COVID, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND CAREWORK: MESOAMERICAN DIASPORIC INDIGENOUS AND LATINO COMMUNITIES IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Covid, Climate Change, and Carework: Mesoamerican Diasporic Indigenous and Latino Communities in the Willamette Valley

Community-based agriculture is not only concerned with the cultivation of food, but also with the cultivation of connection, care, and exchange. This dissertation is based on fieldwork with a non-profit organization that operates seven community garden sites in Lane County, Oregon. Most of my research activity occurred at the largest garden site which happens to also be the oldest garden site, with some families having the same garden plot for two decades. I also travelled to all seven sites to either volunteer or attend workshops. In addition, I draw on my participation as an analyst and interviewer in the COVID-19 Farmworker Study (COFS) of Oregon, a collaborative research project involving twelve community-based organizations that serve farmworkers in Oregon. My research examines the experiences of multigenerational immigrant families in Oregon engaged in preserving traditional foodways and collective care through community gardening. The primary goals are to investigate the historical relationships between foodways and emotional carework within Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora. It examines how foodways shape community well-being despite the many challenges and traumas of migration. Participation in community gardening can serve as a social, emotional, and health resource for immigrant Latino families, functioning as a nexus of care and source of hope.

This research is urgent since disproportionate food insecurities have only been exaggerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Using ethnographic methods such as participant observation, formal interviewing, and informal conversational interviewing, I document some of the integrated physical, emotional, mental health, and social impacts of the pandemic. These impacts include getting infected with COVID-19, losing loved ones, living in uncertainty, and experiencing significant loss of income that affected people's ability to pay rent, utilities, food, and other expenses, producing what I call stress proliferation. Being exposed to the virus or having the virus forced people into two-week quarantines or even longer periods of recovery when many could not work, and if sick were physically debilitated. The precarity of Latino workers' economic situations and the stress that comes from that precarity was inflated during the pandemic and left many struggling to catch up even after recovery and quarantine. Because the research has taken place both before and during the pandemic, I demonstrate how the caregiving practices forged through community gardening may continue to benefit families and communities after the pandemic through ideas such as *curar y pertencer*, caring and belonging, identified by my study participants. I also demonstrate how care practices might have shifted from pre-pandemic times to pandemic times.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AQI – Air Quality Index

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a federal agency under the United States Department of Health and Human Services

COFS –COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study

COVID-19 or COVID – Coronavirus disease 2019, caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

DEQ – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

DHS – United States Department of Homeland Security

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

HDLF – Huerto de la Familia

ICE – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

IIRIRA – Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996

INS – United States Immigration and Naturalization Service

LRAPA – Lane Regional Air Protection Agency

OHA – Oregon Health Authority

ODE – Oregon Department of Forestry

OSHA – Occupational Safety & Health Administration

PCUN – Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste

PRWORA – Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

U.S. – United States of America

WVIP – The Willamette Valley Immigration Project

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Community-based agriculture is not only concerned with the cultivation of food, but also the cultivation of connection, care, and exchange. My research in Lane County, Oregon with diverse Indigenous communities in diaspora from the regions known as Mexico and Guatemala and Latino communities examines how people engage with their cultural foodways through community gardening and how communal agriculture is an important aspect of carework, self-care, and familial care. My field sites for this project span seven community garden sites located throughout the cities of Eugene and Springfield in Lane County, Oregon. Most of my research activity occurred at the largest garden site which happens to also be the oldest garden site, with some families having the same garden plot for almost two decades. I also travelled to all seven sites to either help volunteer or attend workshops. These gardens are linked together through the community-based organization, Huerto de la Familia (HDLF), a subsidiary of the non-profit organization Centro Latino Americano.[1] HDLF provides community garden plots to the local community and tries to target their outreach to people who identify as being from a Latino[2] community and/or from an Indigenous community in diaspora, since data has shown how language and cultural awareness are barriers in people being able to access community and governmental resources.

My research considers how participation in community gardening can serve as a social, emotional, and health resource for families from Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in

[1] Huerto de la Familia formerly operated as their own non-profit organization, but to better serve Latino communities in the county, they merged with Centro Latino Americano and Downtown Languages in 2021 to be able to offer resources, language courses, technology access, family services, legal services, small business development, cultural events, and food support all within one organization.

[2] See Chapter II for a Discussion about why I choose to use the label "Latino" as a generic term to refer to groups of people who identify as Latino, Latina, Latinx, Latin@, Chicana, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Guatemalan-American.

diaspora and Latino communities—indeed as the nexus for alternative forms of carework. My dissertation research is significant because it documents the impacts of compounding crises, particularly COVID-19, climate changes, and wildfires in 2020-2021 on communities that were not only impacted greatly but are also underrepresented in academia, public policy, and climate mitigation planning. I analyze the concept of carework at the individual, familial, and community level and explain how suffering and care are interconnected. Two research goals that framed this project were 1) to investigate the historical relationships between foodways and emotional carework among multiple generations of Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino community members; 2) to examine how engaging in cultural foodways remains an important aspect of carework despite the many challenges and traumas of migration, the ongoing effects from the COVID-19 global pandemic, extreme weather, and other structural vulnerabilities that affect Latino communities and Indigenous communities in diaspora in the U.S.. I explore the concept of carework at community gardens with the communities I collaborated with and analyze how the uncertainty from COVID-19 and historic weather events has resulted in stress proliferation which is cumulative and ongoing. Importantly, because my research has taken place both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, I demonstrate how caregiving practices forged through community gardening continue to have benefits through the pandemic by alleviating isolation through shared experiences outdoors at a distance through gardening; by being able to support one another by sharing the surplus from their gardens; and by getting access to bilingual services such as pandemic relief, COVID-19 testing, and vaccine clinics.

This research project began in 2018, when I contacted HDLF's Executive Director Marisa Zarate by email to schedule a meeting to propose collaborating with the organization for

my dissertation. I originally framed my project in terms of comparing different types of community-based agricultural systems focusing on how they address food insecurity among Latino communities in Oregon, and if the different systems were improving the well-being of the people they are trying to aid. I had a meeting with the executive director, the garden manager, and small business coordinator at the organization's office. After proposing my project, I was invited to the first annual *Fiesta de la Cosecha* (harvest celebration) which was held in their newest garden site. This garden site was created with a partnership between one of the local school districts to address the need of more food-based resources in an area of town that had little connection to the services in the more central part of the city. This region has a large Latino population and was far from the existing garden sites. Many people were on waitlists to get a plot at other HDLF gardens despite living far away. I was excited to attend the event because in Lane County there are not many culturally relevant opportunities or spaces for Latino communities to express themselves.

The *Fiesta de la Cosecha* event had live mariachi musicians, *baile folclórico* (folk dancing) performances, a salsa competition, a potluck, and guest speaker Alejandro Tecum, Regenerative Agriculture Education Manager from Adelante Mujeres located in Forest Grove, Oregon, who gave a passionate talk about organic gardening, the dangers of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, rates of cancer in Latino communities, and the importance of diversity in the garden and in your diet. He also discussed how producing food as a family and community allows "*conocimientos*" (systems of knowledge) to be passed down from generation to generation. His speech emphasized the importance of gardening and the different systems of knowledge it engages. "*La agricultura es una ciencia. La agricultura es un arte. Cuando ustedes van a su huerto, cuando ustedes van a su finca, ustedes están haciendo ciencia y ustedes están*

creyendo arte que nadie puede hacer" (Tecum 2018). "Agriculture is a science. Agriculture is a work of art. When you go to your garden, when you go to your land, you are engaging in science and creating art that no one else can reproduce"[3] (Tecum 2018).

Gardeners at this event told a local news reporter how the garden allows them to save money, that it is important to teach kids about the food they eat, and how they are relieved that no pesticides are used (Adams-Ockrassa 2018). I left this event with a strong first impression of how community gardens can function as culturally relevant spaces where carework, community-building, cultural production/reproduction, decolonial notions of well-being, and food justice all simultaneously occur.

The following year (2019) at the 2nd annual *Fiesta de la Cosecha* there was just as much energy and excitement in the environment as the first event. This year I was not just a visitor, but I was also a garden member as well as a researcher. I arrived at 9am to help set up in the morning, and when the event began, I was assigned to help with the salsa competition. My task was to do registration for entrants to the salsa competition and write down the ingredients used, which gave me a great opportunity to talk about peoples' recipes, the foodways they bring from Mexico and Guatemala, and their experiences during the year's growing season. I also oversaw tallying votes for the salsa competition. I made green salsa with tomatillos, cilantro, and tomatoes from my garden; with serrano chili peppers from my apartment garden; with Anaheim chili peppers, Thai chili peppers, and a Ghost pepper hybrid from Joaquín's[4] garden; with garlic and onion from Bernardino's Garden. I noticed that people took pride in entering their salsas, but I also sensed competitiveness from some of the people as they withheld sharing all the

[3] All translations from Spanish to English in this dissertation are my own.
[4] To protect the identity of research collaborators, I use pseudonyms for all the names of garden members and the participants of the COVID-19 Oregon Farmworkers Study. I use the real names of presenters, activists, and directors of organizations since they regularly interact in the public sphere.

ingredients in their salsa. Overall, there were 26 entries for the salsa competition, and each garden member had a total of three votes to determine the top three winners who received prizes.

There were over a hundred people in attendance for the event, and it was designed to be a community-building get-together since many of the families from different garden sites do not always have opportunities to connect with one another. There was a potluck in addition to food the staff provided, so people were able to share dishes that are important to their families and to showcase ingredients from their harvest. There were also two *talleres* (workshops) that were led by garden members, the first was about soil health and the second was nutrition oriented with a cooking demo. After the 2nd *Fiesta de la Cosecha*, I observed how the act of tending to a garden plot, sharing culturally important food with each other, and celebrating as a community was important for many of the members.

In 2019, I began to shift my focus to the topics of and care and carework and how those were manifested in the garden. I noticed that when I would ask people why it was important to grow their own food, people would frame their answers in terms of taking care of their family or taking care of themselves rather than talk about something like "well-being." I paid attention to their words. Little did I know at the time, the year 2020 would be drastically different with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the various forms of carework that were already happening in the community would become invaluable as sources of in-person support for childcare, health care, food, medicine, and collective resource-pooling. Schools pivoted to remote learning while daycare centers, afterschool programs, and other childcare programs were closed. Many people who had "non-emergency surgeries" needed to cancel their appointments and reschedule for the future, so it was difficult to get any type of medical care that was not acutely life-threatening.

Beginning in March of 2020, many community-based organizations needed to provide their resources remotely, such as English classes, citizenship classes, and leadership trainings, which made the content accessible to some, but was a barrier to others. Connecting to remote resources means needing internet connection and a device that can connect to the internet. This made remote resources inaccessible to those who cannot afford to buy a smartphone, laptop, or computer along with an internet subscription service, since many free sources of internet were no longer available, such as libraries and computer labs at schools. In response to the society-wide distress affecting everyone during the pandemic, especially Indigenous communities in diaspora, I noticed amongst various gardeners that the theme of carework became prominent in the conversations we shared.

In fall of 2020 there was no *Fiesta de la Cosecha*. The pandemic interrupted the annual cultural traditions and rituals that are so important to the communities at HDLF. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020-2021 Oregonians experienced record-breaking heatwaves, extended fire seasons, and severe drought. As a result of the surge in the Delta variant of coronavirus, the 2021 *Fiesta de la Cosecha* was also cancelled for the safety of the community. However, three and a half years after my initial impression and after two years of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, it was evident how community gardens can serve as a culturally relevant spaces where carework, community-building, cultural production/reproduction, and food justice intersect.

Who is Gardening at Huerto de la Familia?

I primarily worked with Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities in Lane County, Oregon who rent a garden plot at one of the community gardens at Huerto de la Familia. HDLF is a community-based non-profit organization that began in 1999 serving only

six families, and in 2022, it has expanded to seven community gardens in Eugene and Springfield, Oregon and serves approximately 180 individuals and their families. Significantly, many of the individuals and families who have garden plots through HDLF are part of intergenerational families who not only work in the garden together but are connected through daily life networks. During my research, I witnessed the growth of HDLF as an organization, since every year of my fieldwork the organization provided services to an increased number of individuals and families. According to the annual demographic intake survey and registration data collected by HDLF, in 2021 a little over 80% of garden members report that they are from Mexico, about 5% are from Guatemala, 13% were born in the U.S., and about 2% migrated from another country. Languages spoken at the garden include Zapotec languages, Mixtec languages, Nahuatl, Spanish, and English. At the new proposed garden site in Cottage Grove, there are communities where Mam, K'iche', and Q'anjob'al are spoken, which are Indigenous Mayan languages from the region known as Guatemala. I did not have the opportunity to work with these communities since the site had not yet opened as I was finishing writing my dissertation.

I chose to work with HDLF, because it was one of the three major community-based organization that served Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County, and it was the only organization that was dedicated to food justice and promoting cultural foodways by offering garden space and Spanish language workshops. These services really stood out to me, because when I lived in El Paso, Texas, and San Marcos, Texas I was unaware of any organizations that were doing community work under this model. Growing food has been important for me since I moved away from hometown to go to college, but in Texas I did not have access to any communal garden spaces, especially one that I considered culturally relevant and where I felt a sense of belonging. My experience with HDLF as a volunteer, garden member,

and a researcher allowed me to understand some of the family and community dynamics at the garden. There are multigenerational families that garden together; for example a pair of sisters have garden plots adjacent to each other, and to the plots of their children, nephews, children in-law, and grandchildren. Even though they have individual plots, they find time to go to the garden together, share family experiences, and help each other out with garden tasks. They are also deeply connected outside of the garden sharing holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, watching sports together, shopping for one another, providing rides, and helping one another to access services. There are other members who are gardening for the first time in their lives and make connections with other members who provide advice and a helping hand to those leaning. There are other garden members who take pride in their communal space and will attend volunteer events regularly to ensure maintenance, repairs, and upkeep of the garden space for everyone. HDLF has been a space for Mesoamerican Indigenous and Latino communities to network and connect inside and outside of the garden; people get to interact with non-member community leaders who lead workshops, get connected to other culturally relevant events and services in Lane County, gain leadership experiences, gain internship experiences, and establish friendships. HDLF has developed robust partnerships with local businesses, other community-based organizations, public health departments, cultural services from the cities of Eugene and Springfield, various school districts, Lane Community College, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University extension services to serve the community in a multitude of ways. Thus, the families who garden are also a part of larger networks, and the organization itself is also a central hub for a variety of networks and organizations supporting people like those that HDLF serves.

The community gardens at HDLF are intended to help low-income individuals and families alleviate and prevent food insecurity by providing garden members a garden plot, seeds, plant starts, educational opportunities and workshops, small business classes,[5] and connecting members to other local community resources. HDLF has built a track record of trust and connection over more than two decades with the Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and through partnerships with other organizations. Marissa Zarate, Executive Director of HDLF, states that the organization, "builds wide-ranging partnerships throughout Lane County to achieve our goals of increased health, cultural identity, community integration, and economic self-sufficiency…. Our gardens are rich spaces for cultural exchange, and we believe that seed saving is an integral aspect of food security and cultural preservation" (Zarate 2019). In 2020 HDLF announced a merger with Centro Latino Americano and Downtown Languages, and in 2021 the transition to operate as one organization began. The organization is opening another garden site in 2022 in Cottage Grove, a more rural town in south Lane County that has a growing Mam Indigenous population. As they merge into one organization, they are expanding their services to meet the demand of the increasing population of Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora in Lane County, Oregon.

History of Migration and Transborder Communities in Oregon

It is important to explore the history of diverse Latino migration to Oregon to understand how Indigenous communities in diaspora have settled in Lane County. Immigration policy in the U.S. has undergone various reforms that recruit certain groups of people for labor purposes and

[5] *Cambios,* is the small business program that consists of a 12-week program, where participants will create a business plan, get technical assistance, and get education about topics such as finances, taxes, and goal setting. It is important to note, for this research project I did not do any participant observation with members of the *Cambios* business program, but I did interview a food truck owner who graduated from the business program and was a former garden member about his experiences through the pandemic. My focus for this research project was to work with the families who are participating in HDLF's organic community garden.

are often exclusionary to other groups of people based on nationality, religion, or racialized ideas (Martin 2003; Gomberg-Muñoz 2017; Stephen 2012). Here I summarize the population growth of communities from Mexico and Guatemala that have migrated and/or settled since the 19th century in Oregon (For more detailed historical accounts of these events see Gamboa 1987; Gonzales-Berry and Mendoza 2010; Stephen 2012; Jiménez Sifuentez 2016; Stephen 2017). I provide a synopsis of historical events that detail the role of Indigenous farmworkers in Oregon's agriculture history, how immigration policies and officials have targeted communities with origins from Mexico and Guatemala, and a historical overview of policy and structural changes that affect populations of Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities.

During the 1830s and 1840s when white settlers were moving into the territory that is now known as Oregon, which was in the process of becoming an organized, incorporated territory of the U.S., the territory bordered the country of Mexico. In 1848, under the Treaty of the Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico was forced to cede the land that would later become California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Colorado to the U.S. as a result of Mexico's defeat during the Mexican American War of 1846-1848. Shortly after this treaty, in the 1850s, Mexican *vaqueros* (cowboys) migrated to the area, and they played a substantial role in the early cattle ranching industry in Oregon and Idaho (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 7). *Arrieros* (mule packers) also migrated to the area and found work providing supplies to the Second Regiment Oregon Mounted Volunteers, who were in armed conflict with the Indigenous peoples who lived along the southern coastal part of the state during the Rogue River War (Stephen 2007: 78; Gamboa 1991). In the 1860s, *Arrieros* also came to the Pacific Northwest with the intention of becoming wealthy through gold mining, and they were known for their skills and knowledge (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 7).

The Mexican Revolution, which lasted from 1910-1920, displaced many people from their communities in Mexico, and some escaped the country to avoid further violence. People from Mexico migrated all over the U.S., including to the Southwest, Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and the American South, and were able to find work due to ongoing labor shortages caused by World War I and the Selective Service Act of 1917, which mandated that all American men ages 18-45 register for the armed service (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8). Ultimately over 4 million people were drafted. In the Pacific Northwest, Mexican immigrants worked on the railroad, in the forest, and most prolifically in the sugar beet industry. The history of farm work in Oregon is connected to the larger history of farm work in the U.S. that has involved slavery, sharecropping, child labor, prison labor, and other exploitations (Hernández 2017: 9; Hurston 1991: 201; Raibmon 2005: 74).

The number of people who migrated to Oregon from Mexico for work during the 1930s was a minimum of 1,568 people according to the U.S. Census, but letters from the Mexican Consul indicate that this number could be much greater (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8). World War II caused labor shortages once again due to millions of U.S. men being drafted in the military by mandate from the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. The Bracero guest worker program was implemented in 1942 as an agreement between the Mexican and U.S. governments to send Mexican contract laborers to work primarily in agriculture, but in Oregon braceros also worked as loggers, tree-planters, and from 1943-1946 were employed as railroad workers as well (Stephen 2012: 8; Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 10). The Bracero program lasted from 1942 to 1964 nationally, but in Oregon, the Bracero Program existed formerly for a much shorter period,[6] only from 1942 to 1947. “The Bracero Program persisted in only three Oregon counties into the

[6] The program was mostly terminated in the state with the expiration of Public Law-45, a labor agreement between the U.S. and Mexico (Gamboa 1987: 397).

1950s, and only growers in the Rogue Valley continued contracting braceros until the program's official 1964 expiration" (Cordia 2019: 154). However, it is important to note that Oregon contractors continued to hire workers from Mexico to harvest their crops even after the program did not get renewed.

Approximately 15,136 braceros were contracted as farm laborers in the state of Oregon from Mexico during this time (Stephen 2012: 8), and these workers were forced to live in unsafe housing and often eat spoiled or low-quality foods (Gamboa 1987: 382). Since the bracero contracts were written in an exploitative manner, workers were not entitled to fair wages, health care, permanent residency, safe working conditions, or the right to legally organize (but that did not stop strikes from happening). This program did not have a pathway to citizenship; therefore, bracero workers had to leave for Mexico after agricultural season and reapply or risk being deemed illegal and undocumented. Many people did not want to return to Mexico because they had started families while living in the U.S. or they just got accustomed to being in the U.S since their contracts extended up to 10 months out of the year. However, the number of braceros in Oregon considered undocumented by skipping out on their contract, overstaying their worker visa, or migrating to the state without a formal contract or visa is impossible to know (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8).

Many of the Bracero complaints in the Pacific Northwest revolved around three major grievances: housing, food, and wages. According to a historical account of a labor camp in Oregon, the camp "had no refrigeration; therefore, by lunch time, the sandwiches, prepared the day before, were unappetizing and the milk was 'sour' or bliny" (Gamboa 1987: 383). During the winter months, some workers would get hypothermia, from lack of insulated buildings in the employer-sponsored labor camps ; in these labor camps, people slept in cars, tents, or

uninsulated shacks and risked fire danger from trying to keep warm with flammable kerosene lamps and stoves (Gamboa 1987: 381). Within the first three years of Oregon's Bracero program there were more than twenty strikes over various issues, and in some instances, workers were able to improve housing conditions and earn higher wages (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 24). Despite enduring harsh survival conditions, many bracero workers displayed resiliency and took time to enjoy life moments. Bracero workers projected Mexican movies on tent walls; requested Catholic priests hold mass on Sundays in the labor camps; communally pitched in to buy radios or jukeboxes; did handicraft work; hosted evening dances, and some men would wear dresses to be dance partners; got married and had children; and celebrated Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo (Gamboa 1987: 385-387).

Records for the number of 'Hispanic' residents are not available for the 1950s and the 1960s, but according to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, the number of *Tejanos* (Texans of Mexican descent) was as high as 85,000 during the 1950s (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8; Cordia 2019: 153). Many of these families remained in the state of Oregon and settled permanently. During this period, there was an expansion of Mexican businesses, radio stations, and cultural celebrations in both rural and urban areas (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8). Beginning from 1970s, multigenerational communities, including many Indigenous people, from central Mexico especially from the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero were increasingly migrating to Eugene and Springfield.

During the 1970s there also was a rise of employment in forestry to replant deforested areas and mitigate the environmental damage caused by over-logging in the timber industry. Competition for labor contracts resulted in some contractors hiring undocumented workers to avoid insurance premiums, pay lower wages, scam workers for the cost of equipment and

housings, and to charge for food: “The isolation also meant that workers had to depend on the contractor for food. The prohibitive cost of food often forced workers to go days without eating. One tree planter recalled, “for $25 I received a jar of peanut butter, bread, canned beans, and a jar of Tang (a powdered orange drink)” (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 89).

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) 1954 program “Operation Wetback,” named after a discriminatory insult, was responsible for deporting over one million people that year alone (Hernandez 2010: 159; Martin 2003: 48). Immigration raids and deportations by INS increased during the late 1960s and the early 1970s from hundreds of deportations to over a thousand per year by 1973, especially among forestry workers (Stephen 2012: 13). The Willamette Valley Immigration Project (WVIP) was founded in 1977 by Cipriano Ferrel, Ramón Ramírez, Juan Mendoza, and Larry Kleinman since there was a need for legal services and representation for undocumented workers who were facing immigration issues or deportation orders. Their concerns were validated when INS targeted Woodburn, where many Oregon farmworkers work and live, on October 15, 1978, and detained over a hundred people (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 69). These INS deportations continued to increase throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The WVIP served as the foundation for the later creation of the *Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste* (PCUN) in 1985 (Stephen 2012: 13). PCUN is an organization that works to improve the working conditions of *pineros*[7] and *campesinos*,[8] especially for immigrant workers who lack federal worker protection, by being involved in creating government policies and providing community and legal resources.

[7] *Pinero* – A worker in the timber industry, either planting pine trees, cutting them for timber, or harvesting whole Christmas trees
[8] *Campesino* – Farmworker or agricultural laborer

The 1980 census indicated that the number of Mexican-born individuals in the Pacific Northwest increased from 105,311 to 183,863 people (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8). The 1980s marked a shift in the populations of communities that were migrating to Oregon, as indicated by the increased amount of immigration from Guatemala. Some of the major causes for Guatemalan immigration to the state of Oregon include communities being displaced by the Guatemalan Civil War, which lasted from 1950s until the Peace Accords of 1996 (Stephen 2017: 555-556). The period from 1978 to 1984 in Guatemala is known as "*La Violencia*," and this is when "the Guatemalan army targeted Indigenous communities with a campaign of genocide, scorched earth missions to burn entire villages, forced displacement, and the hunting of survivors" (Stephen 2017: 556). Most of Indigenous communities in Guatemala are from nine different ethnic groups (*Mam, Tectiteco, Acateco, Jacalteco o Popti', Chuj, Kanjobal, Aguacateco, K'iche,* and *Chalchiteco*) (Stephen 2019: 230). The violence in Guatemala did not end with the Peace Accords. The collapse of the Guatemalan state over decades created an environment in the 1990s that allowed drug cartels to gain prominence as they shifted from being drug importers and exporters to also being drug producers; this shift also marked increased violence by drug cartels towards Indigenous communities and women, which exponentially worsened throughout the 2000s and 2010s as organized criminal groups also engaged in kidnapping, smuggling, and human trafficking (Stephen 2017: 564-565). Today there are many unaccompanied minors from Guatemala who are supporting families while escaping violence, and the number of unaccompanied minors migrating has been increasing over the past decade (Heidbrink 2020).

Throughout the 1980s there was an increased number of arrests of *pineros* and *campesinos* in Oregon and Washington as result of INS raids at worksites and labor camps, and using roadblocks, which made travel progressively more dangerous for Latino communities

(Stephen 2012: 15). In 1986, the government passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) which granted permanent residency and a pathway to naturalization to farmworkers who participated in the Special Agriculture Worker (SAW) Program for at least ninety days or were living unlawfully in the U.S. since before January 1, 1982; this act provided amnesty to nearly 2.7 million people, with most of the applicants being born in Mexico (Rytina 2002: 3). In Oregon 23,736 Mexicans and Guatemalans received permanent residency under SAW (Stephen 2017: 561), however the lack of community resources was a barrier for many people, so many people did not even apply.

By the 1990s there were over 410,000 people in the Pacific Northwest who were Mexican born, according to the 1990 Census, many who were considered undocumented immigrants that did not qualify for IRCA, moved to the region afterward the passage of IRCA, or were faced with anti-immigrant legislation that made it more difficult to qualify for any legal immigration status (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 8). The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 had dire ramifications for family-owned farms and Mexico's agricultural industry since they could not compete with the prices from U.S. subsidized corn and other products that are ironically grown with the labor of Mexican workers. In the decade that followed NAFTA, 4.9 million Mexican family farmers were displaced, and poverty was rising throughout Mexico (Stavenhagen 2015: 94). To make the situation worse, the U.S. Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) imposed a three-to-ten year "bar" or disqualification from legal immigration for many prospective legal immigrants, especially those who had resided undocumented in the U.S. and left the country, regardless of the reason, which made it difficult for people to sponsor relatives to come to the U.S. (Stephen 2012:

28). Many people who filed for residency in the U.S. after January 1998 were punished if they tried to file while undocumented and living in the U.S. (Stephen 2012: 28).

Despite the IIRIRA, throughout the 1990s the number of Mexican-born people in the U.S. rose drastically from 4.5 million in 1990 to 9.4 million in the year 2000 (Stavenhagen 2015: 94). Mixed-status families became more common because U.S.-born children were not able to easily petition to bring their relatives to the U.S. However, this did not stop those family members from wanting to remain united in the U.S., regardless of whether some family members were unable to obtain any legal immigration status. Once Oregon had a significant number of settled migrants who had residency and citizenship, they in turn became an important resource for other undocumented family members who came to join them. In the case of low-income Latino immigrant communities in the U.S., access to healthy food and to traditionally important food and medicine is often limited by income, language, culture, location, and other obstacles.

A decade-long longitudinal study from 2001 to 2011 with 245,679 people about food insecurity in California revealed that "Latino immigrants" were experiencing higher rates of food insecurity than people labeled as Latino who were born in the U.S. and at rates almost twice as high as white Americans (Walsemann, Ro, and Gee 2017: 144). According to 2010 census data, 10% of "Hispanic" households in Oregon are in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). However, this percentage does not represent the true percentage of food-insecure households in Latino communities, since people who are considered undocumented are not eligible for SNAP. Since the SNAP began, those labeled as "undocumented non-citizens" have not been eligible to apply, and those considered "lawfully present non-citizens" qualify only if they have lived in the U.S. for at least five years, if they are receiving disability-related assistance or benefits, or are under the age of 18 (Food and Nutrition Service 2021). Limiting

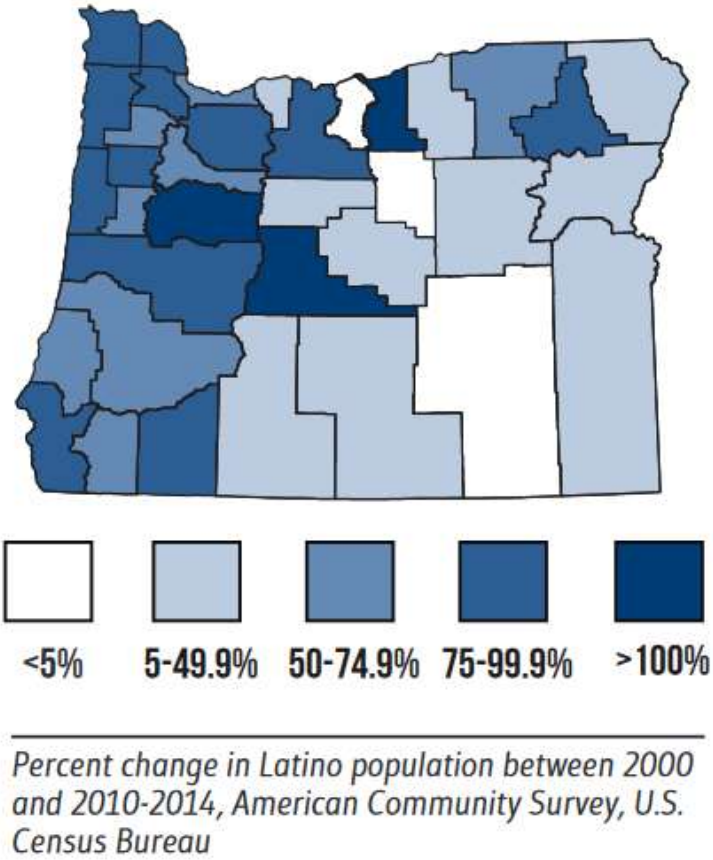
access to SNAP to people with residency by making them wait five years was a result of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) passed by the Clinton administration. And then there is the chilling effect of the "public charge rule" on use of such services; under the "public charge rule" people may be denied visas for using public services and not demonstrating financial sufficiency, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) placed more emphasis on being able to prove financial independence (Loucky et al. 2006).

Ethnographic research has traced the migration paths of Indigenous farmworkers from Mexico revealing the conditions, structural vulnerabilities, and structural and symbolic violence that migrant farmworkers encounter (Holmes 2013; Boehm 2016). Agricultural workers suffer at disproportionate rates from "fatalities and injuries, work-related lung diseases, noise-induced hearing loss, skin diseases, and certain cancers associated with chemical use and prolonged sun exposure" (Occupational Safety & Health Administration n.d.; Environmental Protection Agency 2015). Holmes's research reveals how on U.S. farms, there is a racial hierarchy that determines treatment by supervisors, exposure to pesticides, housing conditions, and how mentally and physically taxing the work can be (Holmes 2013). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 300,000 farm workers suffer acute pesticide poisoning each year (EPA 2002: 55). Cancer, neurological problems, and respiratory damage are some of the health conditions linked to pesticide exposure (Saxton 2015: 168). For example, Methyl Iodide is a fungicide currently in use that has been attributed to miscarriages, still births, and developmental problems (Guthman 2016; Saxton 2021: 3). Pesticide poisoning is not the only occupational hazard farmworkers face; others include sun exposure, heat exposure, and occupational injuries. In 2015, people in the agricultural industry experienced the highest workplace fatalities (570 fatal occupational injuries,

22.8 fatal injuries for every 100,000 full-time workers) compared to workers in other industries in the U.S., and of these fatalities, "workers born in Mexico have consistently accounted for the largest portion of foreign-born workers who died from work-related injuries in the United States from 2011 to 2015" (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). As a result of the dangers from working in the agricultural industry, the average life expectancy of a farmworker is 49 years (Castañeda and Zavella 2003; López 2008; Saxton 2015: 176).

According to the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2010 to 2014, the Latino population increased by over 75% in 15 out of 36 counties in Oregon (Clatsop, Clackamas, Columbia, Curry, Deschutes, Gilliam, Jackson, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Polk, Tillamook, Union, Wasco, and Washington) and in eight other counties (Benton, Coo, Douglas, Josephine, Marion, Multnomah, Umatilla, Yamhill) the Latino population increased between 50%-75%. **Figure 1** displays that most of this growth has occurred in western counties of Oregon (The Oregon Community Foundation 2016: 6). It is important to note that surveys from the U.S. census often undercount the actual number of Latinos in the country, since people who do not have U.S. citizenship may be wary of reporting census data to the government out of fear of deportation or detention. During this period of growth, the number of people considered Latino born in Oregon has grown at a much higher rate than people considered Latino who were born in another country such as Mexico or Guatemala (The Oregon Community Foundation 2016: 6-7).

Figure 1. Map of the growth in the Latino population in Oregon by county from 2000-2014.



