Journal of Family Violence (2018) 33:587–596
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-9990-3

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Action Research at the Intersection of Structural and Family Violence in an Immigrant Latino Community: a Youth-Led Study

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Published online: 16 August 2018

Abstract

The current study addresses the lack of research exploring the social and emotional impact of anti-immigrant policy on Latino communities, and the intersection of anti-immigrant climates with other family stressors, like domestic violence (DV). In this paper we describe a qualitative study led by the participatory action research group La Voz Juvenile de Caminar Latino. Youth researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with Latino men, women, and youth participating in a domestic violence program. Using an inductive approach to thematic analysis, researchers identified themes that reflect how Latino families with histories of DV experience an increasingly anti-immigrant climate. All participants in this study described emotional stress, fear, and restrictions in their day-to-day life attributed to the anti-immigrant sociopolitical climate, and adults also spoke to work-related stress and economic insecurity. Both adults and children described harassment by strangers, coworkers, and/or peers. With regard to DV, women tended to describe immigration stress as exasperating family conflict, while men viewed these external stressors as discouraging DV. Distrust of police and other formal supports was a key theme underlying adult and youth perceptions of help-seeking for DV. The findings of this study suggest that anti-immigrant sentiment and policy creates undue stress for Latino families and barriers to formal help-seeking for DV. The participatory research process provided a corrective experience for youth witnesses of DV and prioritizes the voices of those most affected by immigration policies and violence.

Keywords Domestic violence · Hispanic · Latino · Participatory action research · Policy · Immigration · Youth

Latinos in the Southeast United States have origins in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, and differ not only with respect to immigrant status, but also generational status, acculturation, and other aspects of diversity. Immigrant Latino communities in the U.S. have coped with legal vulnerability and relatively poor mental and physical health for many generations (Zayas and Heffron 2016). In Georgia, the passing of House Bill 87 in 2011 represents an important ecological event, coinciding with increases in anti-immigrant sentiment; deportation rates; and difficulties obtaining employment, housing, and other basic needs (Ayón and Philbin 2017; Brabeck et al. 2014). The house bill required employers to provide proof of citizenship through the government system E-Verify, and it allowed law enforcement to demand proof of citizenship for even minor traffic violations (e.g., broken taillights). The negative economic impact of the legislation includes a shortage of farmworkers (Esses et al. 2012). However, little empirical research has examined the impact of this legislation on immigrant Latino men, women, and children. As anti-immigrant policies surge in the U.S. (Nakamura 2017), it is imperative more research explores the experiences of immigrant Latino families living under constant threat of family separation and deportation (Zayas and Heffron 2016).

Given that nine million Latino families are comprised of at least one undocumented parent and one U.S.-born child (Taylor et al. 2011), many Latino youth are affected by anti-immigrant sentiment and policy, regardless of their own immigrant status. The impacts of the anti-immigrant climate on children are wide-reaching and linked to poorer social (e.g., stigma, isolation), psychological (e.g., anxiety, depression) and academic functioning (Zayas and Heffron 2016). However, little research on Latino youth's experiences of anti-immigrant climates directly engages youth in the process

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of the research (Bosma et al. 2017; Cahill 2010; Gurrola et al. 2016). This may be due in part to the fact that Latino immigrant youth and their families represent a vulnerable, hard-to-reach population, and anti-immigrant sentiment can contribute to a greater sense of distrust of professionals, including researchers. PAR is one methodology that shows promise for engaging Latino youth, particularly those experiencing immigration stress in the context of other family stressors, like domestic violence (DV).

In this paper, the authors describe the process and results of a youth-led, qualitative study examining the impact of anti-immigrant policy on Latino families affected by DV in Georgia. As we explain below, participatory action research (PAR) is an approach to community-based research particularly well-suited for use with Latino youth witnesses of violence affected by anti-immigrant climates. PAR methodology increased the relevance and accuracy of the research project while engaging youth in an empowering approach to examining community issues.

Engaging Youth Witnesses of Domestic Violence in PAR: Relevant Frameworks

PAR seeks to foster empowerment of participants by encouraging communities to critically engage with issues that are important to their lives (Dworski-Riggs and Langhout 2010). PAR can occur on a continuum with varying degrees of participation from community members. On the full participation end of the continuum, community members engage in all stages of the research process, from conceptualization to data analysis and dissemination (Langhout and Thomas 2010). When conducted in full partnership between researchers and community members, PAR builds on the knowledge and strengths of community members experiencing social and/or political marginalization. The democratic process to research inquiry allows for all members of the team have equal input in the co-creation of knowledge. Because power and control often characterize violent family relationships and underlie experiences of structural violence in historically marginalized communities, PAR presents a promising method for youth witnesses of violence to renegotiate their power.

