testimonios* first appeared in *Latinas Telling to Live* in which Latina scholars brought to light their "*papelitos guardados,"* where they highlighted the unique experiences of Latina scholars who have been marginalized (2012). Curry and Reyes (2012) further state that utilizing words such as "memories," "story," "oral history," "autobiography," "voices," "memoirs," and "interviews" do not perfectly exemplify *testimonio* (p. 530). This methodology was intentionally

selected because it highlights the political experiences of being a farmworking woman in the U.S.

The theoretical perspective utilized is LatCrit, which stems from critical race perspectives and de-colonial perspectives (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Valdes, 2005). These specific theoretical perspectives are important toward addressing the intersectionality's *campesinas*. Furthermore, intersectionality is critical towards discussing the experiences and dynamics that farmworking women experience in the U.S. Critical Race Theory (CRT; Valdes, 2005) is a critical component of LatCrit (Matsuda, 1991). LatCrit was born out of CRT and the need to develop a theory that highlights the unique experiences of Latinx people in the U.S. and the world (Hernandez, 1997). McDowell and Hernandez (2010) state, "We use the term decolonialization to position ourselves within colonial history of the Americas, and to challenge and interrupt knowledge production, reproduction, and the practices that emerge from colonialism" (p. 95). It is important to apply de-colonial and critical race perspective in talking about the unique experiences of racism, classism, environmental racism, sexism, misogyny and constant threat of detention and deportation. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the roles of colonization within the stories of Latinx people and specifically farmworking women. Colonization continues to affect farmworking women and is a large driving factor of their forced immigration due to poverty and violence that has displaced them from the land they were born in. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) state that LatCrit is "concerned with a progressive sense of a coalitional Latina/Latino pan-ethnicity and addresses issues often ignored by critical race theorists such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality." (p. 311-312) Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) further emphasize the importance

of intersectionality regarding the Latinx community. Therefore, LatCrit was chosen as the most appropriate theory to utilize for this study.

LatCrit connects liberation and agency for the Latinx community that is critical towards liberation. LatCrit is critical of the dynamic structures that uniquely oppress Latinx people while simultaneously addressing the dynamic identities of Latinx people. LatCrit is important due to the large number of pan-ethnic generalizations of Latinx people as a monolithic in the global context (Arredondo et al., 2014). Furthermore, an aspect of conducting de-colonial research is the importance of centralizing the experiences and voices of those who are directly impacted and affected, critical components of LatCrit (Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). Furthermore, LatCrit challenges mainstream theories towards creating a narrative, reality, and framework that is more applicable to the intricacies of the Latinx experience in the U.S. (Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). This is critical in a time where the politics and society of the U.S. are inherently violent and replicate a new wave of colonization towards Latinx people that is rooted in racism.

Solorzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001) further highlight the role of LatCrit in regard to resistance. LatCrit is a theory of resistance, which is central to studying the experiences of farmworking Mexican women. The farmworking community has a long history of being resistant in their own ways that might look different but have been critical towards their experiences. This dissertation's central role highlighted how farmworking Mexican women resist oppression in their lived experiences and how resistance looks and manifests itself in their everyday life. It is critical to highlight that resistance looks different for different communities due to privilege and oppression. Furthermore, resistance does not always have to be performed in forms of political resistance and also should be discusses in the ways that communities and specifically Latinx

communities chose to be resilient despite the intersectional issues they face in their everyday lives.

Chapter 3

> I did start taking it more seriously, not because I particularly cared about where I ended up, but because I understood that my future was inextricably tied to my family's, and I wanted their story to end somewhere other than those fields. (Rocha, 2020)

Methods

Research Design

Qualitative research is deemed by various scholars in the field of psychology as an effective method towards researching the lived experiences of Latinx people in the U.S. (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018; Hall et al., 2016). Delgado-Romero, Singh & De Los Santos (2018) state that qualitative methods are culturally compatible with Latinx communities due to the cultural value of *personalismo* that the authors state is "a preference for close personal attention in relationships" (p. 320). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative form of finding ways of knowing that often has a writer or person telling a story or way of being (Kim, 2016) . This form of inquiry often has two parts or multiple parts of the story. As such, it is important to situate this study within the realm of narrative inquiry with a specific emphasis on *testimonios*.

Narrative analysis and thematic analysis were utilized within this study to organize and make sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher cycled through data collection, memoing, coding, and analysis based on her ability to recruit and transcribe interviews (Green, 2019; Saldana, 2016). The researcher and research assistants memoed after every interview was coded (Saldana, 2012). Memos are considered "brain dumps" (Saldana, 2012, p.41) of the

process of research, coding, and are ways to reflect on the data that the researcher is interacting with.

This study was conducted in Spanish and the interviews were coded in Spanish. Bilingual researchers who could read and write in Spanish completed the transcriptions (as suggested by Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Furthermore, it is important to address the positionality of the researcher and its relation to the selection of the site of this study. The researcher grew up in the Central Valley and decided on the specific location of the Central Valley of California due to connection to the community, role as a social worker, and importance of research in this part of California. This allowed the researcher to have a uniquely qualified positionality to conduct this study. Given that *campesinas* disclosed mixed immigration status of their families, sexual assault, discrimination, and their own documentation status, it was very important that they felt that they could trust the researcher. The researcher did this by disclosing their own experience with farm work, as well as her family heritage and origins in Mexico. Additionally, some participants have known the researcher since she was a child, which provided participants with familiarity with the researcher and her family, despite her taking on this new role of researcher.

Testimonios

Testimonios were utilized for this dissertation. Narrative inquiry posits that "stories may emerge from a story told to the researcher" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 112). Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to co-construct a story that can be very specific to a situation, place, or emotion. Narratives can be very specific or very broad and sometimes include very specific events that are being inquired about by the researcher. *Testimonios* is considered a branch of narrative inquiry and has been deemed one of the most appropriate methodologies for working

with Latinx communities (Balderas et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). This approach is in alignment with cultural values of storytelling that is often present within Latinx communities. Furthermore, one of the main methodological analysis strategies within narrative inquiry has been thematic analysis as it allows for salient themes within the stories and aids in the story formation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Testimonios was born through oral histories, a way of storytelling and creating counter narratives that are based on political resistance and highlighting oppression of people who have been historically marginalized (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Delgado Bernal & Carmona, 2012). *Testimonios* depicts "a first person oral or written account, drawing on experiential, self-conscious narrative practice to articulate an urgent voicing of something which bears witness" (Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012, p. 525). Delgado-Bernal (2009) indicates that "[i]n listening to the story of one, we learn about the conditions of many" (p. 368) which is relevant to sharing the *testimonios* of *campesinas* in this study *Testimonio* further acts as a way to call truth into power.

Testimonio utilizes the writer and researcher as a co-constructor of knowledge and experiences (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2009; Elenes 2013). Delgado Bernal et al. (2009) call this being a *testimonialista* as someone who participates and is part of the *testimonio*. Not only is the researcher a witness in the story but an active participant in the story, which shifts the power dynamics. Delgado Bernal et al. (2009) further state that researcher and participants become "*emparejados"(*p. 368) when this process occurs. Delgado Bernal and colleagues (2009) further state: "listening to, sharing and transcending struggles, pain, hopes and dreams yields a type of interdependent solidarity or *in lak'ech*, a Mayan philosophy that can be translated as "*Tu eres mi otro yo*" or "You are my other me" (p. 368). *Testimonios* challenges the current production of

knowledge and is a political and intentional stance against other methodologies (Bernal et al., 2012).

Testimonios methodology connects the teachings of Anzaldúa and *nepantla,* which is critical in tell in the stories of farmworking women. For the purpose of this study, "[n]epantla is the Nahuatl word for the land in the middle, which is considered a space of renovation" (Elenes, 2013, p. 134). Elenes (2013) discussed the different stages of *conocimiento* by Anzaldúa, in which *nepantla* is one of the stages. *Nepantla* is a point of critical analysis of the current lived experiences of people living in the space in between (Elenes, 2013). *Nepantla* is a critical way of analyzing the experiences of farmworkers as they engage in the creation of new lived experiences and lives in the U.S. Farmworking women are active participants in creating new worlds for themselves, their families, communities and the world. *Nepantla* is a place where transformation occurs in the *conocimiento* process (Elenes, 2013).

Testimonios are not an act of giving voice to the voiceless but forcing academia to listen to people who are not listened to (Elenes, 2013). Therefore, a key component of *testimonios* is to listen while also sharing the researcher's story with participants (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Elenes, 2013). Thematic analysis has been deemed to be a flexible and prominent tool within narrative inquiry and *testimonios* (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cantu, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to co-construct the *testimonios* of farmworking women by identifying the most salient stories towards creating and solidifying the *testimonios* of resistance, oppression, and resiliency (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

LatCrit Tenets

LatCrit was chosen as the most appropriate theory to utilize for this study. It is important to acknowledge the diverse set of experiences that Latinas experience due to intersectionality,

sexism, colorism, immigration status and other issues that are rooted in colonialism and oppression. Furthermore, LatCrit links theory, practice and community (Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). LatCrit centralizes race, racism and intersectionality to issues of subordination for Latinx people. The specific tenets from LatCrit used for this project included the lens of being aware of the specific issues of colonization, colorism, racism, immigration enforcement, exploitation and systematic oppression that are unique to the Latinx community (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). It is important to utilize this lens when it comes to farmworking Latina women. Furthermore, Liberation Psychology (Martin-Baró, 1996, Montero, 2011) acknowledges the historical implications for this specific community and the importance of centering the voice of *campesinas* in the U.S. Utilizing borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2007) contextualized the history of the land that farmworking women cultivate and further centers the role of colonization within the context of California. The land that many women work on is land that was once indigenous, and therefore belonged to many of the ancestors of some of the women. This dissertation utilized LatCrit as a guiding theoretical framework while utilizing *testimonios* as a method to guide the creation of the *testimonios* of *campesinas*.

It is critically important when utilizing LatCrit to utilize a methodology that aligns with the theoretical framework. Furthermore, Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) discuss the ways in which *testimonios* provide political and consciousness in storytelling that is unique and goes back to the history of Latin America. It is important to utilize a framework that aligns with the culture and traditions of participants. Furthermore, Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) state that a "*testimonio* is intentional and political" (2012, p. 525). Therefore, *testimonios* as a method coupled with LatCrit is the most appropriate approach to counter storytelling the experiences and stories of farmworking women.

A tenet within LatCrit that has guided this research is community building and centering community as a means of resistance. A key guiding tenet that was demonstrated in the data is the centrality of intersectionality and more specifically, racism and the gendered experience that *campesinas* experience. Secondly, this dissertation aims to challenge the dominant discourse of campesinas by highlighting their resiliency factors. Thirdly, this work has a commitment to social justice by constructing testimonios that are exchanged with *campesinas*. Fourth, this dissertation created knowledge through the experiences of campesinas (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Procedures

Sample and Recruitment

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Hays & Singh, 2012) in the Central Valley of California. Participants recruited lived in Tulare and Kern County. Participants were recruited through Facebook groups exclusive to the area where people sell items, look for jobs, or post about possible immigration raids. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher deemed this to be the safest way to recruit participants. Participants were recruited primarily in Kern and Tulare county due to the large agricultural community situated in these counties. The researcher is from this area which created some trust with community members. This is exceptionally important due to the current political climate in the area and nationally. The area can be conservative and therefore can create some sense of distrust amongst community members. The interviews were solely conducted in Spanish and ranged from 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours and 45 minutes. Five out of the 9 participants knew of the researcher from childhood. The remaining four discussed with researcher the vulnerabilities of contacting a stranger to discuss such intimate parts of their lives.

It was of extreme importance that all interviews were conducted in Spanish to ensure the authenticity of experiences were captured and that participants felt the most comfortable in sharing their *testimonios* (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). The researcher screened the interview questions with one community member to ensure accessibility and understanding. This community member had been a *campesina* for about ten years in the area and no longer works as a *campesina.* Additionally, the researcher conducted a mock interview with another community member to develop probes and ensure that probes were linguistically appropriate.

Data Collection

Two interviews were conducted in the Fall of 2020 and the remaining 7 interviews were conducted in the Winter of 2021. Seven of the 9 interviews were conducted during the off-season of farm work in the Central Valley. They were conducted in December of 2020 and January of 2021. This was intentionally done in order to ensure that participants had sufficient time outside of work to participate. Peak season for farm works means commuting up to an hour to work, which might have hindered them from participating. All interviews were conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19 and multiple stay-at-home orders in California. This approach ensured that the safety of either participants or researcher were not compromised during data collection.

Interviews were semi-structured that varied based on each *campesina's testimonio* and experience. The researcher gave participants the options of choosing which language the interviews were to be conducted. Seven interviews were conducted in Spanish and 2 were conducted with a mixture of English and Spanish but were primarily in Spanish. This was due to the level of comfortability of participants with utilizing both as they felt comfortable expressing themselves. Given the vulnerability of the population, and the complete shift to virtual platforms, participants verbally consented to participate in the study. The researcher read the consent

verbally and asked participants if they had any questions and shared that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Research Team

To transcribe and code the interviews, the researcher recruited two research assistants, a current master's student and a recently graduated student with a bachelor's degree. The research assistants identify as Latinx, first-generation students from immigrant households. They were not from the area which allowed for some outside perspectives within this research study. One important component of conducting qualitative research is the use of a research team. Conducting qualitative research with a research team allows for scientific inquiry and reflectivity to voice individual perspectives and how individuals experience the data (Kim, 2016). To triangulate findings, the research team was utilized to assist with transcribing and coding interviews. Everyone involved in this research project completed the University of Georgia's CITI training per IRB requirements. Research assistants engaged in a positionality exercise in which they were asked to write subjectivity statements as part of this study. Both research assistants were not familiar with farm work and do not have close family members engaging with farm work. Research assistants were connected to the community due to shared identities as Latina women and women of color in the U.S. Their unique understandings of words, colloquialisms, and ability to speak Spanish allowed them to more deeply understand and code the experiences of *campesinas* in this study.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis allowed for the researcher to highlight what were the most salient themes within the *testimonios* of *campesinas*, which allowed for recurrent and most salient themes in their *testimonios* to be highlighted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The importance of this

approach was to highlight the most prominent factors within their *testimonios*. Additionally, thematic analysis allowed for the co-construction and triangulation between researcher and participant (Kim et al., 2017).

Research assistants and researcher coded two interviews to consensus to reach uniformity of thematic coding. This was conducted via zoom and thorough discussions of coding, and coding per paragraphs of the transcripts. The coding and coding to consensus was all conducted in Spanish. Research assistants and researcher coded individually the remaining 7 interviews. researcher sent participants their interviews to verify their interviews. Out of the 9 participants, only two participants verified their interviews.

The research team coded 2 interviews as a group to consensus utilizing N Vivo 12. The team discussed and co-created 44 codes that were inductive based on the t*estimonios* of the participants. The codes were utilized to thematically organize the *testimonios* (Balderas et al, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006). These were created to visualize, at the end of coding, the salient themes while capturing the *testimonios* that *campesinas* experience. Additionally, not every *campesina* experienced every theme. Furthermore, the lead researcher identified 20 salient themes that every *campesina* identified to construct one *testimonio*. The researcher further narrowed the themes to 9 salient themes and 11 sub-themes to co-construct the narrative of salient themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process was informed by LatCrit and *testimonios* as creating counter-stories to the narratives of *campesinas* (Balderas & et al., 2006). Through this lens, the data was analyzed, and inductive themes were created (Braun & Clarke, 2006) . Additionally, the utilization of themes allowed the organization of the consistent themes of their *testimonios* to "prioritize and honor the participants' voices" (Saldana, 2015, p. 74). The lead

researcher additionally integrated her own narrative and shared her own narrative of connectivity to participants in spite of not knowing some of them prior to the interview (Kim et al., 2017).

Subjectivity Statement

As a researcher, it is important to reflect on the use of myself in the research process. I am a first-generation college student that grew up in the Central Valley of California and more specifically, McFarland. I had the immense privilege to have been encouraged to attend college while attending high school at McFarland High School. After graduating high school, I attended the University of California, Irvine (UCI) as a political science major. I later changed my major to Chicana/o Latina/o Studies and Sociology. During my time at UCI, I had the privilege of interactinv with people from different social and geographical locations. While at UCI, it was the first time that I realized that statistically I had several risk factors for not completing my degree: I was a self-identified Latina from rural California, first generation, and from a single parent household. I was very fortunate to have been mentored and supported by mentors at the Cross-Cultural Center, the counseling center, and the social science department during my time there. Mentors like Dr. Jessica Ortega, Dra. Rosa, Dr. Sereseres and multiple other faculty and staff who believed I had what it took to attend graduate school encouraged me to pursue higher education. My experience while at UCI set the foundation for my attendance to graduate school at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, which re-directed my life. While at the University of Michigan, I was encouraged by friends to apply to and attend the University of Georgia's Counseling Psychology program to work with Dr. Delgado Romero. This experience has forever changed my perspective, my life, my positionality, and how I view my work, myself and my community. Pursuing a Ph.D. has allowed me to stand on the shoulders of my family and their work and sacrifices.

I am a Latina and I come from a family of immigrants. I grew up thinking that there were few options in regard to career choices. I had the perception that working with the earth was the only job or work that was accessible to me. With time, college became something that was periodically discussed within my family. College was discussed more in my household due to my mother's experiences. Since my mother was not allowed to attend school, my mother was adamant about providing me with different opportunities that she was not afforded. Additionally, I was put into college prep classes after I was removed from English Language Development (ELD) classes. This meant that I was put in classes where my peers and their families were also discussing college at home. This also gave my family the affirmation that I would be college-bound when I applied. A additional motivator were college counselors that supported me in applying to college and often had conversations with my mother at church or in community settings in which they alluded to me being college bound. Even while attending college, there was an expectation that I would return to work and live in my community soon after, and work in other capacity with them outside of the fields. Over time I realized that graduate school and advanced graduate degrees might be options for me.

Although I was a good student, the primary reason that I was encouraged to pursue higher education while many of my peer were not, was my mother. My mother was only allowed to attend school through *la primaria* (6^{th} grade) in Mexico. She was prohibited from attending high school in the U.S. because her father felt that educating women was a "waste of time" because all my mother was going to do was have children. Therefore at age 12 she started working rather than going to school. During my childhood, my mother reminded me of all the years she spent traveling all over California to pick fruit. Her time was spent in Zacatecas, Mexico during the off seasons, which she considered to be her home as a child. She did not have a stable home in the

U.S. and spent her time living in overcrowded apartments that were often transitional homes for farmworkers in California. She ensured that I was aware that I come from a family and generations of people who have done the hardest jobs in the U.S. so that I would value the opportunity to obtain an education. My mother made sure that I worked in the fields so that I was truly aware of the incredible privilege of having other options in my life.

Given my very close experiences with farmworking women in the Central Valley of California, it is important that I reflected on my own assumptions as a racially ambiguous and White adjacent, educated Latina. During this process, I thought it was important to not generalize my families experiences to other people's experiences in the U.S. Due to my grandfather being a *bracero*, documentation status has not been an issue within my family and that is somewhat different for farmworking communities. The Bracero Program was created by the U.S. during WWII to recruit cheap labor in Mexico. Due to my close ties and my own experience as a farmworker, it is important that this study highlights the diverse array of experiences farmworking women and communities experience.

