

BEYOND THE FIELDS: DIALOGICAL ANALYSIS OF  
LATINO MIGRANT STUDENTS' CULTURAL  
IDENTITY NARRATIVES AT OREGON  
MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

by

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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Among the children of immigrants in the United States, the children of migrant farmworkers are at significant risk of not finishing high school. These children deal with challenging socioeconomic conditions specific to their migratory lifestyle and living situations, which negatively impact their schooling experience. Migrant families' cultural diversity plays a significant role in the adjustment and integration of migrant students in schools as they transition into a host educational community. Conflicts between migrant families and schools sometimes occur because of cultural differences regarding the characteristics of interpersonal relationships, standards of behavior, students' cultural identity, and the objectives of education. This qualitative study examines cultural aspects that Latino migrant students describe as part of their cultural identity, including their experiences as migrants and participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program. The aim is to illustrate the cultural elements that Latino migrant students consider when making academic or professional choices after high school.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In 1966, the Title I-C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as Migrant Education Program (MEP) defined for the first time low-income children whose educational opportunities were critically diminished due to economic, social deprivation, and migrancy. Migrant children have always been present in rural communities throughout the United States since the 1920s; they work in agriculture, forestry or fishing activities, travel with their families and live in mobile homes on the outskirts of urban centers (Quintana et.al.,2009). Even though, the national government had rarely considered migrants' educational demands in the formulation of school policies, ESEA was the first legal platform that created a context to discuss the nature of their migratory patterns.

The U.S. congress passed ESEA in 1965 for being the main educational component of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program. Johnson declared that children across the United States were living in despair and extreme poverty and that it was the responsibility of all Americans to secure for them a bright and successful educational future (Olson, 1993). He stated that a piece of legislation by itself would not suffice the most structural and basic needs of low-income families and their children, but his idea was to empower students and families

through access to education; education as a tool that would ignite social change and increase community-based collaboration, especially in rural emerging migrant communities.

Before MEP or Title I-C, the statistics on migrant students were chilling. In the 1960s, according to the U.S. Department of Education only one in ten migrant students would be able to complete high school and transit successfully into higher education (Gibson, 2009). These low achievement rates were the result of the lack of awareness and effective mechanisms towards identification of students, their unique experiences, needs, and challenges. For example, some migrant children would start the school year without records of their previous academic work making it difficult for teachers and school personnel to pinpoint the learning challenges or disabilities (if any) that students had or were experiencing in new school environments. Another highly problematic aspect was the assumption among school personnel that migrant students were mostly Latinos of Mexican origin, undocumented, and unable to linguistically assimilate in schools in the U.S. The increasing influx of documented and undocumented migrant families from Mexico and their search for low-paid jobs in agriculture created a stereotype of who these families were. This simplification in the profile of migrant families made a negative impact for the identification of non-Hispanic families that tended to engage also in agricultural jobs (Gibson, 2009).

Finally, U.S. schools at the time did not count with enough bilingual staff to support recruitment, retention, and parental involvement efforts. Migrant families felt disconnected from schools' culture in the U.S. particularly in the case of Latino recent arrivals or newcomers. In schools in Mexico, Central, and South America, parents were more accustomed to entrust their children's education to teachers almost entirely; they tended to believe that teachers were in charge of all aspects of the pedagogical process (Gándara, 2000). Besides, in their home countries Latino migrant families did not find linguistic barriers (if they had Spanish as their main language or were not part of an ethnic minority) or vast cultural disparities between the school and the household making it easier to communicate concerns and expectations.

Due to the above, politicians and scholars tried to find explanations on the disengagement of migrant families at schools and the educational disparities among minority students and their peers. One of such attempts was known as the Culture of poverty paradigm. Lewis (1966) studied over the course of several years the social and family behavior of Puerto Rican families that were living in slum communities between San Juan, Puerto Rico and New York, United States. What he found was a striking behavior within members of these families that suggested that poverty was more than a mere collective social problem, but a psychological type of behavior that would render children who were part of this dynamic into a cycle of transgenerational poverty. For Lewis



(1966) was clear that the individual shortcomings of people who were living in poverty would set them up for failure, because their intrinsic values were going in direct opposition with the cultural values of the Western society at large such as, the idea of competence, individualism, and productivity. In a sense, families that were living in poverty could not adapt and move towards a middle-class assimilation, because of their lack of cultural capital. That is, they did not count with the cultural resources to negotiate and navigate their social role within a given society. These and other paradigms such as, the 'Cultural deprivation paradigm' developed by liberal social scientists from the University of Chicago served to explain migrant children's low academic achievements. As one can notice, culture has been at the center of the storm and as such, these paradigms would serve as the rationale for ESEA Title I compensatory and remedial programs such as MEP.

The cultural of poverty and the deficit approach were consistent in viewing cultural differences as the principal cause of poverty leaving behind more poignant and structural aspects like political and economic disparities of the society at large. In the 1970s and 1980s scholars and social activists across the nation questioned the culture of deficit paradigm for blaming migrant communities and other low-income families for their educational status and exclusion. Discussions around the 'hidden curriculum' in U.S. schools and the non-existent benefits of 'banking education' (especially in children from low-income and rural

backgrounds) became the key to devote attention on the importance of culture as the solution towards racism, structural silence, and underachievement of migrant students at schools. Nonetheless, migrant families' lack of cultural capital' remained at the core of the debate for being the main cause and the consequence of successful or failed assimilation in mainstream communities (Gándara, 2000). This was the ideological context in which MEP was born.

From the start, MEP as a Federal Title program has had detractors and supporters at the State and Federal levels among them politicians, social activists, and scholars. On one side, supporters believe it to be an excellent navigational tool for migrant families that contributes towards their effective cultural negotiation and adaptation in mainstream-host communities. The program offers supplemental services in education such as 24/7 accident insurance, Summer school, free-reduced lunch, referral to social and governmental agencies, tutoring, college readiness, and scholarship programs. On the other side, detractors criticize the program for helping to exacerbate the discourse around cultural differences between migrant students and their peers whether in traditionally white or African American communities; and in so doing it legitimizes the 'deficit ideology' in which dominant cultures stereotype low-income students based on what they 'lack' (Valencia, 2010). For instance, common stereotypes could be to assume that all migrant students are of Mexican origin, speak Spanish as their main language,

and they are therefore English as second language learners (ESLs), and undocumented (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003); when in reality migrant students can come from different ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds as diverse and rich as any other sub- group of students.

### **Migrant Education Program: Mission Statement and ‘modus operandi’**

In spite of the debate around MEP’s failures and successes throughout these years, it is undeniable that the program’s mission statement is identification, recruitment, and high school graduation of migrant students. The program counts with ‘migrancy’ assistants or recruiters whose solely task is to approach and enroll students once they arrive into a host community. Most MEP recruiters are bilinguals in Spanish since most migrant families that work in agricultural jobs are of Latino origin (Gibson, 2009). However, the demographic and economic changes in the U.S suggests that migrant families also come from places such as, Native American reservations across the nation, and the rural south: Delaware, Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, and they are also African American, Native American and Asian-American (U.S. Department of Education., ‘Migrant Education Program Report’, 2014). The bottom line is that communities are becoming more diverse which means that teachers are likely to have students from various ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious groups in

their classrooms at least one time in their careers (Howard, 2010). Latino migrant students are just one segment within this cultural diversity panorama. With the current political climate in the U.S after the election of President Donald Trump on January 2017, it is critical that we provide the general public with tools that will allow them to better understand the history of struggle, resilience, adaptation, and integration of Latinos in the U.S. On the same token, it is in our benefit to dwell deep into the institutional mechanisms that serve migrant students and the manner in which those could be improved.

### **Migrant Education Program in Oregon: Context of the Study**

In Oregon, MEP has also been vocal about the importance of increasing high school graduation rates among Latino migrant students especially those who come to the country with little opportunities to continue their education after high school. Challenges to get into higher education have many facets, but language barriers, legal status, and homelessness are some of the aspects that prevent Latino migrant students from attending colleges or getting into a professional career beyond their traditional work in the fields. Part of the mechanisms that MEP employs consistently across the nation in order to secure that students envision college as a reality are the Migrant Leadership Institutes. Leadership institutes in Oregon are hosted at Oregon State University (OSU) during the Summer as part of MEP's supplemental

services. Students attend a two-week long Summer camp that emphasizes cultural identity development, college readiness, job shadowing, artistic enrichment activities, Science, technology, and peer-bonding (Aduviri, Amas. Personal interview, June 2016). For most Latino migrant students, the Summer program is the first real chance they have to get to know a four-year institution before attending it. Aside from the normal activities within Oregon Migrant Leadership Institute (OMLI), students learn about a set of programs that could make more bearable the fact of being a Latino first generation college student with a migrant agricultural background. Programs like Trio, College Assistance Migrant Education Program (CAMP), and non-traditional -student groups on campus contribute with their services towards an understanding of the culture and expectations of Latino migrant students while they are attending college.

Given these type of tools, one can imply that MEP recognizes going to college or advancing one's education as an opportunity to attain overall well-being. In virtue of my internship experience for over a year with MEP in Oregon, I noticed that the soul of the program were the stories of resilience, perseverance, and persistence of these Latino migrant students. Whether as newcomers or American born, Latino migrant students used their stories and experiences to inspire others or revert unjust policies or processes at their schools. For example, Latino migrant students from a local high school in Oregon created a

multicultural day to celebrate all Latino identities, because they felt that there was an excessive attention on Mexican culture that was displacing the culture of other Latino migrant students in their school (Personal observation at Springfield High School, May 2016). Since these narratives of resilience constitute the core to understand educational practices and strategies to advance schools in the nation, the purpose of my study was to examine Latino migrant students' cultural identity narratives and experiences when they were part of Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP). Experiences like the summer camp for migrant students or their access to after school programs (available only to them) are some of the aspects that I asked my interviewees about. I also focused on how they considered their experiences and cultural identity when making academic or professional choices after high school completion.

The primary research question of my study was: *How does a group of former Latino migrant student participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) describe their cultural identity and personal or school-based experiences with the program, and how do they consider these experiences, and cultural identity in their academic or professional choices after high school completion?* The two secondary questions were: *What are the most common professional or academic choices Latino migrant students consider when they are on the verge of graduation, and what can these choices tell us in regards to their personal and school-based experiences with MEP?* Educational research on Latino migrant students

suggests that the experiences that minority students have at schools influence directly their educational performance, expectations on career choice after high school, and cultural identity development (Reyes III, 2007). These aspects are critical in that they provide the key to approach and better serve this population, particularly when students make their transition into Community colleges or four-year institutions. On the same token, research on identity development of minority students' states that elementary and secondary schooling experiences mark students' ways of being, their behavior, and learning capacities in the future. If students saw their teachers as positive and consistent role models, they will be more likely to communicate openly with faculty, negotiate strategies of inclusion, and see authority under different lenses (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003).

When conducting this research, I noticed that four-year institutions rarely employed in their analysis the cultural experiences of their (now) first generation college students while they were in high school and how those might influence them later on their educational endeavors. Indeed, academic advisers in four-year institutions focus on topics that although important do not make part of the universe of repertoires that influence directly students' choices after high school completion. As a student mentioned to me at one point during my research, knowing about financial aid, FAFSA, and other elements that would enable them to complete college is just half of the struggle. The

other aspect has to be with the clash identity that they faced first during their k-12 schooling experiences and later into their transition into a new educational environment with predetermined regulations, power relations, and necessities. In fact, if students made part of a subgroup, in this case Migrant students under MEP definition, their schooling experiences most certainly differed than the ones their peers had even if their classmates also identified as Latino; and in consequence, students' cultural identity was modified or developed under a different light, the light created by these personal/ school-based experiences.

### **Definition of Terms**

Provided that the terminology that appears in my study are fluid concepts in the social sciences, I found it necessary to provide a definition or clarification of concepts. There are six key terms defined below: Migrant, Latino, cultural identity, narratives, experiences, and deficit ideology.

*Migrant* here corresponds to the definition that offers Migrant Education Program (MEP). Migrant refers to a child whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher. This includes a student or legal guardian/parent who “in the preceding 36 months [3 years], in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work has moved from one school district to another.” (U.S. Department of



Education., Laws & Guidance, Elementary and Secondary Education-Part C, SEC 1309). MEP does not exclude from this definition those students who come from a different country as long as they or their parents engaged in any type of qualifying activity. Currently, in some schools in the area of Lane County, Oregon [site where I conducted my study], it came to my attention the lack of understanding among school personnel of who were migrant students. In some cases, teachers assumed that migrant students were exclusively those who recently arrived to the country (newcomers) excluding students who were born in the U.S. and have moved from one school district to another in pursuit of such qualifying jobs. In others, there was a racial profiling of migrant students where teachers assumed that Latino students were the only migrant agricultural workers in the area and therefore eligible to receive MEP services. This particular trend has caused difficulties for the recruitment of non-Latino migrant families and the understanding that teachers, administrators, and counselors should have on the needs and specific challenges of all migrant students regardless of their ethnicity in Lane County, OR.

The term *Latino* in the U.S has had complex connotations that have affected the lives of those who identify under such category. In my study, Latino means people coming from different countries in South, and Central America, Mexico, and certain places in the Caribbean such as, Cuba and Puerto Rico (Lukes, 2015). These countries share a colonial

history that brought the Spanish and Portuguese languages and other cultural traits (religion, gastronomy, and the mixing of indigenous, African, and Spanish or Portuguese blood in the case of Brazil). Precisely, I decided not to use the term Hispanic (Spanish speaker or with origins from Spain) when referring to Latinos, because it tends to confer a pan-ethnic identity that places them in one category “denying ethnicity, culture, and linguistic variation as well as historical and present day struggles of diverse people” (Walsh, 1991. P. 84).

I also acknowledged in this research the many socio-economic statuses that Latinos represent once they enter into the U.S. To begin with, Latinos might come from rural or urban areas within their home country, have had access or not to elementary, secondary, or higher education in their main language, be a member of a national ethnic-racial minority group, and speak or not Spanish as their primary language. All these elements greatly shape the migratory experience of Latinos in the U.S and are elements to consider whenever one needs to analyze the identity development of Latinos and their children, their narratives of resilience, struggle, and assimilation in the country. Along those lines, Latinos from rural backgrounds might have far less opportunities to integrate or attain upward mobility in American host communities. This means that they are most likely to not learn English based on their low levels of literacy in their native tongue, work in agricultural jobs, allocate on the outskirts of urban host communities,

and feel disconnected from their new communities at large (Torres, Howard, and Cooper, 2003).

Naturally, the linguistic assimilation of Latinos in the U.S. via the English language is a quite complex phenomenon. In fact, mass media in the U.S. has created the erroneous image of a Latino who speaks an acceptable an unacceptable type of Spanish. For instance, assuming that Latino migrants from rural backgrounds speak a 'slang' Spanish or a non-standard version has a tremendous impact on their lives in terms of the intrinsic social value that their linguistic capital has as a legitimate cultural asset. As Escobar and Potowski (2015) point out, the variation of a language is not merely regional or dialectal, but it also happens by social contact and as such, there is no wrong or right version of a language. The development of a language often occurs in the context of migration, power relations, and historical processes that are present in families, communities, and societies in general. In my research, I was consistent on enticing my participants to reflect and share via their narratives these and other type of dominant ideologies that have framed who they are and their possible impact on their educational choices. Ultimately, ethnic minorities ought not to be blamed for their lack of cultural capital inasmuch that those shortcomings correspond to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities that force them to migrate from their home countries in the first place.

The concept of *cultural identity* refers to one's sense of belonging to a primary cultural context. Aspects that determine affiliation are ethnicity, language, gender, gender identity, spiritual assumptions, age, life stage, ability and disability status, family, community, and nation (Ibrahim and Ohnishi, 1997). In that sense, the process of identity construction is not unitary because it includes the influence of positive and negative experiences that individuals have in specific social settings in correlation with their various affiliations. Societies should not assign to their members a particular identity, but individuals are the ones who adopt, change, exchange, and mold who they are, what their role is in a particular community, and under what mechanisms of interaction and negotiation they get to compromise their own sense of self. Even though, in societies around the world, communities establish labels for their diverse human groups, the real construction of identity occurs at a personal level and it is a way for the individual to regain his agency and uniqueness within the system.

For Latinos in the U.S. the process of cultural identity construction has been influenced for factors associated to migration, discrimination, and their ancestors' historical narratives of assimilation and integration in U.S. society (Bruner, 1993). These were some of the aspects that I took into account when asking my participants to report on their cultural identity narratives. However, this very concept of cultural identity was somewhat alien to them. Participants reported that culture was

expressed collectively and not on a personal level. They did not feel that both concepts could be necessarily tied. After the interview process, my participants had a different take on cultural identity and its influence on their present and future personal and academic choices. They saw that cultural identity defines and directs community and personal orientations in their quest to attain upward social mobility.

Two additional and complementary terms that greatly influence the process of cultural identity construction are *narratives* and *experiences*. Narratives are in principle an account of events, facts, and discourses that individuals experience in cultural contexts (Bruner, 2006). For Castells (2011), the societies today are integrated electronically through systems that facilitate communication and the pluralization of ways of life (economic and social globalization). Through globalization the emergence and coexistence of different ways of thinking is a reality that transforms the self and his interactions with the territory that inhabits. The U.S. is a clear scenario where struggles for representation, equality, and social justice do not occur only for its citizens, but for a diverse group of people who are also part of the American nation in one way or another. In this sense, the cohesiveness of U.S. society does not get facilitated through a set and concrete idea of what the American nation is, but what the nation represents for the diverse groups of people who share this space in time and history.

The so-called American dream narrative is certainly different for all immigrants and also for U.S. citizens at different times. It could represent opportunity, a better education, freedom, but also awareness of one's race, color, and kinship. Narratives here offer a window to the human life that no other research instrument could offer, because it contributes to situate experience in contemporaneity and in so doing connects the individual with larger groups and the dialectic of his or her time. The ultimate goal is to break the structural silence and dominant discourse that have traditionally undermined ethnic minorities like in the case of Latino migrant students within the American educational system.

*Experience* is indeed “the most deceitful term in philosophy and the social sciences” (North- Whitehead, 1927), in that it offers various meanings and accommodations and at the end could signify nothing. In my research, experience refers to particular and collective sensibilities that are born from “a gamut of cultural, political, biological, linguistic, and environmental factors” (Desjarlais, 1997). These sensibilities get communicated through reading, writing, storytelling, and narratives. One can say that narratives are the vehicles to communicate experience and make sense of the world. For Mattingly (1998), there are other forms of experience that are deeply ingrained and punctuate in what the author calls ‘struggling alone’. For example, when an individual belongs to an ethnic minority group, his experience occurs at a different level whether by himself or with others, because his experience carries different

meanings. With Latino migrant students, their Latino affiliation does not express in its totality the multiplicity of experiences they endure at home or school since aside from being Latino, they are also agricultural workers, English language learners, or any other type of affiliation they or others have ascribed to them. In consonance with this idea, the individual also structures his experience through meaning, value, and ends. These are the disaggregated parts of the experience. According to Throop (2009), Meaning is “a cognitive structure oriented to the past, value is an affective structure tied to the vicissitudes of the present moment in correlation with memory, while ends are volitional structures tied to goal-directed behavior towards an emerging future”, with that in mind, I offered my participants to portray in their own voice and create meaning to their experiences, memories, and mental images.

During my interview process, I tried to unveil the constitutive parts of the experiences Latino migrant students endured while being in MEP and the meanings they assigned to those occurrences through narratives. As the literature on narrative and experiences suggests (Bruner, 2003) the best way to elicit the voice of underrepresented communities is through dialogue. *Dialogue here was not only a mere communicational exchange, but it signified reflexivity, recognition of one’s rights, and agency.* For me it was important to notice that the dominant racial binary of U.S. society has marked for Latino migrant students a future and sealed fate that gets expressed in educational practices,

curriculum, classroom culture, and teachers' expectations. Latino migrant students are seen by the dominant culture as not college-bound, excessive familial, culturally different, poor, and bilingual by default. However, these students are more than what others get to assign for them and their experiences and narratives could better inform our practice as teachers, scholars, and concerned global citizens.

The final term is *deficit ideology*. The concept indicates a framework that scholars, educators, and policymakers in the U.S. have employed to explain school failure amongst low socio-economic status (SES) students of color. In short, African American, Latino, Native American, and so on. According to Valencia (2010), deficit thinking has been around from the early 1600s to the late 1800s, however it waxes and wanes according to the intellectual and scholarly climate of the times. The term at its core states that "a student who fails in school does so because of his/her internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn, and immoral behavior" (Valencia, 2010. P, 7). Indeed, school officials blame low-SES students for their cultural differences assuming that those are the direct cause of precarious educational attainment. Additionally, deficit thinking relies on ideas that come from sexism, racism, ableism, and discrimination of any sort. Important to notice is the prescriptive character that the framework has



and the manner in which it gets easily incorporated into schools, curriculum, and social programs in general.

One of the first publications that harshly criticized the *deficit ideology* was the book, *Blaming the Victim* (Ryan, 1971). Ryan observed that in American schools at the time, the so-called compensatory education programs were prone to build and advance the intellectual and cultural skills of the 'ghetto' child the conformity with an idea of 'whiteness superiority', instead of addressing the structure of schools in order to make them more inclusive environments. The author also states that the American society relies on 'social engineers' who must think in new ways to strengthen the ways of the 'Negro and Latino' families ignoring societal methods to eradicate racism. The expected consequences of this deficit ideology are low-educational attainment amongst 'children of color', transgenerational poverty, and I might add a condemned sense of self-worth that further replicates inequalities and deficiencies in the system.

Deficit ideology in this realm is critical in my study, because it has had unsurmountable effects on the lives of Latino migrant agricultural workers. To start, MEP makes part of the compensatory educational programs that appeared in the 1960s. MEP's rationale was to increase the graduation rates for migrant students through supplemental services in education. However, the early MEP did not address aspects of inclusion or advocacy for its recipients at schools. As I explained before,

MEP did not count with specific job appointments that could aid students in their quest towards the legitimization of their cultural identity. In fact, a recent mandate from the Federal government has provided local educational agencies with the funding necessary to create positions that will enable migrant families and students to successfully integrate within their host or arrival communities. Two of these positions are the Graduation specialist and the parental involvement advocate. The first position envisions to work collaboratively with high school counselors, academic advisers, and administrators towards an accurate representation and participation of migrant students in scenarios where they have been traditionally excluded such as, high tech career fairs, job-shadowing experiences or internships. The second position aims to involve parents into the educational experiences of their children by keeping them informed on strategies they could develop at home such as, asking their children what they want to study or how they could support their children financially and morally to advance into higher education.

In Lane County, OR, I found for the most part while conducting my study a lack of awareness among school personnel (mainly certified teachers) about migrant students under MEP definition. This included, the challenges migrant students face, understanding of their schooling- and personal based experiences with MEP and the school system, and ultimately what these narratives could tell about our humane approach to this particular population.

## **Migrant Students and their Cultural Identity Narratives: Target Population**

Since I did an internship in MEP for close to two years (2014-2016), I got to know migrant students from various ethnic backgrounds, but I specially bonded with those who self-identified as Latino, perhaps for our shared cultural heritage and linguistic familiarity (Spanish). Latino migrant students who were on the verge of high school graduation expressed a concern and uneasiness to their future and the professional or academic choices they could follow afterwards. According to Latino migrant students, most high school counselors ignored if they were affiliated or not to a Federal title program like MEP and what specific advantages or disadvantages this affiliation could bring for them potentially as they were transitioning into adult life (Informal conversation with Senior MEP students, March, 2015).

The idea to conduct this study came after an informal conversation with one of my student- advisees in Winter 2015. The student told me that a 'sense of convoluted identity' had emerged on her and that it was the result of being several labels in school, at home, and for us in MEP. At the end, she did not feel comfortable with any aspect of assigned affiliation that was placed on her persona. To solve this discrepancy, the student used our weekly meetings as a way to remember and reflect on what she felt was truly her passion and her cultural experience as Latina

in the U.S. I decided to employ this dialogical/ narrative approach later on in order to answer my primary research question.

In this study, I conducted a qualitative research that involved personal, one-on-one, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with four self-identified Latino migrant students who were enrolled at one point during their k-12 schooling experience in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP). Each of the participants was at least eighteen years old (18), recently graduated from high school in any school within Lane County, OR, and was expecting to enter either a community college, four-year institution or further advance their life outside of any type of agricultural work. This latest aspect, life 'beyond the fields' was critical for my participants because outside of MEP, they did not want to be further identified as migrant agricultural workers.

One can infer that the current political climate places a negative toll on the lives of migrant agricultural workers in general and of Latinos in particular. Therefore, it is my hope that Latino migrant students' cultural identity narratives contribute to inform those who support the lives, challenges, and richness of experiences that these students bring with them. Additionally, I expect that school officials gain interest and understanding on the cultural identity of Latino migrant students, so that we can all demystify who they are, what they want to become, and assist them in identifying and reaching their highest potential (real role) in their communities and in the American society at large. Ultimately, I

believe that my study will facilitate a pragmatic policy approach based on the individual experiences and narratives of these underrepresented students. I also assert that when traditionally, underrepresented communities have the opportunity to elicit their voices, society then opens the path towards educational reform and the deconstruction of patterns that encode privilege, power, and discrimination.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated before, Latino migrant students' cultural identity narratives and experiences have been largely ignored within k-12 educational settings across the U.S. (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003). Ignoring could come in the form of stereotyping students with labels that overemphasize their apparent lack of 'cultural capital' and similar practices. In the case of migrant students, host- communities, teachers, peers, and even their own families could expect of them not to pursue higher education but to keep working in the fields, have a family of their own, or return to their country of origin (Godinez-Ballón, 2015). This could certainly be one side of the spectrum of experiences that these students may decide to live or not. Consequently, students' personal accounts and narratives of resilience, struggle, identity, and persistence can tell us otherwise. This chapter explores the literature and related research that is necessary to understand better the experiences and cultural identity narratives of Latino migrant students as they make professional or academic choices after high school completion.

