SEPARATED BY REMOVAL: IMPACT OF PARENTAL DEPORTATION ON U.S. CITIZEN CHILDREN'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL GOALS

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ABSTRACT

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This research examines the impact of parental deportation on children’s higher education aspirations. The study takes an inductive approach to analyzing interview data in order to answer the following question: in a mixed legal immigration status home, how does the removal of one or both parents impact a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education? Additionally, the following sub-questions are addressed: 1) How does forced separation affect the socio-emotional development of the adolescent with regard to their post-secondary aspirations? 2) How is the social capital available to the adolescent influenced, if at all, by parental removal? In addressing these questions I employ two frameworks; Coleman’s (1988) framework of social capital, and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory framework, as a way to interpret the reciprocal relationship between the adolescents and their environments, and to discuss how this relationship could affect their aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education.

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with U.S. born adolescents of Latino immigrant parents (primarily Mexicans), their parents/guardians who remain in the U.S. with them, people who had close knowledge of each family’s situation, and local experts with experience in issues affecting families separated by deportation. In addition to the interviews, site observations in each of the participants’ homes and/or school environments were conducted.

The results of the study showed that parental deportation caused the families to suffer financial hardships, and emotional and psychological trauma. The forced separation negatively affected the adolescents’ perception of stability, safety, and trustworthiness in their various microsystems, which directly hindered their ability to acquire forms of social capital conducive
to their educational aspirations. In addition to the physical changes of their immediate
surroundings, the changed perception among the adolescents resulted in a behavioral change that
affected the amount and types of interactions they have with family members and school peers.

Participants who continued to strive to attend college or who experienced an increase in
post-secondary motivation did so in spite of their parent’s deportation. Some participants felt that
they had a better chance of reuniting the family if they had a university degree that would lead to
a high paying job. Their motivation to pursue a post-secondary degree came from sense of
mission to repay their parents for the sacrifices their parents made in order to live in the U.S.

This research demonstrates the negative implications of misguided federal immigration
policies along with school inattentiveness to the unique needs of mixed status households. Both
have impacted the educational aspirations of the growing population of children separated from
their parent(s) via deportation.
Los amorosos buscan,
los amorosos son los que abandonan,
son los que cambian, los que olvidan.

Su corazón les dice que nunca han de encontrar,
no encuentran, buscan.

-Jaime Sabines, 1950
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

From 2000-2007 the immigrant population in the U.S. increased by seven million people (Chaundry et al., 2010). According to the 2010 Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), 39.9 million foreign-born people reside in the United States (Passel & Cohen, 2012). Additionally, as of 2011, nearly 24 percent of all school-age children in the United States are immigrants or first generation children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco, C., Casas, Nakamura, Tummala-Narra, 2012). While the immigrant population has increased in the United States, the government has also enacted and enforced the most rigid immigration laws in the nation’s history. In the United States over one hundred thousand citizen children have experienced their parent’s deportation in the last decade (Suárez-Orozco, C., Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, M., 2011). This qualitative case study explores the effects of parental deportation on U.S. citizen-Latino children’s aspirations to a post-secondary education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects that the deportation of one or both parents has on a child’s educational aspirations. The case setting is northwest Ohio and the case members are Latino adolescents, ages 15-19, who had one or both parents deported. This case study illustrates the larger set of cases at the national level of immigrant youth who are separated from their parents because of growing immigration enforcement efforts. The immigration enforcement efforts that plague mixed status homes in northwest Ohio can also be seen on the national level. The main question of the research is: in a mixed legal immigration status home, how does the removal of one or both parents impact a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education? Additionally, the following sub-questions are addressed: 1) How does forced separation affect the socio-emotional development of the adolescent with regard to their
post-secondary aspirations? 2) How is social capital available to the adolescent influenced, if at all, by parental removal?

**Significance of the Study**

Extensive research literature exists showing the effects and resilience of living as an unauthorized immigrant and/or with unauthorized parents, yet there is a significant need in the literature to more specifically address the issue of how the parent(s)’ deportation affects the child’s education. This research comes at a time in The United States where the number of children that are affected by a parent's deportation is only expected to increase (Passel & Cohen, 2012). The project will contribute to research concerning immigration policy and immigrant education in general. It has the potential to generate recommendations for educational programming both at local schools and community based organizations serving the affected youth. At a national level, it has the potential to influence national immigration and educational policy that overlooks this increasing population of citizens.

**Organization of the Thesis**

The organization of the thesis chapters is as follows. Chapter I, Introduction, is an overview of the research that includes the purpose and significance of the study along with the main research questions and organization of the thesis. Chapter II: Literature Review, reviews previous research as well as current legislation related to the Latino/a immigrant youth educational experience in the U.S. The chapter explores the experience of authorized and unauthorized immigrants in the United States, with a focus on the educational experience of immigrant youth in American schools. The chapter then delves into the legislation and enforcement efforts that are responsible for creating many of the conditions that affect immigrants in the U.S. The chapter concludes with an exploration of Coleman’s (1988) social
capital framework and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) ecological systems theory in relation to the immigrant youth educational experience and their academic motivation.

Chapter III: Methodology, outlines the methods used for conducting this collective case study. The chapter begins with a presentation of the research questions, followed by an explanation of the researcher perspective, the case, and the research setting. The chapter then describes the participants of this study, outlines the selection process and details the ethical considerations taken into account during the recruitment process. The data collection and data analysis methods are also presented followed by an examination of the limitations of the study.

Chapter IV: Results, presents the findings of the research. The findings are presented as narrative accounts of the adolescents’ life before and after the deportation. The presentation includes verbatim quotes from the adolescents relating their experience with parental deportation. Qualitative data taken from interviews with the remaining parent and family friends also provides additional information regarding deportation experience. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the local experts’ personal accounts of dealing with children of deported parents in school and in the community.

Chapter V: Discussion, features a discussion that utilizes Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory and Coleman’s (1988) Social Capital framework as the basis to interpret changes in the participant’s home and school environment. The chapter ends with a discussion highlighting the negative effects the parental deportation had on the adolescents’ mesosystem and how this consequently hindered the adolescents’ ability to access social capital beneficial to their educational aspirations. Chapter VI: Conclusion, concludes the research with a recap of the findings. It also features a discussion on the potential implications on educational programming serving the affected youth, and makes suggestions for future areas of research.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews previous research and literature as well as current legislation relating to the immigrant youth educational experience in the United States, with a focus on Latino/a youth. To contextualize the study, the first part of the chapter explores the experience of both authorized and unauthorized immigrants in the United States. The chapter then shifts to an examination of the educational experience of immigrant youth in American schools. The third part of the chapter delves into the legislation that has helped create many of the conditions that affect immigrants in the United States, as well set the groundwork for current immigration enforcement efforts. The section that follows details the enforcement efforts. Subsequent sections outline research done on the effects of enforcement efforts on both immigrant families and immigrant youth’s education. The chapter concludes with an exploration of Coleman’s (1988) framework of social capital, as well as Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) ecological systems theory, and how both pertain to the immigrant youth educational experience.

Immigrant Population in The United States

Authorized/Unauthorized Immigrants

The immigrant population in the United States has increased significantly in the past two decades (Filindra, Blanding, & Coll, 2011). From 2000-2007 the immigrant population in the U.S. increased by seven million (Chaundry et al., 2010). According to the 2010 Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), 39.9 million foreign-born people reside in the United States (Passel & Cohen, 2012).

Of the 39.9 million total immigrants in the United States, an estimated 16.6 million are unauthorized immigrants (Passel & Cohen, 2009). When referring to people who reside in the United States without all the necessary documentation, terms such as ‘alien’ and ‘illegal’ are
often used. ‘Unauthorized’ is however more accurate because some of these immigrants may have had some form of documentation. They find themselves waiting for a legal outcome on their immigration case, but are still subject to deportation (Suárez-Orozco, C., Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, M., 2011). A combination of arbitrary caps set on visas, along with economic and educational deprivation and threats to personal safety and well-being in their home country result in many immigrants entering the US without the proper documentation or overstaying their permit (Kremer, Moccio, & Hammell, 2009).

**Immigrant Population in Ohio**

The state of Ohio was chosen for this case study because of its long history with immigration. Ohio has historically been a destination for many immigrants because of the job opportunities in the agricultural industry, and specifically migrant labor (Valdés, 2000). Ohio’s rich history with immigration is reflected in the recent increase in the immigrant population. Between 2000 and 2010, the foreign born population in Ohio increased from 339,279 to 469,748, (Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2012). The majority of the total immigrant population in Ohio (41.8 percent) entered in the year 2000 or later (MPI, 2012). These numbers indicate that approximately 4.1 percent of Ohio's total population is made up immigrants (MPI, 2012). Mirroring the national trend, a significant percentage of the immigrants are from Latin America, with the majority coming from Mexico (MPI, 2012).

The area of Northwest Ohio was chosen specifically because of the predominance of Mexican immigrant families in the region. Historically, many Mexican immigrants arrived in the area via migrant farm labor and stayed to raise their families (Valdés, 2000). Migrant laborers in the region have worked on local farms picking crops such as tomatoes, corn and cucumber. After the crops have been picked many workers remain in the area to work in the canneries and
warehouses that ship the produce nationwide.

**Mixed Legal Immigration Status Homes**

A household where different immigration statuses exist within the immediate family is known as a mixed legal immigration status home (Fortuny, Capps, Simms, & Chaudry, 2009). Most unauthorized immigrant adults in the U.S. reside with immediate family members, and about half of them (47%) with their own children under 18 (Passel & Cohen, 2009). The Pew Hispanic Center reported that more than 80 percent of these children are US citizens (USC) born after their parents have been settled in the United States for at least two years, and over 50 percent are born after their parents have been settled for at least five years (Preston, 2010 as cited in Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Currently, an estimated 14.6 million people, or one in ten children, are living in some sort of mixed-status home (Passel, 2006). The most common of these homes (86%) is where the children are citizens, but one or both parents are unauthorized to live and work in the United States (Fortuny et al., 2009). In 2003, 3.8 million people resided in this type of mixed legal status home; that figure rose to 4.9 million by 2006 (Passel & Cohen, 2009; Fortuny et al., 2009). Other estimates have placed the figure at well over 5 million (Tienda & Haskins, 2008). Demographically, children with parents from Mexico and other Central American countries are most likely to live in these mixed-status homes (Fortuny et al., 2009). Life in mixed-status homes can present certain difficulties and hardships such as long work hours for parents, poverty, lack of government assistance, and crowded living conditions. These conditions seem to effect Mexican immigrant families most (Fortuny et al., 2009).
**Immigrants at Work**

Significant growth in the immigrant population has meant many immigrants have moved out of the traditional settlement states such as California, Texas, New York, and Florida and into areas that have little or no experience with immigrant incorporation (Filindra et al., 2011). During the 1990s, many Western, Midwestern, and Southeastern states experienced this rapid increase in the immigrant populations. Immigrants are moving to these new destinations in search of jobs away from saturated cities where competition for employment and housing is greater (Filindra et al., 2011). The vast majority of immigrant families are working families; 91 percent of immigrant families have parents and/or other relatives working full time the entire year (Passel & Cohen, 2009).

Taking into consideration that unauthorized immigrants are legally ineligible to work, they still make up an estimated 8.3 million out of the 154 million people in the nation’s labor force (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Over represented in certain areas, unauthorized immigrants make up 25% of farm workers, 19% of building, groundskeepers and maintenance workers, 17% of construction workers, 12% of food preparation workers, 10% of production workers and 7% of transportation and material moving workers (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Even though immigrant parents work more hours than native-born parents, the combination of low educational attainment, limited English proficiency and unauthorized status relegates many immigrants to low paying jobs (Fortuny et al., 2009).

**Poverty**

The immigrant experience can vary widely because of the person and family’s human and financial capital, legal status and social resources (Landale et al., 2011) but statistically immigrant families are more likely to be low-income than native-born families (Fortuny et al.,
2009). In terms of economic status, nationwide, 51 percent of children of immigrants had family incomes that were 50 percent lower than the poverty level (Fortuny et al., 2009, p.8). In Ohio, 2010 estimates show that 16.3 percent of all families headed by an immigrant had incomes below the poverty level. Of those families, 23.7 percent lived with children under 18 (MPI, 2012).

Among all immigrants, the poverty rates are much higher for those individuals who are unauthorized. One-in-five adults who is unauthorized is poor; among children whose parents are unauthorized immigrants, one-in-three is poor. This is nearly double the poverty rate for legal immigrant adults as well as U.S. born adults (Passel & Cohen, 2009, p. iv). Passel and Cohen’s (2009) landmark study indicates that poverty plagues unauthorized immigrant families regardless of who in the family is unauthorized. Poverty rates for children of unauthorized immigrants are similar whether the children are unauthorized immigrants or U.S. born (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Living in poverty increases children’s risk of health and developmental problems, poor academic performance, fewer years of school completed, and low earnings in adulthood (Landale, Thomas, & Van Hook, 2011). In addition to the risks posed by poverty, the unauthorized immigration status exposes a family to separation by way of deportation, affects parent’s job opportunities, and can limit children’s access to public services (Fortuny et al., 2009).

Public Assistance

Immigrant families, who are unable or unwilling to access public benefits are often times marred by poverty, have limited English skills and their children underperform at school when compared to their native born peers (Yoshikawa, 2011). Despite their relatively low incomes, few immigrant families with children use public benefits (Fortuny et al., 2009). The low participation rate is due to restrictions on immigrants’ eligibility, complicated public assistance application processes, and fear of identification for unauthorized families (Tienda & Haskins,
Because unauthorized parents fear being identified and subsequently deported, they often fail to request public benefit programs for which their citizen children qualify (Landale et al., 2011). Poverty and lack of public assistance due to unauthorized status places children at risk for factors such as high family stress, inadequate supervision, multiple family transitions, and frequent residential moves (Landale et al., 2011).

**Living Arrangements**

Living arrangements for immigrants can be complex while they adapt to life in the United States. If a parent is unauthorized, the children are more prone to live in poverty and unstable living arrangements (Landale et al., 2011). Unauthorized families are also much less likely to own their own homes, making them more likely to move, especially locally (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Statistics show that only 35% of unauthorized immigrant households are homeowners, half the rate of U.S.-born households (Passel & Cohen, 2009).

Even though frequent moves are common, stability may exist in the home environment. Children of immigrants are more likely to live in two-parent families than native-born children (Landale et al., 2011). They are also more likely to be part of larger families (i.e.; with three or more siblings) and almost twice as likely to live with extended kin (Fortuny et al., 2009). In Ohio, evidence of the larger homes can be seen in the 5.8 percent of immigrant homes that have the number of people in the home exceeded the number of rooms in the house (MPI, 2012). Among native-born households in Ohio, this figure is 1.1 percent (MPI, 2012).

Immigrant families tend to be larger for both cultural and economic reasons. Because immigrant families tend to be lower income, the extended family in the home serves to help pool together financial resources. Culturally, many immigrants had similar living arrangements in their home country (Landale et al., 2011). In Latino/a cultures, family members, grandparents
especially, are highly revered and respected for their life experience and knowledge. They tend
to live with the family and be part of the children’s life from a very young age, often acting as
the primary caretakers when parents leave for work (Rodriguez, 2009).

The extended family arrangement is favorable for children’s well-being because children
living with the biological family are less likely to experience a range of cognitive, emotional, and
social problems (Landale et al., 2011). Conversely, children in immigrant families do not reap
the benefits of the extended family arrangement if they must compete with siblings for resources
and parental attention (Fortuny et al., 2009). These limited resources are often times due to the
household’s limited earning capacity because of the parents’ unauthorized status (Tienda &
Haskins, 2008).

**Mexican Immigrants**

Currently, Mexican immigrants represent a large part of the total immigrant population in
the United States. Nearly 30% of the total foreign-born population in the United States comes
from Mexico (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Of the total undocumented immigrant population in the
United States, 59 percent (6.8 million) come from Mexico (Hoefner, Rytina, & Baker, 2012).
From 2000 to 2011, this population increased by 2.1 million (Hoefner et al., 2012). Census
projections estimate that the Latino/a population will account for nearly one-quarter of the
nation’s total population by 2040, with people of Mexican origin accounting for 15–17 percent
of the U.S. population (Landale et al., 2011). In Ohio, the Mexican community has grown by
more than half since the year 2000, with more than two thirds born in the United States (Ohio
Department of Development [ODO], 2011).

Mexican immigrants have similar living arrangements and face the same challenges as
other immigrants. Most children of Mexican immigrants live with two parents and extended
family (Landale et al., 2011). The major challenges facing them are their limited opportunity for economic stability, in large part due to their low education and financial resources (Landale et al., 2011). In Ohio, Mexican immigrants are concentrated at the lower occupational levels (Valdés, 2000). The median income for Mexican immigrants in Ohio is $34,700, approximately $10,000 lower than that of native-born Ohio residents (ODO, 2011).

Mexican immigrants are also statistically more susceptible to the hardships of life as an immigrant especially if undocumented. Mexican immigrants are more likely than any other immigrant group to live in a mixed status home; 74% of U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrants have Mexican parents (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Unauthorized status among Mexican immigrants makes it more likely that that they will be poor when compared to other immigrant groups (Landale et al., 2011). In 2007, the median household income for unauthorized Mexican immigrants was $32,000, for all other unauthorized immigrants it was $45,000 (Passel & Cohen, 2009, p.22). This is explained in part by the type of jobs unauthorized immigrants have, but also by the fact that only 50% of unauthorized immigrant Mexican women are in the labor force, compared with 69% of all other women who are unauthorized immigrants (Passel & Cohen, 2009, p. 13).

The immigrant population in the United States is growing rapidly. This expansion along with immigration laws and restrictions is creating many mixed status homes. Even though the vast majority of these families are working families and have strong family ties, life in a mixed-status home can present hardships like poverty and unstable living conditions. Poverty is directly linked to the lack of government assistance, which only worsens the unstable living conditions for these families (Passel & Cohen, 2009).
Immigrant Youth at School

The significant growth in the immigrant population in the United States has meant that schools are coming under greater pressure to meet the needs and experiences of immigrant youth (Filindra et al., 2011). Children who either have immigrant parents or are first generation immigrants themselves are known as immigrant youth (Fortuny et al., 2009). In the United States, the number of immigrant youth more than doubled between 1990 and 2006 (Fortuny et al., 2009). As of 2011, nearly 24 percent of all school-age children in the United States were immigrant youth (Suárez-Orozco, C., Casas, Nakamura, Tummala-Narra, 2012). Of the total immigrant youth, Latino/as make up the majority. In 2006, an estimated 55 percent of immigrant youth were Latino/as, with most children having parents from Mexico (Fortuny et al., 2009).

The educational experience for this increasing population of immigrant youth may be plagued by various difficulties, which are unique to their experience. This section will discuss those difficulties with a specific a focus on hardships that arise when a parents has unauthorized immigration status. The difficulties include limited English comprehension as well as emotional and economic hardships. These hardships have a direct influence on the immigrant youth’s educational goals and outcomes.

The Influence of Limited English

Limited English comprehension of immigrant parents is important to consider because some studies have associated limited English in the home with low academic performance at school. Tienda and Haskins (2011) reported that the academic progress of immigrant youth residing in households whose members speak a language other than English lags behind that of native English speaking households. The combination of limited parental schooling and not using English at home is what often times results in poor scholastic outcomes for immigrant
youth (Tienda & Haskins, 2011). In 2006, 19 percent of immigrant youth ages 5 to 17 were limited English proficient (Fortuny et al., 2009, p.7). Of these children, a much larger share (61 percent) had one or both parents who were not proficient, with the vast majority being Mexican parents (Fortuny et al., 2009, p.7).

Lack of or limited English can also be a significant barrier that prevents contact between immigrant families and schools. Communication can be difficult because many schools may not have qualified interpreters and rely on the children themselves to play the role. In addition to student-teacher communication barriers, limited English can result in unauthorized immigrant parents feeling distrustful of schools. The distrust of schools occurs most often among unauthorized parents who may not understand the information the school is requesting and possibly interpret it as the school recording their immigration status (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

**Emotional Hardships in Mixed Status Homes**

Passel and Cohen (2009) estimate that in 2008 nearly 7 percent of all K-12th grade students had at least one parent who was unauthorized. This percentage means that there are more than five million immigrant youth in mixed status homes in the United States that face unique hardships (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). These students are experiencing difficulties and stressors related to living in a mixed status home, and often times suffer from unrecognized developmental consequences resulting from their family’s constant fear of deportation (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

One of the main difficulties immigrant youth in mixed status homes face is living with the constant fear of deportation. For the parents, the everyday experience and stresses of being unauthorized can reduce their ability to engage in stimulating learning activities with their young children. Unauthorized immigrant mothers especially have reported high distress and shown
depressive symptoms as a result of the fear of deportation and economic hardships. This constant fear and stress can significantly lower the children’s cognitive skills and hinder their learning (Yoshikawa, 2011).

Parental Support and Involvement

Considering that many immigrant parents have a limited education, they generally have high educational aspirations and expectations for their children (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2012). The immigration status of the parents may influence their level of stress but it is not a factor when considering their dedication to their children’s learning (Yoshikawa, 2011). When compared to native-born and authorized immigrants, unauthorized parents have the same level of interest in their child’s education (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Considering that they tend to work substantially longer hours than native or authorized residents, unauthorized parents remain invested in their children’s education and participate in care-giving activities. Reported benefits of parental encouragement and engagement in the child’s education are greater academic achievement, higher rates of high school completion and college enrollment, but for mixed status families these benefits are diminished (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Benefits are reduced because the stress brought on by fear of detection, which, along with limited English proficiency and parent’s lack of familiarity in the education system can hinder their children’s educational mobility (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Academic Motivation in Immigrant Families

Even though many immigrant parents may have limited English and lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system, they continue to support their children’s education via a connection to their family history and values (Benmayor, 2002). This type of parental support is central to immigrant youth’s academic motivations (Benmayor, 2002). Immigrant parents often
times provide motivation by using a “dual frame of reference” that encourages their children to value and take advantage of educational opportunities. A “dual frame of reference” compares life in the parents’ country of origin and life in the United States (Suárez-Orozco, 1989, p.87).

Immigrant parents regularly tell their children of the hardships, sacrifices and investments they made in order to move to the United States. The constant reminders of the parent’s experience become an intricate factor in the children’s motivational system (Suárez-Orozco, 1989). Because immigrant youth are vividly aware of their parent’s sacrifice, their motivation to succeed in school is not an individualistic need for self-advancement, but rather a vehicle to improve their current socioeconomic situation in order to properly care for their parents and family in the future (Suárez-Orozco, 1989). Benmayor’s (2002) work with immigrant youth of Mexican parents further highlights this motivation. The study found that the children expressed a painful awareness of their parents’ sacrifice, which not only motivates them to do well in school but also gives them a sense of mission for their future (Benmayor, 2002).

Immigrant youth’s academic sense of mission may also come as a result of hearing their parents talk about their own unfulfilled dreams of pursuing an education. Often times parents tell their children about the economic or social pressures in their home country that forced them out of school early in their lives (Suárez-Orozco, 1989). The children become aware of the difficulties their parents had in obtaining an education and may also feel the need to be successful in school to fulfill the parent’s dreams of getting the education they never had (Suárez-Orozco, 1989). Even though immigrant youth generally enter school with parental support, optimism, and high aspirations, economic hardships plague them throughout their education (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2012).
Socio Economic Status and Access to Academics

Economic hardships in the family can have various negative effects in an immigrant youth’s education. For many immigrant parents, the combination of low education attainment and limited job opportunities mars the family in poverty and economic hardship that can reduce their ability to invest in their children’s education (Yoshikawa, 2011).

Early in immigrant youth’s education, economics plays a role because stable, well-paying jobs not only allow parents the flexible income to buy their children learning materials; it also means that they are able to enroll young children in center based child care (Yoshikawa, 2011). The role of center care is noteworthy because young children who are enrolled have shown higher cognitive skills and tested higher on assessment tests when compared to children not in center care (Yoshikawa, 2011). Karoly and Gonzalez (2011) reported that among immigrant youth, those who live below the poverty line are far less likely than those who live above it to use center care (Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011).

Once immigrant youth enter compulsory school grades, low-income affects them because they are likely to attend low income, under resourced schools. Attendance in these schools is even more likely among immigrant youth living in mixed status homes. These schools have been associated with negative characteristics such as inadequate resources, low teacher expectations, poor achievement test outcomes and high dropout rates (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Nationally, only 76 percent of first generation immigrant youth graduate from high school (Filindra et al., 2011). Unfortunately, for high school age immigrant youth looking into college, under resourced schools generally produce low college entrance exam scores and have limited information about access to college and financial aid (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

For immigrant youth who are able to pursue a postsecondary education, they often times
find themselves relegated to remedial courses before being allowed to enroll in credit courses (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Along with their delayed start earning credits, immigrant youth in college are more likely to be over the age of 24, which makes them independent from their parents for financial aid purposes. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) have found that in addition to lacking information about financing college, immigrant youth are also less likely to apply for and access student loans. Furthermore, their hesitance to access student loans makes them more likely to attend college only part-time while working to cover college cost with their own financial contribution. All of the aforementioned factors have been strongly correlated with lower academic persistence and degree attainment (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

While immigrant parents have high educational aspirations for their children and the youth themselves can be very academically motivated, the stresses and economic limitations along with limited English proficiency and poor knowledge of the educational system, hinder parents' ability help their children realize their educational goals.

**Legislation Affecting Immigrants**

Many of the hardships and circumstances that immigrants in the United States face came as a direct result of legislation aimed at non-citizens living in the United States. Since the mid-1990s, the United States has enacted a series of laws that heightened the authority of the federal government to exclude and restrict benefits to non-citizens as well as arrest, detain, and deport them (Hagan, Eschbach, & Rodriguez, 2008). These laws include The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), The Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and The (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001(USA PATRIOT Act).
Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)

In 1996 then President Bill Clinton signed the welfare reform act officially known as the Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (H.R. 3734-104th Congress, PRWORA, 1996). PRWORA had a direct impact and long-term consequences on citizens as well as both documented and undocumented immigrants.

PRWORA focused on moving recipients off welfare and into the labor force by significantly reforming the provision of cash assistance to poor families, constraining welfare benefits for college students, and restricting unauthorized immigrant’s access to social services (London, 2006). After PRWORA unauthorized immigrants were no longer eligible for federal public benefits. “Notwithstanding any other provision of law and except as provided in subsection (b), an alien who is not a qualified alien is not eligible for any Federal public benefit” (H.R. 3734-104th Congress, PRWORA, 1996).

Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA)

The same year that PRWORA was signed, two significant federal immigration laws were also reformed; The Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) and The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA). IIRIRA expanded the offenses for which a noncitizen could be deported, limited voluntary departures from the country and replaced the term “deportation” with “removal” to more accurately reflect the penalties associated with being removed from the country (Hagan et al., 2008). An example of IIRIRA’s expansion of deportable offenses came in the definition of an aggravated felony. After IIRIRA, aggravated felonies included 28 more distinct offenses, including any crime that carries a prison sentence of a year or more (Hagan et al., 2008). IIRIRA also called for retroactive punishment so
that criminal convictions prior to 1996 that were not defined as aggravated felonies now became causes for removal (Hagan et al., 2008).

After IIRIRA unauthorized immigrants were more likely to be categorized under new deportable offenses, making them less likely to be eligible for a voluntary departure (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2008). A voluntary departure allows people in deportation proceedings the choice of returning to their home country without a ten-year ban from reentering the United States. Voluntary departures facilitate subsequent re-entry into the United States without penalty (ACLU, 2008). With fewer opportunities to ask for voluntary departure, immigrants with a removal order can now more easily be barred from reentering the United States from 10 years to life (ACLU, 2008).

**Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)**

Where IIRIRA expanded the offenses for which a person could be deported and limited the chance for voluntary departure, AEDPA of 1996 made it more difficult to fight a removal order because it nearly eliminated immigration judicial reviews (Hagan, Rodriguez, & Castro, 2011). Judicial reviews gave immigration judges discretionary authority to cancel an order of deportation if it posed a hardship for a U.S. family member (Hagan et al., 2008). Before AEDPA, an order of deportation almost always underwent judicial review (Hagan et al., 2008). After AEDPA, laws that protected noncitizens from deportation became virtually non-existent, making it nearly impossible for noncitizens with family ties in the United States to remain in the country (Kanstroom, 2007). The effects of these two laws were seen almost immediately, as annual deportations from the country nearly doubled from 1996 to 1997 (Hagan et al., 2008).

**USA PATRIOT Act**

In October of 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act as a direct response to fear
of terrorist attacks on the United States (Hagan et al., 2008). The law elevated administrative powers to survey, detain and deport immigrants who are perceived as threats to national security (Hagan et al., 2008). The USA PATRIOT Act made it possible to carry out subsequent federal policies and programs such as Operation Endgame that aimed to identify and remove all deportable immigrants from the United States (Hagan et al., 2011).

The combination of PRWORA limiting immigrant’s access to public benefits, IIRIRA making it nearly impossible to qualify for a voluntary departure, AEDPA almost completely eliminating the opportunity for an immigration judicial review and the USA PATRIOT Act increasing surveillance and detention capabilities set the groundwork for a record high number of deportations from United States in the following years.

**Immigration Enforcement in The United States**

In 2011, the United States reached a record high number of deportations for a single year: 396,906 people in fiscal year 2011 (Hoefner et al., 2011). Prior to 2001 national yearly deportations did not surpass 189,026 people (Massey & Pren, 2012, p.15). Demographically, the majority of all people removed from the United States are noncriminal immigrants from Mexico (73%) and Central America (19%) (Hoefner et al., 2011, p.4). Of the total 396,906 deportees, less than half (169,000) were immigrants with a criminal conviction (Hoefner et al., 2011, p.5). Reports show that many of the removals in the past decade arise out of arrests made by local police for minor criminal offenses including traffic violations such as speeding or driving without a license (United States Government Accounting Office [USGAO], 2009). Record setting statistics like that of fiscal year 2011 help illustrate how immigration enforcement in the United States changed as a result of the legislation in the mid 1990’s and after he terroristic attacks September 11th, 2001.
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 was signed into law as a direct result of the September 11th, 2001 (9/11) attacks (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2002). The Act consolidated 22 separate federal agencies to establish the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Then President George W. Bush called the creation of the DHS “the most significant transformation of the U.S. government in over a half-century” and considered it key to the President’s national strategy for homeland security (DHS, 2002). The missions of the DHS are (1) Preventing terrorism and enhancing security; (2) Securing and managing our borders (3) Enforcing and administering our immigration laws (4) Safeguarding and securing cyberspace and (5) Ensuring resilience to disasters (DHS, 2010). Financial support for the DHS to carry out its missions has steadily increased since the department’s creation. Currently DHS receives $59.9 billion a year, making it one of the best-funded federal departments (DHS, 2013).