In PAR, redistributing power among the researcher-participant relationship requires the researcher to "give up" some power to participants in order to "lift up" of the experiences of those with less power (Dworski-Riggs and Langhout 2010; van der Velde et al. 2009). In addition, redistributing power in the adult-youth relationship allows youth to become active in developing their own critical analysis and awareness of their world. This is particularly important for youth who are often excluded from participating in larger decisions about their lives (Amsden and Van Wynsberghe 2016). Youth in this study were situated within systemic inequalities such as racism, patriarchy, and xenophobia, and violence. Thus, PAR was used as a corrective experience by way of challenging ideas that perpetuate structural and interpersonal violence. The benefits of PAR include increased relevancy of research agendas, methods, and interventions (Burke et al. 2013).

PAR with Latino Youth Witnesses of Violence Living in Anti-Immigrant Climates

Previous PAR studies have begun to explore how structural violence and immigration affect Latino youth in general. For instance, Cahill (2010) conducted a PAR study in which Latino youth explored strategies for maintaining positive Latino identities while navigating institutionalized racism and xenophobia. Another study examined the impact of immigration on Latino youth using Photovoice (Streng et al. 2004). Within the field of DV, however, PAR studies have primarily focused on adult survivors of violence. To the authors' knowledge, no youth-led studies to date have been conducted to investigate the intersection of immigration and DV.

Current Study

La Voz Juvenile de Caminar Latino (Youth Voice of Caminar Latino) is a youth PAR group at Caminar Latino, a comprehensive, community-based DV intervention program in Atlanta, GA. Caminar Latino is a family-based intervention program that holds weekly domestic violence intervention groups for men, women and their children. Youth from the young adult peer support group (ages 14 and older) volunteered to participate in La Voz to conduct research on topics they identify as important to their communities. La Voz also acts as a space to continue to engage youth whose parents have completed the domestic violence intervention program. At the time of this study, La Voz members had spent four to six years involved with the Caminar Latino peer support group.

The team for the current PAR project was comprised of six adolescent and young-adult La Voz members (aged 14–21 years) and volunteer graduate student researchers from Georgia State University. The graduate student researchers served multiple roles at Caminar Latino, as peer support group facilitators and as consultants in guiding La Voz throughout the process of PAR. The longstanding university-community partnership and graduate students' extended engagement as peer support facilitators strengthened the relationship and sense of commitment between graduate school researchers and youth. Youth in the peer support group also build relationships with each other during their discussions and shared experiences of violence.

During a time when Arizona's HB1070 and Georgia's HB 87 received considerable coverage in the mainstream media,

La Voz members observed peer support group meetings were often used to discuss concerns and uncertainties surrounding new immigration policies. The youth researchers wanted to understand how families impacted by domestic violence fared in other areas of their lives given the anti-immigrant climate. While exploring how to focus of the current study, the group decided to connect two issues close to all their hearts, immigration and domestic violence. The primary research question of the current study became: How are immigration policies affecting Latino families affected by domestic violence?

Participatory Process

Engaging youth in the PAR process began with the youth developing the procedures for conducting the study. For example, youth decided to develop a participation contract among members of La Voz. They documented expectations for participation, and together they agreed that suspensions from school or drug use would not be acceptable during their participation in La Voz. For this research project, youth committed about 30 min before each weekly group conceptualizing the project and developing the methodology. Their time commitment increased to approximately 2 times per week, including two half day meetings on two weekend days during labor intensive periods such as transcription, translation, and data analysis phases of the study. Most meetings were scheduled immediately before regular weekly youth support groups at Caminar Latino to avoid additional transportation costs. Transportation was provided when meetings required additional computing resources (i.e., data analysis). Graduate student researchers held training sessions for youth on the more technical aspect of research, such as transcription and coding, and around presentation skills. While the youth researchers volunteered their time for this study, through a small research grant the academic researchers were able to fund a one-time incentive to attend a music concert. To respect the youth's time and build community, researchers provided lunches, snacks, and celebrated milestones.