The review of literature is divided in two sections. The first section introduces fundamental theories on identity, cultural identity development, and social-cognitive career theory (SCCT). Auxiliary concepts in this section offer clarification on the importance of cultural

identity in career development choices. As I stated before, k-12 educational settings and four-year institutions tend to focus their analysis on the technicalities of the process that will lead students to successfully graduate such as, access to financial aid, scholarship applications, and institutional resources available to students at any given point of their educational experience. Even though, these aspects might be seen as fundamental and pragmatic, they need to go hand-in-hand with the exploring of experiences of students and their framing of cultural identity. Historically, Latino migrant students under MEP definition have been situational marginalized subjects, the legitimization of their school-based and personal experiences must be the stepping stone towards recognizing their cultural capital. In reality what one can see from the literature is that a biased idea on cultural capital prevents these students from getting the education and aids they need to succeed and further attain upward mobility. In this literature, the voices of the students are undermined by premises that gravitate under the framework of either culture of poverty, deficit ideology, or cultural identity as an aspect that only occurs among ethnic minorities, when in reality all humans in our social interactions create and redefine culture and identity.

The second section considers recent studies that specifically refer to the significance of exploring the cultural identity of Latino migrant students and their diverse experiences while in k-12 settings. As the

literature will show again, the experiences of Latino migrant students are a vivid reflex of negative ideologies that socially isolate them from having the same educational and career opportunities that other non-Latino migrant students might have. For instance, educational opportunities might vary by race and access to certain resources that Latino migrant students do not have based on their invisibility within the educational system. Even though, MEP as a Federal program offers resources for this population that any other federal program facilitates, the program has its own limitations. It cannot supplant services that public schools might be already offering to students, because all federal programs work under Title I budget. Here, as Title I-C (Migrant Education), MEP can only tackle the deficiencies in terms of services that cannot be offered to students through the regular school day. These limitations create on the students a set of experiences that in turn shape their process of cultural identity formation, and choices to advance their life beyond the fields. At the end, I will uncover the potential positive effects that students' cultural identity narratives might have in the guidance and exploration of their career and occupational choices after high school.

### **The Nature of Identity**

Identity is the representation of how an individual visualizes himself and how others see him (Salkind, 2002). Virtually, every way that a person employs to communicate and interact is an expression of one's



identity. To understand identity and its importance in education and culture, one needs to explore first the notion of self. The self (Côté, 2016) is a set of beliefs about one's attributes (characteristics), memories, and episodes that reaffirm such beliefs. Attributes and memories form a schema of oneself, or the mental structure that defines and guides how a person communicates with others (Trenholm and Jensen, 1988). For instance, a 15-year-old male migrant student might see himself as energetic and funny and he will then approach problems and schoolwork in that sense, with humor and positivity. These descriptors form the student's schema. However, those are not the only aspects that others might perceive of him as they all interact in a school setting. They might also see him as a person who lacks seriousness and cannot follow directions. Additionally, classmates and teachers can choose to see other aspects and judge him accordingly to his age or migratory status. These layers of the individual are called levels of representation (Hecht, 1993; Krieger, 1995) and they occur in three different facets: individual, relational, and collective.

The individual level refers to the personal self or the self-concept that a person creates for himself, for example: young, analytical, funny, discrete. The relational level describes a relationship that a person has with others and the manner in which this relationship determines identity. For instance, being a wife, sister or brother demands specific responsibilities and ways to conduct oneself. The last aspect (collective),

represents group membership and affiliations and their impact on the construction of self. For example, being Christian, Latino or liberal and the further interactions that come for being part of that group. This basic definition of identity demonstrates how crucial the interactions between the self, his contexts, and the representations that occur within determine orientation and how one conducts in regards to others.

### **Functions of Identity**

Identity provides individuals with a sense of belonging, direction, and self-esteem and confidence (Spencer-Oatey, 2016). First, having a sense of who one is (sense of belonging) constitutes the core of an identity and it contributes to guide an individual to others who share similar values, ideas, and expectations of life. For example, if a student knows that a critical part of his identity is to excel academically, he will pursue relationships that contribute to the attainment of this goal. On the same token, he will avoid relations that could affect negatively the reaching of his immediate or long term academic goals. The second aspect (direction) refers to one's efforts to pursue specific types of affiliations and to determine which ones are adequate or not. For example, when students decide to affiliate to a particular type of political group or club based on the idea they have of who they are and how they want to be perceived. In this sense, affiliation plays an important role, because it functions as another strategy where the individual is able to

explore who he is in relation to him and others in social contexts. In the case of Latino migrant students, they tend to affiliate based on salient aspects such as language, place of origin, home country, religious background or even political beliefs. These type of affiliations prove to be quite effective, because they do not only create a sense of cultural belonging, but a sense of historical and social purpose in the individuals (Valencia, 2010).

### **Theories and Models of Identity**

In the previous section, I clarified terms that facilitate the understanding of identity and its importance such as, self, schema, and levels of representation. In the following segment, I will explore theories and models that exemplify different approaches that capture the notion of cultural identity and its implications in educational settings.

### **Erik Erikson: Crisis and Continuity in the Identity Construction of the Self**

The importance of identity formation in affluent modern societies relies on cultural and historical needs that relate to psychological survival (Cote, 2016). Historically, human societies have relied on pre-established laws, norms, and roles that dictate the manner in which their members ought to conduct and interact with each other. As societies evolve, the fundamental answers to the identity question (who I

am, who I want to be) have become more crucial than before. For example, prior to the modern era, work and cultural roles were acquired traditionally through the observation of parents or strictly structured apprenticeships (Cote, 2016). However, it became more important for individuals to define for themselves these types of roles and even question main societal and political structures within their societies. As Brunner (2003) points out, this was and it is still a basic human desire and the most intrinsic condition of the self, to be able to find who he/she is in the society that he lives in. This process of self-recognition is not spontaneous, but obeys a series of events that mark and channel what psychologists have called the 'awakening of the being'.

Awakening occurs when an individual gains conscience of his own persona. According to Freud (1949), the first five years of a child are indeed the most important ones and will determine the formation of adult personality. That is, childhood determines the personality and identity outcomes that an individual will have. Along those lines, Erikson (1968) considers that processes regarding identity construction are deeply embedded within a life-course framework (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood). Individuals acquire, change, negotiate, and redefine who they are in a community in accordance to these specific life stages. An important aspect here is the ability of individuals to make choices, something that in the tradition of developmental and social psychology is considered as agency. When an individual has the ability to make

choices on his own, it is easier for him to reach an 'identity stability' or a viable interplay between the social and the psyche. This is fundamental for individuals in order to socially function.

Furthermore, a person needs to be able to "develop a workable social identity based on commitments that integrate the person into a particular culture providing a psychological sense of temporal-spatial continuity where his ego identity (id) can be nurtured" (Cote & Levine, 2002. P, 16). The idea that men are indeed 'social animals' reaches in Erikson its highest point. The individual (whether a child, teenager or adult) needs to sustain himself by becoming part and developing his identity within a social group. Ultimately, the success of the group depends on this individual process. Even though Erikson's works were based on his findings on youth who experienced war associated traumas during the second world war; the applicability of his idea about identity construction in the societies of today relies on the concept of 'concerted negotiation' that must exist between the self and his social world.

An additional paramount concept that complements the notion of concerted negotiation between the self and his social world is continuity or sameness (Erikson, 1968). First, it is important to establish that according to Erikson (1968) conflict is a necessary condition for continuity to appear. The 'core' of identity construction falls into the assumption that individuals must overcome in a dialectic sense (from beginning to end) several identity conflicts or crisis, so that they can

transit into their next life stage. The idea of conflict here corresponds to voluntarily letting go of aspects that must be resolved in a particular stage. Freud (1949) suggested the analogy of military troops on the march. As the troops advance, they are met by opposition or conflict. If they have success in winning a battle (resolving the conflict) then most of the troops (conscience of the individual) will be able to move on to the next battle (stage). However, if the individual encounters a greater difficulty at any particular point, his troops will remain behind to fight and he will not be able to go on to the next confrontation (stage).

Now, for continuity or sameness to appear, Erikson spoke of functional integrations between these crises and the identity core of an individual. Continuity is then a sense of cohesiveness in the self that transcends over time and generates stability (Erikson, 1968).

Interestingly, continuity and cohesiveness cannot and will not be accomplished by the individual alone, but through a society's concerted actions in the form of inclusive educational settings that acknowledge individuals' identity formation construction and negotiations within themselves and the community they live in. In the case of Latino migrant students there is a strong sense of community that frames their process of identity construction and replication. As students migrate from one place to another in search of qualifying jobs, they tend to develop strong ties with their community of affiliation. Whether relatives or mere acquaintances. These aspects of continuity and cohesiveness are crucial

when approaching the school-based or personal experiences of Latino migrant students.

### **James Marcia & Ruthellen Josselson: Identity Construction as a Life Time Ongoing Process**

Following and building upon Erikson's theory, Marcia (1993) explored the development of identity in two particular dimensions, 1. An individual's conscience of an identity crisis and its resolution, and 2. The commitment with a sole identity that unfolds after an individual has explored diverse ways of being with himself and others. The novelty of Marcia's model relies on its expansion of Erikson's dichotomy that considers crisis and confusion as the main elements to attain a definitive or committed identity. Indeed, the focus of Marcia's theory is on the processes that serve the purpose of construction of identity. For example, family background, personality, socialization experiences associated with educational contexts, and cultural development patterns or affiliation (Torres, Howard, and Cooper, 2003). In this sense, for identity to occur, an individual does not need to pass necessarily for several life stages in a lineal time frame. Most importantly, an individual can have a committed identity, even though, he still needs to negotiate and understand his past, present, and future choices.

As one can notice, the crux of Marcia's theory is based more on the intrinsic value that choices have as processes that determine identity.

The author defined also four identity statuses that are directly related to individual choice-making: Identity foreclosure, diffusion, moratorium, and achievement. A foreclosed individual has not necessarily experienced a crisis of identity but in any case is committed to a particular type of identity. Marcia determined that these individuals tend to not separate from their families and hold onto traditional social norms without questioning them (Torres, Howard, and Cooper, 2003, p 11). This approach was developed to explain the identity structure of African-American and Latino individuals. However, foreclosed individuals attain their identity regardless of race or ethnic origin, even though these two aspects remain at the center of the discussion. With Latino migrant youth for example, individuals might gravitate from one identity model to another especially when they have lived in the United States for more than five years (Escobar and Potowski, 2015).

Now, In the case of diffused individuals, they have not committed to a particular type of identity, nor have they experienced a crisis related to the construction of their identity. That is to say, they present low levels of past choice but high levels of expected-future commitment (Cote and Levine, 2002, p, 18). Usually, these individuals pass through these dimensions (crisis and development of identity) by the time they have completed college. The individual in moratorium tends to experiment with various ways of being or emulate others. Marcia considered these type of individuals as to be able to exhibit active choice-making abilities,



but low formed commitments. Finally, after an individual has experienced a crisis that forced him to make a choice and commitment to an identity, Marcia considers them as identity achieved or someone who expresses firm commitments for present or future roles after passing for a period of conscious choice-making (Cote and Levine, 2002, p, 18).

In the case of Josselson (1996), the identity development process occurs in similar fashion. First, it is important to notice that he based his findings on extensive research conducted on the development of identity as pertains to women. In this regard, it is important for my literature to include this model of identity construction, because most Latina migrant suffer a process of assigned identity. This assignation stereotypes their choices and the type of experiences they endure in school settings. Indeed, through the employment of Marcia's framework and model, Josselson found the manner in which these four identity statuses were relevant for women attending college. He called the first category of women as 'purveyors of heritage'. These women had a single-minded determination in order to attain their goals, had not explored much on their own (at least outside of their family circle), and greatly valued familial norms and expectations.

The second group of women or 'pavers of the way', believed that their occupations and educational choices were a true expression of themselves, and they distanced from familial values and their childhood assigned or otherwise identities. The third group or 'daughters of crisis',

were women who were in a constant search of an “idealized perfection” (Torres, Howard, and Cooper, 2003, p,12), and therefore needed to experiment constantly in the way to present and conduct themselves. The last group of women or ‘identity diffusions’ were those women that presented a low ego development (sense of self), had high anxiety, low self-confidence, and they “tended to withdraw from situations” (Torres, Howard, and Cooper, 2003, p,12). Josselson saw that this last group of women were the ones that seemed more vulnerable, powerless, and they were associated in one way or another with being part of an ethnic, racial or cultural minority. These aspects of vulnerability are important to analyze as Latino migrant students self-define and construct their own identity, because those will influence their future social interactions as they transit to four-year institutions, colleges or the labor market.

Marcia and Josselson’s frameworks on identity development were fundamental, because they advanced the understanding of aspects that were influential for the construction of the self and his interactions in social settings, specifically educational institutions. Now, it is important to notice that their theories have served as a model to comprehend the self in context, his choices, and opportunities. However, these models did not offer at the time a cross-cultural comparison with underrepresented segments of U.S. society (Cote and Levine, 2002). In a sense, fundamental theories on identity development in educational settings presented a higher grade of studies with subjects who were middle-class

Caucasian/white students (Tamura, 1993). African American, Latino, and Native American were not included. In part, because a new subfield was charged with the responsibility to analyze the construction of identity in regards to cultural differences. According to Tamura (1993), in the case of Asian Americans, it was difficult for the field of developmental psychology to separate itself from the idea that these culturally diverse individuals needed to be scrutinized under their cultural particularities as a main factor. Besides, 'culturally diverse' individuals were rare in U.S. campuses during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. In the following section, I continue with the exploration of identity development as it was defined through the works of Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser (1993).

### **Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser: Identity Development and Education**

Chickering and Reisser (1993) have been a major force in studies regarding higher education, student affairs, and counseling. In the book *Education and Identity*, Chickering highlighted seven critical vectors of identity development in college students and the manner in which educational practice could be designed to promote student development. He saw the tremendous responsibility that educational settings had when it came to contribute to the well-being of students, specifically those who were part of underrepresented communities. He was also a pioneer scholar who acknowledged the correlation between financial

hardships, commuting to school, and academic performance for the so-called 'commute students'. Important to notice here are the analyses he made on structural causes that hinder negatively the academic performance of students rather than their cultural differences or particularities in regards to their peers. The author based more of his findings on personal experiences as college student. He mentioned that "a lot of his egalitarianism and concern about responsiveness to individual differences came out of his personal history" (Garfield, 1986, p.485).

For Chickering then, the process of identity construction during late adolescence is critical for the consolidation of a committed or adult identity. He considers that educational settings work as the force behind the construction of identity. Indeed, one of the primary social relationships that a child develops is through diverse role models at school (Chickering, 1993). These models (teachers, youth mentors, counselors, administrators) will determine factors that are associated with negotiation and understanding of authority. When students see their culture represented in classroom practices, curriculum, and school aesthetics, a positive sense of identity develops. They are able to comprehend and accept authority better, and even understand their own limitations in terms of shared amounts of power (Chickering, 1993). Interesting here is the notion of agency as a fundamental construct of identity, a reiterative aspect that has been studied by previously

mentioned scholars. Typically, educational settings that aid students to perform at their intellectual and cultural capacity or otherwise readiness level establish the ground for the first vector or ‘developing of competence’ necessary aspect for the emergence of a committed or adult identity.

Developing of competence refers to the promotion of social and cultural abilities that students need to acquire academic or professional desired goals (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). The authors state that academic or professional success is due to personal achievements, pre-college experiences, extracurricular activities, and the acknowledgement of students’ particular identity formation process within the educational setting. That is, success depends on a fruitful interplay between the culture of the school, recognition of one’s culture, and positive and consistent experiences that are geared towards the advancement of a sense of belonging. The rationale behind considers the student as an agent of change. All students are important in their differences, struggles, accomplishments, and processes of self-identification. This aspect is highly important when talking about different sub-groups of students who coexist within any educational setting.

The second vector ‘managing emotions’ refers to the process where individuals acquire their capacity to deal with anger, fear, frustration, and anxiety (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). During this process, students learn how to direct strong emotions through valid channels by

recurring to the help of others (mostly adults). In the third vector or 'moving through autonomy to interdependence', students learn how to deal with relatives, keep their connections to them while becoming independent. Usually, the construction of identity is difficult for students who come from traditional family values and need to break apart from conventional structures in order to find themselves within a new educational or social context. Processes of the fourth vector or 'developing mature interpersonal relationships', are associated with the capacity that an individual has to create intimacy with others. The growing of tolerance and appreciation towards one's and others' differences appear during this time. Traditionally, the development of this fourth vector corresponds to the mindset that a counselor could find in an individual near graduation in a college setting. However, students who come from communities where they needed to mature quickly in order to provide financially and emotionally for their household, could come to a college environment with an already well-constructed sense of who they are.

The fifth vector or 'establishing identity', indicates a positive sense of self that an individual has in regards to his body, sexual orientation, gender, and any other type of affiliation (language, ethnicity). In here, college students usually get to know what type of cultural clubs on campus they should join and what type of symbolisms they ought to use to be identified with a specific membership. According to the authors,

students come to colleges with a predetermined sense of self that was developed while they were in k-12 educational settings. Again the idea of correlation comes into mind when talking about the manner in which all acquired educational experiences continue to affect the construction of identity throughout one's life. The sixth and seven vectors or 'developing of purpose' and 'developing of integrity' (respectively) are aspects that begin once an individual reaches adolescence, but they never fully end. An individual will develop and adjust his life to personal interests, goals, and the personalization of values always (Reisser, 1995). That is, the construction of identity as defined through these last two vectors never finishes. Students will come before, during, and after college with these identity dilemmas, so they can create commitments, affiliations, and ideas that will allow them to function within their communities and negotiate their multiple ways of being. Now, these models help to explain the complexity that occurs within the process of identity construction and the awareness that counselors and academic advisers need to have if they intend to foster the educational endeavors of their student advisees.

### **Simon: Self-aspects Model of Identity**

Simon (1999) details different characteristics that contribute to the creation of self-concept. These features reflect beliefs and attitudes that individuals hold as true and become the result of multiple memberships or relational interactions. The following chart elaborates on the idea of

‘traits’ (characteristics) that create self-concept and corresponding communicative behaviors.

Self-Aspects of Maria	Corresponding Attitudes of Maria	Corresponding Communicative Behaviors of Maria
Personality traits	“I’m rather shy.”	Does not participate much in class; is quiet during classroom discussions
Abilities	“I’m an excellent cook.”	Likes to have friends over for dinner
Physical features	“I’m too fat.”	Wears large T-shirts to hide body features
Behavioral characteristics	Stays up late at night and finds it hard to rise early in the morning	Does not answer phone before 11:00 a.m.
Ideologies	Republican	Posts conservative memes on social media sites
Social roles	Project manager at work	Speaks to subordinates in terms of giving directions and orders
Language affiliation(s)	Fluent in English and Spanish	Speaks English at work and Spanish at home
Group memberships	Member of local Baptist church	Wears a cross pendant

**Figure 1.** Examples of a person’s self-aspects according to Simon (2004)

As one can notice, not all self-aspects carry for ‘Maria’ (fictitious name) the same weight as she relates and interacts with others. For example, a



bilingual person in English and Spanish can choose to speak only one of the languages at certain times, and in case he/she has the need to do so.

Additionally, people vary in how much of their self -aspects overlap or integrate with one another. For some individuals their religious beliefs or affiliations are close whereas for others those can be merely coincidental. For instance, an Orthodox Catholic embraces not only his religiosity, but also his national identity if he comes from a country where the major religion is Catholicism. In places like Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia being religious is associated with being Colombian, Ecuadorian or Bolivian, because religious affiliation is an important cultural aspect about themselves. To expand on that notion, Simon employed four concepts that describe how we perceive and examine our self-concepts. The first concept is valence or “positive and negative feelings” (Simon, 1999). For example, Maria (the fictitious person from Figure 1) can confer positive feelings to her bilingualism and religious affiliation. Whereas her overweight can carry a negative valence and therefore she will try to hide this aspect. Simon (1999) asserts that is natural for individuals to exhibit only their positive traits and ignore those aspects that they dislike.

In the case of College students for example, students’ level of maturity influences the notion of valence (Brunner, 2003). An individual can start his college experience believing that being funny or sarcastic is the right way to interact with others. However, as he spends more time

with classmates, he could discover that people do not take him seriously and disregard what he says. Then, the student will change or negotiate (in his interactions with those individuals) these two characteristics (funny and sarcastic), so he can still be accepted and part of the group.

The second concept is centrality. It refers to the extent in which a self-aspect is crucial or central when one describes himself. For example, Maria might see her political affiliation as more important than other aspects of her persona such as, being a good cook or the member of a local Baptist church. In this sense, she will pursue affiliations that contribute to reflect this central aspect of her persona (political affiliation). Naturally, Maria can change centrality regarding the type of interactions that she has with others and the social context where interactions occur. Along those lines, auxiliary concepts that contribute to understand centrality are *core* and *peripheral*. Core refers to the most important personality or affiliation trait one needs to show to reinforce his identity. For example, a liberal person will most likely emphasize this aspect every time a political conversation arises, so others will define him as such. On the contrary, peripheral relates to those aspects that are hardly noticeable in a person. These peripheral aspects can be self or society-assigned. For instance, Maria can hardly ever notice her hair shape or length as being critical or core aspects of her persona, whereas for others those two elements could be associated to preponderant elements like race or ethnicity. In this regard, people create stereotypes

(conventional, oversimplified images of others) based on assumptions of those peripheral aspects they see in others like all Black people have curly hair or Latinos are short and so on.

The third and fourth concepts are currency and actuality. Currency represents another perceptual concept. It refers to how individuals perceive certain aspects of themselves fitting in time (Simon, 1999). That is, some aspects of the self that were important in the past will not be as important in the future as the person continues to define his identity. Finally, actuality has to do with the distinction that a person makes between the characteristics he has in the present and the ones that he would like to have in the future. Important here is the notion of desired aspects. Marcia (1993) considers that college students fulfill this actuality aspect in their adult life if two conditions are met. First, students who had positive educational experiences where their identity and process of self-discovery were taken into account will develop direction. They will know exactly what they want to accomplish (professionally or academically) and what are the steps to attain those goals. The second condition is the existence of role or mentoring models where they get feedback and the oral experiences of others who underwent a similar process of self-discovery of identity construction. For example, current Summer programs that are offered to Latino migrant students around the nation use these two conditions as a context to

develop direction and also influence students' college choices in the future.

### **Culture and Identification: Beginnings**

Culture is a concept that has a large arrange of theoretical definitions in the social sciences. For the purpose of this literature review, culture is understood as the set of practices and frames that demonstrate affiliation to a group (Collier, 1996). At its most elemental and simplistic level, culture is also what defines and connects individuals in a system of symbols and meanings. For instance, some of the key domains that contribute towards one's sense of belonging and affiliation within a culture are language, ethnicity, race, age/developmental stage, migration status, social class, sexual orientation, gender, spirituality, geographical environment, ability/disability status, composition of the family, and birth order (Ibrahim and Heuer, 2016). In general, these factors do not only determine identity, but recreate a sense of 'we-ness' that develops as communities get to interact with each other on specific social settings. For example, the fact that most people within societies get to associate others to a particular group occurs almost imperceptibly. For Castells (1997), it is clear that humans notice almost instantly differences as a basic way to confer meaning to the other and oneself. Some differences can be evident like skin color, height, weight or gender, whereas other differences remain hidden and are more difficult to assert.

Castells (1997) also suggests that communities after asserting group and individual differences develop highly sophisticated nets of power where there are adequate and inadequate structures for being in the world. These nets of power are the ones that determine which group gets to exert dominance over the other and the type of values that legitimate their preponderance. In the case of the U.S., Castells indicates that a look on the foundational history of the nation sheds lights on values that were created and incorporated as part of the main cultural framework of what being an American meant. This process then got reproduced from time to time within specific social constituents. Amongst those, schools, families, and politics. Individuals learned how to become 'good citizens' and what exactly were the symbolisms that represented such ideal. The English language as the main communicational vehicle, being white, Christian, and egalitarian were some of the aspects that were collectively concerted. For Anderson (1991), nations are indeed these imagined communities where multiplicities of identities dialogue to define and redefine constantly what the nation is at its core. Currently, the concept of culture and nation transcends geographies that are local and situate the individual of the millennial in a global setting in which is valid to become about anything (Castells, 2003).

The study of cultural identity must occur then within the context of globalization. For pioneer scholars on identity theory, identity construction was more like a biological and psychological process like in

the case of Erikson with his 'life stages' theory, and later on with Marcia (1993) and his focus on choices and the processes that lead to them. However, as Castells (2003) points out, the construction of identity in the societies of today reveals a collective and individual process that transcends boundaries of any sort. Therefore, an auxiliary term that aided in the formulation of a theory on cultural identity is migrancy or the ability that an individual has to travel and settle in a host-community within a matter of hours (Castells, 1997).