When I interviewed participants, I was 29 years old and a fourth year in a Ph.D. program. In addition, I knew most of the women from my childhood, and I hope that they felt empowered to share and know that their information was confidential. I interviewed people from surrounding towns where I grew up. Due to my own connection to the community, it was also important that I recruited *campesinas* from surrounding towns that did not know me so intimately to ensure that they felt safe sharing their experiences freely. My uncle is a contractor in the community, and it was important for me to not interview people who might feel like they may experience retaliation or consequences regarding their jobs. Not everyone in my community works with my uncle but I

wanted people to feel secure that their information would not be shared with my uncle or other community members.

Furthermore, my role as a graduate student and as someone that has left the community, it is important to acknowledge that things have changed and continue to shift in the community. It was important that I reflect on my insider/outsider status in my hometown and in the Central Valley.

Chapter 4

> When I wander around my neighborhood, I picture how many generations of farmworkers have lived and died here, how many bodies have decayed and resisted here, and I allow myself to feel a little hope (Rocha, 2020)

Results

This chapter presents the narratives of Mexican *campesinas* in the Central Valley of California, who identify as women and have worked as laborers in agricultural fields within the last two years. All nine participants were campesinas who worked in the fields. It is important to differentiate between packing houses and field work. Packing houses are also considered part of farmwork but the nature of the work often looks different due to exposure to the elements in the fields (e.g., extreme heat, dirt, cold weather, and wet conditions). The participants specifically identified as women who were of Mexican descent. Seven out of 9 participants identified as foreign-born and migrated to the U.S. Seven out of 9 participants were undocumented when they arrived in the U.S. Three out of the 7 participants who immigrated to the U.S. continued to be undocumented people in the U.S. during this study. The lead researcher assigned participants a pseudonym for privacy reasons. The following sections highlight the most common themes within participants' narratives and highlight their unique experiences. Forty-one codes were identified by the research team within the narratives of the women. This dissertation will highlight approximately 20 themes that were derived from the narratives of participants. This study particularly explored Mexican *campesinas* perspectives on their work amid the COVID-19 pandemic, being declared essential workers, and their experiences as women in a field of work that was historically male.

Note that in this section I provide the verbatim Spanish quotes from the participants and then I provide a translation into English, which I translated after analysis was completed. Some participants spoke in both Spanish and English, and direct quotes are presented in English when appropriate.

Testimonio **Themes**

Family

Family is a main motivator of *campesinas*' work and was a main theme highlighted within their *testimonios*. *Campesinas* mentioned that the source of their resiliency was their children and family. *Campesinas* shared the significance of their children and the role they played as motivators to create a different world for their children. Multiple *campesinas* discussed the importance of immigrating to this country to give their children a different childhood than they experienced. Many of the *campesinas* shared that they had impactful experiences as children or as young adults that shifted the trajectory of their lives. For most women, these impactful experiences shaped their current circumstances and for many, played a significant role in their desire to migrate to the U.S. *Campesinas* discussed the ways they are attempting to address intergenerational trauma and create change in the lives of their children. The participants are looking at their own experiences and doing their best to shift and change the narratives of their families and communities. When asked about her family, Isabel shared

> *Nuestra mentalidad, pues yo no voy a hacer lo mismo, yo no, yo voy a tratar de estar sano mentalmente y pues afortunadamente mi papá sí, él trabajaba mucho, pero. Siempre estuvo para nosotros, ajá entonces, afortunadamente no es, no, no nos fue tan mal como en otras familias que dices, bueno, los dos fueron malos, entonces teníamos el apoyo de mi papá y él pues prácticamente era de que bueno tienen que aprender a sobrevivir solos.*

Entonces nosotros tratamos de sobrevivir solos, pero de una manera, tratamos de hacerlo las cosas, lo más correctamente que pudiéramos, entonces yo creo que esa fue nuestra. Manera de sobrellevar las cosas, hacer todo para que nuestra condición cambiará. (Isabel)

Our mentality is that well, I am not going to do the same, I am going to try to heal mentally and well, I am very fortunate that my dad did, he worked a lot but he was always there. So, luckily, it's not, it wasn't that bad like in other families that you talk about, well, where both were bad. Well, we had the support from my dad and he practically was the good we had to learn and survive alone. We tried to survive on our own but in a way that we tried to do things alone or the tried best of our ability to do things well or right. I think that was our way of managing things in hopes that our conditions would change. (Isabel)

Isabel's mother had mental health issues that affected her childhood and exposed her to situations that she felt were not age appropriate. Isabel stated that her family's way of coping is by doing things as well as possible to mitigate some of the negative experiences she had with her mother growing up. Isabel states in other parts of the interview that she would like her children to have a different childhood than herself and access to a healthy life holistically. Isabel stated that migrating to the U.S. is part of the undoing process of her own experiences in hopes that her children have a better life. Many participants alluded to this undoing and shifting of experiences and alluded to financial struggles but centered on the overall safety and wellness of their children as a way of improving their conditions. Blanca shared:

> No, no yo pienso que no podría porque como te digo para mí fue bien difícil cuando se murió mi papa... Porque mi mama nos dejó solas. Entre yo lo que menos quería dejar mis hijas solas. (Blanca).
>
> No, no that's what I think that I would not be able to because like I told you, for me it was really difficult when my dad died…because my mother left us alone. I, at least did not want to leave my daughters on their own. (Blanca)

Blanca stated that she had a challenging time when her father died because he was the sole provider in her family, therefore her mother had to leave for the U.S. to work and provide. This forced Blanca to become a second parent to her siblings at the age of 14. She was the person in charge of ensuring her household ran efficiently and her siblings were taken care of. She was determined not to repeat the same generational family trauma she herself had experienced and wanted to give her daughters a dissimilar experience. All the *campesinas* centralized this *testimonio* about disrupting their own difficult childhood trauma experiences. Xochitl stated:

> And being born here, you know they felt that It's not a, it's not a bad job, is just that we have better opportunities and we just decided to stay in stay there not grow so it was hard like I remember, you know it's your 15 like you've never worked in your life and you know you're supposed to work. Like if you've been there like all your life like it's like it's fast paced like you gotta move. (Xochitl)

Xochitl was born in the U.S. and had a different experience with engaging with farm work. For her it was a way for her parents to encourage her to obtain her education and leave farm work. For varied reasons, this was not possible for Xochitl. Citlali reflected on her experience her father dying in Mexico. Citlali shared

Pero cuando él estuvo enfermo y él no duro, enfermo, como un mes, nada más duro, enfermo. Entonces, yo si hubiera querido ir, pero a la vez no me arriesgué a ir porque es bien difícil Maritza, este estás entre la espada y la pared, por un lado, están tus padres y Por otro lado está tu familia. (Citlali)

But when he was sick and he did not last a long time sick. He was sick for about a month before he died. And well, I would have liked to have gone to see him. I did not want to risk going because it is very difficult Maritza, you are in between a rock and a hard place, on one side it is your parents and on the other side, it is your family. (Citlali)

Another experience *campesinas* endured is losing family members in Mexico and the inaccessibility to grieve in traditional ways that are customary. *Campesinas* who identified as undocumented were unable to go to the place of the death of their family members and say goodbye. This put *campesinas* in the position of feeling like they needed to pick between their children and parents. Many of them were faced with the difficult choice of choosing to stay in the U.S. due to their livelihood despite being needed in Mexico. Daniella shared

No veníamos con la ilusión de hacer dólares, no. Solo, queríamos un lugar donde vivir seguras. Era todo lo que queríamos, era un lugar para vivir. Y, no sonábamos, no teníamos ambiciones. Solo queríamos vivir y que la familia estuviera completa. Que no asesinaran a ningún miembro de nuestra familia, era todo lo que queríamos. (Daniella)

No, we did not come with the hope to make dollars, no. All we wanted is a place to feel safe. That is all that we wanted, a place to live. And we did not dream, we did not have ambitions. We only wanted to live and that our family would be complete. We wanted no one in our family to be murdered, that is all we wanted. (Daniella)

Overall, key findings indicate that participants engaged with farm work directly by way of their families and with their families. All workers were introduced to farm work by their families. For many, if not all, they began working with their family members, which helped with the harshness of the experience. Additionally, they felt like they were not as exposed to discrimination and mistreatment due to this experience. Jennifer stated:

> *No, no hasta, eso no me ha pasado, no sé si sea porque pues he trabajado con mi esposo siempre. Que siempre está conmigo, no sé si sea eso.* (Jennifer)
>
> No, no, surprisingly, that has not happened to me. I am not sure if it is because I have worked with my husband always. He is always with me; I am not sure if it is that. (Jennifer)

This is a common experience for all the women interviewed where they felt protected because they worked with a family member who also helped them become acquainted with the work. Additionally, family plays a key role as a driver, motivator, and over all drive to re-imagine ways of being in the world that women share has allowed them and propelled them to continue engaging with farm work. Something that is interesting is that women did not often mention money. One to two participants mentioned being underpaid within their work but did not centralize money as a pathway to healing. Many of women's conversations about their work and family discussed wanting something better but it related to opportunity and well-being more than financial mobility. *Campesinas* overall hopes and dreams for their families were safety, happiness, and wellness.

1a. Childhood

Campesinas testimonios of childhood are important because they frame the thoughts, experiences, and future directions of *campesinas.* Campesinas have shared that many of their

desires to continue is to heal the experiences they had for future generations. They utilize their experiences to frame healing of intergenerational trauma and healing. Their own experiences frame how they would like to re-imagine their experiences, thoughts, and future directions for their lives. Roxanna discusses that she does not remember what her first day of work was like because she was so young. Roxanna shares that it was so long ago that she imagines that the first couple of days were great because it was a new experience, and she was outside. Roxanna shared that as a child, she imagined that she had rose colored glasses regarding work because it was a new experience. Roxanna is 60 years old and started working in the fields around the age of 8 or 9. When asked about her first days of work, Roxanna responded

> *Pues no este (pausa)a ahorita, a este tiempo, no, no te puedo decir que recuerdo yo, pero me imagino que es como. Como un niño, tú los llevas y es una experiencia y es algo bonito porque es algo diferente a lo que estás tú en tú casa, entonces se te hace algo bien padre que sale, sí que andas acá y esto. Todo lo ves bonito.* (Roxanna)
>
> Well, no (pause) now, at this time, I can't say that I remember but I imagine that it is like when you are child… you take them somewhere and it is a new experience and it is something nice because it is something that is different than being at home and well you think it is something really cool, and you are doing things over there and here. You see everything as nice. (Roxanna)

Roxanna additionally shared that she was not able to go to school despite spending half of her childhood in the U.S. She was born in Mexico, but her family would immigrate to the U.S. to work the harvest seasons and migrate back to Mexico during the winter. Roxanna would work alongside her siblings and parents. Additionally, she shared that her parents did not prioritize education, most especially for a woman. She shared that her parents viewed women as people

who would marry and have children, therefore there was no need to invest in her education specifically. She shared that to be a homemaker and raise children, there was no need for education. This sentiment is something that was a common narrative for *campesinas* from Roxanna's generation and even more so for women who worked in farm labor. Roxanna highlighted that her parents overlooked the quality of her future husband therefore not investing in the wellness and survival of the women they raised. Roxanna shared that she felt that her parents overlooked her future:

> *Y otra vez los mismo, la misma rutina. Ósea, por eso fue la razón de que muy poco fuimos a la escuela nosotros... Porque pues a lo mejor los papás de uno le daban prioridad al trabajo. Decían que uno de mujer, pues para qué querías estudio que, al cabo, pues te vas a casar y vas a ser ama de casa, mama de hijos, entonces no necesitabas mucho estudio para eso. Pero nunca se ponían a pensar quien sabe qué clase de hombre te fuera a toca. Que necesitabas tener tu un futuro. Pero bueno, anyway, dijo el Gabacho* (Roxanna)
>
> Again, the same thing, the same routine. That was the reason why we did not really go to school…Because maybe our parents gave priority to work. They would say that us as women, well, what do we need to study if we will be getting married and becoming house makers, and mothers. And well to them, you don't need much education to be a mother or home maker. But they never thought to think, "well I wonder what kind of man my daughter will marry" or the kind of future you may have. Oh well, anyway, said the Gabacho (white man). (Roxanna)

Roxanna's sentiment highlights the patriarchal structures within the family systems within Mexican families and additionally, the system that was present during her young

adulthood and childhood. Roxanna spoke of her experience with acceptance of her experience but highlighted the flaws and specific hurdles and challenges *campesinas* who began working at an early age. Roxanna had the awareness to know that her parents' way of viewing her was flawed and left her ill-prepared for the future. Roxanna was aware of the decisions made by her parents that were specifically tied to her gender. This gendered experience is common for women of Roxanna's generation and illustrates the ways that *campesinas'* experiences can be gendered and shape their future from birth. It is important to highlight how patriarchy shapes the trajectories and livelihoods of *campesinas*. These experiences continue to impact women, their children, and families.

Blanca discussed how her own childhood shaped the parent she wishes to be for her children. She discusses how adamant she was about being present in her daughters lives despite being undocumented and facing struggles regarding her documentation status. This was a prevalent theme for the women who were or are undocumented. They grappled with the notion of being in their children's lives to recreate a life that feels supportive to their children in the U.S. in spite of sacrificing spending time with their loved ones in another country. Blanca additionally highlighted how she attempts to function differently than her mother and the ways she has been intentional about her politics of mothering. She has been adamant of mothering differently than her mother. Blanca has centered on disrupting generational trauma and poverty. Blanca admitted that she has not been perfect but has done her best given that she has felt that she was not mothered in ways that felt healthy due to impactful life events such as her father dying when she was young. Blanca has been attempting to shift the narrative of her daughters to move beyond surviving to thriving. Blanca reflected on her experiences as a mother here:

Mm-hmm. Es algo bien difícil que vivimos, pero a la mejor eso me ha hecho (pausa) yo no digo que estoy la mama perfecta, pero trato de hacer lo que no fueron para mí. (Blanca)

Mm-hmmm. It is something very difficult that we lived through, but maybe that has made me (pause) well I am not saying I am the perfect mother, but I try to be what they were not for me growing up. (Blanca)

Campesinas are attempting to utilize their own experiences of how to shift the narrative for their children and narratives. They are working to create something new and reimagine a life for their communities and children's that are centered in loving their children in ways that are different. They are aware that they are not perfect and are aware of the unique hardships. *Campesinas* are creating a different future for their children while providing critical sustenance for the country. They are creating a new and different world with extremely limited resources and knowledge and consistently showing up and doing the best they can. *Campesinas* are utilizing the love for their communities and children as fuel to propel them in the creation of a new world for future generations of children in the rural areas of California.

2. El Campo/Seasonal Work

El Campo/Seasonal work portrays diverse experiences in the fields. Every participant has a unique experience in coming into becoming a *campesina.* Much of participants work in the fields is rooted in working with family. *Campesinas* highlighted the complex experiences of working in farm work such as the issues with the environment, the back-breaking aspect of the labor and the juxtaposition of how they find beauty within their work at times. When about her experiences in different farm work, Blanca shared:

Muchísima calor, muchísima. Entonces ahora pues ya lo acondicionado y lo hicieron más bonito, pero me gusto más afuera porque tienes menos presión (pausa) Adentro es mucho presión. Entonces yo me gusto mas afuera. (Blanca).

It is very, very hot. And well, now, well now, the air conditioning makes it nicer, but I still like being outside more because you have less pressure (pause). Inside is a lot of pressure so I like working outside more. (Blanca)

For many *campesinas*, they did not like working inside packing houses because they felt like they experience different stressors and tensions that they would not have otherwise experienced. *Campesinas* expressed feelings of more pressure to work more quickly within packing houses. Different participants had different experiences as to why they preferred one workspace versus another. Every participant also shared that the people, company, supervisors, and foremen impacted their work experiences. The people they worked with mitigated how challenging they found their work and how much they enjoyed their jobs. All participants highlighted the effects that the weather had on their bodies, mental health, and work experiences. Environmental factors posed great challenges to work that is difficult without the additives of climate shifts and seasonal shifts. When asked about adjusting to farm work, Jennifer shared:

Y si nos costó mucho trabajo y, a pesar de que a como a mí, en mi experiencia de lo que fueron la primera semana, pues nos enfermamos, nos dio fiebre y este, pues un dolor fatal de las manos del cuerpo, porque si realmente hasta las pestañas del frío, como te mojas por el sereno, la la brisa, se hacía hielo en las pestañas, lo que es la ceja. Y mi cara diaria, bien quemada del frío, no podíamos mover las manos, se me congelaban y pues este hasta que no agarras calor en tu cuerpo de andar rápido, pero si fue solo una semana (Jennifer)

> And it cost us a lot of work and well in spite of that for me, in my experience, the first week was the worst because we got sick, got a fever, and our hands hurt so bad and so did our bodies. Because in reality, even our eyelashes hurt from the cold, and because you get wet because of the winter, and the breeze causes even your eyelashes and eyebrows to freeze. And my face is always burnt from the cold, we could not move our hands and they would freeze and well not until we created heat in our bodies were, we were able to move more quickly, but that was only one week of work. (Jennifer)

Here, Jennifer discusses the obstacles of the weather that made her first days of working in the fields challenging. She shared that the difficulty of the work with the weather conditions created physical ailments such as a fever and intense body aches. Since she began her experience as a farmworker during the winter, she stated that it was exceedingly difficult to warm her body while at work. She stated that it was incredibly challenging to adjust to her work. Jennifer also began with *"La Poda,"* which is a pruning process of cutting branches to prepare grape vineyards for the Spring. This is one of the seasons included in the process of growing grapes, which takes place in the winter and according to participants, is work performed by men due to the need to carry heavy bypass loopers to cut branches. Daniella shared her experience of some of the challenges on hard days in farm work here:

> *Ay que sacar la uva en una caretilla, a veces la tierra esta floja, y tu estas puchando mucho par apoder sacar la caretilla con todas las bandejas llenas de uva. Ya cuando andas como en el miércoles. El cuerpo anda tan cansado que (pause) que no es tan gracioso como habeses parece en la televisión. Yo veo cuando pasan el trabajo, y se mira bonito. Pero cuando estás trabajando es verdaderamente duro. Y todo depende del calor de la temporada.* (Daniella)

> We have to take out the wheel barrow and sometimes the dirt is so loose, and you are pushing a lot to be able to take it out with all the trays full of grapes. And when you are reaching Wednesday, your body is so tired that (pause) that it is not so great like sometimes it looks on TV. I see when they broadcast our work and I think it looks nice. But when you are work, it is in reality very hard. And it depends on the heat and season. (Daniella)

Daniella discussed her experience of the regular harvest season of grapes. Daniella states that on some challenging days she is unable to take the wheelbarrow full of grape trays that are stacked on each other out of the groove. Daniella described the middle of the week as being the hardest day of the week for her because exhaustion from the earlier part of the week is carrying over. The amount of physical strength required for a week of work takes a toll on *campesinas*. Daniella shared that sometimes when experiences of the fields are portrayed on television, their experiences are glamorized because the fields look pretty. And when working, it is arduous work and the variation in climates based on the season increases how challenging farm work can be for *campesinas*. Daniella highlights the glamourization of farm work that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when *campesinxs* were glamorized. Daniella's experience highlights the glamourization that occurred without changes to their wages. When asked about her work, Marisol shared

> *Porque me encanta mi trabajo, me me encanta el campo, mi hija. Y Pues aquí voy a seguir, si Dios me lo permite en el campo. Yo digo hasta que Dios quiera vivir en el campo. Y, a veces, me dice mi viejo, (pausa) porque ya de verdad mi hija el calor.* (Marisol)

> Because I love my work in the fields, my daughter. And well, I will continue being here if God allows me to continue working in the fields. I think until God allows me to work in the fields. And sometimes, my man tells me (pause)because my daughter, the heat. (Marisol)

Marisol highlighted that she loves her job. Five out of the 9 participants shared that they loved their jobs and felt that nothing else would not feel like the right job for them. Marisol highlighted that the weather does make it more challenging to complete her job and most especially during the summer months in which the temperatures can reach as high as 115 in some areas of the Central Valley. It is important to note that other places in California where farm work is completed, temperatures can reach up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. When asked about challenging seasons of work, Citlali shared

> *mmmmm para mí ha sido más difícil ha sido la poda de la viña. Para mí ha sido el más difícil. (pausa) Incluso, no he aprendido hacer muy bien ese trabajo.* (Citlali)
>
> mmm for me what has been the most challenging has been the pruning of the vine. Because it has been the most difficult. (Pause) actually, I have not learned that job very well. (Citlali)

Citlali references the season of *"La Poda"* (pruning of the vines) as being the most challenging job to do. She shared that she has not mastered how to do that job despite working in the fields for multiple years. All women mentioned the source of their resiliency within life and their work are their children and family. They center the love they have for their families and the desire to build healthy and stable families.