Two of the best funded and highest prioritized agencies within the DHS are Customs and Border Protection (CBP), formerly known as U.S. Border Patrol, and Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (DHS, 2013). CBP is in charge of carrying out the second mission of DHS: to secure America's borders and ports of entry (DHS, 2013). ICE is responsible for the third mission: enforcing and administering U.S. Immigration laws. Their focus is on internal criminal and civil immigration investigations (DHS, 2013).

Customs Border Patrol (CBP)

After 9/11, CBP had their budget increased from the size of a municipal police department to one the most heavily armed branches of the government, after the military (Durand & Massey, 2003 as cited in Dick, 2011). CBP currently receives 21% of all DHS funding (DHS, 2013). Even though CBP has seen top-level prioritization and a dramatic increase
in funding, border apprehensions have steadily decreased since 2001. Fiscal year 2001 reported 1,266,214 people apprehended while fiscal year 2011 showed 340,252 (United States Customs and Border Protection [USCBP], 2011, p.3). Total removals from the country however, have not decreased in the last decade; they are currently at an all-time high. Daniel Kanstroom (2007) accounts for the decline in border apprehensions but increase in overall deportations as part of the United States’ new post-entry social control laws. These laws shift from border apprehension to interior immigration enforcement (Kaanstroom, 2007).

**Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

Prior to the creation of ICE in 2003, enforcement operations were primarily concentrated at points of entry, with occasional workplace raids (Hagan et al., 2011). Since then, immigration enforcement’s priority has changed to investigating immigration law offenses within the United States rather than at its borders. On any given day ICE makes more than 200 arrests, prepares 2,462 cases for removal, and obtains 450 final orders of removals (Kremer et al., 2009). Current removal numbers are a result of Operation Endgame and its underlining programs: National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP), Workplace Raids (I-9), Programs 287 (g) and Secure Communities (SC). The latter two are designed to help identify and remove criminal aliens, thus keeping America’s communities safe (ICE, 2012a; ICE, 2012b). “Criminal aliens” are non-citizens who face removal from the United States for criminal activity, which can include both serious and minor crimes (Kremer et al., 2009).

**Operation Endgame**

Operation Endgame is the ICE and Office of Detention and Removal’s (DRO) multi-year strategic enforcement plan. Started in 2003, Operation Endgame aims to remove all persons subject to deportation by the year 2012 (ICE, 2002). The mission of Operation endgame is 100%
removal of all “removable aliens” (ICE, 2002, p.ii). The purpose behind 100% removals of the unauthorized population is to comply with DHS’s mission of keeping America secure (ICE, 2002; American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2008). As a result of Operation Endgame framing immigration enforcement as an issue of public safety and national security all unauthorized immigrants have since been defined as security threats (Romero, 2008).

Information sharing between all law enforcement agencies became a crucial source of identifying all national security threats (ICE, 2002). For Operation Endgame, all unauthorized immigrants constitute this threat, thus ICE programs under Operation Endgame such as: The National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP), Programs 287 (g), Secure Communities (SC), and Workplace Raids (I-9) are required to enter into partnerships with local law enforcement.

**Fugitive Operations Program**

ICE established the first National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP) in 2003 with the aim to expand the agency’s efforts to locate, arrest, and remove “fugitive aliens” (ICE, 2012c). “Fugitive aliens” are different than “criminal aliens”. A “fugitive alien” is defined by ICE as “a non-citizen who has failed to leave the United States because of a final order of removal or who failed to report to ICE after receiving notice to do so” (ICE, 2012c). Since its inception, the NFOP budget has soared from $9 million in fiscal year 2003 to $218 million in fiscal year 2008 (Mendelson, Strom, Wishnie, 2009). The increased budget has allowed for a 1,300 percent growth in the program’s personnel and partnerships with law enforcement agencies (Mendelson, et al., 2009). These partnerships have resulted in data for more than 1.5 million targets from probation, parole, state and local law enforcement agencies being analyzed by the NFOP (ICE, 2012c).
Once NFOP receive information about a target, it dispatches Fugitive Operations Teams (FOTs) to residential areas across the country to arrest fugitive aliens. They consist of seven-member teams who conduct primarily undercover work (Mendelson et al., 2009). Many times FOT agents wear plain clothes; those that wear uniforms identify themselves simply as “police” (Mendelson et al., 2009). In 2003, there were eight FOTs nationwide, in 2012, 104 (ICE, 2012c). Even though ICE’s official position is that its FOTs “give top priority to cases involving aliens who pose a threat to national security and community safety,” 73% of all people arrested by FOTs from 2003-2008 had no criminal conviction (Kremer et al., 2009; ICE, 2012c). In 2003 fugitive aliens with criminal convictions represented 32% of all arrests, that figure dropped to 9% by 2007 (Mendelson et al., 2009). In fiscal year 2011, 40,000 arrests were made by FOTs, making it a yearly increase for the ninth straight year (ICE, 2012c). To date FOTs have accounted for more than 96,000 arrests nationwide (ICE, 2012c).

A major source controversy for this program has been that the majority of the arrests made by FOTs are not their intended target but rather “collateral arrests” (Kremer et al., 2009). Collateral arrests are unauthorized individuals who are not the intended target but happen to be home at the time of the raid (Mendelson et al., 2009; Kremer et al., 2009). Collateral arrests are possible because FOTs carry administrative warrants that allow them to question anyone they encounter during an operation regarding their immigration status (Mendelson et al., 2009). FOT officers can then detain individuals they suspect of being unauthorized without an arrest warrant (Mendelson et al., 2009). Many people affected by these home raids along with legal experts have questioned the practice and legality of FOTs announcing themselves as simply as “police” to gain entrance into a home, and then detain people because their immigration status (Kremer et al., 2009).
Workplace Raids/ I-9 (Silent Raids)

Similar to FOTS home raids, immigration enforcement at worksites has also been prevalent in the past decade. From 2002 to 2008, worksite administrative arrests made by ICE increased more than tenfold - from 485 arrests in fiscal year 2002 to 5,173 arrests in fiscal year 2008 (Kremer et al., 2009). Like FOT arrests, the vast majority of arrests made by ICE in worksite raids are not for criminal reasons. Of the 18,761 worksite arrests by ICE during this time only 17% were criminal arrests (ICE, 2008 Factsheet as cited in Kremer et al., 2009).

In 2009 ICE released a new worksite enforcement strategy that moved away from large-scale worksite raids and towards “more effective auditing and investigations” (ICE, 2009). This change of strategy audits employers who are suspected of hiring unauthorized workers. The audits are conducted via I-9 employment verification forms (ICE, 2009). Known as silent raids, the aim is to penalize and deter employers who attempt to hire “illegal workers” (ICE, 2009). In 2010, ICE conducted more than 2,200 I-9 audits; nearly double those from 2009 (Arrieta, 2011).

ICE’s new workplace strategy allows employers to fire undocumented workers en masse and without any warning, because employers are not held liable if they rid themselves of the unauthorized workers (National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights [NNIRR], 2010). A report commissioned by the National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (NNIRR) in 2010 found that the silent raid strategy has made unauthorized workers more vulnerable to labor rights violations and workplace abuse. Many workers are reluctant to report worker abuses because they fear being fired or deported (NNIRR, 2010). Unauthorized immigrants are not only subject to immigration raids in their homes and places of work, but they can also be apprehended by law enforcement during routine police procedures.
287 (g)

Available to local law enforcement since 1996, via IIRIRA, but only used as of 2002, the 287 (g) program authorizes the Federal Government to enter into agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies, permitting designated local law enforcement officers to perform immigration enforcement functions (ICE, 2012a). Currently, ICE has 287 (g) agreements with 68 law enforcement agencies in 24 states (ICE, 2012a). As of 2010 the 287(g) program has led to the identification of more than 185,000 deportable non-citizens and the removal of more than 126,000 individuals from the US (ICE, 2010).

There are two types of models under the 287(g) program: the jail enforcement model and the task force model. The jail enforcement model authorizes designated local law officers, trained by ICE, to perform immigration law enforcement functions by checking for immigration status as part of the general booking process (Coleman & Kocher, 2011). The task force 287(g) does not require a criminal arrest in order to determine immigration status. Designated officers can check a person’s immigration status while simply performing routine stops (Coleman & Kocher, 2011). 287(g) is controversial because it is active primarily in municipalities and counties with a large or growing Hispanic population (Capps, Rosenblum, Rodriguez, & Chishti, 2011). Furthermore, 287 (g) allows for individuals to be identified as deportable during the local police booking process (Capps et al. 2011). This often times results in people being deported before any criminal charges have been adjudicated (Capps et al. 2011).

Secure Communities Program

Different than 287(g), the Secure Communities (SC) program does not train local law enforcement officers to carry out immigration law. Rather, local law enforcement agencies are now required to submit the fingerprints of anyone arrested to DHS and check for immigration
status. ICE agents are then responsible for carrying out any further immigration enforcement (ICE, 2012b). As of April 10, 2012 SC is active in 2,670 jurisdictions in 48 states and territories; by fiscal year 2013, ICE plans to use this capability nationwide (ICE, 2012b).

SC, along with the other internal investigation programs, was designed and promoted to help identify and remove criminal aliens thus keeping America’s communities safe (ICE, 2012a; ICE, 2012b). Critics however claim SC does little to help remove dangerous criminals but rather targets, criminalizes and removes immigrants with minor or no criminal offenses. A report done by the University of California, Berkley Law School found that out of all the people with removal orders issued through SC: 45% were Present Without Admission (PWA), 21% had other immigration issues but only 19% were arrested on criminal grounds and just 8% were aggravated felons (Kohli, Markowitz, & Chavez, 2011). Demographically, out of all people arrested through SC 93% were Latino/a and 39% reported that they have a United States Citizen (USC) spouse or child (Kohli et al., 2011).

**Deported Parents of U.S. Citizen Children**

The Berkley Law School report shows that nationwide the SC program has impacted approximately 88,000 families with USC family members (Kohli et al., 2011). The rising number of deported parents received congressional attention and in March of 2012 ICE released to Congress data on the number of deported parents with USC children. Congress requested this data as a result of a report done by the Department of Homeland Security’s Inspector General (DHS IG) which stated that ICE did not consistently track information about the number of deportees with USC children (ICE, 2012d). The DHS IG estimated that between 1998 and 2007 more than 108,000 parents of USC children were deported from the United States (DHS, 2009).

At the request of a congressional committee, ICE began collecting data on deported
parents and during the reporting period of January 1, 2011 through June 30, 2011 (ICE, 2012d). The report shows that 46,486 foreign citizen parents who claimed at least one USC child were removed from the United States (ICE, 2012d). The data may be somewhat misleading because not all parents who are detained disclose that they have USC children for fear that child welfare agencies would take their children into custody (Mendoza & Olivas, 2009).

The ICE 2012 report showed removal of parents to USC children in a only a six month frame, yet estimates on total deportation numbers in the last decade claim that more than one million family members have been separated from one another through deportation, many of whom are long-term settlers in the United States (Hagan et al., 2011). A major factor contributing to the rising number of deported parents is that historically men were more prone to detection by immigration, but the more aggressive enforcement initiatives and the economic necessity for immigrant women to work have now put women more at risk of deportation (Hagan et al., 2011).

**Impact of Removal on Immigrant Families**

An immigration removal can result in a family separation that lasts from years to a lifetime, especially in cases where family members in the U.S. lack the means or are unwilling to relocate to the deported family member’s country of origin (Hagan, 2008). The separation disrupts previously stable households, which leads families to often suffer financial hardships, emotional, psychological trauma and fear; all as a result of losing loved ones (Hagan, 2008; Mendoza & Olivas, 2009).

**Financial Hardships**

Families who lose the primary breadwinners face enormous economic challenges. Stable housing becomes a major issue for families separated by removal. The economic strain often
times leads to families losing their long time homes and relocating more frequently because they cannot afford housing costs (Capps, Castañeda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007; Wessler, 2011). Because immigrant families tend to have few resources, live on a tight budget and have very limited disposable income, when a parent is removed, the extended family members frequently take in the family left behind in the U.S. (Capps et al., 2007). Latino/a families especially have strong cultural emphasis on extended family, so when the nuclear family is separated; the extended family takes on the role of immediate family (Rodriguez, 2009).

Taking in new family members however can cause the extended family to experience increased economic hardships and crowded settings in their home (Capps et al., 2007). An example of this hardship can be seen in the family’s diet. A study by the Urban Institute (Chaundry et al., 2010) found that after a parental deportation children were offered less variety of food. The parents/guardians who remained also reported cutting back on their own consumption so that children could eat (Chaundry et al., 2010) Economic hardships and crowded home conditions can also result in younger family members having more responsibilities at home and the necessity to earn an income (Capps et al., 2007; Chaundry et al., 2010) These home responsibilities and the expectations to work have been known to be greater for the girls and young women in the family (Chaundry et al., 2010). In Latino/a families this is largely due to cultural norms that often have girls step into a parental role and acquire more responsibilities than boys (Chaundry et al., 2010).

**Emotional Trauma**

Children in mixed status homes are plagued by significant amounts of stress brought on by the fear of and actual deportation of a parent (Yoshikawa, 2011) Once the deportation occurs, it produces emotional and psychological hardships for deportees and traumatic effects among
children and spouses left behind (Mendoza and Olivas 2009; Hagan et al., 2011). Children of deported parents suffer emotional trauma regardless if the separation is from one or both parents (Capps et al., 2007; Chaundry et al., 2010; Wessler, 2011). Some children have shown symptoms of separation anxiety, insecurity, and depression (NNIRR, 2010). Other long-term effects can be an enduring mistrust of law enforcement and social isolation Mendoza & Olivas 2009).

Both younger and older children experience effects from the separation of a parent, but because young children generally do not understand the concept of unauthorized immigration status (i.e. not having papers) they perceive the sudden loss of their parent as a disappearance or abandonment (Capps et al., 2007). This feeling of abandonment threatens younger children’s sense of security, which can result in clinging to the remaining parents, expressing fear, difficulties eating and sleeping, nightmares, enuresis and excessive crying (Capps et al., 2007; Chaundry et al., 2010). In some cases, children even experience developmental and toilet training regression (Chaundry et al., 2010).

For older children, the forced separation generally triggers sadness, isolation and clingingness to parents (Capps et al., 2007; Kremer et al., 2009). Some children show aggression, rebelliousness or anger (Capps et al., 2007; Kremer et al., 2009). These children lash out angrily and become disobedient or less respectful of parents and authority figures (Chaundry et al., 2010). In a study done after several immigration raids that resulted in hundreds of parents deported, the remaining parents or guardian in the US stated that often the anger and lashing out was aimed at them (Capps et al., 2007).

The experience of having a parent taken away creates in both younger and older children symptoms of severe fear and anxiety (Capps et al., 2007; Chaundry et al., 2010). Some children express a fear of something they cannot describe, while others explicitly state a fear of law
enforcement (Chaundry et al., 2010). Children who witness their parents being taken into custody lose trust in the parents’ ability to keep them safe and begin to see danger everywhere (Kremer et al., 2009). After the arrest of a parent, children exhibit intense fear and uneasiness merely at the sight of a police officer (NNIRR, 2010). Child psychology experts have reported that fear of law enforcement is most severe when children witness armed agents coming into their homes and taking away their parents (Kremer et al., 2009). Children interviewed in the Urban Institute’s (2010) study on families separated by deportation reported this same fear of the police, but said they could not distinguish between actual police and immigration (Chaundry et al., 2010). Coleman & Kocher (2011) report that this fear of law enforcement has created a “generation of insecurity”, where immigrant families fear traveling from place to place be it for leisure or work because of the fear detection that could lead to deportation.

Parental deportation leads to the sudden loss of a parent and subsequent family separation that can last years. This disruption has resulted in financial hardships that leave the remaining family members without a stable home and often times living in crowded settings. The parents’ deportation has also resulted in children suffering emotional and psychological trauma. As noted above, the most common effect among these children is fear, especially fear of law enforcement.

**Immigrant Youth Academic Performance after Parental Deportation**

Relatively little research has been done regarding the scholastic performance and academic motivation of immigrant youth after a parental deportation. Yoshikawa (2011) found that the stress combined with disruption of the home environment has direct consequences on the child’s social interactions and academic performance. Immediately after a deportation, the daily routine of school provides younger children with stability during an unstable time in their lives (Capps et al., 2007). For older children however, school may not be as beneficial. Older children
show a decline in grades, truancy, and behavioral trouble at school (Chaundry et al., 2010; Wessler, 2011). For the older children, the culmination of declining grades combined with the fear of losing both parents and the family’s economic necessity can lead them to dropping out of school completely (Chaundry et al., 2010). Some children however, show academic resilience and demonstrate an ability to focus on their school and perform well in spite of tremendous stress (Chaundry et al., 2010). Others have even shown improved academic performance (Chaundry et al., 2010). This may be because often times the parents used the separation as a motivational tool for their children, motivating them to strive to do better in school as a way to help the family (Capps et al., 2007).

**Theoretical Frameworks**

One of the driving theoretical frameworks of this study is Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979; 2005), which studies the various levels of a child’s environment and how they influence personal and educational development. This framework helps to analyze the adolescents’ environment after the parental deportation and its possible effects on their educational aspirations. In relation to the ecological systems theory, Coleman’s (1988) social capital framework is used to explore the role of networks within the participants’ environment. Coleman (1988) explores the concept of social capital and examines its usefulness in the context of education. Social capital has been utilized in previous studies to assess educational experiences and academic success of minorities and immigrant youth in American schools (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Ryabov, 2009; Enriquez, 2011). The frameworks are used in conjunction with one another to analyze the reciprocal relationship participants have with their environment and the role that relationship plays on their post-secondary educational aspirations.
Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979) involves the study of the progressive, mutual relationships that exist between active, growing human beings and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which this developing person lives. Central to the ecological systems theory is the belief that the developing person is not a blank slate on which the environment simply makes its impact but rather, a growing, dynamic participant that progressively moves into and restructures the setting in which the person resides (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological environment is conceived as a “nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner illustrates the concept of the ecological environment and its set of nested structures, each inside the next by comparing it to Russian nesting dolls [матрёшка] with the innermost level being the immediate setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Originally, the ecological systems theory was conceived as four structures: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem but later in his career he included a fifth, the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Even though the various structures are free flowing and the influence they exert overlap one another, this research will deal primarily with the interactions and influences exerted in the microsystem and mesosystem.

Microsystem

The microsystem is the first level of the structure. It is defined as a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem is the layer closest to the person and contains the people and structures with which the person has the most, direct contact. For a child, the microsystem typically includes the family, school, church
and/or daycare (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2011). Additionally, in the microsystem the child learns behaviors by way of interacting with those people and structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The importance of this theory for a person’s personal and academic development is that it not only defines and locates people as active participants at the center of their own development and environment, but it also gives importance to their perception of the environment (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintained that what matters for behavior and development is the environment as it is perceived by the person rather than as it may exist in “objective” reality. The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 2005) is useful in studying the personal development and academic trajectories of children because it proposes and illustrates how a person’s development has a reciprocal relationship with the environment.

**Mesosystem**

The second level, the mesosystem, comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Stated differently, the mesosystem is comprised of a various microsystems. It is formed, or extended, whenever the person moves into a new setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For a child the mesosystem includes the relations between the microsystems at home, school and neighborhood; for adults, it can include interrelations among the family, work and social life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The mesosystem links information and knowledge from one setting that help to shape behavior and development in another setting (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2011).

**Ecological Systems Theory in Immigrant Homes**

The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005) as a framework has helped researchers analyze the various systemic levels that shape the daily experiences of immigrant youth as they move through the personal and academic developmental spectrum. Research
related to immigrant youth using this framework is scarce with one notable exception. The pioneering work done by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) incorporates some elements of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) ecological systems theory in the analysis of the academic experience of immigrant youth in mixed-status homes.

At the microsystem level, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) found that immigrant youth, especially those living in mixed status homes, find themselves in “the most liminal spaces of America’s dystopic schools” (p. 449). This conclusion comes from observing immigrant youth’s over representation in under resourced, highly segregated schools, which provide them with limited academically engaging opportunities. Furthermore, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) contend that limited financial resources and frequent moves exacerbate the children’s poor academic performance. At home, children’s development can be affected by the high levels of stress brought on by limited financial resources as well as the stress brought on by fear of deportation.

Suárez-Orozco et al., (2011) focused on the micro-, exo- and macrosystems within the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005) to draw attention to the environmental effects that negatively influence development of immigrant youth in mixed status homes. The research concludes that at every level, unauthorized status, economic hardships, and unfavorable perception and legislation targeting immigrants adversely affect immigrant youth’s development.

**Social Capital**

The best way to define social capital is by its function; similar to physical and human capital, social capital can facilitate productive activity. Social capital however is not tangible; it is not observable in material form nor skills and knowledge acquired by a person (Coleman, 1988). It is a unique type of resource that is generated from social relationships by virtue of membership and participation in groups (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). In relation to the
ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005), this participation typically occurs in a person’s microsystem. For a child this can include their home, school, and neighborhood. The resource that comes about from participation in groups, social organizations and networks that produce something of value for the individuals involved (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Membership in these groups and organizations provides those involved with the necessary credentials to enter a network that is not naturally given (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital is observed in the relations among people, its productivity is based on trust but it is not necessarily benevolent by nature; “a given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others” (Coleman, 1998). Social capital is capable of being harnessed for both noble and ignoble endeavors (Ream & Rumberger, 2008). With regards to the academic motivation or performance of students, social capital can be used to understand how potentially detrimental some relationships can be. Some students maintain friendships that foster achievement-related behaviors and subsequent academic success. Others might situate themselves within friendship networks in which antiestablishment behavior prevails (Ream & Rumberger, 2008).

**Forms of Social Capital**

Coleman (1988) states that social capital is acquired through participation in a group or network. Three ways individuals build social capital within a group are: Obligations and Expectations, Information Channels, and Social Norms. This research will focus on the Obligations and Expectation and Social Norms form of social capital than can be acquired.

Obligation and Expectations play out when a person has been granted a favor by another person within a group. This form of capital depends on two elements: trustworthiness and the extent of the obligation. In order for the initial favor to hold any value, there must be trust
between the people involved that the favor will be repaid. The extent of the obligation refers to
the understanding that the person can call in the favor when needed. People can accumulate these
favors, which act as credit slips, to elevate their status within a particular group (Coleman, 1988).

Norms and Effective Sanctions ask its members to act a certain way or give up self-interest
for the advancement of the group (Coleman, 1988). This type of social capital is gained when a
person acts in accordance with the norms in the group as a way to provide order or facilitate a
task. This type of norm is often times seen at schools where students are expected to behave a
certain way. Also, a person in a group can be asked to act selflessly and give up a personal goal,
which may be in direct opposition, in order to further the group’s development.

These forms of social capital facilitate certain achievements that otherwise would not be
possible. Social capital can be available to individuals in a variety of ways, but people who are
relocate and leave behind their network or those people who are found to violate this trust of the
group lose the benefits their social capital gives them (Coleman, 1988).

Closure of Networks

In order to facilitate forms of social capital, not only do members need to be trusted, but
also certain kinds of social structures need to be present to promote norms and create effective
sanctions (Coleman, 1988). A closure of networks is necessary to limit negative external
effects, (i.e. bad influences) and encourage positive ones. Closure of the social structure refers to
a group in which all individuals have a relationship with each other. This relationship allows
them to promote norms when collectively they can reward a member that has followed the
group’s principles.

Coleman (1988) elaborates on a specific closure of networks related to parents
disciplining children. Intergeneration closure refers to networks in which parents interact with
parents of their children’s friends; together they survey their children and have knowledge of all children’s activities in and out of school (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). These networks allow parents to transmit and reinforce common norms and values associated with academic success, in addition to monitoring their children’s activities (Kao & Rutherford, 2007).

Relating Coleman’s (1988) social capital theory to the ecological system’s theory (1979; 2005), the aforementioned illustrations of social capital happen primarily in the mesosystem. The importance of social capital to a child’s development, according to Coleman (1988), is that it has the potential to create human capital. Coleman (1988) proposes two general types of social capital to promote future human capital in children: social capital within the family and social capital outside the family.

**Social Capital In The Family**

Social capital in the family involves interactions between parents and children. Coleman (1988) argues that the primary means through which parents transmit their human capital, or skills and productivity, to their children is by interacting with them. Furthermore, it is not just interactions but the type of interactions and relationships parents share with their children that make the difference in the child’s intellectual future (Coleman, 1988).

The time and effort parents spend promoting intellectual matters is imperative because only when rich interactions between parent and children are present can the social capital within the family give children access to the adult's human capital (Coleman, 1988). Several things can impede this access to social capital such as a large number of siblings in the home which can result in less adult attention to the youngest in the family (Coleman, 1988). In relation to adult attention, Coleman (1988) makes mention that a mother’s expectations for her children to go to college proved to be a positive influence and significant in preventing them from dropping out of
high school. He noted that it was not a measurable sign of social capital but is significant to parental attention.

**Social Capital Outside The Family**

Social capital that has value for children’s development can reside outside of the family as well. Social capital outside the family exists in the cultural norms and the value system of the community, in which the family is embedded, as well as the density and extent of their networks of friends and acquaintances (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Intergeneration closure is a key component of this type of social capital. As described earlier, intergenerational closure refers to parental networks where parents monitor their children’s activities in and out of school as well as transmit and reinforce common norms and values (Coleman, 1988).

Coleman (1988) highlights the low dropout rate and high intergenerational closure and social capital among families that send their children to private religious schools. Coleman (1988) maintains that these schools have low dropout rates because this group has high intergenerational closure based on multiple relations such as children attending the same school and families present at the same religious services and functions which results in the children having constant, close contact and supervision with adults that share common norms. Conversely, the beneficial effects this type of social capital has on children’s education can decrease for families that move constantly. The reason for this is that intergeneration closure is broken every time they move, thus the social capital they acquired with their previous groups does not exist for them in their new social circle (Coleman, 1988).

In summary, social capital, as outline by Coleman (1988) is a resource that is generated from social relations and participation in groups. The groups can be institutional organizations like a church, school, or other units such the family, neighborhoods, or a combination of all the
aforementioned. These groups can also be seen to as the participant’s various microsystems. The resources and actions they facilitate come about from participation in the group but once the person leaves that network so do the benefits.

**Social Capital in Immigrant Homes**

Social capital, as a framework, has been used to explore the educational experience of immigrant families and immigrant youth in part because social capital deals with social relations among people and those relationships can transfer into human capital for the next generation. It is also appropriate because social capital deals with the environment built by relationships between people. When a family leaves a familiar environment and enters a new, unfamiliar one, it is of interest to explore what happens to a child’s education.

**Social Capital In The Family**

When exploring social capital within immigrant families, research has corroborated Coleman’s statements about quality of relationships and motherly expectations positively affecting their education. In immigrant homes, the mother's educational aspirations for her child are consistently related to positive outcomes (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). In addition, Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) reported that in immigrant homes, over 70 percent of children named their fathers as a likely source of emotional or information support and 86 percent named their mothers. Statistics like these show intact families, which promote positive educational outcomes among the children (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Moreover, as Coleman (1988) reported that a large number of siblings divide a parent’s attention; Ryabov (2009) also found that immigrant youth living in single-parent families and/or with larger numbers of siblings were found to perform worse academically than children from two-parent families and/or with few siblings.
When looking at the human capital of immigrant parents, Lee, Perreira and Harris (2006) found that although low educational levels of the parents place immigrant youth at risk of poor academic performance, when accounting for socioeconomic status, immigrant children outperform children from native families. Although there is no clear answer that accounts for this, the authors believe that the high level of parental expectations counterbalance negative effects of low human capital in parents (Lee, Perreira & Harris, 2006).

Something Coleman (1988) did not explicitly include in his description of social capital within the family was the role of extended family. Researches have taken notice of the extended family in the social capital of immigrant homes. Because immigrants, especially those coming from Latin America, have very strong ties with extended family, grandparents as well as aunts and uncles often act as primary caretakers. Even though their human capital might be at the same low level of the parents, they have similarly high expectations for the children, and social capital that comes with the quality of time spent together can be beneficial to the children (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

**Social Capital Outside The Family**

Research on immigrant youth’s social capital outside the family often reflects the importance of intergenerational closure and the negative effects if it is not present. Kao and Rutherford (2007) found that by migrating, most immigrant families lose the social capital they had in their communities in their home countries. As result of the parent’s migration to the United States, immigrant youth access much lower levels of social capital than do children of native-born families, with Latino/a immigrants accessing the lowest levels.

After initially migrating, immigrant families may live in one place for an extended period of time, thus expanding their social capital there. Language barriers however often times prevent
them from building relationship with institutions (including schools) and native English speakers peers and parents (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Kao & Rutherford, 2007). For immigrant parents, limited knowledge of the English language may impede their willingness and ability to become involved in school organizations, functions, or even interact with teachers or the parents of their children’s friends (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Along with language barriers, differences in cultures can also impede immigrant parents from forming relations with native-born parents both in their community and at their children’s school, leading to a lack of intergenerational closure.

For Latin American immigrants, the issue of language, culture and even socioeconomic status (SES) often times overlap. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) found that the use of Spanish, even when English proficiency was controlled, had a consistent negative effect on Mexican origin-immigrant youth trying to establish ties to non-Mexican-origin peers. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) report that because Spanish use correlated with lower Socio Economic Status (SES), many of the Spanish speaking, Mexican origin-immigrant youth did not have significant contact with peers outside of their group.

According to Coleman (1988) children’s educational development can be negatively affected by lack of intergenerational closure. Often times, such is the case of immigrant youth; they have been known to build social capital via their relations with academically driven institutional agents independent from the school (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Agents are often times adult staff at community centers and / or cultural or religious organizations that immigrant youth frequent (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). These agents act as role models capable of developing beneficial relations with immigrant children. Agents embody personal qualities and aspirations children deem worthy of emulating (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).
In addition to being emulated, role models build emotionally involved relationships that act as a source of support for immigrant children who are typically going through cultural assimilation, segregation, and economic disadvantage (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).

Social capital in the family appears to be most accessible to immigrant youth, despite the low levels of human capital of their parents. Social capital outside the family however is often times more difficult for them to access because of the language, cultural and socioeconomic barriers that many immigrant families face. In conjecture with the ecological systems theory, the social capital framework can lead to a better understanding of the effects and experience children face when they enter unfamiliar settings and attempt to continue past relationships or enter into new ones (i.e. the various microsystems that make up the mesosystem).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction/Research Questions

This research takes an inductive approach to analyzing the participants’ interview data in order to answer the main question: in a mixed legal immigration status home, how does the removal of one or both parents impact a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education? Additionally, the following sub-questions are addressed: 1) How does forced separation affect the socio-emotional development of the adolescent with regard to their post-secondary aspirations? 2) How is the social capital available to the adolescent influenced, if at all, by parental removal? In addressing these questions I employ two frameworks, Coleman’s (1988) framework of social capital and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory framework, as a way to interpret the reciprocal relationship between the adolescents and their environments and to discuss how this relationship could affect their aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education.