Migrancy happens virtually or physically. The first idea refers to the notion of people supporting an idea that might seem remote, but in reality is close to what they have experienced or encounter in their own communities. This virtual or physical connection is what generates transcendence and cultural identification. Naturally, mobilization is one of the most ancient process in human history. People used to move from their community or place of origin for diverse reasons. Sometimes, these mobilizations occurred during specific times, epochs or cycles like in the case of harvest and war. Nowadays, people move for reasons that could be more personal oriented and obey to a choice-making process that is not necessarily collective. For example, during the middle-ages migrancy occurred as a result of diseases that were deadly within specific territories (Toynbee, 1976). Entire communities made the choice of moving because it was the right thing to do to secure survival. Migrancy

today happens because a different type of survival has emerged, the survival of individual choices over collective or family ones.

Toynbee (1976) further recognizes that migrancy has been a very complex and untraceable process in regards to its measurable effects on culture. There is not a sole explanation that could potentially determine why some individuals tend to migrate more than others. And one can also make the argument that migrancy has not changed substantially over time. People still migrate for the same or extended reasons like they did in the past. However, the main difference between migrancy before and today lays on the rapidness in which the process can occur.

Naturally, the same constants persist, there are tangible political and social effects on migrants' culture (Castells, 1997). When people migrate virtually or physically into a new context, they tend to develop a sense of connectedness to this new place. They get to engage in an intrinsic and extrinsic dialogue where their cultural values are put at test, so that they can re-accommodate who they are in the new context. They come with a set identity or sense of who they are in their home communities and now they must negotiate that primary identity with the one they need to portray to others.

### **Cultural Identity Theory**

Initial theories on cultural identity studied it as a two-separated phenomenon (Brunner, 1996). On one side of the spectrum was culture

and on the other side identity. As Brunner points out, this necessity towards channeling concepts like cultural identity within a particular box does not allow the researcher to see the wholeness of the concept that is being studied. Cultural identity is then multidisciplinary and multifocal and according to Brunner (2003) cannot be studied otherwise. In educational studies, the concept of cultural identity was not entirely novel. The Social Development Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1986) sets in this regard one of the main reasons to understand the manner in which cultural identity and learning occur in context and how one affects the other in an interdependent or symbiotic type of relation.

Vygotsky (1986) considers that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. That is to say, social learning precedes development where “every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapshychological)” (Crawford, 1996, p. 43-62). This idea is consistent in Collier (1996). He asserts that in the child his cultural identity develops consistently through prior social experiences whether at home or any other social setting. Education does not simply occur within the classroom, but it is rather holistic in nature. The child learns, fabricates, and replicates knowledge at all times in the same manner that identity commitments are created and disseminated throughout one’s life, whether at home, school, or the playground. For



Collier (1996) all forms of being and processing of knowledge are valid. The notion of identity that an infant has is relevant and it will remain as such in the commitments and affiliations that he develops later in life. Children are not humans in the making, but beings with world-views and cultural identity on their own. This aspect has been especially significant to advance currently studies on cultural identity in children.

Furthermore, Collier (1996) first introduced a clear definition on what cultural identity is. His notions on the concept were later extended by Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau (1993). Cultural identity then reflects “the ontological assumption that individuals enact multiple cultural identities constituted in and through discourse with other” (Moss and Faux, 2006, p. 22). In other words, cultural identity is not a single unit. There is not only one cultural identity like in the case of nationality. In Political Science, an individual ascribes his identity and cultural commitment to a particular set of values like being Mexican, American or Native American. Naturally, the concept of being in the political context has specific meanings like speaking a certain language or believing in a particular ideology (Anderson, 1991). Even though an individual can be part of more than one community, there are power interactions that assigns him to a certain category and nothing else. In this sense, belonging and commitment, two important notions in the concept of cultural identity, are always determined by what one is in terms of his class, race or ethnicity. In other words, it is the society in its might that

assigns identity to the individual, social identity. This is true for the political effects of the nation-state. However, for the theoretical purposes of this study, I assume the all-encompassing notion of cultural identity as more than one identity that can be negotiated, subverted, and changed in regards to the context in which arises. This concept aligns more with the anthropological, ethnographic, and pedagogical tradition.

Multiple cultural identities emerge in the self from structures and beliefs of the nation-state of residence. These identities also are coming into contact and arise through broader international structures and social processes, histories, institutions, and ideologies pertaining to ethnicities, social classes, and genders (Collier, 1996). That is, cultural identity can be global and local at the same time and in so doing, it contributes towards the generation of extended group affiliations. The case of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN in Spanish) puts into context that a cultural identity, in this case affiliation to a particular group, transcends boundaries and can touch individuals living in distant geographies. The EZLN has fought from the Southernmost state of Chiapas in Mexico since 1994. The group took its name from Emiliano Zapata who was an agrarian reformer and commander of the Liberation Army of the South during the Mexican revolution in 1910 (Wallerstein, 2004). The ideology of ‘Zapatistas’, reflects libertarian socialism as well as ‘indigenismo’. Indigenismo is a political ideology from South and Central America that advocates for a more dominant social and political

role for indigenous in countries where they constitute a majority of the population (Encyclopedia Britannica, web-access, July, 2017). Both ideologies (Libertarian socialism and indigenismo) are not conflicting, but in the case of the EZLN found a common ground to coexist. That is, the universal idea of oppression and social justice. Now, with the appearance in recent decades of anti-globalization movements around the globe, the EZLN has won international recognition on its quest, because its premises are 'fundamentally and universally human' (Wallerstein, 2004).

### **Cultural Identity: Implications**

Inter-cultural encounters between individuals are always uncertain (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1984). Nobody can say for sure what would be the outcome when a communicational exchange occurs. If everything goes fine individuals would still feel realized and comfortable with the idea they have about themselves. On the contrary, if the communicational exchange was plagued with bias, judgment, and oversimplified images, then identity and the self will become affected and distorted. In the previous section, I spoke about different models and theories of identity construction. I tried to create a framework that could be easy to follow in order to understand the importance for the study of identity. I also signaled the complexity of aspects that relate to identity and the self in context like cultural framework, centrality, valence, and so on. In the following section, I attempt to describe the consequences of

having one or multiple cultural identities. The analysis consists on the explanation of associated variables that affect the nature and progression of cultural identity in interpersonal interactions such as, ethnicity, age, gender, and sex.

### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity, in regards to cultural identity, refers to “the depth of commitment to certain shared patterns of communication, underlying beliefs, and philosophy of life with a particular cultural group: (Ting-Toomey, 1981, p.383). Usually, people believe that a person belongs to an ethnic group because they share aspects that are similar to the ones other members of that ethnicity exhibit. For example, speaking a particular language or behaving in a certain way. However, it is not enough to speak the language or ‘look alike’. In reality, the adoption of a specific ethnicity occurs by choice. To clarify, while having a particular height or skin color are aspects that one was born with, ethnicity is a becoming process. The individual will start to act and talk with a specific demeanor, and in the end, he will feel more socially aware of who he is and his affiliation with that ethnic group. Gudykunst and Hammer (1984) studied the interactions between African Americans and white individuals within a college environment. They found that their ethnic heritages had an influence on the use of question-asking, self-disclosure, nonverbal affinity seeking (closeness), and behaviors conveying attraction or liking. The finding suggested that when people

with two different cultural identities interact, they tend to communicate using styles that reflect their traditions and by default their ethnic affiliation.

## **Age**

Some cultural identities and self-aspects are more stable than others and not likely to change as much such as, nationality or gender. At the same time, boundaries between cultural groups could not be malleable like in the case of Jewish or Muslim cultural identities (Hummert, 1999). However, in the case of age, cultural category views it as fluid. All individuals will pass through several life stages. For example, being a thirty-year-old has different implications that does being middle-aged or a senior. The discussion on cultural identity then is geared towards intergenerational differences such as, comparing baby boomers with Generation Xers or Millennials (Hummert, 1999). The first group of individuals, baby boomers are those who were born between the 1940s and 1960s. The term refers to an increase in the demographics of infants during these particular years. The second group, Generation Xers, are those who were born from the late 1970s to early 1980s. McAllister Ulrich (2003) in his book, *GenXegesis: Essays on Alternative Youth (Sub) Culture*, states that members of Generation X were children during a time of shifting of societal values. Economic changes in the American culture like more women joining the workforce and the increasing of divorce

rates were some of the contextual aspects that influenced the world-view of people from this generation. Naturally, these changes did not impact all age groups in the same manner and that is precisely the notion that cultural identity expands and reconciles in multicultural studies and research. Finally, Millennials are those who were born in the mid-1990s to early 2000s. Contextual changes like major access in the usage of digital technologies and communications affected this generation substantially as well as their approach on politics and environmental issues at a more global scale.

### **Gender and Sex**

For purposes of this literature review, sex refers to possessing the biological characteristics that make one male or female, or having the biological male or female organs (McCornack, 2007). In the case of gender, it refers to a more flexible identification that includes not only biological but social components. Thus, gender includes psychological, cultural, and social traits that could be associated with sex, but not all the time. For example, a person could be a woman, because she was born as such, yet her gender orientation could go in opposition with her biology. Indeed, many people consider gender as the most important aspect of their cultural identity, because it contributes to shape who they are and who they want to become. Lippa (2005) considers that gender is learned, because a person's notion of male and female has been shaped

from an early age. The society one lives in assigns norms, structures, behaviors, and patterns that get to be more associated with being a man or woman and it asks people to portray themselves accordingly. However, in societies where gender is a fluid concept that goes beyond the traditional male or female assignation, an individual can be several behaviors that do not necessarily represent human gender. For example, 'Maoris' will say that their gender is a representation of a brute and soft energy within nature and the animal world. In other words, the individual is not a set of learned behaviors, but the representation and interplay of several energies (Rewi, 2013).

### **Negotiation Between Identities**

Negotiation refers to the ability that an individual has in terms of ascribing or changing at ease from one cultural identity to another (Hedge, 2000). Negotiation oftentimes occurs, when an individual migrates from his place of origin and arrives into a new culture. The natural instinct of the individual in order to preserve his self-concept and esteem is to maintain at all costs who he is (primordial identity). However, there is also the need of belonging, so one makes choices as to what aspects of his 'traditional self' he can maintain and for how long. Hedge (2000) describes this phenomenon as the 'nostalgic connection' with the past. The nostalgia can flow in the form of certain symbols and artifacts that represent one's ethnic group or culture of origin. In the

case of Asian Indian Women for example, Hedge (2000) wrote that women struggle to negotiate their multiple cultural identities once they arrive in the U.S. First, because being a woman in their culture of origin is different than being a woman in the States. Second, women are expected to maintain both traditional values from their ancestors and also become 'Americanized'.

Third, these women need to show that they are still holding onto traditional values and religiosity, while learning how to become more mainstream-like.

This dichotomy that the society creates in individuals having to decide between identities has negative implications for migrant children. Children feel that they need to ascribe to a sole identity by disregarding other ones. In this case, the individual will ascribe more likely to the mainstream's cultural identity, so he can be part of his community cultural, political, and social dynamics. As I make my case in the following chapters of this study, individuals should not put aside aspects that are fundamentally present within their cultural identity. On the contrary, receiving communities should promote the understanding of diverse cultural identities and the manner in which all of them are significant for migrants or people with a particular ethnicity self-assignment.

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)**



Individuals make choices that affect them every day. Some choices are rational and others are not. Sansot (1990), considers that choices in general (whether rational or emotional) represent individuals' self-concept, agency, and context. If a person decides to become a medical doctor and he finally reaches this goal, it could be due to the interplay of different favorable factors that led him to that point. For example, it could be that within the cultural context where that person was born, being a doctor was an ideal occupation because of the high wages and social prestige. Family members could also have a direct influence. Perhaps, his immediate relatives were able to attend college and it was only natural for the student to pursue this dream. After all, humans learn by imitation and research demonstrates that individuals whose parents had access to and graduated from college are more likely to engage in the path of pursuing a professional career (Thompson and Dahling, 2012). To understand the variables that enhance or contribute to career development, SCCT identified two level of analysis. The first level corresponds to cognitive-person variables or those that enable people to influence their own career development such as, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. The second level examines extra-person (contextual) variables that enhance or constrain personal agency (Thompson and Dahling, 2012). Even though both levels of analysis are crucial, SCCT has traditionally emphasized on cognitive-person variables

alone rather than important environmental, social, cultural, and economic variables (contextual) that influence the individuals' career behavioral attitudes. In the following section, I attempt to describe objective and perceived aspects that influence career development for individuals and their implications in the process of career-choice making. Thus, it will be demonstrated how cultural identity plays indeed a significant part in the type of career related choices students make.

### **The Environment and its Implications on SCCT: Objective and Perceived Aspects**

Vondracek et.al, (2014) indicates that examples of objective factors include the quality of the educational experiences and financial support available. Educational experiences are those that relate with the type of instructional support, academic content, and mentoring that students had while they were attending schools. For example, most high school students in the U.S. have the opportunity to attend programs where college or career readiness components are widely explored. Service learning projects, job-shadowing, college and occupational mentoring offer to students the scenario to explore their potential academic and professional interests. Most teachers build these environments within the academic content of classes already offered at schools. The final goal is to familiarize students with the choices they could make after their schooling cycle ends.

Regarding financial support or objective factor, Brown (2012) suggests that counselors look into contextual or environmental variables that are also considered as barriers. Environmental aspects that affect students in their career development process are ethnicity, gender, age, social class, economic, and migratory status. As it was noticed in the previous section, most of these aspects correspond to the formation of cultural identity. And the process does not happen equally for all students. For example, students who live in emerging migrant communities may still be acculturating to new contexts and establishing their ethnic identities, which in turn impacts their ability to engage in planning for their future (Gonzalez, Stein, and Huq, 2012). Even though, context affects the individual in various positive and negative ways, humans are not mere 'passive repositories'. In a sense, the effect of a particular objective factor greatly relies on how the individual reacts and responds to it (Vondracek et.al, 2014).

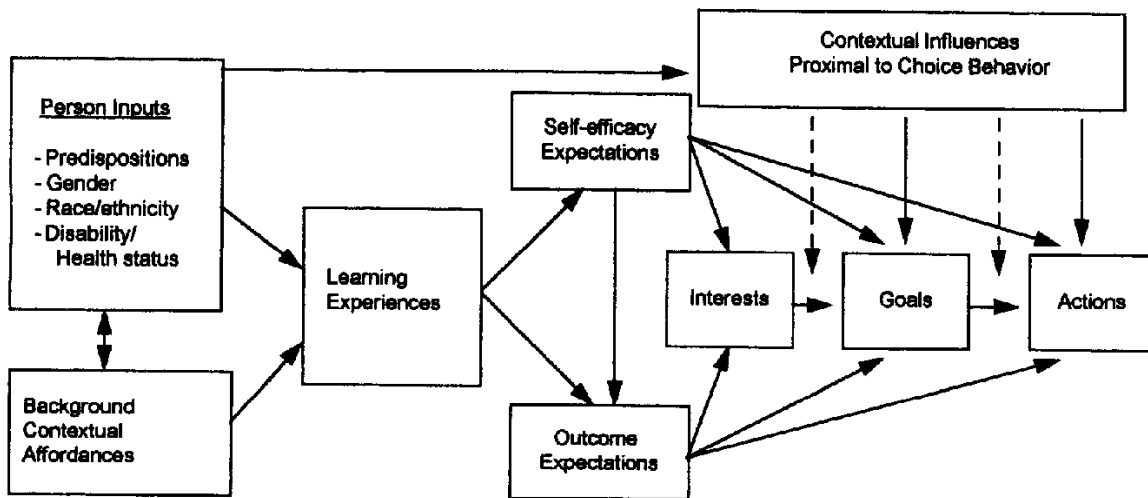
Perceived factors are the individual's responses to objective factors. Responses to objective factors can be non-existent (withdrawal) if an individual sees these elements as barriers that he cannot overcome on his own. For example, an individual who never received career readiness support while attending high school might feel unable to react positively in a college environment. He might feel uneasy when it comes to talking to professors, advocating for himself or getting resources. This phenomenon becomes more evident in first generation and non-

traditional college students. Indeed, when students do not receive the support they need dropping out altogether from college or engage in different non-academic pursuits becomes an alternative. Oftentimes, they are blamed for not knowing exactly what to do within a new college environment. However, responses to specific barriers related to career development vary from culture to culture and correspond to the realm of the subjectivity of the self and his particular identity traits.

Other type of response can be an attitude of resilience which is characterized mainly for being able to find the 'light at the end of the tunnel'. Again, a resilient individual can be afforded as such, based on different factors. He could come from a culture where difficulties were perceived as necessary tasks to overcome in order to gain wisdom. Perhaps, his/her family, friends, teachers, or spiritual beliefs were influential in the developing of this trait. Whatever might be the case, resilience is also another trait that is deeply interwoven in the universe of cultural identity. For SCCT, individuals' reactions to objective factors come also from the notions of 'opportunity structure' and 'contextual affordance' (Vondracek, 2014). Both positions emphasize on the individual interpretation that is given to opportunities, resources, barriers, and affordances that occur within a particular environment or context. In a sense, individuals have an active phenomenological role in "processing both positive and negative environmental influences" (W. Lent and Steven 2012, p. 37).

SCCT also underlies the period in which specific environmental influences occur (Lent and Steven, 2012). These contextual or environmental variables exist in two categories. The first category (left part of Figure 2) shows distal or background contextual factors that

**Model on Distal and Contemporary Environmental Influences**



**Figure 2.** Model of social cognitive influences on career choice behavior. Extracted from R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett, 1994, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45, p. 93. Copyright 1994 by R. W. Lent, S. D. Brown, and G. Hackett.

impact learning experiences. In this case, person inputs and background are specific traits that correspond to the construction of identity. Erikson says that crisis highly influence the type of predispositions that are developed as one approaches to the adult life (Cote and Levine, 2016). Here, approaching to adult life means the getting of a meaningful occupation or an academic pursuit. SCCT does not establish specifically whether or not individuals need to overcome crisis in order to successfully make a career choice. What is important for SCCT is the

recognition of the interdependence existent between personal and contextual factors in career development.

The second category (upper right part of Figure 2) shows proximal or contextual influences that are particularly important in active phases of educational or career decision making (Lent and Steven, 2012). Examples of these contextual influences could be discriminatory practices that students encounter in prospect employers or the lack of trust on themselves as consequence of not knowing exactly what to do career wise (lack of resources of programs in schools). The authors of the model also showed moderator effects represented with dotted lines in Figure 2. These moderator- effects are an approximation to the phenomenological responsibility individuals have to revert or subvert negative experiences they might have within their context. Interestingly to notice is that, the individual does not have the ability to revert unjust practices by himself, but he could do it through the aid of an environment that is responsive to his needs and demands. The first step then consists in the identification of the type of student population a counselor is addressing, and the second step consists in the conscious exploration of students' cultural identity and the narratives that come with it. That is, their personal or school-based experiences.

**Studies on Latino Migrant Students' Experiences and Cultural Identity: Implications in their Professional and Academic Choices**

Orfield (2012) identifies migrant students under MEP definition as to be the most vulnerable sub-group of students in k-12 educational settings. Their frequent moves (migrancy), poverty gaps in previous schooling, and language barriers affect negatively their social and educational opportunities. Students migrate due to the nature of the jobs that they and their parents must perform in order to survive financially. Employment for migrant workers is, by definition, seasonal and temporary (Green, 2003). The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 defines migrant students as "children of farmworkers who move with their families to seek work in agriculture, forestry or fishing" (Green, 2003, p. 52). The majority of these children are first-generation, 1.5 generation, or second generation immigrants to the United States (Free et.al, 2014). Most students are monolingual in Spanish or bilingual in Spanish and an indigenous language (Exposito,2003). The fact that students only speak one language at home increases their chance of falling behind in schools once they enter the U.S. educational system. Most schools in the rural U.S. fail to provide bilingual assistance that migrant students need. Therefore, they struggle to cope not only with language barriers, but also with low academic performance. On the same token, teachers lack the understanding towards the needs and the definition in which these students fall. Free et.al (2014), suggests that most teachers do not bother to offer specific career development resources to migrant students, because they perceive that their lack of

fluency in English will prevent them from upward mobility through access to college or four-year institutions.

### **Latino Migrant Students in Lane County, Oregon**

Jonathan Fernow, current Oregon Migrant Specialist (Informal conversation, May, 2015) indicates that in Oregon, migrant students were born in Mexico or Guatemala (73%), the rest (26%) are second generation or children of immigrants. Additionally, two of five (42%) students are from traditional sending areas of Mexico-Michoacán. Thus, more than one-quarter (28%) of students are from the Southern predominantly indigenous states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero. The fact that students and families come from these specific sending regions in Mexico is not accidental. Traditionally, indigenous states in Mexico have been impoverished as a consequence of uneven distribution of resources and access to education and political power (Green, 2003). First, the Mexican government have replicated for centuries the ideological notion of indigenous groups as the cultural 'other'. The idea of the Mexican nation has mainly gravitated since colonial times around a 'mestizo-light-skinned' identity that has affected for centuries indigenous individuals who do not fulfill this image. Second, the implementation of most recent economic policies associated with the ideology of free-market



have impacted the local economies of these states forcing their most vulnerable populations to migrate across Mexico and to the North (U.S. and Canada). For example, the 'Zapatista' (Zapatista National Liberation Army, EZLN) uprising occurred in 1994 after the NAFTA was put into effect under the direction of Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The uprising was due to the long-standing political and cultural invisibility that the Mexican government had on topics related to the well-being of the Zapatista nation. The phenomenon demonstrated, that there was still a quest to acquire recognition between indigenous and other segments of the Mexican population that were being pushed into situational marginalization due to global and local economic trends (Reyes III, 2009).

In the case of Guatemala, indigenous groups internal displacement has occurred as a consequence of land and ethnic conflicts that remain unsolved (Reyes III, 2009). For the most part, land distribution, educational disparities, and oligarchies have prevented Guatemalan indigenous and rural communities from attaining their educational goals. In Guatemala as in any other Latino country in the region, there is a predominant ideology that puts in the center mestizo or Ladino oligarchies. Peripheral groups in Guatemala are those segments of the population that again do not meet the racial or economic criteria these oligarchies impose. This was exactly the fuel for the emergence of counter-cultural movements and guerrillas across central America. With

that being said, Green (2003), states that Latino migrant students coming from traditionally sending regions Mexico and Guatemala bring with them this particular historical, cultural and political narrative of oppression and exclusion from their home countries. Migrant students might be American born and citizens of a new political order, but they are still connected to the larger historical conflicts that have marked their families and friends. They are Guatemalans, Mexicans, and Latino at their core and this rich dynamic of exclusion, invisibility, dominance, and oppression defines and constructs further their cultural identity and experiences within American educational system.

The impact that oppression and collective discriminatory practices have in the minds of children have been largely documented in the works of Paulo Reglus Freire (1921-1997). Freire (2013), defines oppression as overwhelming control or the act of dehumanizing people or entire populations by denying them the right to their own cultural existence. Oppression occurs first at schools because they are scenarios where cultural, economic, and social ideologies of a nation meet. Children come with their cultural bias as well as teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. And the forming of positive or negative opinions on others and oneself is a condition of the self and it makes part of his identity construction process (Erikson, 1968). Thus, people create mental images as part of their capacity to rationalize and apprehend the world. Then, mainstream world views in schools collide with the realities of

those who have lived and experienced oppression. Consequently, one needs to set up these processes of denied-political power as the context that serves to comprehend the cultural identity construction of Latino migrant students in the U.S.

Ngai (2004) notices that experiences and cultural identity of Latino migrant students cannot be isolated from negative ideologies that U.S. society has had about who migrants are and the nature of their migrancy. For instance, since 1790 the U.S. has enacted different type of regulations that the congress has later turned into laws. The effects of these immigration laws have particularly attacked immigrants from countries that had complex political or economic relations with the U.S. Castells (2003), states that immigration in the U.S. is fundamentally a power issue. The American government seems to welcome people from certain nationalities based on fashionable stereotypes on immigrants and their culture that emerge from time to time. For example, the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act excluded from immigration Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and other Asians on the grounds that they were 'racially ineligible for naturalized citizenship' (Ngai, 2004, p. 7). By contrast, in 2012, Barack Obama called Asians to be a fundamental asset in the modern history of the U.S. as a nation. And then, recently elected president Donald J. Trump in 2017 called Chinese to be 'adversaries' of the American economic progress for adducing that economic agreements signed between China and the United States have been unfavorable for

the latest. As Ngai (2004) points out racial difference is not general but it corresponds to “a confluence of economic, social, cultural, and political factors that impeded major shifts in society’s understanding and construction of race and its constitutive role in national identity formation” (Ngai, 2004, p. 7). That is, the convoluted understanding of race and immigrants’ cultural identity in the U.S. creates issues that translate into structural and systemic inadequacies to assimilate migrants properly, specially within educational settings.

Assimilation here means, the capacity that a nation has to work with the cultural differences that immigrants or peoples from minority groups bring with them (Castells, 2003). The term has been highly controversial in the fields of international studies, anthropology, and ethnography, because it implies that individuals must force themselves to renounce to their cultural identity (Gómez et.al, 2013). However, assimilation and integration could be two sides of the same spectrum which in this case translates into the ability of migrants to accept and negotiate their cultural values vis-à-vis the ones from host or arrival communities. In educational settings, Latino migrant students enter processes where they are in the midst of discourses that validate their cultural differences on one side, while forcing them to leave out what is not a desirable condition. For example, U.S. educational policies have seen the bilingual-self as a sinful condition that prevents students from successfully integrating into mainstream Anglo-Saxon culture (Gándara,

2009). Then, the traditional model of English as Second Language classes (ESL) where non-English speaking Latino migrant students are pulled out from content academic instruction is just one of the examples that portrays the level of discrimination these students must endure. Supporters of ESL traditional instructional models will say that immersing non-English speaking students completely into the target language results in better chances to learn it. However, studies in bilingual education and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning (CLR) (Gandara, 2010) show that students learn better when there is cultural validation of what they know linguistically or when they see a reflection of their identity within the classroom. Therefore, it is not entirely necessary to deny students their natural linguistic abilities in a first tongue. On the contrary, it could be better to validate and incorporate their linguistic abilities and cultural identity into the learning of a second language, so that students feel a closer connection with the new language they are trying to learn. Expósito & Favela (2003), consider that for this shift to occur naturally, American schools need to allocate economic resources to train and hire bilingual teachers, and instructional assistants, so they can create an inclusive classroom culture. Important to notice is that the only condition for change does not have to come from economics. Schools need to be able to debate openly on the needs that their Latino migrant students have as a subgroup within the Latino ethnicity and act accordingly.