Something that is discussed within the realms in society when it comes to farm work is the notion that it is unskilled labor. Something that all women highlighted is the need of the

knowledge base and skill required to effectively do farm work well. People who begin as farmworkers must be educated and learn the knowledge of why certain techniques are more effective. Since everyone's body is different, it takes tactics and dedication to develop a technique that works for each person, their body, and height. Isabel stated

> *No sabía, no sabía nada, pues te dan tu clase cómo se debe hacer el trabajo pero tú no entiende que es el broto, no entiendes todo lo que digan, ahí no entiendes, no sabes que es por más que pase el supervisor y te diga, mira tú no sabes, no sabes qué es una guía, no sabes que es el segundo, el tercero, dejarle, o sea, no entiendes nada y yo la verdad. Lo iba copiando cómo iba viendo que ellos, pero no, no sabía por qué lo hacían paraque lo hacían, ajá, entonces pues me iban regañando cada, cada rato.* (Isabel)
>
> I did not know; I did not know anything. They give you a class on how you should perform your job, but I did not understand what the sprout is, and you do not understand everything they tell you. You do not understand, and do not know no matter how many times the supervisor passes by to explain things to you and tells you to look, this is how you do it. You do not know what is the second or the third and what to leave you do not understand anything. And I, in reality, was copying how I was seeing them do the job, but no, I did not know why they did things because of what they did. Yea, and well, they were scolding me often during the workday. (Isabel)

Isabel highlights the skill needed to complete farm work. Farm work is often considered unskilled labor and therefore is not paid well. Isabel's testimonio highlights the skill needed to complete the job. Isabel highlights that at times the training given when the workday begins is not sufficient in building the skill needed for the task for the day. Since farm work has many distinct phases towards growing and harvesting.

Specialty is required for farm labor. This is not unskilled labor. For fruit to grow, there needs to be a knowledge base and it takes time, education, and skill to effectively do this job. *Campesinas* have highlighted the specifics needed to excel as a farmworker and "sobre salir" (overcome) in this job.

2a. Feelings of work

Campesinas have diverse experiences and opinions of their job. A salient narrative is the feelings of expectations to perform the same as men as women. They often feel the pressure to perform to the caliber as men which contributes to their daily stressors. They are expected to do most of the housework in their homes by society. There is additionally, shame experienced if women are not able to do everything that is expected of them (e.g., cook, clean, take care of their children on their own, keep their husband happy and perform well in their job in the fields). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic created a shift in perspective when it came to farm work. Participants temporarily felt more seen and heard in society. *Campesinas* experienced societies gratitude during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and society witnessed the intersectional stressors and dangers *campesinas* endured for the well-being of the country.

Campesinas internalized the importance of their work and contribution to society which was not present to the same extent prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Isabel discusses how she saw her work when she went to the store and the national discourse of her status as an essential worker and as someone who directly contributes to the sustenance of the U.S. Furthermore, Isabella states that without farmworkers, the U.S. and society does not eat. Additionally, Citlali states that not everyone can do farm work due to its challenging nature. She states, it is arduous work, and I am proud that I am able and try to do it despite its challenges. Isabel shared

Antes era un trabajo de que no te sentías orgulloso, pero ahora digo, pues sí debe de sentirse uno orgulloso, porque como tú dices, pues uno no come, vas a la tienda y todo lo que a veces va uno a lugares Y te topas con lo que hiciste O con lo de tu compañía Y dices ay mira eso nosotros lo hacemos. (Isabel)

Before, it was a job that you did not feel proud of, but now, I think to myself, well I should feel proud because like you say, well we all eat because of it. If you go to the store, and everything you see is your work. You see your work at the store or work that your company has completed, and you think to yourself, we do that work. (Isabel)

Citlali adds

No cualquiera lo hace, o sea yo para para mí, yo me siento orgullosa que digo, pues yo trato de hacerlo. (Citlali)

Not everyone does this work, like for me, I feel proud and say to myself well I try my best to do this work. (Citlali)

Additionally, Roxanna discusses that many people of old age continue to work in the fields. Older adults are continuing to work in the fields due to a myriad of issues and needs. Isabel highlights that she feels deeply for older adults working in the fields because as a young person, she struggles to complete the work. Roxanna states

Porque ya a mi edad mi hija ya son 60 años, ya ya me cansé ya pues no, no me canso, pero lo que pasa que yo ya tengo que pensar más en mí y en mi salud. Entonces, Pues irme poco a poquito por decirte no retirarme por completo, pero a la mejor ya no trabajar, lo que es todo este tiempo tan frío y empezar a trabajar cuando empieza la primavera para delante. (Roxanna)

> Because at my age, my daughter, it's been 60 years, and I am already tired. And well, I get tired but what is happening is that I must think about myself and my health. And well, little by little, I want to retire but not completely retire right away. I would like to not work the winter months to begin and work from the springtime and on. (Roxanna)

Additionally, Isabel shared that she admires the older people who are considered elderly and continue to work and work well within agricultural work. She shares that they have managed to develop tips and tricks that allow them to work as fast or faster than younger people who theoretically are stronger and have more energy. Isabel shares that working alongside elderly people gives them the strength and motivation to continue working. They think to themselves, if they can do it, so can we. Isabel shared that she admires people who can work without getting dirty. Isabel and Roxana shared their admiration and injustice of elderly people working in the fields. They both highlight the lack of resources and alternatives for some farmworking people and even more so elderly adults who may not have any choice but to continue working in the fields despite the harsh working conditions. Isabel shared

> *Para salir completamente limpia y hay gente que también admiro mucho por eso porque hay gente que va a trabajar muy viejitos ya personas de la tercera edad en el campo. Señoras campesinas hombres que están ya de la tercera edad, de plano que los miro campesinas digo guau, como como todavía están trabajando y más aquí y eso es lo que mi esposo dice siempre cuando vemos así dice, es que si ellos pueden porque nosotros no porque los ves trabajar a un ritmo como que si tú los estás viendo y dices.* (Isabel)
>
> To come out completely clean after your workday and there are people that I admire because there are people who go to work and are incredibly old. There are senior citizens and still work in the fields. Older *campesinas* and I think to myself wow, how are they

> still working and even more here in the fields. My husband comments on this often when we see senior citizens working, he says if they can do it then why can't we? If they can do it, then we can. They watch them work with rhythm and you watch them, and you are like. (Isabel)

Xochitl highlighted throughout her interview the experience and perception of having additional privilege compared to other farmworkers. She highlighted that she felt that she was able to call attention to injustices more consistently because of her documentation status and ability to speak English. She recognized that employers or people in power within agricultural settings took advantage of people due to their documentation status or lack of knowledge of their rights. Xochitl felt that this is unfair and felt extremely uncomfortable challenging people in power. She consistently shared that it was due to her intersecting identity of being documented and ability to speak English that allowed her to do so. Xochitl shared

> We were working. (pause) The supervisor said we were doing something wrong, and he came screaming and I am like you are not supposed to talk to us like that. You know you must explain to us and then my husband's like be quiet. I am like no like that's not fair like you guys must speak for yourself. Pero *luego te va agarrar mala fe* (They might get bad faith from you), but I'm like no, but that's not right and then I had to literally like I had to literally walk away. (Xochitl)

Overall, *campesinas* had different feelings about their work and their perceptions changed and were not stagnant. Their own experiences shifted and changed during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Campesinas* also acknowledged some of the injustices present within farm work. Their narratives highlighted the diversity in thought and perceptions that are informed by experiences that differ due to varying factors such as documentation status, working

with family and amount of time they have worked within the fields. The findings suggest that *campesinas* are aware of the injustices and health implications that come with their work but due to systematic factors, they find themselves without systematic agency and power. Due to their narratives, they find agency in their ability to find work elsewhere if they do not agree with their employer. *Campesinas* reclaim their power in everyday actions and choices that center their family and communities. They do so by choosing not to work certain jobs or choosing to work with a specific company or foreman.

2b. Orgullo (Pride)

Some *campesinas* have a sense of *orgullo*, pride, in their work that has arrived from various places for different women. For some women, working in the fields and being outside is something that they love, honor and value as a profession. At times, working in the fields has been depicted within communities and society as a dishonorable profession. Additionally, the historical struggles farmworkers have faced such as concerns with labor rights and appropriate compensation for their work. Societally, there has been a minimization of their work or less honorable than the work of other people. *Campesinas* have had interpersonal experiences with people who look down on them due to their profession.

Roxana discusses that she has been working as a farmworker for about fifty years. She shared that she is not embarrassed of her job or the profession that has allowed her to create a different life for her children. She stated that she was able to raise her children from her wages from the fields and she is proud of what she has been able to achieve. She shared that her children were fed, clothes and given all that they need. Roxanna attributes the fields as an avenue that has allowed her to have to give them. Roxanna's experience highlights the ways that *campesinas* can re-imagine their world and I would posit that this is how they find the drive to do

extremely hard work. In other parts of the interview, Roxanna highlights how she does not want to work in the fields in her old age. She feels that she has worked long enough and deserves to prioritize her health. Roxanna shared the following *testimonio*

> *Entonces para mí, para mí ha sido bien, a mí no me da vergüenza decir trabajo en el campo porque yo bien o mal de allí saqué a mis hijos adelante. De De allí les di de comer, los vestí, todo. Entonces, yo bien que mal. He tenido para darles.* (Roxanna)
>
> Well for me, it has been good, I am not embarrassed to say that I work in the fields because good or bad from that job, I was able to raise my children. From the fields I was able to feed my children, clothe them, everything. And well then, to me it's good. I have had things to give them. (Roxanna)

Marisol shared that she loves her work, loves her co-workers, and does not see herself doing any other job. Marisol stated that she has felt immensely proud to be a farmworker and she congratulates herself because of her job. Marisol stated that she does her job with a lot of love and loves specifically picking grapes. Marisol preferred working in the fields over working in a restaurant or any other job. Marisol stated that the people she works with are a large part of why she loves her job, and she has loved getting to know people. Marisol is an example of someone who, despite the challenges of working in the fields, has loved her job, she has enjoyed the people it has brought into her life, and she has loved the experiences and opportunities farm work has brought her. Marisol's enthusiasm must not be mistaken with the harshness of the fields, the reality that comes for many and the reality that it is a profession that is undervalued and requires skill. Marisol's attitude and desire to do this work is a motivator that is applicable to some women, not all. It is important to make that distinction. That some people love their job but that does not expunge it from the harsh realities that come from being a farmworker in the U.S.

Marisol experience has centered the resistance that farmworkers embody that is centered on joy. Marisol shared

> *Me encanta mija, me encanta mi trabajo, eso sí que me he tenido algunas experiencias como te platiqué, pero. Muy orgullosa, muy orgullosa, mija me felicito con mi trabajo, de verdad lo hago con tanto amor, me encanta, pizcar, me encanta la uva de razón u cuando me dicen mañana nos toca a piscar, verdad o my God, yo mi orgullo de verdad yo hacía una cosa, me pusiera a escoger entre un restaurante campesinas el campo, mija, 1000 veces el campo sí, porque te te miran, te encuentras un compañero, te encuentras sus compañeras muy, muy lindas, mija, personas que te que te encuentren, verdad y conoces más.* (Marisol)
>
> I love it, I love my job, with that, I have had some experiences like I mentioned earlier. But I feel so proud, so proud, I congratulate myself with my job, truthfully, I do my job with so much love, and I love picking grapes and I love the grape season. When they tell me in the morning that we will be picking grapes tomorrow, truthfully, oh my god, I am so proud, really. If I had to pick between a restaurant job and the fields, I would pick the fields. I would pick the fields 1000 times over because they see you, and you see your coworker and you find your coworker. You find lovely coworkers and people who you find and get to know. (Marisol)

When Daniella was asked if she was proud to be a *campesina*, Daniella replied with excitement and pride. She replied that she believes that she was called to do this work and has felt the importance of her work often. She stated that she sometimes thinks that God was intentional with making her a *campesina*. She stated that the bible discusses grapes and wine and she sometimes think she is honored to be chosen by God to work with grapes that some may be

destined to be made into wine. She ends her sentiment with a very grounded presence stating that she feels honored to be in the grape vines and being a *campesina*. Marisol's trust in God and the universe as someone who was meant to do this work is another form of resistance. Marisol has created her own narrative of who she is and why she is a *campesina*. This was evident throughout the interview. Marisol's gratitude for her work and how it has shaped her life and faith is persistent. Marisol feels like she was meant to be a *campesina* and even though in other parts during the interview she highlighted that it is work that is arduous and taxing on her body; she feels honored to be doing this work which she sees as part of god's work. Daniella's pride is reflected in the following quote

> *Que sí. Que sí. Que siento orgullosa de ser campesina porque es un este un trabajo que te hace ser como (pause) como umm como decir la palabra, me hace sentir este (pause). Habeses pienso yo, que trabajar en las uvas como que si dios me mando a trabajar en las uvas. Porque en la biblia habla tanto de las uvas y del vino. Que habeses yo me siento honrada con trabajar en la viña, en la viña del señor. Y este, si, si me da orgullo de ser campesina* (Daniella)
>
> I say yes, yes. I do feel proud of being a *campesina* because it is a job that it makes you be like (pause) how can I say this word? It makes me feel umm (pause) Sometimes, I think to myself, working with grapes is like God sent me to work with grapes because the bible speaks of the grapes and wine. And sometimes I feel honored to work within the grape vines and in the vine of God. And well, yes, I feel proud of being a *campesina*. (Daniella)

Jennifer stated that she had a different perspective on farm work and her experiences with it. She was not proud to be a *campesina* and was not something that she saw herself doing.

Jennifer stated that her perspective shifted with the COVID-19 pandemic, as she was more aware of the dire importance of her job and her work. Jennifer did not see her job as important prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but then quickly realized that without her some fundamental aspects of everyday life would cease to exist. When asked about her experience with her work during the pandemic, Jennifer shared

> *Y ahora que pasó lo ósea ahora que pasó lo de la pandemia sí, o sea, ya ya cambió mi perspectiva porque antes era como que hay, como cada trabajas en elegir, pues sí, no, pero ahora digo, pues si este es trabajo, que fue de los esenciales y ahora qué Que nos dieron la vacuna, pues también por eso, por lo mismo de que somos esenciales, digo pues Antes era un trabajo de que no te sentías orgulloso, pero ahora digo, pues sí debe de sentirse uno orgulloso, porque como tú dices, pues uno no come, vas a la tienda y todo lo que a veces va uno a lugares Y te topas con lo que hiciste O con lo de tu compañía Y dices ay mira eso nosotros lo hacemos* (Jennifer)
>
> Well, not what has happened with the pandemic, yes. Well, yes things have changed, and my perspective has changed because before it was like, every job you chose, well no now I say, well this is a job, and it was considered as essential and now that they gave us the vaccine, well that as well. We are essential and before we did not feel proud of our job but now, well, we should feel proud of our job like you say, we do not eat without people like us. When you go to the store, everything you see is because of a farmworker. And you run into what you made and what your company produced, and you say look we do that work. (Jennifer)

Overall, different *campesinas* had different perspectives on how they feel about their work and how their perspective on their work has shifted and changed. *Campesinas* have been seen and acknowledged temporarily and society was able to momentarily recognize the importance of farmworkers and specifically *campesinas* in the U.S. For some women, their work has always been enjoyable and a profession they looked forward to and for others, it did not carry the same weight.

2c. Health Issues due to Work

Farm work has considerable risk factors and comorbidities for farmworkers. *Campesinas* are often aware of the various health issues they may be exposed to due to their work. The key factor about farmworkers and health issues is that everyone experiences and navigates health differently based on their own reactions to environmental factors. Things such as health habits, biological factors, hereditary health concerns and environmental factors all play a role in how farmworkers experience health. Additionally, women and specifically *campesinas* have different health concerns and perspectives than men, which are highlighted in the narratives presented.

Daniella shared that she had specific symptoms for some time, and she was not sure where they came from. Daniella attributed it to her grief of leaving home and migrating to the U.S. Daniella described that when people go to work in the fields, there is something called *La escuelita* which translates to the little school. This is a quick workshop that occurs most days prior to starting the workday. *La escuelita* is a space where psycho education and work instructions are provided to workers. Daniella learned the symptoms of dehydration during an *escuelita,* and she learned how to take better care of herself. She stated that she had all the symptoms listed when *la escuelita* was provided. Daniella stated that when she went home, she did not feel good and since then she has utilized Pedialyte to help with her symptoms. Daniella

stated that during this time, she was working nine-hour workdays in the heat which she also thinks impacted her symptoms. Daniella stated that the psycho education provided gave her the appropriate information to take care of herself and come prepared to work on hot days with Gatorade, water and Pedialyte because she knows that her body can become dehydrated on those hot days. Daniella did not have the awareness or knowledge to take care of her body prior to *la escuelita,* which demonstrates the importance of psychoeducation to the community when it comes to caring for their bodies as they engage with difficult inclement weather. Daniella shared her experience with dehydration in the following quote

> *Y dijeron todos los síntomas. Yo dije.mmmm (Laughs) cada rato me da. Y este, porque en ese tiempo trabajaba nueve horas. Nueve y media. Nueve y media. Ya cuando iba a la casa. Yo ya me sentía mal. Y me bajaba a vomitar. Pero yo no entendía porque me sentía mal. Ya que dieron clases de los síntomas sobre la deshidratación. Entonces aprendí. Y desde entonces. Ummmm habeses yo llevo Suero. Cuando el día va a estar muy caliente, yo llevo Suero. Y lo empiezo a tomar cuando siento que me hace falta. Lo comienzo a tomar el Suero, Gatorade, Agua También pero no solo agua.* (Daniella)
>
> And they told us all the symptoms. And I said (Laughs) that happens often to me. And well, because during that time, I worked nine hours and half. And when I went to the house, I would feel bad. And I would get off the car to vomit. But I did not understand why I felt sick. And they gave a class at work regarding the symptoms of dehydration. Then I learned. And since then. Umm sometimes I take Pedialyte. When the day is going to be too hot, I take Pedialyte. And I start drinking it when I need it. I start drinking Pedialyte, Gatorade, water but not only water. (Daniella)

Daniella further stated that she has experienced young people who do not know how to appropriately prepare for the heat and take care of themselves. She shared that some people are young and think they are invincible. She stated that she has witnessed people passing out or throwing up from dehydration. Daniella stated that she did not know how to take care of herself before and she would often throw up at home due to the heat she was exposed to at work. She stated that at times this would happen as she was driving home, and she was forced to pull over to throw up. Daniella stated that for some time she was not aware that her symptoms were symptoms of being dehydrated. Daniella stated that she now has the knowledge to take care of herself. Daniella shared

> *Le ha pasado algun percanse que se desmaye que se vomite, que (pausa) se deshydrate en el trabajo. Participant: mmmm antes cuando no sabia cuidarme. Yo no sabia cuidarme del calor. Seguido me iba vomitando a la casa. Ya cuando salia del trabajo, me tenia que orillar el caro para bajarme a vomitar. Porque eran symptomas de deshydracion pero yo no sabia.* (Daniella)
>
> Have you had an experience when you faint, or vomit or (pause) become dehydrated at work? Participant: mmm before when I did not know how to take care of myself, I would vomit on my way home. When I would leave work, I had to pull over and get out of the car to vomit. Because they were symptoms of dehydration, and I did not know. (Daniella)

Daniella's experience highlights one of the many side effects and obstacles that *campesinas* face in their line of work. Her story centers on the importance of knowledge and resources to *campesinas*. Knowledge in the community could have direct implications for the ways people live their lives and the decisions they make. This knowledge could have saved

Daniella's life and allowed her access to take care of herself. It is important to note the lack of knowledge people may have regarding caring for themselves as a farmworker and the unique obstacles and hurdles they may experience.