The 2020 Census reveals that 13.9% (588,757 people) of the Oregon population identify as "Hispanic or Latino;" this indicates a 30.8% increase since the 2010 U.S. census (United States Census Bureau 2021). Currently studies estimate that up to 40% of Oregon's 174,000 farmworkers and families are Indigenous according to Phase I final report by the COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS) (Martinez et al. 2021: 11). The COFS project was developed by a broad coalition of researchers and community-based organizers across California, Oregon, and Washington. The COFS team is composed of twelve farmworker-serving organizations and researchers from Portland State University, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University. Some of the Mesoamerican Indigenous languages spoken by communities in Oregon include *Achi, Akateko, Amuzgo, Chuj, Ixil, Huichol, Jakalteko, Kaqchikel, Mam, Maya Yucatan, Mixteco,*

Mixteco Alto, Mixteco Bajo, Nahuatl, Purépecha, Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchi', Quiche (K'iche'), Tlapaneco, Tojoloba l, Trique (Itunyoso and Copala), Tzeltal, Tzottzil, and *Zapoteco* (different variations) (Martinez et al. 2020: 6). Most likely there are many other Indigenous languages spoken from regions in Mexico and Guatemala, but this list is not intended to be all encompassing, since the list is limited to the data collected from the 2020 COFS survey of 300 farmworkers and the 2021 COFS ethnographic interviews with 48 farmworkers. I discuss the broad collaborative nature of this project and all the participants in Chapter II.

Heightened Tension and Anti-Immigrant Policies Since the Turn of the 21st Century

Here I highlight some immigration policies in the past two decades that have shaped the lives of all immigrant and mixed status communities in the U.S. These policies are not unique to Oregon, but they have shaped how people in Oregon navigate everyday life. Since 2000, communities from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean continued to migrate at high levels despite determent tactics from different White House administrations (Tienda and Sánchez 2013: 59). Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created in 2003 under the Bush Administration and replaced INS. Deportations began in the first year of the program, and this agency was expanded under the Obama administration, which surpassed over 400,000 people per year by 2012 (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013: 276). One of the policies that led to an increase in deportations was the "Secure Communities" program that was implemented in 2008 by the federal government. The "Secure Communities" program required that local law enforcement agencies share arrestee information with federal immigration officials to deport criminal noncitizens (Treyger, Chalfin, and Loeffler 2014: 285). The threat of deportation was intensified as police departments across

the country partnered with ICE, and in some states this program allowed police to check immigration status during routine traffic stops.

Even though "Secure Communities" was marketed to the public as a program to increase public safety, DHS's statistics for removals by ICE from 2004 through 2011 revealed that deportees were increasingly be deported for minor violations and traffic violations rather than serious crimes (see Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011: 16). Many of these individuals deported were not deemed dangerous or a risk to the communities they lived in, some were first-time arrestees without a criminal record, and some were wrongfully arrested; so, the deportation of people with minor violations led to families being separated, families losing their mother or father, neighborhoods losing beloved community members, and young adults being sent to countries where they have not been since they were toddlers. The percentage of deported criminals who were convicted of common serious offenses (assault, robbery, burglary, and sexual assault) declined from 20% in 2004 to less than 12% in 2012, and the percentage of "those convicted of 'dangerous drug' crimes, a category DHS describes as 'including the manufacturing, distribution, sale, and possession of illegal drugs' declined from 37.5% to 21.4% of all removals between 2004 and 2012" (Treyger, Chalfin, and Loeffler 2014: 293). However, the category that increased by the greatest percentage was of people who were deported for traffic offenses, which made up 23.1% of all removals in 2012 (Treyger, Chalfin, and Loeffler 2014: 294). ICE, under the Obama Administration, "issued removal orders to over 2 million people, at a rate 1.6 times higher than the average under President G. W. Bush" (Street, Zepeda-Millán, and Jones-Correa 2015: 540). The deportation of immigrants not only causes people to live in fear, but it causes the separation of families and children, resulting in children being raised without one or sometimes both parents. The increased policing of immigrant communities

beginning in the 2000s reinforced a draconian system that portrays entire communities as threats, criminalizes immigrants, and labels people as illegal while denying them a realistic pathway to citizenship or even a pathway to work legally (Oboler and Dzidzienyo 2005: 6).

Donald Trump's rhetoric, during the presidential campaign and his presidency, was explicitly racist, misogynist, and xenophobic. Trump and his White House administration repeatedly used rhetoric that weaponized racial categories to appease white nationalist supporters while reinforcing colonial worldviews that have been directly connected to white supremacy in the U.S. For example, Trump spoke of immigration in terms of terrorism and a threat to democracy, and enacted drastic measures to reduce the number of people legally allowed in the country (Faber et al. 2017: 6). He essentially shut down the asylum system and experimented with many policies to attempt to limit the rights of asylum seekers and limit movement across U.S. borders. The derogatory and criminalizing references to immigrants perpetuated negative stereotypes of different racial categories and got uninterrupted airtime on cable news networks, as replays of his remarks were continuously shown on all news broadcasts and spread further on social media.

At the press conference announcing Trump's candidacy, he referred to Mexican immigrants as "criminals" and "rapists," and said that he would build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border to keep them out.[9] He smeared federal judge Gonzalo Curiel, questioning his ability as a Hispanic to preside over class-action lawsuits brought by students against Trump around the now-defunct Trump University (Healy, Haberman, and Martin 2016). During his presidency on January 27, 2017, he signed an executive order banning nationals of seven

[9] During his presidency, the administration authorized $15 billion to fund 738 miles of border fencing while 453 miles were constructed (Department of Homeland Security 2021), and pardoned Steve Bannon who defrauded anti-immigrant donors by fundraising off the idea of building border walls on private property (Dawsey and Zapotosky 2021).

countries—Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen—from entering the U.S. for at least 90 days, with the possibility of a wider ban, but the order got blocked by a Seattle judge and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Some of Trump's loyal supporters saw immigration and terrorism as directly tied to increasing racial, ethnic, and national identity. They expressed their anxiety about the country's growing racial diversity (Faber et al. 2017: 8). As a result of Trump's rhetoric, there has been an ongoing increase in reports of discrimination and violence[10] due to race and gender. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported over 1,000 incidents filed in the month following the election in 2019 motivated by anti-immigrant, anti-black, anti- Muslim, and anti-queer bias (Murphy 2017: 12). These incidents of discrimination against communities perceived as other than white in the U.S. continue to occur even with Trump out of office. In Oregon, hate crimes rose from 170 incidents in 2019 to 271 incidents in 2020, while the number of victims climbed to roughly 360 last year, up from approximately 242 in 2019 (Wilson 2021).

In 2018, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers began informing arriving asylum seekers that U.S. ports of entry were full and that they needed to wait in Mexico under the Homeland Security policy known as the "Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)" passed under the Trump administration; this was done in conjunction with metering, which is a process of allowing only a limited numbers of asylum seekers to cross the border each day (Leutert et al. 2020). When the pandemic started, at most ports of entry the asylum waitlists were halted, and CBP did allow new people to seek asylum. In March of 2020, the Trump administration also

[10] One of these events affected my hometown in El Paso. A young white male drove across the state to go to a Walmart in El Paso to target and kill Latinos and Immigrants (Qiao et al. 2022: 299). I live in fear of something like this occurring to me in Oregon in general, since Oregon is the state with the second highest number of hate groups and per capita has the highest number of hate crimes.

invoked U.S. health law, Section 265 of Title 42, to completely close the U.S. borders. Title 42 remains in force under the Biden Administration, despite campaign promises to deal more humanely with migrants and those seeking asylum.

At the same time, various migrant shelters, on both sides of the border had limited capacity or closed due to social distancing guidelines (Leutert et al. 2020). Near the end of 2021, The Biden Administration was forced to restart the Remain in Mexico program due to a court order, but also continued with Title 42, effectively closing the border again. This response is not a new or unique phenomenon since past U.S. responses to epidemic diseases such as yellow fever, cholera, and typhus from the 18th to the early 20th centuries. These epidemics and pandemics all affected immigrant populations disproportionality since these communities were at a much higher risk of infection from structural factors such as poor living conditions, lack of access to resources, and lack of health care (Hewlett and Hewlett 2008: 133). The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 to the present, during which this thesis is being written (2022), is no exception. My research on contemporary community garden usage by Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities is related to this history of forced displacement since food insecurity, culture, and belonging have been ongoing issues in the history of migration and settling in Oregon.

Theoretical Frameworks

In my study, I do not view physical health and mental health as exclusive domains since they are often interconnected, but I do make distinctions when one domain is highlighted during the interviews or survey responses from the research participants in my study. As I discuss physical health in this dissertation, I am using this term to broadly refer to physiological function such as the ability to perform physical activities, the ability to fulfill basic social roles and

expectations, biological health indicators, self-reported perceptions of physical health, diseases (both chronic and acute), injuries (both chronic and acute), physical responses to stressors from natural and human caused environmental factors, and physical responses correlated with mental health (Charlier et al. 2017; Cleary 1995; Levin and Browner 2005: 746). Also, in my framework of physical health, I do not view the concept as a dichotomy of good health or bad health since health is not a "static condition but rather, as a characteristic of a dynamic system, 'a process' or 'a means rather than an end'…. [Also, because] conceptions of good health vary cross-culturally, [and] there has been little empirical work on what, in fact, these variations entail" (Levin and Browner 2005: 746).

When I speak about the physical health benefits of community gardening from the testimonies and observations of my research contributors, these refer to benefits based on self-reported health perceptions from the participants' own statements; some topics discussed are people's medical history, physical capabilities, environmental exposures, and experiences with the SARS-CoV-2 virus. I did not collect or measure any biological health indicators, any other health data, or environmental samples to support these claims. My project is also in conversation with the vast scholarship of the biocultural approach in nutritional anthropology, but I seek not to measure nutrition itself, but access to food, food security, and how food functions as a resource for connection and perceived health (Fitzgerald 1976; Harris and Ross 1987; Himmelgreen 2002; Johnston 1987; Pelto and Freake 2003). My use of interviews to describe health benefits is an attempt at trying to understand individual and cultural conceptions of the physical domain of health in communities in Lane County from diverse backgrounds that span mostly from Mexico, Guatemala, and the U.S.

Furthermore, in this dissertation I frame mental health broadly to encompass psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social realms (Charlier et al. 2017; Kleinman 1980; Kleinman and Good 1985). To describe mental health challenges among Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County, I am informed by the conversations of cultural and medical anthropologist whose research is engaged in examining the cultural variations of how conceptions of mental health are influenced by culture, cosmology, governmental structure, emotions, environmental factors, and intercultural exchanges (Csordas 1994; Desjarlais 1992; Lutz and White 1986; Larchanche 2020; Yarris and Ponting 2019; Yarris 2017). I avoid using a universalistic framework that relies on measurements to attempt to quantify the severity of the impact of mental and physical health that are based on non-culturally specific fixed generalized definitions because this approach has resulted in portrayals of people's culture as a barrier to effective health care while not considering structural features that impact health and affect care (Kleinman 1980; Kleinman and Good 1985; Larchanche 2020; Santiago-Irizarry 2001).

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a stressor due to the risk of severe illness and death to oneself and loved ones, it has also highlighted the long-lasting stressful conditions in people's lives. I use the concept of stress proliferation to explain how my research interlocutors do not experience stressors in isolation, but rather how these stressors can compound and negatively impact people's lives. Stress proliferation is the "tendency for an initial stressor to create other stressors within and between life domains" (Pearlin 1989; Pearlin 1999; Pearlin et al., 2005; Umberson et al. 1992). The concept of stress proliferation was first theorized by sociologist Leonard Pearlin in his research regarding caregiving for people with dementia, but this concept has been used to "understand the experiences of people in very different caregiving situations"

(Knussen, et al. 2005: 207-21). Not only do these stressors compound, but each stressor in its own regard can make one's ability to respond to other events, stress, and responsibilities more difficult (Brown et al. 2017). There are other frameworks in medical anthropology that are also concerned with concepts of well-being and overlapping and accumulating sources of suffering such as social suffering (Kleinman, Das, and Locke 1996), chronicity (Manderson and Smith-Morris 2010), eco-social theory (Krieger 2021), and syndemics (Mendenhall and Singer 2019). I refrain from the concept of social suffering because despite my focusing on stressors from impacts of a pandemic and climate change, I did not want to portray my interlocutors as being in a perpetual state of suffering since many of my participants are actively using care and carework to mitigate and heal from suffering they experienced these past two years. I refrain from the concept of chronicity because I did not focus on chronic illnesses or epidemiological changes to people's chronic conditions. There are accounts of people dealing with comorbidities, but that was not the case for all my interlocutors. I refrain form the concept of eco-social theory because I am not tracking population distributions of disease or finding patterns of disease related to social inequalities. Lastly, I do not use the concept of syndemics because even though some people are managing two or more diseases at a time, I did not ask people specifically what health conditions they are currently managing and how these conditions interact with each other. The concept of stress proliferation allows me to analyze compounding stressors in peoples' lives without making larger assertions of disease, chronic conditions, and diagnosed mental health conditions.

Anthropologists who focus on suffering tend to not engage with local conceptions of well-being, care, and hope (See Bourdieu, Accardo, and Ferguson 1999; Fassin 2004). My framework of well-being is influenced by Edward Fischer's research about the concept of the "good life," aspirations, and well-being in cross-cultural contexts. Fischer compares the

experiences of Mayan Guatemalan coffee farmers, who face poverty and violence, to middle-class German supermarket shoppers who tended to be more affluent economically. Even though the cultural backgrounds, political structures, and economic conditions differed between the two field sites, Fischer still observed common themes of how people thought about well-being. Fischer theorized that well-being is composed of several key domains:

> First, there are objective material conditions as measured by income, health, and physical security. Second, there are the more subjective factors of agency, fairness and dignity, and meaningful life projects. Third, there are the intermediary and more instrumental social elements of opportunity structures and family and community networks. In this system, we find a complex interrelationship between the elements of wellbeing, both subjective and objective. (Fischer 2014: 210-211)

Other anthropologists focus on engaging with local conceptions of well-being, care, and hope; for example, in *Death Without Weeping*, anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes explores how grief, love, poverty, infant death, and survival have been intertwined among women living a favela in northeast Brazil during the 1980s (Scheper-Hughes 1992). Sherry Ortner refers to dark anthropology as anthropology that focuses on power, domination, inequality, oppression, and the subjective experiences of these dimensions (Ortner 2016). Evaluating the impact of the pandemic often results in descriptions of inequality and oppression, but that analysis is missing the agency of people trying to maintain well-being through care and carework. On the other hand, anthropologists who focus on well-being tend to focus on normalcy, happiness, the good life, and morality rather than suffering that people experience in their lives (Das 2015: 4; Ortner 2016). Ortner proposes that anthropologists can engage with communities in a more meaningful way by

theorizing about good and suffering not as opposites, since suffering, carework, and well-being are interwoven concepts that are part of human societies and tend to be experienced together.

My research project contributes to important theoretical and methodological issues in anthropology such as migration/immigration and foodways by illuminating the links between local foodways, daily performances of identity, culture, and community through food and the structures and experiences of migration (see Agyeman and Gianconi 2020; Alkon and Agyeman 2011). My work intersects with Seth Holmes (2013), whose work focuses on structural vulnerabilities and structural violence of Triqui farmworkers in Washington and California. Structural vulnerability is a product of class, gender, race-based exploitation and is defined as patterned ways in which specific population groups and individuals are susceptible to structured physical/emotional suffering (Quesada, Hart, and Bourgois 2011; Watters 2010). Structural vulnerabilities surrounding migration such as economic inequality, citizenship inequality, ethnic hierarchies, and gender hierarchies can be considered social determinants of health because these vulnerabilities affect people's health and well-being in predictable ways (Castañeda et al. 2015; Link and Phelan 1995). The shared structural vulnerabilities that immigrants experience can result in violence that includes undocumented immigrants being at risk of deportation, mixed status families being separated, physical ailments, mental health issues, malnourishment, sexual assault, stress, and emotional distress (Castañeda 2019; Yeung 2018; Cediel and Bergman 2013; Farmer 2003: 40; Vega 2015: 13).

My work also intersects with Sarah Horton (2016; 2021), whose work has focused on the embodiment of physical and mental health of migrant and non-migrant agricultural workers in California who are regularly exposed to extreme heat, and with Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2014), who worked with paid "Mexican immigrant" gardeners/landscapers and community

gardeners in Southern California. Other work has explored agriculture, landscaping, and community gardening in California (Davis, et al. 2011; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014) and in New York (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004), but my research highlights how community gardens in Oregon are used among Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities. There has not been research in Oregon about how community-based agriculture can impact well-being as measured through food security, promotion of health, emotional and social carework, protection of cultural knowledge, and social integration. My research contributes to discussions on how foodways, migration, gender, health, and care intersect (Gabbacia 2000; Diner 2003; Inness 2000, Abarca 2006; Counihan 1999; Ray 2004; Harper 2010) by showcasing these intersections before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. My work draws on literature on how gardening promotes resiliency, food activism, and alternative food movements (Alkon and Guthman 2017; Guthman 2014; Okvat and Zautra 2011; Sbicca 2015), but I refrain from using the concept of resilience because I do not want to perpetuate the notion that communities that are impacted must cope or recover to a preconceived notion of normal. Communities are still suffering from the pandemic and society will not return to a state of normalcy; communities all across the world are adapting, healing, and making changes. I use the concepts of care and carework to showcase the actions, feelings, and needs in people's lives since these concepts do not gauge the psychological and behavioral capabilities of responding to a crisis like how the concept of resilience does.

My research intersects with Michael Kearney (1995; 2004) and Lynn Stephen (2007; 2012; 2019) who have been working with transborder community networks of immigrant agricultural workers who travel back and forth predominately from Mexico and Guatemala to California, Oregon, and Washington. Kinship in transborder communities is separated by ethnic, cultural, and regional borders, but linked by family, cycles of labor, and individual and collective

resources shared through multigenerational patterns of movement (Stephen 2007: 23). My project documents these practices and their impact in the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S. with a focus on the intersections of community gardening, cultural foodways, food security strategies, carework, health, and the impacts of unexpected extreme weather events among transborder communities that have formed between Mesoamerican regions in Mexico and Guatemala and Oregon. As a result, my research contributes to Oregon's history and cultural heritage by illuminating the experiences of multigenerational immigrant families who have come from Mexico, Central America, and South America to settle in Oregon during the past three decades. This more recent history also enriches earlier histories of farming in Oregon and adds to discussions of modern national and regional foodways in the U.S. (Brown and Mussell 1984; Humphrey and Humphrey 1988) and of foodways in Mexico (Staller and Carrasco 2010) by highlighting how Mesoamerican cultural foodways in Oregon have been shaped by both established communities and communities that recently migrated to Oregon.

I position my research in terms of food justice rather than concepts of food security, food sovereignty, and decolonial food studies because food justice scholars and movements are concerned with preventing food insecurity, improving working conditions for agricultural and food sectors, and promoting access to culturally relevant food (Broad 2016; Bradley and Herrera 2016; Alkon and Agyeman 2011). HDLF also labels themselves as engaging in food justice work. I caution against labeling this work as decolonial because this project was not designed by the community I work, nor did I have interviews in Zapotec languages, Mixtec languages, or Nahuatl (Tuck and Yang 2012: 3). However, my work is inspired by decolonial research (Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Menchú 1992; Escobar 2001; Gray, Yellow Bird, and Hetherington 2013), and I hope my collaboration with community gardens and COFS can shed a light on the existing

inequalities in agricultural in Oregon, especially with regard to needed protections from COVID-19 and extreme weather events for workers. I caution against labeling this work as research on food sovereignty because this concept revolves around communities being able to control all aspects of their foodways; the production, distribution, and consumption of food, and that idea is not realistic for many communities in the U.S. (Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2014; Agarwal 2014; Alkon and Mares 2012). Even though HDLF allows quite a bit of autonomy in how people use their garden plot, it does not equate to true food sovereignty: there are still rules to follow, and the members do not own the land which can cause potential issues. For example, the organization relies on community partnerships with other organizations to provide land for gardens. Under this model, there is the potential for gardens to be taken away from members if the partnering organization decides they want the land back for another purpose. In 2021, one of the garden field sites was taken out of operation in the middle of the agricultural season as the partnering organization repurposed their outdoor space and ended the collaboration of supporting a community garden on their property.

Significance of Research

My research in Lane County with agricultural workers, some of whom also procure their own food at community gardens from Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora, describes some of the integrated physical health, mental health, and social impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and from the 2020 and 2021 wildfire seasons. I suggest that we think of the combination of these factors as accumulated stress proliferation that is ongoing. I document how these events contributed to economic, health, work, and social challenges for those living and working in the Willamette Valley and wider Lane County. I explore how people responded to these compounding stressors by analyzing how my research

participants cared for themselves and provided carework for others with specific practices of care and support networks that flowed through HDLF, but also far beyond it.

Long before the global COVID-19 pandemic, farmworkers faced challenges such as pesticide poisoning, wage theft, being underpaid in relation to the minimum wage, long working hours, and substandard housing with lack of water, bathrooms, and other basic infrastructure. These working conditions for migrant farmworkers in Oregon and elsewhere in the country contribute to high levels of occupational violence and are important aspects of the structural vulnerabilities that migrant farmworkers embody and experience (Horton 2016). Ethnographies of migrant communities in the U.S. have amply documented the ways that structural vulnerabilities and structural violence cause social suffering which in turn results in poverty, poor physical and mental health, food insecurity, dismal labor conditions, racism, housing vulnerability, inequity, and displacement for those who labor in agriculture—which all intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme climate conditions. Research about alternative food strategies and carework is urgent since the global pandemic and extreme weather have contributed to increased rates of food insecurity and revealed gaps of social support for communities that experience marginalization.

I use narrative accounts from Latino communities and Mesoamerican Communities in Diaspora in Lane County, Oregon to describe self-reported perceptions of mental health in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather. With this approach, I center concepts of care and carework, such as “cuidar y pertenecer” (caring and belonging) discussed in Chapter V, that are based on the personal narratives of my participants who describe how they are actively adapting to events and experiences that have negatively impacted their physical and mental health. I do not try to generalize that these are the experiences of all Latino or

Mesoamerican Indigenous communities from agricultural backgrounds in the U.S. or abroad, but I do hope this ethnographic research can be used to begin to understand the cultural variation of how people express care and carework in response to factors that can influence the domains of physical and mental health.

Many of the people I collaborated with at the HDLF gardens and who participated in the COFS project are directly connected to the agricultural and food systems in Oregon. Currently some are farmworkers, nursery workers, forestry workers, food truck operators, salmon processers, landscapers, cooks; others construct greenhouses or have had former experience being farmworkers, sharecroppers, or other types of workers in the food industry. Given the wide range of knowledge that exists about how our current food system damages those who work in it, what are the alternatives? Community gardens like HDLF often only allow organic gardening practices, so these sites are important to understanding people's relationship to the land in circumstances that are not connected to their status as essential workers or to exposure to industrial pesticides.

There is not much research in Oregon about how community-based agriculture can impact an individual and their family through food security, promotion of health broadly construed, emotional, and social carework, protection of cultural knowledge, and social integration. I also examine remittance and communication forms of carework as a way of maintaining support between dispersed transborder communities. My results provide new analytical insights on the successful ways that immigrant Latino families and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities access high quality food while continuing traditionally based foodways, rituals, care, and medicinal practices, especially during a global pandemic that has had severe impacts on agricultural workers in Lane County.

My dissertation is divided into four additional chapters which are summarized below:

In Chapter II, "Methodology," I discuss the reasoning for the language and terminology used such as the terms Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and the term "Latino communities." Here I explain the research methods used, my collaboration with COFS and how that influenced my perspectives, how the pandemic impacted my research, and a general timeline of my research activities. I include a land recognition of my field sites in Lane County, since both my education at the University of Oregon and my research has occurred on occupied lands of the Kalapuya peoples. The history of the displacement of Kalapuya communities has connections to the establishment of agriculture and forestry industries and the use of other displaced Indigenous, Latino, and other immigrant communities as farmworkers.

In Chapter III, "Challenges for Latino Workers in Lane County from COVID-19," I examine the impact of COVID-19 on transnational Latino communities in Oregon from agricultural and food workers' perspectives. I use testimonials and survey responses from COFS to discuss topics such as indirect and direct effects of the virus, the loss of work for my interlocutors, and worrying about losses in their home communities in Mexico. I draw attention to some experiences and consequences of people who tested positive for COVID-19. I explore why there is vaccine hesitancy and some strategies used that have had success at stopping vaccine misinformation in Latino communities. I explain the role of HDLF in responding to COVID-19 in the community through their collaboration with other community organizations and governmental agencies to provide bilingual support and services.

In Chapter IV, "Smoke, Wildfires, and Climate Change: Impacts on Latino Workers," I study how seasonal wildfires, smoke exposure, and extreme heat and cold are affecting Mesoamerican Indigenous families and Latino families in their work lives and at home. While

the years 2020 and 2021 were marked by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the vulnerabilities the pandemic exposed were further exacerbated by other difficult conditions related to climate change: wildfires, smoke, and extreme heat and cold. Here I discuss how these multiple stressors propagate in people's lives and the resulting consequences using the concept of stress proliferation. For essential workers who labor outdoors and live in substandard and crowded housing, these additional challenges often pushed them even further into marginality and seeking systems of care and support.

In Chapter V, titled "Carework in the Garden," I analyze the concept of carework through testimonials of agricultural workers who discuss care, remittances, foodways, and gardening. I examine how people are caring for themselves and their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the concepts of care, belonging, and mutuality that emerge from their narratives. I acknowledge that the communities I worked with are not just "getting by" or coping with the changing circumstances but are actively getting their community to positively adapt to the new realities they face from the effects of the pandemic. Some of my research participants are participating in agriculture not as paid labor but are growing food to feed themselves and their families; sharing the surplus of the harvest with friends and others at the garden; using medicinal herbs as medicine; and providing a helping hand with garden maintenance. I argue that participation in community gardening can be considered a form of unpaid carework, since it can be a source of social connection, emotional support, access to healthy food, and nutrition for families.

Lastly, in Chapter VI, titled "Conclusions," I synthesize the importance of carework on the individual, family, and community level to get people through the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. I explore avenues for future research with Latino communities and Mesoamerican

Indigenous communities in diaspora in Oregon regarding adapting to a changing climate, access to water, food security, language access, and long-term impacts from the pandemic. I highlight some of the recommended policy actions from the COFS Phase I and Phase II final reports that can make meaningful impact on the lives of agricultural workers, especially for those who are facing language barriers.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This research for this dissertation was carried out in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. My research sites were spread out across seven community garden sites in Springfield and Eugene, Oregon that are managed by Huerto de la Familia (HDLF). It is important to recognize that the two cities I conducted fieldwork in, are located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional Indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people (Lewis 2021). The Kalapuyan peoples have been living in what is now known at the Willamette Valley for about 14,000 years, and practiced fire land management strategies that prevented out of control wildfires. The Kalapuya people have been displaced and, in some locations, they were forcibly removed from their homelands by settlers moving west in the mid-1800s, and some of the surviving families ultimately were required to relocate to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon, which was created by treaties that were signed between 1851 and 1855 (Lewis 2014; Mackey 2004: 10). Historically the Kalapuya groups who lived in the area now known as Lane County, were the Tsanchifin, Tsanklightemifa, and the Tsawokot (Mackey 2004:10). Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the University of Oregon, to Oregon, and to the world.[11]

The area's geography is composed of valleys, wetlands, temperate mixed forests, and coastal forest, and the traditional wetlands have mostly been converted farmlands after the displacement of Indigenous groups throughout the region. Historically, the Kalapuyan peoples used the forests, particularly cedar trees for a wide range of products from housing to clothes to

[11] This land acknowledgment is shaped by the Honoring Native Peoples and Lands statement, provided by the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies at the University of Oregon.

the production of canoes. Other uses of plants, mushroom, and trees from the forest included bartering, ceremonial use, basketry, dye production, food, medicine, and tool production (Dobkins et al. 2017: 498). The grasslands were maintained by Indigenous peoples who used burning as a land management technique:

> Camas was harvested in the early summer, and other tubers and roots throughout the summer. Wild grains, oats and tarweed seeds would be gathered after the tribal women set the fires in the prairies and roasted the seeds on the stalk. The tribes had woven baskets, trays and bats to collect the roasted seeds from the burnt prairies. These grains would be dried, shelled, and cooked into flatbreads and stews. However, after white farmers plowed up these prairies, the food sources declined. Then the settlers suppressed the other cultural practice, of setting fires to the prairies as they did not want to see their agriculture burnt up (Lewis 2021).

With the arrival of settlers, Indigenous groups in Oregon were pushed off their lands and the forests were seen as expendable resources that did not need to be cared for and managed. More recent displacement of these groups occurred "in 1954, [when] Congress passed bills terminating all the Tribes west of the Cascades as well as the Klamath… The policy resulted in the Tribes' loss of millions of acres of lands and all their resources, including timber, water, plants, and animals, and stripped tribal citizens of their identities…. [but, after many legal battles] many of the terminated Tribes successfully won the restoration of their federal status in the 1970s and 1980s" (Dobkins et al. 2017: 505). However, many of the tribes and reservations of Oregon did not receive their land back after federal recognition. Many Indigenous gatherers in Oregon have expressed encountering the effects of overharvesting by commercial gatherers and that "they struggle to share public land and resources with the commercial forest and non-timber

forest products industries. Respondents raised three main issues: resource competition, environmental damage, and inadequate regulation and enforcement of harvesting rules" (Dobkins et al. 2017: 508). The theft of land from Indigenous communities has resulted in the wetlands of the Willamette Valley and the forests from the Cascade Mountain Range east of the valley to the Oregon Coast Mountain Range west to the valley to the Calapooya Mountain range towards the south to still be exploited by forestry, agriculture, and quarry industries. Despite these challenges, Indigenous communities are advocates in the stewardship of the land and fighting for the reclamation of important cultural lands. For example, the Grande Ronde Reservation in 2021 reclaimed Willamette Falls by purchasing the land for $2.9 Million, and they are working to remove the defunct Oregon City mill for ecological restoration (Hale 2021).

Inquiry into Histories, Identities, and the Terminology Regarding Populations of Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous Communities

In this research project, I refrain from identifying terms that refer to a person's legal status in the U.S such as immigrant, undocumented, documented, refugee, or asylum seeker, and I refrain from terms that refer to a person's nationality or citizenship such as American, Mexican, Guatemalan, etc. Using these terms to refer to my research collaborators not only puts people at risk of surveillance, policing, detention, or deportation, but it reduces people's identity to recently created colonial concept of nation-states; it erases the fact that historical people from the Americas regularly travelled, shared culture, and traded along seasonal migration paths for thousands of years; and it reinforces division in communities while failing to recognize how most families are part of transborder communities that span across various notions of borders such as nations, states, territories, immigration statuses, and rooted connections to Indigenous traditions, languages, practices, and worldviews (Stephen 2007, 2021). I only use these terms when discussing legal policies and the historical background since it provides the necessary

context to understand how Indigenous communities in diaspora from the Americas and the Caribbean get racialized, categorized, and discriminated against in the U.S.

I chose to use the term Mesoamerican Indigenous Communities in diaspora to refer to diverse communities from Mexico and Guatemala that have moved to the U.S., temporarily and permanently, who may speak Indigenous languages and/or practice cultural customs rooted in traditions form their *pueblos* (hometowns). I focus on the regions known as Mexico and Guatemala, because none of my research participants were from the other countries in the Mesoamerican region. The term Mesoamerica has been used to refer to the region from Central Mexico down through Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica, which share cultural and cosmological similarities while being distinctively different culturally from Indigenous communities to the north and south (Lyovin, Kessler, and Leben 2017: 344). Some of the major language families that originate from Mesoamerica include Oto-Manguean (Mixtec, Zapotec, and many other languages from Oaxaca, Hidalgo, Puebla, and Veracruz), Totonacan (Totonac, Tepehua, and other languages from Puebla, Veracruz, the state of Mexico, San Luis Potosí, and Hidalgo), Mixe-Zoquean (Mixe, Zoque, Poplica, and other languages from Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Chiapas), and Mayan (family of languages that expand across southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) (Lyovin, Kessler, and Leben 2017: 344-347). The COFS revealed that "Oregon Indigenous Farmworkers speak at least 26 different languages from Guatemala and Mexico (such as Triqui, Mixtec Languages, different Mam languages, Kanjobal, among others) and many are not fluent or literate in Spanish" (Martinez et al. 2021: 1), and at the gardens, Zapotec and Mixtec are the most common languages spoken after Spanish and English. Based off the languages used by my collaborators, most people participating in this research project have roots from the Mesoamerican region.

The word Indigenous is defined as a person who was the original inhabitant of a place, but historically this word has been used synonymously with the words native, aboriginal, and first peoples. The generalized use of Indigenous as a label for identity can be problematic because as an umbrella term, it collectivizes the experience of many different culturally diverse groups of people to a single category (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 6; Yellow Bird 1999: 3). I use the phrase Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora rather than Indigenous people to signal how communities in Mexico and Guatemala not only "share experiences as people who have been subjected to the colonization[12] of their lands and cultures, and denial of their sovereignty" (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 7; Kauanui 2016), but also have shared experiences of displacement, migration patterns, and transborder connections in their diaspora. A diaspora has been defined as "a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity" (Grossman 2019: 1267), and "the ways in which this movement affords ideological, social, and economic links to the homeland or community of origin'' (Perez Baez 2013: 30-31). I use the term diaspora not to denote a person's nationality or immigration status, but to identify the shared experience of belonging to a transborder community that is multi-sited and spans across ethnic, cultural, regional, and nation-state borders (Stephen 2007: 23). Anthropologist Lynn Stephen argues that "labelling the movement process of Indigenous peoples as trans-territorial movements or diasporas signals that Indigenous people in the continents of North, Central and South America known as Abya Yala are first peoples and their movements today continue historical movements across different Indigenous territories" (Stephen 2021: 78).

[12] The shared subjection and repression that Indigenous people experience under colonial rule include the efforts to eliminate sovereignty of Indigenous people through the reduction of social and political power, forced assimilation, religious missionization, land relocation, allotment, and termination policies (Sturm 2017: 343).