Creswell (2007) maintains that the focus of a case study should be to develop an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases. This research provides in-depth descriptions and analysis of adolescent’s post-secondary academic aspirations after a parental deportation. To achieve this analysis, I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with a variety of participants that included: five adolescents, their parents/guardians that remain with them in the U.S., people that had close knowledge of each family’s situation, and four local experts with experience in issues of families separated by deportation. In addition to the interviews, I incorporated other informational sources such as site observations in each of the participants’ homes and/or school environments. I collected these various forms of data until I reached a reliable sense of thematic exhaustion and variability, known as data saturation (Bryman, 2012).
My data analysis consisted of coding for common themes using Creswell’s (2007) multiple case studies coding scheme. This scheme helps researchers code for each case’s context and descriptions. Subsequently, codes are provided for themes within each case as well as for themes that are similar and different in cross-case analysis. The data analysis section contains a visual of this coding scheme. To assure the accuracy or credibility of the findings I employed strategies such as triangulation, member checking and peer review. Member checking for this research consisted of sharing some of the preliminary findings with my participants to ensure that the findings accurately portrayed them and their experience. Peer review was done by my writing consultant and by the esteemed members of my thesis committee. My thesis committee’s combined expertise and guidance ensured the high academic rigor of the study.

**Researcher Perspective**

A discussion of my personal background is important for contextualizing my role as the principal researcher within this case study. I am a first generation immigrant; I was born in the United States but lived in Guadalajara, Mexico for the first years of my life. My mother felt that the United States provided better educational opportunities for my siblings and me. As a result, we moved to the U.S. during my first year of elementary school, settling in El Paso, Texas, a border town on the West Texas-Mexican border which has a predominantly Mexican heritage Spanish-speaking population. My first language is Spanish; I was raised in a Spanish-speaking home and attended an English speaking school with mostly other native Spanish-speaking students. Most of my then classmates and all of my childhood friends were also first generation immigrant youth. Additionally, some of my best friends growing up were themselves either unauthorized or lived in mixed status homes.
My academic interests have always revolved around multicultural issues, especially those affecting the Mexican-American and Latino/a community at large. I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Translation from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). I pursued this degree because growing up I saw the various disadvantages people face when they live in the United States but do not understand English. For similar reasons, I began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. I have taught ESL in different classroom settings for almost a decade. I began teaching adult evening classes at the local community college and continued as a Peace Corps Educational Volunteer in Kazakhstan.

After returning from the Peace Corps, my academic and professional interests lead me to become a Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited representative for Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, an immigration non-governmental organization. For several years my duties were to conduct multilingual presentations and workshops at immigration detention centers. The purpose of these workshops was to inform immigrant detainees facing deportation of their rights, court procedures and the detention process. Additionally, I interviewed detainees on an individual basis to assess and refer their case to pro-bono immigration attorneys.

My graduate studies reflect my continuing interest in multicultural settings and part of the inspiration to write my master’s thesis on immigrant youth was because of my own personal experience. A driving force behind why I decided to focus on investigating the possible effects of parental deportation was that in my experience interviewing countless number of immigrant parents in detention centers, the first question they would ask me was “if I get deported what will happen to my children and their schooling?”
Case Study Method

The methodological approach taken for this research was that of a qualitative collective case study. Creswell (2007) states that a qualitative case study provides an in-depth study of a bounded system or systems (i.e., activities, events, processes or even individuals) based on a diverse array of data collection materials. The strength of this research method is that it can provide a unique, in-depth description by utilizing various data. Such data materials can include multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and reports. The focus of a case study therefore, is to develop a thorough description and analysis of a case or multiple cases. The researcher can then situate this system or case within its larger context or setting (Creswell, 2007). This case study is situated within the context of northwest Ohio and takes as its focus a population of adolescents who have a deported parent.

This particular study utilized a collective case study method of research. In a collective case study, the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects multiple information points which can also be referred to as individual cases to illustrate this particular issue (Creswell, 2007). Because this method uses multiple individual cases, Creswell (2007) suggests that researchers replicate the same procedure for each individual case within the study. The goal of studying multiple cases is to show different perspectives and provide insight into this issue. The aim of this research is to show the different perspectives and provide insight into the post-secondary educational aims of various immigrant youth after a parental deportation.

I was able to achieve the in-depth description that shows the different perspectives by incorporating multiple sources of information as Creswell (2007) suggests. I interviewed the adolescents regarding their experience, as well as the remaining parent or guardian. Other interviews included the educators and caseworker that had direct knowledge of the family’s
situation, along with experts on the topic who work with families separated by deportation. Most of my interviews with the adolescents were conducted in their home or at their school. This type of access allowed me to observe the family interactions in their home, as well as the adolescent participants’ interactions with their environment both at home and at school. These observations resulted in thick descriptions that gave me a better understanding of the various case settings.

The Case

In this research, the case setting is northwest Ohio. The case members are Latino/a adolescents with a deported parent. This case study illustrates the larger set of cases at the national level of immigrant youth who are separated from their parents because of growing immigration enforcement. The immigration enforcement efforts that plague mixed status homes in northwest Ohio can also be seen on the national level. Thus, the setting is fitting to study immigrant youth’s environment and their educational aspirations, post parental deportation.

Setting

The research was conducted in a geographic region in northwest Ohio, which expands both urban and rural populations. I selected this region because of its historical tradition with Latino/a immigrants and the recent increase of this population (Valdés, 2000; MPI, 2012). The majority of Latino/a, predominately Mexican, immigrants arrived in northwest Ohio as migrant laborers, and many stayed to raise their families in the area (Valdés, 2000). In the last decade, the total immigrant population in Ohio has nearly doubled and the number of immigrant youth has also increased (MPI, 2012). In Ohio, immigrant youth residing with at least one immigrant parent accounted for 7.2 percent of all children under age 18 in 2010 (MPI, 2012). Of the total number of immigrant youth, 81.9 percent were US citizens by birth (MPI, 2012).
At the same time the immigrant population has increased, so also has immigration enforcement in the area. Since the opening of the U.S. Border Patrol (CBP) in Sandusky, Ohio the northwest Ohio region has seen a dramatic increase in immigration enforcement (Blake, 2009). Immigration enforcement in the area has disproportionately targeted Latino/as, which prompted ABLE and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) to file a federal lawsuit alleging racial profiling against the CBP and several local law enforcement agencies in northwest Ohio (Platt, 2009). The lawsuit alleges that in several northwest Ohio counties the Border Patrol and local police departments detain and interrogate Latino/as about their immigration status based solely on their appearance (Blake, 2009; Platt, 2009).

**Participant Selection**

I used purposeful sampling to select participants for this study. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). The procedure allows for the study of several sites, groups, individuals or some combination to acquire rich information (Creswell, 2005). Specifically, maximum variation sampling was utilized in order to facilitate the understanding of complexities in this research topic and to sample participants who would differ on some characteristics or traits, and thus represent multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2005).

In this study, the participants consisted of five U.S. born citizen Latino/a adolescents. The participants were both male and female, and varied slightly in age and ethnic heritage. They also made up a mix of rural and urban residents. Maximal variation sampling was used so that the various participants were able to provide different insights into their post-secondary school aspirations and home environment after their parent(s) deportation. I met my participants via different organizations (educational, mental health, religious and low income assistance) in
various towns and cities in the northwest Ohio region. For reasons of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for all participants, organizations and locations.

**Ethical Considerations**

Sensitivity to ethical considerations is an important part of the research process. Creswell (2007) maintains that all researchers must be sensitive to the potential of their research disturbing the participants. This disturbance includes placing the participant at risk as a result of the research (Creswell, 2007). To this end, measures were taken prior to, during and after data collection to ensure that potential risks to participants were minimized.

**Informed Consent**

Both student assent and parental informed consent were completed prior to the interview. With regard to informed consent procedures, I carefully walked participants through the agreement, giving them ample time for review, and any questions they might have had regarding the nature of the study and/or their participation. Participants were informed that their agreement to participate was absolutely voluntary; that they had the right to decline to answer any question, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

All assent and consent agreements were carefully worded to ensure the understanding of participants. The agreements were written in English and Spanish. The assent and consent agreements provided a description of the study, including its purposes. In addition, I read aloud the consent forms to ensure clarity. Participants were given as much time as they needed to consider their decision to participate as well as ask any questions prior to signing the agreement form. After the verbal explanation of the study and reading the consent form, they signed the consent forms.
Confidentiality/ Use of Pseudonyms

Considering participants’ fear of immigration enforcement, steps were taken prior, during and after data collection to eliminate risk of identification. Prior to data collection, these steps included only recruiting through Latino/a support organizations. There were no public recruitment efforts such as advertisements via multimedia communication channels. During data collection, I made sure to not share the names of my participants to other potential interviewees or organizations. After data collection, I protected the anonymity of all of my participants, locations and organizations by assigning them pseudonyms.

Recruitment: Organizations and Gatekeepers

The sensitive nature of this study mandated the help from various organizations and their staff, including their directors and caseworkers. Knowing that the sensitive nature of this research topic would make participant recruitment difficult, I permitted ample time for recruiting from this population. Nevertheless, recruiting efforts and trust building took more time and effort than I had anticipated. During recruitment, some organizations were skeptical of this research and others were hesitant to introduce me to possible participants because many families are afraid to speak about their unauthorized status or deportation. Families avoid talking about these issues because they do not want to be identified by immigration officials, which could result in having a family member deported. The assistance of gatekeepers was invaluable because it provided me the basis necessary to build trust with both organizations and families. Building this trust allowed my participants to talk openly about their experience without fearing repercussions from immigration authorities.

Creswell (2005) defines a gatekeeper as a person who has an official or unofficial role at the research site. This person provides entrance to the site, as well as helps researchers locate
participants and other possible research sites. Creswell (2005) defines a gatekeeper as a person who has an official or unofficial role at the research site; this person provides entrance to the site as well as helps researchers locate participants and other possible research sites. The gatekeeper usually has an insider status with the organization, community or population. These individuals were vital to my success since I am not from the geographic region and although I am Mexican and bilingual, I did not have any long-standing ties to the Latino/a community in northwest Ohio. Therefore, in order for the research to be possible, I needed to be trusted by the gatekeepers and subsequently be given entrance into this community. The following gatekeepers are recognized, long standing, trusted members of the Latino/a community in the area.

Dr. Moreno, director of Erudición, a Latino/a educational organization in northwest Ohio, was one of my most important gatekeepers. Dr. Moreno has lived in the northwest Ohio area nearly his entire life. He is well known and revered for his work with the Latino/a community. He allowed me to give a presentation introducing my research during a teacher in-service for Erudición. Teachers from all over the region attended this teacher in-service, which gave my research great exposure. As a result, several teachers met with me after the presentation to tell me about students in their classes that might be suitable candidates for my research.

Mrs. Peña is a caseworker for Advocates for Low Income Families (ALIF). She has also lived in northwest Ohio her whole life. She is very politically involved in the Latino/a community. I met her at a community forum on immigration where I presented my research proposal. After the forum, she informed me that she had families in her caseload that would fit the criteria for my research. She spoke with those families regarding my research and then arranged a meeting between us before the interview.
Yvonne, founder of Unidas, a Latina support group, was another instrumental gatekeeper for this research. Unidas is a support group where Latina women meet to discuss a variety of issues, ranging from parenting to health to civil rights. The majority of the women in Unidas are immigrants who live in low income, mixed status homes. Yvonne invited me to meet the Unidas members and present my research during one of their meetings.

**Adolescent Participants**

Alex is a 15-year-old boy who lives in the city of Madera where he was born and raised. His parents are both unauthorized immigrants from Mexico. When Alex and I met, his father was in an immigration detention center. His father was deported a month after our initial interview. At the time, Alex was living with his mother and two younger sisters.

Sandra is a 15-year-old girl who lives in Lejos, a small town in Northwest Ohio. She and her younger brother live with their mother. Sandra was born and raised in Lejos, Ohio. Her mother is Honduran and father is Guatemalan. Her mother is in the United States with a temporary asylum permit called Temporary Protection Status (TPS). Her father was deported three years ago. Sister Patience of the Catholic Church in Lejos introduced us.

Paula is a 19-year-old girl who lives with her 21-year-old sister, Maria and two younger siblings in the town of Emma, Ohio. Paula and her younger siblings were born and raised in Emma but Maria and their parents were born in Mexico. Paula’s mother and father were both unauthorized. Her mother was deported six years ago when Paula was nearing the end of middle school. Her father was deported three years later. Maria, Paula’s older sister, is in deportation proceedings; she has a temporary work permit while her immigration case is under review. A teacher at Erudición introduced me to Paula.
Esperanza is an 18-year-old girl in her last year of high school. She lives with her mother and two younger brothers in Pesca, Ohio. Her 17-year-old brother Miguel also took part in the research. Esperanza and her younger brothers were born in Florida; their parents were born in Mexico. Their family would travel to Pesca during the summers to work in the fields and decided to settle there when Esperanza started high school. They live with their mother, who is unauthorized. Their father was deported four years ago. A teacher at Erudición introduced me to Esperanza and Miguel.

![Figure 1: Table of Participants](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Description/Relationship</th>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Location (Pseudonym)</th>
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<td>Father</td>
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<td>Husband</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Data Collection**

I began crafting the design for this research in January 2012. I first consulted with my master’s thesis advisor, Dr. Bruce Collet, regarding the design, aim and feasibility of the study. Soon after, I contacted Dr. Moreno at Erudición via email. In the email, I introduced myself and asked for a sit down meeting to discuss my interest in researching the topic of children of
deported parents. At the meeting, I gave him a copy of my résumé and draft of my thesis proposal to assist me in elaborating my interest in studying this topic and highlight my previous professional experience with this population. Dr. Moreno was very supportive of the study and gave me permission to recruit at Erudición. We stayed in touch via email where I updated him on possible dates to start collecting data. I received approval for my research from the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University in April 2012. The first interview conducted was with Miguel, a student at Erudición, in late June 2012.

Prior to any interviews, all participants signed a consent form, approved by HSRB, indicating their agreement to participate in the study. Participants under 18 years of age provided active parental consent before the interview. All consent forms were HSRB approved with both English and Spanish versions. As a native Spanish speaker and certified translator, I translated all the recruitment and consent forms. To assure consistency and clarity in the translation, I asked a colleague, who is also a certified translator and native Spanish speaker, to revise them.

Before conducting the interviews I read aloud the consent form to the participants, in their preferred language, and verbally informed them about the procedures of the study. I emphasized the measures I would take to ensure confidentiality. This assurance was important especially because I informed them that I would be recording the interviews using a digital audio recorder. I iterated to the families that this research has no bearing on their immigration status in the United States and that I am not an immigration officer nor in any way affiliated with immigration enforcement authorities. Interviews were conducted at a safe location chosen by the participants. This involved holding the interviews at various places: the family’s home, at a cooperating organization’s site, or in a public place, such as a community center or school. All participants were informed when the audio recorder was on and that they were free to stop the
Creswell (2007) maintains that the uniqueness of a qualitative case study is that various types of information can be used to achieve an in-depth description of the case. As previously mentioned, these four informational sources can include interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. My research utilized mainly interviews and observations in addition to consulting the literature related to the topics in my research. The types of information utilized assisted me in triangulating the data, which helped me achieve an accurate in-depth description of the case. The following is a more detailed description of the types of information used.

**Open-ended, Semi-structured Interviews**

Four different scripts were used in the research. One for the adolescent participants, one for their parents/guardians, another for the people (teacher, caseworker) that introduced me to the family and had personal knowledge of their situation and a separate one for the local experts in the area who work with families separated by deportation. The interview questions were developed as a result of narrowing the main and sub questions of the study (Creswell, 2007).

The interviews were designed as open-ended and semi-structured. The semi-structured design was the most appropriate for this particular study because it allowed me, the researcher, to set the general direction of the interview but still gave participants the freedom to take their story wherever they felt most appropriate (Creswell, 2007). Open-ended questions were used because they encouraged the participants to give full, meaningful answers based on their own knowledge and/or feelings. Open-ended questions also allowed for follow up questions to further understand the participants’ experiences (Creswell, 2007). A major strength of asking semi-structured, open-ended questions was that it allowed me to ask or change the questions during the interview, a process that reflected an increasing understanding of the issues (Creswell, 2007).
Participants had the opportunity to use the language they felt most comfortable with and could express themselves with best. All of the parent interviews were conducted in Spanish. My interview with Yvonne, founder of Unidas, was also done entirely in Spanish. The student participants preferred to be interviewed in English but language code switching (English-Spanish) often took place during the conversations. Similar uses of language code switching occurred with some of the experts interviewed.

**Observations**

In addition to the interviews conducted, my research also utilized observations as a valuable informational source. These included written notes on the physical settings, interactions between people, their reactions, and particular events (Creswell, 2007). Observations were imperative because the theoretical frameworks used for this study involve exploring the participant’s perception of their surroundings and their environment.

Most of the student and parent interviews took place in their homes. This location was chosen by them as a place where they felt most comfortable speaking. The setting was important because it helped establish a level of comfort necessary to ask possibly emotionally charged questions regarding their feelings and reactions to the deportation. Access to their home also allowed me the opportunity to gather information via observations. Observing their interactions with other members of the family, their surroundings, and their environment helped me to better understand and even visualize the situations they described in their stories. In one instance, Sandra’s mother pointed out the very spot in the house where immigration officers handcuffed Sandra’s father. Her memory of that morning was so vivid that she pointed out where her children were standing during the arrest and even what everyone was wearing.
The participants’ homes were very modest; the houses were usually well kept or in the process of being cleaned. After we arranged a meeting time, the families still asked me to call them when I was on my way so they could make sure the house was in order. Often times this was the only chance I had to interview the mothers. Because most of the mothers work multiple jobs, the only time they could meet with me was in the time frame between the jobs when they were home cleaning or cooking for the family.

Other observations were conducted at the participating students’ school sites like Erudición. These observations allowed me to view their interactions with their classmates and teachers. Similar observations were done at Unidas. Their meetings are part class, part support group and encourage the participation of the whole family. A large passenger van picks up the families at their home so the whole family can attend the meetings. At those meetings, I observed my participants’ interactions with each other, other families and discussion leaders.

Data Saturation

In qualitative studies, researchers collect data until they reach a point of data saturation. Data saturation refers to the number of interviews and amount of data needed to get a reliable sense of thematic exhaustion, as well as variability within the data sets (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (2012), researching until saturation is achieved is a challenging approach because it forces the researcher to combine sampling, data collection, and data analysis, rather than treating them as separate stages in a linear process (Bryman, 2012). This process makes it nearly impossible to specify the number of interviews necessary to complete a project in the nascent stage of the project. I am confident that the data collected for this particular study reached saturation. This qualitative collective case study consisted of numerous open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were done with five Latino/a immigrant youth, three
of the parents/guardians that remain in the U.S. with them, along with six other people that had close knowledge of the families’ situation (caseworkers, gatekeepers), and local experts with Latino/a issues and deportation. Additional informational sources included several site observations in each of the participants’ homes and/or school environments.

**Data Analysis**

The first step for my data analysis was to transcribe the recorded audio from the interviews. I downloaded the files from the audio recorder to a secure folder in my computer. I arranged the individual subfolders by the participant’s pseudonym and date conducted. Because of the confidential nature of the study, after the audio file was downloaded, it was deleted from the audio recorder. For the same reason, I was the only person with access to the files.

I transcribed the interviews the day after they were conducted. After transcribing, I did a preliminary inductive analysis of each transcription before continuing on to the next interviews. This process allowed me to find the main points of the interview, which facilitated the development of themes to naturally emerge from the data. This process was also practical because there were times where weeks would pass between adolescent, parent and/or expert interviews.

For the coding process, I followed Creswell’s (2007) coding scheme for multiple case studies (figure 1). This scheme consists of coding for each case’s context and descriptions. I then coded for themes within each case and for themes that were similar and different in cross-case analysis. Lastly, I included codes for assertions and generalizations across all cases. Marginal notes on the transcripts were used as part of coding process to look for passages that shared a common theme. These themes assisted in answering the research questions. All coding was done using the color highlight function on a word processing program.
Creswell (2007) maintains that for all qualitative research, methodological rigor is achieved through the application of verification and trustworthiness. This is achieved through bracketing off the researcher’s personal experiences, conducting literature searches, adhering to the methodological method, using an adequate sample, and interviewing until data saturation is achieved. As mentioned in previous sections, I took great measures to assure that the literature was properly consulted, the sample size was adequate, and the data collection reached saturation.

The next step in the process was to assure the credibility of the findings. This credibility was achieved through strategies such as triangulation, member checking, and peer review. Triangulation is the process of substantiating findings from the different participants, and types of data in descriptions and themes (Creswell, 2005). As per Creswell (2005; 2007), I examined each informational source and found evidence to support the themes that emerged from the data; by doing so I ensured accuracy because the information draws on multiple sources.
Member Checking

Member checking was another step taken to ensure trustworthiness. Member checking is when the researcher takes the preliminary findings of the study to the participants to check the accuracy of their account (Creswell, 2007). The researcher typically asks the participants whether the description of them is complete and realistic, if the themes are accurate, and if the interpretations are fair and representative (Creswell, 2007). In case studies especially, which tend to draw on various informational sources to provide rich descriptions, member checking is considered to be the most critical technique for establishing credibility (Creswell, 2007). I conducted member checks with all of the participants in this research. I shared some of the preliminary findings with them to ensure that these findings accurately portrayed them and their experience.

Peer Review

Peer review was another way to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. Peer review takes place when the researcher presents the findings for validation to an academic audience such as area experts, readers, graduate committee members, or editorial members for academic journal (Creswell, 2007). For this research, peer review was done by my writing consultant at the BGSU Learning Commons and by the esteemed members of my thesis committee. My writing consultant, Christina Yaniga has a Master of Arts in Literary and Textual studies; she acted as a reader. She offered me feedback, suggested changes, and revisions that helped the organization and presentation of the various topics discussed. Having Christina as a reader further helped limit the human biases involved in presenting the findings of my study.

Limitations

I faced several challenges and limitations in conducting this research. The sensitive
nature of this topic that required building trust with everyone from the organizations to the families took a considerable amount of time and effort. Even though I began introducing my study to organizations and future gatekeepers in the area months before any data were collected, access to families was my biggest obstacle in conducting this research.

**Access to Families**

Many of the families affected by a deportation live in secrecy, they do not trust many people with their story and the people that know about their situation are very protective of them. For this reason I needed to work closely with gatekeepers who are known and trusted in the Latino/a community in the Northwest Ohio area. One of my gatekeepers put it best when he said “the people that you are talking to need to know that you’re a ‘friendly’, and that you are not part of some undercover immigration raid.” Concerns of my involvement with immigration enforcement began to subside once I met with staff of the organization and presented them with a copy of the HSRB approval for the study that had the BGSU logo and signatures. After the gatekeepers trusted me enough to introduce me to some families, I then began to build a rapport with those families. The first step to building this rapport was usually to call them over the phone. My noticeable central Mexican regional accent to some degree helped build that rapport. During a couple of those initial phone calls the mothers noticed the accent and asked me what part of Jalisco, Mexico I came from. This detection of my accent not only helped me build a rapport with the families, but it also served to ease the fear that I might be involved with immigration enforcement.

**Time Restraints**

Another limitation that must be considered is the time restraint I had when interviewing the families, the mothers especially. Because most of the mothers I interviewed work multiple
jobs, the only time they could meet with me was in the time frame between jobs when they were home cleaning or cooking for the family. This window of time was no more than two hours. On multiple occasions during the icebreaker questions they would be preoccupied finishing off a chore while politely answering my question. However, once the questions got more personal, they would stop what they were doing, sit down, and answer my questions without any distraction. Limited time was also something that I encountered when trying to interview adolescent participants who were already working. Most of my interviews with them were done either later at night when they got off work or early in the morning before they went into work. Collection of various data materials such as various interviews along with observations in the home served to help to reduce this limitation.

**Personal Limitations**

My own position as the researcher must be disclosed as a possible limitation. I have had extensive personal and professional experience with the Latino/a community as well as with the unauthorized immigrant population in the United States. Those experiences, along with my personal identification as a first generation immigrant, could be perceived as a source for bias. I relied heavily on member checks and peer review to eliminate the potential for this bias. My thesis committee acted as the checks and balance of my study; their expertise and thoroughness helped to assure that all findings and claims were based on the data I presented not on assumptions.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The results are presented as narrative accounts of the adolescents’ life before and after the deportation. The presentation includes verbatim quotes from the adolescents relating their experience with parental deportation. Qualitative data taken from interviews with the remaining parent and family friends is also featured as a way to provide additional information regarding deportation experience. This chapter also includes a presentation of the local experts’ personal accounts of dealing with children of deported parents in school and in the community.

Miguel and Esperanza

Miguel and Esperanza are siblings living in Pesca, Ohio with their mother. Their parents are natives of Mexico who migrated to Northwest Ohio during the summers to work in the fields. Ten years ago they decided to settle in the area. Their father was deported in 2007.

Life Pre Deportation

This section features the family’s journey to Northwest Ohio, explores their home environment, family dynamic, parent’s expectations of their children as well as Miguel and Esperanza’s experience at school before the deportation of their father.

Immigrating and Migrating

Miguel and Esperanza’s parents were born and raised in Mexico. Their mother, Mrs. Santos, says they both came from very poor homes and began working at a very young age. Their father, Mr. Santos dropped out of school at age of 12 and began working. Mrs. Santos has a fifth grade education. She recalls not having a good experience in school as a young girl. “Over there, life was hard. As a young girl, how was I supposed to learn anything if the entire time the teacher was talking my stomach was growling from hunger?” She left school and began working
as a farm laborer early on in her life to help support her family. As a teenager, she met her future husband and they began a family soon after. They had two daughters early on in their marriage. To help support his family, Mr. Santos traveled to the United States to work as a seasonal migrant worker. After a few years, the entire family immigrated to the United States. The parents saw the U.S. as a land of opportunity for their family. They wanted better educational opportunities for their children and better economic opportunities for themselves.

The family originally settled in Florida. Mr. and Mrs. Santos worked as migrant laborers. The family would constantly travel to states such as Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina and Texas to pick crops during the various farming seasons. Esperanza, Miguel and their youngest brother, who did not take part in the study, were all born in Florida. The rest of the family was born in Mexico and did not have authorized immigration status in the United States. The family migrated from Florida to various states for several years until settling in Northwest Ohio in 2003. They stayed in the area after a farmer whom they had worked for offered them a more permanent position working for him. They refer to him only as patrón, Spanish for boss.

**Home Environment**

Miguel and Esperanza recall their early life in the United States as very family oriented. They saw the family always being together, especially when it came time to eat. Miguel remembers his day beginning with eating breakfast as a family. “I’d wake up early; we’d have breakfast, and then go to school. After school, we would go with our parents to work after the whole family would have dinner together.” Esperanza’s recollection of her daily routine is very similar to her brother’s. Their mother talks about this time in their life as one comprised of hard work and family unity:
Their father and I were always working but we made sure to be home when they came home from school. On the weekends, I would take them to work with me. Back then you could take the kids to the fields. They watched and pretended to help.

The family lived in a very rural area of Northwest Ohio. During their time off, the family would go to the park and take long walks near their home. They enjoyed living in the open spaces and shared many fond memories of their time in nature together.

**Concerns**

Even though Miguel and Esperanza’s family often talked about work, neither Esperanza nor Miguel mentioned worrying about money before their father’s deportation. Their mother did not feel that money was a major concern for the family then. For Mrs. Santos, permanence in rural Northwest Ohio offered tranquility and the opportunity for her children to stay in one school. Staying in Ohio also offered the family a sense of protection from exposure to immigration enforcement. From a young age, Esperanza was aware of her parent’s concern for immigration. “I’d hear them talk about how nice it was living out in the country because we could take the country roads and not worry about immigration checkpoints. We wouldn’t go to big stores or anywhere like that in big cities.” Miguel also remembers hearing his parent’s fear about immigration. For him, the fear of immigration restricted his behavior and the type of information he was allowed to share:

Since I was little they told us that we’d have to stay out of trouble because they don’t have papers. We’d have to be on our best behavior and be careful what we told people so that they (immigration) would not get information and possibly go to the house.
Esperanza and Miguel were aware from a very young age that their parent’s immigration status was a concern. Their mother was vigilant of immigration enforcement but never thought her family would be separated by it.

**School Environment**

According to Mrs. Santos, one of the main reasons she and her husband chose to immigrate to the United States was to provide their children with better educational opportunities. The family felt that Ohio provided better educational opportunities than Florida. Esperanza and Miguel do not have fond memories of their school in Florida. They felt discriminated against for being Mexican. They both talked at great length about several incidents of discrimination from other students and even a teacher. Miguel got into fights over these incidents. Esperanza also got into altercations because of derogatory comments she heard. “In Florida, we’d get bullied. That’s why my parents decided to stay in Ohio because we didn’t have that problem here. There was a lot of name-calling and one pushing incident. I fought back though”. The children did not experience that sort of treatment at their first school in Ohio. Esperanza feels that the first school they attended has been her favorite school thus far:

> I don’t like big schools; our school in our first town here is the best school I ever went to.

> It was small and everyone was friendly. The teachers treated us like we were all their own kids, it did not matter what race you were.

Miguel shares similar fond memories of their first school in Ohio, especially of his 5th grade English teacher. For his birthday she brought in a cake for him and had the class sing happy birthday. He enjoyed her class because he saw her more like a parent than a teacher.

Esperanza describes herself as very sociable and outgoing during her time at that school. She feels she was an average student with high grades in some of her favorite subjects such as art
and math. The thing that she looked forward to most about going to school however was spending time with her friends. Miguel did not see himself as a good student. He never really paid much attention to his grades. He did not see much use in school because he felt that he would end up a farm working like his father. He describes himself as a bit of a class clown:

    My dad never went to school. I used to think ‘I’m going to be like my dad and I’m just going to finish school when I’m like 14. So, school was not very important to me. It was fun just to be around friends. I was kind of goofy just always making people laugh.

The family lived in this small town in Northwest Ohio for only two years. Their father’s deportation forced the family to relocate and the children to change schools.