2d. Pesticide exposure

Farmworkers are exposed to pesticides and chemicals that can be harmful to their well-being and health. *Campesinas* have different knowledge bases on pesticide exposure and what it means for their overall health. Different women have unique ways of conceptualizing their pesticide exposure, symptoms due to pesticide exposure and how to make sense of the side effects that may come from pesticide exposure.

Yalitza stated that she suspected that it is dangerous to live and work in the area due to the high exposure to chemicals. Yalitza shared that sometimes when she goes outside, it smells like *"sufre"* which is what people in the community calls the pesticides. It is a pungent smell that lives on the skins and community when they attend work or when they are spraying a field. Yalitza shared that she sometimes takes her children outside to play and she can smell it. She then stated that she brings her children inside because she does not feel like it is appropriate for them to be outside when the smell of *"sufre"* is strong. Often, *campesinas* are tasked with mitigating risk with *"sufre"* and protecting their children from chemicals that are harsh. Due to the rural nature of their work, their families are also exposed within their neighborhoods. This is something that is not often part of the larger discourse when farmworking communities are discussed. This is an important implication for future generations of children of farmworkers. Yalitza has the insight to be aware that her children might be harmed due to pesticides and chemicals in their communities. Yalitza stated:

> Mmm I would say it's a little dangerous. Like you know, sometimes because salemos y se huele. Huele a sufre y no nomas eso pero like cuando están esprayando (we come out and it does smell. It smells like chemicals/sulfur and its not only then, it smells when they are spraying the fields) and stuff like that se arrima muchos mosquitos (many mosquitos come) Yeah and a veces saco ha las niñas y hay muchos mosquitos (and sometimes I take my daughters outside and there are a lot of mosquitos) and like we have to come back inside. Y si, si huele fuerte a veces. (And it does smell strongly sometimes). (Yalitza)

Citlali shared that she tries to protect herself from the pesticides by cover her face with a *paño* to protect herself from exposure. (A *paño* acts as a face covering farmworkers have historically used to protect themselves from elements such as sun and pesticide exposure). Additionally, Citlali shared that she is intentional about covering her body to protect herself from the elements. She wears a long sleeve shirt, long pants, work shoes and she shared how she protects herself from the chemicals in her workplace. For Citlali, being prepared in this way feels like she is creating a barrier from toxicity in her workspace. This creates autonomy and self-determination in creating safety in the workplace in the face of toxicity. Citlali's experience mirrors some of the experiences of other *campesinas* of choosing to protect themselves from the elements by covering their faces, wearing hats, long sleeves. It is arguable that these ways of being for some women also protects them from the elements such as rain, and sun. Citlali shared

> *Así pues, sí, a veces si está 1 esté dispuesto a los pesticidas, pero 1 trata de cubrirse 1 su cara o su cuerpo, usar camisas de manga larga, su pantalón, este, sus zapatos de trabajo, yo pienso que todo eso es que 1 lo protege. Pues de las pesticidas.* (Citlali)

> That is how it is, yes. Sometimes one is exposed to pesticides, but one tries to cover themselves. One tries to cover their face and body and use long sleeve shirt, their long pants, and shoes for work. I think that all that is how one protects themselves from pesticides. (Citlali)

Xochitl has two small children and has experienced first-hand the challenges that stem from attachment, motherhood guilt and financial need. She shared that she stopped breast feeding her first child because she needed to return to work. Xochitl shared that it was very painful to no longer breast feed her first born due to returning to work. She shared that it was not hygienic to breast feed or pump while working in the fields. She therefore had to stop breast feeding. She shared that there is lack of accessibility of pumping while at work or saving the milk she pumps at work. She additionally shared the worries she had of contaminating her breast milk while being at work. Xochitl's experience highlights the unique experiences of farmworking mothers and the challenges and guilt that comes from engaging in this work. Mothering as a *campesina* has additional layers of attempting to keep your children safe. Different studies have highlighted development concerns and birth issues that the children of *campesinas* are disproportionately exposed to. This is something that c*ampesinas* are aware of and are mindful of mitigating for the overall well-being of their children. Additionally, it is important to think about who has access to stay home as a *campesina* to continue to breast feed their children, who has access to stay home and the implications of documentation status in how *campesinas* mother and raise their children. It is arguable that *campesinas* bring additional worries of motherhood due to the environmental factors that their children and themselves are exposed to. *Campesinas* do the best they can to protect their children in ways that are accessible

and intentional that are not experiences shared across the broader publics experience of motherhood. Xochitl shared

> Well, I, I just think the environment like let's say like the restrooms or to me being a woman like let's say you breastfeed like to me that was it hurt me so bad like to me like you know I couldn't provide that for my kid anymore why? Because I, I wasn't allowed to. I mean, even if I was allowed, it would be impossible because you know you're dirty and that would contaminate your supply with all the chemicals. (Xochitl)

Based on the *testimonios* of the *campesinas* interviewed for this project, pesticide exposure was impacted mothering. When asked about exposure and how women protect themselves, *campesinas* included protecting their children in their responses. Campesinas responses indicate the importance they place on being mothers. *Campesinas* are intentional and thoughtful regarding their mothering and protecting their children from potential harm. *Campesinas* mothering is political in ensuring that their children are safe and healthy despite of environmental factors that might impact their children. It is important to note that not every participant mentioned their children in this section. Additionally, *campesinas* do what they can to ensure that they are protected in ways that feel accessible to them. They also feel that pesticides ("*La Sufre*") is not healthy to their bodies and their narratives indicate that this is an obstacle in their work. How they feel about pesticides indicates how they recognize that they are risking their health. Some *campesinas* normalized experience as some women have engaged with their work for most of their lives. Different women have different levels of feeling alarmed regarding exposure to chemicals while others are not necessarily worried. Specifically, Roxanna indicated that pesticide exposure is not necessarily an indicator of health for her since her experience has been that people can get cancer or terminal illness even if they do not work in the fields.

Additionally, Roxanna shared that all our food and prepackaged food has chemicals, which could also lead to health issues. She does not feel that working in the fields as a *campesina* has predisposed her to health issues or concerns. Overall, *campesinas* make sense of their pesticide exposure differently based on their unique perceptions and experiences. Additionally, if women have younger children, they have different concerns regarding exposure and protecting themselves. This highlights the diversity in feelings regarding exposure and knowledge regarding pesticides in their communities and workplace.

2e. Death

Campesinas are faced with many issues that are unique to their work experiences that often put them in danger and jeopardize their wellness and well-being. Daniella discusses that temperatures in Kern County can reach up to 113 on some days which impacts their work schedule and ability to work. Daniella highlights that workers are sent home if the temperatures reach these highs. Daniella's highlight of nearly dying due to temperatures highlights the perilous nature of their work and the ways that their unique experiences can cause them to die if they are overly exposed to these temperatures. Daniella shared

> *Estamos (pausa) aquí en el condado de Kern, sube la temperatura como a 113 a veces. y te mandan a la casa porque saben si te dejan ahí te mueres.* (Daniella)
>
> Here we are (pause) in the county of Kern, the temperature rises to 113 sometimes. And they send you home because if they let you work in that temperature; you could die there. (Daniella)

Daniella discussed that she experienced a death at work. She stated that a co-worker of another crew member who was in her same area passed away during the workday. She saw him show up during the picking season one year. She shared that he was halfway through the "*Surco*"

(groove) on the south side of the field. He shared with her "The grapes are beautiful today; we are going to make many bonuses today" in a very enthusiastic voice and happy early that morning. She stated that by 10 am the ambulance was already there and when Daniella's crew inquired about him at the end of the day, the crew the man was working on shared that he died that day. Daniella shared that he was so excited to be at work that morning and by 10 am he was dead. When asked about experiences at work, Daniella shared

> *Me toco mirar a un señor que llego por la mañana a trabajar y entonces, él era de otra cuadrilla. Pero me toco el surco que le toca a él. Porque los surcos se parten a la mitad. Entonces a él le toco la mitad para el sur. Y yo la mitad para el norte, entonces, me toco escucharlo que dijo. "Qué bonita uva. Ahora, vamos a hacer muchos bonos" dijo, el hombre está entusiasmado y feliz por la mañana. A las diez de la mañana, ya estaba ahí la ambulancia. Se estaba llevando al señor. (Long Pause) Preguntamos que paso, dijeron. Se murió. Se murió. Y si el andaba tan feliz, y entusiasmado en el surco y ya para las diez de la mañana el hombre ya había fallecido. Si, en el fil se miran muchas cosas tristes también.* (Daniella)
>
> I got to see a man who arrived in the morning to work and well he was part of the other crew, but I saw him in the grove next to him because the grooves are split in half. And well, I was on the south side of the groove. And he was on the north side of the groove and well, I was able to hear him share "The grape is so beautiful today! We are going to make lots of bonuses today" he said in an excited and cheerful voice that morning. Like at 10 am, the ambulance was already there and were taking the man with them. (Long Pause) We asked what happened and they said he died. He died. And he was so happy

and excited that morning to be at work and by 10am he had passed away. Yes, in the fields you see many things that are incredibly sad too. (Daniella)

Daniella highlighted the precarious testimonio of witnessing someone pass away in the fields which many farmworkers are cognizant might be them due to a variety of issues and concerns. Daniella shared that within the fields, there are many sad stories that *campesinas* often carry within themselves in their everyday life. Daniella's testimonio highlights the possible trauma people may experience from deaths in the fields. Her *testimonio* depicts the sacrifices people make to feed this country out of their own needs to feed their families and children. Death and risk are crucial factors in the experiences of *campesinas*, and knowing the impacts engaging with farm work on their health and wellness is part of the *testimonios* of *campesinas.* They face risk and show up due to the need to provide and re-create a different world for their children and families. They are showing up to work despite the difficult experiences that transpire in the fields. The prospect of death in the fields is not part of the national discourse when discussing farmworkers.

2f. Undocumented

Daniella's *testimonio* of being undocumented outside of the fields highlights that she experienced more racism and discrimination outside of California and farm work. These experiences, in addition to being far away from home, prompted her to return to farm work. Daniella wanted to engage in another job because she felt that farm work was hard work and she wanted to try something new. Daniella moved to Pennsylvania to attempt to do work that is not farm work. Daniella shared that in addition to the cold, she felt more racism from people in Pennsylvania than in California. She shared that she could not drive there and struggled more due to less access to resources than in California. She shared that she decided to return to

California to continue working in farm work due to her experience with lack of access to things like a driver's license. Daniella's *testimonio* states

> *pues um, (pausa) quería cambiar de trabajo porque el campo es demasiado pesado y yo pensé en cambiar. Pero no pensaba que allá También umm, pues allá esta más frio, allá cay nieve. (Laughs) Allá esta más frio, y este, para una persona indocumentada, vivir en, vivir para allá, para ese rumbo es más umm complicado. Porque no puedes conducir uno, allá no tienen licencia los indocumentados. Así que no Podemos conducir un caro, tenemos que andar caminando. Este, es, es, no me gusto tampoco (dog barks). Es complicado. Andar sin caro y andar cargando tus bolsas, tus cosas siempre. Y para ir al trabajo. Pidiendo ride siempre. Es complicado. Y decidí regresar a California.*
>
> (Daniella)
>
> Well (pause) umm I wanted a change in work because the fields is a very heavy line of work and I wanted a change. But I did not think that over there, would be colder, there is snow over there. (Laughs) It is colder over there, and well as an undocumented person, to live in over there, to live there, on that side is more complicated. Because you cannot drive, over there undocumented people cannot drive a car and you have to walk everywhere. I did not like that either (Dog barks). It is complicated. To not have a car and you have to carry your groceries and your things always. And to go to work, you have to ask for a ride always. It is complicated. And I decided to return to California.

Daniella's experience of being undocumented in another state highlights the *testimonios* of *campesinas* who often find themselves with little options to work in other sectors due to their undocumented status. Daniella's testimonio also highlights the experience of living in another state and the barriers with access to resources such as a driver's license in other states. Daniella's

testimonio also highlights the lack of job options for undocumented people outside of farm work. And/or also the lack of options for *campesinas* where *campesinas* do not feel discriminated against or feel like they have the resources needed for full lives.

3. Gender

Campesinas discuss the high expectations of work within the home and performing at work to a high caliber. *Campesinas* highlight that their experiences are very different than men's due to the cultural expectations that they perform household tasks, rear children and perform well within their workplace. Participants share that the men in their lives are not expected to perform to the same caliber or expectation. Yalitza specifically shared

> Pues si. *Por hacer mujer like the chabacano*, for example As a woman like. It's kind of hard because you have to carry like an avasija y lo tienes que llenar y se pone bien pesada. Lo tienes que ir a dejar y luego regresar. Y la escalera. Tienes que subir por escalera y para una mujer tienes que cargar la escalera el vaso thingy and it's hard like it's it's hard like the poda the same thing. I feel like it's a man's job because you sometimes have to like cut like thick like brazos So yeah, it's really hard but. Uhm, overall, like no one, like the supervisors that I've had. Super nice, super generous like nunca as a woman se han tratado de (pausa) You know what I mean? (Yalitza)
>
> Well, yes. Because working in things like the apricot, for example, as a woman like. Its kind of hard because you have to carry it like a plastic basket, and you have to fill it and it becomes very heavy. You have to leave it and then return the ladder. You have to get up on the ladder and for a woman you have to carry the ladder and the cup thingy and it's hard like it's it's hard like the during the pruning season, the same thing. I feel like it's a man's job because you sometimes have to like cut like thick like branches So yeah, it's really hard

but. Uhm, overall, like no one, like the supervisors that I've had. Super nice, super generous like never as a woman have they tried (pause) You know what I mean? (Yalitza)

Yalitza discusses that some jobs are more challenging than others as a woman because they expect her to perform the tasks in the same way as a man would. There are certain tasks that women do not have as much strength to perform, and it takes more work for them to perform. Yalitza highlights this experience as someone who does jobs that are more challenging as *campesinxs*. Traditionally, certain jobs are designated for men due to the strength needed to perform them. Due to the feminization of farm labor, more women are being hired to complete jobs that men traditionally completed. One of those seasonal jobs that more women are completing is "*La Poda*". *La poda* is completed in the winter and is when grape vineyards are pruned to prepare them for the spring.

Furthermore, Xochitl discusses the multiple roles women play as farmworking women and the dynamic of gender and expectations. The gender roles of labor look differently as to what is socially acceptable and expected from women and men. Men's labor ends when their workday ends. Most especially, Xochitl highlights men who do not take initiative to support their wives with child rearing and housework. This shifts the amount of labor men and women farmworkers perform. Patriarchy is very prominent in the division of labor and specifically "Machista" ideologies (Pinto-Coltrane, 2013). This lack of support for *campesinas* further de-humanizes their labor and experiences as *campesinas.* Discussing the disproportionate amount of labor *campesinas* perform to keep their families and communities afloat is central to their narratives and experiences. Additionally, the lack of expectation of men to participate in household tasks and child rearing creates intense pressure for the survival of their households and communities. The gendering of work further creates another level of exploitation for *campesinas*. This pressure is often

implemented by the community itself and their roots lie in colonization and patriarchy (Pinto & Coltrane, 2013). When asked about issues women face in farm work, Xochitl shared

> most Hispanic men Son machistas ellos they think that going to work And coming back home, And that was your job. Like you know what I'm trying to say? Like ellos ya acabaron, ya cumplieron, ellos ya fueron a trabajar, ya llegaron, sirvanme la comida, you know what I'm trying to say? Like yeah. Y la mujer que ella tiene que vestir a los niños, tiene que ser la comida, tiene que... do laundry through the week. You know? Kids need help with their homework. You know they have to get help with their homework. I mean for me it's easier because I know English, but imagine those parents that, you know, they don't know English, they can't help their kids. (Xochitl)
>
> most Hispanic men are machistas and they think that going to work and coming back home, And that was your job. Like you know what I'm trying to say? Like they already finished and fulfilled their duties, they went to work and came home and are waiting for their wives to serve their food, you know what I'm trying to say? Like yeah. And the women has to dress the kids, make food, she has to… do laundry through the week. You know? Kids need help with their homework. You know they have to get help with their homework. I mean for me it's easier because I know English, but imagine those parents that, you know, they don't know English, they can't help their kids. (Xochitl)

Xochitl further highlighted the unique obstacles pregnant women and post-natal concerns that are unique to *campesinas*. Xochitl stated that she could no longer continue breast feeding her oldest child because she decided to return to work. Xochitl shared that accommodations for breast feeding are not accessible to women and there is a risk with starting work and coming home to young children. Some of the concerns indicated are due to pesticide exposure, ability to keep breast

milk sterile and becoming spoiled with heat. Xochitl stated that returning to work affected her ability to bond with her child. Additionally, farmworkers' benefits look quite different and are limited due to the seasonal nature of their work. Undocumented *campesinas* do not receive parental leave when they have children or health insurance. The lack of resources available to *campesinas* further highlights the exploitation of their labor and expertise as skilled labor. Xochitl shared

> So I feel like it didn't give me that much bonding with her because I can't even pump there because you know, you're dirty, you're sweaty. Hay azufres (sulfur) hay (there are) chemicals, everything. So to me that that affected me because I couldn't give her that. (Xochitl)

Xochitl also highlights the risk of being a new mom and the possible dangers that the chemicals she is exposed to can potentially expose her child. She is unsure of the possible side effects but her concern for her children was evident and clear throughout the interview. Xochitl is also U.S. born and was raised in the U.S. which likely affects her literacy level regarding health issues pertinent to farm work. When asked about her experience as a woman in farm work, Isabel shared

> *No sé qué, no sé cómo decir, o sea, por ejemplo, yo como mujer me tocó trabajar embarazada, entonces Me tocó en el embarazo, hacer mi trabajo regular y pues uno como mujer si tienes tus achaques. De, por ejemplo, de embarazo de que te viene la regla de tu De todos modos. Pues uno como mujer, pues trata de que no me voy a rajar, no me voy a rajar, no me voy a rajar* (Isabel)
>
> I don’t know, I don’t know how to say, like for example, me as a woman, I had to work pregnant, and well I had to work pregnant. I had to do my regular job and well as a woman you have symptoms during pregnancy. Like, for example, from pregnancy to having a

period, either way, as a woman you try to not give up. I am not going to give up, I am not going to give up, I am not going to give up (Isabel)

Additionally, Isabel also shared the sentiment of the obstacles of being pregnant while working as a *campesina*. She shared that in spite of being pregnant, she was expected to perform hard work in the same way that non-pregnant people are expected to perform. Isabel shared that she would tell herself that she was not going to give up which is much of the sentiments farmworking shared in their attitudes to their work as women. They shared that in spite of being pregnant or being women, they are determined to not give up and perform their jobs well. Isabel also highlighted the difficulties and comforts of experiencing a period while working in the fields. Isabel shared that regardless of the barrier, she tells herself that she will not give up despite her work being difficult.