Not all migration is considered a diaspora, because forming transborder communities and transnational ties happens over periods of time and requires patterns of movement (Brah 1996: 179; Grossman 2019: 1271; Sheffer 2003: 127–143; Zeleza 2005: 39). There are deeply rooted communities in Lane County, Oregon that have been established through multiple waves of migration from Guatemala and Mexico (as discussed in Chapter I). There are also communities that are being established by more recent patterned migrations, especially from other countries in Central America, which is leading to the formations of new diasporic communities in Oregon. The term Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora also signals that these shared experiences and histories are different than the shared experience of other Indigenous communities from different regions and/or from Indigenous communities not in diaspora; I recognize that that my research collaborators, largely from the Mesoamerica region, do not represent the experiences of all Indigenous peoples around the world. I hope my project also highlights how the stories and testimonies of Latino Communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County are diverse and cannot be analyzed as a homogenized experience.

I choose to use the term Latino communities as a broad term to refer to groups of people who may identify as Latino, Latina, Latinx, Latin@, Chicana, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Guatemalan American because the term Latinos was used the most often when referring to a community or group of people by the those interviewed from Lane County during phase II of the COFS. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish, and some of the other labels that were mentioned were "*hispanos," "la comunidad hispana," "latinas," "la comunidad latina,"* and *"la raza latina;"* the terms Latinx, Mexican American, and Chicano were never used. There probably will never be a consensus on a generic term to refer to these different communities in the U.S. This project was not about the coloniality of Spanish and Latin-based

languages, so I did not ask specifically if they identify with any specific term, nor did I explore why people used some of these in our conversations. I did not want to impose any preconceived label on the participants I was working with, so I chose to use the label that was most used by the participants themselves to identify the communities they feel connected to.

It is still important to understand the historical roots and theoretical arguments for some of these different terms that are being used for people to identify themselves or their communities. It is important to note that people usually do not identify as 'Hispanics' or 'Latinos' outside of the U.S. since these ethnic categories are used to describe a wide range of communities living inside the U.S. Many Mesoamerican communities in diaspora are already racialized[13] in their country of origin from systems created under Spanish colonialism but many individuals from these communities acquire new racialized identities when they arrive to the U.S. (Almaguer 2012: 111). Prior to the late 1960s, people were categorized in the census based on nationality and race; with most of the farmworkers being of Mexican origin, but with the rise in immigration after 1965, there was an increase of populations from other Spanish-speaking countries than Mexico. In the 1970s the federal census, at the direction of the Nixon administration, used the term "Hispanic" to count those of Spanish-speaking descent including

[13] European colonialism and modernity have shaped ideas about natural law, race, and gender that have caused the marginalization and subjugation of Indigenous people and others in relation to Western conceptions of territory, place, the environment, and the body (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 44). Racialization is the processes of creating a racial hierarchal system of inequality that racially identifies people, even if they do not identify themselves as such. Racialization changed the way people were classified and represented and created discrimination towards entire groups of peoples regardless of a person's status or individual achievement. Colonial identities of race, gender, and sexuality created privilege for men who were white and of Western European descent while causing the marginalization of other people that do not fit that category (Quijano 2000; Quijano 2007; Lugones 2007; Brah 2012: 11). The racial conceptions "indios, castizos, negros, mestizos, mulatto, and criollo et al." did not exist before the "modern world-system" (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992: 550). The concept of race in the "modern world-system" derives from the development of *limpieza de sangre* system in 16th century Spain, which allowed only Spanish Catholics to hold the highest positions in society (Butterworth and Chance 1981: 13) and from the formalization of hierarchical racial stratification in the 17th century in colonial "New Spain" by the creation of the racial caste system, *Sistema de Castas* (Carrera 2003: 12). The *Sistema de Castas*, hierarchically categorized people based on their lineage and location of birth (Butterworth and Chance 1981: 21).

those from Spain (Cadava 2020; García 2020: 395). The term "Hispanic" derives from the term *Hispania*, which is the geographical region that later became Spain, and term is used to signal commonality of the Spanish language among people from countries that were formerly ruled by Spain, which includes many countries in North America, Central America South America, the Caribbean (Almaguer 2012: 112; García 2020: 396; Salinas 2015). The term Hispanic refers primarily to the commonality of language, while the term Latino was created to refer to specific geographical regions.

The term 'Latino' refers to people in the U.S. whose roots come from "Latin America" (countries that span Central America, South America, and the Caribbean that were colonized[14] under Spanish, Portuguese, or French rule); the term Latino was popularized by academics and activists in the 1980s to include non-Spanish-speaking groups and countries in Latin America, such as Belize, Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, and Suriname (Cadava, 2020; De Luca and Escoto 2012; Salinas 2015). Since the term Latino is based on geography and not language, the term also refers to people from Latin America who speak Indigenous languages. The U.S. government began using the term Latino in the 2000 census, and since then the term has "not replace[d] Hispanic on the census. Instead, the terms coexist" (García 2020: 397). Some of the critiques of the term Latino is that it is not a gender-inclusive term (Johnston-Guerrero 2016), and even though Latino was created to signify geography, the term is still a reference to European colonization that excludes the contributions of Indigenous populations and cultures

[14] Colonialism is the practice of establishing a colony outside of a country's borders to expand the territory and power of an imperial country. European imperialism and colonialism began in the late 15th century and early 16th century, as colonial powers such as Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, and other western European nations competed to expand their empires to establish colonial territory (Olmos and Paravisini-Gerbert 2011: 20; Chasteen 2001: 45). Colonial rule relies on power dynamics so the colony can exert control over Indigenous people for exploitative purposes such as labor, resource extraction, taxation, and the acquisition of territory. The establishment of colonial territory inevitably caused a clash of conflicting ideologies between European colonialism against local forms of societal organization, territory, economy, religion, kinship, and knowledge.

(García 2020: 396). I recognize that using terms like Latino communities and Latinos to refer to groups of people composed of different genders can create an otherness that prioritizes masculinity since the term Latino ends in the masculine 'o' form in Spanish. However, it is important to note that Spanish and Latin-based languages are gendered languages, unlike English, and "according to the grammatical rules of Spanish, the term "Latinos" is intended to be an all-inclusive in terms of gender" (Guerra and Orbea 2015).

In response to critiques of the gendered nature of term Latino, there have been academics and activists who have advocated to use the term Latinx to be more inclusive (García 2020: 398). The concept of Latinx was theorized in academic spaces and the term has been adopted primarily by community-based organizations and community activists who are being inclusive in their outreach; queer communities that want to recognize trans individuals and non-binary gender identities; by young adults who want identify themselves and form community in a non-gendered way; and by universities through formalization of Latinx student groups, Latinx studies, and the use of Latinx on their websites (García 2020: 395-398; Salinas 2019: 305-313). A critique of the term Latinx is that the adoption of the word is largely coming from English speakers or U.S. academics imposing on Spanish speakers, deeply rooted communities, and recent migrants about a correct way to identify, and by ostracizing those who do not adopt it as being exclusionary. The term is not used in Latin American communities, and it did not originate from any language used in Latin America, so the term can be a barrier for those who do not know how to pronounce it (Guerra and Orbea 2015; De León 2018). Even though there are good intentions for the term Latinx, I did not use the term because according to a study from data collected in 2019 by the Pew Research Center, only about 3% of the 3,030 "Hispanic Adults" across the U.S. and Puerto Rico who were sampled, identify as Latinx, and revealed that those "who are predominantly

English speakers or bilingual are more likely than those who mainly speak Spanish" (Noe-Bustamante, Mora, and Hugo Lopez 2020: 7). Similarly, a Gallup poll from 2021 with 302 "Hispanic adults" participants, reported that about 4% preferred the term Latinx being generally used. (McCarthy and DuPreé 2021). To reiterate I did not use the term Latinx to refer to communities I was working with because none of my research collaborators used that word to describe themselves or their communities, and I did not want to impose a term that is not being used amongst my participants.

Research Methods

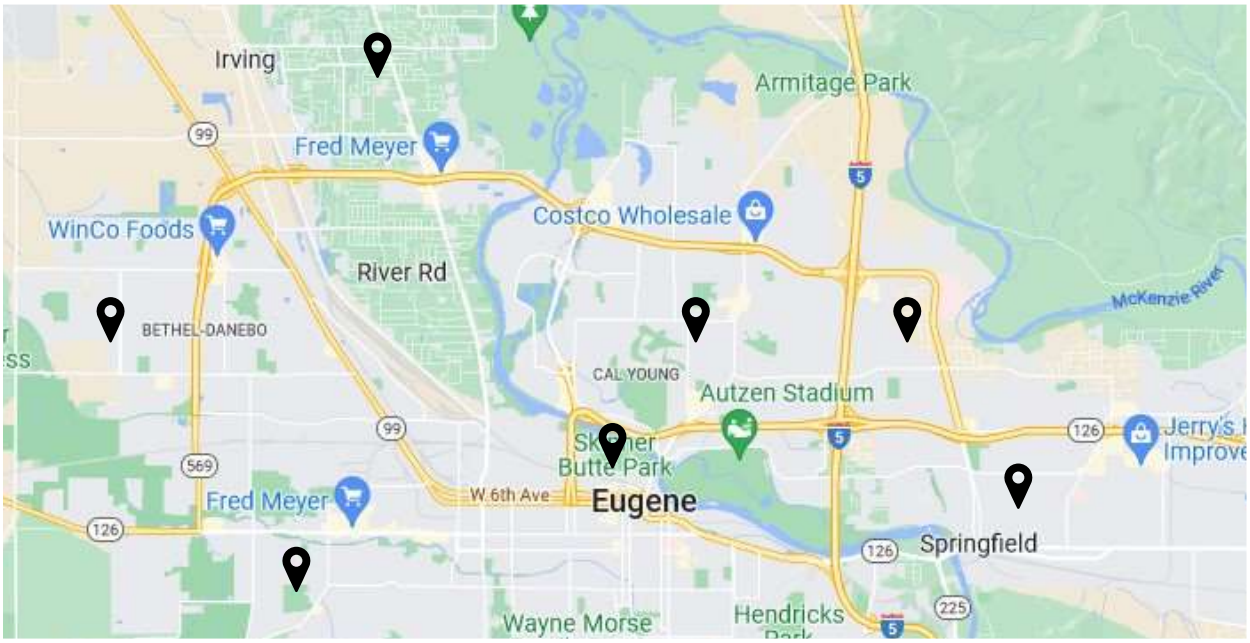
I collaborated with HDLF as a volunteer before I even wrote an IRB or pitched the project, and I became a community member at the garden myself before starting fieldwork. In my initial planning meetings with HDLF staff, they provided intentional advice on how to do things with them as an organization, and they wanted me to know how my relationship with members could impact the trust that has developed between the organization and the community. My dissertation was approved by the University of Oregon Research Compliance Services on May 19, 2019, under IRB Protocol Number: 05092019.011. In this dissertation, I strive to allow people to represent themselves through the sharing of narratives, and letting their words speak to readers. I use narratives from people who identify as being from a Mesoamerican Indigenous community and from people who identify as being part of Latino communities in Lane County between 2019-2021 to provide a glimpse of how these transborder communities originally from Mexico and Guatemala are providing care on an individual, family and community level; how they conceptualize their well-being, material, and spiritual worlds through community gardening; and how these notions are not monolithic. Of course, I have mediated their words and put them in the context of this dissertation, but this narrative form is inspired by how testimony has helped

silenced groups to express themselves. Anthropologist Lynn Stephen writes, “Testimony and rights claiming permit silenced groups to speak and to be heard, to enact alternative visions for political and cultural participation, and to formulate new, hybrid forms of identity…. These identities become shared in specific times and places by a group of individuals and can sometimes help to create new cultures that influence how to do politics, defend rights, and engage with the state (Stephen 2013: 2-3). Narratives drawn from interviews also focus on the multiple challenges people faced with COVID-19, their economic, physical, and mental health obstacles as well as the ongoing suffering and trauma that came with getting COVID-19 and recovering and caring for others with COVID-19. Caretaking in these communities came to have additional meaning in 2020 and 2021 as people continued to work and live during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Primary data sources for this project include textual data produced from field notes and journal entries that I wrote during extensive participant observation, transcripts of semi-structured interviews that I conducted, notes from conversational interviews, photographs of the field site and of community events, recordings of keynote speakers at community events, notes from focus group discussions hosted by the organization’s staff, testimonies from community members in public forums, annual demographic intake surveys collected from HDLF, and comprehensive surveys and semi-structured interviews from the COFS. **Figure 2** shows the field sites where I conducted in-person fieldwork. It is important to note that the seventh garden site, one of the sites in Springfield, is no longer in operation because in 2021 the organization that lent out the space decided to repurpose their outdoor area and ended the collaboration of operating a community garden with HDLF. In response to losing a garden site and the growing need of more

garden spaces in Springfield, HDLF in 2022 has ongoing plans to open a second Springfield location through a collaboration with the Willamalane Park and Recreation District.

Figure 2. Map of Lane County with approximate locations of my field sites at seven community gardens operated by HDLF.



During 2020, I collaborated as a data analyst for Phase I of the COFS. The study research team conducted 300 phone surveys with farmworkers from all regions of the state. In 2021, I collaborated as an interviewer for Phase II of the study. From February to May 2021 the COFS research team carried out 48 in-depth qualitative interviews over the phone and in person that focused on topics of individual and family well-being, food insecurity, and the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a researcher collaborator and analyst, I have access to the data, n=300 surveys and n=48 semi-structured interviews, we collected and the sharing of this data in my dissertation complies according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that I signed before joining the project. The COFS project was covered by IRB approval from Advarra (formerly known as IntegReview), and the University of Oregon recognized the authority of the IRB submitted by the California Institute for Rural Studies; IRB Protocol Number: CV-19 2020

covered Phase I of the research study; IRB Protocol Number: COFS P2 covered Phase II of the research study.

The COFS is a collaborative research project with social science researchers and 12 farmworker-serving community-based organizations: Bienestar, Casa of Oregon, Centro Cultural de Washington County, Columbia Riverkeepers, Farmworker Human Development Corporation, Huerto de La Familia, Legal Aid Services of Oregon, Oregon Law Center, Euvalcree, Oregon Human Development Corporation, Unete Center for Farmworker and Immigrant Advocacy, and Unidos Bridging Community. Phase I research in Oregon was led by Doctoral Candidate Jennifer Martinez-Medina, Dr. Lynn Stephen, Dr. Ron Mize, Dr. Gabriela Perez-Baez, Dr. Carlos Crespo, Dr. Don Villarejo, and Dr. Sarah Ramirez in partnership with a team of many individuals from the partner community-based organizations: Bayoan Ware, Rosie Andalon, Eddie Sepeda, Antonio Garcia, Luis Rivas, Angelica Corona, Edvia Pablo Lorenzo, Dolores Martinez, Maria D. Morales Donahue, Florinda Herrera, Maricela Rocha, Josefina Cruz, Martha Perez, Lupita Ramos, Minerva Vazquez, Maria Teresa Amador, Anna Tavera Weller, Olga Bautista, Cecilia Alonso, Silvia Munoz, Azanet Hayden, Marcelina Martinez, Enrique Santos, Valentin Sanchez, Julie Samples, Dagoberto Morales, Jaime Flores, Peter Hainley, Kathy Keese, Nathan Teske, Maria E. Guerra, Maria Caballero-Rubio, Jonath Colon, Miriam Vargas Corona, Laurie Hoefer, Martin Campos-Davis, Gustavo Morales, Ubaldo Hernandez, Reyna López, and Ira Cuello-Martinez. Phase II research in Oregon was led by Jennifer Martinez-Medina, Doctoral Candidate, Dr. Lynn Stephen, Dr. Ron Mize, Dr. Gabriela Perez-Baez in partnership with a team of community researchers; Anabel Hernandez-Mejia, Anna Weller, Briseida Bolaños, Dagoberto Morales, Dolores Martinez, Helen Palavecino, Kari Mora, Sandra Martin, Valentin Sanchez, and me. Some of the research collaborators in the COFS project have previous

experiences doing farm work themselves and speaking Indigenous languages, which enlightened the conversations we had during our weekly and monthly team Zoom meetings. Every step along the way—from creating survey questions, getting feedback on final reports from community-based organizations, the content and choreography of press releases and public presentations, and plans for how to disseminate the data—was collaborative. Casa of Oregon served as the fiscal sponsor, and the project has been funded by Meyer Memorial Trust, the Oregon Community Foundation, University of Oregon, and during Phase II also the Ford Family Foundation and Ecotrust. Being a part of this collaborative research process and working as a data analyst not only provided me with a rich archive of information, but also widened my perspective on the context for my own fieldwork and how to analyze it.

Data I used from secondary sources include peer-reviewed articles, academic books, newspaper articles, government records, historical records, and documentaries. For the secondary sources I examined breaking news articles (primarily from Oregon) related to farmworkers, food processing, food insecurity, and food systems in relation to COVID-19; I examined federal and state level executive orders, responses from Lane County, the City of Eugene, and the City of Springfield. I reviewed historical documents about past pandemics, migration history to Oregon, labor and organizing history of farmworkers, and the growth of Latino communities in Oregon. I also explored anthropological theories about immigration, food justice, foodways, cultural preservation, well-being, kin work, and carework.

Detailed individual narratives and accounts are based on ten people, n=10, who are from a Mesoamerican Indigenous community or a Latino community in Lane County, Oregon. Six of the accounts are from people who are members of the HDLF community garden. I conducted semi-structured interviews in collaboration with the COFS with four of six of these HDLF

garden members since they also work in the food and agriculture industry and were personally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These four interviews in Lane County with members of HDLF were important for the COFS project since the Lane County region had little representation during the first phase of the study. Two of the ethnographic accounts of members at community gardens were based on a series of conversational interviews. Four of the other key informants are from agricultural workers in Lane County who participated in COFS and were interviewed by Karina Mora, another research collaborator from the COFS research team. See **Figure 3** and **Appendix A** for the list of conversational and semi-structured interviews that are cited in this dissertation. In addition, during my participant observations, I had dozens of conversational interviews, but since these conversations are not directly referenced in this dissertation in relation to a particular person, they are not included in the table below of the appendix.

During the first year of fieldwork in 2019, I was primarily concerned with building rapport and did not record the audio of any of the conversations I had. I did not audio record my conversations because I wanted to gain trust with the communities I worked with before I asked for recorded conversations and contact information. Instead, I would write my field notes once an event was over, and I had time to reflect. There were many moments where people expressed their excitement sharing with me knowledge and stories from their hometown in relation to the different plants that sparked the conversations, but my fieldnotes that were written after the conversation could not capture the excitement and all the details of what was shared. Little did I know, in 2020 and 2021 due to research restrictions and safety precautions from the pandemic that I would rarely get to have opportunities to have regular conversations like this, so I truly wish I could have captured more of those special moments.

Figure 3. Table of in-depth ethnographic interviews cited in this dissertation

Interviewee	Gender	Place of Origin	Interview Type	Interviewer	Date
Alberto	Male	Mexico (region not specified)	COFS Telephone Interview	Timothy Herrera	2/20/2021
Antonia	Female	Oaxaca, MX	Focus Group Discussion	HDLF Staff	9/20/2019
Blanca	Female	Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Karina Mora	6/25/2021
Chuy	Male	State of Mexico, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Timothy Herrera	5/7/2021
Elena	Female	Michoacán, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Karina Mora	4/22/2021
Felipe	Male	Mexico D.F., MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Timothy Herrera	5/5/2021
Mariana	Female	Zinapécuaro, Michoacán, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Karina Mora	5/1/2021
Patti	Female	Astacinga, Veracruz, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Timothy Herrera	2/28/2021
Pedro	Male	Zinapécuaro, Michoacán, MX	COFS Telephone Interview	Karina Mora	5/9/2021
Tomas	Male	United States, (region not specified)	Series of Conversational Interviews	Timothy Herrera	2019-2021

Since I am proficient in Spanish, I did not need any translators for any of the interviews or interactions I had with garden members. For conversational interviews, I received informed consent verbally, following the protocols under the Common Rule for research that poses minimal or no risk, before jotting down fieldnotes. Documentation of consent is not required if

the only record linking the subject to the research is the consent form and the principal risk would be a breach of confidentiality. Storing signed consent forms or documents with identifiable information for any period, creates a risk of a breach of confidentiality. For interviews over the phone that were recorded, I received verbal consent about their voluntary participation and about agreeing to being recorded before the interview.

For the semi-structured interviews that were conducted in collaboration with COFS Phase II, the participants were screened by HDLF staff to ensure all participants fall within the parameters of the COFS. See **Appendix B** to view the core set of questions I asked in the semi-structured interviews for the COFS. I used a combination of demographic information revealed during qualitative interviews from phase two of the COFS, demographic information revealed during conversational interviews, and from data collected from the HDLF yearly intake surveys from 2018 to 2021 to understand the demographics at my field sites. To ensure I am representing diverse perspectives and positionalities, I took into consideration age, gender, ethnicity, employment, duration as garden members, and other factors when I would go around talking to people at the different garden sites to ensure I was getting different viewpoints and backgrounds.

Between June 2019-September 2021, I conducted participant observation over three agricultural seasons by maintaining my own garden plot at one of organization's community garden sites. The garden plot, which I manage with the help of my wife, is located directly at the entrance of one the community garden sites, which gave me the opportunity to greet every person and allowed me to interact with as many community members as possible while I did garden activities in my own plot. This was important for interacting with people I have not yet met, and for making my presence familiar, which helped grow trust with garden members. In 2019, I focused on making my presence known and building rapport with families from the

different garden sites. Volunteer workdays and community events were a great opportunity to interact with people who I do not get to see often. I introduced my project in March of 2019 to the new member orientation, called *Siembra La Cena*, at the Catholic Community Center in Springfield, to get feedback from members and for the organization's staff to gauge the reception from its members before they granted the final approval to allow me to conduct ethnographic fieldwork at their garden sites. Once I officially began fieldwork in 2019, some events that summer that allowed me to network with members from different garden sites were a documentary screening with a potluck hosted at the Methodist Church in Eugene, a Latino cultural celebration called *Nuestras Raices y El Arte* featuring art from garden members at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, and the *Fiesta de la Cosecha* community celebration.

Research Timeline

In June 2019, when I first began fieldwork, I attended two HDLF Events, a documentary film screening with a focus group discussion and a cultural celebration featuring art from HDLF members at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. On July 11, the organization hosted a potluck and a screening of "*Semillas ¿Bien común o propiedad corporativa*?" (Seeds: Collective property or corporate property?) created by *El Colectivo de Semillas de América Latina*. The documentary screening was held at a local church's event room and the focus group afterwards resulted in a discussion about seed preservation, genetically modified food, organic garden practices, and community seed banking models that currently exist around the world. On July 20, 2019, HDLF hosted an event at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art that celebrated the important contributions of local Latino artists, musicians, and performers at the University of Oregon. This museum event was titled, "*Nuestras Raíces y El Arte*" (Our Roots and Art), and one of the flyers can be seen in **Figure 4**. The event consisted of storytelling in Spanish, a

discussion with local artists Ofelia Guzmán and Esteban Camacho Steffensen, a ballet folklórico performance, a musical performance by Malanga, and artwork and photography from some of the garden members. **Figure 5** displays mural painted by Esteban Camacho Steffensen in collaboration with a school district to be gifted to HDLF.

Figure 4. Flyer for the "*Nuestras Raíces y El Arte*" museum event at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) at the University of Oregon

Figure 5. A mural painted by local artist Esteban Camacho Steffensen that was gifted to HDLF. Photo taken while it was on display at the JSMA in 2019.

HDLF offered a salsa canning workshop on Saturday, August 3, 2019, that was taught by Miralda from Michoacán, one of the garden members. The event was held in a church's event room and kitchen, which allowed the participants to get a hands-on canning demonstration. Miralda taught everyone a recipe for a large batch of salsa, basic food safety concerns with home

canning, and freezing as another food preservation method to preserve the harvest. One of the other *talleres* that I attended was held at one of the gardens on August 17, and the guest speaker Bella, a Colombian seed farmer, taught about how to save seeds, how preservations methods differ with certain types of plants, and the biology of plant reproduction. September 7, 2019 was HDLF's 2nd annual Fiesta de la Cosecha, the harvest celebration; I described this event in detail in the introduction chapter. The other event on September 21, 2019 was focused on winter gardening, with a guest speaker from Food for Lane County; there was a workshop about extending the growing season, the benefits of cover crops, and how to do winter gardening in Lane County. Like all the other workshops, it was taught fully in Spanish.

COVID-19 Impacts on Research

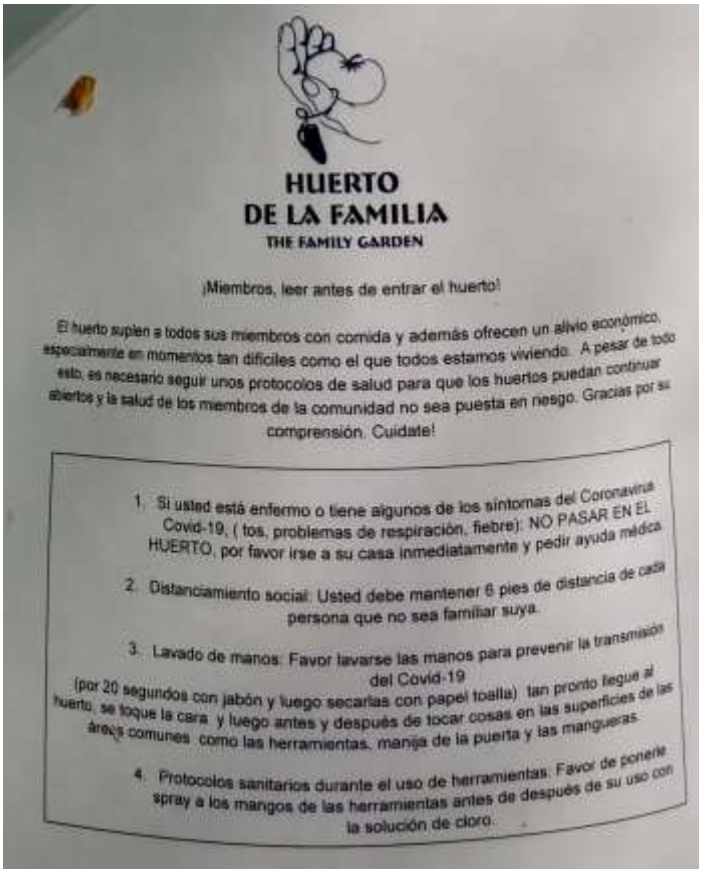
The impact of the pandemic on my project occurred in the middle of research process; I was able to conduct preliminary fieldwork before the pandemic, but a large part of my proposed research was not feasible after the spread of the virus occurred. I defended my dissertation prospectus on March 13, 2020 and even though the Oregon governor had not yet declared the stay-at-home executive order, one of my committee members was being proactive and attended my prospectus defense virtually to practice the CDC social distancing guidelines that were announced shortly after the initial outbreak in New York City. Therefore, the notion of changing circumstances really stood out to me during my ethnographic fieldwork. There were so many adjustments and adaptions we all had to make to survive and to keep others safe. The whole world changed, and so far, it seems society will never return to the "normal" that people were accustomed to pre-pandemic.

Due to COVID-19 safety risks, government mandates, and research restrictions from the University of Oregon, I was largely not able to attend any in person activities or conduct in-

person participant observation from March of 2020 to February 2021. It is important to remember that in 2020 the Alpha and Beta variants of COVID-19 were spreading widely, and no vaccines had been authorized for use. Research Stage 0.5, Stage 1, and Stage 2 from the University required me to systematically keep track online or electronically of research participants who I interact with in-person, for the purposes of contact tracing, but this type of recordkeeping greatly limits the confidentiality of participants, since I would be required to give this data to state health officials if requested. Since many people at the garden have varying immigration statuses and are at-risk populations, I did not feel comfortable compiling any contact tracing information that may cause issues regarding confidentiality of the participants in this project, so I did not do any participant observation during these research phases. In 2020 HDLF did not have any in-person events due to COVID-19 and had their own guidelines that their members must follow while using the community gardens; in **Figure 6** below, you can see an example of some of the signage of their safety rules and guidelines that was placed in every community garden.

There were four guidelines that the organization wanted the members to follow. The English translations of those recommendations are 1) If you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, trouble breathing, fever): DO NOT ENTER THE COMMUNITY GARDEN, please go home immediately and ask for medical assistance. 2) Social Distance: You should maintain six feet of distance between each person who is not in your family. 3) Wash your hands: Please wash your hands to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. 4) Sanitary protocols regarding the use of tools: please spray the handles of the tools before and after use with a bleach solution.

Figure 6. HDLF COVID-19 signage that was posted at one of the garden sites.



I still maintained my garden plot since I use it to grow organic culturally relevant food for myself. However, I would go early in the morning at the break of dawn or late in the evening during sunset to sow, water, weed, and harvest to prevent interactions with research participants (gardening helped me with my stress and depression during the pandemic but being at the garden early or late prevented me from seeing people and was not as beneficial as a cultural and social experience as the first year of my fieldwork, since gardening in isolation is contradictory to the purpose of a community garden). I followed all the recommended guidelines from the CDC, OHA, the University of Oregon, and HDLF while gardening to maintain my own food security.

Even though I lost over a year of in-person ethnographic participant observation, I had the opportunity to I collaborate as a data analyst for Phase 1 of the COFS beginning in the

summer of 2020. I draw upon data from Phase I (2021) and Phase II (2022) published reports of the COFS to understand how the pandemic is impacting Latino communities in Oregon in general. In Phase I, the research team conducted a survey of 300 farmworkers, n=300, focused on labor, health, homelife, and emotional and health challenges regarding COVID-19. Participants were screened and selected by the partner community-based organizations because they already knew the people and have established trust with these populations. I use these three hundred phone surveys with farmworkers throughout Oregon between August 1 and September 30, 2020, to help frame my findings, and it gave me unique insights during the pandemic of the differences and similarities in some of the responses despite being in different geographical regions of the state or in different types of agricultural sectors. The survey sample is designed to be representative of industry specific characteristics, such as employer type and a mix of both on-farm and non-farm agricultural employment—forestry and support services, fishing, and fresh packers. Demographic considerations include gender, age, length of settlement, and indigeneity. These unique insights into the survey data helped me realize that discussions about care, carework, and foodways may differ based on the different perspectives and relationships workers have with food systems and the environment. Farmworker participants were given two $25 incentives for a total of $50. A limitation of the Phase I survey is that we were not able to capture the experiences of farmworkers who do not receive services from the partner organizations in the COFS project, which indicates they are likely more vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Martinez et al. 2021).

In January 2021 I continued my collaboration with the COFS for the second phase of the project, which focused on conducting 48 in-depth qualitative interviews over the phone to record people's narratives about topics of individual and family well-being, food insecurity, the ongoing

effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 prevention in the workplace, housing conditions, challenges in the home, access to health care and mental health, and economic challenges (Martinez et al. 2022). The participants were selected by the partnering organization and the researchers who helped identify regions that were underrepresented in the Phase I survey. These interviews also covered the impact of smoke, wildfires, and other climate issues that impact workers. I conducted interviews in Lane County with members from HDLF since this region had little representation during the first phase of the study. Four people from HDLF participated in Phase II of the COFS since they are food and agricultural workers. I draw upon these four interviews that I conducted and from four other interviews with agricultural workers in Lane County conducted by Karina Mora, a researcher with the COFS team, to explore in detail their narratives of how they are affected by the pandemic, by the wildfires, and their survival strategies.

In 2021, after the COVID-19 vaccine became available to all adults, HDLF was able to offer some educational *talleres* (workshops). On April 17 there was an outdoor volunteer event, which followed all Oregon OHA and CDC guidelines for outdoor gathering, for garden members to catch up on the work that was not able to get done because of restrictions of the pandemic. By this time most of the staff had received their first dose of the vaccine, I had already received my first dose three weeks prior, and HDLF used this event as an opportunity to get members signed up for appointments to get the vaccine. There were tamales and horchata for the volunteers provided by Guadalupe, one of the garden members.

Since I was fully vaccinated in April 2021, I was able to safely resume in-person ethnographic participant observation three weeks after my second vaccine dose. Between June and August of 2021, I attended multiple workshops, volunteered at a vaccine clinic, and

volunteered at work parties for garden maintenance and the construction of a greenhouse. The workshops, the vaccine clinic, and the volunteer events that I attended were all hosted outdoors. The first actual *taller* at HDLF since the pandemic was a kombucha and kefir fermentation *taller* held outdoors in one of the gardens on June 12, 2019, led by Christian and Estrella, a married couple. On June 19, 2021, I volunteered at a vaccine and testing clinic that was held in collaboration between Centro Latino Americano, HDLF, the Bethel school district, and Lane County Public Health. All the information was available in Spanish and English, there were tamales for people getting tested or a vaccine, and gift cards for completing a survey that gauged how well people understand COVID-19 best practices for prevention and exposure limitation. The volunteer work I did in the community with HDLF helped shape my project and understanding of community care and community health. I gained first-hand knowledge about how community-based organizations collaborate with governmental agencies and academic researchers to provide essential services, gather data to inform the needs in the community, and disseminate information related to the COVID-19 virus and the vaccine.

On July 13, 2021, Research Stage 3 was implemented at the University of Oregon, which still required me to follow all OHA, OSHA, CDC, and University of Oregon policies on COVID-19 infection prevention and control. However, I no longer needed to keep a record for contact tracing. I attended workshops at HDLF that included the topics of tomato canning, about making kefir and kombucha, and about soil health. The other *talleres* I attended were tomato and salsa canning demonstrations on July 31 led by Keke, a garden member, and August 22 led by a different garden member, Oralia from Guatemala. They had two events that were the same since HDLF reduced the capacity of people allowed to attend for COVID-19 safety precautions and to maintain safe social distance. With the spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19, I ceased in-

person research activities by the end of August, not wanting to put to the communities I work with at risk and because HDLF also cancelled the *Fiesta de la Cosecha* event that was scheduled for the end of summer. In September 2021, when I stopped conducting fieldwork, there were still continuous societal changes happening because of the Delta COVID-19 variant, low vaccination rates in parts of the county, and more extreme weather events occurring nationwide.