Latinos are also a diverse ethnic group within the United States. Generally speaking, the term Latino refers to people coming from countries in South, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean (Gandara,2010). They can come from rural or urban areas from those countries, speak Spanish, Portuguese or an indigenous language and they are still being considered Latino. However, stereotypes and collective imagery of Latinos in the U.S. have been able to create a particular discourse on whom Latinos are (Chavez, 2013). That is, the American mainstream (White-Caucasians) gets to assign labels to Latinos that could harm or push them away from an intra-national cultural dialogue. These labels get propagated mainly through mass media communication outlets and educational policies.

Chavez (2013), depicts the negative effects of the Latino threat narrative in the lives of Latino migrants and their families. First, the Latino threat narrative builds on the assumption that all Latinos are Hispanics (Spanish speakers), illegal, and culturally unable to assimilate (Chavez, 2013). Besides, the American media has created a discourse where Latinos and their children are actors of the so-called process of 're-conquista' or 'the re-conquest- recovery'. In other words, Latinos supposedly have a hidden programmatic plan to recover and repopulate the states that were part of Mexico once. Most of the states are in the U.S. West like in the case of California (Chavez, 2013). Important to notice within this narrative is the assigned identity that mainstream U.S.

has created towards Latino students. Freire (2013), indicates that when a group has been for so long holding onto power, then it is difficult for them as oppressors to humanize and confer voice to the 'others'. In a sense, Latino migrant students for being one of the most invisible and marginalized sub-group of students within k-12 educational settings live and experience a culture of structural silence.

Freire (2013) defined the culture of silence as the inability that children of color have when they try to become agents of change in the society. The concept of voice comes from the political terrain. Voice represents "the speech and perspectives of the speaker; metaphorically, voice spans inflection, tone, accent, style, and the qualities and feelings conveyed by the speaker's words; and politically, a commitment to voice attests to the right of speaking and being represented" (Britzman, 1989, p.146). Oftentimes, educational policies and classroom practices make an effort, so all students assimilate into what is considered the 'American mold'. In the case of Latino migrant students, this implies adaptation to language and customs of mainstream society in North America (Fitzgerald, 2011). When students fail to comply with this general image, they cannot participate in the collective dialogue that enacts and reenacts norms of behavior and acceptable pedagogical practices for all students. Fanon (1991) also contended in this regard that the oppressor (imposed classroom practices, educational policies, social programs), by distorting, disfiguring, and destroying the past, contributes to the

annihilation of identity in the oppressed. Precisely, this is the type of experiences Latino migrant students have once they get into K-12 American educational system.

### **Situational Marginalization and Deficit Thinking Model**

Situational marginalization refers to the influence of outside forces on one's life and self-determination, over which migrant families and students have little control or power (Reyes III, 2009). In the academic literature that has explored the challenging living conditions of migrant agricultural workers and their struggles to achieve social and economic recognition, it has become evident that most of these families endure aspects that come as a result of the combination of multiple systemic elements. In other words, to correlate and understand the diverse mechanisms that lead to educational exclusion/marginalization, one needs to analyze the political, economic, and cultural forces that are at play within a given society, and to seek for their correlation with the time in which those policies or educational programs were proposed.

According to Gorski (2013), situational marginalization and the deficit ideology are complementary terms that could serve as a frame to comprehend the current direction that are taking remedial and preventive educational programs in the United States such as MEP. As the author points out, in both concepts there is an explicit tendency to



'blame de victim' that is not only applied to a person, but to an entire group or community (Gorski, 2013).

As the human experience has proved to us, the focusing on individual and group differences is dangerous in that it relegates and creates a single dimensional identity of the people we are referring to. This process of 'othering' renders us incapable to identify differences as possibilities or opportunities, "if one always has lived among people who speak a certain language variation, such as what people commonly refer to as 'standard English' she or he might mistake somebody's use of a different variation, such as the Appalachian variety, as an indication of intellectual inferiority or, worse, deviance" (Gorski, 152). These and other experiences negatively impact Latino migrant students' self-perception, educational performance, and cultural identity impeding social and educational mobility. Furthermore, situational marginalization places Latino migrant students at the end of the social spectrum for considering them 'unworthy' or a lost cause. In this regard, stereotypes such as poor, pregnant, or ESL (English as a second language learner) are consciously or subconsciously influencing educators' perceptions and interactions with students, which in turn takes them to attend highly segregated schools that lack appropriate institutional resources (Gorski, 2008).

Similar to the aforementioned (situational marginalization and deficit ideology) is the 'culture of poverty' hypothesis very common during the 1970s that has impacted remedial and preventive programs as well.

Oscar Lewis was the first person who defined the culture of poverty hypothesis based on his observations on small high poverty Mexican and Puerto Rican communities. Lewis sustained (based on his findings) that people who live in conditions of extreme poverty and lack access to economic resources share universally and predictable values and behaviors such as, emphasis on the present, neglect of the future, violent outbursts, a lack of sense of history, and more importantly, most of them had an agricultural labor family background (Gorski, 2008). Lewis hypothesis was also influential for the creation of the image of the 'Welfare queen', which Republican Candidate Ronald Reagan used during the presidential primaries in 1976. Reagan based the image of the 'welfare queen' on Linda Taylor, an African American woman who lived out of public assistance programs in Chicago, and somehow managed to attain more funding from the government than she was entitled to. Although, the Washington Star immediately covered the case explaining that Reagan's campaign advisers were exaggerating and accommodating the story according to their political needs (Gorski, 2008); the portrayal of Linda Taylor left an indelible mark on women of color for being considered as manipulators of the system and its flaws.

As one can see, the American society placed at the center of the discussion, the victims of social and economic marginalization (mostly ethnic and racial minorities), but it did not signal to the inequities of the system and the manner in which all families in the country should have

access to the same benefits that white middle class families have in terms of jobs, education, and health. It was also evident that culture as an idea, stereotype, and set of values played a capital role in terms of relegating and marginalizing entire communities. In this sense, cultural differences such as, geographic location, language, customs, and worldview, came to be considered as the real difficulty around economic progress and social achievement in the United States. For instance, it became conspicuous, and as part of the ideological discourse at the time, to talk about 'backward cultures' that impeded assimilation and adaptation. This ideology that depicts cultural differences as the main reason to blame for poverty and social exclusion, it is not new or recent in the history of the human world. In fact, it has been the norm to follow among empires, nations, and entire political conglomerates. Basically, othering those who are dissimilar will be the norm as long as uneven distribution of political, economic, and social power remains between those who are part of the periphery and the ones who remain at the core (Cardoso and Faletto 1979).

To emphasize, one can find in the vast literature that exists on Latino migrant students living in the United States that the aspect pertaining to cultural differences stands out over other pressing concerns around equity, social justice, racism, xenophobia, gender, sexual orientation, and ableism to name a few (Gorski, 2008). Even though the addressing of these concerns from a multicultural type of perspective

might appear as adequate, the difficulty begins when school personnel, teachers, and staff employ culture as a way to disguise issues around equity and social justice, while simplifying the cultural identity of individuals that in the case of Latino migrant students are part of marginal communities. In other words, educators, administrators, politicians, and the general public are embracing the idea that “there is some singular and consistent true nature shared among large groups of marginalized social groups: people experiencing poverty, Latinos/as, or English language learners (ELLs), but there isn’t. People experiencing poverty are highly diverse and there is no single and predictable culture that can define and contain an enormously diverse population” (Gorski, p. 223). For instance, whenever educators and school personnel define Latino migrant students as apathetic, shy, unambitious (Free, Kriz, and Konecnik, 2014), they are certainly creating and perpetuating mental images that will become actions that create in turn further marginalization and isolation. The consequences of stereotyping students living in poverty have tremendous implications in terms of self-esteem, academic performance, and choices they make after high school completion. Not without mentioning that their negative experiences could take them to endure all sorts of traumas such as linguistic and social trauma with their corresponding implications.

## **Justification of the Study**

I have identified in the literature review the endemic hardships that Latino migrant students endure at schools and social contexts. I have also noticed the conceptual difficulties that come when talking or defining the cultural identity of minority individuals, especially Latino migrant students without falling into stereotyping or deficit thinking related symbols. In this regard, it is important to understand that teachers, school personnel, and students regardless of their cultural background share spaces and interact in a manner in which preconceived opinions, beliefs, values, and expectations about themselves and others take place. Their personalities, learning, and teaching styles come alive and impact the quality of their daily experiences in the classroom for better or worse. In the case of Latino migrant students, their situational marginalization renders their social self to unequal power relations where others (teachers, peers, school staff, employers) get in charge of defining their cultural identity, life choices, expectations, behavior, and even educational performance. In a sense, those who are at the top of the power relation get to exercise their privilege through dictating and promoting normative attitudes that relate to minority individuals' race, socioeconomic background, class, and ethnicity. Educational research has largely demonstrated the positive and negative impact that teachers' beliefs and expectations have on students. And, for most Latino migrant students, the lack of trust that

their teachers might exhibit towards them and their 'adequate' life choices, academic performance, and future takes a negative hold onto their self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride (Gándara, 2009).

As I mentioned previously, Latino migrant students learn how to live with labels that entire systems impose on them such as, ESL, poor, not college-bound, undocumented, deficient and so on; labels that impact their self-defined cultural identity. With my research, I am trying to inform the general public and to invite teachers, educational researchers, and politicians to look into what Latino migrant students' lived experiences convey in regards to their cultural identity as Latino and MEP participants. Indeed, the creation of more inclusive grounds for these students in schools and arrival communities requires that those in positions of power value the resilience and determination that situationally marginalized individuals exhibit. My objective is that culturally responsive practices can be implemented and replicated in the classroom and arrival communities so that Latino migrant students get to experience a real sense of belonging.

Additionally, I expect that through my research, MEP in Oregon can work on adjustments and programs that result in more Latino migrant students graduating from high school and attending college regardless of their legal status in the country. Since the program is fairly new in Lane County, there is still much to be done in terms of understanding MEP's population of Latino migrant students, their

dreams, expectations, life choices, experiences, and significance of cultural identity. In reality, a program can only maximize its results by dwelling deeper into the specifics of the community it serves, and in the case of MEP, I hope that my contribution sets a mark for future research and interest in this population. Ultimately, my research is significant for Latino migrant students, their families, communities, advocates, and people who have been impacted through interactions with them. Since there is little to none literature on the lived experiences of Latino migrant students in Oregon, MEP at regional and state levels will benefit from pinpointing areas that they need to tackle in order to support students better on their quest towards graduation. Effective and efficient operationalization of MEP in Oregon needs of documented and conscientious qualitative research endeavors. My research for being based on case studies contributes to the examination of patterns of conduct, strategies, and systems of knowledge that affect Latino migrant students as well as the identification of those processes that MEP staff have made productive in order to generate inclusiveness.

This study shares and explores the cultural narratives and experiences of a select number of Latino migrant students formerly enrolled in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) in Lane County. By exploring the cultural identity narratives and experiences of Latino migrant students, this research will illustrate how K-12 educational institutions can better understand and support this particular student

population in advancing their lives through higher education or professional choices, so they can move their lives beyond the fields.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Theoretical Perspectives/Research Perspectives**

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and cultural identity of Latino migrant students as both Latino and participants of Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) in Lane County, Oregon. My primary research questions were: How a group of Latino migrant student participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) described their cultural identity and experiences, and how they considered these experiences, and cultural identity in their academic or professional choices after high school completion. Additionally, I wanted to further inquiry into what were the most common professional or academic choices Latino migrant students considered when they were on the verge of graduation, and what could these choices tell us in regards to their personal and school-based experiences with MEP. Important to notice was the convergence of two elements that required a clear definition: cultural identity and experiences.

While interviewing my participants, I employed culture as one's public expression and networks of knowledge where symbolic forms such as, language, race, ethnicity, beliefs, mores, norms, and social values shape an individual's identity or identities, as he or she interacts with

others in specific social and geographical contexts (Homo Localis). For migrant students, culture and identity become fluid, replaceable, and situational as they transit from various contexts whether at school, home or their work place (the fields). Usually, the most traditional definitions of cultural identity see it as an inherited identity that relates to one's origins. This particular definition has deterministic connotations in that it ignores human agency and the ability that individuals have to pursue alliances and affiliations with various groups of people in different contexts.

As I presented in the previous chapter, identity formation is a complex process that possess different aspects to look at. On one hand, identity occurs at a personal level, but it also gets infused with the type of contextual affiliations one develops throughout his life. As we become part of a more global society individuals tend to arrange their multiple identities by salience or the “probability that a given identity will be invoked, or called into play, in a variety of situations” (Stryker, 1994, p. 873); in a sense, there is not a sole identity that can define nor is there a unique culture that situates individuals as part of a group. In this regard, my research offered to Latino migrant students the opportunity to reflect on the elements that they considered significant when exploring their cultural identity. I also understood the manner in which students constructed their multiple identities and the type of negotiation process they engaged to in order to appear as more than what the system

assigned them to be whether by looking at their linguistic backgrounds, race or ethnicity.

Another concept that was worthy of definition corresponds to experience. From an anthropological perspective and following closely the works of Victor Turner and Clifford Gertz (1983), experiences are a subjective and holistic phenomenon that find their beginning out of a gamut of cultural, political, biological, linguistic, and environmental factors. Indeed, experiences differ from one individual to another, yet they might overlap or create different spaces that contain a specific meaning. In other words, individuals as social beings tend to assign cognitive, affective, and volitional meanings to the various experiences they have; and in so doing experiences become the main unit of analysis upon which social research is construed.

In my research, I conferred a privileged place to the individual experience of students as a channel to find group commonalities. Individual experiences are relevant because they inform about particular dimensions within the social world that are worth to explore. In the case of Latino migrant students, their experiences shed light on issues around diversity, inclusiveness, access to education, and agency that exist within school, at the work place and even in their communities. By providing voice to these experiential- individual consciousness, I was able to understand the specific aspects that concerned Latino migrant students and the manner in which these experiences interjected with

their self-assigned cultural identity and the professional or academic choices they made after high school completion.

### **The Researcher**

As the researcher of this study, it is understood that I bring my own personal biases and values to all aspects of this work. It was my own personal experiences as Latina and MEP- case manager (internship) of Latino migrant students that influenced my decision to further explore the topic of their cultural identity narratives and personal or school-based experiences with MEP while they were attending school. I also wanted to capture the implications that their cultural identity and experiences had on their professional or academic choices after high school completion. Ultimately, I noticed that there was a clear interest on the side of my student-participants to reflect and share their experiences, so those could guide other Latino migrant students in Lane, county Oregon. As I mentioned in the previous chapters, the literature around school-based experiences of Latino migrant does not make a continuous effort to elicit the voice of this underrepresented group particularly when it comes to legitimize their cultural capital that is grounded on their affiliations and identity fluidity. Indeed, my participants made a clear emphasis on sharing the stories particularly with newcomers, because they come to the country with a convoluted sense of who they are

(cultural identity) and what they can accomplish for them and their families (professional or academic choices).

Consequently, my own internship experience, the experiences and narratives of my participants are present throughout the study as I read existing literature on the topic, developed interview questions, and conducted interviews with participants. Since I could not uproot completely from this research endeavor and eliminate my own personal values and ideas; I reflected on my feelings, assumptions, and world views during chapters four and five of this research.

## **Research Methods**

This study was conducted from the qualitative research perspective where the researcher collects, analyzes, and interprets visual or oral narratives (non-numerical) in order to “gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest” (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009, p.7). Since the focus of this research was the setting up of a context where students could feel at ease to reflect, share, and interpret important occurrences regarding their personal or school-based experiences with MEP and cultural identity, I used a phenomenological approach. In a phenomenological approach, the researcher targets the manner in which people experience a phenomenon in this case experiences and cultural identity construction and how do they interpret those and potential effect

on their professional or academic choices after high school graduation (Wiersma and Jurs, 2005).

Since I was able to gain the trust of my study participants, because all of them (except participant C) had a direct relationship with me during our college and career development meetings, I employed the narrative research process while conducting my interviews. In a narrative research process, the researcher and the participant need to find equality of voice, so that the first feels empowered to validate the shared-story and report it (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009, p.385). The collection of data process was not easy, because at times as a researcher I felt deeply moved by the intimate details shared by my study participants. However, I was able to regain centrality and remember that my role was to report on my participants' stories and experiences as much as I could without excessive interference from my part. To analyze the data captured through my participants' narratives, I focused on the following aspects that were central in their experiences:

- Chronology of individual experiences
- Construction of their life stories
- Inclusion of context or places
- I constructed their narratives around the “then, what happened?” question (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009, p.387).

## **Sampling**

I selected the participants for my studies based on criterion sampling to get a data rich sample. I selected four students who met my criterion. The participants were all self-identified Latino and former Migrant Education Program students while they were attending school (K-12). All of them were eighteen years of age or older, graduated from high school, and were physically present in Lane County at the time of the interview. To obtain the narratives of cultural identity and experiences, I sought students whose sense of cultural identity felt as more than one identity. Since as it was explained in the previous chapter, cultural identity implies more than one type of identity that can be negotiated in regards to context (Collier, 1996), I directly asked them if they felt to have more than one identity within themselves. Additionally, I used as part of my criterion their affiliation with MEP in order to recruit participants and focus on this particular sub-group of students. This sample could offer insight into the main elements that college career counselors and academic advisers should consider when it comes to offer counseling services to Latino migrant students who are on the verge of graduation. As I mentioned chapter one, Migrant Education Program has not had specific job appointments that could contribute towards the inclusion and advocacy of migrant students at schools, especially while they are heading towards one of the most fundamental educational steps

of any student, graduating from high school and transitioning into the labor market or higher education.

By the same token, the research could potentially be expanded to look for the impact or effect that experiences as migrant and cultural identity construction of Latino migrant students have whenever they are trying to gain access into four-year institutions or community colleges across the nation. Especially if they are entering those institutions as first generation college students.

### **Recruitment**

The first step was to obtain permission from the coordinator of Migrant Education Program (MEP) in Lane County. Since I have been interning for the program since 2015, it was easy for me to gain access on individuals (students) who could meet the criteria for my study. I would like to clarify that the need for this study emerged after several informal conversations I had with migrant senior students who were on the verge of graduation and onto deciding what to do after high school. Most of them talked about a ‘convoluted sense of identity’, expectations, and uncertainty about their future based on who they were in this context (U.S.) Precisely, my job as an intern in the program was to provide detailed information on graduation requirements, college entrance examinations, financial aid available, and social services that



could help students to succeed academically and professionally after high school completion.

Allocation for my role as an intern within the program came after a meeting I had with MEP coordinator in Fall 2015. The coordinator and other members of MEP, met with me at Lane Education Service District (Lane ESD). A panel of six to eight people asked me questions on my educational background and interest in the program. Two weeks after this preliminary meeting, MEP coordinator contacted and invited me to join the program as an intern. As an intern, I had access to list-servers that contained confidential information on all migrant students in Lane, South Lane, and Douglas Counties. Each recent arrival or newcomer student came to me after being referred by their English Language Development (ELD) teachers or bilingual assistants in their schools. I assessed whether or not these students met the migrant criteria under MEP definition. If they met the migrant definition, I would proceed to explain supplemental services and enroll them in the program formally. Enrollment in the program happens after a MEP staff fills out a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The COE has been traditionally filled out by hand. However, a new regulation that the U.S. Department of education in Washington D.C recently passed (June 30, 2017), it is asking that recruiters across the nation fill out COEs electronically to minimize processing time.

As I mentioned previously having access to list-servers facilitated the process of obtaining information on potential student- participants. The first step towards recruitment was to send out an email with a short abstract in English and Spanish about my study and my role as a researcher. Since the database contained information on geographic location where students were by the time they graduated from high school, I only sent emails to students who were in Lane County. The second criteria for recruitment was ethnic self-identification. When students are enrolled and admitted formally in MEP, a recruiter or MEP staff asks students for their ethnicity. This ethnicity criterion is entirely subjective and based on students' responses. From the first list of seventy-five (75) students who graduated from high school, were eighteen years-old or older, and were still living in Lane County, only forty- three (23) self-identified as Latino (a).

I first emailed students on Winter 2016 (December). I received a reply back from only fifteen (15) students. I proceeded to contact students via email and phone calls when appropriate to set up a time to meet individually. Even though my research represented a minimal risk for my participants, after January 2017 (time when I contacted again prospect interviewees) students felt discomfort to participate in my study due to the results of the recent presidential election. Nonetheless, I assured students that they did not need to reveal their migratory status in the country during the interviews; from fifteen students (15) whom I

first received replied from, only four (4) accepted to collaborate with my study. These are precisely the cultural identity narratives and studies that create the data universe of my study.

### Participants

PARTICIPANT A	PARTICIPANT B	PARTICIPANT C	PARTICIPANT D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Guatemalan</li> <li>• Newcomer</li> <li>• Changing/moving pipes (Qualifying activity)</li> <li>• Spanish speaker</li> <li>• Springfield High School graduate</li> <li>• Student joined the National Guard on May 2017</li> <li>• Unaccompanied migrant youth</li> <li>• OMLI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Guatemalan</li> <li>• Newcomer</li> <li>• Picking strawberries(Qualifying activity)</li> <li>• Spanish speaker</li> <li>• Willamette Leadership Academy graduate</li> <li>• Student is attending LCC ( Career Pathways track)</li> <li>• Unaccompanied migrant youth</li> <li>• OMLI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Bilingual</li> <li>• Mexican-American</li> <li>• Springfield High School Graduate</li> <li>• Binational student (Migrant Education Program definition)</li> <li>• Student works at a beauty parlor</li> <li>• OMLI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Bilingual</li> <li>• Mexican (Guadalajara)</li> <li>• Springfield high school graduate</li> <li>• Student will attend the University of Oregon in Winter 2018 (Journalism and Digital technology)</li> <li>• OMLI</li> </ul>

**Figure 3.** Description of Participants

The inclusion criteria for my research population was as follows:

(1) four self-identified Latino migrant students ages 18 and over who graduated from high schools in Lane County and were former participants of Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP). (2) All my Latino migrant student-participants were physically present in Lane County (Eugene or Springfield areas). (3) Since my study was a dialogical analysis of Latino migrant students’ cultural identity narratives and

experiences, I needed the face to face interaction to conduct the interview process in an informal manner. (4) participants self-identified as male or female based on their self- gender assignation. I will expand in the following chapter on more specific demographic details of my participants as I unfold what they conveyed throughout their narratives.

### **Data Collection**

I conducted with my participants one-on-one semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. During the interview process, I asked my participants a set of predetermined questions, but I also allowed them to focus on specific aspects within the questions that seemed highly relevant to them. Students at times went off onto analyzing and sharing on topics that were not previously listed on my questions. These ‘additional aspects’ occupy a specific section within chapter four. I also organized the questions in sections that corresponded to main topics that were significant for the aspects that were being studied (experiences with MEP, cultural identity construction, and professional or academic choices after high school). The first set of questions were demographic questions (age, gender, place of residency in Lane County, and so on). The second set of questions corresponded to ethnicity self-identification. Even though, the list-servers offered already this identification answer, I

asked participants again just to make sure that they felt comfortable with the identity listed on the database.

The actual questions that I asked in order to elicit the voices of my participants were clustered in the following sections or themes. Cluster one corresponded to specific experiences that students had while they were part of Migrant education program. Some of the aspects that I asked about were, knowledge towards supplemental services offered and qualification factors. Cluster two was related with experiences and processes of identity construction regarding bilingualism and bilingual experiences whether in school or other social contexts. Cluster three corresponded to their experiences as minority students for instance, Latino and migrant under MEP definition. I asked students to reflect on challenges and their self-identification as a minority or not. Cluster four corresponded to experiences and identity construction pertaining to migrancy. My participants here expanded onto their emotions, arrival to their first U.S. location, impression they had about teachers, schools, and so on. Cluster five had to be with cultural identity construction. I asked about stereotypes on Latinos and migrants and the concept of illegality in general. I did not ask my participants to reveal their migratory or legal status in the country since this was part of one the measures I took in order to protect their privacy. Finally, cluster six corresponded to their consideration about factors related with experiences and cultural identity in their academic or professional

choices after high school. I asked on role models, common choices that they could make, expectations, and uncertainties.

To help participants to feel comfortable with the interview process I asked them to make a choice of venue. I found that they did not have a preference for it, so we met at the office I had while at MEP. We met at a conference room and I used a digital audio-recorder to obtain their narratives. All participants were informed and signed the informed consent document as it was requested by the IRB office. At the end of the first interview, I told students on the possibility of contacting them again to follow-up questions if needed. I also told them that they could get a copy of my study if desired.