Furthermore, Daniella highlighted that women do not have the physical build that is required to complete some famr working jobs. She stated that in spite of these challenges and obstacles, farmworking women continue to do their best and find ways to do their jobs every day. Daniella further shared that campesinas are motivated to work as farmworkers and they attempt to support each other as they show up to work every day. The energy she expressed and the strong sense of community and support that guides and pushes farm working communities in spite of harsh and difficult working conditions. When asked about her experience as a woman working in farm work, Daniella shared

Definitivamente, sí. Si porque, no tenemos ni la estatura, ni la fuerza. Pero, si tenemos muchas ganas. Y yo miro las mujeres, son bien (pausa) Como decir. Ammm, son muy animadas las mujeres. No dicen no. Las mujeres, siempre te dicen sí. Si puedo. Y si una dice, si ella puede, yo También puedo. (Daniella)

> Definitely, yes. Yes, because we do not have the height needed nor the strength. But we do have the desire. And I see women, that are (pause) how can I say this? Mmmm, they are very motivated as women. They do not say no. The women always say yes. Yes, I can do this. And if one says if she can do it then I can also do it. (Daniella)

Daniella added to her experience as a *campesina* the following:

> *Así, nos animamos las mujeres unas con otras. Y, les echamos ganas. Siempre, miramos a una que va avanzando, si ella puede, yo También puedo.* (Daniella)
>
> Y like that, we cheer each other on as women. And we put forth our best effort. We effort a lot. Always, we see a woman making progress, and we think if she can do it then I can also do it. (Daniella)

Overall, *campesinas* highlight that they feel motivated by other women at work for the most part. They feel that women understand that their work in their families, communities and workplace is critical to the survival of their families and community. They support each other to "*salir adelante*" and help their families. Daniella shared that if she sees another woman completing work then she thinks to herself "if she can do it, then I can too". Daniella highlights how modeling motivates women to continue their work and the importance of putting forth effort "*ganas*".

4. Migrating

Migrating for farmworking women arose due to different needs. Some *campesinas* migrated due to economic need, some due to safety concerns in Mexico, and other's due to both. When asked about the positive aspects of her *testimonio*, Daniella shared

> *Y lo positive (pausa) es que conoces nuevas personas. y haces nuevas amistades Y este…pues seguimos para adelante, seguimos viviendo la vida hasta que dios nos deje. Y aquí ay muchos paisanos. Y muchas paisanas y volvemos a hacer, a crear nuestro propio*

mundo, de familia y de familiares Y amistades. Porque hay familiares que se van reuniendo poco a poco con el paso de los anos. Van creciendo las familias. Es lo positivo, lo bonito. Que volvemos a querernos, a juntarnos con la gente. Tenemos que seguir viviendo, adelante. (Daniella)

And the positive part (pause) is that you meet new people. And you make new friendships and well…you continue forward, and you continue living life until God lets you. And there are many people from Mexico here. And we recreate, we create our own world, of family and family members and relationships. Because there are families who slowly are reunited as the years pass us by. Families grow. That's the positive aspect, the beautiful part. That we continue loving each other and gathering with people. We have to continue moving forward and living. (Daniella)

Daniella shares that the positive aspects of migrating to the U.S. is that it gives *campesinas* access to start all over and the opportunity to build a new community. Daniella highlights that as one family moves, more family reunites with people as they are able to immigrate to the U.S. Additionally, she shared that families begin to grow in the U.S. Daniella shared that *campesinas* create their own world by migrating to the U.S. *campesinas* slowly see their families grow, build community in their new homes and meet good people that allows them to create a new life that is different than their homes but still beautiful. Daniella's *testimonio* and experience of leaving her home was filled with grief and anguish and as a *campesina*, she was able to create community and a new sense of home in the Central Valley. Daniella explicitly states that the positive aspects of migrating have allowed her to create a new world for herself and her family despite the pain she and her family endured. Daniella's testimonio is reflective of many immigrant women and *campesinas* specifically. Daniella shared that there are many people

from Mexico, which she calls “paisanos”. Daniella shared that due to the large amount of people from Mexico, the community built a new life for themselves despite the challenges and struggles of moving to a new foreign country. Daniella’s *testimonio* highlights the importance of community building and the value of community to some *campesinas* as part of their testimonio of creating a new home while also carrying the pain of leaving their home for different painful reasons. Daniella’s *testimonio* highlights the resiliency factors *campesinas* have in leaving their home, their loved ones and creating something new with their current circumstances. Daniella further discusses that she left her hometown in Mexico due to multiple murders that happened in her hometown. Daniella shared that no one wants to leave their home unless they have to. She shared that it was sad to leave her home and that it was very cruel in the moment to leave her home. Daniella stated that she left her home to never return due to safety concerns. She stated that no one wants to leave home in those circumstances and much less due to violent circumstances. Daniella shared that she has been able to return to Mexico, but she has never returned to her childhood home or town due to the danger that is present there. Daniella further shared that no one wants to leave their home ever. Daniella’s *testimonio* highlights the experiences of many immigrants who leave their home without many choices and options. Daniella’s *testimonio* highlights the lack of options immigrants are often left with when deciding to leave their homes in hopes of safety and in search of basic human needs. Daniella’s *testimonio* fleshes out the pain that comes from leaving your home because it can no longer give you safety or nourishment. Daniella’s *testimonio* highlights the mental health implications and sadness that some *campesinas* may experience when they leave their homes to never return. Daniella shared

(Laughs) *no, ni yo la se interpretar, pero fue fue triste, fue duro. Fue cruel en su momento. Porque nadie se quiere ir de donde vive. Y menos para no Volver nunca. Yo nunca he regresado. He ido a México, pero no a ese lugar. Jamás.* (Daniella)

(Laughs) no, I do not even know how to interpret it, but it was sad, and hard. It was cruel in its moment because no one wants to leave where they live. And even less to never return never. I have never returned. I have gone to Mexico but not to that place. Never. (Daniella)

Blanca shares her migrating story and how she came to the U.S. Blanca highlights that she slept in a cave at night and came through the mountains at night. She shared that she walked all night and all day to migrate to this country. Blanca shared that she spent two days with no food and was able to get her first meal at a house they arrived at on the second day. She then shared that the following day she arrived in Los Angeles, CA. Blanca's testimonio highlights the difficulty that comes with immigrating. The constant danger people subject themselves to. Blanca and Daniella's *testimonios* highlight the challenges *campesinas* are tasked with deciding to leave their homes, the journey that awaits to get there and the life waiting for them in the U.S. All of which require an immense amount of resiliency, determination and desire to create a new life that they did not have many options but create due to the situations they are faced with that are often rooted in deep systematic oppression. *Campesinas* are tasked with creating a new world for themselves which is how they have resisted oppression and systematic barriers. When asked about her *testimonio* regarding migrating to the U.S., Blanca shared

Allí pasamos por el cerro (pausa) Caminamos toda una noche. Dormimos en una cueva. Caminamos todo otro día. En una van…Umm después de todo el día umm miramos a un

rancho. Fue la primera comida que nos dieron después de dos días…y ya de allí nos dieron de comer y en la noche llegamos a Los Ángeles. (Blanca)

We passed through the mountains (pause); we walked all night. We slept in a cave. We walked the entire next day. We traveled in a van…and after a whole day, we say a ranch. It was the first meal that they gave us after two days….and well we ate there, and we arrive in Los Angeles that night. (Blanca)

In addition, Roxanna's immigration *testimonio* is different due to her experience with seasonal migration that began with her parents. Roxanna came to the U.S. as a child because she was accompanying her parents who migrated from Mexico to the U.S. every year based on the seasons. She began working in the fields at a young age with her family. She traveled every year to the U.S. where her family would follow the harvest, which at times took them to Washington and Oregon. This meant that their time in the U.S. was spent traveling from town to town and eventually traveling back to Mexico. Roxanna shared

Sí nos llevaron a la cherry. Y luego. Ya de ahí fue cuando venimos en agosto, que es cuando nosotros veníamos, nos veníamos de México en marzo, abril campesinas nos íbamos para Meresbil, luego del durazno y luego de allí nos íbamos Stockton a la pisca de la cherry (Roxanna)

They took us to the cherry. And after. It was when I when we would return in August, and its when we would return, we would return from Mexico in March, April and then we would go pick meresbil, then peaches and then we would travel to Stockton to pick cherry's. (Roxanna)

Campesinas experiences with migrating and reasons for migrating vary based on each person's specific lived experiences and situations. Factors such as SES, accessibility, and violence play a role in how *campesinas* chose to live their lives.

4a. Death

Daniella fled her home due to violence in her hometown. Daniella's *testimonio* is often surrounded by the murders that she experienced in her hometown in Mexico and prompted her family to flee due to safety issues/concerns. Daniella's experience with migrating left her depressed and sad regarding leaving her home with little future plans or desire to leave. Daniella described her experience as challenging and as a way to seek safety and peace of mind. When asked about her migration *testimonio*, Daniella shared

> *No. La verdadera razón por cual nosotros venimos a este país fue por la, por la delincuencia, porque en mi comunidad… este se cometió cuatro asesinatos en un solo día* (Daniella)
>
> No, the truth is the reason for which we came to this country was because of crime. Because in my community they committed four murders in one day. (Daniella)

Daniella left a small community in rural Mexico, where prior to this incident murders were not common. Daniella shared that for a small community, the murders had a shattering impact that disintegrated the community and led people to flee. Daniella shared that due to the nature of the small community, this event was heavily felt by the community. Daniella's family knew that if these murders had begun, then they were not going to stop. Daniella stated that the murders harmed everyone and therefore her family and other people from their small community decided to leave their home to seek safety. She stated that her family and other people were forced to abandon their homes and were forced to start anew elsewhere. Daniella shared

Y para una comunidad tan pequeña como la nuestra, eso es demasiado. Y sabíamos que eso no iba parar. Si ellos, si las personas que cometieron esos crímenes ya habían comenzado. Sabíamos que ellos iban a seguir. Y este (pausa) Y como (pst sound) como era una comunidad pequeña. Entonces todo lo que sucede nos ataña a todos. Y nos duele a todos. Y teníamos miedo todos. Así que nosotros no venimos y mucha gente También. Mucha gente También. También se fue y abandono el lugar. (Daniella)

And for a community that was so small as ours was, it was a lot. We knew that this was not going to stop. Yes, the people who committed the crimes had begun. And we knew that they would continue with murdering people. And well (pause) And well (pst sound) since it was a small community. And well, what happened harmed and affected all of us. And it hurts us all. We were all very scared. That is why we left, and many people left as well. Many people left as well. They also left and abandoned the place. (Daniella)

Daniella's story of death and migration mirror's the stories of many people who have experienced similar experiences of being forced to leave their homes. Daniella's testimonio of feeling forced to leave their home and the sadness that comes with making the difficult choice was part of Daniella's testimonio and unique experience. Daniella's experience with death and close experience with grief directly informs her feelings and experience with migrating. Her testimonio and life was shaped by the murders and the murders directly resulted in her becoming a *campesina* in the Central Valley. Daniella said that her children helped heal the wounds she carried from this experience.

5. COVID-19 Pandemic

Las *campesinas testimonios* varied due to different coping mechanisms that were adapted by them. Daniella highlighted the experience and shift of the national narrative that was

momentary when the COVID-19 pandemic first began. Daniella highlighted that people who were farmworkers never had the luxury of not going to work. Additionally, when many aspects of our world were shut down, *campesinxs* participated in their work and showed up for work when there were many unknowns related to their safety and livelihoods. Daniella shared that *campesinxs* knowingly went to work and risked their lives. Daniella states that *campesinxs* were present in their place of work at 5am, 6am, whatever time was needed. Daniella reflected that this was the only time that she felt seen for her work, even momentarily, nationally. Daniella's interview reflected the pride she felt and how appreciated she felt when she was grappling with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on her health and her loved ones. Many *campesinxs* were grappling with needing to participate in work due to the lack of resources and access to benefits while also meeting the needs of harvest season. The *testimonios* of *campesinas* are incredibly telling of their consistent courage and commitment to feed their families and the country and world. Daniella shared the following *testimonio*:

> *Pues sí, porque sí. Porque ahora con la pandemia. Este, la gente campesina nunca dijo no. La gente campesina, sabiendo bien que nos Podemos infectar en cual quiere momento, todos estamos ahí a las 6 de la mañana, a las 5am (pausa) a lo hora que nos digan. Estamos ahí, al pie del cañón. Y listos para trabajar. Y listos para poner nuestro granito de arena por el país. Y por la gente.* (Daniella)
>
> Well, yes because yes. Because now with the pandemic. Farmworkers never said no. The farmworking community did not say no, knowing that it could affect us at any moment. We were present at 6 am, 5 a.m. (pause) at whatever time we were told to arrive to work. We were there, ready to work. And ready to work. And ready to contribute with our little grain of sand for this country and for society. (Daniella)

Daniella continues her testimony by discussing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on her co-workers and herself. She shared that she witnessed many people in her community be sick and leave work due to being ill. Daniella's *testimonio* also highlighted the fear that farmworkers experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the added danger of their work. Daniella discusses that people were in and out of work due to being sick and they returned to work. *Campesinxs* did the best they could to protect themselves and continued to finish the harvest season and feed the country. Daniella tells her *testimonio* of the COVID-19 pandemic with pride in her work and of other *campesinxs* who did not give up and continued working through exceedingly grim times. Daniella shared

> *Y sí. Estamos aquí. Estamos aquí trabajando y echando pa adelante. Este, unos se enfermaron. Yo tuve compañeros que se enfermaron. Se enfermaron muchos. Maritza: mmmmmm Participant: Y otros, ahí de pie. Y luego que, que se curaban, volvían los compañeros enfermos. Ya que se curaban, volvían, regresaban a trabajar en cuanto podían. Y asi estuvimos. Y no, nos rajamos la cosecha.* (Daniella)
>
> And yes. We are here. We are here working and ready to move forward. Um, some got sick. I had coworkers that became sick. Many became sick. Maritza: mmmm Participant: And some were there on their feet after being sick. My coworkers would heal and return after being sick. They would return to work when they were able to do so. And that is how the seasons went during the pandemic. We did not give up during the harvest. (Daniella)

Blanca discusses her *testimonio* and her experience with the COVID-19 pandemic being incredibly challenging. Blanca shared that she is unsure if she was being dramatic due to the extent to which she found working during the COVID-19 pandemic challenging. Blanca shared

that she was very scared to die and even more so to die alone without her family. Blanca indicated that the scariest part of the COVID-19 pandemic was dying alone. Blanca stated that dying without her family and community felt unbearable to her and was her greatest fear. Due to the collectivist nature of many farmworking communities, some people were more worried about dying alone. Feeling loved by family members while dying is something that people in the community grieved as the COVID-19 pandemic completely altered traditional ways of engagement in community care. Blanca's *testimonio* highlights the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic altered community's way of grieving, which is done usually in community. Therefore, for Blanca, it was not only the prospect of dying but the lack of support and love that would be available if she were to die. Blanca's *testimonio* highlights the stories of many who did die alone without cultural practices and grieving practices that are culturally important and meaningful to people's lives. Blanca shared

> *Estaba muy difícil. Es la más difícil porque a la mejor soy o soy muy escandalosa o le tengo mucho miedo. Tengo miedo enfermarme. Me dio miedo a morir me sola por lo que estaban diciendo porque no es de morir me. Yo pienso que no tengo miedo. Simplemente morir lejos o que se me muere alguien de mi familia o que se muere alguien de mi familia y no está en el momento. Eso es el más difícil.* (Blanca)
>
> It was very difficult. It was more difficult because maybe I am too dramatic, or I am very scared. I am very scared to become sick. I was scared to become sick alone because of what was being said. Dying was not the fear but dying alone was the scary part. The simple aspect of dying on my own and away from my family. Or if someone in my family dies and we are not there in those moments. That is the most difficult part. (Blanca)

Yalitza discusses how she experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways it affected her family and her mother's mental health. This testimonio demonstrates the community care and collective experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways it affected *campesinas* mental health. Yalitza shared how she had experiences with loss and loss that was experienced in another country. Yalitza shared that her mother's stress and experience also impacted how she experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Yalitza's family experienced great loss that overall impacted her mental health and the mental health of her family. Yalitza shared

> Seeing my mom like you know, stress and stuff like that like about everybody like you know my family in Mexico like sick and like passing away (Yalitza)

Campesinas experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their mental health and their coping mechanisms. *Campesinas* faced the need to continue going to work and even more so if they were undocumented and were not eligible for public benefits. Additionally, *campesinas* feared the death of their families and extended family while also fearing the deaths of themselves. *Campesinas* continued to work in the fields despite the fears posed to them and the deaths of their family members. *Campesinxs* highlighted that for some moments they felt appreciated and for the first time in their experiences were recognized nationally for their work.

6. Racism/discrimination

Jennifer shared that she has experienced discrimination due to not speaking English. She shared that she gets looks from people due to speaking Spanish in public or comments from people on the street. Jennifer shared that she has experienced racism and discrimination from people she did not anticipate experiencing racial comments from such as brown and Black people. She shared that she is sometimes surprised which can be disappointing. Jennifer

highlighted that Latinx people sometimes share racist comments due to speaking Spanish or because she is an immigrant. When asked about discrimination/racism, Jennifer shared

> *A veces, sí, sí, sí, sí he tenido episodios que sí hay gente que sí, sí se nota cuando con el solo hecho de que no hables inglés, no sea ya este sí han hecho comentarios racistas, incluso personas que piensas que son Que no son personas mismas.* (Jennifer)
>
> Sometimes, yes, yes, yes. I have episodes that there are people that are, that you can tell that with the simple fact of not speaking English. They have made racist comments. In fact, people who you think are themselves immigrants. (Jennifer)

Experiences such as Jennifer's were mentioned by multiple *campesinas* in this study and is a sentiment that is felt by many *campesinas*. Discrimination and discrimination within the Latinx community is rampant and can often contribute to oppression and access to resources from folks.