I found it important, before embarking on fieldwork, to make a self-care plan. By making a self-care plan, I planned to prevent experiencing burn out, to prevent being exposed to unsafe situations, and to care for my health. To take care of my emotional well-being, I took breaks from research-related pursuits on Sundays and whenever I felt like I need an extra day off. During my breaks I would go hiking, go on dates with my wife, walk my dog, and call family members. To maximize my personal safety, I limited outings after dark; I abstained from drinking alcohol with interlocutors; I sent location updates to my partner when I was traveling between garden locations; and I avoided interactions with people under the influence, especially while I was commuting by bike or use public transportation. To take care of my physical health, I tried to exercise regularly by weightlifting, swimming, playing sports, biking, and doing yoga. Despite my best intentions of following this self-care plan, the pandemic took a large toll on me mentally, physically, and emotionally while I was in the middle of my research.

Doing fieldwork in the pandemic is a unique experience. I suffered depression, anxiety, chronic stress, poor sleep, and weight gain during the pandemic. It is hard and lonely being a researcher, having to be isolated in a one-bedroom apartment, not being able to travel to see family who live in other states, and having to deal with personal issues remotely. I lived with fear of exposure to the virus, especially since according to CDC data people who identify as Latino or Hispanic (which I do) are getting infected, hospitalized, and dying at much higher rates

than people who identify as “White, Non-Hispanic.” My stress and anxiety also stemmed from anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies, detention at the border, increased deportation, police violence against Black communities, and rising hate crimes against Asian communities. I also experienced bouts of hives and headaches from longtime exposure to the smoke from the wildfires, which were in multiple locations in Oregon in September of 2020 and again in the summer of 2021. My experience is not uncommon, studies with graduate students have revealed that they are six times more likely than the general population to suffer from anxiety and depression (Fletcher et al. 2022). Graduate students, adjunct faculty members, lecturers, and those navigating a precarious job market often have issues that are exacerbated or elicited by the stressful conditions of graduate school, finding employment, and the uncertainty of adjunct positions, while navigating the rising cost of living, caregiving responsibilities, and leaving their familial or social support systems to attend school or find employment (Fletcher et al. 2022; Flaherty 2018; Harris 2019; Shaw and Ward 2014). Despite these hardships, I found inspiration and gained hope from the narratives of people caring for each other as families and communities, and from my collaboration with the COFS research team, which allowed me work closely with Latino community leaders who are directly responding to these challenges in Oregon communities. The experiences over the time of my fieldwork made me feel more connected to local Latino communities throughout Oregon and made me feel encouraged for a future that will be more equitable to all.

CHAPTER III

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND CHALLENGES FOR LATINO AND MESOAMERICAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The coronavirus pandemic became reality for most people living in the U.S. in March of 2020. This chapter illustrates the unique challenges that stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic faced by Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities in Lane County, Oregon. Almost all the participants that I interviewed or conversed with regularly, discussed how the changing circumstances have caused some sort of suffering and turmoil in various aspects of their lives. I document how extreme weather concurrent with the pandemic affects health, increases economic uncertainty, and creates housing and family life challenges in Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities of Lane County. Here I show through my ethnographic work, including observations, interviews, and other interactions, how my research participants navigated these challenges. Many people expected to adjust their lives for only a few weeks to possibly a few months. No one could have predicted that people would need to lockdown for over a year until they were able to get vaccinated, and no one expected the virus to keep mutating to become more infectious, even in vaccinated populations. The pandemic caused me to change how I was able to interact with people at HDLF and how I collected ethnographic data and caused me to modify the scope of my proposed research project. The changing circumstances that have arisen so far from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the danger of the virus itself, financial instability, job insecurity, and vaccine availability have greatly affected workers from Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County, Oregon. Responses to these changing circumstances I have documented make it evident that stress has been proliferating in my interlocutors' lives as they manage ongoing uncertainty.

COVID-19, Loss of Work, Income, and Cascading Consequences

To begin the discussion about the impacts from COVID-19 on Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities, I want to highlight the experiences of Alberto, a 44-year-old garden member at HDLF who works in salmon processing. I conducted his interview for the qualitative Phase II of the COFS. His story demonstrates the many ways that COVID-19 impacted him and his family. Our interview occurred on February 20, 2021, and revealed how Alberto's experiences reflect what many other workers in the food and agriculture industry who are considered part of a Latino community have gone through—including loss of work, financial stress, exposure to COVID-19, anxiety, and worrying about family in their home communities outside of the U.S.

Alberto lost over a month of work from government-sanctioned stay-at-home policies at the beginning of the pandemic. When his worksite reopened, his scheduled hours were reduced, and he lost additional work time when he had to quarantine. These unfortunate events greatly impacted Alberto wages and thus his family's finances. Latino communities in the U.S were disproportionately affected economically during the pandemic because ongoing economic and social inequalities were only intensified during the time of the global COVID-19 pandemic. During Phase 1 of COFS it was reported that most respondents reported difficulties paying for basic expenses: 59% for food, 60% for rent; 59% for gas and electricity, 28% for water, and 16% for childcare costs (Martinez et. al. 2021: 16). By analyzing the responses of Indigenous farmworkers, it was revealed they faced economic challenges at higher rates; 71% had difficulty paying rent, 69% for food, and 68% for gas and electricity (Martinez et. al. 2021: 16). Labor conditions became even more precarious during the pandemic and lost hours made it very difficult for workers to be able to financially provide for their families.

One of the biggest challenges for many was the strong possibility that they could get COVID-19 at work. The Phase II report of the COFS project found that of 48 workers interviewed, 52% tested positive for COVID-19 and most reported that they had multiple family members, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances who were infected (Martinez et. al. 2022: 21). Just by taking a quick glance at the symptoms of COVID-19 it is easy to understand why so many people are fearful of the coronavirus. According to data collected by the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, anxiety, depression, cognitive issues, and brain damage; and in more severe cases pneumonia, chronic side effects, and death can also result from infection of COVID-19 (CDC 2020; Frontera et al. 2021; Davis et al. 2021). These symptoms are well known, and people are constantly worrying about any sign of them. Fish processing plants, such as the one Alberto works at, often have workers laboring close together on an assembly line. Social distancing is not always possible. Alberto worried about getting infected with COVID-19 from his coworkers, since they may get infected outside the workplace and put others at the work site at risk:

> *En el trabajo no tengo tanta preocupación porque como le digo, yo sé que ahí está limpio, bastante limpio. La preocupación de que pues ya como alguna otra persona, algún compañero que se vaya a contagiar afuera y vaya a trabajar y que por medio de ellos se contagie uno, ¿me entiende? Ese es mi miedo y mi preocupación* (Alberto 2021).
>
> At work I don't have too much worry about, because as I was saying, I know it is clean there. The concern that I have is that some other person, some colleague, who is going to be infected outside of work and go to work and infect others. Do you understand me? That's my fear and my worry (Alberto 2021).

Alberto, like many workers, made sure to take all the necessary precautions to prevent infection such as using a mask, trying to stick to social distancing, and limiting time outside the house. There are, however, many factors outside of his control. This is consistent with the COFS Phase I findings that farmworkers and food processors regularly take precautions at home and work as much as possible (Martinez et al. 2021: 1). Alberto emphasized how he does not feel fully protected at work, even though his company is regularly disinfecting and providing masks.

> *Una vez si me sentí que no estaba protegido porque un muchacho nuevo, como de 19 años que recién entró nuevo a trabajar, salió positivo al virus y pues, yo me sentí… tenía mucho miedo de que me pudiera haber contagiado, pero pues no. En ese tiempo si sentí mucho miedo. Yo allí me sentí que no estaba protegido porque no me haya contagiado, pero no, gracias a Dios que no* (Alberto 2021).
>
> Once I felt that I was not protected because a new young employee, about 19 years old, tested positive for the virus and well, I felt I was very afraid that I might have been infected. But no, I wasn't. At that time, I did feel very afraid. I felt that I was not protected there [at work] because I might be infected, but no, thank God I was not (Alberto 2021).

Alberto felt that he did not get enough support from his employer. In the example of the recently hired young worker who tested positive for COVID-19, Alberto mentioned how the individual did not get paid sick time while he recovered from his infection. The COFS Phase I study documented how "because of [farmworkers and other food workers] living and working circumstances and lack of insurance, farmworkers [and other food workers] encounter barriers to COVID-19 testing and care, the ability to quarantine, and benefits to support them if they do get sick despite reporting exposure to COVID-19" (Martinez et al. 2021: 1). Alberto was exposed at

work from that coworker and had another exposure incident from the family members in his household, however like his co-worker, he was not paid for the time spent quarantined after his exposure even though he reported the situation to his supervisors:

> *No, el patrón no paga cuando uno se enferma así. Porque mi hermana y mi mamá también se enfermaron y pues, yo vivo con ellas. Y pues, yo me tuve que quedar también por la cuarentena, y entonces pues no, tampoco me pagó. Yo le dije a mi patrón sobre eso, pero dijo que no, que él no tenía la orden. No sé cómo explicarle a usted como me explicó él, pero que él no estaba obligado a pagar por eso* (Alberto 2021).
>
> No, the employer does not pay when one gets sick. Because my sister and my mom also got sick and well, I live with them. I had to stay home also to quarantine, and well he [my employer] didn't pay me either. I told my employer about it, but he said no, he didn't have the order. I don't know how to explain to you how he explained to me, but he said that he wasn't obligated to pay for it (Alberto 2021).

Alberto needed to stay at a hotel when his sister and mom tested positive for the virus since he lives with them, and he did not want to potentially spread the virus at work. He mentioned how he feared testing positive from a workplace incident, so he wanted to take the necessary precautions so he himself was not the cause of a workplace incident. During our interview, there was no mention of how much the hotel costs, but I can infer that it was financially difficult since we discussed the impact of losing work for Alberto's family. Alberto was able to get by financially because he utilized financial assistance for rent and got food from local community-based organizations. He was tested for COVID-19 after the second exposure incident and felt fortunate that the test was negative and that he did not get sick from either exposure incident.

Cuando el muchacho salió positivo en mi trabajo, obvio yo tenía miedo de haberme contagiado, entonces yo fui a hacerme la prueba y gracias a Dios, como le digo, salí negativo. Como le digo, en diciembre del año pasado mi hermana y mi mamá se contagiaron también, y pues yo vivo aquí con ellas. Entonces, pues, también estaba con mucho pánico, mucho miedo y pues, lo que hice yo me fui a un hotel, me quedé allá y fui y me hice también el examen para ver si no me había infectado también, y gracias a Dios salió negativo, no me infecté (Alberto 2021).

When the young man came out positive at my job, obviously I was afraid of having been infected, so I went to get tested and thank God, as I say, I came out negative. As I said, in December of last year, my sister and my mother were infected too, and I live here with them. So, well, I was also very panicked, very afraid, and well, what I did is I went to a hotel. I stayed there. I also had the [COVID] test to see if I had been infected too and thank God it came out negative. I did not get infected (Alberto 2021).

Alberto's sister had lost work during the pandemic and was unemployed at the time of the interview. She had also got infected with COVID-19 and recovered while quarantining at home. Alberto's household finances were strained not only from losing work opportunities, but because he needed to save for his niece's surgery; the doctors discovered a tumor on her leg that needed to be removed. In addition, Alberto's mother has diabetes, which put her at extra risk of complications when she was ill with COVID-19. She worries about getting reinfected again and how it might be worse the second time around. Thus, he lives with two medically vulnerable people in a household where two people were infected with COVID-19.

Ahorita pues, también [*mi hermana] tiene su niña enferma. Que se la van a operar como le salió un tumor en su rodillita y tienen que operarla, Pues* [*mi hermana] va a dejar*

también de trabajar. Entonces va a ser ahorita más difícil porque pues me va a tocar ayudarla un poco a ella también (Alberto 2021).

Right now, my sister's daughter is ill. She is going to have surgery as a tumor came out in her knee and they must operate on it. My sister is going to need to stop working. It is going to be more difficult right now because I'm going to have to help her a little bit too (Alberto 2021).

This challenging situation has resulted in considerable anxiety for Alberto. Fortunately, Alberto was able to find some mental health support during this period through prescription management, which is important to note since only 6% of participants in the COFS Phase I reported receiving some level of mental health support while 82% of farmworkers interviewed reported having no access to mental health services (Martinez et al. 2021: 14). He did not share with me if he received or had access to any kind of counseling as part of his anxiety management. Alberto manages his anxiety with a combination of prescription medications and spending time at the garden to clear his mind:

Entonces, yo tengo como dos años que estoy tomando las pastillas para la ansiedad [y] cuando me siento con el miedo y todo eso. Yo siento que la medicina que me estoy tomando ahorita, que es la que me ayuda. Me da miedo cuando lo pienso [de COVID-19], pero la medicina pues es para calmar la ansiedad. Entonces, yo creo que ahorita la medicina me está ayudando bastante en eso. Cuando pienso en eso y miro, o escucho sobre todo eso, entonces me pongo a pensar y pues obvio me da miedo, pero después ya pienso en otra cosa, y pues ya se me pasa (Alberto 2021).

For the past two years old, I have been taking pills for anxiety and when I feel afraid and all that. I feel that the medicine I'm taking right now helps me. I'm scared when I think

> about it [the COVID-19 pandemic]… but the medicine is to calm anxiety. So, I think right now medicine is helping me a lot in that. When I think about it and I look, or I hear about all that, then I start to think and it's obvious that I'm scared, but then I try to think about something else, and then the feeling passes (Alberto 2021).

Oregon workers who are in the agricultural and food industry and are part of Latino or Mesoamerican Indigenous communities like Alberto experienced increased stress levels affecting their emotional and mental well-being according to the COFS. Barriers to mental health support for these communities include linguistic barriers, transportation, cost, hours that services are available, societal stigma, feeling ashamed of needing counseling, fear of the unknown, family not understanding, family wouldn't approve, fear of being "put away", and believing that your problems are your own business (Dupree et al. 2010: 52; Rastogi, Massey-Hastings, and Wieling 2012: 4). This lack of access is alarming since 70% of respondents reported some type of physical, emotional, and spiritual symptoms of stress and other indicators of mental health needs (Martinez et al. 2021: 13-14). Some of the symptoms people reported included *cansado* (tired) (18%); *coraje* (frustration) (9%); *enojo* (anger) (7%); *deprimido/a* (depressed) (29%); *dolor de cabeza* (headaches & migraines) (19%); *susto* (frightened) (25%) (Martinez et al. 2021: 13). The question on the survey asked "since COVID-19 began, you have felt: (Check all that apply)." The concept of *susto* has been well researched in Mexican and Mexican-American communities and the term translates to being frightened, but the actual meaning of *susto* has been documented as a cultural specific affliction of the soul that results from a traumatic experience; symptoms can include dizziness, trembling, nervousness, lethargy, anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability to name a few and treatment includes ritualistic healing through *barridas*, sweeping of the body using eggs, lemons, or herbs, and *limpiezas,* cleansing ceremonies

performed by *curanderas* (healers) (Pigozzi 2020: 70). The following question in the COFS asked, "if you answered yes to one or more of the options in the previous question, can you describe more how you feel?" Answers that were self-reported in the follow-up question included: *estresada* (stress) (12%), *ansiedad* (anxiety) (7%), *triste* (sadness) (7%), *preocupado* (worried/concerned) (13%) (Martinez et al. 2021: 13). These results of the COFS revealed that most people participating in the research study who are agricultural, timber, or food-related workers are suffering from some type of emotional or mental distress connected to the significant challenges in their lives due to the pandemic.

Fear of getting infected by COVID-19 is a constant in the lives of Mesoamerican Indigenous and Latino communities I have interacted with. People fear getting infected with COVID-19 for a multitude of reasons, such as having preexisting conditions (diabetes, hypertension, asthma, or others) that heighten the risk of severe complications or even death, the unknown, long-term health complications, losing work, getting their kids sick, and infecting someone who is elderly or is at heightened risk to get infected, etc. Mariana, a 44-year-old who migrated from Michoacán and currently works in a flower nursery in Lane County, expressed these fears in an interview that was part of the qualitative Phase II of the COFS project:

> *Ahora el temor es salir a la tienda, ya no sale uno como antes a la tienda a gusto, sale uno con preocupación porque dice: "No vaya yo a llegar y a traer el virus." Y pues, la vida cambió mucho desde la pandemia para acá* (Mariana 2021).
>
> Now I am afraid to go to the store, I no longer go out as before to the store at ease. I am concerned because I am always thinking: "I am not going to go and bring home the virus." And so, life has changed a lot since the pandemic around here (Mariana 2021).

In another example, on April 13, 2021, while I was planting seeds in my garden plot, I chatted for quite a while with Tomas, a long-time garden member, about various topics while maintaining social distancing and wearing a mask. He shared with me that he was fearful of COVID-19, not only because of the risk of dying, but for the other potential long-term complications like cognitive functioning or respiratory issues. Tomas has diabetes and needs to regularly gets dialysis. He explained that he cannot afford having any more health complications beyond the diabetes because his children and grandchildren depend on his financial support and his health/well-being on an everyday basis. At the time of our conversation, he had just received his first vaccine from his primary doctor, even though he thought the dialysis clinic would offer the vaccinations first. He was surprised to find out that wasn't the case.

Transnational Impacts: Worry and Loss in Home Communities in Mexico

Fear about the coronavirus also stems from witnessing firsthand the devastation it can cause. In an interview on February 28, 2021, Patti—another long-term garden member, mother, and farmworker who works in blueberry and strawberry fields and does other types of fieldwork seasonally—also expressed fear of getting infected with the virus. Patti related how she was exposed to the virus at work when two of her coworkers got sick from COVID-19. Fortunately, Patti did not get sick from this exposure and when she got tested for the virus, her test was negative. Patti's income was not stable since her wages were greatly reduced and there was very little work available during the pandemic. She lost work for most of 2020 and barely started working regularly again in the berry fields at the beginning of 2021. During our interview she told me that:

Sí, pero como ahorita está la pandemia que empezó, y que bajó mucho el trabajo. Casi no hay mucho trabajo ahorita, ¿ves? Empecé a trabajar hace un mes apenas. Como bajó mucho, como esta enfermedad… no deja mucho a uno trabajar" (Patti 2021).

Yes, but right now there is the pandemic that began, and that lowered the work a lot. There's almost not much work right now, see? I started working just a month ago. Hours went down a lot from this disease... it doesn't let you work much (Patti 2021).

In addition to work loss due to the pandemic, Patti also lost over a week of work due to 2020 wildfires and needing to stay home to avoid the hazardous air quality. Losing work was a financially stressful for Patti and her daughter, and impacted her family in Veracruz, Mexico, since she was not able to send as many remittances to family as she used to send. At the time of our interview, Patti had not utilized any financial assistance for lost work or rental relief. Patti discussed how she speaks Náhuatl as her first language, but she was not able to find any information about government aid, other financial help, the pandemic, vaccines, or workplace safety in Náhuatl. When I asked if Patti had received any information about resources and the vaccine in her primary language she responded, "*No. [todo] es en español… Hablo otro idioma, se llama Náhuatl*" (Patti 2021). "No everything is in Spanish… I speak a different language, it is called Náhuatl" (Patti 2021). This was a common occurrence for other Indigenous farmworkers as revealed in the COFS Phase I Final Report:

Farmworkers in general are experiencing resource gaps. But those who speak Indigenous languages face additional information and accessibility gaps. Oregon Indigenous Farmworkers speak at least 26 different languages from Guatemala and Mexico (such as Triqui, Mixtec Languages, different Mam languages, Kanjobal, among others) and many are not fluent or literate in Spanish. In addition, we found that Indigenous farmworkers

lost more weeks and months of work…than non-Indigenous farmworkers (Martinez et al. 2021: 1).

The lack of access to information in Patti's primary language is a structural barrier for many Indigenous community members whose first language is not Spanish. Information about services and resources they qualify for is seldom available in Mesoamerican Indigenous languages. Patti worries deeply about the number of people still dying from COVID-19, especially since she knows people from her hometown in Veracruz, Mexico who have passed away from being infected:

> *Todavía estamos preocupados de cuándo se va a ir esta enfermedad, que ojalá que pronto que se termine, pues que se vaya. Pues estamos también preocupados, las cosas como están, mucha gente que se está muriendo todavía…En mi pueblo allá en Veracruz, hay unas personas que conocemos que murieron de eso* (Patti 2021).
>
> We are still worried about when this disease is going to go away, which hopefully will soon, so it will go away. Well, we are also worried, things being as they are, because a lot of people are still dying…In my town there in Veracruz, there are some people we know who died of that [COVID] (Patti 2021).

Pedro, a 47-year-old field worker from Michoacán, like Patti, lost several people he was close to after they died from COVID-19. In an interview with a researcher from the Oregon COFS project on May 9, 2021, Pedro stated,

> *Tengo familiares también en México y pues han sido momentos difíciles. Muchos amigos que han perdido la vida; una tía también, una hermana de mi papá que falleció"* (Pedro 2021).

> I have relatives also in Mexico, and these have been difficult times. I have had many friends who have lost their lives, also an aunt, a sister of my dad who passed away (Pedro 2021).

Losing a loved one can cause enormous grief and financial burdens of medical debt. Anthropologist Sarah Horton highlights an account of an "undocumented immigrant" whose husband died of COVID-19 to document how sadness, grief, and financial impacts can be a result from a loved one dying of COVID-19 (Horton 2021: 102). Losing someone close to you is already a painful experience, but especially if you are not able to travel to grieve with family and close friends. Because of the threat of the coronavirus, international travel has been restricted (to varying degrees), so many people were not able to fly to Guatemala or Mexico for funerals or to grieve with loved ones. Travel restrictions from COVID-19 and the expense of travel in a time when people are losing work are not the only prohibitive factors that prevent people from returning home to attend a funeral. Another major factor that prevents workers from Mexico or elsewhere from returning home to bury a loved one is status in the U.S. immigration system. If a person is undocumented, they cannot leave the country without the risk of being barred or detained on their return. Being separated from family, especially when losing a loved one has been reported to cause distress, may become particularly difficult for "undocumented immigrants" (Garcini et al. 2020: 357). Some of the distress of family separation that has been reported to be experienced as "sadness and guilt about being away in general…and a state of desperation…when a loved one was terminally ill, about to die, or just deceased" (Bravo 2017: 38). Despite the distresses people experience, the risk of deportation and detention is a real risk that people must weigh when making decisions to attend a funeral that crosses borders since being captured can cause more suffering and tragedy (Boehm 2016: 53).

Surviving COVID-19 and All Its Consequences: Worker Perspectives

So far, I have primarily discussed the experiences of people who expressed worry about getting COVID-19 and who know people who have tested positive form the virus, with some surviving and others who passed away. Here I shift my focus to community members who got infected with the virus and their experiences. From the conversations I had with people who tested positive, they each have had unique experiences, and different relationships with the coronavirus than people who have never been infected with COVID-19.

Felipe and his wife operate a *lonchera* (food truck), and their sales for the year were much lower than usual because people were required people to stay home to try to curb the spread of the virus. Financially Felipe and his wife were greatly impacted since they had to close their lonchera on three different occasions. They needed to close for a while at the beginning of the pandemic due to restrictions on workplaces and food establishments; they closed a second time when Felipe and his wife got infected with the COVID-19 virus, and they closed a third time from unsafe air quality from ash and smoke during the 2020 wildfire season in Oregon. Even though the lonchera experienced multiple closures, they still needed to pay rent and insurance for their business.

> *Sí, si ya con que deje de trabajar uno no alcanza para cubrir la renta o los gastos, porque es la renta, la luz, aseguranza, porque la aseguranza te la siguen cobrando aunque no saliéramos. Aseguranza de la lonchera, aunque no estuve vendiendo. Aseguranza de la lonchera de manejo, aseguranza de lo de la comida* (Felipe 2021).
>
> Yes, when you stop working there is not enough [income] to cover the rent or expenses, because it is the rent, the electricity, insurance—because the insurance is still charged

even if we did not go to work. We paid for insurance on the food truck and insurance on the food, even though I was not able to sell from the truck (Felipe 2021).

Felipe was able to only send a small number of remittances to family in the state of Mexico, since he lost income from the pandemic and barely had enough for his immediate family. Local community-based organizations were able to help Felipe connect to resources to help with rent, with the Oregon Worker Quarantine Fund and other resources. The Oregon Worker Quarantine Fund operated temporarily from 2020-2021 and provided up to two weeks of financial relief to agricultural workers who needed to quarantine, regardless of federal immigration status. The program was paused at the end of 2021, and as of February 17, 2022, there is no indication that the program will be extended into 2022 despite the spread of the Omicron variant. The fund considered an applicant to be an agricultural worker if the individual was working for a wage in Oregon in an activity related to agriculture, farming, fishing, tree planting, tree harvesting, dairy, ranching, food processing, canning, slaughtering, packaging, butchering, or nursery work. To those who are eligible, the relief was $430 for one week, and $860 for two weeks with ability to re-apply if they need to quarantine again. The Oregon Worker Quarantine Fund was administered through the Oregon Worker Relief Coalition, a statewide network of community-based organizations.

Felipe mentioned how most of the paperwork was in English, and he was grateful for help from HDLF in completing the applications. Felipe shared how when he got sick from COVID-19, it took over three weeks for him to recover from the infection. Even though Felipe and his wife got infected with the virus, their kids did not get sick despite living in the same household. Felipe experienced body pain, headaches, a high fever that lasted two weeks, and he temporarily lost his sense of taste and smell. He told me how his wife had the same symptoms:

> *Nada más fui y me hice la prueba, me dio positivo y ya me dijeron que no saliera por dos semanas. No nos dieron nada, solo que podíamos tomar Tylenol…[Tenía] dolor de todo el cuerpo, dolor de cabeza, mucha temperatura. Mucha fiebre, estuve dos semanas, que estuve aquí en la casa. Con ganas de nada más estar durmiendo, sin poder oler ni tener sabor la comida* (Felipe 2021).
>
> I went to get tested, it came back positive, and I was told not to go out for two weeks. They didn't give us anything, we could only take Tylenol… I had whole body pain, headaches, a high temperature, a lot of fever, so I was here in the house for two weeks while I recovered. All I wanted to do was to stay sleeping and I was not able to smell or taste the food (Felipe 2021).

Felipe slept a lot while he recovered and was told to take Tylenol after he tested positive for COVID-19. He did not go to the doctor or hospital to get further treatment. He mentioned that he drank green tea and took vitamin C to help with his recovery, and to stay hydrated. He also received an herbal package from HDLF that was created by Herbalists Without Borders Eugene. **Figure 7** is an example of a package of immune-boosting herbal remedies that was given to all garden members during the annual registration events in 2021 and 2022; the package that was given to people who tested positive contained more items than the image shown. When the interview was conducted, Felipe had received his first dose and was waiting for the second dose of the vaccine, while his wife was already fully vaccinated. His mom, nephew, and sister who live in Mexico also got infected with COVID-19.

Figure 7. Herbal care package prepared by Herbalist Without Borders Eugene, which contained various tea bags, cough drops, elderberry syrup, menthol with Eucalyptus topical ointments, and vitamin C supplements.

Mariana, a worker in a flower nursery introduced above, lost her senses of taste and smell when she was infected with COVID-19. She also had persistent headaches and diarrhea. It took her more than two weeks to recover, and she suffered significantly during the process, also battling with depression while in quarantine. She stated:

> *En mi casa yo me enfermé de eso y fue muy duro porque me tuve que apartar en mi cuarto, duré dos semanas allí encerrada, me sentía depresiva, triste, pensé que me iba a morir porque se hablaba de que, al que le daba se moría. O mirábamos en las noticias que mucha gente se estaba muriendo y pues yo pensé: "Me iré a morir, seré una de esas." Pero gracias a Dios no me morí, aquí estoy (*Mariana 2021).
>
> In my house I got sick from [COVID-19], and it was very hard because I could not leave my room, I spent two weeks there locked up. I felt depressed, sad, and I thought I was going to die because there was talk that the person who passed it to me, had died. Or we would hear on the news that many people were dying, and I thought: "I am going to die, I will be one of those people." But thank God I did not die, here I am (Mariana 2021).

When the news talks about the coronavirus, it is usually about statistics: infection and death rates. When the CDC and state health departments discuss the coronavirus, it is usually about recognizing symptoms, preventing exposure, and when to seek medical help. However, discussions about emotions and people's well-being are often missing in the narratives and messaging promoted. The account from Blanca, an Indigenous Zapotec woman from Oaxaca, revealed how she struggled with her mental health, and she dealt with the stresses of being undocumented, not being able to find a nanny or daycare, and the difficulty of paying for food and rent despite working fulltime. Blanca crossed the border at age 15 in search of a better future for herself and her daughters, and she currently works at a nursery in Lane County. She was interviewed as a part of the COFS Phase II. She has worked with the same company for more than 20 years. Even when Blanca has dedicated herself to her workplace, she constantly faced unequal treatment not only from her employer, but also from her co-workers who are documented. She describes the discrimination and unequal treatment she has received at work with regards to her legal status. This has included a lack of information as well as the financial relief she cannot receive due to her status as undocumented. She stated:

> *Nos merecemos que nos traten por igual no importa que seamos indocumentados o que nacimos aquí no... que se nos respete y que valoren nuestro trabajo* (Blanca 2021).
>
> We deserve to be treated equally no matter that we are undocumented, or that we were not born here [in the U.S] ... We deserve to be respected and that employers value our work (Blanca 2021).

In the conversation, Blanca discussed how her mental health worsened after she and her family tested positive for coronavirus in December 2020. Blanca, as the head of her household,

was pressured to take care of her family, cook, clean, and manage the finances despite being ill from the coronavirus.

> *Pues, a mí me afectó el COVID porque si nos dio COVID toda mi familia. Estuvimos en cuarentena y pues en todo ese tiempo. Pues si me afectó un poquito emocional porque me sentí estresada, me sentí cansada, ¡me sentí fatigada! Como le voy a decir me afectó muy emocionalmente que no tenía apoyo. Era yo sola y tenía que sacar adelante mi familia. Yo con fiebre, dolor de cabeza, dolor de cuerpo, pero tenía que levantarme para poder ver a los otros que tenían que comer o necesitan algo. "Mamá tengo hambre, mamá necesito esto." y yo con este dolor que traía en el cuerpo, pero tenía que pararme y hacerlo. Y pues hay veces que me dolía toda la mano al tocar el agua y lavar los trastes, pero tenía que hacerlo por más estresada que yo me sentía. Tuve un momento donde dije porque no me llega fuerte el COVID para de una vez desaparecer y acabar con todo esto* (Blanca 2021).
>
> Well, I was affected by COVID-19 because my family all got infected with the virus. We were in quarantine while we recovered. It affected me emotionally because I felt stressed, I felt tired, I felt fatigued! As I'm going to tell you, it affected me emotionally when I did not have support. It was me alone and I had to move my family forward. I had a fever, headache, body aches but I had to get up so I could see who had to eat or needed something. "Mom I'm hungry, Mom I need this." Even though I was in pain, I had to do it. And there are times when my whole hand hurt when I touched the water and washed the dishes, but I had to do it because I was more stressed with the dirty dishes. I had a moment where I wondered to myself, why don't I get a strong case of COVID and disappear, so all if this can end (Blanca 2021).

Blanca's story is heart-wrenching and brings home the suffering and hard daily life for many people during this pandemic. Many people were barely coping and getting by before the pandemic, but difficulties caused by the pandemic only made everyday stresses feel completely overwhelming to some. Deteriorating mental health is often accompanied by physical debilitation, as discussed above.

Mariana, who was introduced in this chapter, described her depression and sadness:

> *Cuando uno se enferma es muy triste, estar uno solo, que tienes mucha familia, pero no se pueden juntar. Tú quisieras en esos momentos, que estás enfermo, que tus hijos se abrazaran. Esa es la parte más triste, que si uno se muere es solo porque no puedes estar con nadie y eso sí me da como mucha tristeza* (Mariana 2021).
>
> When you get sick [from COVID-19] it is very sad, it is sad to be alone, and it is sad knowing that you have a lot of family, but you cannot get together. When you are sick, you cherish the moment with your family, and you just want to hug your children. That is the saddest part, that if you die, you will die alone because you cannot be with anyone and that makes me sad (Mariana 2021).

Felipe, Blanca, and Mariana experienced many symptoms, but since they did not get severely ill, they were able to quarantine and recover at home. During the COFS Phase II qualitative interviews, Elena, a 46-year-old who migrated from Michoacán and works in a flower nursery in Lane County, revealed that she got severely ill when she got infected from COVID-19. Even though all her family members in her household tested positive for the coronavirus, Elena was the only person who needed to be hospitalized; she discussed in detail, her hospitalization experience:

Porque de hecho yo también me enfermé del virus y mi hija y mis dos hijos que están en casa, mi esposo, y, pues, es algo muy terrible, yo estuve en el hospital por siete días y ellos estuvieron en casa, enfermos…[Un] día me levanté y sentí ahogarme…Esa fue la primera vez que sentí esa tos muy fea. Y para el siguiente día me dio nuevamente esa tos, pero yo ya no podía respirar y fue cuando me llevaron al hospital, entonces me dijeron que necesitaba oxígeno, pero yo no quería ir porque mucha gente decía que los mataban ahí, que no era bueno que fuéramos al hospital porque estaban matando a la gente, y muchas cosas que se hablan en las noticias. Pues yo la verdad tenía miedo y mis hijos tampoco querían que me llevaran porque decían que me iban a matar. Pero, pues yo me estaba muriendo en casa… Me dejaron allá por seis-siete días. Y no podía ni bajarme de una cama porque yo ya me estaba ahogando. Me pusieron mi oxígeno. Me dijeron que me iban a poner unos tubos, pero yo no quise, les dije que no, que no quería que me intubaran, que me dejaran el oxígeno, entonces me dijo la doctora, "Te lo vamos a dejar por este día, y mañana, si no amaneces mejor te vamos a intubar porque tus pulmones están muy mal" (Elena 2021).