Narratives were not transcribed in their totality. Instead, I selected preponderant aspects (experiences) that emerged throughout the conversation since there was a set of established clusters. Besides, some aspects within the narrative were not specifically pertinent to the main clusters or themes subjected to study; therefore, I did not find them useful to be included in my study. In that sense, even though the purpose of the study was to focus on Latino migrant students' narratives, the centrality of the study was also to select those experiences and aspects that were poignant to the main phenomena analyzed (consideration of experiences and cultural identity in academic or professional choices after high school).

## **Data Analysis**

For data analysis I followed the procedure provided by Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009). The authors organized three main strategies to analyze narratives as follow: Reading/memoing, describing, and classifying (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009, p. 450). These organization strategies are subjective in nature and in a narrative research process, the researcher can make a conscious choice as to what how present his findings. In my case, I found it useful to have a type of lineal organization in the form of a story with a clear beginning, plot, and closure that in my research will be the expectations students unfold as they reflect on their experiences, cultural identity, and choices after high school.

Two familiarize myself with the data I heard the narratives two to three times each. Since I organized the narratives in six main clusters previous to the interview process, then I started to write memos and make notes on specific quotes that I could include later in my results and discussion section per cluster. While doing that, I also found and listed specific recurring experiences and concerns pertaining to cultural identity construction and MEP such as, discrimination, cultural shock, transgenerational stories, locality as a factor that creates and furthers affiliation to a certain group, and so on. The describing aspect relates to the context. Then, I described thoroughly my participants, the setting, and the phenomenon studied. As Gay et.al (2009), points out the context influences participants' actions and understandings and the fact that

they were asked to report on highly personal topics made important to focus on the context and the emotional effect that it had on their responses.

The classifying aspect of the data relates to breaking it down into smaller units. In this sense, I classified the experiences and themes already found within a specific cluster. For instance, experiences related to migrancy were evaluated individually (each narrative) and also comparatively (among each other) to look for commonalities within experiences between participants. Then I started to construct a web of relations between experiences that students underwent and their process of cultural identity construction. I found that their stories shared certain aspects while others not. Commonalities occurred for example between first generation and 1.5 generations participants. Whereas the student-participant who was born in the U.S. had a different take on aspects related to migrancy or illegality as concept for example as she felt that it did not affect her directly. Finally, after reviewing the narratives, I determined that for the purpose of my research there was need for follow-up interviews with participants.

### **Trustworthiness**

Credibility in the data collection process was ensured through the usage of member checking (Creswell, 2005). I gave the opportunity to student-participants to hear and review the main experiences and



aspects within the cultural identity narratives that I considered as relevant. I showed to my participants a transcription on the experiences I was going to use for specific clusters, so they could offer insights and thoughts on the information. As the researcher, I tried to maintain the dependability and replicability of the study through the inclusion of detailed descriptions of all the methods used in the study. I also wanted to maintain the confirmability of the study by being continually reflexive of my own personal biases. Along those lines, I offered my own personal insights wherever it was needed to further expand on a specific narrative. These personal observations corresponded more to in-field nuances I found while conducting the data collection process.

### **Small Size of the Study**

I acknowledge the fact that my study was limited to the small size of the sample. Due to intrinsic characteristics that migrant students have under MEP definition, it was nearly impossible to recruit a larger sample of students who were willing to participate. To start with, most students were not living at present in any location near Lane county and their contact information (phone number, email address) changed or was no longer accurate. Therefore, trying to contact them was a difficult task since once students exit MEP after high school, MEP does not update its databases on them. Students also had worries about participating in my study based on the current political climate the country is living. Since

my study focuses on cultural identity narratives and experiences of students, prospective participants felt unsafe and indicated through email that they did not want to collaborate. Most of them asked me to delete their contact information from MEP database in order to not get contacted further. However, I explained to them that I could not make those changes on the databases, because I was not staff. Nevertheless, I facilitated the information of the person who could make those changes on behalf of the students.

Another aspect relates with the fact that most of the students who were contacted first did not know me before. In this sense, they felt reluctant to share their stories even though I explained the purpose of my research, and the usage I was going to give to their narratives and stories. Then, after exhaustive looking for my study participants, I could contact only four students who were more than willing to participate on condition that I would not use any type of name or nickname. I believe they wanted complete anonymity of their stories. Finally, since this is a qualitative approach that analyzed the cultural identity narratives and experiences of four Latino migrant students and how they considered these two aspects in their academic and professional choices after high school completion, the information obtained does not explain the particularities or commonalities of all Latino migrant students in Lane County, Oregon. However, in my view, my study is a first attempt towards understanding Latino migrant students, their experiences,

choices, and needs in Lane County as a way to advance the type of services MEP could offer to them. Additionally, through the exploration of migrant students' narratives, counselors and MEP staff could acknowledge the specific areas they need to target the most, especially when it comes to offer career development and college readiness services.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As noted in chapter one, the primary research question for this study was, how does a group of former Latino migrant student participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) describe their cultural identity and personal or school-based experiences with the program, and how do they consider these experiences, and cultural identity in their academic or professional choices after high school completion? The two secondary questions were: What are the most common professional or academic choices Latino migrant students consider when they are on the verge of graduation, and what can these choices tell us in regards to their personal and school-based experiences with MEP? I found that each participant described and considered their cultural identity construction and experiences with MEP in similar fashion. Yet, they brought their unique perspective to the questions that I asked in the form of their oral narratives. I organized the narratives in six main clusters that came after an exhaustive literature review on the subject. The clusters are (1) experiences with Oregon Migrant education program (MEP), (2) identity construction- bilingualism, (3), minority status, (4) migrancy (experiences and identity construction), (5) imagery on Latinos, and (6) academic and professional choices after high school. Each of these clusters are explored in depth in this chapter through the

narratives of four self-identified Latino migrant students.

### **Context**

Participants A and B are members of the same family group. They both are originally from San Marcos, Guatemala and arrived to the United States as unaccompanied migrant youth in 2015. Their father left home when they were about five years old. Their mother lives in Guatemala with three more children. Participants A and B are the first in their family to attend and aspire to graduate from high school. I first met with them during a meeting at their local high school in Lane county. The students were referred by their ELD teachers after the first week of their arrival on February of that year. I remember speaking with them in Spanish, because they seemed scared and a little reluctant, so I broke the ice with an informal greeting. After that first interview (where I served as an interpreter), MEP staff determined that both students qualified as migrant under MEP definition. I then proceeded to explain the supplemental services that the program offers and the different options that they could have after high school, since they both were about to enter 11 and 10 grade respectively. I asked them what they wanted to do and they were unsure. Yet, they told me clearly, “solo queremos aprender a hablar bien el inglés” [ we just want to learn how to speak good English]. After they left the MEP office that day, they became regular visitors. They would come to talk to the secretary who is from Peru or

just hang out with others who spoke Spanish as well. Participants A and B are the qualifying workers. That is, they work regularly (all weekends) in the fields. Participant A works at a ranch harvesting lettuce and carrots while participant B works for a logging company.

Participants C and D are both female. They are not related.

Participant C is Mexican-American. She has been living in Lane County for more than ten years. However, she and her family travel constantly between Mexico and the United States. Since MEP qualifies students based on the type of qualifying activities in agriculture, forestry or fishing they or their parents do, she was qualified based on migrancy related factors. Her father works harvesting blueberries. Her mother finished middle school while her father only attended until seventh grade. She is the oldest child in the household, and the first to graduate from high school in her family. She mentioned that her family owns a small ranch in Mexico (specifically in Michoacán). However, they cannot travel as much as they would like because of the current political situation that Mexico is enduring. She is bilingual and graduated from high school in Summer 2016. She plans to attend Lane Community College to study Early Childhood Education. Participant C has been interning at a local non-profit organization called 'Downtown languages 'for the last three months.

Participant D is originally from Guadalajara, Mexico. She is bilingual and has been living in Lane county for more than 11 years. She came to Oregon when she was six years old. Her parents finished high school in Mexico and are attending Lane Community College to learn English. Her father works harvesting mushrooms and her mom is a housewife. Her father travels constantly between Shasta, California and Roseburg, Oregon. She has been part of MEP for the last three years. After graduating from high school, she applied for a scholarship for migrant students. She is waiting for the results. She would like to study journalism, Education or photography. She has not been able to go back to Mexico since she first left the country. She mentioned to have little memories from her home town or relatives who are still there. These narratives are an account of these students' experiences as Latino and migrant within the K-12 American educational system. Aspects of their cultural identity construction and choices after high school are openly exposed.

#### Cluster 1- Experiences with Oregon Migrant education program (MEP)

This cluster explores notions, perceptions, and ideas that interviewees had about MEP and its supplemental services. For the most part, school staff identifies recent arrivals and explains to them the different type of Title I programs they could qualify for, MEP is one of those. MEP – Title I-C, counts with a specific system to recruit and enroll

students. The Certificate of eligibility (COE) is a tool that a recruiter employs in order to determine type and reason of the move, qualifying activities students were seeking at the time of their arrival to the new school district, and latest school district attended.

Researcher:

“Please tell me all about Oregon Migrant Education Program MEP? If you do not know anything specific about the program, what does the name of the program tell you? From where does your knowledge about MEP come from?”

Participant A:

“since we came here [Springfield, Oregon] this program opened its doors to us. It helped us with understanding what we needed to get into the school [...] they [MEP staff] gave us their support. They taught us how everything works at school, and they gave us all the help that we needed, and we really needed a lot of help (chuckles)”

Participant B:

“when I think about MEP, I feel very grateful. This was a really great help [...] immigrants come to this country and they don't know how to speak English. The program gave me resources to improve, like the English class after the school or even the food boxes we still get every week. When you are hungry you can't study well, right? They [MEP staff] told us that we qualified for other services like the one for homeless students [McKinney-Vento Program], because we crossed the border on our own. About MEP, I thought at first that the program helped all immigrants, but they [MEP staff] told me that it was only for agricultural workers [...] lástima! [what a pity!], all people should benefit from this program”

Participant C:

“So, I know that MEP is for families and students who move around a lot. I remember that some of the services were like, for students who didn't meet the reading levels, they [MEP staff] would help us to get into the ELD program to have the language classes we needed, so we could meet those reading levels [...] I volunteered



for them last year [MEP Summer school], so I got to know the services they offered for students pretty well [...] I was part of the program when I was nine years old. I know that you can only stay in MEP for three years. I was part of the program six years in total, because of two moves that my family did during my elementary and middle school years”

Participant D:

“My ELD teacher told me about MEP [...] I thought that it was really nice to be part of a program that helps migrant students [...]” I also played sports thanks to having insurance through the MEP. That was one [service]. If you had any questions like immigration wise or any benefits you can receive we can go to the representative. I think it was M\*\*\* at that time. She could answer any questions and that benefited me. If my mom ever had questions about my school or about my education, she would go to her [MEP staff]”

Participants A and B mentioned that MEP staff opened its doors and helped them with specific resources like food boxes and language classes. Indeed, most migrant students do not qualify only for MEP related services, but additional resources that are offered through other Title I programs such as, English Language Development and McKinney Vento. The fact that students qualify for other services further explains their vulnerability and situational marginalization. In the case of these two student-participants, homelessness was a constant. Since they came to the country as unaccompanied youth, they had to seek for a place to stay on their own. The difficulty was also their status as minors and the fact that in most shelters in Lane County youth is not allowed to remain for the night unless they are with a guardian or family member.

Participant C, mentioned that she was part of MEP for six years

altogether. In her narrative is clear the notion of collaborative work or collaboration amongst different dependencies within the school like in the case of ELD related services. Most students, do not understand at first the reason behind receiving and enrolling in ELD classes, however for this participant, her reading levels needed improvement and she understood that. Later in her narrative, she reflects on feelings and ideas that came from being part of the group of the 'English language learners' in school. For participant D, the services that MEP gave her were more related with immediate needs that she had in terms of information (immigration wise), and accident insurance that covers students in and out of school 24/7. Most migrant students cannot qualify for Medicaid, therefore, they are not able to join sport-teams, because most after school programs require them to have insurance. In participant D's narrative is also evident the level of comfort that she and her family had whenever they had questions related to her education or school. Indeed, recruiters aside from being in charge of enrolling and identifying migrant families; they also refer families and students to different resources in the County. MEP in Lane County for example created and organized a bilingual handbook with information on different services that migrant families can access. The handbook explains the resources in detail and it also offers an explanation on whether or not the agency has bilingual employees to assist Latino migrant families. In this respect (services and extra resources), participants A and B further explained:

Researcher:

“could you elaborate more on the services that the program offers? What type of services? how useful or not those were to you?”

Participant A:

“yes, then [...] the services are like the bus passes. We used the bus pass, because it helped us to get to school whenever we had to sleep at a friend’s house. If my friend lived far away from school and the bus didn’t pick us up from there, then we had to take the other bus [ LTD city transportation system]. Without the bus pass, we could not go to school”

Participant B:

“well, they [MEP staff] helped us with school supplies. I came here and I didn’t have a piece of paper to write on [...] then the MEP lady gave me my notebooks, and a bunch of pens of all colors. I also received a backpack and clothes. The clothing was awesome, because we came from San Marcos [Guatemala], the weather is different there. Here is super cold! And it rains! In Guatemala rains, but then it gets hot right after, here it rains and is always cold and grey [...] I also got the ‘baggy of love’ with socks and shoes. I used those shoes and socks for my work in the fields”

As described above, students face many obstacles that hinder negatively their schooling experience such as, lack of clothing, school supplies, and transportation to and from school. The monthly bus passes that participant A mentions, is a service that McKinney Vento program offers to students based on their lack of housing and mobile situation. In the case of MEP, students can only access daily bus passes due to limited funding. Important to notice, Springfield school District has a different system to identify and help migrant students. For instance, new students must fill out eligibility surveys that will determine if they qualify

for one of the compensatory Title programs such as, McKinney Vento, ELD, MEP, and Indian Education. After the survey is filled out, students are invited to attend a meeting at the Brattain house which is the social services offices of the school district. If a student qualifies for more than one program, then a collaboration emerges and students are given different resources like in the case of these two participants.

### Cluster 2- Identity construction (bilingualism)

This cluster explores notions that participants had in regards to language barriers, being or becoming bilingual in the U.S., perceptions on second language acquisition classes, and their own experiences (in case they were English as second language learners). Additionally, the narratives in the section describe the importance of language as a symbolic structure that creates a sense of belonging and affiliation.

Researcher:

“Some MEP students were also part of the English Language Development Program or ELD, please tell me all you know about this program. What do you remember the most? What did you like or dislike about the ELD classes? Why? You can also share about specific feelings you had when you were attending ELD or any other classes in the school, were you pulled out from ‘normal’ classes a lot in order to get ELD language support? Was this annoying to you or beneficial? Why? You can also elaborate on being bilingual and what does it mean to you?”

Participant A:

“yeah, I was part of the ELD program. For me it wasn’t terrible [...] I mean, they [ bilingual instructional assistants] took us

[participants A and B] out of class, because [well], we couldn't talk in English. It wasn't embarrassing for me or anything, because I do speak Spanish, we both speak Spanish. I needed to learn more English so I could understand the teacher and my classmates. The problem was that people would not talk to us, like my classmates and stuff [...] because [well] we are 'chapines' [Guatemalans] and I guess, they didn't like that. "

Participant B:

"well, it was the same for me. They took me out of class, I fell behind in math because of it. That was annoying. Now, I have to take this credit recovery class online and it's even worse. Most of my classmates graduated already and I am stuck! [...] because I do not remember studying this stuff [factorization] in class. Then, I also remember when my teacher told me with an attitude that 'you were probably in ELD'. Why did she say that? I just didn't like the way she [math teacher] talked to me, like it was my fault to not pass her class."

Participant C:

"I was an ELD student for a long time, but I passed my testing when I was in six grade. ELD for me was like an extra reading class on top of the other English classes we had at the time. It just helped us get the flow with the language [...] my biggest problem with the language is with the spelling and the writing so I was always very conscious. I can write my ideas now, but when some other people read them, they don't quite understand. I don't feel fully bilingual and that hurts me, because I see how people [English speakers] mistreat my mom for not being able to talk clearly [...] she understands, but she is very shy about it [English]"

Participant D:

"I think been bilingual helps me so much. I see little kids come as High Schoolers [migrant/ recent arrivals] and they feel that they can't learn English in one year just cause the older you get the harder it is to learn, and it's really sad because they are completely secluded from the rest of the school so no one really tries to talk to you; and being younger, little kids specially in California since they're mostly Hispanic, they will talk to you in Spanish and in English. You're little, everyone talks. And I am glad I got to learn a second language been young, because I see how hard it is for older

kids coming here and they want to learn, but it's hard for them changing so much”

Even though, participants A and B found ELD classes to be a useful resource to improve their communicational skills, they felt that there was not a shameful feeling associated with non-being bilingual or being pulled out from class. On the contrary, they seemed to be open to learn a new language, because they saw the necessity. However, there was a negative notion associated with not being accepted. In this case, the notion came from being from Guatemala or ‘Chapin’. After several observations and interactions with these participants and other students who lived under similar circumstances, I noticed that these notions of discrimination based on being ‘chapin’ are critical and determine their self-identity. The term ‘chapin’ has profound historical connotations in the case of Guatemala. The word describes a type of material that is similar to cork and was used to fabricate shoes (Juarros, 1857). According to Domingo Juarros (1857) in his book on Guatemala City, Spaniards used the term in a derogative way to imply the color and contexture of Guatemala’s Mayan indigenous. Currently, people employ the word to refer to all people who are from Guatemala; however, amongst certain indigenous communities that are direct descendants from the Mayas, the term is highly offensive.

Participant B also talked about the negative consequences of being

‘pulled out’ from class. In his case, he could not graduate on time, because of issues with his math class. Throughout the literature provided on chapter two about adverse schooling experiences of Latino migrant students within the American educational system, it remains a concern the fact that teachers tend to ‘blame’ the migrant student for not passing a class, instead of acknowledging and perhaps understanding that the student makes part of a sub-group of students who need extra language support.

Participant C refers to feeling self-conscious about her oral and writing command of English. For her, it is also clear that the ELD class was another class on top of the other classes, so she did not feel out of her comfort zone. Perhaps, because in some schools in Springfield, the ELD program has a model where non-English speaking students and native speakers are paired in a classroom twice or once a week, so they can share and practice their language abilities. This program makes part of the ‘teacher cadet’ initiative that Springfield school district has been promoting as part of its shifts towards becoming a more inclusive district. Participant D, did not want to talk about the ELD classes. She did not remember the model very much, because she came at a younger age. The first school that she attended in the U.S. was in California. She feels that it was more inclusive the environment there. In that sense, she further elaborates on the advantages of being bilingual. She also

mentions that it is highly difficult for older recent arrivals (specifically in their teenage years) not being bilingual. Indeed, research suggests that the process of integration within the U.S. tends to be more traumatic for students who have not been exposed to bilingual or multilingual environments, because they feel confused as to how to engage their voices within a discordant system, where they must establish and negotiate who they are. Along those lines, I also asked students to report on their feelings around discrimination based on languages other than English and accent- ideologies. I only received a clear reply from participants A and B.

Researcher:

“Have you felt discriminated for being Hispanic? if so, what were the feelings that you had and how those affected you at school, home, and friends?” please feel free to elaborate as much as you want on your responses”

Participant A:

“well, it has been difficult [...] I speak Spanish and when they [English speaking classmates] saw or heard me talking in Spanish, they would look at me like with a ‘what the heck?!’ type of look [...] I think that there is a conflict in this country, because people who speak another language [silence], I mean in this country white people discriminate a lot the people who speak Spanish. In Guatemala, Ladinos discriminate people when they are indigenous, because they don’t speak a good Spanish. My grandma for example, her Spanish wasn’t good and she was discriminated. She had an accent in Spanish, so people knew she was not from the city. Here, I speak English and they [others] know I am not from here. But, in Guatemala the native tongue is not Spanish, I don’t know if English is the native tongue here. There are so many people who speak other languages, like some of my classmates they speak Chinese, but no one discriminates them”



Participant B:

“I don’t really want to talk about that much. I have to learn English and that’s it. I have felt discrimination, but it’s not going to change. People always discriminate. Some people discriminate because you are short or tall, fat or skinny, it doesn’t matter [...] I think, it’s human nature. My feelings, well, I feel sad. People only see one side of me, like the Hispanic side, but I am trying to become a better English speaker [...] pero me da pena! [ I feel embarrassed], I don’t get to practice my English, because I don’t know how to pronounce the words”

The aspect of discrimination based on the Spanish language and accent is present throughout these students’ narratives. On one side, participant A indicates that discrimination in the U.S. comes from ‘whites’ or people who speak English, but at the same time he also reflects on the discrimination that a family member suffered in Guatemala, because she could not speak ‘good Spanish’. The distinction between acceptable and unacceptable type of ‘Spanish’ comes from the imperial times. The Spanish monarchy created a clear racial division that remains until today in developing communities across Central, south America, and parts of Mexico. These transgenerational experiences then create a specific world view on the migrant student who now is able to encounter commonalities and compare types of discrimination. In that sense, the experience of discrimination is part of the migrant experience as well as in the idea or construction of being Latino/Hispanic in the U.S. On the same token, for participant B, discrimination is part of the human nature and he adduces that it will remain as an status quo that cannot be subverted. He acknowledges that the nature of his oppression

is based on his inability to speak the language, therefore, he has to learn 'English and that's it'. Although, he seeks for integration and assimilation into the U.S. society via English language acquisition, there is a barrier that in this case has to be with his accent when he talks in English. Another aspect that is highly fundamental in these narratives has to be with other languages spoken in the U.S. Participant A feels that his classmates who speak Chinese are not discriminated in the same way. This particular aspect suggests that the speaking of a foreign language in the U.S. is associated with status and prestige of a specific social group or minority.

### Cluster 3- minority group status

This cluster explores feelings and perceptions of students whenever they are considered by others (adults, teachers, counselors) as a minority. In this section, students also offered an insight into how school personnel served them for being part of a minority (migrant under MEP definition).

Researcher:

“Did people in your school identify you as a minority? How? Who did it? And what do you think was that? Minority students face challenges in getting an education that others students do not face. Could you tell me about some of the reasons why minority students might experience these difficulties and why? Do you think that does it have to be with culture? If so, why?”

Participant A:

“people identified me as a minority. They [ school staff] always mentioned to others [classmates, counselors, and so on] that I was a Spanish speaker. I don’t feel bad about being a Spanish speaker, I just don’t like people always telling others that my fluency in English is limited. They don’t need to know that! [...] I want to practice, if they say that to others, they won’t talk to me. About difficulties, probably the language is the difficulty, the money, and the working [...] I work four days a week after school in the \*\*\* ranch in Springfield. I don’t like the agricultural work, but I have to do it [...] my back is always sore at the end of the day”

Participant B:

“Of course, I am a minority. They [school personnel] called us Spanish speakers, that’s how they said it. But they didn’t know that I was migrant [MEP definition]. They didn’t know that I worked with my brother [participant A] in the \*\*\*ranch. If I am tired every morning and I sleep in class [laughs], it’s because, I’m always tired. The difficulties are the housing, the food, the language, and not having a family. I really want to go back [Guatemala] some day. But, life is hard there, you know? That’s why I came here. My counselor did not know that I was MEP or that I could apply to the scholarship in Corvallis [OSU]. I didn’t even understand my counselor. She speaks only English, she is nice, but [...] I like her, though”

Participant C:

“People [classmates, teachers] identify me as a minority, because I spoke Spanish a lot of when I was young. They weren’t mean to me, but they knew that I was Latina and that’s how they called me [...] about the difficulties, I think they come because we [ Latino migrant] have less support, the people who support you are like your own race and stuff and they are also striving to survive [...] people in general are mean and stuff and we tend to support like our own kind, and that’s how the world is”

Participant D:

“I felt that teachers in my school used to make so much emphasis on that [being a minority], but they don’t understand how that feels like. They could be talking about, I don’t know, tax returns and how you can file for so much and how you’re giving back to your own city and everything and I don’t feel like that. An immigrant like me, we can’t get those benefits back, so everyone is talking about like “so you’re giving so much money back to the

government, so you can receive that in financial aid for your college; and I'm like no, you can't, you're [referring to teachers] talking to half the people in these classes, the rest can receive that, you know! [...] I am sorry for getting emotional, but I just hate when they call me a minority [...] it is like I don't have a voice [...] Since half my education was in California, and CA is mostly Hispanic, I think that teachers there can relate more to the students, because the teachers also speak Spanish. However, when we came here [Oregon], because my dad couldn't find a job in the fields there [California], when I got here I was like "wow this is a really, like white people community" you didn't see a lot of Latinos when I got here in Sixth grade; now I see a lot more. Teachers I think, they don't know how to interact with us kids, they don't have much to talk about with us since their culture is so different. Teachers, I think, they don't comment to not be rude so I don't think they get the same connection that they have as with their, let's say white students"

Participants A and B acknowledged their status as a minority and they mentioned about their discomfort whenever school personnel made emphasis on their English language proficiency. They felt that this aspect was unnecessary and affected their chances to practice English and engage further in communication with their non-Spanish speaking classmates. Participant B indicated that his counselor did not speak Spanish and it was difficult for him to relate with her. The relational aspect between a counselor and counselee is critical in that the student needs to feel a positive and consistent relationship, in order to share academic and occupational concerns. Currently, there are not counselors who can work specifically with Latino migrant students in any of the high schools of Lane County. The only position that serves these students, but not necessarily migrant under MEP definition is a multicultural liaison who works at Springfield high school. Additionally, participants A and B,

indicated the lack of financial resources, type of job they do, and minority status experience as an important aspect that affects the type of relationship they developed with others in school.