**Parental Expectations**

Even though Esperanza and Miguel did not consider themselves good students, their parents wanted them to make the most out of their education in the United States. Mrs. Santos would often remind them that one of the main reasons the family moved to the U.S. and stayed in Ohio was so they could do well in school. “We would tell them all the time ‘study so you won’t end up like us working in the fields’. I don’t want them to live their lives like we had to.”

Their parents wanted them to value their educational opportunities in the United States by using their own struggles as an example. Miguel remembers his father taking him to work as a way of helping him visualize their message. Esperanza remembers her father doing the same for her.

    Dad would take us to work and he would say ‘you don’t like it right, being here in the hot sun?’ and we would all shake our heads no, and he would say ‘this is so you guys could take into consideration what you have and what other kids don’t have with school’.

The family’s parents have worked as farm laborers since they were very young. They moved to the United States from Mexico in hopes of providing more opportunities for their family. The
family decided to stay in Northwest Ohio because this is where they found steady employment and peace of mind from immigration enforcement. The family spent most of their time together and has fond memories of the years their early years in Ohio. Their parents would take their children to work with them to show them the difficulty of farm work. They did this to motivate them to value their education in the United States.

**Father’s Deportation**

In 2007 Mr. Santos was detained at an immigration checkpoint in Kentucky. He was held at an immigration detention center for six months before ultimately being deported to Mexico. This section will talk about the family’s experience with the detention of their father and subsequent deportation to Mexico.

**Detention and Deportation**

During our interview, Esperanza was too emotional to talk about her memory of the day her father was detained. When I first asked, she was only able to tell me “I don’t know maybe I was I think 14, maybe. We weren’t together.” She then began to cry so we paused the interview until she felt comfortable enough to continue. Later in the interview, I asked her again and she responded only with “I think it was a weekend.” Her eyes then began to water. She fell silent and started to play nervously with her metal bracelets. Esperanza’s mother reacted almost identically to the question. She stayed quiet for a few seconds and fidgeted with her nails. When she began to talk her voice quickly broke. “It was five years ago, he went to look for work and got stopped at a checkpoint on the way back. They got him and deported him and we left also, all of us.”

Out of the three family members, Miguel recalls that day in more detail. He remembers eaves dropping on a phone call their mother received from their father in detention. “My dad called my mom; he told her they got caught. I didn’t know how to take the news. I just cried”.
Their father was detained at an immigration detention center for six months before ultimately being deported to Mexico. During those six months, the family would travel weekly to visit him:

It was a six-hour drive. We woke up at two in the morning. We were only allowed one hour. We couldn’t hug him and we’d each have to wait our turn to talk to him. There was a glass window in between us. I remember being at the window and crying to see my dad. Esperanza and her mother were very emotional during questions about this period in their lives. Miguel was also somewhat reserved on the topic but gave more detail about that day and was also only one to mention the family’s trips to Kentucky.

Life in Mexico

After their father was deported, the entire family moved to Mexico. The family structure, before the deportation and in Mexico, consisted of the biological parents, five children (the three oldest being girls and two youngest being boys) and two grandchildren. The move was most drastic for Esperanza and Miguel who had never been to Mexico. Miguel, though having grown up speaking Spanish, never attended a Spanish speaking school. The language barrier proved to be a challenge for him. “By that time I knew way more English than Spanish. I’d always have trouble with my Spanish. I’d never do as well because subjects are different, school was different down there.” Esperanza did not mention having problems with the language. Unlike her brother, she felt that she was doing well in school. She had even been chosen to be part of the color guard in her school, an honor given to the top academic students. Even though she was doing better academically than her brother, Esperanza also found school in Mexico a different experience from the United States. Mrs. Santos recalls the differences at school as more of a challenge:

Over there, we did not live in a city. The school was a small house with a room and that is it, they had small chairs and tables that were ugly and written all over. There were no
telephones in the school; there were no computers, there was nothing. When we had to get a fax or pick up an official document we had to go into the city and that costs money. When talking about their time in Mexico, the cost of the children’s education was a reoccurring topic in the conversation with Mrs. Santos. At times she felt overwhelmed by the daily cost of sending her children to school. Miguel and Esperanza themselves were aware of the family’s economic hardships in Mexico. Miguel remembers worrying about food and money; “It was harsh, no food, we’d always have to worry about food, we’d always have to ask for money and it was just hard”. Esperanza describes their living situation in Mexico exactly like her brother described it. “I still want to go visit my dad but like, I don’t plan on going back and living there again, it’s hard. Really hard.”

Returning to the United States

The entire family lived together in Mexico for two years following their father’s deportation. The parents felt their time in Mexico was only temporary. Their mother feared the violence in Mexico and wanted their children to come back to the United States to finish school. She was especially concerned about Miguel’s safety. “There was violence everywhere and I was afraid for my children, especially for Miguel. He can run his mouth. It’s different over there, you can get hurt or worse for just saying the smallest thing to the wrong person.” Initially, their mother and father wanted to move the entire family back to the United States. Their motive for returning was always to ensure their children’s safety and provide them with better educational opportunities.

While in Mexico, their mother stayed in touch with their former patrón. With the patrón’s help, the family planned to return to the United States together. Their father however was hesitant to return because he feared getting caught and put in jail because of his deportation
order. The patrón then offered to host Esperanza so she would not miss her first year of high school in the United States. The family made the decision to send Esperanza alone to live with the patrón so that she could attend high school in the United States. Mrs. Santos remembers:

She was only 15 years old when she left. We had never been apart. We cried a lot, I cried a lot. I did not sleep. I did not eat. She didn’t have any family around. It was like this for almost a year, I could not stand it so I decided to come back. I left my other children in Mexico. I worried about them the same, a month after I came back I sent for them.

Esperanza’s family decided that it would be best to send her to live with the patrón so that she could return to the U.S. to study. The patrón was Esperanza’s legal guarding during the time she was away from her family. After her mother returned, the patrón remained Esperanza’s legal guardian and also added Esperanza’s brothers to his guardianship for a year.

**Life in the United States Post Deportation**

Following the deportation of their father, the entire family moved to Mexico. The move to Mexico brought many changes and challenges to the family. After returning to the United States, the family continued to go through changes and faced various hardships. This section features changes they discussed to their life in and outside the home in addition to the children’s experience and motivations at school after relocating to the United States.

**Living Space**

The family members that returned to the U.S. lived in the migrant camp on the patrón’s farm for the first year. During our interviews, none of the family members described the living conditions at this migrant camp. Ms. Pira, their teacher at Erudición who introduced us, met the family after they returned from Mexico. Ms. Pira was Esperanza’s teacher at one of Erudición’s summer school programs. Ms. Pira describes migrant camps as temporary housing intended to
be lived in only during the summer. I visited the camp where they lived and saw a weather beaten, propped-up trailer home next to a field and behind the farmer’s home. I did not get a chance to enter the trailer because another family was staying there. Ms. Pira describes Esperanza’s family’s situation at that camp as unfavorable. “It really wasn’t a good situation. Faith and Sam would go over there on Sunday evenings normally, they’d tell me about their place.” Ms. Pira’s son Sam and his best friend Faith helped out in Ms. Pira’s class during the summers; that is where they met Esperanza and Miguel. Soon after they met, Sam began to date Esperanza and Faith dated Miguel. The couples dated for a year and remained friends afterwards.

The family moved to their current home approximately a year after they were reunited. Their current home is on the edge of Pesca, Ohio, a small city about an hour away from the patrón’s farm. The family now lives in a two-bedroom trailer home. Their kitchen, dining area, and living space are combined and not much wider than a hallway. Esperanza shares a bedroom with her mother and Miguel with his youngest brother. During our interview, Esperanza mentioned that she preferred their first place northwest Ohio. “Now we live closer to neighbors, closer to the city now. We used to live out in the country. I liked that better. We’d walk to creek near the house. It was nice.”

Changes in Routine and Behavior

In addition to their change in physical space, the family’s daily routine also underwent a significant change. Miguel describes an average day at home as very different now that his father is gone. He is reminded of those differences first thing in the morning. “Now it’s different, I eat breakfast alone. My sister isn’t here and my mom’s out early so I just watch TV then go to school.” Esperanza is also reminded of her father’s absence first thing in the morning. Like her brother, the empty dining table provides that reminder:
Before, we’d see mom and dad in the kitchen preparing us breakfast. If they didn’t make us breakfast, we would just sit eating cereal together. Now we just get up, get dressed and go. My mom doesn’t say ‘are you going to eat before you go?’ anymore (crying).

Miguel feels that their new routine shows how the family bond has been weakened since his father was deported. He feels he does not see his mother as much as he used to and that she behaves differently. Esperanza also noted changes in their mother’s mood and physical appearance after they returned to the United States. “My mom’s always crying. She’s lost a lot of weight because of that. She’s my size now and she used to be size 14, now she fits into a size 5.”

When I asked Mrs. Santos if she feels she has changed, she gave a short and tearful answer. “Yes, I’ve changed...a lot, we all have.” She feels the whole family has changed, she notices her children are often times sad.

As part of their behavioral change, she also feels that her sons have become rebellious since they came back to the U.S. Her youngest son, who did not take part in the research, recently had a run in with the police. “I don’t like his friends but he doesn’t listen to me. The police caught him and those friends at school and well now he is on probation for six months.” She shares similar concerns about Miguel. She feels his behavior has changed. She finds him to be rude and rebellious towards her. She believes that the absence of a man in the house contributed to his change of behavior. Miguel himself admits to this change in behavior. When asked if he feels he has changed, he answered that before the deportation he was more “educado” Spanish for well mannered:

I was more educado. I was not as rude when my dad was around. I was well behaved and I would not go out as much. It’s just very different since my dad is gone but I help provide for the family, I help mom with bills.
Even though Miguel admits to being rude to his mother and more rebellious, he also made it a point to mention that he has also taken on more of an adult role.

**New Responsibilities**

Both Esperanza and Miguel mentioned several times that they took on additional responsibilities in the home after they returned to the U.S. Esperanza sees Miguel has taken on chores she remembers her father doing. “He is the only big guy in the house. When the car breaks down or something he will do the role of mechanic, he checks the oil. He does everything my dad would do.” Esperanza feels that she too has taken on additional responsibilities since her father was deported. For her, responsibilities include taking on a more motherly role for her younger brothers:

I’m more hardworking, more responsible. I watch over my brothers. They are always wandering off with their friends. If they don’t come at certain time then I will go out and look for them. Before, we wouldn’t have that problem because dad would watch them.

Their mother however doesn’t necessarily see the deportation as the reason they are taking on additional responsibilities. She feels it is a natural part of growing up. Ms. Pira sees the children as very mature for their age. In her opinion, Esperanza is the more responsible one of the three. “In many ways they’re typical kids in high school, they also have added pressures that other kids do not. They help pay the bills. Esperanza takes up most of the slack. She works a lot more.”

Esperanza acknowledges that she has had to find a job since her father’s deportation but her mention of it was very much in passing. From my previous conversation with Ms. Pira, I knew that she worked long hours, especially in the summer. I interviewed Esperanza at 8:00 p.m. at one of Erudición’s school sites. When I asked her why this was the best time for her, she
responded in a very nonchalant manner. “Well, I work at 12 hours each day. I had to pick up overtime over the past weeks. I do it during the school year also.”

Financial Concerns

The mention of financial hardships after their father’s deportation was something that came up frequently during our interviews. Miguel does not recall having to worry about money when his father was living with them. Esperanza also does not remember worrying about money before their father’s deportation, however now money is a major concern for her. “When dad was here he would always work and pay bills. Now it’s me and mom paying bills and I just have to work.” A reason the family worries about money now is because Mrs. Santos does not have steady employment. During the summers she works as a farm worker. After the farm work is done she tries to find different odd jobs that do not typically require verification of her immigration status. Esperanza does not see much of her mother now because they are both constantly working. She has come to enjoy rainy days in the summer because that is when they can be home together. “My mom and I are always working. The other day though it rained really hard so there wasn’t work for us, that was nice.” Their mother feels that she should be the only one worrying about the family’s finances.

Mrs. Santos talked at length about working long hours so that her children do not have to worry about working. Even though she feels that she should be the only one concerned about money, the children are aware of the economic hardships in the home. Miguel looks forward to his paycheck so that he can help pay for some of the household’s necessities. “I get paid, and look for a bill or on payday I give the money to my mom so she can buy food, pay the rent and bills.” Ms. Pira knows how hard the children work. However, it is her observation that out of all the children, Esperanza feels the need to contribute more financially. She calls her “the
breadwinner”. Esperanza even sends money to her father in Mexico. When talking to Esperanza about how often she communicates with him, she had an aside to herself about sending him money; “I have gone six months without talking to him and a week ago was the first time I called him, I sent him money again today, it was worth it though”.

**Fear of Immigration**

In addition to the financial concerns, the family also worries greatly about immigration enforcement. The three children who returned to the United States are all U.S. born citizens but their mother is still living here as an unauthorized immigrant. Miguel described his fear of immigration detection and his thought process whenever his mother drives:

> When we are driving I think: Are they going to pull us over? Do we have something wrong with our taillights? Is our license plate expired? Are they cracked? Are they in the right place? Are we in the right lane? Are we going the right speed? It all just goes through my mind. Just like that (snaps fingers).

Miguel is concerned that his mother does not have a valid driver’s license from the U.S. and that her lack of proper identification will lead to her deportation. Esperanza has identical concerns about her mother’s immigration status and lack of proper identification. For both children, the fear of immigration arises most frequently when their mother is either driving or a passenger in the car. They are afraid that a traffic stop will result in their mother’s deportation.

Both Miguel and Esperanza prefer to drive as a way to limit their mother’s exposure to the police. They reported almost an identical fear and thought process when driving. Esperanza however talked about an additional worry she has if her mother is identified and subsequently deported. “If they ever catch her driving and ask for license, they’ll deport her. I can’t take care of my little brothers now, I am working and then I have school.” Ms. Pira is aware of the
family’s fear of driving and shares Esperanza’s worry about her having to take on additional responsibilities if her mother is identified. “If her mother gets pulled over and then deported now Esperanza has to raise those other two by herself.” Mrs. Santos was brief when discussing her fear of immigration. In her opinion, immigration officers and police officers serve the same function. “I am afraid of immigration but I even more scared of police. It’s the same thing really. If they stop me, right away they’ll deport me.”

**School Environment/ Friendships**

Miguel and Esperanza’s experience at school also changed after the deportation of their father. Esperanza’s gave a tearful, albeit brief, account of school when she first returned to the United States. “It was hard because I would always say where is he or how is he doing? My grades dropped dramatically… (crying).” The interview then stopped for a few minutes. When we resumed the interview we changed topics briefly to give her a chance to compose herself. During the break she mentioned that one of the toughest things for her was to see her grades drop so much after having been chosen as part of the color guard in Mexico. She felt that this was a result of not being able to concentrate because she was distracted by the thought of her father.

Another major change she mentioned was the time she is now able to spend with friends. Esperanza feels her responsibilities at home do not allow her to spend the amount of time with her friends at school the way she used to. Esperanza feels that the friends she still has help her to feel comfortable at her current school. She feels she can ask her friends for help and advice. This year Esperanza is entering her senior year of high school. When she and her friends get together now, the conversations deal mostly with plans after high school. Talking about life after high school can lead Esperanza to make painful comparisons:
I have a really close friend and sometimes we talk about what college she is going to and how she is going to have so much fun and how her parents are going to help her out and I can’t do that…(begins to sob uncontrollably).

The interview ended soon after this comment. She was visibly shaken by the thought of wanting to attend university but not having the financial opportunities her friends have.

Miguel feels that since returning to the United States, he has begun surrounding himself with more academically driven students. His mother disagrees. She admits to not liking most of Miguel’s and some of Esperanza’s friends. As much as she dislikes them however, she feels that their choice of friends is beyond her control. Mrs. Santos admits that she does not know them very well because of the language barrier, but regardless of that does not like them. “I don’t know English so I cannot talk to them and get to know them but sometimes you don’t need to speak the same language, you can just tell how a person is by the way they act.”

Their mother she also does not like their choice in dating. She sees dating as a distraction and potentially detrimental to her children’s future. “I don’t think my children drink, or do drugs. The only vice is their boyfriend or girlfriend, Esperanza especially. I tell her that if she gets married young she should still try to go to college”.

**Information about University**

Miguel and Esperanza both mentioned that no one in their immediate or extended family has ever been to college. Furthermore, they could not name any close friends who have attended a university. Miguel says the reason he has never heard of his friends going to college is because they are Latino/a. Both he and Esperanza reported knowing about college mostly via Erudición.

Erudición organizes several campus tours and university information sessions throughout the year. I was able to attend one of the university recruitment fairs at one of their school sites.
Universities from all over Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and even Illinois were present. I saw Miguel there but Esperanza was unable to go because she was working. Miguel was walking around with a group of friends, from booth to booth. I walked up to him after he visited several booths and asked him if he saw anything that interested him. He replied by saying that some schools “look cool” but he was just looking. Miguel mentioned that he has gone on several campus tours.

At the time of our interview, Esperanza had not gone on any campus tours. She said she wanted to very much, but had never had the chance. She has however begun working with Ms. Pira to find out more about attending college. The first time she and I met, Esperanza was in Ms. Pira’s classroom. She visited her after class to ask her for help with the financial aid application. That evening I observed Ms. Pira working with Esperanza one on one, searching several websites to find out more about financial aid. Once their meeting concluded, Ms. Pira told me that was the first time they looked at the university application process. Their meeting came about because Esperanza asked her son’s friend for help applying to universities. “Recently, Faith came to me and said that Esperanza wanted help looking at colleges. She asked her about the process and Faith told her to talk to me.” When I asked Esperanza’s mother how she feels about Ms. Pira’s involvement, she said that she feels that if she is ever taken away, people like Ms. Pira will take care of her daughter and make sure she continues school.

Post-Secondary School Aspirations

Esperanza wants to attend university to become a nurse. She likes to take care of people and she feels she is especially good at taking care of babies. She enjoyed taking care of her nieces when they were younger. Esperanza has shared this goal with her mother. My interview with Esperanza’s mother was often times very emotional. Her eyes would water and she cried on several occasions. During our conversation about Esperanza’s future however, she smiled
constantly. “One day, she came up to me and said that she wants to be a nurse so that she can take care of me when I’m a little old lady (laughing).”

Esperanza sees her mother as supportive of her goal of studying to become a nurse. She feels that her mother gives her more freedom to go to certain places if the trip is school related. Even though Esperanza’s mother is supportive of her education, she admits that she is not very active in their school. Mrs. Santos feels that some of factors that prevent her from participating are her lack of experience with formal schooling and her hectic work schedule. Her biggest hesitance however is her lack of English. Ms. Pira noticed Mrs. Santos lack of participation at school. She feels that their mother’s absence at school functions does not reflect her dedication to her children’s education. “I don’t speak Spanish, so I haven’t really talked to her but the fact that she sends her kids to our night program, especially in the summer, says a lot about what she wants for them.”

Miguel is currently in his junior year of high school. He has also expressed some interest in going to university but is undecided about what he wants to study. Miguel would first like to join the military before attending university. He sees the navy as an opportunity to help him pay for his studies and help out his family. His mother however understands the military as an expense for the family and is unsure about his decision. She mentioned that he has also expressed interest in working straight out of high school:

He talks me about joining the military and I tell him that’s a lot of money, and we don’t have the money for that kind of thing. He has also told he wants to graduate and get a job to save up money to help out and then go to college. I tell him ‘No son! Don’t waste time, just go straight to college’.
Their mother wants both children to attend college. For Miguel the military is a stepping-stone for achieving that goal. His mother however sees it is a distraction. She prefers that her children attend college immediately after graduating high school.

**Motivation**

Miguel and Esperanza feel their motivation to attend college was strengthened after the deportation of their father. Miguel feels that it is his responsibility to take care of his family. He feels more motivated to attend college now because he believes that if he graduates with a university degree then that will help him get a better paying job and increase his chances of bringing his father back to the United States. I asked Miguel where he heard that educated people with U.S. citizenship (papers) could petition to fix their parent’s immigration status. He replied that he had heard it from his 8th grade English teacher and that it remained with him ever since.

Esperanza’s motivations to go to college also increased after her father’s deportation. Much like her brother, she views going to college is a way of helping her family. For her, graduating from college is also way of showing appreciation for her parent’s sacrifices. “I’m trying my hardest to get to college. It used to be dad sacrificing and mom sacrificing so that we could have everything. Now, I look at it like I have to sacrifice to help them out.” She has not always been so motivated to attend college. She recalls that in junior high school she was not concerned with getting failing grades. Esperanza’s mother has noticed this motivation. She has always seen Esperanza as a good student but now she feels Esperanza is more motivated to attend college in hopes of help out the family in the future. Additionally, she feels that an even bigger motivator for Esperanza is her desire to be more successful than her sisters:
She also wants to be successful so she does not end up like her sisters. Both sisters were good students also but they ended up starting a family at a very young age. She saw how difficult that was and told me she doesn’t want to be like them.

Ms. Pira also mentioned Esperanza’s sisters as a big part of her motivation. “She has told me she doesn’t want to be like her sisters, she wants to graduate from high school and more. She doesn’t want children as a teenager.”

After returning to the United States, the family went through many changes and hardships. Miguel and Esperanza feel they have taken on more responsibilities and begun contributing financially. Outside of the home, the children fear their mother while driving will be identified and subsequently deported. At school, they are performing relatively well and aim to continue doing so in hopes of attending college. They both see a university degree as a way to acquire a well paying job that will allow them to take care of their family and possibly reunite them in the future.

Sandra

Sandra is a 15-year-old girl who lives in Lejos, a small town in Northwest Ohio. She and her 12-year brother Abel live with their mother, Mrs. Cardenas. Sandra and Abel were born and raised in Lejos. Mrs. Cardenas is Honduran and Mrs. Cardenas is Guatemalan. Her mother is in the United States with a temporary asylum permit called Temporary Protection Status (TPS). Her father was deported three years ago.

Life Pre Deportation

The first section features the family’s immigration to Ohio, the family’s home environment, and children’s experience at school prior to the deportation of their father.


**Immigrating**

Sandra’s parents immigrated to the United States in the early 1990’s asking for political asylum. Mrs. Cardenas is from Honduras. She worked as a bookkeeper for a supply company in Honduras before leaving the political unrest in her country. She received her bookkeeping diploma from a technical college a few years before immigrating. A faith-based immigration Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Lejos, Ohio facilitated her TPS application to live in the United States. The TPS acts as a temporary asylum permit that must be renewed every two years. The NGO also arranged for Sandra’s mother to live and work at a local convent.

Sandra’s father, Mr. Cardenas is from Guatemala. As a teenager, he worked for a state bus company that was under pressure to unionize. He was threatened and stalked by union members pressuring him to join the union. At the age of 16, union members threatened to kill him if he did not join. After the death threat, he left Guatemala in hopes of immigrating to Canada. The same faith based NGO in Lejos assisted him with his application. They arranged for him to stay in a convent associated with the NGO for a few weeks before immigrating to Canada. He lived and worked in Canada for three years until he received notice that his Canadian asylum was denied. He returned to Lejos and began an asylum application in the U.S. He also lived and worked in the convent.

Sandra’s mother and father met in the convent. Mrs. Cardenas has fond memories of their courtship. “It was a beautiful love story. He was the first person I saw in Ohio. The sisters sent him to pick me up from the bus station. We would see each other at work and afterwards we rode around on our bicycles.” Sister Patience, a nun living at the convent who has known the family since they immigrated to Ohio, recalls that courtship. “It wasn’t a very well kept secret (laughing). They would spend all their free time together. Theirs has been the only wedding
ceremony we had in our convent dining room.” Soon after the couple was married, they moved out of the convent and into a small apartment. Sandra’s father began working at a food manufacturing plant during the day. In the evenings, he attended night school to learn English and receive his GED diploma.

**Home Environment**

Sister Patience, Sandra, and Mrs. Cardenas all described the family’s early life in Lejos, Ohio as typical and joyful. Sister Patience describes the family as “a typical American family, well adjusted to the culture, very hardworking, and wanted the best for their kids”. She recalls Mr. Cardenas excitement when he became a father. “Sandra’s father doted on those kids. He was just elated when they had them. His family meant everything to him. He wanted to see them have things that he didn’t have as a kid.” Sandra’s mother also recalls their home environment as very happy and joyful. Mr. Cardenas loved spending time with their children. According to her, he would take them to play in the park almost daily. Sandra has similar memories of her father’s playfulness. “He would wake us up in the silliest way. He is very silly with us and he liked to be playful. He would take us to the park or we would take the dog on a walk, just fun family activities.”

Economically, the family was doing well. Both of Sandra’s parents worked at the food processing plant. Her mother worked the afternoon shift and her father was promoted to supervisor of the day shift. Soon after the promotion, her parents bought the family home they live in now. During the interview, Mrs. Cardenas proudly said, “We bought our house the right way, with hard work. All the paperwork is in order, we never cut any corners.” Sandra does not recall worrying about much during that time in her life. She thought of her family as average. “We were just average, middle class, like everyone else here. We always had money.”
Sandra’s mother also does not recall worrying about the family’s finances. She felt that between her and her husband they earned enough for the family. Mr. Cardenas would take care of paying the bills and any other paperwork that required knowing English. Sandra’s mother does not feel very comfortable speaking English. She describes her English as basic but functional. Their home was a bilingual household. Sandra’s father would speak to them in English and her mother in Spanish.

**Parent’s Expectations**

Sandra’s parents have very high expectations for their children at school. Sister Patience met Mr. Cardenas when he was a teenager and remembers his own academic motivation. He would talk to her about wanting his children to have the education he never had. “He did not go beyond the 6th grade but he was very good at studying. He got this GED in English! He always talked to his kids about education being important and wanting them to have a good education.” Mrs. Cardenas also talked to her children about the importance of a good education. Early on, she told them she expected them to do well in school because she did not want them to work in manual labor like she did. She still shows them her own hands as a physical example of her struggle.

In addition to Sandra’s parents using their own life’s struggles to set an example for her, they also try to motivate her by telling her that if she does well in school, she would be the first person in her family to graduate high school. Sandra expresses excitement about that possibility. “No one from my family in Guatemala or Honduras has graduated, so I would be the first. I am very excited about that!” Her parents also expect her to be the first in the family to attend college. “They’ve always talked about college. Since like the fifth grade ‘we want you to go to college and be successful. You could be a lawyer or doctor but you need to go to college’.”
Sandra’s teachers have also told her they expect her to attend college. As far back as she can remember, Sandra has heard her both parents and teachers talk about their expectations for her to attend college.

**School Environment**

Sandra described herself during the time period before her father’s deportation as “Just your typical immature girl, very energetic. Just nice and sweet, regular child. I would always want to help with things. Help out all my teachers.” She feels that she was very active in school and enjoyed participating in various activities. Her mother jokes that keeping up with her school activities was a full time job “She was in band, she was in language clubs, she stayed afterschool to help with different things, all that and she still got good grades. She’s very gifted”.

Sandra’s father would usually accompany her to all her various activities. Sister Patience remembers Sandra’s parents visiting her and boasting about her various activities and high grades. “They would come in and talk to me and it seemed that Sandra did very well, she’s very active. From what I knew she got mostly A’s and B’s. Abel had a harder time but he was passing.” Sandra also considered herself a good student. Her favorite subject was Science because she did various experiments in class that she found fun. She says she would get mostly A’s and B’s in her classes.

Sandra has grown up in a very small town with a large majority White-Anglo population. Mrs. Cardenas says they are the only non-white family in their neighborhood. Sandra’s school reflects the town’s majority population. Even though Sandra’s school was not very diverse, she does not remember ever feeling discriminated against or unable to make friends. “It is not very diverse in my school but there are some people like me, but mostly everyone is white. Everyone gets along though. Plus, I am very outgoing; I like to make new friends.”
Sandra’s parents immigrated to the United States because of persecution in their home countries. With the help of a faith based NGO they established a peaceful life in a small town in Northwest, Ohio. Sandra does not recall worrying about anything growing up. The family was doing well economically and Sandra was doing well in school. She was active in various activities and maintained high grades.

**Father’s Arrest and Deportation**

In 2009, a Fugitive Operations Team (FOT) arrested Sandra’s father in their home. After the arrest, he was transferred to different immigration detention centers before being deported to Guatemala days later. This section chronicles and explores the unexpected arrest of Mr. Cardenas.

**Arrest**

In 2009, an FOT was sent to arrest Sandra’s father because he had failed to comply with a 1994 order of deportation. Sister Patience was the person in charge of helping Mr. Cardenas with his asylum case. She does claim that she never received a notice from the government that Mr. Cardenas had been ordered deported.

Sandra’s father had no criminal record. He had a valid social security card and work permit. Sandra’s mother recalls that at work, her husband never had any problems with his work permit or social security. Additionally, she and her husband filed their income taxes yearly, bought two cars and a home and never once had a problem with his paperwork. She was told several times that an asylum process could take years to resolve and it was their thinking that if his work permit and social security were still valid then his case was still under revision.

Mrs. Cardenas remembers an unusual series of events before the arrest of her husband.
Two weeks before the arrest of her husband, Abel noticed a strange car parked outside of their home. The car stayed there for several minutes then drove away. Several days after, the same car returned and two men knocked on their door. Sandra’s father opened the door and the men asked him if his mother was home. He was confused by the request. Mrs. Cardenas walked up next to her husband and the two men told her they were there to take pictures of her to update her immigration file. She agreed. The men entered the home. One of them took profile photos of her while the other looked around the house. Sandra’s mother had been renewing her TPS permit every two years since she arrived in the United States. With each permit she had to submit photographs. She thought this was a strange request, but did not suspect anything was out of the ordinary. Two weeks later, the same men returned to the house to arrest her husband.

According to Mrs. Cardenas, the same two officers returned to the family’s home early on a Sunday morning. She opened the door for them. They said they were there for her husband. One of the officers yelled at her, ordering her to find her husband. She went upstairs to get him. Her children had been woken up and were waiting downstairs. Her husband walked downstairs and the men arrested him in front of his children. They informed him that he was being arrested for not leaving the country after his deportation order. They handcuffed him and took him into custody. Sandra recalls one of the officers yelled at her and her brother to stay put and be quiet during the arrest. “When they handcuffed my dad, I ran and gave him a kiss. He said ‘everything will be okay’. I didn’t understand what was going on. I was crying.”

Sandra was confused because her parents had always told her their children that they were in the U.S. as residents. When Sandra would ask them how they came into the country, they would simply respond by saying “we flew here.” Sandra’s mother actively avoided details. She did not want to worry her children by telling them that she had to renew her permit every two
years and that their father had not received notice on his asylum claim. Their plan was to tell them the entire story after they received their residency.