Method

The qualitative study design involved semi-structured interviews with adults and children served by a community-based DV organization. Youth selected the research approach with an emphasis on trust and respecting the sensitivity of information they would be collecting. For example, the youth decided to interview participants individually instead of a focus group to both protect personal information and enhance disclosure of sensitive topics.

Protocol Development

La Voz youth researchers developed the semi-structured research protocol during two in-person weekly meetings. The first meeting was spent discussing what youth had seen or heard about immigration and compiling topics that each member of group wanted to learn more about through the research project. In the second meeting, each youth researcher, based on their own interests and observations, generated questions about experiences with discrimination, family violence, and the intersection of these experiences. From an initial pool of 50 questions, the youth developed two interview guides, one for adults and one for youth with around 18 questions each. Demographic questions captured country of origin, length of time lived in the U.S., and ethnic identity. Protocol questions explored experiences of Latino participants coping with DV and living within the anti-immigrant sociopolitical climate, such as: "Given the current immigration situation in Georgia, who would you ask/not ask for help about violence?"

Procedures

In preparation for conducting the participant interviews, youth researchers received training on interviewing skills and research ethics. Youth who had participated in previous La Voz studies prepared and presented tips on conducting interviews to new youth researchers. Youth researchers were paired with more experienced youth researchers to practice conducting interviews and presenting information. During study recruitment, two youth researchers and one graduate student researcher presented information about the study to participants in the women's, men's, and youth weekly support groups at Caminar Latino. All adults and children over 11 years old were invited to participate and those who were interested scheduled follow up interviews held at the program site. Youth researchers obtained informed consent, youth assent, and interviewed participants privately. Given their involvement with the larger organization, youth did not interview individuals that they were related to or knew personally. Study procedures were approved by the Georgia State University Institutional Review Board. In pairs, La Voz researchers interviewed participants individually in interviewee's preferred language of Spanish ($n = 10$) or English ($n = 8$). Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 min. Participation was completely voluntary and continued to receive program supports as usual. Research participants did not receive any compensation to participate in the study.

Analysis

Youth researchers transcribed all interviews and translated all interviews conducted in Spanish into English with technical assistance from graduate student researchers. For interviews

conducted in Spanish, youth researchers were also paired with native Spanish speakers to verify translations. The research team used an inductive data analysis approach consistent with community-based, culture-specific research (Serrata et al. 2017). The research team conducted a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) using the following steps to identify common patterns from the interview data: (a) researchers familiarized themselves with the data - of 18 total interviews each team member was assigned four interviews to read thoroughly so that each interview was read by at least two team members; (b) data reduction - all team members took detailed notes on each interview, coding the main themes presented within each; (c) data were sorted into similar groups of themes and named. The research team met regularly throughout this process and to discuss emergent themes. The youth PAR researchers contributing to this article note that rather than viewing these discussions as dealing with "discrepancies" in coding, meetings allowed the adolescent researchers to hear different viewpoints and perspectives on the data and come to agreement on the final categories of themes.

Results

Study Participants

All study participants ($n = 18$) were attending Caminar Latino at the time of the interview. In total, the sample included 10 adults, (6 female, 4 male) and 8 youth (5 female, 3 male). Adults in our sample were 26 to 45 years of age, while youth ranged in age from 11 to 20 years. Most adult participants were born in Mexico ($n = 8$); one adult was born in Central America, and one was born in South America. Youth were born in Mexico ($n = 4$), the United States ($n = 3$) and Central America ($n = 1$). Adult participants moved to the United States at relatively young ages; women between the ages of 20 and 27 and men between the ages of 14 and 22 years. Adults had lived in the U.S. an average of 14.75 years (range = 8–23 years).

For the current study, youth researchers examined how immigration policies affect Latino families who also are affected by domestic violence. The youth researchers identified the following themes related to anti-immigrant sentiment and policy: (1) immigration enforcement policies and harassment as a source of psychological stress for both adults and youth, (2) economic insecurity among adult participants, and (3) harassment by strangers, coworkers, and peers. The research team identified a gender difference among adult participants related to the intersection of DV and immigration stress: adult women tended to describe immigration stress as exasperating family conflict, while men said the opposite. Youth perception of the relationship between anti-immigrant climates and DV was split. Additionally, participants tied feelings of distrust to their perceptions of help-seeking in the context of DV. These findings are elaborated on in the following sections. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities.