The minority- identification experience for participants' C and D is more political. Participant C is Mexican- American and she does not feel a sense of belonging to the country. She talks about race as an aspect that creates affiliations and intragroup boundaries. This sense of affiliation further separates her from feeling connected and relied on her school support system. She mentions that 'people [white people] only help their own kind'. During the interview process, I saw disappointment in her gestures an uneasiness. I tried to make her reflect on what it means to be separated and excluded within her own country, and she refused to continue with the conversation. She said empathically that 'this is not her country', she is Mexican. Freire (2013) mentions that for the oppressed it is always difficult to assume and reflect on the nature of his oppression. In the case of the student, she gave us hints into her convoluted sense of who she is and who can become in the country.

Now, another interesting aspect worthy of mention corresponds to the specific examples that participant D offers. For her, teachers behave as actors that replicate and exclude students through their making them

feel a minority constantly. The fact that teachers talk about tax returns and the type of aid or resources that minority students could access or not makes it difficult for her to explain her situation. It is clear that the student seeks empathy, the capacity that all humans have to understand and value the experiences and hardships of others. The student also reflects on a sense of affiliation and empathy that in the case of these teachers might come from race kinship. Then, one can imply within these narratives that minority status or identification as well as race are core components within the construction of cultural identity for Latino migrants. In reality, their experiences are plagued of plentiful representations and symbolisms of this unfortunate race binary.

#### Cluster 4- Migrancy (identity and experiences)

This cluster explores participants' experiences as migrants in schools. This category also considers life experiences of other people who were close to students and whose migrant story has been significant to them. Within this narrative will emerge the topic of affiliation, sense of belonging, ethnicity, and nationalism as aspects that determine creation and emergence of multiple cultural identities.

Researcher:

“What do you think people in general see of you when they call you Latino or migrant? Think about your life, family members and others around you as agricultural workers, was this image important or not in terms of your relationships with teachers,

classmates and other school personnel? Please be as specific as you like. What does it mean to be Latino and migrant for you? Please talk about aspects that you think define you as Latino or migrant. I encourage to consider whether or not you have changed these ideas about yourself or how are they still the same?

Participant A:

“well, I feel that people see that I speak Spanish. People in my job, they call me Mexican, because I speak Spanish and they think that if all of us speak Spanish, then, we are Mexicans [...] However, I am Guatemalan. When people ask me about my country, I tell them that my country is very diverse. We have indigenous people, Ladinos, and whites [...] when people see me as a migrant, I think that they see that I came from a different country. I work in the fields, but they do not really care about my job. My teachers think that I’m migrant, because I came from a different country. They [teachers] don’t say anything about agricultural jobs or MEP. They don’t know that I can’t attend the Summer school session, because I go to work to Pasco, WA. I have to earn money for my family in Guatemala and for my brother here.

The image that other people have about me [well], it is not very important; I mean [...] I know who I am. I am a hard working person. I want to help out my mom, she is still in Guatemala. I also want to do something different, I don’t want to work always in the fields. This is a very hard job. My mom told me that it doesn’t matter what people think about you, what matters is what you think about yourself, and I think that I can be a better person in this country. If I learn English and find a job like in an office, then I can keep studying”

Participant B:

“I agree with my brother. Most people see us as either Mexicans or something else. The reason [well], we speak Spanish and like tortillas [laughs]. However, it doesn’t mean that we are Mexicans. I believe all of us in Central America, we share the same culture. Like the food, music, beliefs [...] but, I feel that I have changed. In Guatemala, we all are the same. We all are citizens of Guatemala, even when people discriminate, I don’t feel that you are out of place. You know Guatemala is your country [...] here, I can’t feel that connection. I always feel scared, because I don’t want to get in trouble for doing things that we as migrants are not supposed to

do. I remember asking the first week I came here a person on the street if a could walk on a certain street, because there was a road sign that I didn't understand. The person laughed and kept walking”

Participant C:

“Now, with the new election and stuff, they [non-Latinos] see us like criminals [...] they think that we don't have feelings, but we honestly do, and we try to work hard to provide for our families [...] Well, about the image that teachers have on us, I think that they [teachers] feel bad about us sometimes, because they know that we work in the fields and we don't have time to do our homework, they kind of like understand, but they still push us, if we are falling behind in the class [...] other thing that I remember is that sometimes teachers were not very understanding about missed assignments specially after long weekends [...] long weekends in my family, we all went to work in the fields [...] also, on your question about being Latino, for me is like sharing your culture with others, like ‘Dia de los muertos’ [Day of the death] and things like that, and a migrant is someone who is always moving, we are always on the go”

Participant D:

“Well, I consider migrant someone who moves to find a better life, so I moved here [ United States] when I was six from Mexico to find a better life, a better job so my parents could give us a better life [...] My dad has always worked out of town so right now he is working at Medford, OR; he comes on the weekends Friday, Saturday, Sundays to visit us and then he goes back. He's migrating from place to place to find a better life you know, so I've always seen him only a couple of days a week [...] I like to talk a lot about my dad whenever someone asks me about being migrant [...] my dad when he worked here [Oregon], he had a side job. He went mushroom hunting at night with other like families to like bring extra money and I still remember that because he would come back like super muddy, super wet at night, and he'd be like “no, it was scary” because you have to go so far into the forest to find mushrooms and they don't pay them enough for that job, so that's migrating for me.”

Participant A, refers to Spanish as a factor that identifies migrants and Latinos equally. Language is indeed an important symbolic structure



that carries political, geographical, and situational connotations.

However, he expresses his discomfort in regards to being identified as Mexican, because he is from Guatemala and speaks Spanish. Since he is a first generation Latino migrant in the U.S., his reflections about being migrant come from the experiences he had while in Guatemala.

Important to notice is his awareness in terms of class and racial divisions and the impact that those had in the construction of his identity. He understands and acknowledges the boundaries between groups like in the case of indigenous, whites, and Ladinos in Guatemala. He also notices that his teachers in the U.S. assume that he is a migrant merely, because he came from a different country. Precisely, this idea of migrant does not enable teachers to identify successfully migrant students under MEP definition, when they arrive to a new school. As I have explained in previous chapters, migrant students work in agriculture and move across school districts. In order to serve better this specific population of students, schools should know the different economic activities that make part of their local economy and the diverse seasons in which those are carried out. Additionally, participant A, mentions his job (qualifying, agricultural job) as a sign of identification for migrants. In this sense, Latino migrant students seem to be aware of these aspects. For instance, low-income jobs, racial and class divisions in their country of origin are former aspects of their identity construction. One can imply that first generation students still have a deep connection with their home country

and their arrival communities are only 'passing contexts' that they use to accomplish dreams, life projects, and expectations they could not pursue in their own spaces.

Participant B reflects on the meaning of belonging to a country, in his case Guatemala. He talks about the ability to participate in the political life of his country, because there 'he is like the rest'. Indeed, this notion between them and us transcends with Latino migrant students and it is a core part of their identity. Castells (2003) points out that building up connections between localities creates in migrant individuals a global cultural identity or the capacity to live and negotiate within diverse spaces. The student also emphasizes on the importance of having a connection. This connection is described as familiarity. Familiarity is a concept that indicates the ability that an individual has when understanding his role within a particular social structure or system. For example, when the student talks about not knowing the normative boundaries about where to walk or being scared about doing things that 'migrants are not supposed to do', he then acknowledges the aspect of familiarity.

Participant C, reflects on her hardships as migrant and Latina and the meaning of being both in the U.S. She mentions that after the presidential elections result in 2017, Latinos were portrayed as criminals. Interesting to notice is the symbolic dichotomy that students

encounter. On one hand, Latinos are hard-working people who strive to improve their life; on the other, they are illegals who brought to the country their culture of illegality. The culture of illegality is a collective narrative where organized crime is permissible and acceptable as long as it is committed by the elites (Couso, 2010). Couso (2010), criticizes that entire communities in developing countries tend to validate and legitimize crime and even create laws to promote it. Here, in the United States the notion of Latinos as being descendants from backward cultures problematizes their assimilation and integration process. Precisely, based on the assumption that most Latinos come from communities where the culture of illegality is a norm. In the case of the school, being migrant seems confusing as well. Participant C notices that teachers might seem to understand at times that their migrant students must work in the fields in order to provide for their families. However, when it comes to assignments and academic expectations, participant C seems a little uneasy, because her teachers expected her to use wisely long weekends. As she mentioned, her family used long weekends to travel and make more money, so she could not make up for missing assignments. In regards to culture, the expression of being Latino occurs through cultural artifacts like 'day of the death' or the food. In this sense, sharing is an important linkage between being and the expression of the self.

Participant D associates migrancy with hard-ships and constantly moving from one place to the other. She offers as an example, his father's experience. Her father travels constantly between Medford and Springfield, Oregon, and when he is at home, he still looks for side jobs to keep providing for the family. In the previous chapter, Reyes III (2003) states that this is one of the main characteristics of being located at the edge of what he calls situational marginalization. In the case of Latino migrant families, due to the nature of their jobs where low-wages are a constant, they are forced to look for extra-activities that could ensure the well-being of their family members. Even if these extra-activities are dangerous or could potentially jeopardize them (migrant workers), they still need to survive, so in this sense survival is also a definitive aspect within the identity construction of the migrant agricultural worker and it creates his culture and *modus operandi* (experiences). An additional aspect that appears in this narrative has to be with family cohesion. Even though, the agricultural worker in the narrative needs to travel constantly and his daughter cannot see him as much; he is still part of this family. That is, there is a sense of family cohesiveness that transcends the hardships that one must endure in life, migrancy. As Castell (2003) notices, a migrant individual learns how to be present even when he is not there. He creates connections that although virtual still define and keep his role within his family unit.

## Cluster 5- Imagery on Latinos (concept of illegality and stereotypes)

This cluster analyses the concept of illegality as it pertains to Latino migrant students. It also explores common stereotypes that the U.S. society at large (represented in the schools) have on Latino and migrants. For instance, what are some of the frequent assumptions that teachers, school personnel, and other students have on cultural values, identity, and experiences of Latino migrant students. The narratives presented below do not touch on the legal status of any of the participants or how this might affect their migratory experience. I do acknowledge that this problematizes the richness of their experiences. However, I am only interested in how students frame the concept and the symbols associated with being illegal, Latino, and migrant in the country.

Researcher:

“Now, let’s talk about the concept of illegality, please do not refer to your particular legal status in this country. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word illegal? What do you think about the way this word is applied to people who have entered the country without visa or other documents? How did teachers make use of the term illegal when referring to other students? what are some common stereotypes or simplifications that people use when referring to Latinos and migrants? “

Participant A:

“Well, thank you for explaining what stereotype means [...] I don’t want to talk about stereotypes [...] I don’t like how people see me in this country. I want to talk about what I think about myself [...] the image that I have about myself. I think that I am a hard-working man, a family man [...] I had

to grow up super quick like in a matter of seconds. At the beginning of one week, I was in my house helping my mom with the chores and on Friday I was crossing to the U.S. so I am also strong, and 'terco' [stubborn]. I knew, I could come here. I am also very religious, I know that God [Christian sense] is real [...] then, I say, if I am a family man and all the good qualities that people like about others, then I am not illegal, because I am a good guy, I know, I am [...] if I am her, it's because I don't have an option, I also have my oldest sister from my dad's side, so she could help me, here I am. About the concept as it applies to others who are like me, I don't know [...] I feel bad, because they are also hard-working people [...] if some guys like me join gangs or something, well, sometimes you don't have a choice you know. Nobody believes in us, so it's hard to believe in yourself when all people are telling you are nothing"

Participant B:

"An stereotype that I've always heard is that people from Guatemala are criminals or gangsters [...] but, this is not true [...] likes us for example, we came to this country or in general most people from Guatemala, they come to this country because they want to improve their lives [...] because, in Guatemala, the life we have is really hard [...] for example, Guatemala is a very dangerous country right now. People [Guatemalans] get robbed anywhere in the city, specially in poor neighborhoods, so when people here in the U.S. they see that violence in the T.V. then, they think, people in Guatemala are violent and criminals, but we are not"

Participant C:

" I think that people , when they [mass media] talk about illegals, they only talk about Latinos, but there are other 'illegal' people from other countries as well [...] when I hear the word 'illegal', I feel that everyone thinks that they [illegals] all are Latinos or that they [illegals] have only crossed the Mexican border, but that's not true, people can come from different sides of the border [...] they can come from Canada, from the ocean over [...] and they [mass media] don't understand that, it's not only Latinos [...] and this really frustrates me!, this is a country of immigrants [...] besides, California, Arizona, and Nevada, those were once

part of Mexico, so who crossed the border? [...] I also think that people use the word illegal to bring us down, like you don't really know if they are or they're not [...] in school, we used to talk a little bit about illegals in our government class, but the teacher's attitude was really awkward [...] Mr. S\*\*\*, started the conversation like looking at us [the Latinos there in the classroom], and then me and my friend J\*\*\* felt terrible, because Mr. S\*\*\* focused on illegal immigration from Mexico and me and my friend, we both are Mexicans, Chicanos [...] and then, we had a problem with the teacher, because we asked him to talk about illegal immigration from like the white people, and the Indian removal Act, and, he was like, that's not today's topic, and we were like [...] we just want to learn things straight, and he looked at us, like, go to the principal's office right now, you don't get to put the rules here [...] we couldn't believe it, this is the 21st century, you know?"

Participant D:

"I remember a kid in 4<sup>th</sup> grade calling me a wet back. Oh, god I just remember the rage I felt within, just because—oh God, I don't even know how to explain it. It was so, so demeaning to call someone else such a like a racist name. I remember other people calling each other 'beaners' or 'wetbacks'—oh God, I cannot stand it [...] another stereotype, "Latinas are hot because they speak Spanish" [...] The women, I do feel that's a big thing. I don't know why it is—oh, you sound hot when you speak Spanish; no it's my language. It's not supposed to be sexualized. It's not supposed to be for your own good, it's my language you know. And, ah—all Latinos are from Mexico. Sometimes, that can be a bad thing. Just like trump said, all immigrants are criminals. You're generalizing, and if you ever see a brown person on the news, you automatically are like, they're Mexican, they're illegals, they're bad. They can be from—they can be U.S. citizens, just because they're brown, they're Mexican, they're bad. You're putting them in a certain category. And I feel like that's becoming normal. And even for me, I don't usually think—oh, they're coming from Guatemala or El Salvador. I think they're probably from Mexico. And, it's just ignorance again, I mean you don't want to ask, you don't want to learn, and even I do that, so I can't blame everyone for it."

Participant A refers to aspects that self-identify him as migrant and Latino. He also offers a contrast between his self-image and the image that the society creates of him in the context of being illegal in the U.S. As I mentioned previously, any of my participants disclosed their legal status to me. I encouraged this omission to further enhance their privacy. Now, in his narrative is evident that he values more his personality traits and in that sense, he has a positive idea of his persona. He mentions to be a family man, a hard-working person, a person who needed to grow up faster, so he could meet his own expectations and the ones from his family members. He then contrasts this image with the one that mass media replicates. He explains that he is also a very religious person and that he sees this personality trait and corresponding behavior as something common in the U.S. society. Erikson (1968) asserts that for first generation migrants, the predicament between the identity they had before arriving to a host community, and the new one they need to create in order to assimilate is not as harsh as it could be for second and 1.5 generation migrants. In a sense, from Erikson's perspective, if a first generation migrant arrives during his teenage years, he just needs to negotiate aspects that were pre-established and incorporate new ones. However, this is not always the case. For Valencia (2010) the deficit thinking model and derived stereotypes fracture the individual in his sense of self and isolates him from political and



economic participation. He is blamed for being different and as such, any image is valid to assign identity and affiliation even if the individual does not fully agree.

Participant B thinks in similar fashion. Thus, he talks about mass media presenting U.S. society with images of violence and criminal activities that a small number of people perform in Guatemala. Interesting here to notice is that this collective image has real consequences for migrants from Guatemala, in this case Latino migrant students. Castells (2003) talks about the biased- assigned identity that developed societies employ to create or change attitudes towards immigrants. Castells (2003) also suggests that all is part of a political agenda that tries to stop the influx of immigrants from specific nationalities according to the political climate of the time. Currently, the anti-immigrant policy in the U.S. has targeted Muslim communities from diverse countries as well as Latinos. The reason behind seems to be that criminal activities are directly linked to people coming or belonging to these communities. However, the reasoning that employs culture or geographic locality as a sign that determines predisposition towards crime is not accurate, but it reduces immigrants to a simplified image that turns them into objects.

Participant C considers, that there is a concept of illegality that targets specific populations, in this case Latino migrants. Indeed, she

acknowledges that there are different nationalities aside from Mexicans, Guatemalans, and people from Central and South America, who do also cross illegally the border. She also reflects on the further exclusion that this panorama creates for Mexican-Americans/ Chicanos. In a sense, the U.S society in its educational system, migration policy, and diverse legal measures on the like, reduces the narrative of illegality to this particular group (Mexicans, Chicanos and Latinos). The implications are unsurmountable. These translate into non-culturally responsive classroom practices and stereotypes (Gándara, 2009). For instance, in her example of a teacher excluding from the curriculum, themes that explore the effects of the Indian removal act or the invasion of territories in California, Nevada, and Arizona, it was presented only one side of the story. As Diaz-Greenberg (2013) points out, Latino migrant students should be presented with all sides of the story, so that they can reflect openly on their role in this country and how they can contribute within these dynamics of power and oppression.

Participant D reflects on specific stereotypes that correspond to Mexicans and the impact that those have on interactions between Latino migrant students and other non-Latino students. For instance, she recalls on name-calling actions towards her or close friends at school like 'beaner' or 'wetback'. Aside from being bullied, name-calling practices adduce to describe the assigned-cultural identity of a particular group of

individuals, and it makes part of what in theory is considered as racism. Racism in this context is the set of behaviors that further increases isolation and marginalization for certain individuals, in this case Latinos and migrants. Therefore, framing others as 'illegals' is merely the behavior that highlights more poignant issues like the inability of the U.S. system to value racial differences. She also talks about the tendency that mass media has towards portraying Latino women as 'hot' or sexually open based on language or other aspects of their culture. She mentions an example where one of her classmates told her that she was 'sexy', because of her usage of the Spanish language. In this realm, objectification of women of color demonstrates the non-existent general level of acceptance that the U.S. society has on appreciating women from different cultures and considering them also as positive examples of professional or academic success. For instance, Leo Chavez (2013) corroborates this behavior talking about the 'Marianismo' and the image of Latino women as 'hypersexual'. The first tendency indicates that Latino women are seen as these models of virtue that must be subjugated by their husbands and families. They also should act in accordance to the image of 'Mary virgin'. The second tendency or the hyper-sexualization of women of color occurs when the society in general frames them as individuals who are valuable inasmuch they can awake sexual desires on others, because they are exotic, hot-heated or strange in their culture (Chavez, 2013). In this sense, Participant's D narrative on

stereotypes and imagery offers a valuable insight into aspects that indeed affect the construction of cultural identity and experiences of Latino/Latina migrant students in their quest towards self-discovery.

#### Cluster 6- Academic and professional choices after high school

This cluster examines the most common professional or academic choices Latino migrant students consider after high school completion. It also elaborates on the implications that Latino migrants' cultural identity has when they are making these career selections. Students reflected on role models, people who have critical throughout their lives, and their hopes for a life 'beyond the fields'.

Researcher:

“Now, let’s talk about choices after high school, how did you decide what you wanted to do after high school? Was there someone who made or advised you to take a specific decision? Who is this person? How important is this person for you and why?”

Participant A:

“Well, I didn’t know at first what I wanted to do [...] it was really hard for me to have an idea. Then, I came to one of the after school programs for migrant students and they [MEP Youth mentors] talked about going to college and getting financial aid. They taught me that I could study something like engineering, because I like construction a lot [...] I want to build things for people who needed it the most. Then, they also told me about architecture, and more and more choices, and options [...] I asked them [MEP youth mentors], are you sure I can become a professional? I mean, I don’t have the language[English] yet, and they said, of course, you can! [...] we just need to work extra hard [...] about a role model, I think my mom [...] she has been so great to us, I can’t imagine my life without her. She is very smart, she told me that the greatest

richness a person can have is to have an education, because education makes us equal [...] about my counselors in school, they were nice, but all the meetings I had with them were about credits and going to a community college, because my English wasn't that great [...] they said it politely of course, but the message was that I couldn't do it, that something in me was still lacking”

Participant B:

“I don't know what I want to study. I really want to work first. I want to help my family. I am going to attend Lane Community College soon to study gastronomy. I like cooking for people [...] I am also taking English classes in the evenings, so that I can maybe look for a different job [...] I am tired with this job, my back is always aching [...] I also want to apply for the migrant scholarship [College Assistance Migrant Education Program or CAMP], I think, it would be great to get that [...] I also can say that nobody in my school explained to me all the different career options I could have. They told me that I needed to focus on getting my conversational English or something like that [...] that right there traumatized me, because how come they [counselors] couldn't understand me? [...] anyways, I really want to work in a different job, but I don't have references or connections. The only people I know are the contractors in the nurseries [...] without references, I don't think, I can get a job in an office [...] my dream is to work in an office, I can learn really quick, like to alphabetize files or make copies, something like that”

Participant C:

“I would like to study Early Childhood education [...] I have been an intern for quite a while at this local non-profit and I really love it! [...] kids are so smart, their minds are like sponges, they can absorb so much knowledge [...] and you can say a kid something positive and they will believe it [...] I like that about children [...] the little kids I take care off, they have told me that they want to become doctors or lawyers or something like that, and their parents are not like even educated or anything [...] it makes me think that people can become about anything they set their mind to [...] positive role models, well, this white teacher when I was in sixth grade [...] she told me that I was really smart and beautiful and valuable [...] that I was very patient, so I could maybe teach or help other children who might be struggling at school [...] that was very inspiring”

Participant D:

“I’m going to start with a story. My counselor last week said, you better invite me to your graduation party and I just started laughing. If my mom ever heard that, she’d laugh with me. She’s always told me that High School isn’t even like a big thing. It’s not, it’s not in Mexican culture at least. You graduate High School—Ok, now keep going. It’s like saying I’m going to throw a party for a middle school graduation, it’s not where you’re supposed to be and a lot people do feel like that—ohh! I graduated High School that was such a big thing, I’m going to go get a job—like no, if you want to live good you have to go to college and I don’t completely agree with that just because so many people can live successfully without it, but like as a society, if you do want to be successful you’re going to go to college. Since I never thought of graduation as being a big thing so I’ve always seen myself in college; graduating getting like a good job when I’m older. And through OMLI [Oregon Migrant Leadership Institute], it wasn’t like eye opening like uh I do have to go to college. It was like more of like there’s a lot of resources I can use and there’s a lot of things I can do being Mexican to go to college. So I wasn’t planning on going, but now I’m going to because of OMLI. It was just like here are the things I need to do to get there.”

Participant A reflects on the supplemental services that MEP offered to him in the form of youth mentoring programs and career counseling. First, MEP as part of its services offers Summer and after school programs that teach migrant students strategies to get jobs or further their education through financial aid or scholarships for migrants. Some of the college readiness components include workshops on college culture and strategies to get resources when one is a first generation college student. For instance, job-shadowing and mock interviews. In this narrative is also interesting the sense of encouragement and empowerment that youth mentors promoted in the mindset of the student. They (youth mentors) focused on his interests and turn them into a professional occupation that he could accomplish

through hard work. Since, participant A defines himself as a hard-working man, the analogy brings in the positive personality traits that he already acquired. He also mentions that the traditional counseling approach was not as effective as the one offered by MEP. For instance, his appointed counselor focused only on the technicalities to graduate from high school rather than on the interests that he had and his life as a migrant student. He also exhibits a clear understanding on the value of education as a factor that equalizes people from diverse backgrounds, and one can imply that this also means the ability to look beyond racial or class divisions.

Participant B talks about specific concerns that he has in terms of finding a job like having connections and references outside of agricultural type of jobs. Indeed, one of the most difficult aspects for Latino migrant students when they think about their lives beyond the fields is their lack of volunteer and internship experiences that could facilitate them to get an office job in the future. In the case of this student, he did not have access to an academic counselor that was culturally responsive towards his needs as Latino and migrant under MEP definition. One example of this lack of cultural responsiveness came from the discouragement of the counselor towards the student. The counselor implied that he could not pursue an academic or professional occupation based on his limited English conversational skills. Indeed,

language barriers are one aspect that generates isolation for migrant Latino students, specially those who are recent arrivals.

Participant C emphasized her narrative on a positive role model that she had while she was attending school in sixth grade (a white teacher). She uses then this memory to explain, her interest towards working with infants. She describes working with children as a rewarding experience. Interesting to notice is that she has been able to volunteer at a non-profit organization which has helped her to have a different occupational expectation. For the student, the lack of education that these children's parents have is not an impediment for their advancement. This idea goes in opposition with common stereotypes that describe Latino parents as unable to support their children's efforts to attend college and further their education. Even though, Latino parental involvement remains as a concern amongst public schools in Lane County. I believe that is important and part of the societal change that we need to acknowledge that Latino parents do value education and their children's involvement in after school programs. Part of the identity of Latino migrant families is this necessity to improve their lives and their children's well-being through education. Perhaps, they do not fully understand all the mechanisms or resources they could have access to; however, they feel satisfied when their children graduate from high school and continue to pursue education onto the next step which is



college.