**Detention and Deportation**

After his arrest, Sandra’s father was taken to an immigration detention center in eastern Ohio. A few days later, he was transferred to the immigration detention center in Lejos, Ohio. As soon as Sister Patience was notified, she helped organize a protest rally for Sandra’s father. They wrote a letter to Senator Brown’s office, and held a protest and a prayer vigil at the detention center where Sandra’s Father was held.

Sandra’s father was not eligible to plead his case in front of an immigration judge because he was classified as a fugitive alien. People classified as fugitive aliens are held at a detention center only until an Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) repatriation flight can be found to their home country. Nearly two weeks after his arrest, Sandra’s father was placed on a flight to Guatemala. Sandra’s mother complained about the conditions of her husband’s detention and repatriation.

Sandra herself remembers the day she received news her father was deported. She was in class when she heard an announcement calling her to the principal’s office. She says she had a premonition that day she would receive bad news regarding her father. When Sandra arrived home that day she wrote a letter to President Obama asking him why he would allow the deportation of someone like her father. In the letter, she wrote that her father had worked hard his entire life and never committed any crimes, but was arrested and forced to leave the country like a criminal.

The arrest and deportation of Sandra’s father in 2009 came as a shock to the entire family, the children especially. Sandra’s parents thought his case was still under review and
Sandra was told her parents were residents of the United States. Her parents neglected to tell her that her mother was living in the U.S. with a provisional permit and her father was still awaiting news on his case. Sister Patience tried to help by organizing a vigil for the detention of Sandra’s father. Soon after his arrest, Mr. Cardenas was deported to Guatemala, a country he fled when he was 16 years old.

**Life after Deportation**

This section explores the numerous issues the family faced at home and at the children’s school after the unexpected arrest and deportation of Mr. Cardenas.

**Behavior**

The family has noticed different changes in each other’s behavior since the deportation of Sandra’s father. Sandra’s mother noticed a stark difference in Sandra’s temper. She refers to her daughter’s temper as explosive. “Sometimes out of the blue she will get mad at me. She will become hysterical and start yelling at me and I can’t control her. It’s only with me though.” Sandra’s mother feels that she is the primary target of her daughter’s dramatic mood swings.

Sandra started exhibiting behavioral changes soon after her father was arrested. The first Christmas after her father was deported, the family went to mass and Sandra had what her mother refers to as a “nervous fit”. According to Mrs. Cardenas, Sandra was sitting in church and suddenly began to cry uncontrollably. Her crying was so uncontainable that she had to be taken to the emergency room because she began to have trouble breathing. The doctors at the emergency room gave her a sedative and referred her to a counseling center. Sister Patience arranged counseling for the children. The counseling lasted for several months.

Sister Patience is aware of Sandra’s temper. She feels that Sandra shows a lot of resentment towards her mother. “The children were surprised and angry that their parents hadn’t
told them. I think because Sandra’s Mother was the one that was left here, that resentment has played itself as if her mother could have somehow, someway done something.” She has also noticed Abel has begun clinging to his mother.

In her interview, Sandra mentioned having emotional breakdowns, but also mentioned that she was not the only one in her family. Her mother has them as well. She feels her mother is always stressed out and easily upset. When her mother gets upset, she will hold her chest and complain of chest pains. Sandra is concerned that her mother’s temper could lead to a medical condition like a stroke.

**Home Environment**

Since her father was deported three years ago, Sandra’s home environment has changed considerably. Sandra’s mother reached out to Sister Patience and the other nuns at the convent for help with childcare. The first summer after the deportation, while their mother was working, Sandra and Abel spent their evenings at the convent. Sister Patience arranged for some activities. “We had sisters assigned to do both educational and play activities all summer. We also asked different families from our congregation who had kids to help a little bit so they could play with other kids.”

The arrangement at the convent was only temporary. Sandra now stays home with Abel for most of the day while her mother goes to work. Sandra calls the change at home “drastic”. She is constantly reminded of her father’s absence. The first reminder comes as soon as she wakes up because she he does not wake her up in the playful manner she was used to. She now waits for his morning call on Skype, the web based video conferencing program.

In addition to not being able to see her father, Sandra also feels that the deportation has changed how often she sees her mother. Sandra’s mother is constantly working to support the
family. She arrives home late into the evenings. To make ends meet, her mother works a full
time job, a part time job, and has a stand at the town’s flea market on Sundays. Her only free
time is on Sunday afternoons. When she is home, Sandra feels her mother is too tired to spend
time with them. Sandra blames her mother’s hectic schedule for not allowing the family to spend
time together like they once did. Mrs. Cardenas herself admits to not having enough energy after
her long day to spend more time with her children. “They ask me to take them out to the park
like their dad used to. We go every now and then but I just don’t have the time or energy.”

Sandra and Abel stay home alone until their mother gets out of work at 11:00 p.m. She
calls home during her work breaks and Sandra’s father also calls them again in the evening. He
calls on average twice a day. While they are at home, Sandra takes care of her younger brother.
She makes sure he eats, does his homework and goes to bed at 10:00 p.m. She will stay up until
her mother arrives home. When their mother is not home, Sandra likes to play loud music in the
house. She says it keeps her distracted and lifts the mood in the house.

**New Responsibilities/Maturity**

Sandra’s father’s deportation has led her to take on new responsibilities. Prior to their
father’s deportation, Sandra and her brother were rarely home alone. Now, she is in charge of the
house and cares for younger brother while their mother is working. Sister Patience feels Sandra
has handled the new responsibilities well and has matured quickly.

The day after our interview, Sandra and Abel flew to Guatemala to visit their father.
Since their father’s deportation, the Sisters at the Lejos convent have sponsored a yearly summer
trip for a Sandra and Abel. This was the first time they were traveling without a chaperon.
Sandra was nervous because she knew she would be in charge of her brother. Mrs. Cardenas
feels her daughter has matured rapidly. She feels that their current situation has presented her
with some hardships she did not know before and that their trips to Guatemala have exposed them to other people’s hardships and a variety of different situations.

Sandra herself feels that she has had to take on new responsibilities and has matured quicker than her friends. “I feel I have had to grow up a lot faster, I compare myself to my friends and think they are still very immature. I just understand things a lot better now, like, I know I can’t get everything I want.” Since the deportation, the family does not have the economic freedom they once did. Sandra feels that the family’s new economic situation has helped her mature.

Financial Concerns

A reoccurring topic of conversation during our interviews was the financial concerns the family is facing since Sandra’s father was deported. Mrs. Cardenas feels that the financial responsibilities of the home rest solely on her. Her husband cannot contribute economically because his salary in Guatemala is only enough to cover his expenses.

Sister Patience is aware of the economic hardships in the home and has offered to help the family with groceries and other necessities. Sister Patience has also waived many of the fees related to her TPS paperwork in hopes of lessening Sandra’s financial burden. When Sandra’s father lived with them, the parents’ combined income was enough to cover all of the family’s expenses. They had enough disposable income to take frequent shopping trips and visit amusement parks on a regular basis.

For Sandra, the family’s economic situation has contributed to the stark change in her family’s routine and limited the luxuries she was once accustomed to. Sandra’s mother can only afford to buy the family second hand clothes. This has been a big embarrassment for her daughter, who was accustomed to having the same clothes as her friends. She feels guilty that
she can’t pay for the lifestyle her daughter wants. “I can’t even give Sandra $10 to buy pizza with her friends afterschool. She used to always have a little pocket money and now I can’t even give her that.” When she turns 16, Sandra plans on applying for a job at a fast food restaurant. She did not mention feeling pressure from her mother to work, but rather says that she wants to have her own money.

**Community Support**

Several times during the interview Sandra and her mother expressed their gratitude for the support from their community. Mrs. Cardenas says she is grateful to the Sisters of Lejos for their occasional financial support and sponsorship of her children’s trips to Guatemala. Sandra’s school has also helped financially by waiving the fees on some of Sandra’s extra curricular activities.

In her interview, Sandra did not mention financial support from the school, but she did talk about the emotional support her teachers and other people in her neighborhood have offered after hearing about the deportation of her father. “Some of our neighbors come up to my mom and they’ll say ‘oh we heard about your story we are very sorry. If you need anything, or need someone to talk to’ things like that.” According to Sandra, her mother informed all of her middle school teachers about her father’s deportation. Her mother however has not felt comfortable enough to disclose that information with her high school teachers.

Sandra herself is very selective whom she tells about her father. She does not disclose this information to many people, especially since she entered high school. “I don’t tell people my dad was deported. I say they are separated or divorced. Not all my friends know. They wouldn’t understand at all because their parents live in the U.S. Only like four people know my actual story.”
Even though Sandra feels her community has been supportive, she is still secretive about her father’s deportation. She feels that even friends would not understand her situation because their parents are U.S. citizens. Sister Patience has heard Sandra’s partial disclosure of her father’s absence. She believes that revealing he was deported might embarrass her. “I have interpreted from some of her remarks that it was a real embarrassment for her. She did want her friends to know that he was taken off to jail and sent out of the country.”

School Environment/Academic Performance

At the time of the interview, Sandra was entering her second year of high school and was still getting accustomed to life at her new school. She feels the transition from middle school to high school was challenging. The student population at her high school is almost twice what it was in her middle school. Her high school has the same ethnic makeup as middle school. She feels comfortable in high school but at times feels overwhelmed by the amount of class work and not knowing all her teachers the way she knew her middle school teachers.

Before entering middle school, Sandra considered herself an A, B student. Her grades have since dropped. “Now, I’m more of a high C +, low B student, I do get A’s every now and then. I’m not the type of person that gets F’s or D’s constantly, but sometimes it just happens.” Sister Patience noticed her decline in grades but feels they are improving. According to her, the steepest drop in Sandra’s grades came immediately after her father was arrested. She feels Sandra has good determination and will improve her grades enough to graduate with a grade point average that will allow her to enter college.

Sandra’s mother has not noticed a change in her daughter’s grades and says that she continues to receive recognition for her hard work at school. According to Sandra, her mother does not understand the grading system at school very well. Sandra feels that her father has a
better understanding of the school system in the United States. She has given him her password for her online report card. “I gave my dad my password to my progress book so he can log in and look at my grades. He checks them every day and tells me to pick them up.”

During most of our interview Sandra had a very relaxed demeanor. The only time she choked up was when I asked follow up question regarding experience of transitioning from middle school to high school. “This is when I most need him, soon I will be driving. I am getting older. This is the time when I really need him the most.” We changed topics and talked about activities she enjoys doing. Sandra does not feel that her interest in school activities has changed. She continues to enjoy playing in the school’s band. A notable difference for her however is that because her parents cannot not attend the events, she does not feel their support like she once did; “for me, the new normal is doing these things without my parents.” She now relies more heavily on her friends and their parents for transportation to and from her activities.

**Friendships/ Post-secondary Aspirations**

Some of Sandra’s friends from middle school are attending the same high school as her. Those are the only friends that know about her father’s deportation. She tells the friends she made in high school that her parents divorced. She feels this story allows her friends to relate with her experience because most of her friends are from families that are divorced:

When they tell me ‘I miss my dad’, I tell them ‘I miss my dad too’ but you know their story is obviously different. Some had a dad that was very mean to the mom. I can’t relate to that but we can relate to not having our dads with us.

Sandra and her friends talk about a variety of topics. They have begun talking about their lives after high school. All her friends want to attend to college but they prefer to attend a local community college or a university near by. She differs in her opinion. She wants to go to a large
city to attend college. Sandra likes the idea of attending college in a city but she does not want to leave Ohio. Recently she has decided that she wants to go to school to become a fashion designer. She wants to move from her town to pursue her career but does not want to move too far away from her family.

Sandra’s life changed in many ways after her father was deported. Sandra experienced behavioral changes. She is often temperamental and lashes out at her mother. Her mother is unable to spend a lot of time with her children now. She started working long hours to economically support the family. Sandra has taken on more responsibilities at home because her mother is away from the house for most of the day. Sandra’s grades have dropped slightly but she continues to be active in school. She aspires to attend university in a large city in Ohio and study fashion design.

Paula

Paula is a 19-year-old living in Emma, Ohio. She is currently living with her 24-year-old sister, Irene, who is the legal guardian of their 10 and 12 year-old siblings. Paula’s parents are natives of Mexico. Paula’s mother was deported in 2006 and her father in 2008. We met early morning at a McDonald’s restaurant in Emma, OH. Arranging an interview time with them was challenging because of their hectic work schedules. They asked to be interviewed together.

Life Pre Deportation

This section of their case study explores their parent’s journey to the United States and different aspects of the family’s life before the deportation of their parents.

Immigrating

Paula and Irene’s parents are natives of Mexico. They both come from very poor families. Paula’s mother is originally from Mexico, City. After middle school, she dropped out to
start working. Their father never went to school. He was from a poor family that did not have the opportunity to send any of their children to school. Paula remembers hearing her father often talk about the work he did at a young age. “My dad was real poor. He would pick up the trash at different people’s houses and carry it very far away, just so he could get some money to eat.”

Their parents met and started a family when they were still teenagers.

Soon after Irene was born, her father moved to the United States to find work. Irene and Paula’s maternal grandfather was living in California and offered to host Paula’s father if he wanted to find work in the United States. Irene was two years old when her father left Mexico to find work in California. For the two years he was away from his family, he worked as a migrant farm laborer in the summer and at factories during the rest of the year. After two years, he sent for his wife and daughter, Irene, to join him.

Irene and her parents entered the country as unauthorized immigrants, but Irene’s maternal grandfather was a naturalized U.S. citizen. Neither Irene nor Paula knows how he became a U.S. citizen. However, because he was a citizen, he was able to petition for his daughter and son in law to acquire U.S. residency. The petition gave them a temporary, but renewable work permit that allowed them to work in the country, pending the outcome of their petition. If they were granted residency then they could petition for their first-born Irene.

**Life in Emma, Ohio**

The summer after they were reunited, the family traveled to Northwest Ohio to work in the fields. When the farming season ended, Irene’s father was hired at a factory in Emma, Ohio. The family decided to settle in the area. Soon after the family settled in Emma, Paula was born. The family bought a house near the countryside. Paula has fond memories of their old home. She enjoyed playing in the open space of their front and back yard. “I loved that house. We would sit
in the big front yard, or backyard, all of us together. We would put music on so loud and we would all start dancing. Everything seemed so perfect.” Irene remembers her father worked long hours. He was gone most of the day, so their mother was a central part of her daily routine. “My mom would walk us to the bus stop and she would be there when we got back. My sister and I would help my mom prepare dinner, we would all cook together.” Irene and Paula shared fond memories of their time together with their mother. They did not talk much about their home environment outside of the time they shared with her.

**Academic Motivation/ Parent’s Expectations**

Irene and Paula went to a private elementary and middle school. When asked to describe their experience in school, Paula described it as “just normal” and Irene as “nothing out of the ordinary.” Paula did not feel she was a very good student. For her, school revolved mostly around meeting her friends. Irene feels that she was more academically inclined. She felt she was good at math. She wanted to be an accountant and early in her high school began taking accounting classes. Irene was attending school as an unauthorized immigrant, but did not feel that deterred her from planning to pursue a post-secondary education. She was hopeful that her immigration status would be resolved by the time she graduated high school so that she could attend college, but that never happened.

Paula and Irene parents’ dream was to have their children attend college. Paula remembers their father constantly reminding them how lucky they were to be getting an education in the U.S. “When he got home from work, Dad would tell us how lucky we were because he never got the chance to go to school.” Paula however did not mention feeling any pressure from her parents to do well in school. She also never thought about college.
Paula and Irene’s parents were born in Mexico and traveled to the U.S. in search of better economic opportunities for their family. Both Irene and Paula describe their early life in Emma as ordinary, and recall fond memories of their family together in their first home. Paula’s parents often shared stories with their children about their own struggles early in life as a way for their children value their life and education in the United States.

**Parent’s Deportation**

This section explores the deportation of the family’s mother and father. Immigration officials picked up Paula’s mother unexpectedly at her work. She was deported to Mexico later that evening. Paula’s father was deported two years later in a very similar fashion.

**Mother’s Deportation**

Paula and Irene’s mother was deported in 2002. Paula was 13 years old and Irene 18. The deportation of their mother was unexpected. Neither Paula nor Irene mentioned being concerned about immigration enforcement before their mother was deported. Their mother was awaiting news on her residency petition and had a valid work permit that she had renewed several times, the last being two years prior to her deportation. Paula can vividly recall receiving the unexpected news:

> I was in language arts class and the announcements came on. I thought ‘please let it be me, I don’t want to be in this class’. I left class, walked to the office but as soon as I saw my dad like I said ‘no, I want to go back’.

The expression on her father’s face scared Paula. She frantically asked him to tell her the problem. Paula’s father delivered the bad news to her that her mother had been picked up at work by immigration officials and was being deported. “As soon as Dad said that, I froze. Everything seemed to disappeared.” After Paula’s father picked her up from school, they drove to her
younger sibling’s school. Paula remembers her father telling her younger siblings about their mother, but they did not understand. “They were laughing. They thought it was a joke. Then I yelled “Can’t you see mom’s not coming back?” I felt so bad. I got so angry that I didn’t realize what I was doing.”

The family then went together to pick up Irene at work. She remembers getting into the car and seeing everybody crying. When they arrived home, she was left in charge of the family while their father tried reached their immigration attorney. The attorney was unsuccessful at stopping their mother’s deportation. “He went to her office and paid her $400. She didn’t do anything at. It was $400 thrown away, mom was already gone. They picked her up in the morning, and at night she was already in Mexico.” For Irene, the most painful part of that experience was the timing. They had picked up her mother the week after mother’s day and two weeks before Irene was to graduate from high school.

No one in the family was prepared for this event. They did not receive a warning or notice that immigration was looking for their mother. Earlier that morning however, their father was woken by what he thought were police officers knocking on the door. He was working the night shift at the factory and had just fallen asleep when he heard them knocking. The officers went to their home with the pretext that they were looking for someone suspicious. Irene recalls her father told them that he hadn’t seen anything out of the ordinary. “We lived in a good neighborhood. He said the guy then asked ‘who lives here? And my dad said ‘me, my wife and kids”. The officers then asked him where his wife worked. He told them and they thanked him for his cooperation. Later that afternoon, he received a call from his wife informing him that immigration officials arrested her at work.
Irene says that according to the family’s immigration attorney, the immigration officers were sent to pick up her mother because she failed to comply with a deportation order. When the attorney contacted immigration officials regarding the case, she was told her that years earlier her residency petition had been denied and she was ordered to leave the country. Furthermore, the attorney informed the family that if the mother’s petition had been denied then the same could happen to Paula’s father and Irene. The family was confused because they never received her notice of deportation and her work permit had been renewed.

News of their mother’s deportation took the family by surprise. She was picked up from her work in the morning and by the evening she was in Matamoros, Mexico without any money or way of contacting her family. This part of Mexico was unfamiliar to her. A stranger saw her walking out of the Mexican customs office and offered to buy her a ticket out of town. Paula and Irene talk about their gratitude to that stranger but feel shocked and upset that their mother was put in such a potentially dangerous situation.

**Father’s Deportation**

Two years after the deportation of their mother, Paula and Irene’s father was also deported. He was arrested at the factory he had worked at since they moved to Emma. Irene was the first to receive the news. “My dad called my phone. He said ‘mi’ja (daughter of mine) I don’t want you to cry’. I froze. I already knew what he was going to say. My first thought was ‘can I do this alone?’” Paula remembers Irene breaking the news to the rest of her siblings. The family was in disbelief. “For a week after, we looked at the door, waiting for dad to walk in. We knew he wasn’t going to but we still hoped that he was going to walk through that door and say ‘I’m home’ (choking up).
The deportation of Paula’s father was very similar to her mother’s. Immigration officials arrested them both at work for having an outstanding deportation orders. Their father was sent to Mexico two days after his arrest. The deportation of Paula’s father was not as unexpected because the family’s immigration attorney had informed them of this possibility. Regardless, the deportation of both parents created a void for their children who remained in the United States.

Life Post Deportation

This section encompasses different aspects of Paula’s life after both of her parents were deported form the United States. It explores the changes to her home and school environment after the deportation of her parents. It also features her emotional reaction to those changes.

Home Environment After Mother’s Deportation

The family’s home environment changed dramatically after the deportation of their mother. One of the changes was immediate. The day after their mother was deported; Paula took over some of her mother’s responsibilities. “The next morning we had to prepare my little siblings to go to school. Dress them, get them ready, give them food, and take them to the bus stop.” Her mother’s absence resulted in Paula taking on a more motherly role at home. She was now in charge of the house chores and looking after her younger siblings. Irene took on more of the family’s financial responsibilities. Irene began working full time at the same factory as her father. Irene remembers that job was very physically demanding of her. “I started to work at the factory with my dad. I was an 18-year-old girl who only weighed 105 lbs but they had me lifting heavy stuff all day. I would get home at 3:00 a.m. totally exhausted.”

Paula did not see much of her father or sister after their mother was deported. Due to their work schedule, Paula was left home alone to take care of her siblings. She found the experience overwhelming and frightening. “We went from this really nice big house to an
apartment in a side of town we didn’t like. I’m not going to lie, I was really scared.” Paula and Irene’s family was forced to move from their house into an apartment. Even with Irene working full time, the family was unable to make the house payments and thus forced to move into a small apartment in a new neighborhood. Paula found the relocation painful because of all the memories she was leaving behind. “We had memories in every single room and it hurt me to say goodbye it was very drastic change.” The family’s daily routine and home environment changed after their mother was deported. Paula recalls enjoying the open space and tranquility of their previous home. Their new apartment did not provide them with that open space or peace of mind.

**Home Environment After Father’s Deportation**

After their father’s deportation, the family’s home environment changed again. Irene was now the family’s only source of income. They could not afford their apartment anymore and moved into the small trailer home where they currently live. Irene feels that their father’s deportation was harder on her because she was left financially responsible of the entire family:

> It was just us. I had to sign for them at school and take them to the doctor and I didn’t how drive, I thought ‘how am I going to get places, the winters here are really bad. What am I going to do?’ It was stressful! All the money that we made we used it towards the bills.

Irene’s best friend moved in with them temporarily and contributed financially. Paula enjoyed having Irene’s friend live with them, she saw her as a supportive mother figure. “It was awesome because it felt like we had kind of like a mom. She joined us in everything we did and was always with us, supporting us.” Paula felt the family’s relocation from the apartment to the trailer home was a positive move. She felt more comfortable in their new neighborhood and enjoying
having a backyard again. This environment reminded her somewhat of their first house. “When we moved there, everything seemed closer to normal. We now have a backyard we share with our neighbors, but everybody is cool. We play kickball there and it’s a lot of fun, kind of reminds us of our house.” After their father was deported, the family relocated for a second time in two years. They moved into a trailer home that was smaller than their previous apartment but felt the area was much safer. Paula enjoys living there because it provides her with a sense of normalcy.

**Fear and Depression**

After their mother was deported, Paula remembers feeling an overwhelming sense of fear. She had trouble sleeping in the apartment they moved to after her mother left. “It was hard for me to sleep there. I’d stay up until my sister came home. I had a lot of nightmares of being left alone or I’d have nightmares someone broke into the house and hurt us.” Paul did not feel safe in that apartment. She had nightmares that someone broke into her home and hurt her family. Her fear worsened after someone actually tried to enter the home. She then became vigilant about checking the locks in their home.

Another fear that arose after her mother’s deportation was the fear of immigration authorities. Paula began to fear that immigration would look for and deport her father and sister. “I was scared that my family was going to be torn apart, that immigration would knock on my door and take my dad. Now I am scared that they might take my sister too. I’m scared and angry.” Paula felt angry at immigration for taking her mother away and feared they would do the same with her father and sister. Two years after her mother was deported, one of her fear materialized and her father was deported. Irene filed another residency petition after her father’s deportation. Her case is still pending; she has her final immigration hearing set for October 2013. Even though Irene has a valid work permit, the sisters worry Irene might be deported without a
warning like her mother. Two weeks before our interview, the post office had lost Irene’s renewed work permit. This is a major concern to them because Irene is responsible for carrying it at all times to indicate she’s allowed to be in the country pending the outcome of her case.

During our interview, Paula mentioned several times that she felt very depressed after her mother’s deportation. She felt her father’s deportation also caused her grief, but the experience of having her mother taken away unexpectedly, triggered a depression and suicidal thoughts:

My mom was the main person in my life. When she left, the suicide thoughts were there. It was a terrible phase. I was going to do it but thought to myself ‘Who is going to take care my siblings?’ I didn’t want to bring more hurt to the family.

Paula says she no longer has suicidal thoughts, but her battle with depression is ongoing. Irene did not talk about Paula’s depression. She only mentioned that the experience of having their mother taken away was “really difficult” for everyone in their house. She admits to being overwhelmed herself by the experience, but drew strength knowing her siblings depended on her.

**School Environment/ Progress Technical School**

Paula was in middle school when her mother was deported. She did not consider herself a very good student before her mother’s deportation but enjoyed the social experience of being around friends and classmates in school. Once her mother was gone, she was no longer as outgoing. Her friends started noticing her change in behavior and wardrobe. “People told me that I started dressing all baggy and acted like I didn’t care. Some friends said that they noticed I never walked in that door smiling like I used to.”

Paula also feels the experience of having her parents deported alienated her from her peers. She did not feel she could talk to anyone about what she was going through. Her language arts teacher noticed her change in behavior and reached out to her. “My language arts teacher
asked if I was okay. I never got to talk to anybody how I felt. It was the first time, I felt alone
because I was the only one going through this in the entire school.” In addition to feeling
alienated, she also feels her added responsibilities at home resulted in her losing many friends:

We drifted apart. I didn’t get to spend as much time with my friends anymore. I didn’t get
to do typical teenager stuff. When school was over, I went home to take care of the house
and of my siblings. I didn’t hang out after school like they did.

In high school, Paula did not mention plans on attending college. She was unsure what she would
do after high school. Paula recalls a conversation during her sophomore year of high school in
which Irene asked her about her plans. Paula did not have any definitive plans and so Irene
suggested that she enroll in Progress, a vocational program at their high school. Paula graduated
high school in 2011 with a high school diploma and a dental hygienist certification.

At the time of our interview, Irene was working at a call center. She had left her job in
the factory. Paula had been out of high school for a year and was working at the local diner to
help support the family. Paula’s home environment underwent a different change after each of
her parents was deported. After her mother was deported, the family moved into a neighborhood
the found unsafe. She developed a fear being victim to a home break in as well as feared her
father and sister would end up deported as well. After her father was deported, they moved again
into a trailer home. At school she felt alienated from her classmates. She felt she was no longer
as sociable as she once was and lost many friendships because of her circumstance. She
graduated high school with a dental hygienist certification but has been unable to find work on
that field in her hometown.
Alex

Alex is a 15-year-old boy who lives in a suburb of Madera, Ohio. He is the oldest of three children. He and his two younger sisters, ages 12 and 9, were all born and raised in Madera. His parents are natives of Mexico. The family had been living in Madera since 1997. His father was deported in the fall of 2012, a month after our initial interview.

Life Pre Deportation

This section features the family’s life in Madera before the father’s detention and subsequent deportation. It explores their parent’s immigration to Northwest Ohio, the family’s home environment, Alex’s behavior at home, at school, and his outlook towards school.

Immigrating /Economic Opportunities

Alex’s parents are natives of Mexico. His father had been traveling to the United States as a temporary migrant worker since he was 16 years old. In 1997, he married his future wife in Mexico. Shortly after they got married, the couple immigrated to the United States in search of better economic opportunities. Alex’s mother, Mrs. Casera explains that her husband found it easier to find work in the United States here than in Mexico. He worked in a restaurant and in the fields during the summer. Originally, the couple intended for both of them to work. However, because Mrs. Casera became pregnant with Alex soon after the moved, her husband decided he should and she should stay at home and care for their son. Alex’s Mother describes Northwest Ohio during the late 1990’s as a place of great economic opportunities. “Then it was very easy to find a job! If you didn’t like your job you could quit and find another one, no problem. My husband was always working. He never had a problem finding a job without papers.”

Both Alex’s mother and father immigrated to the United States as unauthorized immigrants. Mrs. Casera did not see their lack of immigration status as preventing her husband
from finding employment during their first years in Northwest Ohio. Furthermore, she did not fear immigration early on. “When we first moved here we never saw an immigration truck, we felt very safe, and we were free to go anywhere we wanted, not like now.”

**Home Environment/ Children’s Behavior**

Alex’s mother describes her family before the deportation as “an ordinary family.” Their daily routine consisted of her husband going to work early, her children going to school, and she staying home to take care of the house. Alex describes their life before the deportation in a similar manner; “My father worked and my mother stayed home and took care of us, when he got home he’d ask me how my day was.” Alex did not say much during our interview. His answers were very short. He avoided eye contact. His voice was so soft that it often sounded like a whisper. When I asked him to describe himself, he said “Shy I guess. I used to be more outgoing, more social. Right now I really don’t want to talk to people.”

Alex’s mother described him as very energetic and outgoing when he was younger. She remembers that Alex especially enjoyed helping his father around the house. She remembers her husband’s home repairs would quickly become a family affair. “I remember my husband was putting in the new siding and windows and before you knew it, we were all helping. It was a lot work but we enjoyed it.” Alex remembers spending a lot of time with his father when he took the family to the park. “We would go to the park a lot and spend time together. My mom played with my sisters and me and my dad would play basketball. I don’t think he played it before but we had fun.” The family’s home is situated half a mile from a city park across the street from the elementary school. Alex’s parents would often take the family there after the children finished their homework.
School Environment

According to Mrs. Casera, her children enjoyed going to school and did very well as students. She does not recall ever having problems with attendance or low grades. “He’s been a good student since Head Start. I never had problems getting him to school. In the morning he would never tell me he was sleepy or fake being sick, never.” Alex also thought of himself as a good student. He described himself as a hardworking, with an A or B+ average, who was especially good at art and science. His teachers would praise him on his artwork.

The schools he has attended had predominantly White-Anglo students. Alex says that all his friends are white and that in most of his classes he is the only Mexican student. Alex has heard some derogatory comments about his race at school. “Once in class a boy made a joke that my parents were illegals”. He says this is not common and he has never heard anything like it from teachers. Alex’s mother knows about the incident and advised her son to not respond to them and to simply continue focusing on his schoolwork.

Parent’s Expectation/ Academic Aspirations

Mrs. Casera is very proud of her children’s accomplishments at school. She mentioned several times that Alex would bring home certificates of recognition from the school district for his good grades. Her oldest daughter is also a straight-A student and proudly boasts that she has never had a B. She feels her children are taking advantage of an education she herself did not enjoy. “They have a lot of opportunities here; I only finished middle school and then got a license in shorthand. I wanted to continue studying, but my family gave preference to my brothers’ education.” Alex says that from a very young age he heard both of his parents tell him how fortunate he was to grow up in the United States and should make the most out of his education. “They always tell me that I have a lot of opportunities here and I should take
advantage of them. I know my dad wanted to get a degree in engineering”. Alex mentioned that he dreamed about being a mechanical engineer because his father liked that type of engineering profession. His mother recalls Alex would often talk to her about his plans once he became an engineer. “His dream was to study engineering. He would tell his dad ‘when I become an engineer we’ll open up a custom car shop. I’ll design customs cars and you will help me make them’”.