In fact, my two children who are at home, my husband, and I got sick with the virus. Well, it is something very terrible. I was in the hospital for seven days and my family members were at home sick… One day I got up and felt myself drowning. That was the first time I felt that very ugly cough. The following day, I got the cough again and I couldn't breathe anymore, so that's when they took me to the hospital. They told me that I needed oxygen, but I didn't want to go because a lot of people said they killed them there, that it wasn't good that we went to the hospital because they were killing people. A lot of things like that are talked about in the news. Well, I was afraid, and my children did not

want me to be taken away either because they said they were going to kill me. But I was dying at home… They left me there [in the hospital] for six to seven days. And I couldn't even get out of a bed because I was already drowning. They put my oxygen on me. They told me that they were going to put some tubes in me, but I didn't want that. I told them no, that I didn't want to be intubated, to leave me the oxygen. Then the doctor told me, "We are going to leave it for this day, and tomorrow, if you do not wake up better, we are going to intubate you because your lungs are very bad (Elena 2021).

Y me hablaron de un tratamiento de cinco inyecciones que eran intravenosas y les dije que me lo pusieran y me dijeron que iban a hablar a la aseguranza a ver si lo cubría. Entonces, para otro día vinieron y dijeron que sí me cubría, entonces me lo empezaron a poner. Con eso sentí como algo muy, muy feo. Yo sentía que me estaba muriendo con eso, porque me inyectaban en mi estómago dos veces al día, una vez en la mañana y una vez en la noche, que para los coágulos de sangre. Que ya al final de los siete días yo ya no tenía sangre para que me sacaran. Entonces, con ese tratamiento no dormí toda esa noche, todo el otro día, toda la otra noche, hasta el siguiente día dormí como cinco horas, pero sentía que… me sentía muy mal, no sé cómo describir eso, pero era algo muy mal. Entonces, este… a los siete días me mandaron a la casa y ya llegué y, pues, guardé un poco más de reposo y ahí estuve, pues, casi el mes (Elena 2021).

And they told me about a treatment of five injections that were intravenous, and I told them to give them to me. They told me that they were going to talk to the insurance to see if it was covered. Then, for the next day they came and said I was covered. Then they started putting the injections in me. With that I felt something very, very ugly. I felt like I was dying because I was injected into my stomach twice a day, once in the morning and

> once in the evening. Then at the end of the seven days, I no longer had blood to be taken out. So, with that treatment I didn't sleep all that night, at all the other day, at all the other night, until the next day I slept like five hours. I felt very bad, I don't know how to describe that, but it was a very bad thing. So, after seven days they sent me to the house and I arrived and, well, had more time to rest and there I was. I stayed home [recovering] for almost a month (Elena 2021).

Elena's story captures the terror, fear, and pain experienced by many who have survived severe COVID-19 infections. Her and her family's reluctance to take her to the hospital comes from concrete experience in Mexico and among low-income families in Oregon. In Mexico, good hospital care is rare and for most people must be paid for out of pocket. Many people resist going to the hospital because they cannot afford it and often don't receive good care. Because people wait until they are in grave danger, a significant number may die in the hospital. The experience of family and community members is that they died because they went to the hospital. Elena did not die in the hospital, but she appears to have come close. Her own insistence on not being intubated resulted in her being offered another treatment that may have helped her to survive. As a longer-term worker in a nursey, she had health insurance, which paid for the treatment. Many people do not have insurance and would not have been able to receive the treatment.

Elena's hesitancy to go to the hospital and engage with the medical system can also relate to vaccine hesitancy in the Latino immigrant community. While Elena and her family did get vaccinated in part because of their understanding of the severity of some COVID-19 infections, others hesitate to become vaccinated and engage with the formal medical system in the U.S. To understand vaccine hesitancy among Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous farmworker

communities I explore some of the reasons respondents in the Phase II COFS gave to explain why they were hesitant to get the vaccine, some of the misinformation that was spreading in social media and among some Christian communities, and community-based organizations and governmental agencies' efforts to get more people from Latino communities to get vaccinated and tested for COVID-19.

Vaccine Hesitancy and Strategies to Successfully Combat It in Latino Communities and Mesoamerican Communities in Diaspora

Alberto, introduced above, expressed hesitations about getting the vaccine due to hearing about people having strong side effects/reactions. Some of this hesitancy is also attributed to listening to misinformation about many people dying from receiving the vaccine.

> *Dicen que muchas personas tienen muchas reacciones a la vacuna, e incluso muchas personas creen que se han muerto cuando se ponen la vacuna. Pero pues como le digo, tengo miedo, no sé qué harían [la vacuna] en realidad…. Mi inseguridad de yo ponérmela [la vacuna] es que le digo que muchas personas tienen muchas reacciones a ella… ¿Por qué muchas personas tienen reacciones? Incluso muchas fallecen*" (Alberto 2021).
>
> They say that a lot of people have many reactions to the vaccine, and I think even a lot of people died when they get the vaccine. But as I say, I'm scared, I don't know what the vaccine would do to me…. My insecurity of me getting the vaccine is why I tell you that a lot of people have had reactions to it… Why do many people have reactions? Many even die" (Alberto 2021).

Alberto was not the only person to express hesitations about getting the vaccine. Patti is also worried about receiving the vaccine (at the time of the interview the vaccine was only available to people 65 years or older). Her hesitancy stems from misinformation that she has

heard, which was like the misinformation that Alberto saw on social media, such as people dying after receiving the vaccine.

> *Pero yo, pero como mi hija no se lo puso, entonces yo tampoco me la voy a poner. Escuché que hay mucha gente que ha muerto y todo eso, que se pone muy feo y… Yo también si me platica algún amigo, también dice que fue un video también, no sé un video local que dice aquí si te vas a poner las vacunas que en unos 20 años te puedes quedar inválido* (Patti 2021).
>
> Since my daughter did not get the vaccine, I'm not going to get the vaccine either. I heard that there are a lot of people who have died and all that, or that they get in a bad state ... I also have a friend that tells me, that he saw in a video, that if you are going to get the vaccine that in about 20 years you can become disabled (Patti 2021).

The vaccine hesitancy of Patti, Alberto and others is complex and rooted in both contemporary and historical experiences and understandings in Mexico and in Latino communities in the U.S. A research study in Oregon[15] that explored COVID-19 vaccine perceptions through semi-structured telephone interviews with 46 people from Latino communities (22 mothers and 24 youth, 13–18 years old) who self-identified as being Latinx, Latino, and/or Hispanic revealed that one of the most common reasons of vaccine hesitancy was mistrust of governmental and medical institutions. Overall, 31.8% of the respondents did not trust doctors and 13.6% reported fear of encountering law enforcement/immigration while accessing health care; a 48-year-old housekeeper told the interviewers "If Oregon gives vaccines to Latino people, I think it's good, but the people will think … that we are the experiment, *conejillos de indias* (guinea pigs)" (Garcia et al. 2021: 750).

[15] The collaborative research study between Oregon State University, Casa Latino Unidos, and the University of California, Los Angeles occurred from July 2020 to January 2021.

Another respondent who is a 50-year-old agricultural worker in Oregon expressed how he was worried about being one of the first people to get the COVID-19 vaccine. He said, "We always get the flu vaccination. I don't want to be the first one to get the COVID vaccination, but I will eventually get it for me and my son. I don't want to be an experiment" (Garcia et al. 2021: 750). Other people's mistrust is not directed at the government in general, but rather they believe that targeting minority populations as a priority was politically motivated by the Trump administration. An agricultural worker who participated in the study that explored COVID-19 vaccine perceptions said in an interview, "When hearing about the plan to prioritize minorities, I'm afraid. We never know if Trump is involved. I think we need much more information and to understand why we should be first [to receive the vaccine]. We are very resistant people. The OHA (Oregon Health Authority) are trying to help us be priority. Their intentions are good. But we have doubts about this President; we think about how Trump is" (Garcia et al. 2021: 753). Fear of the virus and of vaccines stems from anti-immigrant discourse in the current political sphere and from knowledge about historical deep-rooted violence against Indigenous communities throughout the Americas that includes biological warfare, medical experimentation, government corruption (Acuna-Soto et al. 2004; Few 2015; Few 2020).

Since the beginning of European colonization in the Americas, diseases such as smallpox have disproportionately killed Indigenous people and wiped-out entire communities. For example, archaeological and historical records show that the Maya population in the area that encompasses parts of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize was reduced by about 94% in less than a century, from about 2 million people at the time of the arrival of Spanish conquistadors to a low of about 128,000 people by the 1620s (Few 2020: 382). A large part of this population decline is a result of the same factors devastating other Indigenous communities in Mexico: the spread of

the smallpox virus epidemic throughout the Americas.[16] Other factors that reduced Indigenous populations in the Americas during early colonization include warfare, drought, famine, and epidemics of measles, mumps, and cocoliztli (a disease that causes hemorrhagic fevers and has unknown origins) (Acuna-Soto 2004: 1-2).

Smallpox outbreaks continued in Mexico and devasted communities until the 1800s. The last major smallpox epidemic occurred between 1797 and 1798 and had a really high mortality rate: about 7,143 people died in Mexico; while the outbreak in 1840 killed nearly 3,000 people in Mexico City, the mortality rate was lower due to the creation of a vaccine in 1798 and the vaccine being available beginning in 1803 in Mexico (Cooper 1965: 153-155). There were 22 large typhus epidemics in central Mexico between 1655 and 1918 that caused tens of thousands of deaths (Burns, Acuna-Soto, and Stahle 2014: 442). Typhus is caused by different varieties of the bacterium *Rickettsia* and can cause weakness, extreme fever, headaches, and muscle aches, accompanied by rashes, spots, and bumps all over the body (Alexander 2020: 63-64). There were cholera epidemics in Mexico between the 1830s and 1850s that caused large population loss and some of the symptoms of the disease included severe diarrhea, dehydration, abdominal pain, breathing difficulties, muscular spasms, and death (McCrea 2011: 102; Sepúlveda, Valdespino, and García-García 2006: 5). The H1N1 influenza virus spread across 135 countries in 2009 and was considered one of the fastest spreading pandemics; in Mexico there were at least 7,847 confirmed cases (Davidson and Lerner 2019). As the virus spread to pandemic proportions, in population-dense areas like Mexico City there were social distancing efforts, school closures,

[16] The first report of smallpox in the Caribbean was at least as early as 1518 in Hispaniola, modern-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Then by 1520 the virus has spread to Tenochtitlan, the Nahuatl capital at the time, and once the virus arrived in the Americas, it was quickly spread along trade routes, so by 1525 the virus spread all the way to South America and reduced the population of the Inca empire by about 50-75%, even before of the arrival of the first European military expedition by Francisco Pizarro into the territory now known as Peru (Few 2020: 382).

and vaccine campaigns, but it was reported that there was an unequal distribution of the vaccine that slowed relief efforts (Ear 2012: 54). Diseases spread from mosquitos such as yellow fever, zika, malaria, dengue, and chikungunya are non-communicable diseases that impact people, historically and currently, living in Mexico (McCrea 2011).

Fear of vaccines in Latino communities in the U.S. is not a new phenomenon. Latinos suffered disproportionately higher rates of H1NI influenza virus, in part due to low vaccination rates. During the 2019 swine flu pandemic, the state of California was the most impacted as they saw the most confirmed cases, hospitalizations, and deaths (Cassady et al. 2012: 1111). The results of a study conducted in 2010 about the HINI flu vaccine in Rural Latino communities in California revealed that people had strong mistrust of the medical system and did not want to get the vaccine because they either thought the H1NI was not a real emergency or were fearful of side effects from the vaccine; others believed the vaccine could make you ill or even cause death or that the vaccine was too new so there was not enough data; some mentioned that it was a government plan to make money from selling the vaccines; and others mentioned that their health and fate is in God's hands (Cassady et al. 2012: 1111-1114). In a research study about misinformation, some of the participants who self-identified as Latino responded that they are afraid that the COVID-19 vaccine contained a "tracking device" or "microchips," and that they encountered that misinformation being disseminated on social media (Garcia et al. 2021: 753).

Efforts have been made to combat this type of misinformation in the current COVID-19 pandemic by local community-based organizations, university researchers, and Lane County Health employees. As a result, vaccine rates of Latino communities in Lane County are among the highest in Oregon. This educational work on the part of local organizations and others began with educating the Latino community about COVID-19 and how to avoid it. This work began

months before vaccinations were available to anyone. Chuy, a gardener with HDLF who works as a *pinero*, forestry worker, is aware that many in his community, himself included, are fearful and stressed about getting infected with the virus. At the time of the interview, May 2021, Chuy had not been vaccinated even though it was just made available to the public at large; his wife already received the vaccine, and Chuy stated that he wants to take the vaccine, but he just has not had time to do it. He believes that the virus is a disease that needs to be respected, and that social distancing is necessary to control it:

> *Ahorita hay mucho temor. Hay mucho temor, de que tiene alguna enfermedad, pues que más me preocupa es los ancianos que están enfermos. Debemos tener mucha precaución. Yo pienso que todas las familias estábamos preocupados y estresados porque no sabías cuándo te podía llegar una enfermedad así. Entonces era un poco estresante y pues la gente, estábamos estresados y un poco con temor a salir a la tienda, salir de compras, porque nunca pensabas en lo que pudiera pasar… Pues el virus es una enfermedad que hay que respetar y manteniendo la distancia yo pienso que podemos controlarlo o evitar el contagio, pero tenemos que evitar las reuniones, como nos han explicado en la radio, en las noticias, y si no de otra forma, pues esta pandemia no la vamos a controlar* (Chuy 2021).
>
> Right now, there is a lot of fear. There is a lot of fear that someone has the disease, because what worries me the most is the elderly who are sick. We must be very careful. I think all the families are worried and stressed because you do not know when such an illness might come to you. So, it was a little stressful and we, the community, were stressed and a little afraid to go out to the store, go shopping, because you never know what might happen…. The coronavirus is a disease that must be respected, and I think we

> can control the virus if we maintain social distance and avoid the contagion, like how it has been explained on the radio, in the news, and if not, then we are not going to control this pandemic (Chuy 2021).

In 2021 after the COVID-19 vaccines became widely available, people began to think the pandemic would be a thing of the past. In May 2021 when I was doing gardening work, I spoke with a couple who were leaving after finishing their garden activities. They shared that they were happy to have received both doses of the vaccine but were worried about the governor lifting the COVID-19 restrictions because they did not want to spread the virus to others who couldn't be vaccinated at the time, such as young children. They knew that the vaccine does not mean that they cannot get infected anymore, it just meant that they would get less sick from the virus. In an interview with Pedro during Phase II of the COFS, he discusses the importance of getting vaccinated:

> *Pues, hasta ahorita, yo ya tengo mis dos dosis. Mi familia aquí en mi casa también, mi esposa, casi toda mi familia, todos nos hemos vacunado. Nosotros creemos en cómo se maneja la pandemia, y creemos que va a ser una solución, aunque sea momentánea, si es que no es la vacuna precisa. Pero yo creo que, por el momento, nuestra máscara y las vacunas, que están ahorita, yo creo que es una de las partes más importantes para que podamos seguir nuestra vida normal en un futuro* (Pedro 2021).
>
> Well, until now, I already have my two doses. My family here in my house too, my wife, almost my whole family, we've all been vaccinated. We believe in how the pandemic is handled, and we believe the vaccine will be a solution, even if it is momentary, if it is not the right vaccine. But I think that, for the moment, our face masks and the vaccines are

one of the most important parts for us to continue our normal life in the future (Pedro 2021).

Blanca, who also was interviewed during Phase II of the COFS, was hesitant to receive the vaccine, but ultimately, she was happy to have received both doses. Even though Blanca has both doses, she was still wearing a mask out of precaution. Blanca described her experience:

> *Pero ya me quedé pensando y les preguntaba yo a mis muchachas: "Mija, ¿ustedes se vacunarían si se lo ofrecieran?" y a mí me decían: "Sí." Y yo dije: "¡Wow! ¿Cómo mis hijas me dicen que si se lo van a poner y yo como madre les digo que no me lo voy a poner?" Y dije: "Bueno pues si ellas dicen que sí, ¿por qué yo no?" Y entonces dije: "Pues si me la voy a poner"…. pues dudaba, dudé como 15 días, de ir o no ir, hasta que tuve el valor y fui, y sí, me pusieron la primera dosis. Pero si me dio un poquito de calentura, dolor de hueso, dolor de cabeza poquito, leve, y dije: "Bueno, está bien." Ya la segunda pues nomás me sentí como zombi… Pero sí, gracias a Dios si me puse las dos y… Pero no bajo la guardia, siempre uso mascarillas, aunque el gobernador ahorita dijo que podíamos no usar la mascarilla si estábamos vacunadas, pero yo mejor trato de ponerme la mascarilla* (Blanca 2021).
>
> But I kept thinking, so I asked my girls, "Mija, would you get vaccinated if you were offered it?" and they said, "Yes." I said to myself, "Wow! How do my daughters tell me that if they are going to receive it and I as a mother tell them that I am not going to get it?" So, I decided, "Well, if they say yes, why don't I?"… I hesitated like 15 days, to go or not to go, until I had the courage, and I went, and yes, they gave me the first dose. The vaccine did give me a little fever, bone pain, a mild headache, and I said, "Well, it's okay." The second I just felt like a zombie… But yes, thank God I got both vaccines. But

> I do not let down my guard, I always wear my face mask, although the governor right now said that we could not wear the mask if we were vaccinated (Blanca 2021).

Oregon lifted mask mandates and physical distancing requirements for all populations (except in health care setting and airports) on June 30 with the Executive Order No. 21-15 signed by Governor Kate Brown claiming that Oregon had almost 70% of the adult population with at least one dose of the vaccine. However, this perceived victory over the coronavirus was short-lived because the Delta variant of COVID-19 became the primary strain worldwide in June of 2021 and was more infectious than previous strains. Oregon reinstated the mask mandate on August 11, 2021, as a response of the Delta variant spreading widely in the state beginning in July (Oregon Health Authority 2022). Even before the Delta variant began spreading widely people were already aware that they can still get infected from COVID-19 even after being fully vaccinated. The next pandemic wave of Omicron confirmed this possibility even further. With the spread of the Delta variant in Lane County, I stopped in-person fieldwork, and HDLF cancelled the annual *Fiesta de la Cosecha* event for the second year in a row. Even though this celebration was an important community-building event, the organization wanted to protect the community it serves. Many garden members understand the cancellation was for public health, and many people once again started masking outdoors in the garden and kept more distance while they talked to others.

Conclusions

COVID-19 had severe impacts on Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous families living and working in Lane County, primarily in agriculture, food processing, and other related sectors. In this chapter, I have documented the integrated physical, emotional, mental health, and social impacts of the pandemic, which is ongoing as I write. Significant loss of income affected

people's ability to pay rent, utilities, food, and other expenses. Being exposed to the virus or having the virus forced people into two-week quarantines or even longer periods of recovery when many could not work and, if sick, were physically debilitated. The precarity of workers' economic situations and the stress that comes from that precarity was exaggerated during the pandemic and left many struggling to catch up even after recovery and quarantine. Elena during the Phase II interview, stated how Latino workers are the ones being affected the most:

> *Son los que más trabajan. Son los que más trabajan y como han dicho, no sé, no estoy segura, que son los más casos que ha habido en los Estados Unidos, que son los que han muerto más, los que se han enfermado más, que son los latinos. Muchas personas dicen que es porque no se cuidan. Eso no es verdad. La verdad es que ellos tienen que salir a trabajar porque ellos no agarran un desempleo, ningún estímulo, entonces tienen que trabajar, y en esta pandemia muchos que tienen papeles no trabajaron o muchos que son nacidos aquí no trabajaron y esas personas latinas que no tienen un seguro social son las que estuvieron trabajando y es lo que estuvimos comiendo durante la pandemia* (Elena 2021).
>
> They are the ones who work the most and as they have said, I do not know, I am not sure, that they are the most cases that there have been in the U.S., that they are the ones who have died the most, the ones that have gotten sick the most, that they are the Latinos. Many people say it is because they don't take care of themselves. That's not true. The truth is that they must go out to work because they don't get unemployment, any stimulus, so they must work, and in this pandemic many who have papers did not work or many who are born here did not work and those Latino people who do not have social security

are the ones who were working and that is what we were eating during the pandemic (Elena 2021).

Elena's account captures how Latino workers who are labeled as essential workers are one of the groups that are being infected, dying, and facing economic stress at higher rates than other employment sectors. These ongoing economic, health, and social challenges from the pandemic were further exaggerated with heat, fire, and smoke linked to already existing climate changes and its impact on living and working conditions in the Willamette Valley and wider Lane County. These added larger challenges and their consequences for workers is the subject of my next short chapter, before I turn to the subject of how workers cared for one another.

CHAPTER IV

SMOKE, WILDFIRES, AND CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACTS ON LATINO AND MESOAMERICAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

While the years 2020 and 2021 were marked by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the vulnerabilities the pandemic exposed were further exacerbated by other difficult conditions related to climate change: wildfires, smoke, and extreme heat and cold. For essential workers who labor outdoors and live in substandard and crowded housing these additional challenges often pushed them even further into marginality and seeking systems of care and support. The precarity of life is a constant under these conditions, particularly when people are under evacuation orders, unable to avoid smoke 24-7 at work and in their homes, and already struggling with mental and physical health challenges from the pandemic.

I have learned from my ethnographic research that Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Oregon have faced numerous changing circumstances and stressors since I began my fieldwork, such as the danger of the virus itself; financial instability; the loss of work; and changing weather patterns that led to extreme drought, unprecedented wildfire seasons in 2020 and 2021, and recording breaking heatwaves in 2021. Here I explore how extreme weather contributes to the ongoing stress proliferation in peoples' lives that has already been intensified by the pandemic. I do so through an examination of how wildfires and heat have affected the physical and mental health of Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora living and working in Lane County, Oregon. I also detail how my interlocutors are navigating the stress proliferation and daily living and work conditions brought on by climate change.

Seasonal Wildfires & Smoke Exposure

At the peak of the Oregon wildfire season in September of 2020, parts of Lane County needed to be evacuated, other areas were on evacuation notice, and the entire Willamette Valley was filled with smoke, which turned the sky red while it rained ash for a week. The numerous wildfires impacted most people living in the Willamette valley, people who live near forests in the western part of the state, and people living along the Cascade Mountain range in a negative manner, especially marginalized communities that have been disproportionately struggling with the pandemic. These large wildfire events cause significant damage to the Oregon landscape; they burn down structures and homes displacing many people and even entire communities. Many wildfires are caused by human activity such as unattended campfires, fireworks, downed power lines, cigarettes, arson, and equipment malfunction, but are fueled by drought conditions, rising temperatures, and the increased number of unhealthy trees (diseased, dying, dried) from improper fire management strategies and large-scale climate change (National Park Service 2018; National Park Service 2020).

According to a report from the Oregon Department of Forestry, during the 2020 wildfire season, which was shorter in duration than past years but far more intense, there were a total of 2,027 fires in the state which collectively burned an area of 1,221,324 acres (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 2021: 6). The 2020 wildfires burned 11% of the Cascade Mountain range in Oregon, which was more than the previous 36 years (Abatzoglou et al. 2021). An example of the destruction caused by the wildfires was the Almeda Drive Fire which burned from September 8, 2020 to September 14, 2020 and destroyed large parts of the towns of Phoenix and Talent, Oregon; about 42,000 people were displaced while over 600 homes and 100 commercial buildings were burned (Benda 2020). The 2021 wildfire season compared to the

2020 wildfire season lasted longer in duration, but overall, less acreage was burned. As of September 3, 2021, in Oregon there have been 1,108 reported fires with over 816,880 acres burned. (Oregon Department of Forestry 2021). It will take years for researchers and government officials to fully understand the devastation to communities and the environmental impacts that resulted from back-to-back, record-breaking wildfire seasons.

I worry about the long-term effects of breathing this in on my health and my community's health, since air pollution is a growing cause of premature death, and everyone in the Willamette Valley was exposed to hazardous air quality. Air pollution was attributed to 1.8 million deaths globally in 2019 (Southerland et al. 2022: 5). In addition to smoke particles that people were inhaling, the State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) found the carcinogenic compounds benzene, benzo(a)pyrene, and high levels of formaldehyde at elevated levels that correspond with the elevated levels of wildfire smoke (Burns 2021). These compounds not only increase the risk of cancer but can also cause health impacts such as irritation to the respiratory system, disrupt the immune system, damage DNA, and other types of tissue and respiratory damage. Another concern of the elevated levels of formaldehyde and benzene is that most facemasks people are using are not effective at filtering out these chemical compounds, which means specialized filtration will be needed to protect communities when these compounds reach a certain concentration threshold in the air (Burns 2021). Since there are many immediate and long-term effects from exposure to the wildfire smoke, it is necessary to understand the living conditions of my research participants to begin to conceptualize how people coped with the situation. This requires an understanding of housing conditions for Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities.

Data from the COFS Phase I revealed that 58% of the farmworker participants lived in apartments, 26% lived in a single home, and 13% lived in a trailer/mobile home. By searching websites of apartments and looking at the amenities offered in apartments in Eugene and Springfield, I found that most apartments in Lane County do not have A/C or central ventilations (Martinez et al. 2021). By searching Zillow and Realtor websites, most of the listing of homes, mobile homes, and trailers in the area do not have A/C units/central air built in. As a result of the lack of central ventilation in the region, when the 2020 wildfires got progressively worse, stores rapidly sold out of air purifiers and smoke-rated filters. People who could not afford these products or did not react fast enough to the weather conditions due to time constraints, work schedules, health concerns, etc. did not have adequate protection from the hazardous air quality.

According to the data collected by the Oregon DEQ and Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) in September of 2020 during the wildfire season, Eugene reported three days over 400+ AQI on the DEQ Air Quality Index (AQI); on September 11 Eugene's AQI score was 447 AQI, on the 12th it reached 438 AQI, and on the 13th Eugene had its worst day with a AQI score of 457. The Air Quality Index is a color-coded system that "provides current air quality conditions and ranks air quality on a scale of 0-500 AQI; Green (0-50 AQI) is good; Yellow (51-100 AQI) is moderate; Orange (101 to 150 AQI) is unhealthy for sensitive groups such as children, seniors, pregnant women, and those with respiratory conditions; Red (151 to 200 AQI) is unhealthy for everyone; Purple (201 to 300 AQI) is very unhealthy for everyone; [and] Maroon (301 to 500 AQI) is hazardous for everyone. Over 500 AQI is off the Air Quality Index scale" (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 2021:4). During the 2020 wildfire season Lane County also had a few days over 300+ AQI and 200+ AQI which is above the threshold to be considered hazardous and very unhealthy for everyone. To put these numbers from the 2020

wildfire season into context, Eugene's previous AQI record was 291 AQI in 2017, which was another frightening fire season.

The most extreme conditions in Lane County were a result of the Holiday Farm Fire which burned over 173,393 Acres (U.S. Forest Service 2020). According to an ArcGIS online database from the Lane County government and the Oregon State Fire Marshall's Office, 431 homes burned from the Holiday Farm Fire with one fatality (Lane County 2020). Elena (introduced in Chapter III) not only was hospitalized from COVID-19, but when she was recovering at home she had to deal with breathing in smoke and unhealthy air from the Holiday Farm Fire. In Elena's interview during the Phase II interview, she stated:

> *Había humo, hubo un día que estaba el día rojo, muy rojo, por el sol, no sé, era algo terrible … y yo estaba enferma de neumonía y, por lo del virus, quedé mucho más afectada. Mi hija y mi hijo tienen asma, son asmáticos. Me recuerdo una vez a mi hija le dio un ataque de asma y tuvo que usar el espray. Mi niño chiquito que no podía respirar. Y no podíamos recibir aire puro, no podíamos abrir las ventanas y si salíamos era humo, porque se quemó alrededor de donde nosotros vivimos. O sea que fue algo muy, muy triste, muy difícil* (Elena 2021).
>
> It was terrible, there was smoke, there was a day when the sky and the sun was red, very red. And I was sick with pneumonia because of complications from the coronavirus, so I was much more affected. My daughter and son have asthma, they are asthmatic. I remember my daughter had an asthma attack and had to use her medicated spray. My little boy couldn't breathe. We could not get fresh air, we could not open the windows and if we came out it was smoky, because it burned around where we live. So, it was a very, very sad, and a very difficult thing (Elena 2021).

Patti, a longtime garden member and a farmworker who migrated from Veracruz, lost over a week of work due to 2020 wildfires and she needed to stay home to avoid the hazardous air quality. Patti mentioned how the 2020 wildfires were a traumatic experience for her and her daughter. She recalled how they had to tape the doors and windows so the smoke would not enter their house. She even told me how her household discussed the possibility that they might die.

> *"El humo huele feo," le digo, y es que huele muy feo. Y en la casa, adentro, tapábamos las puertas que entra mucho humo, lo tapábamos con una cinta, todo lo pegábamos para que no entre el polvo. Todo en la escalera, el carro bien tapado de cenizas también* (Patti 2021).

> "The smoke smells ugly," I said [to them], and it smells very ugly. And in the house, inside, we covered the doors where there was a lot of smoke entering, we covered it with tape, and we shut everything so that dust does not enter. Everything, including the stairs and the car were covered with ashes (Patti 2021).

Felipe and his wife, who lost work from getting infected with the virus, also lost a substantial amount of work from the 2020 wildfires, even though they do not get scheduled like an employee, since they operate their own food truck. Nevertheless, even with their own business they couldn't work because of the conditions. Felipe and his wife were not able to open for a couple of weeks because of the hazardous air quality. It would not have been safe for them or for their customers if they had opened. Felipe shared with me:

> *Ah, del incendio también. Tuve que cerrar dos semanas porque había harta ceniza y no podía vender… no pude trabajar dos semanas hasta que se disipó la ceniza, porque aquí donde estuvimos había mucha, mucha ceniza, y mucho humo* (Felipe 2021).

> Ah, from the fire too. I had to close for two weeks because there was a lot of ash, and I couldn't sell... I couldn't work for two weeks until the ash dissipated, because here [in Eugene] where we are located there was too much ash and a lot of smoke (Felipe 2021).

The fires caused heavy economic tolls for the communities affected, and many of my research collaborators were already facing financial insecurity. The unsafe environmental conditions produced by the wildfires was an unexpected stressor, that led to another stressor of not being able to earn money for up to two weeks. This is an example of stress proliferation for many people because they needed to stay at home to stay safe from the smoke and ash, but not having a source of income led to additional stressors such being unable to pay for housing, bills, and other basic needs. Research about stress proliferations has revealed that financial insecurity and job insecurity are factors of increased conflicts at home and the workplace, which in turn produce other stressors (Ciciurkaite, Marquez-Velarde, and Brown 2021: 2). Financial insecurity is also not just a result of job loss or reduced income, the wildfires destroyed the homes of many people in the state. Mariana's coworker at the flower nursery where she works in Lane County had their house burn down, and at the time of the interview for the Phase II portion of the COFS on May 1, 2021, they were still displaced indefinitely, with no timetable on when their house can be rebuilt:

> *Sí, por dos semanas no trabajamos, nomás en las mañanas íbamos tres o cuatro personas a checar la planta que no se secara, a regarse. Y tengo entendido que la patrona a todos les pagó la quincena y sí, nos proveían las mascarillas, hasta de las más buenas para el humo…. en mi casa estuvimos seguros, pero tengo a una compañera de trabajo que a ella se le quemó su casa y hasta la fecha todavía no se la han construido* (Mariana 2021).

> Yes, for two weeks we did not work, only in the mornings three or four people went to check that the plants that did not dry out, to water them. And I understand that the employer paid everyone for the time off. And yes, they provided us with masks, even the best ones for smoke….In my house we were safe, but I have a co-worker who had her house burn down and to this day, their house has not been rebuilt yet (Mariana 2021).

Wildfire events put entire communities at risk, cause damage to infrastructure, incur high economic cost, and can have severe effects on human health. Human activity such as unattended campfires, fireworks, and arson, combined with dry and windy weather conditions, are the most common causes of wildfires. (FAO 2021: 48-49). Reyna López, Executive Director of PCUN, advocates for more protections for farmworkers from smoke exposure suggesting that farmworkers often have pressure to harvest in unsafe conditions because the wildfires were happening during peak harvest season, even though many lacked health insurance and proper protection; in an Op-Ed in the Oregonian, she writes,

> PCUN is asking Oregon OSHA to improve protections in farmworker housing and require the provision of air conditioners and air purifiers. These [OSHA] emergency heat and smoke rules at the workplace are temporary and must be made permanent. As climate change increases the number of extreme weather events, we know that heat and wildfires will continue to endanger the health of workers in Oregon…. The state should create a disaster pay fund that would be administered like COVID quarantine pay, so that workers do not have to risk their financial security to protect their health (Reyna 2021).

Losing a harvest can result in loss of wages for the farmworkers, so many continue to put their health at risk, since financially they cannot afford to lose working hours.

HDLF responded to the wildfire situation by acquiring face masks that are smoke-rated, (see **Figure 8)**, and distributed them to garden members during their drive-through registration events held at each garden site in February 2021. While HDLF members had access to masks, many outdoor workers did not.

Figure 8. KN95 masks distributed by HDLF.