For participant D this is precisely the most poignant aspect of her narrative. She mentions that graduating from high school was only one accomplishment. Attending college has been the natural path she has to pursue. Therefore, she indicates that her parents continue to support her in any way they can, so she can acquire the education she wants to. This sense of empowerment and cohesiveness of family as the support system for Latino migrant students is critical and inspiring. One can imply that family as a support system is another aspect that enhances the cultural identity of Latino migrant students. Indeed, throughout the narratives presented in this chapter family plays a significant role that defines the lives, expectations, identity, and world views of Latino migrant students. This sense of family as a community that also has its own expectations must be the core to advance educational and professional opportunities for these students. For the most part, universities in the U.S. fail to include the concept of family and familiarity as critical feature of educational success and academic performance. For this student, her accomplishments are also the result of a collective effort, her and her family as a sole unit and entity.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### **General Conclusions**

This research endeavor chronicled the cultural identity narratives of four self-identified Latino migrant students. Students shared their experiences and described aspects that pertained to their cultural identity as they saw it. From these experiences and narratives, I was able to find commonalities that signaled the lives of Latino migrant students in a similar fashion. Even though, they have experienced different behaviors, attitudes, and services within their schools that are divergent; students shared certain aspects that enhance their understanding and world view towards who they are, what they want to become, and their future occupations or career choices after high school. For example, they all endured discrimination, racism, had a similar concept of support system, family values, and being Latino/ migrant in the U.S. They all also acknowledged the importance of education as a tool to enhance positively one's life. They felt that some family members where inspiring role models or that teachers could help them overcome their fears if they were culturally responsive. Along those lines, they had mixed experiences when interacting with counselors, teachers, and youth mentors. Some of them had access to MEP youth mentoring services while others complained about the traditional counseling approach that focuses

merely on technicisms to graduate. As I mentioned in previous chapters, k-12 educational settings have disregarded in great measure the school-based or personal experiences that their subgroup of students, in this case Latino migrant students have and the manner in which these experiences affect their choices after high school. By the same token, once students enter four-year institutions or colleges, they get into a new environment with predetermined rules, power relations, and mechanisms that they are in need to negotiate. This negotiation as I mentioned in chapter two occurs when students reflect on their self-assigned values of cultural identity by reflecting on their situational, contextual, and individual role within their communities.

Furthermore, they had a strong sense of connection with their parents' culture and the culture they found in the U.S. In a sense, they described their experiences and cultural identity as an extension of larger, local, and global political, historical, and collective processes that correspond to the common struggle that Latinos face as an ethnic category in the U.S. I also discovered that students had a clear idea of what their role is in this society. They felt entitled to criticize and reflect on issues regarding oppression, exclusion, and ideologies that portray them negatively or simplify the richness of their migratory experience. Finally, in terms of their occupations and career choices after high school, Latino migrant students felt that a professional job could be ideal

and it would help them to improve their lives. Therefore, there is an expectation on upward mobility. As a researcher, this finding was not surprising given the inner and contextual difficulties that these students face while working in the fields. These students also want to improve their social and cultural life through learning more English, becoming fully bilingual, and changing ideas that depict them as illegals or criminals. In a sense, these narratives are filled with hope and fruitful expectations on the future in spite of the adversities and the current political climate the country is enduring.

### **Personal Reflections and Implications for my Practice**

As I mentioned before, this research study came after long conversations I had with migrant students in general, but with Latino migrants in particular. I first came into contact with Migrant Education Program (MEP) on 2015 while I was conducting research on successful pedagogical practices that foster second language acquisition amongst Latino families while increasing first language literacy. The program called 'Pilas' is a collaboration between MEP and a local non-profit organization that serves Latino migrant families in Lane County, Oregon. What sparked my attention was the high level of community involvement from the same families that were receiving the services. Families met twice a week at a local church where they received bilingual instruction. Parents and MEP staff worked side- by- side running the program

collaborating and supporting each other's goals. Given the hardships of most Latino migrant families, child care and homework help were offered, so children could get attention while parents were attending classes. I spoke with one of the promoters of the 'Pilas' and she connected me with the MEP coordinator.

My involvement with MEP formally started around October 2015. I was helping the coordinator with different activities such as, recruitment, identification, and explanation of supplemental services to recent arrivals. In 2016, there was a change in staff and a new coordinator was hired. The new person appointed told me to increase the involvement of migrant youth transitioning to college through new services like workshops and one-on-one sessions. From all of the one-on-one sessions I had with Latino migrant students, I did not only discover my true professional passion which is career counseling and instructional design, but I found what my students' passions were. Precisely, I saw that my students had a tremendous necessity towards expressing themselves and finding their voice. Most of them had very important stories to share. Stories that talk about resilience, their ability to be empathetic, and need for improvement based on who they are. As one can notice from previous chapters, these findings are not surprising, but they reveal a normal preoccupation underrepresented communities have, the ability to create, define, and orient who they are and can be in the context of larger social

processes.

I also saw that due to different circumstances, Latino migrant students felt a frustration that comes from the dichotomy between the images and symbols that the society presents about them, and the idea they have about themselves. Through this research endeavor, we were able to explore together concepts that have framed the migrant experience of Latinos in the U.S like illegality, criminality, and the Latino threat narrative. Since the participants in my study will become first generation college students, their academic and professional success will depend in great measure of the type of approaches they get while in college. College counselors need to comprehend the richness of experiences these students bring to campuses across the nation. Experiences that are the result of their being part of specific sub-groups and connections they created while they were part of the K-12 educational system.

Indeed, different multidisciplinary studies have captured the issues that surround the identity construction of Latino migrants, but I found little research on the identity construction process as it pertains to migrants Under MEP definition. I also wanted to notice that the completion of this study will allow me to support better Latino migrant

students as I continue my work as an advocate and High school graduation specialist for MEP in Lane County. I also hope to expand these research findings into bigger academic endeavors. In the form of better curricular strategies of inclusion for migrant students or novel strategies to identify, recruit, and entice involvement of migrant youth and their families. Finally, when my academic and professional travels take me to Central, South American, Mexico, and the Caribbean, I will not turn my back on the stories of resilience that begin in these countries and continue as they transit into arrival communities in the U.S.

### **Implications for Practice**

Even though the findings of this study correspond merely to the individual experiences of four Latino migrant students, they can provide insight into how counselors and school personnel can adjust their practices and create structural changes to serve better Latino migrant students. This research depicted also the personal experiences and process of cultural identity construction that four study- participants faced while attending K-12 educational settings. Students were able to explore and reflect on their experiences when they were part of MEP and the manner in which these experiences and cultural identity were considered when they made professional or academic choices after high school completion. What these experiences revealed to us about

students' choices was that they feel a need towards improving their lives through education. All of them are seeking to transit into higher education institutions and pursue either an Associate Degree or a Bachelors. Interesting to notice is that education for Latino migrant students is the best equalizer and they see themselves as individuals who possess resilience, perseverance, and identity capital.

Identity capital refers to the repertoire of individual resources that are assembled over time (Jay, 2013). This assembly of attitudes, experiences, and individual abilities enable people to face academic, professional, and life changing situations. In the literature about identity capital amongst minority students, Jay (2013) asserts that culture is rich and complex. Individuals from all backgrounds enrich the repertoires of classroom practices through their unique world view and lived experiences; therefore, by incorporating cultural difference as an aspect that enhances learning, minority individuals see the validation of their culture and identity. The positive outcome then will be upward mobility and better academic performance, because the student will consider the school as a democratic center not in theory, but in practice.

Moreover, the experiences of Latino migrant students are related with bigger structural inequalities that need to be addressed at the local and federal level. That is, migrant students continue to be a vulnerable segment in the American public educational system. Therefore, as



counselors, scholars or educational practitioners, we ought to get to know these students and responsively understand the challenges they face including discrimination, racism, stereotyping, isolation, situational marginalization, and cultural exclusion. Consequently, the study pointed out that it matters how we approach minority individuals in the classroom and how their migratory experience is depicted. Once again, the findings are not surprising, but they reveal a common trend and the nature of the so-called achievement gap.

First, it is important to acknowledge that all students bring to the classroom a specific set of beliefs, values, and world views. They get to interact with each other in regards to those particular elements. In a sense, school is the scenario where all types of cultures coexist and interact. Teachers, who practice culturally responsive teaching understand that they are mediators and that everything matters including verbal and non-verbal communication. The examples provided by the narratives suggest that there are still topics that teachers are scared to share and comment on with minority individuals. Historical issues that have marked the well-being of minority individuals and entire communities like the Indian Removal Act or the Mexican-American war, and even the more recent presidential election. In that sense, students deserve to know all sides of the story and make the global and local connections they need to understand the nature of their social role. In

human history, present occurrences are the outcomes from discussions and conversations that were not addressed at their specific moment. In the case of U.S. society issues regarding one's race seems to be the cornerstone to comprehend current phenomena.

By the same token, the narratives of Latino migrant students demonstrate that they expect that the educational system in the U.S. gets to normalize and validate their culture (differences). In a multicultural context like the one in the U.S. global and local issues coexist in a sole scenario. When teachers regardless their own cultural frame and ethnic background learn how to incorporate and make those connections, they give significance to the stories that all students bring to school. Culture does not belong only to minority or ethnic diverse individuals. Culture is also an experience and all individuals have their own take on it.

The narratives also demonstrated a very important distinction between the cultural identity process between first, 1.5, and second generation Latino migrants. For all students, there was a commonality which was based on values and fundamental traditions that correspond to familiarity with the concept of Latino and migrant. They all have endured hardships, have worked in the fields, speak Spanish as their

first language, and identify resilience, and education as factors that contribute to their success. However, it was clear that for first generation migrants, there is still a lack of connection with their arrival communities. This lack of connection or lost linkage between the self and his new community affects negatively their cultural integration. Then, as an answer to this feeling of disorientation, the school must serve as the context that embraces differences of all students, so that they feel valued. In Lane County for example, Springfield School District has launched a newcomers' program at Springfield High School. The administrator in charge of the initiative is part of the ELD program and works collaboratively with MEP staff. Some of the services that both programs offer are, one-on-one sessions with recent arrivals, explanations of cultural differences between U.S. education and their home communities, as well as, their academic options, and requirements to graduate from high school. Most students qualify for both Federal programs (ELD and MEP). However, for those who do not, MEP staff refers them to appropriate agencies in the County.

Another important aspect to notice is that cultural identity does not occur equally between male and female Latino migrant students. Latina migrant students face a different type of discomfort or identity disorientation that comes from adverse images. Two opposing images are the Marianismo and hypersexual/voluptuous woman. The first image

corresponds to how Latino women ought to behave in accordance to the virtues of the virgin Mary. Values like sacrifice, abnegation, and submission make part of this universe of assigned cultural identity. While women can certainly exhibit these and other qualities, they should also be free to explore their femininity in their best interest. The second image corresponds to the manner in which women, especially Latino women are seen as 'hot', erotic or hot-headed. The problem with these two images has to be with the simplification that it offers in regards to how Latino women are. In reality, they are also smart, adventurous and value their agency. My take on this, women regardless their ethnicity, cultural background or identity should be valued and considered as individuals and not as objects to be categorized.

In regards to academic and professional choices Latino migrant students make after high school, their narratives indicate a great need for mentoring services that explain them how to navigate successfully the work-world. Since most migrant students will become first generation college students later on, it is important to expose them to different experiences that will teach them how to create connections with prospect employers. It is also crucial to teach them the different resources they could access through their potential universities or colleges. Currently, MEP in Lane County does not offer a service that specifically aids migrant students with job-shadowing, mock-interviews or career fairs.

Most students are referred to programs that are already in place. As I mentioned in chapter one, MEP has specific limitations and one of those has to be with the supplanting of services that might be already in place under Title I funding. However, as we have seen from this study, migrant students' needs are very specific and they cannot find always the time to attend after school programs, because they are either working in the fields or taking care of younger siblings.

To illustrate, this last Summer Oregon Migrant Leadership institute (OMLI) saw its numbers decreased in terms of migrant students-attendees. OMLI is a supplemental service that MEP offers to all its senior students. Migrant students can apply to attend a one- week Summer program at Oregon State University (OSU) in Corvallis. The focus of the program is to teach and show students that college is indeed a very plausible possibility, and that there are different financial resources they could access regardless of their legal status in the country. OMLI also emphasizes on the construction of positive models of cultural identity that will help students to overcome any sort of difficulties as they transition from k-12 educational settings and into college. Lane County has had for the last six years (according to the coordinator of MEP) twelve to nine spots for migrant students to attend. Now, the application process is very straightforward and students need

to sign and write an essay explaining the reasons behind their interest to attend the program.

This year, Lane County did not count with any student-participants. The reason was that most of them decided to travel out of the state to work with their families and friends to save money to start their classes at the Community College. The difficult part is that once students graduate from high school, they do not have access to MEP specific services that are only available from k-12. All students send their applications on time. However, these type of eventualities demonstrate that migrant students can have all the interest and be willing to attend a program, but their economic hardships force them to forgo these type of academic or occupational related activities. Part of my recommendation is that MEP should offer to students who cannot attend these type of programs in the Summer, several additional sessions throughout the year, so that they can have that opportunity open and available.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited by its scope, including the small sample size and the single interview with each participant. The time constraints of this study made it also difficult to conduct a large number of interviews and did not allow time for follow-up interviews. In that regard, I wanted to explore more specifically on role models, occupational choices, and

family members' stories of migrancy that in one way or another could have an impact on the lives of Latino migrant students. The recruitment method for the study resulted in a smaller number of participants. For this study, I was required to contact only Latino migrant students who were listed on the MEP database. Most of the students from the database had non-working phone numbers, their email accounts were not functioning, and the ones that I could contact had reserves regarding the nature of my research. Even though, they were not required to disclose their legal status, students felt that the research was in fact very invasive of their privacy.

I believe that I might have had a larger sample size if I could have had access to a list of students who met the criteria for the study and then personally contacted them. Indeed, the coordinator only allowed me to contact students from the list of MEP graduates. I did have prior contact with some other students, however for the coordinator was very important to respect the privacy of the students and ensure that they could have access to all the documents pertaining to the reason for my study.

Another limitation of the study is that the participant population is quite uniform in terms of ethnicity (Latino). It would have been interesting and highly beneficial for my study to include students from various ethnic and racial denominations. Since the main criterion for my

study was Latino, my study does not address similarities or differences on the processes of cultural identity construction and experiences amongst students from other sector within the migrant sub-group population. In fact, my objective was to understand how Latino migrant students describe their experiences with MEP and cultural identity when making professional or academic choices after high school completion. However, I did not realize the importance of understanding how these processes impact also students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the findings of the study offer only a one-dimensional view of experiences and cultural identity of Latino migrant students, and they do not pertain to all Latino migrant students.

### **Emergent Questions and Areas for Further Research**

The overall benefit that I see in my study is its potential to contribute to a better and larger understanding of the experiences and cultural identity of Latino Migrant students as former MEP participants. As I have explained before, Migrant students are an underserved and underrepresented segment of the American public school system. And, it is my aim that other students have the opportunity to voice their experiences, concerns, opinions, and challenges for as long as they are attending k-12 schools. With my research, I also expect to inform the general public and to invite teachers, educational researchers, and politicians to look into what these Latino migrant students' lived



experiences convey in regards to their cultural identity as Latino and MEP participants. Indeed, the creation of more inclusive grounds for these students in schools and arrival communities requires that those in positions of power value the resilience and determination that situationally marginalized individuals exhibit. My objective is that culturally responsive practices can be implemented and replicated in the classroom and arrival communities so that Latino migrant students get to experience a real sense of belonging.

I have also identified in this study that the endemic hardships that Latino migrant students endure at schools and social contexts are real. In this regard, it is important to understand that teachers, school personnel, and students regardless of their cultural background share spaces and interact in a manner in which preconceived opinions, beliefs, values, and expectations about themselves and others take place. Their personalities, learning, and teaching styles come alive and impact the quality of their daily experiences in the classroom for better or worse. In the case of Latino migrant students, their situational marginalization renders their social self to unequal power relations where others (teachers, peers, school staff, employers) get in charge of defining their cultural identity, life choices, expectations, behavior, and even educational performance. In a sense, those who are at the top of the power relation get to exercise their privilege through dictating and

promoting normative attitudes that relate to minority individuals' race, socioeconomic background, class, and ethnicity.

Educational research has largely demonstrated the positive and negative impact that teachers' beliefs and expectations have on students. And, for most Latino migrant students, the lack of trust that their teachers might exhibit towards them and their 'adequate' life choices, academic performance, and future takes a negative hold onto their self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride (Gándara, 2001). As I mentioned previously, Latino migrant students learn how to live with labels that entire systems impose on them such as, ESL, poor, not college-bound, undocumented, deficient and so on; labels that impact their self-defined cultural identity. With this study, I hope MEP in Oregon can work on adjustments and programs that result in more Latino migrant students graduating from high school and attending college regardless of their legal status in the country. Since the program is fairly new in Lane County, there is still much to be done in terms of understanding MEP's population of Latino migrant students, their dreams, expectations, life choices, experiences, and significance of cultural identity. In reality, a program can only maximize its results by dwelling deeper into the specifics of the community it serves, and in the case of MEP, I hope that my contribution sets a mark for future research and interest in this population. Ultimately, my research will be significant for Latino migrant

students, their families, communities, advocates, and people who have been impacted through interactions with them. Since there is little to none literature on the lived experiences of Latino migrant students in Oregon, MEP at regional and state levels will benefit from pinpointing areas that they need to tackle in order to support students better on their quest towards graduation. Effective and efficient operationalization of MEP in Oregon needs of documented and conscientious qualitative research endeavors. My research for being based on case studies will contribute to the examination of patterns of conduct, strategies, and systems of knowledge that affect Latino migrant students as well as the identification of those processes that MEP staff have made productive in order to generate inclusiveness.

## APPENDIX A

### IRB-APPROVED RESEARCH PLAN

**Study Title:** Beyond the fields: dialogical analysis of Latino migrant students cultural identity narratives at Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP)

**Protocol Number:** TBD

**Principal Investigator:** Laura Burbano

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#### **A. Introduction and Background**

With the aim of addressing the endemic needs of children of migrant farmworkers, the Federal government established the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966 or Title I-C through an amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). To be eligible for MEP supplemental services, a child must have moved into a new school district within the last three years to engage in temporary or seasonal work in agriculture, forestry or fishing related activities or to accompany family members seeking such work; the child must be between 0 to 21 years old and not having completed high school or obtained a GED (General Educational Development test). Each migratory move that a child and their family does create a new 3-year period eligibility. Once a child is part of the program, he/she receives supplemental instructional and support services during the regular school year and the Summer. These services include free-reduced lunch, preschool services, remedial and compensatory instruction, testing services, accident insurance -that covers only the children within the household-, referral to other social agencies, and Summer school. Migrant families consider MEP as one of their most important navigational tool especially when they arrive to host or transition communities. In most school districts throughout the nation, MEP is a point of reference for families because of its unique system of identification and recruitment. Unlike other Title Federal programs, MEP

counts with recruiters, high school navigators, parental involvement specialists, and a regional coordinator who works in close collaboration with the state and other federal agencies.

In Oregon, the Department of Education is the highest entity that oversees MEP and the work that Educational Service Districts (ESD) do when implementing the program in each County. Oregon counts with approximately twenty regions that correspond to Oregon's agriculture regions (Willamette Valley, Mid-Columbia, Columbia plateau, North-east, Coastal, Southern, Central, and Southeast). As I mentioned previously, collaboration amongst Oregon Department of Education and its Department of Agriculture is key for the success of the program. Both departments release quarterly reports on migratory trends, crops availability, seasonal jobs, and areas that tend to be more productive for farmland and agricultural intensive production. Often, MEP regional coordinators are in charge of sharing this information with recruiters, bilingual instructional assistants, and school personnel in order to ensure identification of migrant students within school districts. Once recruiters identify a student as eligible to receive MEP supplemental services, they generate a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) where a detailed account of the family's move is provided. There are two types of qualifying moves: seasonal and temporary. A seasonal move is the one that lasts for as long as the crop is available in a specific area, whereas in the temporary move the employer hires the worker for a short period of time (usually three months). Most jobs in Agriculture do not offer health benefits or insurance for the worker or extra benefits. Agricultural workers also receive a price for their work that falls behind the legal minimum wage in most states; farmers tend to pay workers based on amount of produce collected. In addition to this salient problematic, the Oregon Department of Agriculture in its most recent report identified as a frequent practice among farmers

the hiring of undocumented agricultural workers and their children (State of Oregon Agriculture Report, January 2017), which in turn produces another layer of difficulty for families where they are rendered invisible and situationally marginalized for the system.

The term situational marginalization refers to the influence of outside forces on one's life and self-determination, over which migrant families and students have little control or power (Reyes, 2006). In the academic literature that has explored the challenging living conditions of migrant agricultural workers and their struggles to achieve social and economic recognition, it has become evident that most of these families endure aspects that come as a result of the combination of multiple systemic elements. First, the uneven distribution of economic resources and access to the means to obtain them push disfranchised communities in the global south to seek for alternatives to improve their living conditions, often outside of their home country. For most families in the global south the journey to the north will mark the beginning of an 'adventurous-dangerous' experience in their quest to gain social and economic recognition. Unfortunately, the journey takes the form of a bitter-sour transition when families do not possess a visa or legal document that authorizes them to travel and remain in a foreign country, besides of exposing their children to unsurmountable dangers. As a result of these dynamics, migrant families tend to place themselves at the outskirts of host communities. The idea behind is to remain unnoticeable, invisible, and in the shadows of the system so that they can survive as they could. In a sense, situational marginalization of migrant families does not occur simply due to their undocumented legal status in a host country, but to their lack of education or cultural capital which makes it difficult for them to navigate and negotiate their multiple identities and cultural differences on their own benefit (Bourdieu, 1969). Second, once migrant families have

made the transition into a host community, they start a process of cultural adaptation in all dimensions of their social being. Families need to face processes and dynamics that might seem daunting at first such as, visiting for the first time a school to enroll their children, attending health centers or clinics, or asking for social services at a particular agency. All these experiences that migrant families live create repertoires or networks of knowledge that becomes part of their new cultural identity as migrants, foreigners or passing residents of a place. In a sense, families do not renounce or reject their old cultural identity- the one they brought with them from their place of origin- they learn how to incorporate elements of the old and new identity for survival.

Elements from migrant families' old cultural identity might clash or juxtapose with symbolisms or stereotypes from the new one in that the latest does not represent accurately the rich universe of experiences, knowledge, and former culture that migrant families bring with them. Migrants quite frequently do not get to define who they are under their own words, but is the system that assigns them values and labels that push them further away from what is normally conceived. Educational research in the last decade has identified othering as the process in which host communities assign labels or categories to migrant families and their children in order to assume and represent them as exogenous social subjects unable to incorporate and adapt (C. Howard, 2015). Othering in schools occurs almost imperceptibly. On occasion teachers from economically privileged backgrounds tend to bring to the classroom their own bias, prejudices, and expectations towards what they consider an optimal educational performance. When a student does not fit the mold between the expectations that the school system has and his/her unique universe of repertoires, experiences, and cultural identity, students get excluded and silenced in their right to exert and express their unique toll

on the type of education they want to acquire and for what purposes. In my research, I intend to explore the cultural identity and personal/school-based experiences of students as participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP). My idea is to further elaborate in the manner in which Latino migrant students consider or not aspects of their cultural identity and experiences once they graduate from high school and transit to the adult world to make professional or academic choices. I have selected as the population for my study Latino migrant students for two main reasons. First, the majority of MEP students in Lane county are from countries in Latin America mainly Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, and they are considered as newcomers or recent arrivals (Informal conversation, Urbina Carmen- Regional Coordinator MEP Lane & Douglas Counties., March 2017). Additionally, given the current political climate, I believe it to be pertinent to explore the unique challenges that Latino children from migrant agricultural backgrounds face since they are the ones who are benefiting from the supplemental services that the program offers. Second, as Latina scholar, I find importance on the understanding and the connection that lays between former cultural identity constructions and the adoption of new symbols in order to adapt. Ultimately, I also want to understand strategies of negotiation, multiplicities, and commitments Latino migrant students make in order to craft their own cultural identity whether that happens at school, in the fields or at home. My hope is that by providing voice to Latino migrant students, educational researchers, politicians, MEP staff in Lane County, migrant students advocates, and the general public get to understand and value the unique experiences these students have had and help them to move forward into what they want to become or give in return to their home and host communities.

## **B. Specific Aims/Study Objectives**



The objective of my research is to respond to the following questions:

1. How does a group of former Latino migrant student participants in Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP) describe their cultural identity and personal or school-based experiences with the program, and how do they consider these experiences, and cultural identity in their academic or professional choices after high school completion?
2. What are the most common professional or academic choices Latino migrant students think about when they are on the verge of graduation and what can these choices tell us in regards to their personal and school-based experiences with MEP?
3. What are the most salient cultural elements or symbolisms that emerge from the experiences that Latino migrant students had with MEP when they reflect on their cultural identity?

### **c. Methods, Materials and Analysis**

For my data collection process I will be conducting in person semi-structured interviews with my participants. I will interview three to four former MEP Latino migrant students at the Brattain House (Springfield public Schools) or at Lane ESD (Education Service District) in Eugene, Oregon. I have selected these two locations for specific reasons. First, most MEP students are familiar with these locations based on the supplemental services they received there such as, food boxes, tutoring, and clothing. Additionally, they got to know the MEP staff that works there and the offices have been a safe-haven where they could feel comfortable and at ease. In fact, I got this impression after interning with

MEP students for over a year. Second, prospect interviewees might not have a steady place to live and meeting at MEP offices will facilitate the data collection process greatly. It is important to understand that former migrant students might not feel comfortable about sharing important details and aspects of their lives in their homes or in a public place. Therefore, it is only natural for me to help them feel comfortable by offering a place that is familiar and will provide them with pleasant memories from their time at school.