Alex’s mother hoped to motivate her children to do well in school by reminding them of the opportunities they have that she and her husband did not have. She also made it a point to show them successful Latino/as. She often calls the children into the room to watch a segment on Spanish language television called “Orgullo Hispano” Hispanic Pride. “The other day they featured that astronaut who as a boy was a migrant worker. He’s Mexican and president Obama praised him for his hard work and dedication. That’s what I want my children to see.”

Alex grew up in a Spanish speaking home. Alex’s parents have very limited English. His mother says she does not understand much English other than basic greetings and some phrases to ask at parent teacher conferences and doctor’s appointments. She usually takes a dictionary with her for help. She had always felt welcomed at her children’s schools and says she used to be more active at school. She would walk them daily to school and participate during lunch activities. She has stopped going since she noticed a border patrol truck began parking at the city park across the street from her daughter’s school.

**Concerns**

When I asked Alex if he remembers having any concerns growing up, his answer was brief. “No, not really. I just didn’t want my parents to get deported.” He remembers his parents talking to him when he was about 7 years old about their immigration status. “They told me
never to say they weren’t born here, because they might be taken away. We couldn’t go some places or do certain things because they didn’t have permission to be here”. When I asked him to elaborate on what places he was referring to he responded with “just some places.” Alex’s mother remembers talking to her children from a very young age about her and her husband’s immigration status. She does not feel immigration enforcement was a big issue for them until the economic recession of 2008.

Economically speaking, Mrs. Casera felt the family lived comfortably. Her husband had a well-paying job as a mechanic. His job allowed the family to buy a house and two vehicles. I conducted both Alex and his mother’s interview in their home. Their house is located in the suburb of Madera, Ohio. All the houses on their block have the same design. When we agreed to meet, she gave me their address and told me to look for the only house with the truck in the driveway. Parked in their house were two vehicles: a large truck and a hatchback, both with Michigan license plates. She told me that out of all the residents on that block, her husband was the only one who drove a truck in so it made it easy to spot. The license plates were from Michigan because unauthorized immigrants are able to obtain a valid driver’s license and register vehicles in that state.

Alex’s mother recalls that in 2008, their family began experiencing economic hardships. Her husband got laid off from his job in the fall of that year and was unable to find steady employment since. “Once he got laid off all the problems started, all the fighting, all the tension, all the yelling, all of that.” Mrs. Casera feels that their family started experiencing financial and emotional hardships because of her husband’s inability to find employment. In her opinion, the economic recession was to blame for her husband losing his job and his immigration status began preventing him from attaining steady employment.
When her husband found work, it was through a staffing agency. He had acquired a false social security card in order to work. When the sites the agency sent him to saw the discrepancy in his paperwork, they let him go. Some sites would not pay him for the day he worked. After several of these occurrences, the staffing agency called him into their office to discuss his paperwork. He never returned to the agency. He feared that the agency had informed immigration officials about the discrepancy and that he would be detained.

**Detention and Deportation**

This section will talk about the family’s experience with their father’s arrest, detention, and subsequent deportation to Mexico. Mrs. Peña, a caseworker for Advocates for Low Income Families (ALIF) introduced me to Alex’s family. ALIF has helped the family with short-term economic assistance since Alex’s father was arrested. When I first met Mrs. Peña, she informed me that Alex’s father had already been deported. Alex was my first interview for this case. Thus, I interviewed him thinking that his father had already been sent to Mexico. Alex answered my questions in the past tense with brief and sometimes vague responses.

Later that day, when I interviewed his mother, she corrected me and told me her husband had not been deported. He was currently in an immigration detention center awaiting his final court hearing which was scheduled a month after our interview. I apologized for the misunderstanding. I told her I was informed that her husband had already been deported to Mexico and that during my interview with Alex; he spoke about his father as if he had already been deported. She said that their immigration attorney did not have high hopes for his case.

**Arrest and Detention**

My conversation with Alex regarding the detention of his father was short and his answers were not very clear. When I asked him when his father was deported, he answered, “I
don’t remember”. I then asked him if it was recent, his response was “A while back, my mom told me he got picked up. We don’t have money for a lawyer, so we’ll have to move.”

According to Mrs. Casera, her husband was arrested on domestic disturbance charges. She says her husband was upset over the family’s finances and took it out on Alex, slapping him across the face. She called the police. Police officers entered their home and arrested Alex’s father. Mrs. Casera decided not press charges on her husband, but during the booking process his fingerprints were checked for immigration status. He was identified as unauthorized, which prevented him from being released. While being booked, police officers also found a false social security card in her husband’s wallet. The discovery of the false social security card resulted in the state pressing charges for identity theft. He pleaded guilty to a false social security card and under the conviction of identity theft was sentenced to a year in prison; he served six months.

After completing his jail sentence, he was moved to an immigration detention center in Lejos, a small town in Northwest Ohio. This detention center is located less than an hour from the family’s home. Several days after he was placed there, he was unexpectedly transferred to another detention center in eastern Ohio. The distance and cost of travel prevented the family from visiting their father. During the four months of his immigration detention the only communication they had was through telephone. Alex’s father was allowed to call collect from the detention center. He would call the family on a regular basis.

Concerns/ Academic Motivation

According to Alex’s mother, the economic hardships that began when her husband was laid off from work worsened after his arrest and detention. At the time of our interview the family’s house was about to be foreclosed on because they had failed to make the mortgage payments for the last three months. Mrs. Casera was unsure about their future in Ohio. “I don’t
know whether to sell our cars to make the mortgage payment but if my husband gets deported, that money could be better used to help us move to Mexico so we don’t go empty handed.”

Alex’s mother was also unable to provide for her children’s school supplies. Mrs. Peña has helped the family apply for short-term financial assistance at ALIF. This assistance however was scheduled to expire. Alex is aware of the economic necessity at home. When asked if he feels his life has changed after his father’s deportation he replied, “Yeah. Right now my family doesn’t have any money. My mom can’t support us by herself because she is also here undocumented. My dad was the only one that worked and I feel, like, useless because I can’t help.” Alex states that these concerns about money and the family’s future have made it harder for him to focus at school. “Everything is confusing because I can’t concentrate. I’m just thinking ‘are going to be able to keep our house? Will we have money for food? How’s my dad’s health, what will happen to us?’ Alex feels no point in learning if he is going to leave to Mexico.

Alex is worried about his father’s health because his father is in need of regular medical supervision. Mrs. Casera informed me that her husband had an accident at work several years ago that resulted in a spinal cord injury. Since the accident, Alex’s father has seen a neurologist every three months to monitor his condition and examine the implant used to treat him. Alex’s father did not want the family to be separated. If deported, he wanted the family to relocate to Mexico with him. Alex was born and raised in Madera, Ohio and even though his parents speak only Spanish in the home, he does not speak the language well. Alex expressed his concern that if they move, he will not be able to understand classes conducted in Spanish.

When I asked him if there are any subjects that he is still able to focus in at school, he replied “No, not really. I just get F’s now”. He does not enjoy art or science anymore and does not think he will even graduate from high school. “I honestly don’t care about school, I don’t
think I’m going to finish.” He comments that his classmates describe him now as “Quiet, because I don’t care about anything anymore. I just keep to myself.” Alex’s mother noticed her son started losing interest in school soon after his father was detained. “It was almost immediate. Right after they told us he might be deported, I noticed his grades started dropping. They dropped a lot. He just keeps saying ‘I don’t care’.” She encourages her son to continue trying his best at school. She tries to reassure him that their situation is only temporary.

Alex’s failing grades also caught the attention of the school’s guidance counselor. The counselor called Alex and his mother into a meeting to discuss his failing grades. Alex translated for his mother during their meeting. He does not remember what the counselor said. Mrs. Casera understood that the counselor was informing her of Alex’s failing grades, but was not able to understand much more than that. She did not tell the counselor about her husband’s arrest or detention. She says that her limited English makes it especially difficult to talk about those issues at her children’s school. Alex also does not feel comfortable talking about his father’s situation to anyone at school. “I keep it from people, my friends too. When somebody at school asks me where he is I just say ‘he’s on vacation.’ It’s just something that stays in the family.”

**Change in Behavior/Fear**

Alex’s mother has noticed a change in Alex’s academic performance, interest in school, and his behavior at home. Since the arrest and detention of her husband, she feels all her children’s behavior has changed dramatically. “They all used to be very happy (crying) and now they’ve changed. Alex has such an explosive temper. He’s very disrespectful towards me now.” Alex himself admits to having changed his behavior towards his mother. “I’m angry all the time; I don’t want to listen to anyone, including my mom. I’m rebelling I guess. I just don’t think
anybody understands how I feel right now.” When asked to elaborate on why he feels angry, he replied, “I guess I’m angriest at how this government treats the people that aren’t from here.”

Alex has told his mother on several occasions that he plans on going to the park where his father used to take him, the park with an immigration truck in the parking lot, to see if immigration detains him. He then plans to sue the government for detaining him, an American citizen. His mother tries to dissuade him, because she feels that would bring negative attention to the family. They are the only Mexican family in the neighborhood, and she feels that if he tried to get detained that immigration would then inquire about her own status. “In jail they asked my husband if I was legal. He couldn’t lie to them or else they would have charged him for lying so he told them I wasn’t. They know I’m here without papers. I constantly worry about that.”

Alex’s mother lives in constant fear of immigration officials arresting her. She does not search for employment, because she feels that currently it is not safe as an authorized immigrant to look for work. Furthermore, she is also afraid that driving will further her exposure her to immigration enforcement. In her opinion, if local police see her driving a car with Michigan license plates, they will pull her over, question her immigration status, and report her to immigration. She relies on family friends and the group rides Unidas offers to take her to buy groceries, attend doctor’s appointments, and any other necessities.

Mrs. Casera fears being deported because she does not want her children to live in Mexico. She fears that the move will disrupt her children’s studies and that they might be victims of violence. “The cartels think that anyone coming from over here has money. The fact that my kids don’t speak Spanish gives them away. I’m afraid they might kidnap them for ransom.” Both Alex and his mother do not leave the house if it is not necessary. He cannot remember the last time he left his house to visit friends. “We don’t go out anymore. I stay here a lot. I need to stay
with my family. I don’t know what could happen. Maybe my mom could get… I don’t know. If something happens, I need to be here.” Alex’s mother adds that in addition to her children not visiting friends, they do not have many visitors at their house either. She describes her children’s behavior as always afraid. They constantly cling to her. “They cling to me like this (clutches her hands). Even in our house, I can’t be alone for one moment. Alex (whispering) also acts scared; he sleeps in my bed. Sometimes, they all pile into bed with me.”

Mrs. Peña has observed similar behavior from the children when the family goes to her office. “The girls told me they can’t sleep at night because they are scared. I’ve seen the way they cling to their mom. The whole time they were here, the youngest doesn’t let go of her mother’s hand.” I conducted the interview with Alex’s mother in the family’s living room. The three children were in the room the entire time. Alex sat across the room at the computer desk, surfing the Internet. Their youngest daughter played with a doll near her mother’s feet and the middle daughter sat close to Alex, watching cartoons on the television. I did not pay much attention to the fact that they never left the room until after she pointed it out. I was at their house for three hours that day.

**Unidas Meetings**

Two weeks after interviewing Alex and his mother, I visited an Unidas meeting and observed them interact with each other and other families. Unidas meets in a large home that has been converted into a community center. The support group’s meetings are set up in three parts.

The first part is a parenting class. An Unidas volunteer takes the children into another room to play while the parenting class is conducted in the living room. The children would periodically run into the dining room to ask their parents for something, but the class went pretty much uninterrupted. The second part of the meeting is a group lunch. The parents, along with
their children, sit in the dining room and eat together. The room was filled with a loud rumble of
silverware and various conversations going on at once. The third part of the meeting has the
parents and children work on an activity together. The activity leader gave the group activity
directions in both Spanish and English. That day, their task was to find different places on a map.
During the group activity, Alex’s mother would speak to her children in Spanish and they all
responded in English. All of the families I observed were very active during this activity.

**Deportation**

On a Sunday, two weeks after my observation at Unidas, I visited another Latino/a
community center in Madera. I saw Alex’s mother sitting in an empty classroom with her
children. I did not expect to see them there. I walked in, said hello, and asked her how everyone
was doing. Her eyes became watery as she got up from her chair. Her children got up also. She
told them “Stay here. I’m just going to the bathroom, I will be right back”. She walked passed
me on her way out of the room and waved me over to where she was standing. She began to cry.
She told me that the family is not doing well but she did not want her children to see her cry.

Three days prior, the immigration judge deported her husband. A family friend drove
them to eastern Ohio to speak at his final hearing, but the judge did not allow any testimony.
Her husband had received a lifetime deportation and was scheduled to arrive in Mexico on
Tuesday. He wanted her to meet him there with the entire family. He told her he didn’t care
about the house or the cars; he wanted her to abandon everything and meet him in Mexico. She
told me she was crying because she felt overwhelmed and did not know what to do. She did not
want to go against her husband’s wishes, but she also did not want to return to Mexico.

Her children had not taken the news well. Her oldest daughter had been sobbing
uncontrollably, begging her to not move the family to Mexico. Alex shut down emotionally and
had not talked much since he heard the verdict. He had prepared a testimony of support on his father’s behalf, but the judge did not allow him to read it. She was most frightened by her nine-year-old daughter’s behavior. She had begun acting like a baby. She started talking gibberish, crawling around the house, and even pulling on her mother’s blouse asking to be breastfeed. Alex’s mother shared this while crying. Soon after we began talking, her daughters ran out to look for their mother. She saw them and walked into the bathroom. When she came out, I offered my sympathies. She thanked me, dried her eyes, and changed the topic of conversation while her daughters were next to her. I have not been able to get in touch with Alex’s family since that meeting.

My goal for this research was to explore the lives of adolescents who had been separated from their parents because of a deportation. Inadvertently, I met a family that was in the process of being separated. At the time of our interview Alex’s father was detained, but he spoke as if he had already been deported. He was angry and felt that he could no longer concentrate on school. Following the arrest, Alex’s mother felt the family was constantly living in fear. Almost a year after he was initially arrested, Alex’s father was deported for life from the United States.

**Experts**

For this research, I conducted interviews with experts in the local Latino/a community of Northwest Ohio along with the families separated by a deportation. The following section is a presentation of the themes that arose from my conversations with Dr. Moreno, director of Erudición, Yvonne, the founder of the Latina support group, Unidas, and Mr. Rodriguez, principal of a high school in Northwest Ohio.
Fear/Behavior Changes

One of the most reoccurring themes during my conversations was the fear of immigration enforcement. Yvonne feels that from a young age, children living in mixed status home are taught to be weary of immigration. She refers to immigration as the “boogey man” for these families. “It is as common for these children to be afraid of the dark as it is for them to be afraid of immigration”. In recent years, she has seen that fear extend to all law enforcement agencies. In her experience, many mixed status homes are teaching their children not to call that police in case of an emergency. Some parents go so far as to teach their children not to talk to police or even make eye contact with officers. She feels that the practice of avoiding of the police is based on the fear that police officers are working with immigration enforcement.

Yvonne states that the fear of the unauthorized parents being indentified arises mostly when the family is driving a vehicle. Dr. Moreno sees similar patterns with the families his organization serves. “Everyone has at least one eye to the road checking to see who is passing by, especially if they see vans”. He says that Latino/a families share information about what towns and cities have a reputation for speed traps and other routine stops that could potentially lead to detection. Additionally, he sees that families in mixed status homes will not travel unless necessary. “The choice to travel becomes more of a choice by necessity. They tend not visit their compadre (friend) just to visit, if they go somewhere it’s because they have to go”. Yvonne mentioned that many of the families in her support group wait for the Unidas group bus rides to run errands because they feel safer that way. According to Yvonne and Dr. Moreno, the fear of detection while driving has also lead many unauthorized parents to travel to the few states that still issue licenses to unauthorized immigrants. Additionally, they are finding it more common for parents, usually the fathers, to buy stolen or fraudulent licenses and social security cards.
Yvonne feels that the deportation of a parent heightens the children’s fear of immigration officials and presents other behavioral changes. In her experience, younger children will cling to their mothers and teenage boys tend to lash out violently. Mr. Rodriguez has also seen varying behavior changes as a result of the deportation. He also believes that many teenagers feel angry. It is his opinion that for some teenagers, that anger combined with subsequent lack of parental supervision leads to dramatic changes in their behavior. He has seen teenagers lose interest in school and begin to engage in risky behavior, such as sexual promiscuity and drug and alcohol experimentation.

Mr. Rodriguez states that other teenagers exhibit a distancing behavior. He believes that this change in behavior is a result of the stress teenagers feel when they need to provide economically for their family. He describes them as “more serious, more distant” because seemingly overnight, their role in the family changes from child to provider. “There are so many decisions that they never dealt with before. How are we going to pay the rent? How are we going to get food? Typical teenagers don’t have to worry about that, but they now do”.

**Disclosure of Deportation/ Lack of Support Groups**

All of my expert participants mention that if a parent is deported, news of the deportation usually reaches them through informal information channels. Dr. Moreno typically gets news of a deportation through one of his teachers or from somebody he trusts in the community. He says, “It’s a topic that is not talked about unless you are in trusted company”. Mr. Rodriguez feels that ethnicity plays a big part in the level of trust needed to disclose that information. “My Hispanic heritage and the fact that I speak Spanish help a lot. It helps me develop a rapport with students which permits me to ask what’s going on in their life”. Yvonne also states that families feel more comfortable talking about issues of deportation with Latino/a teachers or counselors. She
adds that because Latino/a faculty are not very common at schools in the Northwest Ohio region, many children will not disclose a deportation to anyone at their school.

Dr. Moreno reports that there is no standard protocol to follow once a school or organization gets news of a parent’s detention or deportation. According to him, there is no procedure in place because, as publicly funded institutions, they are not supposed to know the immigration status of their students or parents. He feels he is unable to ask for federal funding or local support to create a program for these students, because that might bring unwanted attention to the families affected or it could result in his organization losing federal funding.

Yvonne runs a support group for Latina women. She is aware that the majority of the Unidas group members are unauthorized immigrants. At their meetings, the members often talk about issues of deportation and immigration. However, Yvonne is careful about how she promotes the group because similar to Dr. Moreno, she does not want the program to lose its funding or have her members subject to unwanted attention or harassment.

Mr. Rodriguez finds many similarities between the experience of children with deported parents and those who have an incarcerated parent. He says both experience similar hardships, but because of political reasons, there are no supports groups for children of deported parents:

There are groups that support kids of incarcerated parents but if your dad gets deported, you don’t have that. Having them would mean acknowledging that, as a country, we’re responsible. We deported these ‘illegals’ and now we must to take care of their kids.

None of my expert participants know of any support groups or programs specifically designed to help with the economic and emotional needs of families separated by deportation. The experts say that families will usually rely on extended family and friends to help them adjust. Yvonne believes the reason for this is because unauthorized parents are reluctant to apply for support
from social services. Their reluctance stems from their fear that they will be identified as unauthorized and subsequently deported.

Parents’ Expectations / Mentorships

The experts feel that Latino/a immigrant parents’ expectations for their children to pursue a post-secondary education differ from family to family. Yvonne has noticed that generally, the majority of immigrant Latino/a families in the area value the importance of a high school diploma and expect their children to graduate high school. However, the parents’ expectations for the children to acquire a university degree vary by gender. In her experience, parents will give preference for their sons to attend college. “There is still a mentality that it is not worth investing in their daughter’s education because she will eventually become a housewife”. Furthermore, she feels that many mothers are reluctant to allow their daughters to move out of the home to attend college because they will live in coed dorms, away from their parental supervision.

Mr. Rodriguez believes immigrant Latino/a parents generally have very high expectations for their children to finish high school and attend college. In his opinion, expectations to attend college are important but firsthand knowledge of the college experience is imperative. He feels that in order for a child to attend college, the family must make their expectations clear from an early age, prepare their children academically, and then navigate them through the entire application process:

Until one person breaks through for a family and understands the process, then it is going to be very difficult. Without that firsthand knowledge, all they’re saying is ‘this is where you want to get to but nobody has a map to get there’.
Mr. Rodriguez adds that a mentor, someone outside of the family, can provide the expertise and guidance necessary. It is his opinion that these mentors can be almost anyone in the community, but they must be aware of and sensitive to the needs of the Latino/a families.

Dr. Moreno feels that parents’ expectations play a crucial part in their children attending university. Similar to Mr. Rodriguez, he also feels that expectations fall short without parental support and supervision. In his opinion, immigrant youth are most likely to attend college if their parents create what he calls a “perfect storm” of support. For him, the perfect storm consists of the parents’ expectations that their children will go college, knowledge of their children’s friendships, constant encouragement to perform well in school, and parental participation in their children’s education. He acknowledges that for many immigrant families, the parents’ lack of English prevents them from participating at their children’s school. He feels that that barrier can be overcome if there is a mentor present that can act as an intermediary between the family and the school. He tells the story of a teacher in his program that acted as a mentor for an 11 year old boy who had his father deported. The mentor had communication with the boy’s mother and was active in his school. She would talk to the boy’s mother about what was going on at his school and, with the mother’s permission, advocate on the boy’s behalf at school.

The experts’ knowledge was invaluable to this research. Their expertise showed that immigrant families generally have high academic expectation for their children but Many families lack the knowledge necessary to guide them through their academic endeavors. Additionally, families constantly live with a fear of immigration. After a parent is deported, the children often exhibit behavior changes. The experts believe that support groups that help children cope with the deportation do not exist because petitioning for this type of program might result in a loss of funding or unwanted attention to the families affected.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the effects of parental deportation on the participants’ home and school microsystems, which makeup the mesosystem, and the effects it had on their ability to access social capital beneficial to their educational aspirations. The discussion utilizes Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory and Coleman’s (1988) Social Capital framework as the basis to interpret changes in the participant’s home and school environment. Such changes include a difference in parental interaction, added responsibilities at home, new financial difficulties, relocation, behavioral change as well as loss of friendships and new feelings of alienation.

This research takes an inductive approach to analyzing the participants’ interview data in order to answer the main question: in a mixed legal immigration status home, how does the removal of one or both parents impact a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education? Additionally, the following sub-questions are addressed: 1) How does forced separation affect the socio-emotional development of the adolescent with regard to their post-secondary aspirations? 2) How is the social capital available to the adolescent influenced, if at all, by parental removal? In addressing these questions I employ two frameworks, Coleman’s (1988) framework of social capital and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory framework, as a way to interpret the reciprocal relationship between the adolescents and their environments and to discuss how this relationship could affect their aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education.

Home Environment

All participants experienced a significant change to the microsystem of their home environment after parental deportation. Most participants experienced changes that included less
parental interaction, added responsibilities at home, and financial difficulties. For others, the home environment underwent geographic changes because the family was forced to relocate to another house, another city, or even another country. Additionally, after the deportation most participants and family members exhibited some sort of behavioral change such as dramatic mood swings, depression, fear, and anger, which changed the home environment.

For some participants, the changes in their home environment did not affect the post-secondary goals they had prior to the deportation. For others, the changes at home contributed to the disruption of their previous aspirations. In other instances, the change of environment had the opposite effect and served in part as the motivation to attend college. The following discussion explores the relationship between these various changes in the home and their relation to the adolescents’ post-secondary academic motivations.

**Parental Interaction**

All of the participants reported living with both biological parents prior to the deportation. The parents acted as primary caretakers for their children; none of the families used center-based childcare. In all but one of the cases, both parents worked, but managed their schedules so that one of them could be at home with their children. In Esperanza and Miguel’s case, the parents took them to work if no one could stay at home.

Parental interaction plays a central role in the post-secondary aspirations of their children. According to Coleman (1988), forms of social capital such as: Obligation and Expectations, Information Channels, Norms and Effective Sanctions can be cultivated in the family. Among immigrant families, the Obligations and Expectations form of social capital is commonly cultivated through the parents’ use of a dual frame of reference. Immigrant parents share their own struggles to encourage their children to take advantage of the educational opportunities in
the United States. The children then feel a sense of duty to repay their parents for their struggle. Coleman (1988) maintains that those who have obligations owed to them, in this case immigrant parents, acquire the capital. The immigrant dual frame of reference interprets the capital parents gain as a system of expectations for immigrant children to repay their parents.

The social capital in the family is developed as a result of the various interactions between parents and children. The parents’ presence and type of interactions with their children are important because those are the primary means through which parents transmit their human capital, skills, and productivity. The type of interaction is also important because it can set expectations for the child’s intellectual future. A deportation results in the absence of a parent, which Coleman (1988) refers to as structural deficiency in family social capital. The structural deficiency can interrupt the transmission of knowledge and cultivation of social capital on the part of children.

The first example of this can be seen in Alex’s case. Prior to his father’s detention, Alex spent much of his time with his father working on different home improvement projects. His father was mechanically inclined and wanted to become a mechanical engineer, but his educational opportunities and immigration status prevented him from achieving his goal. Alex stated that prior to the deportation he wanted to become a mechanical engineer because that is what his father wanted to do. This type of interaction shows the transmission of knowledge from father to son and the influence it had on Alex’s college aspirations. During his father’s detention, that transmission was interrupted and so was the cultivation of that social capital. Alex no longer wishes to be an engineer. The amount and type of interactions between Alex and his father have changed. His mother still encourages him to make the most of his educational opportunities and does so, in part, by showing him successful Latino/as on television. This type
of encouragement is beneficial to his aspirations, but not as strong as the interactions Alex had with his father. Alex has been physically separated from his father, unable to take part in projects or learn from his father the way he used to. Alex’s father stayed in touch regularly by telephone, but this type of interaction was neither as frequent nor as rich as their personal interactions.

Sandra’s relationship to her father was similar in many ways. She too spent a great deal of time with her father. Her father was the first person she saw when she woke up in the morning. He took her to the park almost daily. Sandra did not mention undertaking specific projects with her father, but his expectations for her were clear. Both her father and mother shared their struggles and expected her to do well in school. Her father reinforced their expectations by being present at her various school activities. More importantly, ever since she can remember, Sandra’s father told her that he expects her to attend college. Both parents told her that if she did well in school, she would be the first person on either side of family to graduate high school and attend college. According to Sandra, she also aspired to be the family’s first college student, even before her father’s deportation.

After her father was deported, Sandra no longer had her father at home to wake her in the morning, take her to the park, or attend her various school activities. Her mother is also unable to attend because of her work schedule. Sandra interactions in the mesosystem remain fairly constant. She continues to attend school activities, but refers to attending these events without her parents as “the new normal.” This disruption of her parents’ transmission of their expectations is evident. However, Sandra’s parents have been able to continue reinforcing their expectations of her. Her father calls her twice a day, either through the telephone or by videoconference. For the past three years, she has traveled to Guatemala for a month to spend
time with her father. She has witnessed some of the struggles he talked about in his dual frame of reference. Additionally, Sandra gave her father access to her online report card. He monitors her grades and provides her with constant feedback. This helps ensure that she continues to meet their academic expectations. Her post-secondary aspirations have not changed. She continues to strive to be the first person in her family to attend college.

Miguel and Esperanza’s parents frequently used their dual frame of reference to transmit their educational expectations to their children. From a young age, their parents took both of them to the fields to see them work. Their mother says it was a way to supervise them, but Miguel and Esperanza remember those trips as more of a life lesson. Miguel recalls that his father talked to him while working, preaching, and encouraged his son to choose schoolwork over physical work. Both parents left school at a young age, thus unable to transmit much human capital to their children. However, their use of the dual frame of reference and decision to settle in Ohio, where their children had better educational opportunities, illustrates their expectation that their children would make the most out of their education. The difference between the parental expectations for Miguel and Esperanza as opposed to Sandra is that Sandra’s parents were very specific and Miguel and Esperanza’s were too vague. Neither Miguel nor Esperanza could elaborate on what their parents meant by expecting them to make the most out of their education. They did not mention that their parents expected certain grades from them or talked to them specifically about attending college.

After Miguel and Esperanza’s father’s deportation, the family moved to Mexico for two years. The family faced various hardships while there. Much like Sandra’s case, during their time in their parents’ home country, Miguel and Esperanza experienced some of the difficulties their parents talked about in their dual frame of reference. Esperanza returned to the U.S. a year
before the rest of her family so that she could begin high school in the United States. Soon after she was reunited with her family, her mother says that she began talking to her about wanting to attend college to become a nurse. Esperanza says that she wants to attend college because she feels she must repay her parents for their sacrifices “Now, I look at it like I have to sacrifice to help them out.” She wants to become a nurse so that she can take care of her mother when she gets older.

In Esperanza’s case, the deportation of her father actually strengthened the Obligation and Expectations form of social capital. Living in Mexico and personally living through some of the hardships her parents referred to, strengthen their message and her sense of obligation to repay them. The experience also helped Esperanza define those academic aspirations for herself and she became interested in attending college. She now strives to attend college to become a nurse. Her career choice is evidence that her sense of obligation and her defined academic focus merged in a way that would allow her to fulfill her parent’s expectations of her and also repay them by being able to physically take care of them in the future.

Miguel also mentioned feeling more motivated to attend college after his father was deported. In his case, the sense of obligation to repay his parents is strong, but unlike his sister he has yet to give meaning to his parents’ academic expectations. Miguel is indecisive about what he wants to study in college. He aspires to attend college only so that he could find a way to petition for his father’s return to the United States. He has also expressed interest in joining the military to help pay for college and help his family financially. Those two factors reflect that Miguel’s sense of duty to the family has strengthened after the deportation, but his current academic aspirations are unclear in part because his parents’ academic expectations of him were vague pre-deportation.
In Paula’s family, both parents were deported. In terms of parental interactions, the larger disruption occurred as a result of her mother’s deportation. Her mother was her primary caretaker because her father worked nights and slept during the day. Her mother did not attend school beyond middle school and, like previous participants, had limited human capital to transmit. Despite her limited human capital, both Paula’s mother and father used the dual frame of reference to motivate Paula and her siblings to value their education. Like Miguel and Esperanza, her parents’ message was rather vague and they did not specify what they expected from their children in terms of their higher education. Paula does not recall her parents expecting her to get high grades nor did they tell her they expected her to attend college. Paula never thought about attending college prior to or after either of her parents’ deportations. Thus, her aspirations did not change. The message her parents transmitted before the deportation was simply to value her education, but they did not create specific expectations, engage in their own teaching activities with Paula or participate much in her formal schooling.