The 2021 fire season started exceptionally early in Oregon as well as in California, Washington, and Arizona. The Middle Fork Complex Fires were the wildfires that most directly impacted Lane County in 2021. The Middle Fork Complex Fires, according to information from Lane County, is the collective name to refer to the Kwis fire, the Gales Fire, and the Nine-Mile fires, which were burning near each other north of Oakridge in Lane County, Oregon. As a result of the Middle Fork Fire Complex, Lane County experienced numerous unhealthy days in August and September of 2021, according to the Air Quality Index. The attempt to curb the spread of the Gales Fire, resulted in the tragic loss of Frumencio Ruiz Carapia, a 56-year-old Latino firefighter, husband, and father from Medford, Oregon. He died when a tree fell on him in the Willamette Forest in Lane County on August 23, 2021, while combating the Gales Fire (U.S. Fire Administration 2021). He was originally from Mexico but has spent the last 11 years

fighting fires in Oregon, California, and Arizona (Parfitt 2011). Frumencio's story was shared widely on local news outlets in both English and Spanish, and it was evident that he was mourned by many communities in Oregon.

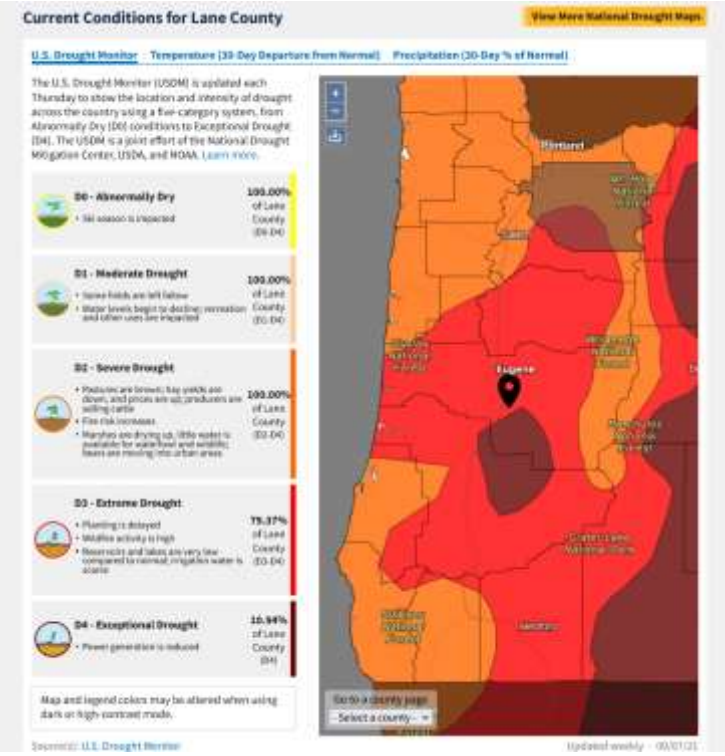
Record-Breaking Heatwaves

Changing weather patterns in Oregon also contributed to the record-breaking 2020 and 2021 wildfire seasons in Oregon, since Oregon has been experiencing a drought for over a decade. Climate change because of human activity, poor fire management strategies, damming of waterways, and construction of unsafe powerlines are resulting in forests being more susceptible to more frequent and intense large-scale wildfire events (FAO 2021: 48-49). These wildfires will continue to endanger the health of workers in Oregon, threaten the subsistence and livelihoods of local communities, and displace more people every year after the fire season. The wildfires were accompanied by record-breaking heatwaves in 2021, intensifying the dangerous conditions for workers.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners voted on June 22, 2021, to declare a local emergency regarding the extreme drought conditions in large parts of Lane County. This drought is what is helping fuel wildfires, and the drought is also contributing to higher summer temperatures. Since the Willamette Valley is not receiving as much rain as it normally gets, the abnormally dry conditions are factoring into the record heat experienced in 2021. During periods of drought, low surface moisture attributes to the surface temperatures of a given area being higher than normal (Chiang, Mazdiyasni, and Aghakouchak 2018: 1). **Figure 9** shows a map created by the U.S. Drought Monitor that visualized the different severities of drought conditions in the western part of Oregon as of September 7, 2021. As the map shows, 100% of Lane County is experiencing some level of drought; 79% of Lane County is experiencing extreme drought,

while 11% is experiencing exceptional drought and the other 10% of the county is in severe drought.

Figure 9. Map of drought conditions in Lane County



June 27, 2021, was the hottest day on record for the city of Eugene and Springfield and broke the record for highest recorded temperature ever in Eugene, reaching 111º degrees Fahrenheit.[17] This heatwave affected primarily the Pacific Northwest, and according to the National Weather Service (NWS), the states of Oregon,[18] Washington,[19] and the territory of British Columbia, Canada[20] broke records for the hottest day ever recorded in the region on Monday June 28, 2021. This extreme heat wave is on top of an increasingly worsening drought. Just days before the heatwave on June 22, 2021, Lane County Board of Commissioners voted

[17] The previous record in Eugene was 108º degrees Fahrenheit on August 9, 1981.
[18] Portland reached 116º (previous record of 107º); Hermiston reached 118º, a new Oregon state record.
[19] Seattle reached 108º (previous record of 103º); Dallesport reached 118º (previous record of 111º).
[20] The village of Lytton reached 121º, which broke the highest recorded temperature ever in Canada.

and declared a local emergency due to extreme drought conditions that were expected to last into the summer months.[21] In the previous section I discussed how most homes, trailers, and apartments do not have A/C, so when I saw a forecast for a potential recording break heatwave, I began to worry greatly about the communities that I am part of. As an engaged anthropologist who cares deeply about connecting to community, I felt compelled to act.

Leading up to the heat event of June 27 and 28, 2021, I compiled resources mostly from the Lane County Health and Human Services and from the Red Cross Heat Wave Safety websites about tips on how to stay safe during the heatwave to create a resource guide (see **Figures 10 and 11**). I shared that resource guide with HDLF staff to circulate with its members; I shared it with whomever I had contact with at the garden and posted it on my department's listserv since I know many graduate students are living in places where A/C is not provided. Ninety and 100-degree days are rare in the Willamette valley, which is why most apartments and houses in the valley do not have A/C units. The fact that most people don't have access to ways of cooling down their living spaces left many vulnerable in the heat wave.

Staying Safe from the Heat and Dangers from the Climate Crisis

Extreme heat is especially dangerous for farmworkers since most of their job requires them to work outdoors. Studies in the U.S. and Central America with agricultural workers have revealed that symptoms of heat illness can range from mild symptoms of dehydration, kidney disease, heat stroke, to even death (Moran 2021; Dally et al. 2018; Horton 2016). According to data from the CDC from 1992-2006, 68 people working in agriculture died from heatstroke, which is 20 times higher than the average in most other occupations (Totoian 2021). Indigenous farmworkers and undocumented immigrants are more likely to be exposed to unsafe work

[21] The last drought emergency in Lane County was declared in 2015.

conditions and are less likely to speak up, whether due to language barriers, fear of retaliation, or inability to afford losing work (Shapiro 2021).

Figure 10. Resource guide to prepare for heatwaves in Spanish with information from the Lane County Health and Human Services and from the Red Cross.

Guía de recursos – Preparación para el calor

Eugene

- Centro de Eventos de Lane County estará abierto como un centro de enfriamiento; El Expo Hall 2 tiene refrigeradores de "swamp cooler". Las habitaciones estarán disponibles de 9 a.m. a 10 p.m. Sábado y domingo.
- La Estación de Servicio Eugene estará abierta (8:30am-5pm 7 días/semana) y First Place Family Center (8am-5pm) tendrá agua
- Black Thistle Street Aid estará en Washington Jefferson Park el domingo a la 1:00 p.m. distribuyendo agua y otros suministros mientras duren.
- Todas las fuentes de agua en Eugene están abiertas para el verano . Las fuentes están disponibles en:
  - Fairmount Park (E. 15th Ave. and Fairmount Blvd.)
  - Oakmont Park (2295 Oakmont Way)
  - Skinner Butte Park (248 Cheshire Ave.)
  - Washington Park (2025 Washington St.)
- La Biblioteca del Centro está abierta de 10 a.m. a 6 p.m. Sábado, cerrado los domingos. Los servicios regulares están disponibles. Personas pueden refrescarse a dentro.

Springfield

- Estación de llenado de botellas de agua debajo de City Hall, 225 Fifth Street en Springfield. Disponible de 2 pm a 7 pm todos los días a partir del sábado 26 de junio.
- ***Splash water park*** estará abierto:
  - Sábados y domingos de 11 a.m. a 3 p.m. y de 3:30 a 7:30 p.m.

Cottage Grove

- La ciudad de Cottage Grove tendrá un centro de enfriamiento en el Centro Comunitario de Cottage Grove (700 E Gibbs Ave) el 9/26 y 9/27 desde las 10 am hasta la puesta del sol. Se requerirán cubrebocas/mascarillas para todos los participantes.

Cómo mantenerse a salvo durante el calor extremo

RECUERDE: El calor mata al empujar el cuerpo más allá de sus límites. En calor extremo y alta humedad, el cuerpo debe trabajar más duro para mantener una temperatura normal.

- Pase la parte más cálida del día en edificios públicos como bibliotecas, centros comerciales y otras instalaciones comunitarias.
- Beba mucha agua, incluso si no siente sed. Hable con su médico antes de beber mucha agua si tiene epilepsia o enfermedad cardíaca, renal o hepática; están en dietas restringidas en líquidos; o tiene un problema con la retención de líquidos.
- No beba cafeína ni bebidas alcohólicas; estos pueden deshidratarte.
- Vístase con ropa holgada, liviana y de colores claros que cubra la mayor cantidad de piel posible. Evite los colores oscuros porque absorben los rayos del sol.
- Protéjase la cara y la cabeza usando un sombrero de ala ancha, como una gorra de béisbol.
- Cierre las persianas y cortinas, especialmente en las ventanas orientadas al sur que permiten la mayor cantidad de calor.
- Abra las ventanas por la noche, durante la noche y temprano en la mañana para dejar entrar el aire fresco.
- Use ventiladores para traer y hacer circular aire frío.
- Nunca deje niños o mascotas en su vehículo.
- Manténgase hidratado bebiendo muchos líquidos sin cafeína y sin alcohol.
- Verifique a familiares, amigos y vecinos sin aire acondicionado, que están solos o que tienen más probabilidades de verse afectados por el calor.
- Use aparatos que produzcan calor como hornos, lavavajillas y secadoras temprano en la mañana o tarde en la noche cuando las temperaturas sean más frescas.

Figure 11. Resource guide to prepare for heatwaves in English with information from the Lane County Health and Human Services and from the Red Cross.

Resource Guide – Preparing for the Heatwave

Eugene

- Lane Events Center will be open as a cooling center; Expo Hall 2, which has swamp coolers, or Rooms 3 and 4, each roughly 5,000 square feet. The rooms will be available from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
- The Eugene Service Station will be open (8:30am-5pm 7 days/week) and First Place Family Center (8-5) will have water when visiting the folks in overnight and safe parking spots.
- Black Thistle Street Aid will be at Washington Jefferson Park on Sunday at 1:00 p.m. distributing water and other supplies as long as they last.
- All water fountains and splash pads in Eugene are turned on for summer. Splash pads are available at:
  - Fairmount Park (E. 15th Ave. and Fairmount Blvd.)
  - Oakmont Park (2295 Oakmont Way)
  - Skinner Butte Park (248 Cheshire Ave.)
  - Washington Park (2025 Washington St.)
- The Downtown Library is open 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday, closed on Sunday. Regular services are available. People can cool off while browsing, and 1-hour time slots are available for people to use a computer or access wi-fi.

Springfield

- Water Misters beneath City Hall, 225 Fifth Street in Springfield. Available from 2 pm to 8 pm each day starting Saturday, June 26.
- Water bottle filling station beneath City Hall, 225 Fifth Street in Springfield. Available from 2 pm to 7 pm each day starting Saturday, June 26.
- ***Splash water park*** will be open:
  - Saturday and Sunday from 11AM–3PM and 3:30–7:30PM

Cottage Grove

- The city of Cottage Grove also announced it will have a cooling center at the Cottage Grove Community Center (700 E Gibbs Ave) on 9/26 and 9/27 from 10 am-sunset for anyone seeking a place to escape the heat. Masks will be required for all entrants.

How to stay safe during extreme heat

REMEMBER: Heat kills by pushing the body beyond its limits. In extreme heat and high humidity, the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature.

- Spend the warmest part of the day in public buildings such as day shelters, libraries, shopping malls, and other community facilities.
- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty. Talk to your doctor before drinking a lot of water if you have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restricted diets; or have a problem with fluid retention.
- Do not drink caffeine and alcoholic beverages; these can make you dehydrated.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, like a baseball cap.
- Close blinds and drapes, especially in south-facing windows which allow in the most heat.
- Open windows in evening, overnight and early morning to let in cool air.
- Use fans to bring in and circulate cool air.
- Never leave children or pets in your vehicle.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of non-caffeine and non-alcoholic fluids.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors without air conditioning, who are alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- Use heat-producing appliances like ovens, dishwashers and dryers in the early morning or late evening when temperatures are cooler.

On Friday June 25, 2020, I arrived at the garden in the early morning to avoid the midday heat to see if anyone needed any information about cooling centers. I know some people tend not to check the information shared on HDLF Facebook group page or text messages, so I wanted to go in person to check in on people since I worried about their safety. At 7am there were already eight different families watering, which is much more than normal for this time day. I went around the garden while maintaining proper social distancing to check how everyone was doing and if they need information about resources. One of the families I asked said "*gracias a Dios que ya tenemos A/C este año*" (Thank God that we have A/C this year). Another family expressed that in the apartments where they live, they do not have A/C. They have wanted to buy a portable one since window units are prohibited at their apartment complex, but portable units are more expensive, and they have not been able to afford one yet. On a positive note, when I asked if they need information about the cooling center, he told me that they did not because they would be with family who did have A/C at their house over the weekend.

On Sunday June 27, 2021, the hottest day ever in Eugene, I went back to the garden to see if people needed information about cooling centers. I arrived at 6:30am in the morning and there were six families watering, and some plots looked like they were just watered, implying people were at the garden earlier in the day or late the previous evening. People care not only about their safety, but they really put in the effort to take care of their crops to make sure they survive the extreme temperatures. One of the garden members with three young children told me they had A/C. Another family I talked to; told me they do not have any A/C but when they finish watering they were headed out to the coast for the day to escape the heat. Where they were going on the coast was forecasted to have a high of 77 degrees, nearly 40 degrees cooler than in the

Willamette Valley. I hosted a family at my place who did not have A/C.[22] They themselves are not direct garden members, but their parents are long time garden members. Their parents live in Veneta, a smaller town in Lane County, and fortunately have A/C in their house. However, their parents were already hosting their son's family, other family, and some friends, so they did not feel like there was enough space to go over. Even though most of the family is vaccinated for COVID-19, they also did not want to be around so many people because their child is too young to be vaccinated and is still at risk. We managed the brutal heat safely, but unfortunately there were many people who did not survive the extreme heat, particularly those working outside.

Unfortunately, the heatwave caused the death of a farmworker in Oregon. The loss of Sebastian Francisco Perez, a 38-year-old Chug Indigenous farmworker, husband, brother, and son who lost his life due to heat-illness at the workplace, was especially impactful to many Latino communities in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. PCUN, Oregon's farmworker union and advocacy organization, held multiple vigils to honor Sebastian's life on Saturday, July 3, 2021; at 10:00am a Vigil was held in St. Paul, Oregon; at 12pm a vigil was held in Portland, Oregon; and at 2pm a Vigil was held in Hermiston, Oregon. The vigils were broadcasted live on Facebook. PCUN focused their organizing efforts on pressuring OSHA to pass emergency rules to ensure there are no more worker deaths due to excessive heat or wildfire smoke. According to Reyna López in an interview with a journalist from Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), even when workers are given the day off, there are no rules for workers to be compensated for these days, and she stated that no person should have to decide between their health or a paycheck (Samayoa 2021).

[22] As a result of the awful experience, I had during the 2020 wildfires, I moved to an apartment that has central A/C which literally saved my life during the 2021 Oregon heatwave. I also invested in two air purifiers that were smoke-rated since my original air purifier was not smoke-rated and was not powerful enough to cover the square footage of the entire apartment.

Overall, more than 107 people died and their deaths were directly associated with the record heat at the end of June 2021, according to the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office. According to the Oregon Health Authority data for June 2021, there were hundreds of emergency room visits for heat-related illness during the heatwave, which is much higher than the average of zero-to-one person a day for June. Since Oregon normally does not experience temperatures that high, a review of Oregon and federal OSHA databases on workplace fatalities revealed that "this was the first reported work-related heat death of a farmworker in Oregon in at least the past two decades, which is as far back as the database goes. At least two workers in construction and logging died of heat-related illness in Oregon in the past 19 years" (Totoian 2021). As a result, from public pressure about the death of Sebastian, Oregon OSHA adopted an emergency rule on July 8, 2021 that guarantees workers rest on their breaks in the shade and have plenty of cool water to drink during hot weather.

According to the July 2021 Oregon OSHA emergency rules, which are not permanent, outdoor workers must have access to a cool-down rest period in the shade for ten minutes for every two hours of work. The shade must be open to the air, or the employer must provide mechanical ventilation for cooling, and this cooling space must be located as close as practical to the areas where employees are working. According to these rules, employees must have a readily accessible drinking supply that does not cost money and the employees must have the opportunity to drink at least 32 ounces of cool or cold water per hour that is either cool (66-77 degrees Fahrenheit) or cold (35-65 degrees Fahrenheit). Employers must ensure that employees are monitored for alertness and signs and symptoms of heat illness to determine whether medical attention is necessary (Oregon OSHA 2021).

The only other states that have worker protections regarding heat for farmworkers are Washington, California, and Minnesota. However, the Oregon OSHA emergency rules did not go far enough, according to PCUN, which brought attention to aspects of the initial emergency rule requiring further attention. For example, "when workers return to their employer-operated farmworker housing after work, they may not have a safe place to cool down and rest" (López 2021). PCUN is advocating that "emergency heat rules at the workplace [that] are temporary…must be made permanent" (López 2021). The organization is also advocating for more financial security to make protections and rule changes viable since many employees feel like they have a financial obligation to their family to work in unsafe conditions out of economic necessity. Reyna López declares, "The state should create a disaster pay fund that would be administered like COVID quarantine pay, so that workers do not have to risk their financial security to protect their health" (López 2021). PCUN also lobbied for a farmworker overtime bill, HB 4002, which successfully passed on March 10, 2022, by the 81st Oregon Legislative Assembly and was signed by Governor Kate Brown. Under this bill, permissible hourly workweek limits are established, and any hours worked beyond the permissible limit are to be paid at an overtime rate of 1.5x the employee's regular hourly rate; for calendar years 2023 and 2024, 55 hours in one workweek is the limit; for calendar years 2025 and 2026, 48 hours in one workweek is the limit; and by 2027 and thereafter, 40 hours in one workweek is the limit (Oregon Farm Bureau 2022). The passage of this bill highlights the importance of advocacy, research and documentation, and testimonies. In 2021 PCUN made presentations to the Oregon Senate labor and business committee in collaboration with the Oregon Farm Bureau (Totoian 2021). This bill is important for weather-related work challenges because overtime eligibility for

agricultural workers will help to offset days when people cannot work due to smoke, heat, cold, or storms.

As a result of the critiques of lack of protections at employer-provided housing against heat dangers for farmworkers and from smoke from the wildfires, on August 2, 2021, Oregon OSHA adopted two more emergency rules to protect workers. “The wildfire smoke rule applies to employers whose employees are – or will be – exposed to wildfire smoke where the ambient air…is at or above an Air Quality Index (AQI) 101, which is unhealthy for sensitive groups. Sensitive groups include people with lung and heart problems; children younger than 18 and adults older than 65; pregnant women; and people with diabetes.” The primary change is “whenever employee exposure exceeds an AQI 101, employers must maintain an adequate supply of NIOSH-approved filtering facepiece respirators that effectively protect wearers. Such respirators must be provided at no cost and be readily available for voluntary use to all exposed workers at their request” (Oregon OSHA 2021).

Regarding the rule changes that affect employer-provided housing, sleeping areas must maintain an indoor temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit or less. Employers must take steps to provide adequate coolness in sleeping areas by, using artificial or natural shade to ensure windows are protected from direct sunlight during all hours of the day. Each housing unit must have a thermometer provided that displays the temperature in both Fahrenheit and Celsius in each housing unit. If the employer is not able to provide sleeping areas that maintain an indoor temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit or less, then employers must provide a common area large enough to accommodate at least 50% of the occupants at any one time for occupants to cool off whenever the heat index outside the housing is at or above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Employees and supervisors must receive training that discusses dangers of heat illness and “employers must

display the ‘Heat Risks in Housing’ poster provided by Oregon OSHA so occupants can see it. The poster is available in both English and Spanish” (Oregon OSHA 2021).

Conclusions

Ongoing climate change and global warming guarantees that Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous families will continue to confront significant smoke- and heat-related challenges in their work lives, at home through housing, and for children. The pandemic and climate change have intensified existing inequalities that continue to impact physical, mental, and emotional health. Stress proliferation theory helps us understand that the Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities who participated in this research project in Lane County, Oregon are experiencing one layer of stress from COVID-19 (see discussion in Chapter III), another layer of stressors that arose from the historic wildfires in 2020 and 2021, and another layer of stressors from record-breaking high temperatures in 2021, on top of any additional stressors that existed before the onset of the pandemic. The descriptions of stressors that proliferate in the lives of my research collaborators does not encompass the experience of all Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Oregon, because the intensity of the wildfires, exposure to smoke, and extreme heatwaves did not impact all regions in the same manner.

In addition, research about stress proliferation describes how even in the same environment, “when facing the same stressor individuals may well vary in their experiences and subsequent well-being” (Fan, Lam, and Moen 2019: 2752-60). By documenting the experiences of my interlocutors navigating extreme weather events, I provide new insights into how people get impacted specifically by smoke exposure, wildfire evacuations, and extreme heat. These insights can be useful for public policy and planning for cities and communities to better prepare

and mitigate the severe impacts of these seasonal events that are worsening from drought conditions. It is important to acknowledge the layering of these stressors with the pandemic and existing inequalities because people do not experience stress associated as isolated incidents; rather these stressors overlap in various aspects life and are experienced in conjunction. The implications for analyzing stress proliferation from COVID-19 and changing weather patterns in Mesoamerican Indigenous communities and Latino communities is to advocate that governmental and community responses and support should holistically address needs, instead of trying to address one issue at a time.

In the next chapter I detail the topic of food insecurity and food scarcity in Latino communities, which are stressors that existed before the pandemic but intensified during the pandemic. I also document the practices that families in HDLF have adopted to actively care for one another along a variety of dimensions in response to the proliferation of stress. I analyze how carework at community gardens is addressing different layers of stressors for Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County. It is important to note, just as people experience stressors differently, they also cope, adapt, and provide care in response to these stressors differently. My research participants provide important insights into their own local and network-based practices of care that offer alternatives to individually based solutions for people as "patients" in a medical system and instead suggest the importance of community and belonging in care.

CHAPTER V

CAREWORK IN THE GARDEN

While numerous scholars have examined the kinds of extreme structural vulnerability experienced by agricultural and food laborers from Indigenous communities in diaspora (Holmes 2013; Horton 2016; Jiménez Sifuentez 2016), I am one of the many researchers who are urgently examining how existing vulnerabilities are being intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, how new vulnerabilities are being created during the pandemic, and how people are caring for themselves and their loved ones together. At the community gardens, I regularly witnessed acts of care on different scales: the individual level, the familial level, and the community level. Acts of care can include supporting friends and extended family, providing remittances, sharing knowledge about cultural foodways, sharing food, maintaining community and connection, helping people connect to services they need, both inside the garden and across the networks of day-to-day life that exist outside the garden. It is important to recognize that the participants in this project are not just "getting by" or coping with the changing circumstances, but rather many are active agents in getting their community to positively adapt to the new realities they face.

The sharing of food and foodways revolves around patterns of care, kinship, culture, and health (Carney 2015; Minkoff-Zern 2014: 1196-8). Maintaining food security is part of *la lucha diaria* (the daily struggle) for family caregivers since eating is a daily activity that takes time to prepare, ingredients must be bought or grown, eating healthy is a choice that must be made, and because food insecurity is relatively high among Latino communities, broadly speaking (Carney 2015). Several of the people I spoke with are actively using their garden as a form of carework that not only allows communities in diaspora to connect to foodways that are culturally relevant for their family, friends, and community, but also to alleviate or prevent food insecurity. Most

are growing food to feed themselves and their family's healthy foods; some grow enough surplus to share with others; some are using herbs as medicine; some provide a helping hand with the day-to-day garden maintenance, especially to those who may be older or have injuries; others take time to volunteer with larger projects such as building a greenhouse, repairing/replacing fencing and doors, and leading educational workshops. I illuminate participation in agriculture not as paid labor but as a source of social connection, emotional support, access to healthy food, and nutrition—thus as unpaid carework. This participation in community gardening is also a route for personal coping and promotion of one's own well-being.

Care and Carework

Care and carework are interrelated concepts, and I seek to understand how these concepts get operationalized on the individual and family level by agricultural workers in Lane County and on a community level and beyond. To examine this, I use examples, pre-pandemic and during the pandemic, of how HDLF helps alleviate the needs of families who garden there through their social services. The framing of the concepts of care and carework in this dissertation is guided by the following definition that has been created from conversations between anthropologists and sociologists engaged on immigration and border issues; care is the "the multifaceted labor that produces the daily living conditions that make basic human health and well-being possible" (Zimmerman, Litt, and Bose 2006; Carney 2015; Yarris 2017). Care under this definition can include the daily mundane tasks and gestures such as "refreshing web pages to get your parents a vaccine appointment. Texting a colleague to see how they are doing. Cooking food to drop off for a sick neighbor. Scheduling a doctor's appointment. Shopping. Chatting. Driving. Etc." (Arnold and Aulino 2021:13). Carework is often unrecognized in our day to day lives, as people can take for granted gestures of care. Carework can simply mean

providing care for others, which can include family, friends, and community members. I felt it was important during the pandemic to recognize and appreciate the different forms of care that were happening at the garden between family and friends, and between the organization and the communities they serve.

HDLF cultivated solidarity with the local Latino, Mesoamerican Indigenous and immigrant communities in Lane County, Oregon by providing relief and assistance. The organization normally manages bilingual community gardens, and offers small business class, but from 2019-2022, they also helped support families who were excluded from the different economic relief packages. Historically HDLF has referred their members to other community-based organizations to get access to resources such as English classes, U.S. Citizenship classes, bilingual computer classes, Oregon driver license exam preparation courses, mental health support, addiction services, and getting connected to financial/housing support. To expand on the services HDLF provides, in 2021 they merged with two other non-profit organizations in Eugene and Springfield: Downtown Languages, a community-based organization dedicated to teaching English and civic education classes to immigrants, and Centro Latino Americano, an organization that provides a wide range of services to the Latino community including social services, addiction services, family counseling, food pantries, and mental health support.

The cultural spaces and networks created at the HDLF community garden, the food grown, and referrals to resources at these garden sites may be a buffer to the violence and suffering associated with structural vulnerabilities that affect Indigenous, immigrant, and Latino communities. For many Mexican immigrants living in the U.S., “gardens are the foundation for social networks because they…connect individuals to their food by gaining them direct access, and to their community through the sharing of resources and knowledge” (Valle 2017: 49).

Support networks formed in the garden create routines and stability that provide buffers to structural violence experiences from immigration, violence, and inequity.

According to the 2020 year-end note from HDLF Executive Director, Marissa Zarate, during the COVID-19 pandemic HDLF was able to provide rental assistance to some of their members they assist to ensure they stay housed, are not evicted, and do not incur debt by deferring payments. Another way that the organization exemplified care in a time of crisis, is that they distributed essential supplies such as cloth masks, KN95 masks, hand sanitizer, and culturally relevant bulk foods such as rice, beans, and *masa harina* (corn flour). In partnership with Herbalists without Borders, the organization delivered COVID-19 care packages that were designed to support the immune system to program members. Packages include fire cider, tea, vitamins C & D, herbal remedies, and more. **Figure 12** displays a scanned letter written in Spanish that was included in the care packages that were distributed by HDLF.

The translated letter reads:
Greetings,

We hope this care package provides you some comfort and relief. Prayers and blessings for your health and wellness. As you know by now, coronavirus spreads very easily. Please remember to: wash hands often, wear a clean mask that covers your mouth and nose, sneeze, or cough into your elbow, sanitize frequently touched surfaces often and sanitize your hands before handling these supplies to share amongst yourselves. Soups, Broths, teas, and water will be very important for wellness, illness, and recovery. Rest as much and as long as you possibly can! Sometimes recovery is slow! Thank you for all you do, friends. You are a blessing to this community.

Important information about the items in this package:

- Vitamin D is very important for immune support and bone health. It may be very important for avoiding or tolerating coronavirus. Most people are deficient in vitamin D, especially dark-skinned folks, and people from the southern hemisphere. The vitamin D drops in this bag come out of the bottle slowly on purpose - so you can be certain of the dosage. Tip the bottle upside down and wait for the drop. It will come. Drop it into your water or onto your food once a day. It is flavorless.
- Vitamin C is very important for immune support and tissue healing.
- Zinc is another important immune support element.
- Fire cider is a potent infused vinegar packed with immune boosting vitality and made from regular foods in your kitchen.

- Elderberry syrup is a longtime beloved immune support remedy.
- Aromatic inhalers are for external use only. Remove the cap and breathe deeply the therapeutic vapors as desired.
    - Lavender: calming, emotionally balancing, relaxing
    - Respiratory blend: support respiration, opening
- Tea variety pack offers support and comfort specific to your needs and is labeled according to its use: digestion, sore throat, cough, anxiety, and immune support. To make a cup of medicinal tea: pour hot water over the dry herb, cover and let steep for 15-45 minutes. Take 2-3 times throughout the day.

Blessings 2021
Herbalists Without Borders Eugene

We are not medical professionals. We are trained herbalists, but do not practice medicine. None of the items in this package are substitutes or cures for any illness or disease; they are intended to fortify your immune system and vitality to prevent illness. Please seek higher care when indicated.

Figure 12. Letter written in Spanish from *Herbolarios Sin Fronteras* Eugene that was attached to the care packages they distributed through community partners.

Herbolarios
SIN FRONTERAS
EUGENE

Saludos,

Esperamos que este paquete de remedios naturales le sea de provecho y le sirva de algo. Nuestros mejores deseos para usted.

Como ya sabrá, el coronavirus se propaga con mucha facilidad. Recuerde: lavarse las manos con frecuencia, usar una mascarilla limpia que cubra su boca y nariz, estornudar o toser en su codo, desinfectar las superficies que se tocan con frecuencia y desinfectar sus manos antes de usar estos remedios naturales.

Las sopas, los caldos, los tés y el agua son muy importantes para su bienestar, para ayudarlo a sanar si está enfermo, y para tener una pronta recuperación.

¡Descanse tanto como pueda! ¡A veces la recuperación es lenta!

Información importante sobre los remedios naturales que hay en esta bolsa o paquete:

- La vitamina D es muy importante para fortalecer el sistema inmunológico y mejorar la salud de los huesos. Puede ser muy importante para evitar o sobrellevar el coronavirus. La mayoría de las personas tienen deficiencia de vitamina D, especialmente las personas de piel oscura y las personas del hemisferio sur. Las gotas de vitamina D en esta bolsa salen del frasco lentamente a propósito, para que se asegure que está tomando la cantidad correcta. Ponga el frasco boca abajo y espere que salga una gota. Déjela caer en el agua o en la comida una vez al día. No tiene sabor.
- La vitamina C es muy importante para fortalecer el sistema inmunológico y la curación de los tejidos.
- El zinc también ayuda a fortalecer el sistema inmunológico importante.
- La cidra de fuego es un potente vinagre que da mucha vitalidad y estimula el sistema inmunológico. Esta sidra es preparada con alimentos comunes que usted puede encontrar en su cocina.
- El jarabe de saúco (elderberry) es un remedio que se ha usado por muchos años para fortalecer el sistema inmunológico.
- Los inhaladores aromáticos son solo para uso externo no para tomarlos. Retire la tapa y respire profundamente los vapores terapéuticos según lo desee.
  Lavanda: calmante, crea un balance emocional y relaja.
  Mezcla respiratoria: ayuda a respirar mejor.
- La variedad de tés tienen usos diferentes y están etiquetados según el uso que tienen. Hay para la digestión, los, la ansiedad, el dolor de garganta, y para fortalecer el sistema inmunológico. Para hacer una taza de té medicinal: ponga agua hervida sobre la hierba seca, cubra y deje reposar durante 15 a 45 minutos. Tomar 2-3 veces durante el día.

Blessings 2021
Herbalists Without Borders Eugene
herbeugene@gmail.com

"No somos profesionales médicos, somos herbolagos(conocedores de plantas medicinales). No practicamos la medicina. Ninguna de las cosas que hay en esta bolsa o paquete sustituye a las medicinas recomendadas por su medico ni cura ninguna enfermedad o dolencia; están hechos para fortalecer su sistema inmunológico y darle vitalidad para ayudarlo a prevenir enfermedades. Por favor consulta con su médico si tiene alguna dolencia o enfermedad. ."

The care packages were distributed by HDLF at their annual registration event in 2021, which was an outdoor event with a four-hour time window at each of their gardens to reduce people congregating and for the staff to maintain social distance the entire time. **Figure 13** shows a photo of one of the set ups during the one of the registration events that happened in February 2021. In partnership with Lane County Public Health, they were able to offer COVID-19 testing bilingually at their garden locations. The commitment that HDLF has demonstrated in engaging with the needs of the local Latino and immigrant communities, is evidence of carework that was able to happen through the social connections and trust that was forged at the organization's community gardens.