During the actual interview process, I will bring a digital voice-recording device and a questionnaire with pre-determined questions. I will ask my participants for their consent on recording and keeping the interview only for transcription and analysis purposes. Since the focus of my research is the exploration of cultural identity and personal and school-based experiences of Latino migrant students as former participants in MEP, I will try to conduct the interview in a much more conversational manner so I can obtain from them narratives. The interview process will last approximately one hour to one hour and twenty minutes per participant. In this sense, I have determined that no follow-up interviews will be required. I will use instead probing questions in case I do not fully understand a response, when answers are vague or ambiguous or if I want to obtain more specific or in-depth information on the spot. In educational research, a narrative can be an oral or symbolic account that a subject or a group of subjects make to convey a message or a meaning that corresponds to past or present experiences and the overall impact that those had in their lives (H. McMillan, 2016). The narrative is rich in that it digs deeper into specific aspects of the experience helping interviewees to reflect and find intersectionality between the researcher's aim and their own participatory experience. In a narrative type of research, the interviewer allows the subject the freedom to expand or silence a topic that might be relevant or poignant.

Ultimately, the data collected will be qualitative and therefore I will analyze it from a social sciences perspective paying special attention to the intersectionality that my topic has with other disciplines and fields of study.

#### **D. Research Population & Recruitment Methods**

The inclusion criteria for my research population will be as follows:

1. Approximately 3 to 4 Latino migrant students ages 18 and over who graduated from high schools in Lane County and were former participants of Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP). I will not exclude from this research those students who obtained GED high school equivalence as long as they were former participants of MEP and meet the age range.

2. Latino migrant students must be physically present in Lane County (Eugene or Springfield areas); my study is a dialogical analysis of former MEP Latino migrant students' narratives; therefore, I will conduct the interview process in a much more informal manner. I would like to analyze specific gestures or mannerisms my participants display while at the interview, so that I can further expand on the potential meaning of those gestures. Former MEP Latino migrant students who returned to their countries of origin or moved out of Lane County after graduation will be excluded from my study.

3. Participants for my study could be bilingual (English-Spanish), monolingual (Spanish or English speakers) or Bilingual in any native dialect from Central, South America, and Spanish. During my internship with MEP, I found that most former Latino Migrant students (mainly 'newcomers') speak a native language from Guatemala (Mam) and Spanish. Most of them do not speak English at a proficient level. Their

lack of English proficiency will not deter their participation in my study. I will make all materials accessible to them in both English and Spanish.

4. In terms of methods to identify potential participants in my study, I have already made preliminary contacts based on my internship experience at MEP for over a year since October 2015. As an intern, MEP coordinator appointed me with the task of helping senior high school students, at the time, with their application essays for college and scholarships. The MEP coordinator also provided me with a list of all Latino migrant recent graduates in Lane County who were former MEP students. Due to the nature of the relationship I had with these students when they were in high school, I was able to identify whom of them could be ideal candidates to conduct my study based on the criteria previously mentioned. Since I am still interning for the program, MEP Coordinator, Carmen Urbina<sup>1</sup> has granted me permission to access MEP's database to obtain more information on former Migrant students if needed.

5. I will recruit participants via email and in person. First, I will introduce myself and my research project asking them if they would be interested in participating. After, and if they seem interested, I will provide them with a general overview of my research project and ask a few preliminary questions such as, 1. Are you still living in Eugene or Springfield? 2. Do you have time to meet in person for an hour or an hour and twenty minutes? 3. How old are you? If former Latino migrant students agree to participate and meet the research criteria, I will continue contacting them through the phone to make arrangements to meet in person. On the day of the interview, I will give to participants two copies of the attached informed consent form, one for them to keep and one (signed) for me to keep for my records.

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<sup>1</sup> See annex for letter of support from MEP coordinator

I am cognizant that my sample might not be particularly representative of the entire population of Latino Migrant students who participated in MEP and are from other parts of Oregon. However, I believe my case-study approach will inform MEP staff on culturally responsive practices the program can incorporate when identifying and recruiting migrant students.

6. Participants in my study will not receive any type of financial compensation for their participation in my study. I will instead facilitate to them a copy of my completed study if they wish me to do so. In case prospect participants ask me for any sort of financial compensation, I will inform them that I do not have funding available and I will explain to them the procedures and regulations under which my study is going to be conducted.

### **E. Informed Consent Process**

To obtain permission from participants to conduct my study, I will make use of the written consent form template from the research compliance website. I will personally go over the document with participants before carrying out the interview to make sure that they understand the nature of my research, what they are consenting to, and the rights they have as participants. I also plan to offer a written version of the consent form in Spanish. For the most part, Latino migrant students' first language is Spanish, and even when it is not their native tongue, they certainly feel a deeper level of connectedness when speaking in this language. Since I am a native speaker of the language in an academic level, I will make sure the translation fits into culturally appropriate levels of literacy. It is equally important to mention that I will employ for all translations in Spanish a standard version of the language or Castilian Spanish. I will also encourage participants to ask questions and make comments about

the research, objectives, and any other detail that might be unclear to them, so we can discuss those concerns. I will make clear to participants that they can opt out of any questions that they feel uncomfortable answering for any reason. In addition to all these provisions, I will assure participants that their participation in my research is completely separate from any affiliation they had in the past with Migrant Education Program, and that their decision to participate or not will not have an adverse effect on their affiliation with these programs if any. With this last aspect, I hope to reassure students that their ideas, opinions, and concerns on MEP will not hinder in any measure their status as former Migrant students, but their experiences will rather offer an incredible opportunity to improve services that MEP has carried out and proven successful with other students.

#### **F. Provisions for Participant Privacy and Data Confidentiality**

I will store the data collected such as interview notes, audio files, and transcripts of the audio files, on my personal laptop that is password protected and only used by myself. I will encrypt (secure with a password) all data concerning my study. All files in my computer will be on their individual file, and I will make sure to label them with fictitious names to protect participants' privacy. Along those lines, I will provide each of my participants with pseudonyms (chosen by them), and their real names will not appear anywhere on my thesis paper or data, drafts or notes that might be accessible to other individuals. Finally, I will not reveal any identifying information about participants in my study to Migrant Education Program.

## **G. Potential Research Risks or Discomforts to Participants**

I have not identified any potential research risks or discomfort in my research population for participating in my study. In fact, I will not ask participants about their legal (documented or not) status in the country. However, I will address during the interview the topic of legality and illegality in a general manner and as a common identifier among the community of Latino Migrant farmworkers in the United States. Often, Latino Migrant farmworkers in the United States see their rights undermined by the premise of their 'illegal' status in the country. Therefore, I believe it is crucial to ask former Latino Migrant students about their opinions, concerns, and feelings on 'illegality' as an identifier of Latino Migrant agricultural workers. In the current political debate where ideas on human rights, civil liberties, access to education, and health care are critical than ever, Latino Migrant students need to find and elicit their voice so we as scholars and educational practitioners can comprehend Latino Migrant students' expectations and dreams for the future. Along those lines, I will also make clear to participants that they do not need to disclose their legal or illegal status to me. If a participant discloses this information, I will exclude it from my notes and transcriptions. Once I transcribe the interviews, I will permanently delete the recordings. Another potential discomfort for my participants could be my current affiliation as an intern with Migrant Education Program. In this sense, I will make sure to explain to them that my position as an intern in the program does not include to reveal in any way participants' real names or information that MEP can use to identify them and their opinions. I will also assure them that their participation is voluntary and they might withdraw from the study if a discomfort of any sort arises. Additionally, I will explain to my participants that I have no affiliation with any governmental or law enforcement agency. Overall and after

reviewing all potential risks, I do not foresee any other hazards for the participants in my study.

#### **H. Potential Benefits of the Research**

The overall benefit that I see in my study is its potential to contribute to a better and larger understanding of the experiences and cultural identity of Latino Migrant students as former MEP participants. As I have explained before, Migrant students are an underserved and underrepresented segment of the American public school system. And, it is my aim that these students have the opportunity to voice their experiences, concerns, opinions, and challenges while they were attending school and how they benefited from supplemental and college readiness programs offered through MEP. With my research, I also expect to inform the general public and to invite teachers, educational researchers, and politicians to look into what Latino migrant students' lived experiences convey in regards to their cultural identity as Latino and MEP participants. Indeed, the creation of more inclusive grounds for these students in schools and arrival communities requires that those in positions of power value the resilience and determination that situationally marginalized individuals exhibit. My objective is that culturally responsive practices can be implemented and replicated in the classroom and arrival communities so that Latino migrant students get to experience a real sense of belonging.

Finally, I expect that through my research, MEP in Oregon can work on adjustments and programs that result in more Latino migrant students graduating from high school and attending college regardless of their legal status in the country. Since the program is fairly new in Lane County, there is still much to be done in terms of understanding MEP's population of Latino migrant students, their dreams, expectations, life



choices, experiences, and significance of cultural identity. In reality, a program can only maximize its results by dwelling deeper into the specifics of the community it serves, and in the case of MEP, I hope that my contribution sets a mark for future research and interest in this population. Ultimately, my research will be significant for Latino migrant students, their families, communities, advocates, and people who have been impacted through interactions with them. Since there is little to none literature on the lived experiences of Latino migrant students in Oregon, MEP at regional and state levels will benefit from pinpointing areas that they need to tackle in order to support students better on their quest towards graduation.

### **I. Investigator experience**

As part of my qualifications to conduct this study, I want to mention that I earned a dual B.A in Political Studies and International Relations from Military Nueva Granada University in Bogota D.C, Colombia. While studying as an undergraduate student at the Military Nueva Granada University, I had the opportunity to work for several research projects financed by COLCIENCIAS, a government entity in charge of research in education and multicultural programs in Colombia. I also wrote an honors thesis that explored the countercultural systemic narratives and ideologies that are present in the political discourse of the Zapatista National Liberation Army or EZLN, for its acronym in Spanish. Upon graduation, I had the privilege to work for over a year for a non-profit in Colombia, FUNDECOPI that sent me to document via photos the status of its main grant projects throughout the country. During this long year, I traveled to rural and isolated places within the Colombian geography visiting migrant seasonal-agricultural workers of mixed racial heritage. Back then and now, I have always been interested in issues surrounding identity

construction, oral history and its relation with intergenerational and transnational poverty and marginalization in migrant communities. As a graduate student at the University of Oregon, I have had the privilege of taking classes in research methods and Graduate seminars in several departments such as, the College of Education, International Studies, Romance Languages, History, Linguistics, and Sociology. I have been able to excel in all those courses and I have obtained important theoretical insights into current poignant issues that affect the well-being of migrant communities in the Pacific Northwest and the United States. Additionally, I finished in its entirety the CITI training following closely the courses and insights that were offered regarding research with culturally diverse and vulnerable populations.

My academic advisor, Dr. Kathie Carpenter from the international Studies Department at the University of Oregon has extensive research experience with human subjects and remarkable theoretical insights on political, cultural, economic, and linguistic issues that compromise the wellbeing of children across cultures. She has also completed her CITI Training and has conducted research projects in disenfranchised, vulnerable and multiethnic communities in South East Asia. This last aspect of her work relates directly with my research in that it offers a parallel version of problematic situations of multiethnic communities in contexts different than the Americas. Since poverty and silencing of historical-cultural memory do not recognize frontiers and they seem to affect vulnerable communities across the globe equally, I found Dr. Carpenter's expertise appropriate for the intention of my research project.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SCRIPT – ENGLISH

\* Interview will be semi-structured

#### **Demographic questions**

- a) What is your age?
- b) What is your gender identity?
- c) Where were you born? (family village, state, province, country)
- d) How many years did your father attend school?
- e) How many years did your mother attend school?
- f) What is your father's occupation?
- g) What is your mother's occupation?
- h) How many brothers and sisters do you have? How old are they?
- i) How much education have your brothers or sisters?
- j) Are you presently employed? If so, what kind of work do you do?
- k) Are you attending college? What type of college? Community college? private college? private or public university? Where? What are you studying?
- l) What is your major or minor in?
- m) What is your High school graduation year?
- n) Were you a newcomer or recent arrival at your school?
- o) For how many years have you known about MEP?
- p) Where do you live in Lane County?
- q) How many years have you lived in lane County?
- r) What high school did you attend in Lane County?

#### **Ethnic self-identification**

Please mark with an **X** one or more of the following

- Chicano (Mexican-American) \_\_\_\_\_
- Chicano (Mexican-American First generation)   x
- Chicano (Mexican-American second or third generation) \_\_\_\_\_
- Mexican   x
- Central American (please state your country) \_\_\_\_\_
- Guatemalan (Ladino) \_\_\_\_\_
- Guatemalan (indigenous) \_\_\_\_\_
- Guatemalan (mixed racial heritage) \_\_\_\_\_
- South American (Please state your country) \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher:** Now, I would like to ask some questions in regards to your knowledge and experiences with Oregon Migrant Education Program or MEP. You may stop me at any point to ask for clarification or expand on a certain answer you feel is important to you. Please state clearly that you have understood the directions and that you wish to continue. If so, let's proceed

1. Please tell me about what do you know about Oregon Migrant Education Program MEP? If you do not know anything specific about the program, what does the name of the program tell you? From where does your knowledge about MEP come from?
2. How did you know that you qualify for MEP related school services in school? Who told you?

**Researcher:** As you can remember, MEP students at your school used to participate in workshops and events that were available to them only

3. Please tell me all about an event of this kind that you remember the most? what did you like or dislike? And if you would have done something different to improve it and why?
4. If you do not remember any MEP event or you did not participate in one, share about any other school event that you participated in. Tell me all about the event, who organized it? What was the purpose? Why did you enjoy it or not?
5. Some MEP students were also part of the English Language Development Program or ELD, please tell me all you know about this program. What do you remember the most? What did you like or dislike about the ELD classes? Why?
6. Share about specific feelings you had when you were attending ELD or any other classes in the school, were you pulled out from 'normal' classes a lot in order to get ELD language support? Was this annoying to you or beneficial? Why?
7. Did people in your school identify you as a minority? How? Who did it? And what do you think was that?
8. Minority students face challenges in getting an education that others students do not face. Could you tell me about some of the reasons why minority students might experience these difficulties and why? Do you think that does it have to be with culture? If so, why?
9. Think about your specific challenges and successes while you were attending school, what has motivated you to do well? What has

inspired you to continue with your education? Who has inspired you to do well in school?

What do you think people in general see of you when they call you Latino or migrant? Think about your life, family members and other around you as agricultural workers, how does this image was important or not in terms of your relationships with teachers, classmates and other school personnel? Please be as specific as you like

10. What does it mean to be Latino and migrant for you? Please talk about aspects that you think define you as Latino or migrant. I encourage to consider whether or not you have changed these ideas about yourself or how are they still the same?
11. if you were a newcomer or recent arrival, please tell me about what you felt the first day you went to school here in the United States? what was the name of the city, county your school was at?
12. What was the first impression you had about teachers, classmates, school buildings, classes, and any other aspect that you think was significant to you.
13. If you were born here in the United States, what do you know about newcomers? If you do not know anything specific about them, what is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word 'newcomers or recent arrivals'?
14. What do you think is culture and identity? do you think these terms are important or not? And how?
15. How do these terms resonate with you? Please think about your school years and now
16. Now, let's talk about choices after high school, how did you decide what you wanted to do after high school? Was there someone who made or advised you to take a specific decision? Who is this person? How important is this person for you and why?
17. What do you think about the following statement: "some people think that being from a minority group in this country such as Latino, African American is a disadvantage and it relates to academic success"? how does it make you feel and why? How does the statement relate to you and/or family members or people you know?
18. Now, let's talk about the concept of illegality, please do not refer to your particular legal status in this country. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word illegal? What do you think about the way this word is applied to people who have entered the country without visa or other documents? How did teachers make use of the illegal when referring to other students?
19. Is there anything else you would like to say that has not been covered yet. While you think about this, I would like you to ask to yourself who I am? And what truly defines you as the person you

are today? we can talk about these aspects more or we can end the dialogue at this point.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. I will share with you a copy of my thesis at the end of this project.

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SCRIPT – SPANISH

\* La entrevista será semi-estructurada

#### **Preguntas Demográficas**

- s) ¿Cuál es tu edad?
- t) ¿Cuál es tu identidad de género?
- u) ¿Dónde naciste? (Pueblo, villa, municipio, estado, provincia, país)
- v) ¿Cuántos años tu padre atendió la escuela?
- w) ¿Cuántos años tu madre atendió la escuela?
- x) ¿Cuál es la ocupación de tu papá?
- y) ¿Cuál es la ocupación de tu mamá?
- z) ¿Cuántos hermanos o hermanas tienes? ¿Cuántos años tienen?
- aa) ¿qué grado de escolaridad tienen tus hermanos o hermanas?
- bb) ¿te encuentras trabajando actualmente? Si es así, ¿qué clase de trabajo tienes?
- cc) ¿te encuentras atendiendo el College? ¿qué tipo de College estas atendiendo? ¿ Colegio comunitario? , ¿ privado? ,? ¿universidad pública o privada?, ¿dónde?, ¿que estas estudiando?
- dd) ¿en qué año te graduaste de la escuela preparatoria?
- ee) ¿Fuiste un estudiante migrante recién llegado en tu escuela?
- ff) ¿Por cuantos años has estado en MEP?
- gg) ¿en qué lugar del Condado de Lane vives?
- hh) ¿Cuántos años llevas viviendo en el Condado de Lane?
- ii) ¿cuál es el nombre de la Escuela preparatoria que atendiste en el Condado de Lane?

#### **Auto-identificación étnica**

Por favor marca con una X algunas de las siguientes opciones

- Chicano (mexicano-americano) \_\_\_\_
- Chicano (mexicano-americano Primera Generación) \_\_\_\_
- Chicano (mexicano-americano segunda o tercera generación) \_\_\_\_
- Mexicano \_\_\_\_
- Centroamericano (por favor identifica tu país) \_\_\_\_
- Guatemalteco (Ladino)\_\_\_\_\_
- Guatemalteco (indígena)\_\_\_\_\_
- Guatemalteco (Herencia racial mixta) \_\_\_\_\_
- Suramericano (Por favor identifica tu país) \_\_\_\_\_

**Investigador:** Ahora, me gustaría hacerte algunas preguntas con relación al conocimiento que tienes sobre el programa de educación migrante de Oregon o MEP (por sus siglas en inglés) y tus experiencias en la escuela. Ten en cuenta, que puedes preguntar por clarificación o también puedes parar esta entrevista en cualquier momento. Por favor di claramente que has entendido las instrucciones y que deseas continuar. Si esto es así, comencemos.

20. ¿Por favor dime lo que sabes acerca del Programa de educación migrante de Oregon o MEP? Si no sabes nada acerca del programa, ¿que es lo que te dice el nombre? ¿de donde viene tu conocimiento acerca de MEP?
21. ¿Como supiste que calificabas para recibir servicios de MEP en la escuela? ¿quien te dijo?

**Investigador:** como podrás recordar, los estudiantes de MEP en tu escuela solían participar en eventos o talleres que solo eran para ellos

22. Por favor dime todo lo que recuerdes acerca de este tipo de eventos, ¿que evento de este tipo recuerdas más y por qué? ¿que fue lo que más te gusto o disgusto? Y ¿si hubieras podido hacer algo diferente para mejorar este evento que hubiese sido y por qué?
23. Si no recuerdas ningún evento de MEP específicamente o si nunca participaste en uno, por favor habla acerca de cualquier otro evento de la escuela que si atendiste. Dime todo acerca de este evento, ¿quien lo organizo?, ¿cual fue el propósito?, ¿porque te gusto o no?
24. Algunos estudiantes de MEP también fueron parte del Programa de desarrollo del inglés o ELD, por favor cuéntame todo lo que sepas acerca de este programa. ¿que es lo que más recuerdas?, ¿que fue lo que más te gusto o disgusto acerca de ELD y por qué?
25. Comparte un poco acerca de sentimientos específicos que tuviste cuando estabas atendiendo ELD o cualquiera otra clase en la escuela. ¿cuando estabas atendiendo ELD, te sacaban mucho de las clases normales para ir a ELD ?, ¿esto te molestaba o te parecía benéfico? ¿por qué?
26. ¿las personas en tu escuela te identificaban como miembro de una minoría? ¿Cómo?, ¿quienes lo hacían?, ¿porque crees que ellos lo hacían?
27. Los estudiantes de minorías se encuentran con más retos difíciles a la hora de tener educación, en comparación con los estudiantes que no son minorías. ¿me podrías decir algunas de las razones por las cuales los estudiantes de minorías pueden llegar a



- experimentar estas dificultades y por qué?, ¿piensas que esto tiene que ver con la cultura? Si es así, ¿cómo y por qué?
28. Piensa acerca de retos específicos y éxitos que tú tuviste mientras atendías la escuela, ¿que te motivo a salir bien?, ¿que te inspiró a continuar con tu educación?, ¿quien te inspiró a salir bien en la escuela?
  29. ¿que piensas que las personas ven de ti cuando te llaman Latino o migrante? Piensa acerca de tu vida o la vida de familiares y amigos que han trabajado como trabajadores del campo, ¿como fue esta imagen importante o no en cuanto a la relación que tenías con maestros, compañeros de clase y otras personas de la escuela? Por favor se tan específico como quieras
  30. ¿qué significado tiene para ti ser Latino o migrante? Por favor habla acerca de aspectos específicos que tú piensas te definen como Latino, migrante o las dos cosas. ¿Te aliento a que consideres si has cambiado o no estas ideas acerca de ti mismo o como estos dos conceptos son iguales para ti todavía?
  31. Si fuiste un estudiante migrante recién llegado, por favor cuéntame acerca de lo que sentiste el primer día de escuela en los Estados Unidos. ¿cual fue el nombre de la ciudad, Condado donde tu escuela estaba?
  32. ¿cual fue la primera impresión que tuviste acerca de los maestros, compañeros de clase, edificios de la escuela, clases y cualquier otro aspecto que haya sido importante para ti?
  33. ¿Si naciste aquí en los Estados Unidos, que tanto sabes acerca de los estudiantes migrantes recién llegados?, si no sabes nada acerca de ellos, ¿que es lo primero que se te ocurre cuando escuchas la palabra migrantes recién llegados?
  34. ¿que piensas que significan las palabras cultura e identidad? ¿piensas que estos términos son importantes o no y por qué?
  35. ¿como estos términos resuenan contigo? Por favor piensa acerca de tus años de escuela antes y ahora.
  36. Ahora, hablemos acerca de tus opciones después de la escuela preparatoria, ¿como decidiste que querías hacer después de la escuela? ¿hubo alguien que te aconsejó o te hizo tomar una decisión específica?, ¿quien es esta persona?, ¿de qué manera esta persona es importante para ti?
  37. ¿que piensas acerca de la siguiente afirmación: “algunas personas piensan que el ser de un grupo minoritario en este país como los Latinos o africano americanos es una desventaja y que está directamente relacionado con el éxito académico” ?, ¿como te hace sentir esta afirmación y por qué?, ¿como se relaciona esta afirmación contigo o tus familiares o las personas que tú conoces?
  38. Ahora, hablemos del concepto de ilegalidad, por favor no menciones tu estatus legal en este país. ¿qué es en lo primero que

piensas cuando escuchas que esta palabra se aplica a personas que entraron al país sin una visa o un documento?, ¿como los maestros usaban esta palabra cuando se referían a otros estudiantes?

39. ¿Hay algo más que quieras agregar y que no se haya preguntado ya? Mientras piensas en esto, me gustaría que te preguntaras a ti mismo, ¿quién soy?, y lo que define a la persona que eres hoy? Podemos hablar un poco más acerca de esto o terminar en este punto el dialogo.

Muchas gracias por tu participación en este estudio. Compartiré contigo una copia de mi tesis al final de este proyecto.

APPENDIX D  
LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS



LANE EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

1200 Highway 99 North | 541.461.8200 | www.lesd.k12.or.us  
Eugene, OR 97402 | 541.461.8298 [Fax]

EQUITY COMMITMENT LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION INTEGRITY

June 12, 2017

To: Institutional Review Board-IRB  
Office of Research Compliance Services  
University of Oregon, Eugene Campus  
677 E. 12th Ave, Suite 500, Eugene, OR 97401

Dear University of Oregon IRB- Research Compliance Services-,

The purpose of this letter is to grant Ms. Laura Burbano from the University of Oregon permission to access our Migrant Education Program (MEP) data base on high school graduates in Lane County. She will only have access to their email address, phone number, and name of the schools they attended. I have instructed her about not sharing this information with any person or agency aside from those who are already part of this research endeavor.

Ms. Burbano has also indicated that she will use the information to contact prospect interviewees for her research project titled, "*Beyond the fields: Dialogical analysis of Latino migrant students' cultural identity narratives at Oregon Migrant Education Program (MEP)*". Her research entails the conducting of open-ended, sequential questions with former Latino migrant students in the form of a semi-structured interview. She will recruit for her study three to four former Latino migrant students ages 18 and over. Additionally, I grant permission to Ms. Burbano to carry on the data collection sessions at our program's site at Brattain House- Springfield public Schools or at our office in Lane ESD-Eugene at her discretion.

We as program are thrilled to participate in this study and contribute to this important research endeavor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (541) 510-0302

Sincerely,

Carmen Urbina

Migrant Education Program Coordinator

[curbina@lesd.k12.or.us](mailto:curbina@lesd.k12.or.us)

*electronic records and signatures carry the same weight and legal effect as traditional paper documents and handwritten signatures: A document or signature cannot be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because it is in electronic form.*

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