**Added Responsibilities at Home**

Most of the participants reported added responsibilities at home after the deportation. Coleman (1988) maintains that the Norms and Effective Sanctions form of social capital asks its members to act a certain way or give up self-interest for the advancement of the group. As a result of the deportation, some norms and sanctions were strengthened inside the family. Parents asked the adolescents to give up their self-interests such as time with their friends in order to help the family. This usually meant taking care of their siblings or maintaining the home while the remaining parent was working. Cultivating this particular type of social capital within the family could have prevented some of the children from acquiring other forms of social capital outside the family beneficial to their post-secondary aspirations such as afterschool activities like
band or language clubs. Children’s development of such forms of social capital outside the family may be beneficial to their cultivating or strengthening post-secondary aspirations. Coleman (1988) maintains that social capital outside the family can have value for children’s educational development if the norms and values inside the family are reinforced by the values of the network of people outside of the family. The reinforcement of values is strongest when intergenerational closure is present. As described in earlier chapters, intergenerational closure refers to parents who know and interact with their children’s friends’ parents.

In Sandra’s case, her added responsibilities at home did not prevent her from continuing to cultivate social capital outside the family. First, her new responsibilities were not as demanding as other participants’. Her new responsibilities consisted of looking after her brother Abel, who is only three years younger than her. Even though this was an added responsibility, it did not prevent her from continuing to participate in school activities with her friends, like she had prior to her father’s deportation. Sandra mentioned that her friends at school all plan to attend college. The exposure to these friendships shows a cultivation of social capital outside the family that strengthens the social capital in the family. Her parents’ expectations for her to attend college are strengthened because her friends aspire to do the same. Additionally, she reported that her friends’ parents take her to and from these events. This shows that intergenerational closure is present.

Paula’s new responsibilities were more demanding. She had to take care of her much younger siblings who were in elementary school at the time their mother was deported. The age difference required her to pay closer attention to them. In her case, those responsibilities took her away from activities with friends. “I didn’t get to do typical teenager stuff. When school was over, I went home to take care of the house and of my siblings. I didn’t hang out after school like
they did.” The fact that she could no longer interact with her friends might have prevented her from cultivating the social capital outside the family that reinforces her parents’ academic expectations for her. However, as previously mentioned, her parents’ expectations were not well defined. Thus, interactions with friends at school might not have created the reinforcement necessary to promote post-secondary aspirations. Secondly, unlike Sandra, whose parents had very specific expectations for her academic future, and who continues to spend time with friends who share similar expectations, Paula did not report those types of friendships or interactions prior to the deportation. Paula did not mention wanting to attend college, considering herself a good student, or participating in school activities before her parents were deported. Thus, the lack of interaction with friends as a result of the deportations did not affect her post-secondary aspirations.

Esperanza also reported taking on more responsibilities at home after her father’s deportation. Like the other female participants, the majority of her responsibilities at home now consist of looking after younger siblings and maintaining the house. Similar to Paula, she also felt that her new duties at home caused her to lose out on spending time with her friends. However, unlike Paula, Esperanza has been able to cultivate social capital outside the family in spite of her added responsibilities at home. Even though most of Esperanza’s spare time outside of school is taken up by responsibilities at home or at work, she manages to spend some time with her friends.

According to Esperanza, all her friends now aspire to attend college and they frequently talk about it when they are together. Unfortunately, sometimes these conversations pain Esperanza because she compares her economic situation with her friends that appear to be more financially prepared to attend college. Regardless, these friendships demonstrate a cultivation of
social capital outside of the family because Esperanza’s friends share values and norms that reinforce her own aspirations to attend college. Intergenerational closure is not very strong in this case because Esperanza’s mother does not know her daughter’s friends. However, her mother’s message to value her higher education is reinforced.

In addition to her friendships, the added responsibilities at home have not kept Esperanza away from attending the Erudición classes. According to Esperanza, Erudición is her main source of information about college. In the summer of 2012 she began working with Mrs. Pira to start her college application process. Like her friendships at school, these meetings also serve to cultivate the social capital outside of Esperanza’s family necessary to facilitate her goal of attending college. At Erudición, Esperanza’s aspiration to attend college and her mother’s message to value her education are reinforced. The shared values are evident when examining Ms. Pira’s comments that Esperanza’s mother encourages her daughter’s attendance at Erudición, “the fact that she sends her kids to our night program, especially in the summer, says a lot about what she wants for them.” Esperanza’s mother also commented that she feels reassured that, if she is ever deported, Ms. Pira and people at Erudición will continue helping her daughter achieve her academic goals.

Miguel’s experience with added responsibilities at home is different than his sister’s. The extent of his added responsibilities has been maintaining the family’s van. Miguel, however, did not state that the responsibilities at home have kept him from spending time with his friends. Similarly, Alex did not report any added responsibilities at his home. These findings about added home responsibilities after a deportation are consistent with Chaundry et al.’s (2010) observations, which state that, following a deportation, home responsibilities are typically greater for the girls and young women in Latino/a families.
Financial Difficulties

All of the participants in the research stated that their family began to have financial difficulties after the parental deportation. None of the adolescent participants expressed a concern over money prior to the deportation. However, in every case, the financial difficulties hindered the participants’ ability to develop forms of social capital outside the family that could be considered beneficial to their post-secondary aspirations.

Prior to her father’s deportation, Sandra never had to worry about money. She referred to her family as “average, middle class, like everyone else here. We always had money.” Sandra’s father was the family’s primary source of income. His deportation resulted in a structural deficiency and financial hardships for the family. The financial hardships did not dissuade Sandra from attending college, but they did make it more difficult for her to continue participating in the school activities she enjoys.

A hectic work schedule prevents Sandra’s mother from taking part in her daughter’s school activities. Her mother’s unavailability threatens Sandra’s ability to continue developing the social capital outside the family that benefits her college aspirations. As discussed previously, Sandra’s school activities are part of the Obligations and Expectations form of social capital outside the family that reinforce her parents’ expectations of her to attend college. Sandra has been able to continue participating in these events in part because of the intergenerational closure that exists between her family and friends. Her friends and their parents transport her to and from school activity events. If Sandra did not have this support, then the cultivation of the social capital that occurs from her participation in school activities would have weakened.

Economic hardships almost prevented Sandra’s participation in school activities entirely. In the beginning of the 2012 school year, Sandra’s mother could not afford the fees for the
school band. Fortunately, the school provided her with scholarships and fee waivers. If Sandra had been unable to pay the band fees, then she could have lost out on the cultivation of social capital outside the family with like-minded friends that also want to continue to college.

In Alex’s case, the family’s financial difficulties as a result of his father’s detention distracted him at school. “I can’t concentrate. I’m just thinking ‘are we going to be able to keep our house? Will we have money for food?’” Alex’s home was facing foreclosure. After the deportation, the entire family relocated to Mexico. The economic hardships, which led to the relocation, affected his post-secondary aspirations in various ways. During his father’s detention, Alex felt there was no point in learning if he is was ultimately moving to Mexico. Alex did not want to study there because he has never lived there, does not speak Spanish well, and feels it would be too difficult to understand the lessons.

Viewed through the framework of social capital, the financial hardships had a negative effect on Alex’s post-secondary aspirations because the hardships led to the family’s relocation to Mexico. That relocation separated Alex from the types of social capital outside the family beneficial to his higher education aspirations. Alex was born and raised in Madera. Throughout his entire life, he cultivated social capital outside the family via his relationships with friends and teachers that strengthened his aspiration to become an engineer. He considered himself a good student with a passion for art and science. He commented that his teachers praised him for his talent in both. These types of relationships and compliments reinforced the human capital transmitted from father to son and the expectations for Alex to do well in school and become an engineer. Additional closure between his family and school, beneficial to the cultivation of social capital, existed because his mother was more active in her children’s school, prior to the immigration truck parking across the street from the school.
According to Coleman (1988), social capital is a resource that is generated from social relations and participation in groups. The resources and actions that such relations and participation facilitate come about from being in the group; but once the person leaves that network, so do the benefits. Thus, Alex’s relocation to Mexico physically separated him from his teachers and friends. The separation disconnected him from important forms of social capital beneficial to his college aspirations. Those relationships outside the family that strengthened his father’s academic expectations of him are no longer available to Alex. If Alex continues to study in Mexico, he could make friends and relationships that renew his aspiration to attend college. Additionally, Alex’s father will likely continue to exert higher academic expectations of him in Mexico. Therefore this element is presumably not lost. The cultivation of social capital from those relationships, however, will take time and effort. Alex had never lived in Mexico and does not speak Spanish well. Those factors will likely make it more difficult for him to communicate with classmates and teachers.

For Esperanza and Miguel, financial hardships also resulted in the relocation of their family. They moved from a small town in Northwest Ohio to a village in Mexico they had never been to. Like Alex, Miguel also had trouble speaking Spanish. The financial difficulties that led to the relocation caused the same loss of social capital outside the family for Esperanza and Miguel. The loss of social capital occurred twice for them because, after two years in Mexico, they moved back to the United States but to a different city in Northwest Ohio. Similar to Alex’s situation, their family’s economic hardships led to relocations that hindered their cultivation of social capital outside the family.

For Esperanza, the economic hardships that came after her father’s deportation also obligated her to work. She now reports working long hours during both the school year and the
summer. The time she spends at work has slowed, but not completely precluded, the development of the Obligations and Expectations form of social capital outside the family that reinforces her post deportation goal of attending college. Esperanza has made friends at her school who share and reinforce her goal of attending college, but her time with them is limited. If she were not obligated to work, then she would have the opportunity to spend more time with those friends or perhaps take part in school activities. Spending more time with like-minded friends and becoming active in school activities cultivates social capital outside the family that could reinforce and facilitate her goal of attending college.

Miguel’s case is different than his sister’s. Even though he is also working to help his family, his financial obligations are not pressing. He did not report working during the school year, giving up time with friends, or being unable to participate in after school activities. When analyzed through Coleman’s (1988) social capital framework, his family’s financial hardships did not affect his ability to acquire social capital beneficial to his post-secondary goals as strongly as his sister; in part because he did not have to forfeit his time with friends, but also because his post-secondary goals are still unclear. Prior to the deportation, he did not aspire to attend college, and afterwards he remains uncertain about attending.

Paula’s family also faced economic difficulties as a result of both her mother and father’s deportation. Among other things, the financial strain forced the remaining family to relocate twice in three years, within the same city. The relocation could have potentially affected her ability to acquire social capital outside the family beneficial to her post-secondary goals, but Paula did not aspire to attend college before or after the deportation. In Paula’s case, the economic difficulties do not appear to have altered her post-secondary aspirations because she did not aspire to attend college in any case. Nonetheless, overall the various limitations that
come with financial strain were shown to impede or completely hinder the cultivation of social
capital for those participants who did aspire to attend college.

Relocation

With the exception of Sandra, every other participant in this research was forced to
relocate as a result of the parental deportation. As discussed below, the relocation can influence
Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) five nested systems with which an individual interacts. The
nested systems, as per Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory framework, have a
reciprocal relationship with a person that shapes personal and academic development. This
section analyzes what effect, if any, the relocation had on the participants’ microsystem of the
home environment, and how that might have influenced their post-secondary aspirations.

Esperanza’s home environment microsystem underwent various changes after the
deporation of her father. The first change was when her entire family moved to Mexico. The
family structure remained the same, but there were geographic changes to this microsystem. She
went from living in what she considered a big house in Northwest Ohio to a small Mexican
village. Academically, Esperanza did well in Mexico. This microsystem underwent a second
change when she returned by herself to the United States to live with the farm owner, el patrón.
This change was perhaps the most drastic because at the age of 15 she was separated from her
biological family. For an entire year, she lived in a new home with a person that had never been
part of her family structure. Even though the purpose of Esperanza returning alone was to
continue her education, this change in her home environment microsystem had negative effects
on her schooling. During our interview, she began to cry when she talked about how drastically
her grades dropped during this time period.
A year later, this microsystem changed again when she was reunited with her mother and two younger brothers, but remained separated from her father, older sisters and their children. The reunification and change to her home environment microsystem proved to be beneficial to her education and provided a notable change in her academic aspirations. During this time, Esperanza’s grades began to improve. Her mother also noticed that Esperanza began talking to her about her wanting to attend college to become a nurse. Additionally, this was when Esperanza started attending classes at Erudición and met Ms. Pira. The last change to this microsystem, in terms of physical space, occurred a year later when her family moved to their current trailer home in Lejos, Ohio.

In Esperanza’s case, she did not aspire to attend college or even consider herself a good student prior to her father’s deportation. Academically, she did well in Mexico but her grades dropped when she moved away from her family. After she was reunited with her mother and brothers, her grades improved and she began talking about attending college. The reunification seems to have provided her with a sense of normalcy and the experience of living in Mexico sparked a sense of mission to her family. Her mother, teachers and friends are aware of her aspirations to attend college and the steps she has taken towards achieving that goal.

Unlike his sister, Miguel was not separated from his family for a year, but his home environment microsystem underwent similar changes as a result of his father’s deportation. In Miguel’s case, it does not appear that the changes to this microsystem had a significant effect on his post-secondary aspirations. He did not express a desire to attend college before the family moved to Mexico and after returning to the U.S. his aspirations remain unclear. Unlike his sister, whose college aspirations clearly changed after she was reunited with her family, Miguel’s aspirations remain undetermined. He has expressed interest in going to college, but as only one
of his various options after he finishes high school. Unlike the communication of post high school plans that exists between his mother and sister, Miguel’s mother is not sure what Miguel plans to do after high school nor has he taken any clear steps towards preparing for college.

The deportation of Paula’s parents caused her to undergo various relocations within the same city. Those relocations however do not seem to have altered her post-secondary aspirations. After her mother’s deportation, the remaining family moved to a smaller apartment in a neighborhood Paula felt was unfamiliar and unsafe. This change brought on an intense sense of fear in Paula. Even though that sense of fear did not directly change her college aspirations, it was not beneficial to her personal or academic development.

After her father was deported, Paula and her siblings moved into a trailer home where she felt more comfortable. Paula felt this was a positive move for her. The new neighborhood in many ways reminded her of her first home. The trailer home provided her with sense of familiarity and normalcy. “When we moved there, everything seemed closer to normal. We now have a backyard. We play kickball there and it’s a lot of fun, kind of reminds us of our house.” This relocation and the sense of normalcy were beneficial to her academic development. Around this time, she began attending a vocational program at her school to become a dental hygienist. She enjoyed the courses and planned on working as a dental hygienist after she graduated. Her aspirations to attend college, however, remained unchanged.

Alex’s family did not relocate during his father’s detention, but just the thought of moving to Mexico, if his father were deported, was enough to negatively affect Alex’s schoolwork and post-secondary aspirations. This speaks to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) point that what matters for behavior and development is the environment as it is perceived by the person rather than as it may exist in “objective” reality. The perception of what his new environment
might be like was enough to negatively affect his post-secondary aspirations. Alex was not optimistic about the outcome of his father’s immigration case and spoke of his father’s deportation as if it had already happened. Alex’s grades declined during his father’s detention. He said that he saw no point in learning or going to college if he is going to end up moving to Mexico. “I honestly don’t care about school, I don’t think I’m going to finish.” Thus, in Alex’s case, it wasn’t the changes to his microsystem after the relocation that negatively affected his aspirations, but rather his perception of what those changes would be.

**Behavioral Change**

Every participant in this research exhibited some sort of behavioral change as a result of the parental deportation. Consistent with the literature consulted, these changes included dramatic mood swings, depression (NNIRR, 2010), sadness, isolation, clinging to parents (Capps et al., 2007; Kremer et al., 2009), anger (Capps et al., 2007; Kremer et al., 2009), and disobedience or lack of respect towards the parent who remained in the United States (Chaundry et al., 2010). Analyzing the behavioral changes through Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory framework (1979; 2005) will help answer how those behavioral changes effected their home environment and any effect that may have had on their post-secondary aspirations.

Every participant reported some form of behavioral change, but, in Alex’s case, he reported various negative behavioral changes after his father was detained. Prior to the detention, Alex’s mother described him as very energetic and outgoing. She now describes him as short tempered, angry, fearful and rebellious. This behavior comes as result of a change in his microsystem. His father, once an active part of his home environment, is now absent. Alex admits that he behaved very differently prior to being separated from his father. “I used to be more outgoing, more social; right now I really don’t want to talk to people.” He is also conscious
of his anger and rebellion, especially towards his mother. In Alex’s case, his behavior both reflects and contributes to a change in his microsystem that has been a factor in his diminished aspiration to attend college.

The disobedience towards his mother shows a rift in their relationship that affects his post-secondary goals. Both his mother and father both encourage him to do well in school so that he can attend college to become an engineer but, as part of his rebellion, he is going against his parents’ wishes. He expressed explicit defiance towards his mother: “I don’t want to listen to anyone, including my mom.” Alex’s desire to no longer attend college can be attributed, in part, to his rebelling against his mother’s wishes for him to do well in school and attend college.

Alex’s relationship with his mother is very tumultuous. He is angry and disobedient towards her, but he also clings to her out of fear. He is compelled to stay at home because he fears that immigration officials will search for his mother at home. “I need to stay with my family. Maybe my mom could get… I don’t know. If something happens, I need to be here.” Alex is so afraid that he could not bring himself to say the word “deportation.” His fear is a result of a change to his microsystem, but also shapes it. Everyone in his household constantly lives in fear of deportation. Alex’s mother reported that her children do not like to leave her alone even in their own home. That fear is part of the reason Alex no longer wants to go to school and cannot concentrate in class. That sense of fear negatively affects his college aspirations because, for him, making sure his mother is not picked up by immigration takes priority over his education.

Much like Alex, Miguel has also demonstrated disobedient behavior towards his mother. His mother complains that he constantly acts rude, disobeys her and leaves their house at all hours to be with friends. He admits to this behavior. Both mother and son attribute this
behavioral change to a missing father figure at home. “I was not as rude when my dad was
around. It’s just very different since my dad is gone but I help provide for the family.” Miguel’s
quote shows that he acknowledges his defiance, but substantiates his behavior because he is now
a contributing member of the family. This behavior has a negative effect on his post-secondary
aspirations because he feels he can make his own decisions regardless of his mother’s advice or
wishes for him. Miguel mentioned wanting to attend college, but prefers to join the military or
perhaps work after high school then try to attend college. His mother prefers he try to enter
college first. She feels the family cannot afford to send him to the military and worries that if he
starts working, he might not want to enroll in college afterwards. Their difference of opinion
shows how a change in the microsystem of the home environment leads to a change in behavior
that disrupts how a mother’s advice is received and can affect college aspirations.

Miguel’s sister Esperanza did not report any rebellious behavior after her father was
deported. Her behavioral changes consist of constant sadness. That sadness was evident during
her interview for this research. She was very emotional when she talked about her home
environment after the deportation. Her father’s absence has prompted a constant feeling of
sadness for both her and her mother. Sandra’s sadness is often times brought on in the morning
when she notices the empty table where she used to eat breakfast with both her parents. Now, her
mother leaves early for work and is away for most of the day. When she’s at home, Esperanza
perceives her mother as always sad and constantly crying. What is particular about Esperanza is
that the sadness that has altered her microsystem, in a sense, also serves as motivation for her to
attend college. Esperanza’s mother feels that her daughter channels the sadness at home to
compel her motivation to succeed:
Everything she does is to help the family. She sees how much I struggle and suffer now and she sees how sad I get. I know she is working hard because she wants to succeed to help us get a better life.

Esperanza has told her mother that she strives to be a nurse so that she can take care of her when she gets older. Her career choice shows both Esperanza’s motivation to attend college and commitment to take care of her family. Esperanza draws on her and her mother’s sadness to help drive her goal of attending college because that will eventually help her take care of her family.

Sandra has also exhibited behavioral changes such as sadness, mood swings, and anger towards her mother. Her mother feels that Sandra can be very temperamental and that she is usually the target of her daughter’s anger. Sister Patience is aware of her mood swings. She interprets Sandra’s temperament as anger towards her parents for not disclosing their immigration status. What is unique about Sandra’s case is that out of all the participants in this research, she is the only one who reported receiving professional counseling after the deportation to help her deal with her emotions. Since having gone to counseling, Sandra feels that she is learning to cope with the sadness of her father’s deportation but admits that she can still become easily upset with her mother. Similar reports of parental rebellion, such as in Alex and Miguel’s case, were detrimental to college aspirations but in Sandra’s case, her aspirations to attend college have not changed. The fact that she went to counseling to help her deal with the loss may have helped prevent her aspirations from waning.

The deportation of Paula’s mother created a sense of insecurity for her that manifested itself through behavioral changes such as fear and depression. Her most prominent fears were that a stranger would break into their home and that immigration authorities would find her father and sister and deport them unexpectedly, like they did with her mother. The deportation of
her mother was a drastic change in Paula’s microsystem. Paula no longer felt safe at home because her principal caregiver was taken away unexpectedly. That sense of fear worsened with her family’s relocation to an unfamiliar neighborhood and the attempted break-in at their apartment. In addition to constantly being afraid, Paula felt an overwhelming sense of depression that led to suicidal thoughts. The thought of causing more pain to her family prevented her from carrying out the suicide, but she continues to battle depression.

Even though Paula did not have post-secondary aspirations before the deportation, her feelings of fear and depression were detrimental to possibly developing those aspirations. Paula did not consider herself a good student prior to the separation of her parents, but enjoyed the social environment at school. Her behavioral changes caused her to distance herself from the things she enjoyed at school, such as spending time with friends and teachers. Paula’s rejection of the school environment was not beneficial to possibly developing aspirations to continue on to a post-secondary education.

School Environment

In addition to changes in their home environment, participants also reported a change in various aspects of the microsystem of their school environment after the parental deportation. Such changes include a loss of or difference in school friendships and feelings of alienation at school. Changes in this microsystem of the school environment coincide with some of the changes in the home environment which show transformed interactions at the mesosystem level that for some participants resulted in change in their post-secondary educational aspirations.

Friendships

With the exception of Sandra, all other participants reported a change in their friendships at school. Participants Paula and Alex reported losing the majority of their friends after the
deportation. Esperanza reported having limited time to spend with her friends, but since moving to her current school, she has made new friends that share several common interests, one of which is attending college. Miguel also reported new friendships at his current school. His mother however, does not like their influence. Coleman’s (1988) social capital framework will help examine what effect, if any, the loss and change of friendships had on the adolescents’ academic motivations.

Alex reports that after his father’s detention, he became disinterested in spending time with friends at school. Before his father was detained, he considered himself more sociable. “I used to be more outgoing, more social, right now I really don’t want to talk to people.” That disinterest comes, in part, from his fear of leaving his mother alone. He fears immigration officials will also detain his mother. Alex does not spend time with friends at school. Furthermore, he cannot remember the last time he visited a friend’s houses or had a friend visit him. His mother says that prior to the detention, Alex and his friends were always at each other’s houses. Not interacting with friends has contributed to a negative change in Alex’s college aspirations.

Disengagement from friends has hindered Alex’s ability to develop any of the three types of social capital outside the family that reinforced the Obligations and Expectations form of social capital within the family, which set his parents’ expectations of him to become an engineer. Coleman (1988) contends that intergenerational closure is necessary for this reinforcement to occur. In Alex’s case, intergenerational closure was present but not strong. His mother knew his friend; they spend a lot of time visiting each other’s homes, but she made no mention of knowing his friends’ parents. Regardless, there seems to have been reinforcement of shared values. Alex did not explicitly say they shared a common goal of going to college, but he
did mention that his friends were all “also good students”. Alex thought of himself as a good student before the deportation because he felt he was hardworking and had an A, B+ average at school. After his father’s detention, Alex has stopped interacting with his friends whom he considered good students; those friends with whom he shared common norms and values.

Paula also reported losing most of her friends after she was separated from her parents. The loss of her friendships was in part because of the added responsibilities at home and the alienating feeling she had as a result of the deportation. Her post-secondary aspirations, however, did not change like in Alex’s case. She did not aspire to attend college before or after the deportations. She never thought of herself as academically driven. Additionally, she made no mention of her friends’ academic goals. The loss of friendships could have prevented her from developing social capital beneficial to her academic goals, but she did not seem to be very academically motivated prior to the deportation and did not provide enough information about her friends’ academic aspirations to make that determination. Thus, for Paula it does not seem that losing contact with her friends had a significant effect on her post-secondary aspirations.

Esperanza reported both a change in post-secondary aspirations and a change in friendships after her father was deported. After the deportation, Esperanza lost touch with her friends in the small town where she lived prior to the deportation, and in the Mexican village where she lived before moving to a new city in Northwest Ohio. Even though she lost these friendships as a result of the deportation, the friendships she has made since returning to the United States appear to be beneficial to her new post-secondary aspirations. Since being reunited with her mother and brothers, she reported being more motivated to attend college to become a nurse. Her current friends also plan on attending college and they often talk about these plans when they are together.
Viewed through Coleman’s (1988) social capital framework, these friendships are forms of social capital outside the family beneficial to her post-secondary aspirations. They reinforce the dual frame of reference her parents use, as part of the Obligations and Expectations form of social capital within the family, which expects Esperanza to value her education and repay her parents for their sacrifice. Intergenerational closure however is not strong in Esperanza’s case. Her mother feels that the language barrier prevents her from interacting with her daughter’s friends and their parents. Coleman (1988) contends that intergenerational closure is important because it reinforces common norms and values beneficial to a child’s education. Even though intergenerational closure is not present in Esperanza’s case, there is a reinforcement of norms because her friends’ academic aspirations align with her mother’s expectations of her.

Similar to his sister Esperanza, Miguel also reported losing touch with friends after relocating. He also feels that his current friends are more academically driven and that he has begun doing better at school. However, there appears to be some inconsistencies with reports of his friendships. His mother does not like his new friends. She feels that Miguel has become very disobedient and that his current friendships are a bad influence. She says that Miguel leaves their house to be with his friends at all hours of the day, for extended periods of time, and without notice. Esperanza gave similar examples of her brother’s behavior, and Miguel himself admitted to it in his interview. “I was not as rude when my dad was around. I was well behaved and I would not go out as much.”

With these inconsistencies it is difficult to conclude what the influence of Miguel’s friendship has been on his college aspirations. Miguel reported that after the deportation he feels motivated to attend college and that his new friends are very studious, but there seems to be limited evidence to supports the claims that they are academically motivated. In his sister’s case,
Esperanza, her mother, and Ms. Pira all have similar accounts of Esperanza’s friendships. In Miguel’s case, there are conflicting reports between his account and the accounts of his sister and mother. Ms. Pira was unable to say much regarding Miguel’s friendships. When asked about his friends, she simply said, “he has so many, Miguel is very sociable. He has no problem making friends”. What is evident is that in Miguel’s case, there is no intergenerational closure or any other type of reinforcement of his mother’s academic expectations for him. The lack of reinforcement could be a reason why Miguel reports wanting to attend college, but only as one of his various options after high school.

Sandra did not report a loss or change in friendships after her father’s deportation. Her friendships remain the same and so do her aspirations to attend college. There is evidence of intergenerational support in Sandra’s case and its effects on her academic aspirations are clear. She continues to interact with academically motivated friends who aspire to go to college. They participate in school activities together. Her friends’ parents take her to these school activities because her mother is unable to. These interactions and relationships continue to reinforce her parents’ expectations for her to attend college even after she was separated from her father.

Alienation

Three of the five participants reported feelings of alienation and reluctance to disclose the deportation to anyone at school. These feelings of alienation at school demonstrate a disruption in the participants’ microsystem at school that had various effects on their post-secondary aspirations.

Alex lived in a predominately White-Anglo neighborhood in the city of Lejos, Ohio. His family was the only Mexican family on their block. The schools Alex attended throughout his life have all been in walking distance from his home and had a majority White-Anglo student
body. Alex’s friends at school were all White-Anglo. He was typically the only Mexican student in his classes. Prior to the detention of his father, Alex made friends with ease and did not mention feeling uncomfortable about being a minority student. The only instance of discrimination he remembered was a classmate once saying something derogatory about his parents’ immigration status.

During his father’s detention, his perception of school changed. He felt that he could not share what was happening in his family with anyone at school. “I keep it from people, my friends too. When somebody at school asks me where he is, I just say ‘he’s on vacation.’ It’s just something that stays in the family.” This lack of disclosure and need for secrecy demonstrates Alex’s perception of his school environment as untrustworthy. His perception of the people at school speaks to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) contention that in a child’s academic development, perception of the environment is more important than how it may exist in “objective” reality. Alex perceived that his school was not a place where he could disclose the detention of his father. This distrust might be due to the fact that he was the only student at school that was not White-Anglo. Rather than talk about it with his friends or any of the faculty at his school, he created the alibi that his father was on vacation. This need for an alibi along with Alex’s subsequent loss of friendships at school and a dramatic disinterest in continuing with his education, shows a connection between his perception of an untrustworthy environment at school and his diminished interest to continue studying.

Similar to Alex, Sandra has also grown up being the ethnic minority. Sandra’s situation is different because rather than growing up in a larger city like Alex, she has lived in a very small town. Sandra and her mother both feel that their neighborhood is very close knit. She has never felt discriminated against at school or felt that her minority status prevented her from making
friends. When Sandra’s father was deported, her mother informed all of her middle school teachers. Sandra reported that her teachers and neighbors expressed sympathy and offered their support.

Sandra experienced a change in this microsystem when she transitioned to high school. She and her mother no longer felt comfortable disclosing the deportation to people at Sandra’s new school. Sandra does not share that information with anyone that was not a close friend of hers in middle school. Like Alex, she also uses an alibi for her father’s absence. “I don’t tell people my dad was deported. I say they are separated or divorced.” She feels that she cannot disclose the real reason for her father’s absence because all of her friends and classmates are U.S. born citizens and would not understand her situation.

The change of microsystem from the smaller and more familiar setting of her middle school to a larger and unfamiliar high school changed Sandra’s level of trust. The lack of trust at her new school however, did not severely affect her grades or college aspirations. Her college aspirations remained the same, in part, because Sandra continues to perceive the school environment as safe. She does not feel completely isolated from her friends at school like Alex did. Sandra continues to have previous relationships she trusts. Some of her current friends are close friends from middle school who know the truth about her father’s absence. In addition, her outlook towards friendships has not changed. She continues to be sociable and seeks new friendships. In her opinion, the reason she created the alibi of her parents divorcing was to help her and her new friends relate to each other. “Their story is obviously different…but we can relate to not having our dads with us.” The fact that she still seeks friendships at school shows that she continues to feel a sense of trust and comfort at school that encourages her to continue her education.
Paula felt a sense of alienation very similar to Alex’s. Like the other participants that reported feelings of alienation, she was the ethnic minority in her city and school. She attended a private elementary and middle school where most students were White-Anglo. Other than the social aspect of it, Paula did not enjoy attending school. Her parents’ deportation caused Paula to feel disconnected from the only thing she enjoyed about school. Paula began feeling a sense of alienation from her friends and classmates. She did not feel she could talk to anyone about what she was going through. “I felt alone because I was the only one going through this in the entire school.” Paula felt that her friends would not be able to sympathize with her experience because they are all White-Anglo, U.S. born American citizens. The feelings of alienation also extended to her teachers. She reports that only after several months following the deportation of her mother, did a single teacher reach out to her. “I never got to talk to anybody how I felt. It was the first time”.