Figure 13. Photo of a HDLF registration event during the pandemic. The photo depicts two people registering for their garden plot with the help of one of the HDLF interns. Everyone was properly socially distanced, wearing face masks, and using sanitized pens and clipboards.

During the pandemic, garden members were also making their own fire cider to share with other members to keep everyone's immune system healthy. In 2019, during one of the *talleres* (workshops), a guest speaker who is a *curandera*, herbalist, taught garden members how to make *cidro de fuego* (fire cider); a fermented natural remedy made from apple cider vinegar, onions, garlic, horseradish, chilies, and ginger (there are many various recipes, so the garden members who made *cidro de fuego* during the pandemic probably were using varying ingredients).

Being a caregiver for family members is something that is already done regularly in many households, but the stay-at-home CDC guidelines forced countless others into a caregiving role. People needed to be caregivers for children who could not go to in-person daycare or school; according to the COFS Phase I report, farmworkers had "trouble accessing affordable childcare and supporting their children's education with the shift to remote classes" (Martinez et al. 2021: 1). The interview with Elena during Phase II of the COFS revealed that she was the primary caregiver for her 6-year-old son when the schools closed, and because she was worried about his safety, he also did not attend daycare. Even though Elena was trying to look out for the safety of her son, this caused her to lose a substantial amount of work because there was no one else to care for her son. She declared:

> C*omo mi niño no está yendo a la escuela porque, pues, no quiero que se relacione con más personas porque como es chiquito y no hay vacuna para él. Yo ya tengo mis vacunas* (Elena 2021).
>
> My child is not going to school because, well, I do not want him to interact with more people because since he is small and there is no vaccine for him. I already have my vaccines (Elena 2021).

People also needed to be caregivers to family members who have chronic conditions, tested positive for COVID-19, have "non-emergency" ailments, and aging family members. For example, Pedro, a fieldworker who was ill was COVID-19, shared during an interview in Phase II of the COFS, how he conceptualizes care on an individual level and how it relates to care on the family level and community level.

> *Yo estuve en cuarentena. Mi esposa, ella salió positiva de COVID. Nosotros, yo con mi familia, no salimos… Yo estuve cocinando para ella, le proveía… Pues, yo creo que, lo que tenemos que hacer, siempre lo que he hecho es siempre ser una persona responsable; y la responsabilidad es primero cuidarme yo, para poder cuidar otras personas; seguir adelante yo, para que puedas seguir adelante también otras personas* (Pedro 2021).
>
> I was in quarantine. My wife, she came out positive for COVID. We, myself with my family, didn't go out… I was cooking for her, I provided for her. Well, I think that what we must do, it is always what I have done as a responsible person; and the responsibility is first to take care of myself, to be able to take care of other people; to move forward myself, so that you can move forward other people (Pedro 2021).

To understand a grounded sense of carework, it is essential to understand how differing models of personhood shape a person's worldview. Often personhood is conceived of as a dichotomy between the individual and the community, the autonomist, and the collectivist, and/or kin and non-kin (Speed 2005). For my project and conceptualization of carework, it is necessary to highlight balancing the needs of the individual self while helping others meet their needs, since the idea of the individual and selfhood is a particular cultural construct that is not universal (Kondo 1990: 113). According to the COFS Phase I report, many of the farmworkers

who responded to the question about how families kept healthy answered about needing to take care of each other and about the need to take care of themselves as an individual. People cared for themselves by taking precautions from being exposed to COVID-19, taking care of their physical health while gyms and recreational sports were closed, and taking care of their mental health when most services were only being offered virtually. Results from the survey during Phase I COFS revealed that some of the ways that people took care of themselves include exercising, staying hydrated, playing sports, listening to music, watching TV, shopping, walking, reading, taking vitamins, talking with family and spouses, drinking herbal teas, maintaining their faith, reading, playing with their kids, doing Zumba remotely, gardening, going out in nature, taking baths, and getting massages (Martinez et al. 2021: 14).

Long before COVID-19, research at community garden sites has revealed social, emotional, and physical benefits. Research with Latino populations in Southern California that use community gardens revealed that the care of the staff and members has helped people who experience depression, anxiety, and stress to improve their emotional well-being through emotional relief and/or stress relief (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014). Participation in community garden sites is more than just food security; there are social and emotional benefits as well. HDLF uses surveys and phone calls to try to understand the needs of the people they serve, and from these conversations they can provide care that expands well beyond the garden; they help people navigate applications that are only available in English, provide financial literacy courses, help educate about regulations for small businesses, and provide referrals to other community services (Zarate 2020).

In addition, community gardens in urban and rural areas may serve as bridges connecting immigrants from Central and South America with the more-established Latino residents, which

can facilitate community-building. In the U.S. many immigrant community members did not receive support from the multiple governmental economic relief programs that existed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic because they were not eligible, did not have information about how to access them, or were unaware of the relief funds in general; 48% of the respondents of the COFS Phase I indicated that they were unaware of the Oregon Relief Fund. The Oregon Relief Fund was a program that provided financial support directly to those who lost their jobs yet were ineligible for unemployment insurance and federal stimulus relief due to their immigration status, and were experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, and economic hardship. Farmworkers who identify as Indigenous showed higher rates of not knowing about the program; 56% of Indigenous respondents said that they were unaware of this relief program (Martinez et al. 2021: 17).

Foodways and Community Gardens

For many members of HDLF, growing food is an act of care. Through the actions of the members at HDLF, there is evidence that food distribution and carework at community garden sites does not revolve around the exchange of money. Instead, the sharing of food and foodways revolves around patterns of care and kinship. Below, I explore how care and carework concepts are operationalized on the individual level and family level by agricultural workers in Lane County, specifically those who are engaged in community gardening with HDLF. I chose community gardens as a site of analysis because I believe that members of Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities who produce their own food have a unique perspective about providing care, what is considered carework, and how to address issues associated with health and well-being. My research reveals how those who engage in unpaid

carework especially at community garden sites provide a source of social connection, emotional support, and food security through their actions.

Prior to the pandemic, food insecurity was an ongoing issue in Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in many regions of the U.S. and in Oregon. These communities are often situated in regions where heavily processed food is readily available but fresh produce and healthy foods are unavailable or too expensive (Valle 2017: 54). Not having access to grow their own food, many farm working communities, historically and more recently, are reliant on purchasing what is available and affordable at supermarkets. This transition from consuming a diet based on traditional food from fresh ingredients to consuming unhealthy alternatives that are processed, sugary, or lacking in nutrients has contributed the rise of chronic conditions such as type II diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases (Cidro et al. 2015: 32; Socha et al. 2012; Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996). A literature review of 51 articles from 1980-2017 about community gardens and well-being amongst "vulnerable populations" revealed that community garden participation can have the potential to enhance well-being at the individual level (i.e., self-esteem, independence, personal control, etc.); can have a positive impact on physical health through increased physical activity and access to nutritious foods; and can have positive influence on the social level by fostering relationships, social connections, and community (Malberg Dyg, Christensen, and Peterson 2020).

Food insecurity can be defined as "when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level" (FAO 2021: 199). Food insecurity among "Latino/Hispanic" communities from 2015 to 2019 in Oregon was 8.3%, while 21% were

experiencing “very low food security” (Edwards 2020; Oregon Health Authority 2019: 2). Daily challenges of food insecurity can interfere with the ability of people to provide care, and research has shown that food insecurity can have profound effects on people’s subjectivities and overall health status (Hales et al. 2020: 2; Tappia, Ramjiawan, and Dhalla 2020: v; Moreno et al. 2015; Munger et al. 2014). In 2021, food insecurity only got worse as food prices rose to the highest in decades (everything from vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy, and eggs) due to ongoing supply chain issues from the pandemic, not valuing worker safety, and a weakening economy that caused inflation to rise to the highest since 1982.[23]

During the pandemic, many farmworkers in Oregon relied on the support of food aid to make ends meet and not face hunger. Overall, out of the 300 participants in the COFS Phase I, 54% of farmworkers reported that they used a food bank. However, farmworkers who identified as Indigenous faced higher rates of food insecurity since 67% reported needing to rely on a food bank for support (Martinez et al. 2021: 16-17). Many of the farmworkers in the study also received food aid support from schools, churches, and non-profit organizations. In Lane County, Oregon, non-profit organizations such as HDLF, FOOD for Lane County, Burrito Brigade, Catholic Community Services, and the Rural Organizing project helped provide food relief to the community.

To address food insecurity, it is important to understand what it means to be food secure. Food security is not just about providing something edible to survive, since Indigenous communities, here and abroad, often experience malnourishment and hunger despite food efforts because of not being able to access Indigenous crops and cultural foodways that have sustained their cultures and ancestors (Peña 2017: 22). For food security systems to function effectively,

[23] The rate of overall inflation was 6.8% according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for November 2021, and 7% for December 2021. The CPI is tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

they must address the needs of the local community and ensure that the members share their traditions, cultural foodways, cosmological beliefs, and environmental knowledge to create agricultural systems that are reflective of the community's distinctiveness. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO), food security is when people:

> At all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Based on this definition, four food security dimensions can be identified: food availability, economic and physical access to food, food utilization and stability over time (FAO 2021: 199).

This definition of food security vaguely considers access to cultural foodways since the food produced must meet the need of food preferences of the people being served. Growing food at community gardens allows people autonomy, to an extent, to plant food crops that are preferred by themselves and their families.

At HDLF, people practiced Indigenous agricultural methods such as the milpa, an agricultural system that dates back thousands of years in Mesoamerica that consists of corn (*Zea mays*), squash (*Cucurbita pepo*), and beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) grown together. There is regional variation about how to plant the crops in this system. Garden members regularly share cultural foodways by sharing crops and knowledges from their home communities. I have seen people engaged in conversations about *chepil* (*Crotalaria longirostrata*) and *chile de aguas (Capsicum annuum* cultivar*)* from Oaxaca, and many other conversations that revolved around *pápalo* (*Porophyllum ruderale*), *chile pequín* (*Capsicum annuum cultivar*), *nopales* (prickly pear cactus, *Opuntia spp.), verdolaga* (purslane, *Portulaca oleracea), quelites* (a generic term for

edible herb in Mexico but is most attributed to the herbs *Amaranthus spp.* and *Chenopodium album*). According to Marissa Zarate, the executive director of HDLF:

> Many families in the garden program grow plant varieties that are impossible to find in this geographical area. Others do not have seeds for the plants that they wish to grow. These plants are important parts of their heritage that have been grown in Indigenous communities for generations, and they are vital ingredients for recipes that allow people to celebrate and express their culture through food…. many of the new families have no experience growing food but feel passionately about preserving the agricultural traditions of their ancestors (Zarate 2019).

The act of growing culturally relevant organic crops highlights how garden spaces can offer Indigenous communities in diaspora a place to connect to their roots, the earth, and their foodways while engaging in carework. Foodways and community-based agriculture is not only concerned with the cultivation of food products but has also been identified to encompass both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014; Farb and Armelagos 1983; Douglas 1972). Having access to garden spaces and cultural foodways can promote cultural production, economic stability, self-sufficiency, and increase access to fresh produce (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014: 1101), especially when economic opportunities are limited like during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community gardening can promote economic stability because by not spending as much money on groceries, people can save money for other purposes such as rent and health care (Minkoff-Zern 2012: 1200-1201).

To enact care is to "produce the daily living conditions that make basic human health and well-being possible" (Zimmerman, Litt, and Bose 2006: 3; Carney 2015). Procuring food for oneself or for others can promote food security and care because these actions demonstrate

concern for a person's well-being and needs. In an interview with a local news station in May 2020 about the expansion of one of the gardens, Teresa a member of over ten years told the reporter, "*Es como una gran bendición para mí porque honestamente, el contacto con la tierra y las plantas es como una terapia"* (It's like a big blessing for me because honestly, the contact with the earth and plants is like therapy) (Gutierrez 2020). Important conversations are had between families and friends about the needs in their lives. Through everyday discussions people are making decisions about what crops to plant, when to buy food, when to ask for help, how to manage resources, how much in remittances can be sent, etc. These decisions made collectively imply that "language can enact care by creating and nurturing the social relations on which provisioning is based" (Arnold and Aulino 2021: 14). The importance of connectivity and support among kin was reflected among the interactions that pertain to care, exchange, and foodways at the HDLF community gardens as seen in my fieldwork.

Antonia, one of the garden members who was part of the Garden Lideres Committee,[24] shared an inspiring story during a focus group discussion moderated by HDLF staff at a seed saving workshop on August 16, 2019. I did not record the audio of this focus group, but I did take notes and captured a memorable quote. Antonia told us how she was experiencing deep depression due to the death of her husband who died in a tragic accident leaving her as the sole breadwinner for her family. She shared how acquiring a garden plot was a turning point in her healing as she was able to support her family and find community support. Antonia told the group that she, "*Podía cultivar suficiente alimentos saludables y frescos para cuidar a mi familia. Gracias por el apoyo, siento que pertenezco aquí"* (I was able to grow an enough

[24] In 2019, HDLF formed the Garden Lideres Committee, which was composed of 12 garden members who meet monthly to help with program planning (Zarate 2019). This program was put on hold during 2020 as a result of the pandemic, and as of January of 2022, the committee has not resumed since the spread of COVID-19 variants has delayed the start of some programs.

healthy fresh foods to take care of my family. Thank you for the support, I feel like I belong here) (Antonia 2019). During the focus group discussion, she talked about how she served on the City of Eugene's Climate Action Plan Equity Panel and provided essential feedback to Eugene's City Council in a public hearing on June 17, 2019, about how climate change is impacting the Latino community on behalf of HDLF and the Climate Action Plan Equity Panel. She mentioned how it was the first time a Spanish-speaking, monolingual speaker spoke to the Eugene City Council. Antonia's experiences reveal care for herself, for her family, and care about the future of the local communities in Lane County.

Antonia's story and use of the concepts *cuidar* y *pertenecer* is a unique contribution to the field of carework because *cuidar* does not just translate to care and *pertenecer* does not just translate to belonging. *Cuidar* is to care for, care about, to protect, shelter, while *pertencer* is to belong, be connected, to be part of a group. The concept of *pertenecer* showcases the importance of connections and relationships that are fostered by people who have a garden plot with HDLF. Many of these members have extended, multigenerational families, while others are relatively new to the region, but the networking opportunities at the garden allow neighbors to garden together and interact often inside and outside of the garden. Carework and the concept of well-being in relation to food tends to be connected in many cultures. For example, concepts of carework and well-being from a Kuranko community in Sierra Leone indicate that kinship, parenthood, food, and food relations, and ritual and celebrations are all elements of well-being (Jackson 2011: 9). In other words, the care between kinship networks helps reinforce connectivity within the community and creates reliable systems of support. This same type of model of carework and well-being is likely to make sense in other places as well. When carework and well-being as concepts are built from the ground up from specific, place-based

models, it is evident that culture, cosmology, religion, and place cause different understandings of what "care" means.

Indigenous people throughout the Americas and the Caribbean historically have had a close relationship with plants since multiple independent plant domestications have occurred in the past 9,000 years (Fussell 1992). Being removed from the land has made it difficult for Indigenous and Indigenous-descended communities to continue their rituals and historical connection relationship with food and the environment. Here I define ritual as "an act or series of acts regularly repeated over years or generations that embody the beliefs of a group of people and create a sense of continuity and belonging" (Guest 2016). Gardening and foodways are considered rituals because the agricultural practices performed today have been repeated over generations for thousands of years and are linked to spiritual and cosmological rituals. The act of gardening in Mesoamerican communities embodies beliefs from various Indigenous cosmologies that predate European colonization.

Agriculture has been fundamental to the people of Oaxaca, for example, for thousands of years. I use Oaxaca as an example because a large proportion of the garden members at HDLF have their roots there, whether they migrated from Oaxaca, or their parents were born there. The Pre-Columbian Mixtec and Zapotec people's diet consisted of maize, beans, squash, avocados, and chili peppers, and they would build storage systems to preserve these crops throughout the year or use natural formations to use as storage such as Guilá Naquitz, a dry cave located in Oaxaca, Mexico that has archaeological evidence of foodways that date back at least 8,000 years BP (Warinner, Robles Garcia, and Tuross 2013: 871; Powis et al. 2013: 2). Many of the crops were domesticated in Oaxaca while other important crops such as maguey, avocado trees, *guajes*

(native legumes), and mushrooms grew wild in the diverse ecological region (González Licón 2001; Williams 2013).

To provide an example of how foodways are related to ritual and connect traditions of the past to the present, I draw upon the research I conducted in Oaxaca in 2017 for the completion of my master's degree. Many of my interlocutors for my dissertation are from Oaxaca, speak Indigenous languages from the region, and practice their cultural traditions in Oregon. In 2017 I spent *Día de los Muertos*, Day of the Dead, with a Zapotec community in Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, exploring the ethnobotanical significance of copal. Copal in Oaxaca can signify the species of trees in the *Bursera* genus that grow in Mexico and Central America or the resin that is produced and collected from certain species of the Bursera tree that is ritually burned as an incense on personal altars and places of worship. The practice of using copal resin in Mexico dates back at least 3,900 years ago to an Olmec site in the territory that is known today as the state of Veracruz (Pool 2007: 75), and the early evidence of copal being associated with ritual in the territory known as Oaxaca is found on a stone slab at the *Museo de los Culturales de México* (Museum of the Cultures of Mexico) in Oaxaca City, dated 1,900 BP. On *Día de Todos los Santos*, All Saints Day, on November 1, 2019, I spent the afternoon with a Zapotec-speaking family. After the ritual burning of the copal incense to lead the spirits of the dead into our realm, we all sat down and ate lunch, which consisted of *mole amarillo* (yellow mole sauce), tamales from the same batch of tamales as those placed on the altar as an *ofrenda* (offering) to the returning spirits of the dead ancestors. We were thus eating the same food as Doña Florinda and Don Mateo's returned relatives. We were joined with their loved ones through the food as well as the copal. The following day, on *Día de los Muertos*, we ate the same meal with the addition of *higadito* (egg soup in chicken broth).

The *mole amarillo* was made with yellow chilies called *chilcostle* and *chilhuacle*, *yerba santa* (Piper auritum), onions and other various spices and herbs. Mole is served on *Día de los Muertos* because it is meant to honor the deceased and to please the souls that come visit during this holiday, but this practice is adapted from the pre-Hispanic tradition of drinking a cacao beverage prepared with the water used by the deceased to bathe, so that guests of a funeral were imbued with the essence of the deceased (Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas 2019). The personal altar at their home was decorated with offerings of *flores de cempasúchil* (*Tagetes erecta*, Mexican marigold flowers) and other flowers, a picture and a figurine of the Virgin de Guadalupe, commercially produced candles in glass, handmade candles made from *cera de virgin* (honeycombs), Oaxacan chocolate, different types of breads, *higadito* (egg soup in chicken broth), *mole amarillo* (yellow mole) tamales wrapped in banana leaves, two sugar cane stalks, oranges, *tlayudas* (Oaxacan Tortillas), and figurines of Christ. The rituals associated with food offerings and copal smoke links the spiritual and material well-being of individuals to the ancestors, which indicates how the physical realms (the body and the home) are interconnected to the sacred realm (the afterlife).

Día de los Muertos and *Día de Todos Santos* are also important holidays for some of the garden members at HDLF, especially for those who are from Oaxaca and speak Zapotec or Mixtec. One of the garden members constructed a small "hoop-house" (mini greenhouse) at their garden plot to ensure the *flores de cempasúchil* that they sowed would survive until the beginning of November for them to use for their cultural traditions. Since Oregon has a shorter growing season, many of other members who tried to grow cempasúchil for the *Día de los Muertos* learned through experience that the flowers would die in October without special shelter.

Part of some Indigenous understandings of how people exist in the world link human relationships very closely with the natural world, including plants and animals (See González 2010; Hale and Stephen 2013). Some examples of communal or familial based agricultural systems that are culturally linked to Indigenous groups from the region now known as Mexico include *huertos familiares,* the *milpa* agricultural system, and the *chinampa* agricultural system (Long and Vargas 2005: 3; Adapon 2008: 139; Guillen Valdovinos 2017: 182). However, colonization of the Americas from various European nations resulted in the forcible removal of people from their land through displacement, genocide, slavery, forced labor, and incarceration. Throughout the history of colonization and the development of nation-states, Indigenous American and Indigenous African bodies have suffered extreme violence as the labor force that produces food for national and global food markets (Hernández 2017; Raibmon 2005; Hartman 1997; Boswell 2003: 36-39). The models of commercial and industrial agriculture that have emerged in the U.S. as well as in Mexico tend to privatize large areas of land and are designed to create societal dependency on large-scale food distribution systems, increasing disconnection from land and food production. Once Mexican and Indigenous subsistence farmers were displaced from their places of origin and moved elsewhere in Mexico or in the U.S. in pursuit of work as farmworkers, their lives were usually segmented, separating work on the land from the rest of their lives. The relegation of Mexican immigrants to simply laborers, and their marginalization as non-citizens in many cases coincided with a history of immigration policy that created ongoing exclusions (Jiménez Sifuentez 2016: 50; Stuesse 2016). They were hired as laborers paid by the piece or by the hour. The land they worked on was not their own, and their living and working situations were not connected to land with multiple meanings. Once people migrate and move into non-Indigenous spaces and communities, maintaining a self-conscious

relationship with soil, plants, and animals becomes even more challenging. In addition, lack of property ownership is a major barrier for many to practice self-sustaining food systems and cultural foodways in more urbanized areas.

The rapid urbanization happening globally has reduced the amount of land that is available for food production, which is another challenge for local food sovereignty (Peña 2017: 24-25). Apartments do not have the space to grow food and rental houses usually have restrictions about making changes to the landscape of the yard. Some other limitations of home gardens in urban areas include toxic environmental pollution such as heavy metals from municipal and industrial wastes, pesticides, fertilizers domestic heating, industrial emissions, heavy traffic, and past land use (Szolnoki, Farsang, and Puskás 2013: 106). Access to water has also been a site of struggle for some communities in Lane County. In 2020, the Oregon Water Futures Project Report, a collaboration between the University of Oregon, water and environmental justice interests, Indigenous peoples, communities of color, and low-income communities, revealed that only four of their 68 participants from "*Latinx*," "*Hispanic*," and "*Mixteca*" communities had gardens: "When asked why they only had a few plants, two main reasons arose: the landlord would not allow them to have more and/or they did not want the water bill to go up because of watering. … [however] around three-fourths of participants expressed a desire to have a garden with edible and medicinal plants (Reyes-Santos et al. 2021: 42-43). HDLF supports people who cannot afford to water their garden at home or are facing limitations from their rental agreement, since the members do not need to pay for their water usage at the gardens.

Despite the challenges associated with access to land and water, Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and other Latino communities in the U.S. have been

disassociating themselves from exploitative industrial agriculture by asserting control over their foodways through participation in communal-based agriculture in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Juan, a HDLF garden member in Springfield, told news station KLCC in 2019 that “We try to grow as much as we can for two reasons. The first one is that it teaches you and the kids what you're eating, the stuff that you put into your food. And the meanwhile you know you have a good time growing your own food and your kids learn that they can do that too” (Begay 2019). The access to garden space, has allowed many people in Eugene and Springfield to get more involved in their foodways, and it has allowed multigenerational families to learn from each other. Documenting the expansion of the HDLF gardens through my ethnographic research is important because many Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities elsewhere in the U.S. have faced barriers and confrontation when trying to engage in these community-based and culturally relevant forms of agriculture.

For example, the South-Central Farm in South L.A., operational between 1994-2006, was a community garden of mainly Indigenous and Latino farmers who were descended from Mexica, Nahua, Zapotec, Mixtec, Chontal, Otami, Maya, Triqui, and other Mesoamerican Indigenous communities (Tezozomoc and the South-Central Farmers 2017: 213). This garden, during an urban area, was supporting over 350 families, and they grew over 150 varieties of fruits, vegetables, grains, medicinal plants, and trees (Tezozomoc and the South-Central Farmers 2017: 213). Unfortunately, the members of this community garden were forcibly evicted by law enforcement and had their garden bulldozed in 2006; 44 activists and farmers were arrested by a police force that was made up of 385 sheriffs and LAPD officers (Tezozomoc and the South-Central Farmers 2017: 216). Sadly, many people in South L.A. lost a significant resource of food

security because of the closure at the garden. Land has been a site of constant struggle for food subsistence, labor, and exclusion.

A similar example that shows how land and autonomy can be a site of struggle for Mesoamerican Indigenous communities trying to practice their foodways happened at HDLF in 2020. This situation did not result in anyone losing access to their food security, but this situation highlights unforeseen stressors and sentiments of exclusion can occur to those gardening in common spaces. In Eugene, Oregon the police were called on an Indigenous HDLF member who was tending to his garden plot because someone who is not involved with the garden in any manner claimed that the garden member broke in. This assertation was ridiculous because every garden member has a code to enter the garden, so the unknown person was trying to create a hostile environment for the garden member by lying to the police. The police officer who arrived at this scene interrogated the garden member in English even though they spoke Spanish. The officer did not issue any citations since they accepted that the garden was not broken into. This type of policing and surveillance of immigrant communities can "render undocumented immigrants visible to authorities for arrest and potential deportation" (Kline 2017; Kline 2019). Situations like this can negatively affect the well-being of Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous community members who are considered undocumented, since it can cause stress proliferation by having to live in fear of immigration authorities, which can affect the trust that the organization has developed with the communities they serve and prevent people from accessing a resource that can address food insecurity. HDLF staff filed a formal complaint with the Eugene Police Department for how the situation was handled without a qualified interpreter. According to Marissa Zarate, the Executive Director of the HDLF, the organic garden program is to ensure

that families in Lane County have access to culturally relevant food production systems that can help alleviate food insecurity.

In an interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting, Zarate stated that as an organization HDLF wants families to be food secure by providing opportunities to grow food together, cook together, preserve their family recipes, and to preserve aspects of their own culture. Zarate told the interviewer that:

> [we want] families to have access to healthy organic produce that's grown sustainably, allowing families to share traditions around food growing and [fostering] intergenerational connection. We see Mom and Dad in the garden with their kids and usually grandpa and grandma are there with a plot right next to them (Zarate 2020).

Thus, the purpose and structure of Huerto is to promote food security in a culturally relevant manner by empowering people to make the decisions themselves about what food to grow to support themselves and their families. I argue that the community gardens facilitate care, and this site of analysis needs to be included in more discussions about carework. I noticed from my fieldwork over the years that activities in the garden can foster relationships between intergenerational families and community members.

The following example of Tomas, introduced in Chapter III, highlights some of the ways that care and carework can manifest at the HDLF garden. Tomas relates how being at the garden has supported his mental health, physical health, and personal well-being as he copes with chronic health conditions, while allowing him to foster relationships with and care for his children, grandchildren, and other garden members. His story is also an example of carework as he provides care for both himself and his family by growing food to make sure his family is food secure. In my regular conversations with Tomas from 2019 to 2021 while I was doing participant

observation by tending to my garden plot, he revealed to me that he primarily grows food for his four daughters and ten grandchildren. He cannot eat many of the vegetables and fruits he grows because he has type 2 diabetes. He has dietary restrictions such as limiting the liquid he drinks/eats, avoiding foods with potassium, and controlling his sugar intake. He has dialysis three times a week, gardens three times a week, and has one day off. He is a retired stone/brick mason for about 30 years and a veteran. Tomas has expressed to me over the years about how the garden helps him find productive use of his time, allows him to provide food for his family even after he stopped working for wages, helps alleviate the stress and depression caused by his health conditions, and provides a space for him to spend quality time with his daughters and grandchildren.

Tomas currently buys plant starts, mainly from FOOD for Lane County's Youth Farm, for his garden since he does not grow from seeds because he is partly blind and that makes it hard for Tomas to distinguish seedlings from weeds. His partial blindness is attributed as a side effect from his diabetes. When he was an adolescent, he did sharecropping after his dad passed away from heart issues, but he did not specify in which years he did that labor. Even though the sharecropping ended on a large scale in the 1940s, there are reports of people engaging in sharecropping until the 1980s (Sanchez 2015: 922). He shared with me how before he started gardening, he had not done anything associated with plants since he sharecropped in the southern region of the U.S. in his younger years. Tomas told me how he did not realize that he enjoyed some of the agricultural labor he used to do, and even though he and his family were exploited for labor, working in fields kept him out of trouble. Tomas grows a wide range of crops, but it is evident that he takes pride in growing many varieties of chilies. Chilies were domesticated in Mexico and are an important part of foodways for many cultures; however chilies can be

difficult to grow in Oregon due to the short growing season, lack of constant heat, and reduced sun exposure.

Tomas gifted me some chilies from his garden in 2020; he shared with me Anaheim chili peppers, Thai chili peppers, and a ghost hybrid. In addition, he took the time to teach me to dry chili peppers after harvest.[25] He also gifted me a drip water hose since he didn't like to use it since watering gives him something to do. As discussed in Chapter II, Tomas shared with me that he was fearful of COVID-19 because of the risk of dying, other potential long-term complications, and the impact on his children and grandchildren. Even though this is an instance of stress proliferation, since he is managing a chronic condition, is a provider financially for his family and is more vulnerable to extreme effects of COVID-19, Tomas' stories are filled with acts of care at the garden. Care from his perspective includes providing food for his family, spending quality time with his family outdoors, and making time to take care of his mental and physical health through gardening, volunteering with HDLF, and helping other members by sharing about food preservation. I did not learn this information from Tomas in just a single interview, but from our everyday regular conversations. He had a garden plot near mine, and we happened to see each other almost on a weekly basis. As time went on, and he trusted me more, Tomas would share details about his personal life. I did not formally interview Tomas, rather just took fieldnotes during our conversation because he already shared many stories and knowledge with me over the years.

Tomas's story about providing carework for his family by securing food while navigating the challenges of having diabetes resonates with research done in Vietnam about concepts of love and care with people who are living with type 2 diabetes:

[25] How to dry chilies quickly: preheat the oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit and bake for one to four hours depending on size and moisture content. Check regularly until ready.

> While recognizing that they suffered from a chronic and sometimes debilitating disease, people with diabetes strove to continue attending to others…. The significance of such loving interactions reached far beyond situations of immediate interpersonal attention and care. As an everyday moral practice, loving care for another person is more than a contribution to that specific individual. It is also a social and moral contribution to the collective, '*cái chung.*' By caring for an ailing mother, or for a child, one also contributes to building and upholding the family, the community, and the nation, actively recognizing the importance of these collectives as sites of social integration. Love is, seen from this perspective, a moral and affective force that keeps families, communities, and the nation together (Gammeltoft 2022: 12).

Tomas's and Antonia's stories of being family providers relate to the struggles of carework in everyday life. L*a lucha diaria* (the daily struggle) is not just motivated by a sense of obligation, but "by a finely tuned attention to others" (Gammeltoft 2022: 10). Concepts of foodways, food security, and care are not unique to those engaged in community gardening at HDLF, since these concepts can be found at gardens from other community-based organization engaged in food access. For example, Karen Washington, a community activist and Black farmer from Bronx, NY, in an interview with *Guernica* magazine discusses how gardens are particularly impactful especially among those who are considered low-income or those without health insurance, since gardens are not just being used for food, but also for well-being and medicine. She states as a community organizer, "I eventually realized that I couldn't concentrate on food alone because there were so many things that were intersecting. I saw that the people who were in [that first community] garden were mostly low-income and had no health insurance. The

garden wasn't just being used for food, but also for well-being and medicine" (Washington 2018). Food security and cultural foodways is clearly connected to carework.

Through access to gardening sites, Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in Lane County have been showcasing their acts of care and love in daily life and during extreme circumstances such as a pandemic and extreme weather events. Addressing food security in a family's household can alleviate some of the impacts of the stressors that proliferate in my interlocutors' lives, while preventing additional stressors that occur from experiencing food insecurity and food scarcity. The next section focuses on an account of a garden member who highlights carework during the pandemic through examples of using the garden to maintain food security, sending remittances to family, supporting friends in need, and providing care for sick family members.

Carework and Remittances, a Pinero Supports His Family in Oregon and Mexico

Chuy, a 56-year-old father and *pinero*, engages in various types of work in the forestry industry such as planting pine trees, cutting down pine trees, and putting out wildfires. He also gathers prized edible mushrooms, such as chanterelles, in the forests when there is no work available. Our interview occurred on May 7, 2021, and his narrative has many similarities to the experiences of the people I discussed in the previous chapter about the many ways that COVID-19 and the wildfire season impact people. Chuy and his family were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic and the devasting 2020 Oregon wildfire season. Beyond coping with the stress proliferation of these very difficult work circumstances, Chuy also engaged in a lot of unrecognized carework that he did for his family and close friends.

Chuy and his family endured financial hardship, social isolation, and personal loss. Finances were strained because Chuy experienced reduced wages due to work closures from

worksites needing to respond to new state policies regarding the virus, from people testing positive for COVID-19 at work, and from unsafe conditions as a result of the wildfires. Chuy also needed to take extra time off to take care of his wife who has pre-existing health issues that made her especially vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus and the unhealthy air quality from the smoke that saturated the Willamette Valley.

> *No, esta vez no pude ir a trabajar en los fuegos porque mi esposa no estaba muy bien de salud y como había mucho humo acá. No podías salir por la pandemia, por el humo, entonces tenía que estar al pendiente con ella* (Chuy 2021).
>
> No, this time I could not go to work on the fires because my wife wasn't in very good health and there was a lot of smoke here. You could not go out because of the pandemic, because of the smoke, so I had to be on the lookout for my wife (Chuy 2021).