6a. Undocumented

Citlali discusses that her experience as an undocumented person has been challenging due to how other *campesinas* saw undocumented co-workers and people in their community. Citlali shared that she felt discriminated by other *campesinas* due to her status as undocumented. She shared that she would hear people discussing how they felt about undocumented people and saw how they were not very empathetic to undocumented people in spite that in her experience, most *campesinas* were immigrants. In her experience, she heard discriminatory comments about undocumented people while at work. Citlali further shares that she believes that with or without documents, everyone suffers by migrating to the U.S. She shared that she does not believe it should matter because everyone comes with similar hopes. Citlali's *testimonio* demonstrates that people experience the most discrimination and hardship people within her community. Citlali's

testimonio demonstrates how intergroup support and perceptions impact the wellness, comfortability, and safety in their workplace more than anything else. Citlali identifies as an undocumented *campesina* and has not been able to obtain documentation in the last 28 years that she has resided in the U.S. Citlali shared

> *Ajá, pues este como a veces 1 se siente discriminado. Maritza simplemente con el hecho de que a veces entre 1 mismo se discrimina porque a como yo he escuchado comentarios de que hay personas que le tiran mucho a 1, que no tiene documentos. Pero yo para mí es o no le tomó importancia porque yo siempre he pensado Maritza haha, no todos llegaron a que con documentos todos llegaron a sufrir campesinas yo digo porque ahora los que tienen nos quieren discriminar a nosotros. Pero si, pues en realidad sí hay mucha discriminación.* (Citlali)
>
> Yes, well, sometimes one feels discriminated against. Maritza, simply with the act of within our own groups we discriminate, like I have heard comments that throw things at one that does not have documents. But for me, I do not give it importance because I have always thought Maritza, many do not arrive with documents. And regardless of documents, we all arrive to suffer and well I say why are the documented people going to discriminate the undocumented people. But yes, in reality, there is a lot of discrimination. (Citlali)

Citlali's *testimonio* highlights the experience that some *campesinas* have while working in the fields. This testimonio highlights the importance of solidarity within the community and support for *campesinas*. Additionally, testimonio highlights that different *campesinxs* have different degrees of privilege, which *campesinxs* utilize to navigate their experiences. Therefore, highlighting the roles of hierarchies and oppression within farmworking communities. Citlali's

testimonio highlights barriers in mobility that can exist within farmworking communities which mirror larger societal issues and concerns within minoritized communities. Citlali shared that she has felt most discriminated by people who are more like her. Jennifer shared

> *No, no entiendes. No, no hay fundamento, pues por todavía puedes entender a una persona que nació aquí, dices, Pues sí, es su país para mí es tal vez se siente invadido, tal vez tal vez tenga razón, pero pues una persona Latina que tal vez él nació aquí, pero sus padres emigraron, no nos dices, no tiene sentido que que seas así. Entonces no, no lo entiendes, se desconcierta un poco, no, no, pues como que entender.* (Jennifer)
>
> No, no you do not understand. No, there is no point because you can possibly understand a person who was born here, you say, well yes, you might feel that your country is becoming invaded and maybe you have a reason. But a Latina person who was born here but their parents migrated here, then you think that is pointless because there is no point to you being that way. And well then, you do not understand it, and you become disappointed a little because you cannot understand it. (Jennifer)

Jennifer further shares that she has experienced racism/discrimination from Latinx people as well, which was disappointing and disheartening because it did not make sense to her. She shares that it often feels pointless and senseless. She shared that it would make more sense if it were someone who were from the U.S. and not of Latinx decent as U.S. born people might feel like Latinx immigrants are invading the U.S. Jennifer shares that she feels bewildered at the experience and did not expect this from Latinx people.

7. Resiliency Factors

Campesinas highlighted factors or resiliency and how they coped during tough times in their lives. Roxanna's testimonio of resiliency is that she believes God gave every person the

capacity to overcome and achieve what they would like. Roxanna's faith in God has been a definitive source of resiliency for her and her family. Roxanna believes that God has given you everything you need to overcome, and it is within you if you have faith in God. Roxanna has shared that she has taught her children this lesson and believes it has allowed her to overcome in her life. Roxanna additionally shared that following your path is the way to achieve and to focus on your path based on your faith in God. Roxanna believes that resilience and tenacity comes from God. Roxanna shared

> *Mira, yo pienso que Dios hizo al ser humano con la capacidad para lograr lo que tú quieras. entonces yo siempre le digo a mis hijos. Ponte tú, tu meta. Y que nadie te desvía de eso, tú vete directamente a dónde vas y qué es lo que tú quieras, lo vas a lograr. Maritza: ¿Entonces para usted la tenacidad viene de dios? Participant: Para mí sí, porque dios te da todo.* (Roxanna)
>
> Look, I think that God created the human being with the capacity to achieve anything that you want. I always tell my children to set a goal and do not let anyone deter your goal. You go directly to where you are going, and you will see that you will achieve your goals. Maritza: Well then you think that resiliency comes from God? Participant: Yes, for me yes because God gives you everything. (Roxanna)

Jennifer's way of being resilient and coping is to keep going and not demonstrating weakness to those around her. Jennifer shared that she does not want others to see her when she is experiencing negative emotions, so she pretends like things or experiences did not hurt because she does not want people to know when she is hurt. Jennifer shared that is her experience with resilience. She is unsure if it is related to her upbringing with mostly men. Jennifer does not feel open to allowing people in her life to know when she is down or not

feeling her best. Jennifer described herself as being cold and that has impacted how she copes and moves through tough times in her life. Jennifer stated

> *Pues no se. Será por lo fría que soy, no sé o por lo el mismo de que crecí con hombres de que crecí, pues con mis hermanos de que si me doy un golpe y me duele prefiero aguantarme y seguir caminando como el típico del que no me vean porque se van a reír y así como que así me pasa algo así, difícil, prefiero hacerme como él no me dolió, no pasa nada y a seguirle.* (Jennifer)
>
> Well, I am not sure. It might be because I am cold, I am not sure if it is because I grew up with mostly men that I am this way. If I hit myself and it hurts, I prefer to withstand the pain and continue my path. Like the typical person who does not want to share their vulnerability because they might laugh at me if something like that happens. That is what happens when something difficult happens, I prefer to pretend that it did not hurt and continue as if nothing happened. (Jennifer)

Citlali's *testimonio* is that she can be resilient with the support of her husband and operating as a team through the obstacles and challenges that are presented to them. Citlali shared that she could ask her husband for support when she is having a challenging time or is very tired. Citlali's testimonio identified that her husband will identify different alternatives and solutions to her experience which allows her to feel supported when things or life can become challenging. Citlali shared a significant factor of survival is being able to rely on her partner to work through challenging times. According to Citlali, survival and overcoming for her are rooted in her partnership with her husband and receiving and asking for support from her husband. Citlali shared that this has been especially salient in the last year. Citlali shared

y como en este caso como como yo con mi esposo, más que nada tener el apoyo de 1 al otro de que si yo le digo ay pues me siento mal por esto que voy a hacer o cómo le vamos a hacer y que él me dé una buena respuesta. Todo va. No te preocupes, lo vamos a hacer así. O. Oh, sí, estoy cansada, descansa un rato así, yo pienso que eso es lo que cuenta como en una pareja que que los dos se lleven bien para poder sobrevivir. Eso que estamos por lo que 1 esté pasando. (Citlali)

Like in this case, like with myself with my husband, it is of utmost importance to have my husband's support. And supporting each other. I tell him, I feel bad because of this; what should I do? He helps me figure things out and how to proceed and gives me a positive response to my concern. Everything goes. Do not worry, we will figure out how to do it. Oh, and if I am tired, he encourages me to rest for a little. I think that is what counts in a couple. The importance is to get along well to create a life that allows you to survive. Especially with what one is currently living. (Citlali)

Daniella's *testimonio* describes the birth of her resiliency to come from her father. Daniella worked in the fields with her father for some time before he retired. Daniella attributes her identity, drive, and pride as a *campesina* to her father who was incredibly determined and diligent as a *campesino*. Daniella shared that her father modeled work and work ethic as a campesino. Daniella shared that she was not able to work many seasons with her father but the seasons that she was able to work with him modeled how to approach work in *El Campo.* Daniella learned how to work in the fields from her father. Daniella describes her father as a good worker and a hard worker in *El Campo*. Daniella shared that she has moments as a *campesina* where she wants to cry because work feels very difficult and overwhelming. Daniella shared that when she gets a difficult groove she thinks about her father and how he would

approach a difficult groove. She shares that her inspiration, drive, and creativity in approaching work comes from working alongside her father. Daniella's *testimonio* highlights the drive, motivation, and resiliency that *campesinas* can channel from working alongside their parents and families. Daniella shared that her father's drive and motivation when he was a campesino directly inform her resiliency to continue working as a *campesina*. Daniella's narrative highlights the impacts that *campesinxs* experience when working with their family members. Daniella's testimonio highlights the social and intellectual capital of *campesinas* that directly inform how they make sense of their work in their everyday lives. Family is a central part of resiliency for *campesinas*. Daniella's *testimonio* regarding resiliency was as follows

> *¿En la mía? Pues Bueno. Eso también me lo enseno mi padre. Por cómo, como mi trabajo es en el campo, y como mi papa trabajaba en el campo. Yo a veces, me toco trabajar con el muy poco, no mucho tiempo. Pero el tiempo que anduve con él. Umm yo aprendí como él trabajaba, aunque yo ya tenía años trabajando. Cuando yo trabajé con él, yo aprendí mucho. Él era Bueno. Él era Bueno trabajando. Y entonces, cuando yo. En el campo. Ay veces que uno a veces quiere hasta llorar. Ay veces…Una mira a curco tan tan duro y tan difícil. Ohh Ay dios mío, me toco el peor. Entonces, que haría mi padre, y que haría en este surco. Y digo. Oh my God. Mi padre haría esto y empiezo. El haría esto, porque él era Bueno. Entonces, me da, me da mucha me da muchas ummm pst animo cuando recuerdo su movimiento para trabajar como él y su tenacidad.* (Daniella)
>
> In mine? Well, that is also what my father taught me. Like in my work in the fields, is how my father would work in the fields. I sometimes was able to work with him but not a lot and not for much time. But the time that I was able to work with him, umm I learned how he would work even though I had worked for some time. When I worked with him, I

> learned a lot. He was a great worker. He was good at work. And well, when I worked in the fields, there were times that I wanted to cry. There were times…one sees the groove that looks so hard and difficult. Ohhh my god, I got the worst one! And well, what would my dad do and what would he do with this groove is what I tell myself? My father would do this and then I would begin. He would do this because he was good. And well, it gives me a lot, it gives me a lot of ummm Motivation when I remember his movements to work like him and his tenacity. (Daniella)

Campesinas testimonios of resiliency and tenacity revolve around family, community and social support that gives them the ability to persist as *campesinas*. *Campesinas* focus on their ancestors, loved ones and peers to continue their work to ensure their family is supported. Their resiliency factors are directly born from the people they love. Additionally, *campesinas* have learned to cope and be resilient from their community and specifically the modeling of their elders and community members. Therefore, centralizing resiliency from community rather than from the individual. It is critical to highlight the role of family, faith, and love as factors of resiliency and drive to persist in work that is often invisible in the U.S., underpaid and exploitative at times.

7a. Gratitude

Campesinas share their experiences with gratitude. Daniella shares her gratitude to *El campo* for feeding and sustaining her family through many times and seasons of their lives. Daniella's *testimonio* highlights that she feels thankful to have been able to move forward in her life despite some of the challenges that she has experienced in her life. *El campo* has given her access to move forward and heal from trauma she experiences in Mexico. Daniella shared being thankful for the opportunities *El Campo* have given her and the ability to arrive with nothing and

create a new life and world for herself and family. Daniella shared that her family and herself arrived suffering and were able to find comfort, relief to move forward. Daniella ended her testimonio with the certainty and trust in herself that her family and herself will move forward in the U.S. Daniella shared

> *ahmmmm. Me siento bien porque agradecida, agradecida con este país porque, aunque el trabajo es pesado hemos salido adelante. Hemos vivido de ahí por muchos años entonces fuera una persona mal agradecida si no estuviera agradecida. Si no estuviera agradecida. Yo estoy agradecida porque de ahí, he comido, yo, he vivido y mis, mis hijas también. Mis hijas también de ahí han comido y han vivido. Y estoy muy agradecida con dios y con este país que en alguna manera nos abrió la oportunidad de cuando aquí llegamos. Llegamos con nada campesinas llegamos sufriendo y este encontramos aquí Consuelo. Encontramos Alivio y, y vamos a salir adelante.* (Daniella)
>
> ahhhmm. I feel good because I am thankful, thankful with this country because even though the work is heavy, we have been able to continue forward. We have lived from that work for many years and well I would be a thankless person if I were not thankful. If I was not thankful. I am thankful because from this work, I have been able to eat, myself and my daughters have also been able to eat and live from. I am very thankful with god and this country because in some ways it opened the opportunity when we arrived. We came with nothing, and we came suffering and we found refuge. We found relief, and, and we were able to move forward. (Daniella)

Gratitude was a consistent theme throughout the *testimonios* of *campesinas*. They were thankful to have been afforded the opportunity to come to the U.S. and shift their realities.

7b. Love

Campesinas testimonios center love to persist and continue work that is challenging and can be taxing to their bodies. Daniella shared that love is fundamental in every human. She shared that love gives people the motivation to continue and move forward. Daniella shared that love gives you the motivation to wake up and continue with your everyday life and tasks. Daniella stated that love is a fundamental aspect of life and having someone to love and be loved by is imperative to *campesinas* livelihoods. Daniella shared that love is beautiful and is a main part of life. Daniella stated

> *No, pues el amor es fundamental en cada ser humano. Eso te da ánimos en seguir adelante, y de que cada día que te despiertas y cada día te vas a trabajar y para salir adelante y he, es muy importante y fundamental el que tengas alguien que da todo lo que pueda por ti. Eso es muy bonito para cual quiere ser humano.* (Daniella)
>
> No, well love is fundamental to every human. That gives us the drive to continue moving forward and wake up every day and go to work every day to continue moving forward. It is particularly important and fundamental that you have someone that will give everything they can for you. That is incredibly beautiful for any human being. (Daniella)

Daniella's *testimonio* is significant and mirrors the experiences and role love plays in the lives of *campesinas*. *Campesinas* derive their motivation and desire from love. Daniella shared that having someone who is willing to give everything for you is a fundamental aspect of existing and moving forward. Daniella's *testimonio* highlights some of people's most fundamental needs such as being loved and supported by people in ways that helps propel them forward. Love is one factor of resiliency that allows *campesinas* to overcome and is a motivator to create a new world for themselves and their children.

7c. Fe en Dios (Faith in God) /Gratitude

A second resiliency factor that was identified in the *testimonios* of the women I interviewed was faith in god as a resiliency factor amongst their lives. Roxana shared that she is not embarrassed to share her age because she has lived well and lived badly and as life has transpired, she has learned a lot about her life. Roxanna shares that she has had good and bad lessons which she was able to learn and grow from. Roxanna's testimonio further states that due to her age, she has been able to have the life lessons and without her age, then the life lessons would not have been available to her. Roxanna expressed gratitude to god for her family, her life and wonderful family. Roxanna's *testimonio* shares that her children are the best and she is incredibly grateful to God for her life. Roxanna shared that she is thankful to god for the good and bad in her life. Roxanna shared

> *O sea que yo a mí no me da pena decir mi edad, porque bien vivido o mal vivido los tengo y en el transcurso del tiempo que yo he vivido he tenido muchos aprendizajes en mi vida, buenos y malos y de todos les he sacado lo mejor. Maritza. Mhmmm Participant: Entonces. Digo si no tuviera esa edad, pues no hubiera vivido lo que he vivido y gracias a Dios, a esa edad que tengo, tengo unos hijos, una familia que es maravillosa para mí, mis hijos es lo máximo.* (Roxanna)
>
> Well, I am not embarrassed to say my age because I have lived well or lived badly. This is the age I have and well in the transgression of time, I have lived and have had many lessons in my life. Some have been good, some have been bad, and I have taken the best from those lessons. Maritza: mhhmmm Participant: Well, them, if I did not have this age then I would not have lived what I have experienced and thanks to god, I have the age I have and my children and an incredible family to myself and my children are the best. (Roxanna)

Roxanna's *testimonio* highlights the gratitude to God and life for the good and bad experiences she has experienced.

7D. Mental Health/Healing

Isabel's *testimonio* on healing and mental health highlights her childhood that was challenging due to mental health issues and concerns experienced by her mother. Isabel shared that she feels that her current life is more stable and secure compared to her childhood due to the mental health issues that her mother experienced. Isabel shared that she was not able to enjoy her childhood due to her mother's mental health issues. Her childhood was challenging due to her mother's resistance to treatment. Isabel additionally shared that her mother did not believe in being treated and Isabel suspected that her mother suffered from schizophrenia that went untreated. Isabel shared

> *Más difícil (pausa) Experiencia (pausa) pues mira la verdad, mi niñez fue difícil. Pues ahorita siento que estoy más estable porque como si hablamos de salud mental, mi mamá no está bien, no está bien de salud mental, entonces mi peor experiencia fue la niñez, yo no disfruté mi niñez como la debería de haber disfrutado, entonces quizás eso sea eso me afectó a, pues a todos.* (Isabel)
>
> It is more difficult (pause) the experience (pausa) Well, look, the truth is that my childhood was difficult. And well, now I feel that I am more stable because we have more conversations about mental health. My mom is not well, she is not well mental health and so my worst experience was my childhood because I did not enjoy it like I should have and so well that might have affected me and affected all of us. (Isabel)

Marisol's *testimonio* depicted her experience with sadness she experiences due to the poverty that people in Mexico and her community experiences. She shared that she witnesses

many people in *El campo* who have challenges with paying their rent, bills and feeding their families. Additionally, Marisol's testimonio highlights the burden and sadness *campesinas* who have family in Mexico experience. Marisol additionally highlights the burden of sending money home that is placed on *campesinas* who come to the U.S. This experience and expectation do not account for the barriers *campesinas* experience if they come to the U.S. as undocumented individuals. Marisol's testimonio alludes to the collectivist nature and expectation that migrating to this country places on migrants to help their families in Mexico or another country. Marisol's testimonio additionally depicts the financial challenges that are presented to *campesina's*. Marisol's *testimonio* also highlighted that some *campesinas* are unable to feed themselves and pay for basic needs despite working within a field that produces food for the country. Marisol stated

> *Cómo me duele, cómo cómo ver sufrir a alguien como en mi trabajo, como te estaba explicando hace rato de mi trabajo, yo me miro mucha gente de ahí, de gente que están sufriendo porque no tienen dinero porque no puede hacer nada con su familia en México y yo los miro y a mí me da tristeza* (Marisol)
>
> Well, it hurts me, to see how others suffer at my job, like I explained to you earlier, I see many people at my work. People who are suffering because they do not have money to do anything to help their family in Mexico. And I see them, and it makes me sad. (Marisol)

Isabel's *testimonio* regarding mental health further elaborated on meeting her husband and creating a new life with her husband facilitated healing of difficult childhood experiences that she was exposed to due to her mother's mental health challenges. Isabel shared that marrying her husband and having her own children helped heal her negative childhood

experiences. Isabel shared that having children was a challenge due to her past experiences with mental health, but she saw the ways it allowed her to heal and start anew. Isabel further shared that having someone to share the challenges and overcoming the challenges is an experience that heals and helps her move forward. Isabel's testimonio highlighted the importance of support in healing and overcoming. Isabel remarks

> *Pues mi familia cuando me casé con mi esposo, la verdad, pues ya cuando conocí a mi esposo y nos casamos y empezamos a hacer nuestra ahora, si nuestra familia empezó como a sanar todas esas cosas pasadas, entonces. Pues son vivencias que que nació la niña y luego, o sea, son, son retos. Cuando ves que que paso un obstáculo y lo pasas junto con alguien a tu lado, entonces.* (Isabel)
>
> Well, when I got married to my husband, my family, in truth when I met my husband and we got married is when our family began to heal from our past. Well, their experiences that we born when I was a child and well their obstacles. When you see an obstacle and you overcome them with someone by your side well… (Isabel)

Daniella indicated that she had a difficult experience when she moved to the U.S. She stated that fleeing her home due to violence was harmful. She shared that for quite some time since she arrived, she felt that food was not enjoyable, and she expressed feeling a deep sadness. She shared that after some years, she was unable to talk about her migration experience and the contributing factors for leaving her home. She shared that at first, it was particularly challenging to share what had happened and how she felt about it. She shared that when something serious happens, you never want to discuss it or revisit it again. She shared that as time passed, she felt that she could discuss her unique migration experience. She shared that her wounds healed with

time and with arriving to this beautiful country. Daniella feels like she was able begin again in the U.S. and is thankful to god to be in the U.S. today. Daniella comments

> *Y eso. Eso sí. Eso mi hizo daño. Yo sentí. Por muchos, muchos años, la comida. La comida no me sabia. Y yo era joven. Yo debería estar ..ummm..muy este bien. Y la comida no, no me sabia. Por, Por esa ummm cosa tan triste que nos tocó que vivir. Y, pero ya de lo paso de los anos (pausa) ummm al menos yo. Logre ummmm poder hablar de eso. Porque al principio, ni puedes hablar y ni quieres hablar con nadie de esas cosas. Cuando te pasa algo tan grabe, no quieres ni volverlo a repetir. Pero ahora, pues ya paso mucho tiempo. Y asiento que sanaron las heridas y es ummm y pues llegamos a este hermoso país. Y este a comenzar otra vez y gracias dios aquí estamos todavía.* (Daniella)
>
> Well, that is true, yes to that. That caused me harm. And I felt it. For many, many years, the food, the food did not taste like anything to me. I was young, I should be (pause) ummm I should be well. The food did not taste like anything. Because of that sad, such a sad thing that we experienced. But with the passing of the years. (pause) ummm at least for myself, I was able to talk about that. Because at first, you cannot speak about it, and you do not want to discuss it with anyone. When something so serious happens, you never want to repeat it. But now, well, much time has passed, and I feel that the wounds have healed. My wounds healed with the arrival to this beautiful country, and we were able to begin again. Because of god and thankfully to god, we are still here. (Daniella)

Mental health is an aspect of *testimonios* of *campesinas* that is not often discussed. During the interviews, some of the *campesinas* interviewed were unsure on how to answer the question due to some of the silences on mental health in the community. The *testimonios* of

campesinas did highlight that community, love and support were essential in their resiliency to overcome and heal difficult experiences and finding meaning in their experiences.