Social and Psychological Impact of Anti-Immigrant Policy

Most adult participants ($n = 6$) expressed fear and apprehension when describing the impact of immigration policy on their lives. They described feeling worried when engaging in daily living tasks such as driving, grocery shopping, going to doctor appointments, and walking in public. Some participants ($n = 4$) and their families began to avoid leaving their homes for fear of being stopped by police officers and asked for documents. Monica, an adult participant interviewed by youth researchers, touched on the collective experience of fear felt by her family and provoked by unsafe cues in the environment:

> We don't go out as much. We try not to. We try to get home as early as possible - not late. […] it's been scary for us as a family; we are always scared of seeing two or three cop cars. For us that's a nightmare.

For this mother, police vehicles, rather than being a sign of safety and security, represented a legitimate threat to family wellness and cohesion. Cesar, a 30-year-old man, similarly described how fear of deportation restricts the day-to-day routine of his family and exacts an emotional toll:

> Before [the immigration laws] I would go out a lot with my family to the mall [plazas]. Now I don't go out as much because of [the] fear of being deported, it emotionally affects not just me, but all my family also living with that fear and doubt.

Similar to adult responses, youth described being afraid to leave their homes and a general heightened sense of fear and worry for themselves and their families. For instance, Joseph, a 17-year-old young man who moved to the US at 5 years of age, described a distinct shift following the passing of HB 87. "It affected my life in a way where I can't go anywhere, to the point where I can't go outside without worrying that I'll get stopped by a cop." Another adolescent explained that her family was afraid to leave the house because of the increased likelihood of being pulled over by police and deported. In total, half of the youth interviewed for this study expressed worry about their families becoming separated and fear of leaving home.

Economic Insecurity among Adult Participants

Individuals in the current study living within the context of the increasingly anti-immigrant sociopolitical climate expressed significant economic concerns about their ability to provide

for themselves and their families. All but one adult participant described difficulty obtaining employment, complications with transportation to work, and significant work-related stress. For instance, participants described the financial burden of being ticketed for driving without a license, as is illustrated by Jacob:

> I have no license, but I have to drive. They pulled me over various times and I have had to pay fines … while driving to work is when I've gotten pulled over by [City] police. A $1,200 no license fine!

These types of fines add to the financial stress experienced by many families in the local Latino community, the majority of whom live in low-income communities. Daniel explained one reason for the lack of available jobs was because employers began to "check our documents," and subsequently bar them from working. Cesar reported recent changes in the workplace following the passage of HB87:

> […] work has diminished here in Georgia. I've seen many businesses with signs hanging that say they are operating under HB 87 and they check social security numbers. Some companies were scared of that. They quickly fired a lot of their Hispanic workers because they didn't want to have problems with the government. I think it causes more frustration, more stress.

Here, we see reference to the government web program, E-Verify. Cesar describes how this policy not only limited the job prospects of Latino community members, but it also limited the hiring practices of employers.

Adult participants also described harsh work conditions and four adults reported not receiving compensation for work they had done. Monica, a 39-year-old woman, was aware of the discrimination in pay: "They didn't pay me for a job. In others they paid me very little for a lot of hours." Cesar shared his experiences about being assigned unnecessary tasks on the job:

> My manager called me to pick up some trash that was two feet from where he was standing, while I was 50 feet away. [This was] something he could have done by simply bending over and picking it up in the trash. I think that's too much, but they tell us if you don't want to work, leave, go back to your country, and for other workers it's even worse.

In this account, the participant highlights the degrading nature of some job experiences described by participants who experience feeling undervalued by employers. These findings are consistent with past research showing Latino adults are at risk for exploitation in the workplace (Ayón and Philbin 2017).

Psychological Impact of Harassment

Almost all men, women, and youth in this study described experiencing discrimination and harassment from strangers, coworkers, and employers based on their assumed immigrant status. Women spoke about direct verbal harassment in their community and men spoke about harassment experiences at work. Harassment often took the form of direct verbal insults often (but not always) by strangers. Both women and men described experiencing verbal harassment in their community. Monica described the emotional impact of street harassment:

> They have insulted me in the street. I was just crossing the street, and someone stopped, and they followed me. I was walking with my kids and I was insulted […] so I just started crying. I felt very bad.

Alex, a 34-year-old male participant shared a detailed account of the kinds of harassment and intimidation Latino community members face regularly. In this instance, within his own neighborhood:

> My neighbor became upset and started yelling at me, "I will call the police to come and get you and send you back to Mexico you illegal!" They want to humiliate us, and lower our self-esteem, because of the laws right now they feel like they can just step all over us, that's an effect of the laws that are starting to come in.