Chuy also was impacted emotionally since the pandemic devasted his hometown community in Mexico. In his account below, he details how he lost friends and family due to the virus, and others suffered when they got ill and struggled to pay for medicine. Even though Chuy experienced reduced employment opportunities during the pandemic, he was still managing to send remittances to Mexico to support his friends and family in need. The fact that he still sent remittances is important to highlight, since remittances are an important aspect of carework, but unfortunately, data from Phase I of the COFS shows that many families were not able to send any remittances in 2020 due to financial strain from losing work: 45% of the participants stated that they were no longer were sending remittances, 40% were sending less than before the pandemic, 9% stated that they were sending the same amount, 2% were sending more, and the rest of the respondents signified other or that the question did not apply (Martinez et al. 2021: 30). Chuy commented on how the remittances were critical as financial support to his family in

the state of Mexico, Mexico. He felt obligated to continue sending those remittances to his family despite reduced wages. Heartbreakingly, in the neighborhood where Chuy grew up (he did not mention the name of the town during the interview) and where his family currently lives multiple people died due to COVID-19.

> *Tengo familia allá en México y estuvo muy, muy mal. Allá había mucho virus y se murieron como unas diez personas de mi calle a donde vivo en México… Mi vecino, se enfermó toda su familia y, pues, estaba un poco mal económicamente, y pues yo hablé con mis hijos y nos reunimos con mi familia y les echamos una manita porque se enfermó toda la familia. En México está muy cara la medicina. Hace como dos semanas estuve allá y mi vecino ya está muy contento, está muy agradecido por lo que lo apoyé a él y me da mucho gusto que la gente, pues, esté contenta conmigo* (Chuy 2021).
>
> I have family back in Mexico and it was very, very bad. There was a lot of the virus there and about ten people died from my street to where I live in Mexico... My neighbor, his whole family got sick and, well, he was a little bad financially, and then I talked to my children, and we met with my family, and we gave my neighbors a hand because their whole family got sick. Medicine is very expensive in Mexico. About two weeks ago I was there, and my neighbor was happy, and he is very grateful for what I was able to support him with and I am very pleased to know they are content with me (Chuy 2021).

In the case of Chuy, he demonstrated caregiving through his sustained remittances to his family in his hometown, but he also understood that in-person emotional support was important and that his presence was needed in Mexico for his family and friends' well-being. Chuy traveled to Mexico to physically be there to emotionally support his neighbor and to help support him financially. I am unaware if Chuy has residency or citizenship to travel out of the country since I

did not inquire about how he got to Mexico during our interview, but Chuy told me that my calls and texts to schedule the interview did not go through because his cell phone does not get service outside the U.S. Another way Chuy demonstrated care for his family was by growing cilantro, epazote plants, red and white onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, jicama, squashes, chili peppers, and tomatillos. His family fortunately did not need to rely on food assistance during the pandemic because of the food he grew in his own garden plot at community garden. He commented:

> *El huerto comunal es una ayuda que es muy bien para toda la comunidad. A veces no compro vegetales todo el año porque me cosecho todos mis vegetales y es una muy grande ayuda* (Chuy 2021).
>
> The collective garden is a help that is very good for the whole community. Sometimes I don't buy vegetables all year round because I harvest all my vegetables (there) and it's a very big help (Chuy 2021).

Even though Chuy did not use the word well-being, it was evident that his acts of care for his wife, friends, and family were done in response of them being impacted by the pandemic and his actions were efforts to improve the well-being of his loved ones. Chuy ended our conversation with a message about solidarity among Latino communities and hope since he knows better times will come after pandemic. It was important to him that he communicated that Latino communities support each other:

> *Nosotros, latinos, ayudarnos uno al otro, echarnos la mano cuando lo necesitemos y son unidos. Necesitamos estar unidos siguiendo adelante, pues ya vendrán tiempos mejores* (Chuy 2021).
>
> We Latinos, help each other, we lend a hand when we need it and are united. We have to be united moving forward, for better times will come (Chuy 2021).

Chuy's actions are representative of how individuals in Lane County, Oregon from Latino communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora are demonstrating acts of care on the individual, family, and community level through remittances, food security, and providing in-person support. His story reveals three key domains of well-being: 1) when he described how his objective material conditions were greatly affected by the pandemic, yet he had agency in taking care of his wife, 2) supporting his family abroad with remittances, and traveling despite the risk to help a friend in need; and 3) participating in community networks through his membership at HDLF and maintaining communication with family through talking on the phone and messaging. The patterns of carework and people's ideas of care and well-being are influenced by the relationships of each person's objective and subjective realities. For many garden members there is something materially important about connecting to the *suelo* (the land) and the act of growing food over seasons that adds to the health-promoting effects of gardening. In addition, in the framework of *cuidar y pertenecer,* people like Chuy, Antonia, and Alberto whose story was detailed in Chapter III, offer us new models for understanding how caring and belonging are woven together in ongoing relationships of healing, trust, and connection that take people through the hardest of times and allow multigenerational families, neighbors, and friends to build rich networks inside and outside of spaces like community gardens.

Conclusions

Carework and acts of care are not universal in a community, but rather care can be selective based on many different factors such as cultural norms, religion, cosmology, other worldviews, individual connection, family, and/or personal circumstances (Winters 2014; Brown 2016; Yarris 2017). Latino communities, and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora are reclaiming their foodways and traditions in both rural and urban areas of the U.S. and

elsewhere. During my research, what stood out was the demand for community garden plots, despite the rapid growth[26] of the HDLF organization during the past five years to try to meet the needs of the growing communities of Indigenous peoples in diaspora and Latino population. Most of the garden sites have waitlists every year. Even though some people stopped gardening during the pandemic, there were others who expanded to a second plot. As seen through my research and the anthropology of Indigenous peoples, ideas about collective good, collective governance, sacred relationships to the land, and even collective property are alive and well and can transfer in diasporic movements (Stephen 2005; González 2010; Coté 2016:1; Kepkiewicz and Dale 2019). I have theorized the concepts of care and carework in a variety of contexts linked to agricultural work. I was able to gather evidence that reaffirmed my first impression of how community gardens can function as culturally relevant spaces where carework, community-building, cultural production/reproduction, decolonial notions of well-being, and foodways are occurring simultaneously.

Care and carework activities at community gardens, based on the experiences of my research collaborators, can help people manage the stress proliferation that manifests in their lives, their families' lives, and their communities' lives. The history of Oregon that I discussed in the introduction, from the 1800s to now, has exemplified the many stressors that stem from the structural vulnerabilities and violence that have impacted farmworkers, immigrants, Mesoamerican Indigenous communities, and Latino communities in general. Moving forward it is important to establish and reinforce societal structures that benefit, empower, and help these communities thrive. Promoting structural access to culturally relevant foodways and medicinal

[26] From 2016 to 2019 HDLF doubled in size, increasing from 65 to 110 families (Zarate 2019), and from when I began my research in 2019 to finishing data collection in the summer of 2021, the organization kept growing and was serving over 150+ families and is expected to serve over 200+ families once their next garden site is constructed.

plants can be one important step forward for community-based organizations, city development, and housing communities to foster the important care and carework that already happens every day.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 virus and the societal consequences resulted in severe impacts to finances, job insecurity, food insecurity, physical health, and mental health of Mesoamerican Indigenous families and Latino families living and working in Lane County, especially for those working in agriculture, food processing, food service, and other related sectors. The ongoing impacts of climate change and global warming guarantee that these communities living in the Willamette Valley of Oregon will continue to confront significant smoke- and heat-related challenges in their work lives and at home. The embodiment of stress from the intensification of existing inequalities, paired with unexpected new stressors from disease and extreme weather can be understood as stress proliferation. I use the concept of stress proliferation because many events in 2020 and 2021 during my fieldwork caused compounding stressors in people's lives. People did not experience situations of stress proliferation in isolation, but they continued to live in precarity. The vast majority of research collaborators navigated challenges associated with these events daily. As I finish this dissertation, the Omicron COVID-19 variant is spreading at a much higher rate than previous variants despite relatively high vaccination rates, including vaccine boosters.

Contributions

In my research about food ways and carework, I investigate some of the historical relationships between these two concepts, particularly with Indigenous participants from Zapotec and Mixtec communities. My research interlocutors make unique contributions to the field of carework applying the notions of *cuidar* y *pertenecer* to expand the definition of carework to include to care for, to care about, to protect, to shelter, to belong, to be connected, to be part of a

group. The concept of *pertenecer* showcases the importance of connections and relationships that are fostered by people who have a garden plot with HDLF. Many of these members have extended, multigenerational families, while others are relatively new to the region, but the networking opportunities at the garden allow neighbors to garden together and interact often inside and outside of the garden. I examined how engaging in cultural foodways and access to garden space remain important aspects of carework, especially during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I recognize that HDLF was essential for these communities to practice cultural foodways because there are no other bilingual garden spaces in Oregon and people who rent face additional barriers of connecting with land and foodways. I explored the immediate impacts of the pandemic, wildfires, and extreme weather and how these events proliferated stress associated with the existing traumas of migration, food insecurity, and other structural vulnerabilities that affect Latino communities and Indigenous communities in diaspora in the U.S. I demonstrate how community gardens can help alleviate some of the impacts of stressors in people's lives and be sites of carework. I argue that community gardening is just one component, for those who willingly engage in agriculture and have access, of how people take care of themselves and their families and promote social connection on a community level. I do not suggest community gardens are a large-scale solution to prevent food insecurity, cure mental or physical health conditions, or provide financial security. There will always be people who do not have the time to garden, the resources to garden, the ability to garden, who are not interested, who are allergic to plants, or live in less-than-ideal environmental conditions, etc.

My research furthers conversations in cultural anthropology and food studies because numerous scholars have examined the kinds of extreme structural vulnerability experienced by Mesoamerican Indigenous and Latino farm laborers in agriculture along the West Coast, but few

have systematically examined the potentially positive social, emotional, and health impacts of collective types of non-industrial agriculture and the forms of care and belonging it fosters. And few people have conceived of community gardening as an important form of mutual caretaking both within and between immigrant families. In this dissertation, the stories of my participants illuminate participation in agriculture not as paid labor but as a source of social connection, emotional support, access to healthy food, and nutrition—thus as unpaid carework. In addition, research about alternative food systems is important to reduce reliance on industrial forms of agricultural that are exploitative and dangerous to the workers.

My research topic is urgent since the global COVID-19 pandemic amplified existing disproportionate food insecurities. By undertaking fieldwork before and during the COVID-19 pandemic I offer new analytical insights into the ways that Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities' access high quality food during a pandemic, and the ways that care is provided for loved ones. Facilitating carework opportunities, like community gardens, has the potential to significantly impact society by improving the local and statewide recovery response of Mesoamerican Indigenous, Latino, and immigrant communities that have been impacted negatively by the global pandemic. My research about facilitating carework and food security in relation to a pandemic and extreme weather contributes to conversations and environmental studies about climate resiliency. Climate resilience refers to a community's or city's ability to prepare and respond to unexpected extreme weather and to expected long-term patterns of climate change. As more cities and counties adopt climate action plans, it will be important to analyze existing models of effective food security strategies during COVID-19 and the 2020-2021 wildfire seasons. Despite lockdowns, travel restrictions and widespread supply shortages, this research demonstrates how my collaborators not only were

able to procure food for their families but were also able to continue practicing their traditional foodways, rituals, medicinal practices, while fostering emotional and social connections. My research and the COFS also highlight how crucial it is that all information about extreme weather, disease outbreaks or any other disaster be available in all languages that are spoken in a region; currently there is a lack of resources in Spanish and Indigenous languages from Mexico and Guatemala.

Policy Recommendations

My research offers practical applications for holistic strategic planning for community-based organizations and governmental agencies in Oregon and elsewhere in the U.S. to take in consideration of how cultural foodways are a part of carework and well-being. Based on my collaboration with the COFS, I want to highlight some of the policy recommendations from the Phase I final report that were proposed for policy makers, legislators, other officials, and institutions and how my dissertation research contributes to these recommendations. The policy recommendations include:

> Provide access to culturally informed methods of mental health support in a variety of languages and administered through trusted community clinics and university partnerships (Martinez et al. 2021: 31).

Most participants in the COFS reported not having access to mental health services. While community gardening does not replace mental health support, people did report that their time in the garden provided some temporary and long-term relief from a few of the symptoms that manifest from stressors in people's lives. Since people use community gardens for self-care and carework, these sites can help facilitate connection to trusted community clinics if these partnerships are established. Language barriers are factors to this disparity in access for Latino

communities, and especially Mesoamerican Indigenous communities; my research showed how some of my interlocutors spoke Indigenous languages and did not have access to culturally informed methods of mental health support. The following two policy recommendations pertain to language access:

> Reduce barriers to accessing safety net support by allocating resources to community-based organizations that reflect the communities they are serving (including Indigenous-led organizations) who have a history of working with the population and equip them with appropriate language interpreters (Martinez et al. 2021: 31).
>
> To reach Oregon's farmworkers in the administration of the vaccine, resource and information should flow to farmworker health clinics and farmworker-serving organizations to facilitate information about COVID-19 vaccinations and testing available in Indigenous languages, farmworker clinics and farmworker-serving organizations need additional state resources for interpretation and the creation of materials in Indigenous languages (Martinez et al. 2021: 31)

Researchers from the COFS have begun mapping the languages spoken in Oregon to better connect community members with qualified interpreters and translators. My research collaborators at the gardens spoke many Indigenous languages from both Mexico and Guatemala, including Zapotec languages, Mixtec languages, Náhuatl, Spanish, and English, and at the potential new garden site in Cottage Grove there will be future garden members who speak Mam, K'iche', and Q'anjob'al. Expanding interpreter services in government and providing community-based organization resources to access interpreter services will be important steps in creating equitable access to culturally relevant mental health support, vaccine clinics, and other general resources.

Lastly, the COFS recommends for the establishment of "a center for farmworker research that is rooted in community-based and collaborative research that can continue the effort of [the COFS] study (Martinez et al. 2021: 31). The farmworker research center can network with community-based organizations that are not directly associated with farmworker issues but also serve farmworker families like HDLF and Centro Latino Americano. These organizations may have different perspectives and approaches that can help benefit the communities where farmworkers live in a holistic manner. Based on the experiences of my research participants, many members of these organizations are already advocates in their community. Getting farmworkers from Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora and Latino communities who are leaders in areas other than labor can help foster the farmworker research center's mission to be rooted in community by considering all aspects of peoples' lived experiences and listening to what they deem important.

My research and insights from the COFS have revealed the need for interpretation and translation services for Mesoamerican Indigenous communities in diaspora. Even though HDLF made efforts at knowing what languages are spoken at the garden and trying to disseminate information in other languages, there is still work to be done to make this a regular part of their program. I suggest program recommendations for community-based organization, service providers, and health departments like Lane County Public Health and the Oregon Health Authority to expand interpretation and translation services, and make these services available for all community events, outreach, and support in order to be inclusionary of diverse Indigenous communities.

Final Thoughts

Documenting the narratives and experiences of my collaborators during the global pandemic was urgent for understanding how care and carework can better prepare and provide societal support to communities most as risk during times of social upheaval. My research collaborators make independent decisions to get their families, loved ones, and communities to positively adapt to the new realities they face; they are not just "getting by" or coping with the changing circumstances from the pandemic, wildfires, and weather changes. As Oregon and the U.S. will continue to see growth of Latino Communities and Mesoamerican Indigenous, and other Indigenous communities from around the world, these communities will need improved social and physical infrastructure, more interpretation and translation services, more efficient food aid, support to facilitate family and community level agriculture, backing of cultural foodways, affordable housing, access to health care, and financial security to handle foreseeable and unforeseeable challenges. Inclusionary policies for those migrating and/or in diaspora will be the only way to constructively shape the country since immigration will always be part of identity of the U.S.

Discussions about care, carework, and foodways may differ based on the varied perspectives and relationships workers have with food systems and the environment. Areas of future exploration regarding Mesoamerican Communities in diaspora and Latino Communities in Oregon include expanding analysis of the impact of the pandemic on workers in the food truck industry and the forestry industry. I briefly discuss the experiences of people working in these industries, but they only comprise a small percentage of those who participated in the COFS. As a result, some of the data discussed may not be wholly representative of the experiences of

Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous individuals in those sectors.[27] Other future research avenues for building upon my work could include examining the gendered dynamics of carework. Women have often been tasked with unpaid carework and that may be a biased reason that women in the COFS study lost work for greater amounts of time. Based on my ethnographic research that focused on the narratives from ten people, five women and five men, it seems that the pandemic shifted that responsibility of unpaid carework on everyone—not just women alone. So, it will be important to see how gendered dynamics of care and carework change as the pandemic ends. Potential sites of analysis that were outside the scope of my research include how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Latino and Mesoamerican Indigenous workers in the service industry, such as restaurants, patisseries, panaderías, carnicerías, other food-related small businesses, or other closely related industries like fishing, fisheries, Christmas tree nurseries, and landscaping. Researchers in anthropology and food studies can further analyze and theorize about carework by focusing on people in these other kinds of labor sectors.

I want to conclude by reminding those who read this dissertation that we can all sow the seeds in our community to cultivate solidarity, whether it is doing activist research, decolonizing pedagogies, volunteering in your community, or providing financial support to non-profit organizations. My ethnographic approaches are inspired by activist anthropologists and community leaders in the collective works, *Mexican-Origin Foods, Foodways, and Social Movements: Decolonial Perspectives* (2018), *Otros Saberes* (2014) and *Indigenous Women and Violence: Feminist Activist Research in Heightened States of Injustice* (2021), works that

[27] With all the ongoing stressors from the pandemic and extreme weather, I did not feel like discussing immigration status, which can cause anxiety and distrust. Consequentially because of this decision, I did not capture any data or accounts about the specific impacts related to their experiences as H-2A workers, H-2B workers, workers under other types of work authorization, undocumented workers, citizens born in the U.S., and citizens who went through naturalization.

emphasize the essentiality of collaboration, recognizing Indigenous epistemologies, and highlighting the importance of people's testimonies, experiences, and narratives. Thank you to all the activist researchers, students, non-profit personnel, and community members engaged in promoting equity, cultural services, immigration services, social services, environmental remediation, and addressing food insecurity. Continue all the vital work that you do, it will truly take a community effort to heal from the pandemic and foster the growth of a more equitable sustainable reality for everyone.

APPENDIX A

Participant Interviews

Alberto, Interview by Timothy Herrera. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, February 20, 2021.

Antonia, Focus Group Discussion during Seed Saving Workshop led by *Huerto de la Familia* Staff. Springfield, Oregon. September 17, 2019.

Alejandro Tecum, Keynote speaker at the 1st annual Fiesta de la Cosecha. *Huerto de la Familia*. Eugene, Oregon. September 9, 2018.

Blanca, Interview by Karina Mora. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, June 25, 2021.

Chuy, Interview by Timothy Herrera. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, May 7, 2021.

Elena, Interview by Karina Mora. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, April 22, 2021.

Felipe, Interview by Timothy Herrera. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, May 5, 2021.

Mariana, Interview by Karina Mora. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, May 1, 2021.

Patti, Interview by Timothy Herrera. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, February 28, 2021.

Pedro, Interview by Karina Mora. *COVID-19 Oregon Farmworker Study (COFS).* Telephone Interview, May 9, 2021.

Tomas, Conversational Interview by Timothy Herrera. Eugene, Oregon. 2019-2021.

APPENDIX B

Interview Outline for Core Participants

Calentamiento / rompe hielo / general

1) Como estás hoy? ¿Puedes contarme un poco sobre ti? ¿Cuál es tu nombre? ¿Cuántos años tienes? ¿En qué ciudad o pueblo vives?

2) ¿ Trabaja usted o alguien más en su hogar en el campo, empacadoras o procesadoras?

a) ¿Qué hacen ellos?

b) ¿Cuánto tiempo ha trabajado allí?

c) ¿Qué otros trabajos realizan durante el año?

3) ¿Qué tipo de fuentes o personas son las mejores para compartir información sobre el virus y mantenerse a salvo en su comunidad? ¿Quién es de confianza y respetado y por qué?

4) ¿Ha recibido información sobre pruebas, vacunas y servicios disponibles en su propio idioma?¿Habla usted alguna lengua indígena?

a) ¿Cómo ha podido ayudar a otros hablantes de (nombre del idioma) (mam, por ejemplo)? ¿Qué tipo de asistencia y apoyo han podido ofrecer usted o las personas que conoce a otros?

b) ¿Qué tipos de servicios adicionales necesitan los hablantes de (nombre del idioma) que usted sabe que no han recibido?

c) ¿Cómo le llama usted a su lengua en su propia lengua? **[Escriba nombre de la lengua lo más claro que pueda]**

d) ¿A qué pueblo originario, comunidad indígena o grupo étnico específico pertenece usted, sus padres o sus abuelos?

e) ¿Cómo se llama su comunidad o pueblo de origen?

f) ¿Con qué otros pueblos de la región se entienden usted?

g) ¿A qué municipio, aldea, caserío, o cabecera pertenece su comunidad/pueblo?

h) ¿En qué estado, departamento, provincia o distrito se encuentra su comunidad/pueblo?

i) ¿En qué país es?

Temores, preocupaciones o barreras

5) Ahora que pasamos los 9 meses de esta pandemia y volvemos a un cierre parcial y lidiamos con un aumento de casos, ¿cómo ha cambiado su vida en el trabajo, el hogar, la escuela o la comunidad ?

a) ¿Cuáles son algunos de sus temores o preocupaciones sobre la pandemia en este momento?

b) ¿Qué es lo que más le preocupa y por qué?

c) ¿Cómo han cambiado sus temores y preocupaciones desde el inicio de la pandemia?

Pregunta Sondeo: [Nos da idea de temas importantes que saldrán de entrevista]

6) ¿Le preocupa poder obtener el apoyo ____ que necesita? Cuéntame sobre eso.

a) Lugar de trabajo

b) Escuela en Linea / Cuidado de Nin@s

c) Médico

Lugar de Trabajo:

7) ¿Cómo le ha afectado la pandemia en su trabajo? (por ejemplo, ¿le ha afectado la pandemia la cantidad de trabajo que tiene usted? ¿Como? ¿Le ha afectado el tipo de trabajo que usted está haciendo? cómo?

a) ¿Usted y sus compañeros de trabajo se han sentido protegidos en el trabajo? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

- a)(1) ¿Su empleador le preveo máscaras (mascarillas, cubre bocas)? ¿Le daba una máscara cada vez que necesitaba una?
- a(2) ¿Su empleador se asegura de mantener a los trabajadores a 6 pies de distancia física?
- a(3) Si su empleador le proveo transporte, se sintió seguro? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
- a)(4) Si vive en una vivienda proveída por su empleador, se siente seguro? ¿Tiene preocupaciones? ¿Tiene sugerencias para mejorar la vivienda?
- a(5) ¿Hubo una comunicación/entrenamiento sobre las nuevas protecciones de OR-OSHA?
- a)(6) ¿Cómo se sintió con la comunicación de su empleador sobre infecciones en el lugar de trabajo?
- a(7) Su empleador le pregunto a usted o a sus compañeros de trabajo sobre cómo hacer su lugar de trabajo más seguro y saludable?
- a(8) ¿Cuáles protecciones piensa usted que son las más beneficiosas?

b) Si no se sintió protegido o seguro en el trabajo, ¿qué hizo usted o sus compañeros de trabajo?

- (b(1)¿Habló usted o sus compañeros de trabajo con el supervisor o el empleador? Si no, ¿por qué no?
- (b)(2) Si, si, ¿Qué te movió a hablar?
- (b)(4)¿Usted o alguien que conoce sufrió represalias por hablar (por ejemplo, se le dijo que no regresará al trabajo; horario reducido)? Qué pasó después?

c) ¿Usted o su compañero de trabajo tuvo que entrar en cuarentena porque salió positivo o fue expuesto de COVID-19?

- c(1) Si, si, ¿su empleador le pagó a usted o a sus compañeros de trabajo por el tiempo de enfermedad?
- c(2) ¿Tuvo algunos problemas cuando usted o su compañero de trabajo regresaron al trabajo después de que el periodo de cuarentena se venció?
- c(3) ¿Su empleador tomó alguna clase de represalia en contra de usted o de sus compañeros de trabajo o el trato peor porque usted o su compañero de trabajo tuvo que estar en cuarentena?

d) ¿Su empleador lo conectó con algunos recursos?

(In)seguridad Alimentaria:

8) ¿Cómo ayudaron los jardines de Huerto de la Familia? ¿Tuviste algunas dificultades en la jardinería este año? como impacto los fuegos y humo a su cosecha? ¿Qué tipo de platos preparados comes con más frecuencia para tu familia?

a) Desde que comenzó la pandemia, ¿ha podido preparar estos platos? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

b) ¿Cómo obtiene la comida? ¿Cuáles son algunos de los desafíos con el acceso a los alimentos que enfrentan usted y su familia?

c) Como resultado de la experiencia de la pandemia, ¿hay algún paso nuevo que esté tomando para asegurarse de que haya suficiente comida para usted y su familia? Por favor explique.

d) ¿Su familia ha pasado hambre desde que comenzó la pandemia? ¿Cuántas veces?

Escuela / Cuidado de Niñ@s:

9) ¿Necesitaba cuidado de niños? ¿Cómo satisfizo sus necesidades durante la pandemia? ¿Cuáles fueron los desafíos que enfrentó?

10) ¿Tienes hijos en la escuela? ¿Qué funcionó / qué no funcionó con respecto a la escuela en línea? ¿Cuáles fueron los desafíos que enfrentaron en el aprendizaje en línea? ¿Qué tipo de apoyo necesitarán cuando regresen a la escuela?

Recursos / Apoyo / Superar Barreras:

11) **Antes de** la pandemia, ¿qué fuentes de ayuda había utilizado para satisfacer sus necesidades básicas: alimentos, alquiler, servicios públicos, cuidado infantil? (por ejemplo, ayuda del gobierno, bancos de alimentos, iglesias, escuelas, EBT, familia, otras personas) .

a) ¿Qué tipo de asistencia ha sido más útil y por qué?

b) ¿Cuáles son algunas fuentes de ayuda externa / apoyos adicionales que conoce?

c) Antes de la pandemia, que fueron las barreras de utilizar las formas diferentes de asistencia?

12) ***Desde la Pandemia*** , ¿sabe usted de la ayuda y el alivio financieros? (por ejemplo, fondos de cuarentena, alivio de la renta, EBT, comida escolar o asistencia alimentaria)

a) ¿Cómo se enteró de la asistencia?

b) ¿Solicitó? ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?

c) ¿Le preocupaba la aplicación? (por ejemplo, cargo público, estado migratorio, documentación)

d) ¿Recibió la ayuda económica que solicitó? ¿Qué opinas de este programa?

e) ¿Recibió ayuda financiera de otra organización local? ¿Qué hay de las organizaciones sin fines de lucro basadas en la comunidad?

i) ¿Cuáles? ¿Qué opinas de este programa?

f) ¿Qué podrían hacer / ofrecer las organizaciones sin fines de lucro de manera diferente para mejorar su apoyo en la comunidad (por ejemplo, alimentos, comidas escolares, alquiler, servicios públicos)?

g) ¿Hizo uso de la baja por enfermedad a través de su empleador?

i) ¿Utilizó la baja por enfermedad debido al virus?

ii) ¿Sus compañeros de trabajo utilizaron la licencia por enfermedad?

13) ¿Tiene alguna sugerencia sobre cómo hacer correr la voz sobre este tipo de ayuda? ¿O hacer que sea más fácil de aplicar?

Atención Médica / Pruebas y Vacuna COVID-19

14) ¿Conoce o conoce a alguien que haya sido examinado?

a) ¿Qué has escuchado sobre la prueba?

b) ¿Cuánto tiempo se tardó en obtener los resultados de la prueba? ¿Cómo obtuvieron los resultados? ¿Recibieron los resultados por escrito en su lenguaje? ¿Fueron claros? ¿Recibieron ayuda para averiguar cómo seguir las recomendaciones de salud y seguridad? Explique.

c) ¿Tuvo problemas para llevar los resultados a su trabajo?

d) ¿Tiene miedo de hacerse la prueba? ¿Qué son? ¿Irías a hacerte la prueba? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

e) ¿Sabe qué es el rastreo de contactos, o en otras palabras, por qué es necesario que alguien que está enfermo con el virus le informe a un funcionario de salud pública sobre con quién ha tenido contacto cercano durante las últimas semanas después de obtener un resultado positivo? ¿Resultado de la prueba? ¿Puede explicarme con sus propias palabras cuáles son sus pensamientos o ideas sobre este proceso? ¿Tiene preocupaciones al respecto?

15) ¿Conoce a alguien que tenga o haya tenido el virus?

a) ¿Cómo les va ahora mismo?

b) ¿Qué sintieron cuando estaban enfermos? ¿Cómo fue para ellos, sus familiares, compañeros de trabajo o usted como amigo / familiar?

c) ¿Cuánto tiempo los ha llevado recuperarse? ¿Quién les ayudó con su recuperación? ¿A dónde fueron en busca de ayuda y por qué? ¿Cómo fue esa experiencia?

d) ¿Pudieron poner en cuarentena? ¿Cuáles fueron los desafíos con eso? ¿Quién les ayudó durante la cuarentena?

e) Si alguien que conoce se infectó con el coronavirus, ¿cómo se las arreglaron sin seguro? ¿Qué pasó?

f) ¿Qué más necesitaban? ¿Qué fueron sus preocupaciones principales? ¿Qué se podría haber mejorado?

16) ¿Usted o alguien que conoce ha tenido que ir al hospital debido al virus? ¿Cuál fue tu experiencia?

17) ¿Qué ha escuchado sobre la vacuna COVID-19?

a) ¿Quieres vacunarte? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

b) ¿Qué le haría sentirse a gusto de recibir una vacuna para usted y sus hijos?

c) ¿Cree que todos los trabajadores agrícolas deberían tener acceso a vacunas gratuitas? ¿Por qué esto sería importante?

d) ¿Qué preguntas tienes sobre las vacunas contra el coronavirus?

e) ¿ Cuál sería la mejor manera para que usted y los miembros de su familia reciban vacunas? ¿Donde? ¿Cuándo?

Salud Mental, Estrés y Cuidado Personal

18) ¿Qué hace para sentirse mejor cuando tiene miedo, está preocupado o estresado? ¿Qué te ayudará a sentirte mejor?

a) De esos recursos de apoyo, ¿qué ha estado disponible para ayudarlo a sentirse mejor durante esta pandemia? Por favor explique.

b) ¿Qué estrategias de afrontamiento personal ha adoptado durante la pandemia que desea continuar después de la pandemia?

Apoyo Comunitario / Lazos de Redes Sociales

19) A los Farmworkers se les considera como trabajadores esenciales. ¿Qué significa eso para usted?

20) ¿Cómo están respondiendo los demás miembros de su familia, comunidad o lugar de trabajo a la pandemia? ¿Por qué crees que actúan o se sienten así?

21) ¿Ha estado en contacto con miembros de su familia en su comunidad de origen durante los últimos 9 meses? Con quién estás en contacto ¿Cómo te comunicas? ¿Cuáles son las mayores preocupaciones de las personas con las que habla? Descríbelos.

a) ¿Ha podido enviar remesas? ¿Ha disminuido la cantidad o se ha mantenido estable desde que comenzó la pandemia? ¿Qué otras formas de ayuda le han ofrecido a su familia y a otros en su comunidad de origen?

b) Si los miembros de su familia reciben remesas de usted o de otras personas, ¿en qué están gastando el dinero? ¿Han cambiado sus necesidades desde que comenzó COVID?

c) ¿Las personas en su comunidad de origen se están enfocando más en cultivar alimentos locales desde que comenzó COVID? ¿Cómo es eso? ¿Qué están cultivando?

d) ¿Tiene familiares que se hayan enfermado con COVID en su comunidad de origen? ¿Puedes decirme cómo están ahora? ¿Pudiste apoyarlos desde la distancia y hablar con ellos?

e) ¿Cuáles cree que son los mayores desafíos para su familia en este momento en su comunidad de origen?

Impacto y humo de incendios forestales

22) ¿Como los incendios afectaban usted y su familia?¿Tuviste que trabajar durante los incendios forestales? ¿Cómo fue esa experiencia? ¿Tuviste que salir de casa por el humo? ¿Cómo te las arreglaste con la familia, los niños y no poder salir? ¿Te afectaron los incendios durante mucho tiempo?

Alojamiento

23) ¿Describe tu casa? Donde duermes ¿Se ha mudado desde que comenzó la pandemia? ¿Por qué? ¿Ha tenido problemas para asegurar la vivienda? ¿Ha recibido alguna ayuda para pagar el alquiler?

Ideas para mejorar

24) ¿Ha estado ayudando a otros a superar los desafíos de esta pandemia? ¿Cómo es eso?

25) ¿Cuáles son sus cuatro preocupaciones más serias sobre su salud y seguridad en el trabajo durante la pandemia? ¿Qué podría haber hecho su empleador de manera diferente en respuesta a la pandemia?

a) ¿Qué ideas tiene usted para hacer el trabajo, el hogar o la escuela más seguros? ¿Cuál sería su consejo para los empleadores?

b) ¿Qué se necesitaría para motivar a sus compañeros a tomar en serio la salud y la seguridad y las recomendaciones?

26) Si pudiera dar consejos a los funcionarios electos o hacer un cambio en su comunidad, ¿qué cree que debemos cambiar para que seamos felices, saludables y seguros durante esta pandemia y más allá?

c) ¿Qué nuevo hábito ha adoptado durante la pandemia que quiere seguir adelante? ¿Qué impacto tendría a largo plazo si muchas personas hicieran el mismo cambio o adoptaran el mismo hábito?

Conclusión

27) ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría agregar?

28) ¿Estaría dispuesto a participar en futuras discusiones sobre los trabajadores agrícolas en la pandemia?

29) ¿Le interesaría conocer los resultados o el resumen de nuestro proyecto una vez que esté terminado? ¿O recibe una copia del archivo de audio o transcripción de su entrevista ? ¿Cómo le gustaría recibir estos materiales? ¿Copias en papel o digitales?

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