8. El Valle Central/Detention Centers and Prisons

Campesinas in the Central Valley are overly exposed to prisons and detention centers that are close in proximity to their homes. Additionally, due to the conservative nature of the Central Valley, it is common for cities to negotiate with contractors who operate detention centers. Daniella discusses her *testimonio* regarding her thoughts on contemplating opening a detention center in a nearby town. Daniella shared that she feels like it is a strong concept to have a jail or detention center in her community that she may need to drive by to get to the field she may be working in for the day. Daniella shared that she feels that it is a strong concept because the communities in the Central Valley are majority Latinx/Hispanic in her experience. Daniella shared that everyone who lives in the community is hard therefore a detention center feels unsafe, disheartening, and disappointing. Daniella further elaborated that the community is full of good people whose only desire is to support their families and families who do not benefit from a detention center in the community. Daniella further elaborated that the ranchers in the community needs the Latinx/Hispanic community to cultivate crops in the area. Daniella specifically shared "Lift up the crops" to describe the art of harvesting crops in the Central Valley which is symbolic of the ways that *campesinas* do the work of moving the communities of the Central Valley forward. Daniella further shared that the hands of *campesinas* and *campesinxs* are to cultivate the crops and feed the country not to be malignant. Daniella states that the community is not here to do harm but to support their families and contribute to U.S. society while creating a live for the people they love. Daniella shared that they do not call California the golden state without the deeper meaning of allowing people to *sobre salir*

(overcome). Daniella's *testimonio* further shared that the community does not need prisons or ICE detention centers but schools and community support to help the community thrive. Daniella emphasized that anything positive for the community is needed and the negative aspects need to be taken out. When asked regarding living in a community with prisons and detention centers, Daniella remarks

> *Pst. Eso es (pausa) eso es, No sé ni como decirlo porque eso me pareced pausa) fuerte. Eso me parece fuerte porque aquí es una comunidad de (pausa) los los los hispanos que aquí vivimos, es pura gente de trabajo. Somos gente de bien. Gente trabajadora. Gente que no necesita un centro de detención de ICE. Aquí, los rancheros nos necesitan para levantar la cosecha. Para que vamos a quierer un centro de detención aquí. ¿Para qué? Sí si si, nuestras manos no son para (pausa) No venimos para hacer el mal. No estamos hacienda el mal. Nosotros estamos trabajando. Trabajando para tener a nuestras familias. Y Y Y para esta comunidad (pausa) este salga adelante. No le llaman a este estado dorado pues eso queremos que sea. El estado dorado. No necesitamos, um oficinas de ice ni ni ni este, ni cárceles. Mejores escuelas, lo positivo. Todo lo positivo es Bueno. Lo negativo, pues no.* (Daniella)
>
> Pstt. That is (pause) that is, I am not sure how to say it because I think that is. (Pause) strong. That is something that is strong because here the community is (pause) of the Hispanic people who live here is mostly people who are here to work. We are good people. Hard working people. People who do not need a center of detention of ICE. Here, the farmers need us to harvest the crops. Why do we need a center of detention here? Why? Yes, yes yes, our hands are for (pause) We did not come here to do harm. We are not harming anyone. We are here working. We are working to have our families and for

this community (pause) to continue moving forward and be able to move forward. They do not call this state the golden state for a reason and well that is what we want it to be like. We do not need ummm ICE offices or or, or prisons. We need schools, positive things. All the positive things and the good. We do not need negative things. (Daniella)

Blanca further shared a slightly different testimonio where she believes that it depends on people and what they are experiencing in regard to a detention center and prisons. Blanca shared that people could work in the community independent of the prison and detention center. Blanca believes that if people follow the rules, then they should not be fearful of the prison and detention center. Blanca shared that everyone has different opinions and thoughts on the matter, and she believes that people are entitled to their opinions and thoughts on the matter. Blanca shared

> *Pero mira es que depende, depende um yo pienso en cada persona. Um a mí no me preocupa nada porque siento que las personas que tiene que hacen su trabajo hacen su trabajo y yo estoy muy independiente de todo eso. Pero no sé qué (pausa) por eso te digo que cada persona piensa diferente, pero yo soy bien.* (Blanca)
>
> Well look, it depends, it depends because I think of each person. It does not worry me at all because I feel that the people who have done their job and do their job are very independent of all that. But I am not sure (pause) and because of that, I think each person things differently, but I think I am fine with it. (Blanca)

The *testimonios* of *campesinas* regarding their experiences and opinions with detention centers vary and depict different schools of thoughts and how they feel affected. It is important to note that both Blanca and Daniella were undocumented for some time in the U.S. and were able to obtain their documents. The *testimonios* of Blanca and Daniella depict that *campesinas*

are not a monolith and everyone shares their own thoughts based on their own unique experiences and *testimonios.*

9. Processing the interview

The *testimonios* of *campesinas* in the Central Valley are directly tied to the testimonio of the researcher and towards becoming a bilingual and bicultural psychologist. In spite that some of the *campesinas* interviewed for this project being strangers while others being people who have known the researcher since she was a young child. Approximately 4 of the people interviewed knew the researcher since childhood. During this part of the interview process, the researcher shared the purpose of the interview and also asked the participants about their experience with the interview. Blanca shared that she felt that the interview felt like catching up with an old friend after not talking or seeing each other for some time. Blanca remarks

> *Bien, muy bien. Muy agradable. Es um. Siento como si estuviera hablando con una amiga que dejé ver hace mucho tiempo y que me la reencontré. (laughs) Le he platicado todo lo que ella no supo de mí.* (Blanca)
>
> Good, very good. Very pleasant. It is um. I feel like I spoke to an old friend that I had not seen in a long time and we re-connected. (laughs) I talked to her about everything she had missed while we were not in contact. (Blanca)

Isabel further discusses some of the thoughts that arose from the interview, Isabel shares that *campesinxs* in the area of the Central Valley contribute to 80% of the worlds almonds which to her is a huge feat and magnificent testament to the amount of work *campesinxs* contribute to the world. Isabel further elaborates that she wonders how many stories and *testimonios* are part of that production that are often not highlighted, not seen and not told. Isabel shared that she thinks that this study is beautiful, which is what prompted her to respond to a Facebook post by

the researcher. Isabel further shared that she finds it beautiful that that the compilation of the stories of different people with different stories and different experiences coming together due to their experiences as *campesinxs*. Isabel further elaborates that some people's circumstances are easier than others and some harder than others therefore making it important to depict a diversity in experiences. She further shared that it is important to identify the tendencies and identify problematic themes that may be occurring within the experiences of *campesinas*. Isabel found the project very interesting and were her lasting thoughts from the experience. Isabel states

> *El 80% de Producción de almendras en California, o sea, imagínate cuántas personas no trabajan ahí, contribuyen al 80% del mundo, o sea muchísimo para que un solo Estado lo haga y cuántas historias, cuántas cosas hay ahí, entonces se me hace bonito y también, por eso me llamó la atención el proyecto entonces qué bueno que estés haciendo algo así, recopilando historias y experiencias y vivencias de la gente que todas son diferentes, porque todos venimos de distintos lugares y tenemos diferentes circunstancias, unas más fáciles y otras más difíciles, pero pues qué bueno que así elijas varios personas para que mires la tendencia o el cierto tipo de problemática repetitiva que hay después. Sí está interesante.* (Isabel)
>
> 80% of the production of almonds come from California, imagine how many people do not work in the production and contribute to 80% of the world. Basically, that is a lot for just one state. Imagine how many stories and how many things are found there and I think it is beautiful and your project caught my attention because I think it's good that you are doing something like this, gathering the stories and experiences of people who are all different. Because we all come from different places, and we have different circumstances and some more difficult than others but the important part is that you

chose different people so you can see the tendencies that arise or if there are problematic themes that come up. It is very interesting. (Isabel)

Yalitza's experience with the interview was one of reflection. She shared that she had never been asked some of the questions posed in the interview. Yalitza shared that her experience allowed her to recognize some truths from her testimonio that she had never reflected on. Specifically, Yalitza had not identified what was one of the hardest things she has ever experienced or processing her experience with COVID-19, or the role love plays in her life or views on love. Yalitza's *testimonio* regarding the interview stated

> Honestly, like I'm gonna be honest like I really didn't think, uh, like you know like I never actually like. Sat here and thought about like everything you were gonna ask me. But like when you asked me all these questions, they made me actually realize and actually think like. oh Yeah, hey like this is true. Like you know, like for example, like what has been the hardest thing like I've never like sat down and be like damn that was like the hardest thing like I had to go through and stuff like that and to ask me and then like automatically like my brain was like That's the hardest thing you know or like, even about the whole Covid thing. Or like oh how about like the love like thing, like these questions I have never asked myself or nobody ever asked me. (Yalitza)

During all the interviews, I share parts of my story, about my educational journey which I directly connect to *campesinas* in the Central Valley. I share with everyone my reasons for wanting to do this project and emphasize their role in the community and the role they have on the people in the community even if we do not know each other. I share with Daniella the importance for me to depict the stories of *campesinas* that center on their hardships equally to their ability to center joy and resilience despite their lived experiences. I shared with Daniella the

importance of sharing a dynamic narrative of humanity, struggle, and joy due to some of the negative discourse that can be discussed about *campesinas* in the Central Valley. The researcher states

> *Maritza:mi razón por hacer este tema de investigacion es porque yo quiero que las personas y las personas más que no son de la comunidad. Y no conocen a muchas personas que se den cuenta que tienen muchas fortalezas las comunidades y es a basada de las mujeres que trabajan en el campo. Y más en lugares como (pausa) Kern County. Entonces, para mi es como puedo traer las historias como usted al conocimiento al mundo porque muchas personas hablan cosas negativas del campo. Y no saben realmente como las comunidades sobre salen todo, como todo como usted habla de todo lo que sobre salió para ser feliz, para hacer una vida, para darle una vida mejor a sus hijas, no nos enfocamos tanto en las fortalezas de personas como usted entonces mi Proyecto es para hablar de las historias que hablan de la Fortaleza. Que hablan de los positivo y hablan de como usted está sobre saliendo en su vida diaria. Ese es mi, mi meta de este Proyecto. Y ay algunas preguntas que son de su trabajo y otras que son más intensas*. (Laughs) (Writer talking during Daniella's interview)
>
> Maritza: my reasons for doing this study was because I wanted the people and the people who are not from the community (pause) who do not know people here to recognize that the community has many strengths, and those strengths are based on women who work the fields. And places like Kern County. And well, for me, it's like bringing your stories to the world because many people say negative things about the fields. And they do not know in reality how the community overcomes everything. Like you discuss how you overcame everything in your life to be happy, create better life for your daughters and we

do not focus as much on people's strengths of people like you. And well my project aims to talk about the stories that also focus on strengths. That discusses the positive and discusses how you overcome in your everyday life. That is my goal for this project. There are some questions that are about your work and others are more intense. (Laughs)

Furthermore, I share with the *campesinas* that I interviewed the power of their work as a direct reflection of my desire to pursue a doctorate and due to their sacrifices, I have been afforded the opportunity to follow my dreams. I share with them the interconnectedness that we experience in our community and the importance of highlighting their stories as a direct result of mine. I shared with the *campesinas* that due to their experiences, I have been able to succeed and overcome. My own resilience and tenacity has been directly learned from their modeling and their experiences. Therefore, I let them know that it is important to witness their stories, document them and highlight them as I stand on their shoulders. The researcher shared

Maritza: Entonces, para mi es para mí es para hablar de eso. Yo he podido triunfar (struggles to say this word)(pausa) No me había travado hoy. He podido sobre salir, aunque yo no la conozca, tengo tías y familiares como usted que, gracias a ellos, yo he podido, hhhee sacar (pausa) estar en un programa de doctorado, y sacar mi educación. y por eso, para mi es muy importante hablar de las experiencias de personas como usted porque gracias a personas como usted, yo he podido llegar a donde estoy.

Participant: Que bonito.

Maritza: well, for me this is to discuss that. I have been able to overcome and succeed (struggles to say a word) (pause) I had not gotten stuck today! I have been able to overcome, even though I do not know you, I have aunts that are farmworkers and family members like you. And thanks to them, I have been able to obtain my education and be in

a doctorate program and continue my education (pause). And because of that, it is particularly important to me to discuss the experiences of people like you because thankfully, due to people like you, I have been able to be where I am today.

Daniellas reaction to my *testimonio* was that she thought it was a beautiful testimonio. Our *testimonios* are interwoven as someone who is a product of *campesinas* and a community of *campesinxs*. I stand on their shoulders to continue, and I directly learned from them how to exist in the world. I let Daniella know that due to people like her, I have been able to be who I am today. Their *testimonios* are what sustains the country, the community, the area, and the world. Exchanging *testimonios* was a part of this dissertation as resistance, recreate and attempt to co-create a *testimonio* that depicts the dynamic experiences and impacts of *campesinas* in the Central Valley of California.

Chapter 5

> Although to others we may be disposable, we are not to each other. That is enough to guarantee that the struggle for a better world will not end with me, and that someday it won't be this way anymore. (Rocha, 2020)

Discussion

Campesinas have faced many obstacles and are often overlooked in societal discourse, academic discourse and within the realms of women's rights. Specifically, in academic spaces, most research on farmworkers centers the experiences of (self-identified) male farmworkers. This has been historically due to the dominance of men within the workspace of farm work. This is due to many historical and policy factors such as the Bracero program and immigration laws that were more lenient in the past. The growing shift of stronger immigration enforcement along with growing violence and poverty in places like Mexico has impacted farmworkers. Growing research is highlighting the rising numbers of women farmworkers, which creates implications for the workspace, women's rights, and the unique experiences of *campesinas*.

This study aimed to highlight the lived experiences of farmworking women. More often than not, their work is glorified and centered without the acknowledgement of their full human experience. *Campesinas* experience most "isms" while being exploited due to their gender, documentation status, and employment. Their experiences are critically important as there will be a growing need of awareness of their experiences as the demographics within farm work shift and as the national demographics shift in the U.S, most especially in California. Additionally, the Central Valley of California is one of the most under-resourced places in California where

poverty rates are higher than the rest of the state with 55% of its population at or below the poverty line (Sahagun, 2022). Additionally, the rural nature of the Central Valley and farm work creates additional barriers and concerns for farmworking women and their families in this area. This dissertation highlighted the barriers and resiliency factors of *campesinas* in this area. This additionally calls attention to *campesinas* voices, their experiences and thoughts on love, resiliency, community, and how they tell their own stories of resistance. *Campesinas* are doing their best to mitigate intergenerational trauma and the poverty they have experienced. The specific research questions posed were:

1. How do Mexican Farmworking women cope with the socio-political and environmental climate of exploitation and toxin exposure?
2. What are resiliency factors Mexican farmworking women identify as a source of love, strength and resistance?

This dissertation utilized LatCrit through *testimonios* to inform its perspective and approach (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Valdes, 2005). These approaches are incredibly important as they highlight the importance of centering the voices of *campesinas*. This was an important component due to the factors present during this time frame such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher was consistently in alignment with these theories to consistently center the impact of colonization and the importance of capturing the experiences of *campesinas*. This was salient due to the stark impact capitalism and colonization had on the lived experiences and social location of *campesinas*. Many of the challenges that *campesinas* experienced were rooted in the intersectional experiences impacted by colonization and capitalism. Such factors included the importance of production that disregarded their health and did not provide the support needed to feel safe and taken care off by our society. Additionally, the perspective of being documented

and needing to migrate across dangerous landscapes that include environmental dangers, and systematic dangers such as interactions with border patrol.

The theories utilized informed the perspectives, questions, and inclusion of the *testimonio* of the researcher. All these components ensured that the researcher created a space in which an exchange was created that honored *campesinas.* Additionally, the research and interview questions aimed to capture the intersectional experiences of *campesinas* that often varied due to documentation status, when they migrated to this country, the roles of their families, and their social location within Mexico and the U.S.

Within this dissertation, nine *campesinas* shared their testimonio of their experience as a *campesina*. They shared their perspective based on their immigration experience, how they came to farm work in the Central Valley, experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, perspective on toxicity in their community and their sources of love, strength and resistance in their everyday lives. Different women highlighted different *testimonios* that were often contingent of familial dynamics, unique immigration experiences, intergenerational trauma and lived experiences. One aspect of *campesinas testimonios* was the generation and age of the participant. For some women, this was informed by where they were born, privilege, and class status. Additionally, their own experiences informed their perspectives and how they view themselves in relationship to the U.S., the Central Valley of California specifically and Mexico.

The women interviewed for this dissertation all came to become *campesinas* due to different needs, life events, and experiences. A common theme within the experiences of *campesinas* that is important to highlight is the role of family in their *testimonio*. The *campesinas* interviewed for this study highlighted how their family has supported them throughout their lives and have brought them to this moment. For all of the women interviewed in this study, breaking

intergenerational trauma and giving their children a better life was a key component of mental health, resiliency, pride and motivator to continue their work in the U.S. All of the women with children shared that they would like a better life for their children. An important outlook that the women shared was that *campesinas* highlighted the desire for their children to have health, happiness and well-being for their children rather than centering monetary wealth. This component highlighted that *campesinas,* who immigrated to this country and worked in the fields desire for their children to lead healthy and comfortable life free of suffering which did not always center on becoming rich. desire for their children is for their own struggles and childhood traumas to stop with them. This sentiment is revolutionary and speaks to the radical mothering that *campesinas* engage with in their everyday lives. Most women shared how they would like their children to have access to a healthy life that is not filled with the same struggles as they have been exposed to through the back-breaking labor they engage in every day.