In terms of her post-secondary aspirations, the deportation did not alter them because Paula did no aspire to attend college before or after, but the feeling of alienation that was caused by a change in this microsystem took away the only aspect of school she enjoyed. Feeling completely disconnected from school, both for academic and social reasons might not have changed her post-secondary aspirations per se, but it made it nearly impossible for her to feel a sense of belonging at school that might have encouraged her to continue her education.

Social Capital in the Microsystems

In a mixed legal immigration status home, the removal of one or both parents impacts a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education. The forced separation alters the socio-emotional development of the adolescents in such a way that negatively influences
their post-secondary aspirations. The separation also hinders the cultivation of forms of social capital conducive to the child’s educational aspirations.

Parental deportation negatively affects the adolescents’ perception of stability, safety, and trustworthiness in their various microsystems, which directly hinders their ability to acquire social capital conducive to their educational aspirations. In addition to the physical changes of their immediate surroundings, the new perception results in a behavioral change that affects both the amount and types of interactions adolescents have with family members and school peers. The acquisition of social capital depends on the richness and frequency of the interactions in an individual’s social network. Thus, the adolescents’ ability to cultivate social capital beneficial to their educational aspirations is compromised because their surroundings change, and their perception and behavior after the deportation leads to limited and lower quality relationships with individuals that can help reinforce and facilitate their educational goals.

Participants who continued striving to attend college or who experienced an increase in post-secondary motivation did so in spite of the parental deportation. For example, in Esperanza’s case, the experience of moving to Mexico and later moving back to the United States to live with el patrón seems to have sparked a sense of mission to her family. However, it was not until after she was reunited with her mother and brothers that her sense of mission manifested itself as motivation to attend college. She now aspires to attend college so that she can secure a career as a nurse, which will allow her take care of her family both physically and financially.

In Esperanza’s case, her post-secondary motivation could not have been possible without a perceiving a sense of normality in her microsystems. Although her father stayed behind in Mexico, the reunification with her mother and brothers, in a relatively similar part of Ohio,
brought about a perceived sense of normality back to her life. This sense of normality was the bedrock that allowed Esperanza to be exposed to and begin interacting with school peers who shared similar academic goals to hers. The interactions with these friendships proved to be beneficial to her post-secondary aspirations. Conversations with those friends served to reinforce her sense of mission to attend college. Moreover, they provided her with a better understanding of what it takes to attend college. As a result she is actively seeking help in the application process from teachers such as Ms. Pira who can help facilitate her goal. For Esperanza, the exposure to friendships with similar goals and the subsequent cultivation of social capital beneficial to her academic goals could not have been possible without the sense of normality that came with being reunited with her family.

In Sandra’s case, for example, her seemingly unfazed academic motivations can be attributed to the fact that her mother and father have gone to great lengths to preserve a sense of normality to Sandra’s microsystems at home and school. One such example is Sandra’s daily communication with her father. Mr. Cardenas remains a constant fixture in his daughter’s life; he has talks to her twice a day either by telephone or videoconference. This regular communication creates a sense of normality in Sandra’s home life that attempts to compensate for her father’s physical absence. That sense of normality allows her to continue focusing on school the way she did prior to her father’s deportation. Their regular conversations along with the access Sandra’s father has to her online report card allow him to continue exerting his expectations for her to attend college.

Additionally, the physical settings that make up Sandra’s microsystems have not undergone substantial changes. Mrs. Cardenas works several jobs and struggles financially in order to keep the family in the same neighborhood where Sandra and her brother grew up. This
permanence allows Sandra the stability to continue participating in school activities and fostering the friendships that cultivate the social capital beneficial to her college aspirations. Sandra’s post-secondary aspirations have not waned in large part because of her parents’ constant struggle to keep her microsystems at home and school relatively unchanged. In short, the perceived sense of normality that comes with constant communication with her father and an unchanged physical surrounds has allowed Sandra to continue participating in activities that allow for the cultivation of social capital beneficial to the post-secondary aspirations she had before her father was deported.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter provides a summary of the research findings and analysis. It also includes suggested future areas of research, and a discussion on the possibly implications this research can have on federal immigration policy as well as school policy nationwide.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to explore the effects that parental deportation has on a child’s higher educational aspirations. The case setting was northwest Ohio and the case members were Latino/a adolescents who had one or both parents deported. This case study illustrated the larger set of cases at the national level of immigrant youth who are separated from their parents via parental deportation. The main question of the research was: in a mixed legal immigration status home, how does the removal of one or both parents impact a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education? Sub-questions included: 1) How does forced separation affect the socio-emotional development of the adolescent with regard to their post-secondary aspirations? 2) How is social capital available to the adolescent influenced, if at all, by parental removal?

Consistent with the literature (Hagan, 2008; Mendoza & Olivas, 2009), this research found that the deportation of a parent disrupts previously economic and emotionally stable households. For the participating families, the deportation of one or both parents resulted in financial hardships. Adolescent participants reported not worrying about the family’s finances before the parental deportation but afterwards stated that finances were one of their principal concerns. For participants like Miguel and Esperanza, the economic necessity was such that they began working full time in the summer and part time during the school year to help their mother with the family’s finances. Esperanza in particular reported giving up time after school she
normally spent with friends so that she could go to work or take care of other responsibilities at home. For Sandra the financial burden caused her mother to constantly be away from home working, which left her responsible for taking care of her younger brother. For Alex, the constant stress of losing the family’s home to foreclosure left him unable to concentrate at school. Paula’s financial situation after her mother was deported caused the family to lose the house she grew up in and move into an apartment that she found unsafe.

The emotional and psychological trauma that resulted from losing a parent to deportation manifested itself differently in the various participants in this research. The literature consulted reported that after the deportation, children tend to exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety, insecurity, and depression (NNIRR, 2010). One such study participant, Paula, exhibited the majority of these symptoms. After Paula’s mother was unexpectedly deported Paula felt feelings of severe anxiety and depression. The symptoms were so grave that she contemplated suicide. Study participant Sandra in turn suffered an emotional breakdown soon after the unexpected arrest and deportation of her father. With the help of longtime family friend, Sister Patience, Sandra was able to get emotional counseling to help her deal with the deportation of her father. Esperanza also reported constant feelings of sadness when thinking about the loss of her father. Esperanza’s brother, Miguel, reported rebellious behavior after the deportation of their father. His mother claims that he is constantly disobeying her, something that he admits to because he feels entitled to it since he has taken on a more adult role in the home. Similarly, Alex became more rebellious towards his mother since the detention of his father. He and his mother both reported on his dramatic mood swings.

In addition to mood swings Alex also reported anger and mistrust of law enforcement. An example of this anger and mistrust is his plan to purposely get arrested by immigration officers
so that he could sue the government for wrongful imprisonment. Previous literature (Mendoza & Olivas, 2009) reported on enduring mistrust of law enforcement and social isolation. Like Alex, Paula also reported feelings of animosity towards law enforcement because her mother was arrested at work after immigration officers passing themselves as police investigating suspicious behavior in their neighborhood visited their house and asked her father about the whereabouts of her mother. Esperanza and Miguel expressed similar fears of law enforcement, mostly due to the constant exposure of their unauthorized mother driving without a U.S. driver’s license.

Summary of Analysis

This research took an inductive approach to analyzing the participants’ interview data while employing the two frameworks: Coleman’s (1988) framework of social capital and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2005) Ecological Systems Theory framework, as a way to interpret the reciprocal relationship between the adolescents and their environments, and to discuss how this relationship could affect their aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education.

The results were that in a mixed legal immigration status home, the removal of one or both parents impacts a U.S. citizen child’s aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education because the changes to their immediate surroundings negatively affect the adolescents’ perception of stability, safety, and trustworthiness in their various microsystems. The altered perception directly hinders their ability to acquire social capital beneficial to their educational aspirations. Their change in perception is linked to behavioral change such as isolation and mistrust that affects both the amount and types of interactions they have with family members and school peers. This is of concern because the cultivation of social capital depends on the richness and frequency of the interactions in an individual’s social network. Thus, the adolescents’ ability to cultivate social capital beneficial to their educational aspirations is
compromised because their surroundings change and their perception and behavior after the deportation leads to limited and lower quality relationships with individuals that can help reinforce and facilitate their educational goals. The participants who continued to strive to attend college or who experienced an increase in post-secondary motivation did so in spite of the parental deportation.

**Implications for Policies and Further Research**

This case study contributes to literature in the area of immigrant studies in the United States. Extensive research has been done that presents the effects and resilience of living as an unauthorized immigrant and/or with unauthorized parents. My contribution to the literature signals a dearth of studies that specifically addresses the issue of how parental deportation affects a child’s education. This research aims to serve as a basis for further research exploring the deleterious effects of parental deportation. Further research may include longitudinal studies that explore the long-term environment created when children have experienced a forced separation from their parents via deportation. This research also aims to yield significant implications for how federal immigration policies along with the schools’ inattention have negatively affected the educational aspirations of the growing population of children separated from their parent(s) via deportation.

This research may contribute to a change in federal immigration policies. As part of an immigration reform, current enforcement efforts should be reexamined. Aggressive enforcement efforts that operate under the pretense of locating criminal immigrants but rather indiscriminately detain unauthorized immigrants in the United States are detrimental to a child’s sense of security and stability, which has a direct impact on their education.

Additionally, this research aims to inform school personnel at all levels about the
frequency and consequences of a parental deportation. This exposure will hopefully act as a catalyst to begin conversations regarding the effects of a deportation, and discussions of ways in which schools and organizations can support their students during this turbulent time in their lives. Every participant in this research reported the absence of support groups and programs at schools specifically designed to help with the economic and emotional needs of their families. Expert participants stated that the lack of attention to this growing population of students is because asking for federal funding and/or drumming up local support to create these programs will likely bring unwanted attention to the families affected or result in organizations losing federal funding. One expert encapsulated this sentiment by stating, “having them [children of deported parents] would mean acknowledging that, as a country, we’re responsible. We deported them [unauthorized immigrant parents] and now we must to take care of their kids.” Communities and schools in the United States that are committed to creating and promoting a healthy learning environment for all students need to move beyond past practices of overlooking or undervaluing this issue because such negligence contradicts the reality that the number of children affected by a parent's deportation is only expected to increase.
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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STUDENT QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

I. Icebreaker and Background
   a. Tell me a little about yourself.
   b. How many people in your family?
   c. Are you the youngest/oldest?
   d. How old are you?
   e. Who do you live with?
   f. What is your relationship with the family you live with? *
   g. What do your parents do for a living?

LIFE BEFORE DEPORTATION

II. Before the Deportation: Home
   a. What did a normal day at home look like before [your (parent) was deported]?
   b. What kinds of things would you do together as a family?
   c. What kinds of things would you worry about before [your (parent) was deported]?
   d. How would your parents describe you before [your (parent) was deported]?

III. Before the Deportation: School
   a. What did a normal day at school look like before your (parent) was deported?

   Attitude about school before the deportation:
   b. Did you like school? Why or why not?
   c. What did you like about it?
   d. What did you dislike about it?

   Relationships with people at school
   a. Did you get along with your classmates?
   b. How would your classmates describe you?
c. Did you get along with your teachers?

d. How would your teachers describe you?

Behavioral issues:

a. Did you ever get into trouble at school?

Academic Interests

b. Did you have some favorite teachers then? Who were they? Why?

c. What were some of your favorite subjects?

d. Did you feel you were good at them?

e. What kind of grades did you get?

f. How important was school for you?

Thoughts of Post-Secondary School/ Life after school

g. What were your plans after high school?

h. Did you ever think about going to college?

**LIFE AFTER DEPORTATION**

IV. After the Deportation: Home

a. What did a normal day at home look like now?

b. What kinds of things do you do together as a family now?

c. What kinds of things do you worry about now?

d. Is money a concern in your house? Has it always been that way?

e. Did you have to move after [your (parent) was deported]?

f. Do you get a chance to visit or talk to your (deported parent)?

g. If your (deported parent) was living with you now how would your life be different?

h. Would you like to go live with your (parent who was deported)?

i. How would your parents describe you now?

V. After the Deportation: School

a. What does a normal day at school look like now?

Attitude about school after the deportation:
b. Do you like school? Why or why not?
c. What do you like about it?
d. What do you dislike about it?

Relationships with people at school

e. Do you get along with your classmates?
f. How would your classmates describe you?
g. Do you get along with your teachers?
h. How would your teachers describe you now?

Behavioral issues:
i. Do you get into trouble at school now?

Academic Interests

j. Do you have some favorite teachers? Who were they? Why?
k. What are some of your favorite subjects?
l. Did you feel you were good at them?
m. What kind of grades do you get?
n. How important is school for you?

Thoughts of Post-Secondary School/ Life after school

o. What are your plans after high school?
p. Do you think about going to college?

FUTURE

q. What do you think you will be doing in ten/five years?
r. What would you like to be doing in ten/five years?
s. If I were to ask your parents what would they want you do to be doing?
t. Do you work now?
u. Are you thinking about working full or part time after you finish high school?
v. Do you feel pressure to work full time after you finish high school?
w. Has anybody in your family ever gone to college?
x. Do you know anybody who has gone to college?
   a. What do they tell you about it?
   y. What do you think college is like?
   z. Do you think you would do well in college?

PARENT QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

I. Background/ Immigration
   a. Tell me a little about yourself
   b. How many children do you have?
   c. What do you do for a living?
      i. How long have you been doing this?
   d. When did you move to the United States?
   e. Why did you decide to move to the United States?
   f. Have you moved around a lot while living in the United States?
   g. How long have you lived in this town?
      i. How often have you moved within the town / city?
   h. Did you attend school?
   i. For how long, to what grade level?

LIFE BEFORE DEPORTATION

II. Before the Deportation: Home
   a. What did a normal day at home look like before [your (spouse) was deported]?
   b. What kinds of things would you do together as a family?
   c. What kinds of things would you worry about (if anything) before the deportation?
   d. How would you describe yourself before [your (spouse) deported]?
   e. How would your children describe you before [your (spouse) deported]?
   f. How would you describe your children before [your (spouse) deported]?

III. Before the Deportation: School
Attitude about school before the deportation:
   a. Did your child like school?
   b. What did s/he like about it?
   c. What did s/he dislike about it?

Relationships with people at school
   a. Did s/he get along with his/her classmates?
   b. Did s/he get along with his/her teachers?
   c. How would his/her teachers describe him/her?

Behavioral issues:
   a. Did s/he ever get into trouble at school?

Academic Interests
   b. Who were your some of your child’s favorite teachers?
   c. What were some of his/her favorite subjects?
   d. What kind of grades did s/he get?
   e. How important was it for him/her?

Parental Expectations/Involvement
   a. Did you tell your children you wanted a certain grade from them?
   b. If your children got in trouble at school, what was your/ your spouse’s response?
   c. Were you able to help with your children’s homework?
   d. Did you participate in your children’s school activities?

Thoughts of Post-Secondary School/ Life after school
   e. Did you ever talk to your child about attending college?
   f. If so, at what age do you remember talking to them about it?
   g. What would you tell your child about attending college?

Deportation
   a. How did your children find you/ your spouse were unauthorized?
b. Did you ever talk to your children about what to do in case you/your spouse or both were deported? Was there an emergency plan?

c. Did you ever talk to your children about what life might be like were one or both parents to be deported?

d. How did you talk about this?

**LIFE AFTER DEPORTATION**

IV. After the Deportation: Home

a. What does a normal day at home look like now?

b. What kinds of things do you do together as a family now?

c. What kinds of things do you worry about now (if any)?

d. Is money a concern in your house? Has it always been that way?

e. Did you have to move after [your (spouse) was deported]?

f. Do you get a chance to visit or talk to your (spouse)?

g. If your (spouse) was living with you now, how would your life be different?

h. How would your children describe you now, since [your (spouse) has been deported]?

i. How would you describe yourself now, since [your (spouse) has been deported]?

j. How would you describe your children now, since [your (spouse) has been deported]?

V. After the Deportation: School

Attitude about school after the deportation:

a. Does your child like school? Why or why not?

b. What does s/he like about it?

c. What does s/he dislike about it?

Relationships with people at school

d. Does s/he get along with his/her classmates?

e. Does s/he get along with his/her teachers?

f. How do his/her teachers describe him/her now?

Behavioral issues:

h. Does s/he you get into trouble at school now?
Academic Interests
i. Does s/he have favorite teachers?
j. What are some of his/her favorite subjects?
k. What kind of grades does s/he get now?
l. How important is school for him/her?

Parental Expectations
a. Do you talk to your child about attending college? If so what do you tell them?

Thoughts of Post-Secondary School/ Life after school
a. What are his/her plans after high school?
b. Does s/he think about going to college?
c. Has anybody in your family ever gone to college?

FUTURE
d. What do you think your children will be doing in ten/five years?
e. What would you like for them to be doing in ten/five years?

EDUCATOR QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND
a. How long have you been a teacher?
b. How many schools have you worked in prior to your current position?

ORGANIZATION/SCHOOL
a. What are the demographics of your school/ classroom is there a significant Latino population?
b. Is it a common situation to have a student with a parent deported in your organization/ school?
c. How does news like that reach you?
d. In your experience, does a parent’s deportation have an effect on the child’s school performance?
e. Does a parent’s deportation affect their behavior at school?
For those student nearing the end of their high school what effects, if any, does a parent’s deportation have on the student’s academic goals/Post-secondary goals?

POLICY

a. Is there any kind of official program established to help these children cope with the deportation of a parent?
b. Is there a need for such a program at your school?
c. What kind of support networks (formal and informal) if any are available to them at your school?

i. Does the school help connect the students and their families with NGOs that deal with immigration legal services or other types of family services that the family might need (i.e: financial assistance, emotional counseling)?

ii. Have you seen or taken part in adjustments to school policy that might meet the needs of students with deported parents?

FUTURE

a. Do you feel that parental deportation will be an issue that affects students in your school/classroom in the future? Why, why not?

EXPERT QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND

a. How long have you been in the community?

ORGANIZATION/SCHOOL

a. What are the demographics of your school/organization?
b. Is it a common situation to have a student with a parent deported in your school/organization?
c. How does news like that reach you?
d. In your experience, does a parent’s deportation have an effect on the child’s school performance?
e. For those student nearing the end of their high school what effects, if any, does a parent’s deportation have on the student’s academic goals/Post-secondary goals?
f. Does a parent’s deportation affect their behavior at school?

POLICY
a. Is there any kind of official program established to help these children cope with the deportation of a parent?

b. Is there a need for such a program?

c. What kind of support if is available to them at your school/organization?

FUTURE

a. Do you feel that parental deportation will be an issue that affects students in your school/organization in the future? Why, why not?
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORMS

Macías 2012: Impact of Parental Deportation on U.S Citizen Children’s Educational Goals

Letter of Informed Consent

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. Below is a brief outline of information you need to know about the study and interview process.

Purpose of the study

You are being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Mr. Luis Fernando Macías. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact a child’s educational aspirations.

Description of the study

The study is being carried out by Mr. Luis Fernando Macías. Mr. Macías is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He would like to speak to you about your educational aspirations, specifically after high school. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. Mr. Macías would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. It will take place at a secure and public location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

A third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

Confidentiality

The information you provide in this interview will not be linked to your name. All transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will:

- Use a number as opposed to a name for classification purposes
- Use a pseudonym (false name) to protect your identity.
- Alter any additional information that might reveal your identity.

The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macías’ office. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation

Your voluntary participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at any time, and you may choose not to answer any questions. Whether or not you choose to participate will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macías, Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies. Participation or withdraw will not affect any rights to which you are entitled.
Risk or discomfort
There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. The following are steps taken to minimize any discomforts:

- The interview is held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable in.
- If at any time during the interview you want to stop, just let Mr. Macías know and he will stop the interview.
- If you start to feel uncomfortable, just ask Mr. Macías to stop the interview.

You must sign the Letter of Informed Consent before the interview can take place.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you by participating in this study. By engaging in this interview, you will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

Questions
If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macías at (915-355-9427), (lmacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7354) (colleba@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hscr@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the study. Attached is a copy of the consent document for you to keep in your records.

Agreement

- Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study.
- Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.
- You have been told that by signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Signature of interviewee: ___________________________________________ Date: ________

Printed name of interviewee: ___________________________________________

Researcher: ___________________________________________ Date: ________
Macías 2012: Impact of Parental Deportation on U.S. Citizen Children’s Educational Goals

Letter of Informed Assent

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. Below is a brief outline of information you need to know about the study and interview process.

Purpose of the study

You are being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Mr. Luis Fernando Macías. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact a child’s educational aspirations.

Description of the study

The study is being carried out by Mr. Luis Fernando Macías. Mr. Macías is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He would like to speak to you about your educational aspirations, specifically after high school. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. Mr. Macías would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. It will take place at a secure location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

A third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

Confidentiality

The information you provide in this interview will not be linked to your name. All transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will:
  • Use a number as opposed to a name for classification purposes
  • Use a pseudonym (false name) to protect your identity.
  • Alter any additional information that might reveal your identity.

The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macías’ office at BGSU. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.

While Mr. Macías will discourage interview members from sharing with others what they have talked about in the interview, he realizes that this a possibility.

Voluntary Participation

Your voluntary participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime, and you may choose not to answer any questions. Whether or not you choose to participate will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macías, Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies. Participation or withdraw will not affect any rights to which you are entitled.
Risk or discomfort
There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. The following are steps taken to minimize any discomforts:

- The interview is held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable in.

- If at any time during the interview you want to stop, just let Mr. Macías know and he will stop the interview.

- If you start to feel uncomfortable, just ask Mr. Macías to stop the interview.

- If you wish, helpful information about where you can get support services can be provided.

You must complete and return the participant assent form and one of your parents or guardian must complete and return the parent consent form before the interview can take place.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you by participating in this study. By engaging in this interview, you will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

Questions
If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macías at (915-355-9427), (lmacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7354) (colleta@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the study.

Agreement

- Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study.

- Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your assent to participate at any time.

- You have been told that by signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

- Permission has been obtained from a parent or guardian for your participation in this study.

- You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Signature of interviewee: ______________________________________ Date: ______

Printed name of interviewee: ___________________________________________

Researcher: __________________________________________ Date: ______
Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son/daughter is being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Luis Fernando Macías. Mr. Macías is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact their child’s educational aspirations. Mr. Macías would like to interview your son/daughter or child over whom you have guardianship about their educational aspirations. Your son/daughter or child over whom you have guardianship is being asked to participate in one (1) interview. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. It will take place at a secure location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

Mr. Macías would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. If you so choose, a third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. To minimize any discomforts, the interview would be held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable with. Further, if at any time during the interview the child wants to stop, Mr. Macías will stop the interview.

To assure confidentiality, your child’s identity will be protected. The information from this interview will not be linked to your child’s name. For classification purposes, all the transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will use a number, not a name. A pseudonym (false name) will be used to protect your child’s identity and any additional information that might reveal the child’s identity will be changed. The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macías’ office. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may withdraw from the interview at anytime, your child may also choose to not answer questions. You will not be penalized.
if your child does not participate in the study. Whether or not your son/daughter or child over whom
you have guardianship participates will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macias,
Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies.

There are no direct benefits to your child by participating in this study. By engaging in this
interview, your child will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and
education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system
in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as
spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macias at
(915-355-9427), (Imacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor
in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-
7354) (colleba@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s
Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns
arise during the study. Attached is a copy of the assent document for you to keep in your records.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have
been able to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that your
son/daughter/child in custody will be able to participate in the study. If you change your mind you
may withdraw your consent for your child to participate. Your child cannot participate without his or
her assent and without your consent.

By signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your or your child’s legal rights.
This document must be returned to Mr. Luis Fernando Macías prior to any interview.

Thank you for your consideration.

I. ___________________________ (parent’s name) agree to let my child/child in custody ___________________________ (child’s name)
participate in the research study conducted by Mr. Luis Fernando Macías.

Signature of parent/guardian: ___________________________ Date: __________

Printed name of parent/guardian: ___________________________

Printed name of child: ___________________________
Macias 2012: Impact of Parental Deportation on U.S. Citizen Children’s Educational Goals

Parent Consent Form for Student Interviews

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You are being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Luis Fernando Macias. Mr. Macias is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact a child’s educational aspirations. The children in the study have been interviewed. The study now aims to interview parents, teachers, and administrators to gain a more complex understanding of the impact of deportation. Mr. Macias would like to interview you regarding your experience with students’ educational aspirations. You would be asked to participate in one (1) interview. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. It will take place at a secure location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

Mr. Macias would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. If you so choose, a third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. To minimize any discomforts, the interview would be held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable with. Further, if at any time during the interview you want to stop, Mr. Macias will stop the interview.

To assure confidentiality, your identity will be protected. The information from this interview will not be linked to your name. For classification purposes, all the transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will use a number, not a name. A pseudonym (false name) will be used to protect your identity and any additional information that might reveal your identity will be changed. The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macias’ office. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime, you may also choose to not answer questions. You will not be penalized if you do not participate in the study. Whether or not you participate it will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macias, Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies.

There are no direct benefits to your student by participating in this study. By engaging in this interview, you will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macias at (915-355-9427), (lmacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7354) (colleba@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the study. Attached is a copy of the assent document for you to keep in your records.

**Agreement**
- Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study.
- Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.
- You have been told that by signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signature of interviewee: ____________________________ Date: __________

Printed name of interviewee: ____________________________

Researcher: ____________________________ Date: __________
Macias 2012: Impact of Parental Deportation on U.S. Citizen Children's Educational Goals

Educator Consent Form for Student Interviews

Dear Educator:

You are being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Luis Fernando Macias. Mr. Macias is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact a child’s educational aspirations. The children in the study have been interviewed. The study now aims to interview parents, teachers, and administrators to gain a more complex understanding of the impact of deportation. Mr. Macias would like to interview you regarding your experience with students’ educational aspirations. You would be asked to participate in one (1) interview. The interview will last approximately one hour to an hour and a half. It will take place at a secure location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

Mr. Macias would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. If you so choose, a third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. To minimize any discomforts, the interview would be held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable with. Further, if at any time during the interview you want to stop, Mr. Macias will stop the interview.

To assure confidentiality, your identity will be protected. The information from this interview will not be linked to your name. For classification purposes, all the transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will use a number, not a name. A pseudonym (false name) will be used to protect your identity and any additional information that might reveal your identity will be changed. The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macias’ office. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime, you may also choose to not answer questions. You will not be penalized if you do not participate in the study. Whether or not you participate it will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macias, Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies.

There are no direct benefits to your student by participating in this study. By engaging in this interview, you will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macias at (915-355-9427), (lmacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7354) (colletba@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the study. Attached is a copy of the assent document for you to keep in your records.

**Agreement**
- Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study.
- Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.
- You have been told that by signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signature of interviewee: ___________________________ Date: ________

Printed name of interviewee: ___________________________

Researcher: ___________________________ Date: ________
Dear Administrator:

You are being asked to participate in a study being carried out by Luis Fernando Macias. Mr. Macias is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Cross Cultural and International Education (MACIE) at the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The purpose of this study is to learn how the deportations of one or both parents impact a child’s educational aspirations. The children in the study have been interviewed. The study now aims to interview parents, teachers, and administrators to gain a more complex understanding of the impact of deportation. Mr. Macias would like to interview you regarding your experience with students’ educational aspirations. You would be asked to participate in one (1) interview. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. It will take place at a secure location of your approval (for instance, a community center, school or public library).

Mr. Macias would like to audiotape the interview with your permission. If you so chose, a third party staff member from a cooperating organization can be present during the interview.

There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information. To minimize any discomforts, the interview would be held at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable with. Further, if at any time during the interview you want to stop, Mr. Macias will stop the interview.

To assure confidentiality, your identity will be protected. The information from this interview will not be linked to your name. For classification purposes, all the transcripts of audiotapes made during the interview will use a number, not a name. A pseudonym (false name) will be used to protect your identity and any additional information that might reveal your identity will be changed. The audiotapes and transcripts from the interview will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in Mr. Macias’ office. They will be available to no one except himself. Once this study is completed, the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime, you may also choose to not answer questions. You will not be penalized if you do not participate in the study. Whether or not you participate it will not influence your future relations with Mr. Macias, Bowling Green State University or the cooperating schools or agencies.

There are no direct benefits to your student by participating in this study. By engaging in this interview, you will be contributing to research concerning, immigration, identity and education in general, and research concerning first generation Americans in the school system in particular. This work may in turn be used to improve educational policy and programming as well as spread awareness about issues affecting minority youth.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Luis Fernando Macias at 913-355-9427, (Imacias@bgsu.edu) or his Thesis advisor Dr. Bruce Collet, Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University (419-372-7354) (colleba@bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu) if any problems or concerns arise during the study. Attached is a copy of the assent document for you to keep in your records.

Agreement
- Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study.
- Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.
- You have been told that by signing this agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signature of interviewee: ___________________________ Date: _______

Printed name of interviewee: ___________________________

Researcher: ___________________________ Date: _______

500 Education
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0250
Phone: 419-372-8933
Fax: 419-372-8940
http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/edshift/

BSU/HSRB APPROVED FOR USE
REB ID # 231-928
EFFECTIVE 06/27/2013
EXPIRES 06/26/2018
APPENDIX C. HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

DATE: April 30, 2012
TO: Luis Fernando Macias
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: [317529-3] Impact of Parental Deportation on U.S Citizen Children's Educational Goals
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: April 27, 2012
EXPIRATION DATE: April 9, 2013
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 15 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on April 9, 2013. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsr@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.
Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Modifications Approved:

1. Interview the parents of the students and ask them what changes, if any, they have seen in their child's educational aspirations.

2. Interview the educators who introduced me to the families. These individuals have a strong rapport with the family, have prior knowledge about the deportation in the family and were mentioned in the initial interviews as support systems at school.

3. Interview the director of the migrant program and principal of the high schools the students attend. Their interview would not necessarily ask about the students previously interview but rather ask about their perspective as administrators who have had students who have lost family members as a result of deportation.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.
This approval expires on April 9, 2013. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or herb@bgusu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.