" Crear Nuestro Propio Mundo" Creating our own world

Daniella shared that coming to the U.S. has meant being able to create a new world for herself and children. This type of sentiment is what allows for the creation of new ways of being and even more so for women of color and their children. The children of *campesinas* are witnessing their mothers attempting to create new ways of being that have never been accessed before. Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) speaks of the navigating the subliminal space of in between. Anzaldúa (2007) discusses the in-between subliminal aspects of the in-between space that often forces people to create and make space for new ways of being. *Campesinas* are recreating ways of being in the Central Valley while feeding the country. Their experiences are dynamic in regard to the seeds they are planting, cultivating, nourishing and harvesting. Their work extends beyond feeding the country and beyond performing back breaking labor in a male dominated

space. They are actively re-imagining and acting on their imagination to create a world for their children. *Campesinas* experiences extend beyond their relationship to the fields and food. Their lives extend to creating lives for their children that attempt to challenge intergenerational trauma that they are carrying from their motherlands, families, and oppressive systems. *Campesinas* are engaging in such dynamic practices of creation that are often overlooked by society and their communities. This narrative and *testimonio* was the reason for this dissertation. It is important to highlight the everyday liberatory practices some *campesinas* in the Central Valley of California have created. They are intentional, thoughtful, and cognizant of their lives and community.

Additionally, it is arguable that *campesinas* are engaging in liberatory practices by changing their external and internal lived experiences (Montero, 2007). Montero (2007) posits that "Liberation's goal is the creation of a new person in a new society with a new social identity" (p. 522). *Campesinas* are finding ways to create lives they are proud of and lives they love that are filled with dignity for their children and themselves. This creation does not indicate that *campesinas* are not faced with oppression or exploitation but their ways of actively and intentionally creating a life that is better than the life they had before highlights the ways they are engaging in liberatory practices that will allow them to re-imagine a life that they want for themselves and their children. Additionally, it is arguable that *campesinas* have self-awareness of the ways they are exploited by systems and are aware of the importance of their work, which is part of *conscientizacion* that Montero and Martin-Baró discuss in their writings regarding liberation (Martin-Baró, 1990; Montero, 2007). *Campesinas* are re-creating their world in the Central Valley that allows them to grow, flourish, and shift their lives. Choosing to immigrate to the U.S. in spite of oppression and violence in their countries is one form of liberation and obtaining control over their destiny's. *Campesinas* testimonios in this dissertation highlight their

experiences and how they make sense of their lives, efficacy and acquisition of their futures for generations.

Family

Participants highlight the impact on family on their trajectories as *campesinas*. Simultaneously, family is a driver and fuel to their work and is directly connected to creating a new world. *Campesinas* centralize their families in their *testimonios* and experiences as *campesinas*. Family is often the factor that brings them to be *campesinas* and also could be a protective factor for them when it comes to being sexually assaulted, exploited, and taken advantage of. This was not highlighted in the interviews, but familial pressures could also be a source of stress for *campesinas*. This was not highlighted by the participants during the interviews. *Campesinas* also identified the family as a source of love and desire to *"sobre salir"* (overcome). These experiences highlight the large motivator and role love and family play.

Documentation Status

Multiple participants shared about discrimination that is felt and brought up by documented *campesinxs* against undocumented *campesinxs*. This discrimination is something that was surprising to all of the participants who mentioned it. Additionally, participants shared that it is painful to experience discrimination from people who knew what it was like to be discriminated against. Additionally, some participants shared that it was disheartening to experience discrimination from people they would not expect it from.

Toxic Environments

Some *campesinas* did not see it alarming that they live in places that are toxic while others shared that the prospect of a detention center and a prison in their communities is alarming. There is a differing opinion amongst *campesinas* regarding what they see and

experience as toxic. This is important to highlight as the possibility of detention centers in the Central Valley is growing therefore community opinions and awareness could deter this from occurring. Additionally, *campesinas* are aware that pesticide exposure could potentially impact their long-term health. Some believe that if they develop cancer, that it is fate and part of life while others believe there is a correlation between cancer incidence and pesticide exposure. This awareness in addition with *campesinas* awareness of the state of their water indicates that they are aware there are some risks to where they live and have chosen different ways to cope. For some, it is to leave it up to fate and god whereas others it looks like taking additional precautions like ensuring their children are not drinking water from their faucets. Each *campesinas* way of coping highlights the importance of psychoeducation and the agency that *campesinas* practice in order to ensure the toxicity in their community does not permeate their homes. Additionally, one specific participant, Yalitza, emphasized that violence in her neighborhood is also part of the toxicity present. Community violence is something that is present in the Central Valley but is not always emphasized due to the rural nature of their lives.

Resiliency

This dissertation highlights the different ways of coping that *campesinas* have developed in their lives through the need to survive versus an inherent trait. *Campesinas* have been tasked with the role of surviving for the sake of their families and their family's livelihoods. It is important and imperative to highlight this factor when discussing their resiliency factors and their experiences. *Campesinas* attributed their resiliency to their families and most especially their children. *Campesinas* highlighted the ways connection and community was one of the most important factors highlighted in their testimonio. Daniella specifically shared that she learned

resiliency from her father who taught her how to work in the fields. *Campesinas* specifically attributed their resiliency to their families and centered their love for their children as fuel.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Campesinas processed during the interviews, their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic as *campesinas*. Their experiences highlight the demand to continue feeding the country under additionally precarious conditions that impacted their well-being and ways of being. *Campesinas* highlighted that they felt pride in their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlighted that they experienced a shift in perspective within society. *Campesinas* experienced more accolades for their work versus before they were taken for granted by society. They were often invisible and exploited for their work. This was the first time *campesinas* experienced a shift in regard to society's perception of them. It is important to note that they did not receive raises or additional benefits beyond verbal accolades of their work. Additionally, *campesinas* who were undocumented during this time faced mixed messages regarding their importance to the U.S. while also experiencing rejection by the country. It is important to keep in mind the percentage of undocumented farmworkers in California. Specifically, approximately 75% of farmworkers are undocumented. *Campesinas* in this study highlighted the lack of access to benefits when they became sick or did not have work during the off-season. This is very important to highlight as undocumented *campesinas* were more vulnerable to not having appropriate support and care during the COVID-19 pandemic yet were deemed essential. Additionally, if there were public benefits available to them, their testimonios indicated that they were not aware of ways to seek assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic or before. Therefore, indicating that *campesinas* that identify as undocumented do not have the knowledge or accessibility to resources in their communities to help support them. It is also important to

highlight that undocumented *campesinas* might experience distrust in systems due to discrimination they indicated they experience within their workplace and at times within their communities.

Additionally, *campesinas* risked their lives and have continued to face precarious working conditions. *Campesinas* also experienced grief and a shared fear of dying alone without their families. *Campesinas* additionally described their experiences with community members dying around them while continuing to work through the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience also demonstrates the additional stressors and factors that *campesinas* had to cope with while feeding the world who was mostly shut down.

Limitations

This dissertation has multiple limitations. First and foremost, most *testimonios* are captured in person and there is a sense of *personalismo* that is important in gathering the stories of participants and even more so Latinx community members (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Zoom due to safety concerns for the researcher and for participants. Additionally, all of the interviews were conducted before vaccinations were widely available to community members and non-healthcare professionals. The *testimonios* depicted in this dissertation reflect the experiences of *campesinas* as they were experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic in full bloom. This is noted as a limitation as *campesinas* were likely still forming their *testimonios* regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and their roles as *campesinas* during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another limitation is the access to the internet and ability to navigate Zoom could have been a barrier for some *campesinas*, which might have deterred *campesinas* from participating during the recruitment phase of this study.

All of the participants self-identified as Mexican or of Mexican descent which is another limitation. This study only depicts the *testimonios* of Mexican *campesinas*, which might not capture all of the lived experiences of all *campesinas*.

Additionally, none of the participants self-identified as indigenous or Native American in this study. The researcher did not ask regarding racial identity and was not mentioned by participants during interviews. This is important as the indigenous community is growing within farm work. Based on the *testimonios* provided in this study, discrimination and racism exist within farm work therefore it is likely that indigenous community members experience additional colorism and racism within farm work. This study does not depict the experiences of indigenous farmworkers in the Central Valley. According to the Indigenous Farm work study there are approximately 120,000 indigenous farmworkers living in California (Mines et al., 2010).

An additional limitation to this study is the lack of LGBTQ and afro-Latinx participants. This study does not capture the experiences of LGBTQ and Afro-Latinx farmworkers in the U.S. or California. This study also did not ask participants about their ability status or specifically regarding their socio-economic status. Therefore, the researcher is not aware of participants income or if they are considered to be living in poverty. Since multiple research studies have emphasized high poverty rates for farmworkers. This is a large limitation as we do not know if a connection between resiliency, support, and poverty exists.

Implications

The importance of this study to the field of counseling psychology and beyond is highlighting the resiliency factors of *campesinas,* who are often overlooked, silenced, exploited and taken for granted in our society. It is important that their *testimonios* be taken into

consideration and centered, most especially in regard to treatment and care when working with farmworking communities. Farmworking communities have resiliency factors that should be utilized to support them through difficulties related to systematic oppression, mental health concerns, building community and developing coping mechanisms. Counseling psychology prides itself on their social justice perspectives and history in shifting the role of psychologists in relation to oppression and liberation. This dissertation aims to uplift the legacy of counseling psychology and continue challenging psychologists to actively participate in liberatory practices (DeBlaere et al., 2019)

Counseling psychology positions itself as a field that is shifting the field of psychology to address disparities of minoritized communities (DeBlaere & et al., 2019). This dissertation's affiliation to counseling psychology is in line with strengths-based perspectives that counseling psychology as a field has adapted towards supporting communities resist and exist within oppressive systems. This dissertation highlights the importance of utilizing the existing tools minoritized communities have developed and utilizing existing strengths towards overcoming obstacles. A resiliency-based perspective has been historically utilized as a tool within the field and this dissertation is adding to the existing literature while contributing to the field. There are minimal studies on farmworkers within the field of counseling psychology. Therefore, this study contributes to the psychological literature through the lens of counseling psychology of the *testimonios* of *campesinas*.

Additionally, this study centers a cultural perspective that is informed by a Latinx farmworker lens which is an important component and value of counseling psychology. Therefore, utilizing culture as a strength of *campesinas* is a perspective this study takes and is in alignment with a core value of counseling psychology. This study centers the voices of

campesinas by someone who grew up and was born to a *campesina*. This study aligns with standing in the value of centering the voices of people who have been historically silenced. An important distinction this study makes is that *campesinas* are not silent but have been silences over the course of years. This distinction is in alignment with the values of the field and contributes to the field in significant ways of modeling of ways to center the voices of oppressed communities.

It is important to note that the researcher has a social worker background that also impacted this study and the perspective. It is important to highlight the similarities in values within social work and counseling psychology. They both align with ensuring social justice is centered within their respective fields to ensure that minoritized communities are given the tools needed to resist and exist oppressive structures in the U.S. Due to this background, the researcher cannot dispel as a perspective that has inherently informed her lived experiences, approach and reflexivity. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the researcher's reflection of her own positionality, perspective, and experience in moving forward and working with farmworking communities which is a leading tenant of counseling psychology. Reflection of positionality is a stark distinction ensuring that counseling psychologists are in constant reflection of their own experiences, privilege and how their identities directly impact their work.

This dissertation aligns with the principles of counseling psychology and hopes to inspire and encourage counseling psychologists to center and find action to support farmworking communities across the country. This dissertation hopes to highlight the strengths of *campesinas* while also calling the field of counseling psychology to center their experiences and highlight the importance of *campesinas' testimonios* as learning tools towards supporting *campesinas* across the country.

Additionally, the COIVD-19 pandemic has highlighted the implications of working with farmworking communities. Due to their exposure and experiences, the stark reminder of injustices that continue happening to farmworking communities highlights the implications of this work and the need for mental health services for immigrant communities. More research and work alongside farm working communities is needed and important in co-creating a life that is just for some of the most important members of our society.

Future Directions

This study was conducted and guided by a strength-based perspective, which is evidenced in Delgado-Romero et al. (2018). It is imperative that more studies are conducted that explore the experiences of *campesinas* children, indigenous *campesinas,* and undocumented *campesinas* across the country and the Central Valley specifically. Additionally, *campesinas* experience higher rates of incidence of COVID-19 and experience health disparities due to multiple factors and systematic issues. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a clear indicator of disparities in physical health, and the study of their mental health after the COVID-19 pandemic is an incredibly important endeavor as farmworkers have historically experienced high rates of depression and anxiety. The additive factor of the COVID-19 pandemic to the multiple stressors they experience will likely highlight the importance of additional resources, support, and psychoeducation regarding caring for their mental health. Additionally, exploring the role of family within the life of campesinas is important as it is a large role in their lives. The role of family was centralized in the *testimonios* of *campesinas* as part of their experiences.

Updated Subjectivity Statement

Additionally, it is important to highlight the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on myself, my community, my friends, my family, and ultimately the *campesinas* interviewed for

this project. The COVID-19 pandemic and conducting this project during a time that *campesinxs* were disproportionately impacted created great stressors for me. My entire family continued working through the COVID-19 pandemic while I applied to internship and completed my time at the University of Georgia. I had extended friends, family, and community members die of COVID-19, which heavily impacted my mental health. This caused grief and vicarious trauma that I did not foresee arising when conducting the study. I was fortunate enough to not have lost any immediate family members despite multiple family members contracting COVID-19 during the time of this project. My family and community in the Central Valley operate from a collectivist view; therefore, the losses in our community here in the U.S. and in Mexico were deeply felt, mourned, and discussed. This mirrored the process and sentiments that the *campesinas* that I interviewed shared. Never before in my life had I felt the deep collective grief that I felt during this time period. This grief was coupled with immense guilt from my ability to stay home and survive. These sentiments deeply impacted my ability to move forward with this project in some moments due to the immense sadness felt for my community, and *dolor* felt in my community. During this time, I experienced strong insider-outsider sentiments due to my far-removed experience while discussing often deaths. In the month of January 2021, my mother notified me of multiple deaths of people she grew up with, people in our community and people who were currently sick. This experience heavily impacted my well-being and shifted how I interacted with this project. During the time of conducting interviews, it was very challenging to pick up the data without crying or experiencing large amounts of distress. Additionally, there were some points during the process in which I wanted to completely switch the topic of the dissertation. This dissertation emphasized the interconnectedness that I have with my community

and further solidified the ways that my own *testimonio* is linked and connected with *campesinas* in the Central Valley in spite of being so far removed from the experience of a *campesina*.

Additionally, I was experiencing vicarious trauma regarding conducting, analyzing, and writing regarding the data. I was heavily impacted by the *testimonios* due to the close proximity of the *testimonios* and experience with COVID-19. At the time of many of the interviews, January 2021, a surge was taking place and participants and I were experiencing community deaths. I contacted Brooke Rappaport, a colleague, and friend, for consulting support regarding the dissertation project. This scope and approach utilized a culturalist methodological approach which is defined as "culturally centering and, therefore, decolonizing our research methodologies requires us to change the stories we live by through both liberatory counternarratives and decolonized methodologies" (Grills et al., 2022, p. 6). Through this, I was able to process my experience with gathering data and my own parallel process I was experiencing with participants. This also created a reflective space to ensure that I was reflecting on my own reflexivity in ways that provided emotional support and ensured scientific groundedness as the coding process began.

This part of the research emphasized the interconnectedness that I experienced while conducting the project and the impacts that the *testimonios* had on me. Additionally, it was important that I find someone who was familiar with qualitative research and had different identities to ensure vicarious trauma did not continue. This research consultation is a testimony to the ways the research impacts me and also demonstrates the interconnected nature of this project and COVID-19 pandemic (Grills et al., 2022). Conducting research that utilizes counter-storytelling and highlights the resiliency factors is part of culturalist methodologies. Furthermore, a cultural methodological approach seeks to provide "a foundation for collective

and individual action but also provides protocols for healthful living" (Grills et al., 2022, p. 6). This approach and additional support for the vicarious trauma that I was experiencing highlights alternative ways of conducting research that centers the community, wellness, and the impacts on researchers of color co-creating narratives during painful times that are disproportionally impacting *campesinas* (Grills et al., 2022).

Closing Thoughts

Conducting this study challenged me in more ways than I anticipated or thought it would when I proposed it and decided to pursue a Ph.D. This experience has forever changed me as a human and future psychologist. This process forced me to face the experiences of my community as they were supporting the country through the global COVID-19 pandemic without a vaccine, resources, and for some, access to basic needs such as unemployment when sick, or healthcare. This experience highlighted the stark experiences of my community versus that of the very privileged one that I was surrounded by during my time conducting these interviews. Additionally, I experienced a duality of worlds that I have been straddling for most of my life. The experience of *Nepantla* was stark and was an experience that was painful and made me incredibly angry with the world (Anzaldúa, 2007) . The people I interviewed reflect the people who have brought me to this point and highlighted that I stand on the shoulders of giants of *campesinas*, who have sustained me and sustain the country. I was born from a *campesina*, and into a family of *campesinxs*. And even though my mother ceased to engage in farm work at the age of 23, her experiences, lessons, and takeaways from working between the ages of 11-23 inform my life today. This experience was painful as I was experiencing parallel experiences of grief due to my close proximity to farmworking communities in the Central Valley. This study created anger and additionally created pride for my community that continues to overcome

systematic barriers with little to no resources. Our community is often overlooked, secluded, isolated and made invisible and in spite of these issues, the community continues to create and overcome with little to nothing. This is not to say that the community did not experience inordinate death and infections, it is to also highlight how they overcame and continued. This study has overall fueled the importance of mental health work as a bilingual and bicultural future psychologist from the Central Valley. *Campesinas* have created for generations and continue being the backbone of this country. I hope those reading this recognize the amount of work *campesinas* engage in to feed this country and simultaneously, raise a generation who they hope creates a different world outside of the fields. I, with great confidence, believe this dissertation and becoming a bilingual psychologist is my family's creation, and ultimately seeds they planted, cultivated and harvested. I believe *campesinas* across the Central Valley are doing the same things my family has done for me. I believe this degree is liberation in practice for my family as Maritza Montero (2011) discusses in her work on liberation psychology.

Additionally, this study being conducted solidified for me the interconnected nature of our lives to the most oppressed and marginalized communities. Conducting the majority of my interviews in January of 2021 highlighted my experience of interconnectedness on a global and national level. Our decisions and choices impact people who are marginalized and oppressed. Therefore, *campesinas* and farmworking communities were directly impacted by our individual and collective choices. This experience highlighted that U.S. society often sees itself through an individual lens that overlooks the direct impacts their individual choices have on the collective. The impact *campesinas* experienced is a testament to this even though they found ways to cope. Ideally, it would have been helpful for the country to care for the people pushed into the margins. This did not happen at some points during the COVID-19 pandemic and people on the

community level were impacted. This forced *campesinas* to cope and find ways to be resilient and overcome. My wish for my community is for the ability to utilize their energy in other ways other than being resilient.

This experience forever changed my life as a Latinx Psychologist because it highlighted the amount of work there is left to do with the farmworking community and how little has been done to support the community. It is arguable that the community has not received the support needed to flourish and overcome. Therefore, this experience has made ever so clear the importance of the field of psychology to pay attention to this community and their experiences. Additionally, to support *campesinas* as they challenge intergenerational trauma that has impacted their lives due to factors such as colonization and oppression. This experience solidified my desire to be a bilingual psychologist and further ignited my desire to continue serving my community and shedding light on their experiences. This study highlighted the lack of relevant research that has been conducted and the large oversight. This study has solidified my desire to publish this study to ensure that more awareness is created on *campesinas* and centering their experiences and voices regarding psychological wellness and strength-based perspectives.

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