Here we see broader anti-immigrant sentiment tied directly to policies like HB 87. Estela, a high school student, also felt that the discrimination at school occurred because of anti-immigrant policy changes. She stated, "people are a lot more open to being racist in school. Because with the new laws, they think it's ok." Harassment and verbal discrimination was reported by individuals even at the doorsteps of their homes and in settings were youth would hope to feel safe, like school.

Like Alex's experience with his neighbor, the term "illegal alien" was often cited by participants as a pejorative used against them. Jacob and other adults interviewed for this study highlight the psychological impact of being called "illegal":

> Being called illegal its humiliating, once they categorize you as illegal it's like they think, "I don't even need to give you water because you're an illegal," that's how they use that word. You don't deserve that because you are illegal and if you don't like it, well, leave, the doors are open.

A sense of dehumanization and of humiliation was common in response to being called "illegal" or other derogatory names. For Nadia, a woman participating in DV support groups, the experience left her feeling shocked and vulnerable:

> At that moment I felt impotent, very bad. It was as if they had thrown a glass of water at me and I had to realize that that was my reality … At first, I felt vulnerable, like "what am I doing here?"

Other adults described feeling stuck in the anti-immigrant climate, for instance Alex described feeling like being in a jail "without an escape" and also touched on painful responses to verbal abuse, stating, "you begin to feel humiliated when they call you illegal or wetback."

Among men, verbal harassment at work was commonplace. Within the larger DV community organization, most Latino clients work in service-oriented jobs or work requiring manual labor, positions already marked by mental and physical stress. One 30-year-old man in the study tied harassment directly to anti-immigrant policy (HB 87):

> Hispanic coworkers of mine have been yelled at "What are you doing here! Go back to your country! This is not your country." They are already sending back all the Hispanics. It's from the law that's in place that they base this off of.

In addition to verbal harassment reported by participants, Cesar described witnessing someone being physically harassed at work:

> It's ugly, some [Latinos] get discriminated more than others. Some have been pulled by their shirts and have been yanked away. I believe they are crossing a line. The truth is my manager is a racist. He only puts up with us because we get the job done because they need us.

Experiences of harassment also extended to youth participants. Youth described instances of bullying at school. Joseph, a high school student describes the first time he was called an "illegal" at school, "They [peers] were calling me illegal and telling me to go across the border." The same participant described how this led to a physical altercation, explaining: "although I didn't know what it meant, I knew it was bad." Later in the interview, he pointed to conflicted feelings about both the term "illegal" and his actions: "Now I know it's true. I can't fight back, even though it wasn't my choice to be illegal."

Immigration-Related Stress and Domestic Violence

When asked about the intersection between immigration and DV, youth observed gender differences among the adult participants in this study. Five out of six women described how anti-immigrant policy and harassment served to exacerbate family stress. Several women spoke about how the risk of deportation increases stress experienced by individuals in the home, and in turn, increases conflict among family members. The relationship between these stressors was described by Nadia:

> There are a lot of people who cannot do what they used to be able to do, there's the stress of going to jail and being deported that many people worry about. I have lived that. When somebody experiences stress they are more likely to say and do things that they don't want to do.

In contrast to women, three out of four men believed new immigration enforcement laws reduced domestic violence because of the increased risk of deportation. For example, Alex shared the following: "I believe that people begin to think about the consequences before they act, because they know that the police […] will turn you into immigration [authorities]." This quote was mirrored by other adult males interviewed believing that the consequences of perpetrating domestic violence are too great to risk.

Youth beliefs about the intersection of immigration policy and domestic violence were mixed. When asked about whether immigration policy would increase or decrease rates of DV, Amalia shared that, "yes [violence would increase] because the abuser might take advantage of the victim knowing they won't call the police because deportation might happen and no [violence would be less] because they [abusers] are just scared of the laws." Some youth, like the adult men, thought domestic violence would decrease because people would be more likely to think of the consequences of their actions before committing a crime. As Estela, a 15-year-old female notes, "they (abusers) know that if they commit a crime they are more likely to be deported immediately." Other youth, like Jorge, a 14-year-old adolescent, echoed the responses of most adult women in the sample, believing domestic violence would increase because of immigration laws. "Yeah, I think it [violence] would be more because people are angry, they blame other people for immigration [problems]."

Distrust and Help-Seeking The research team asked both adult and youth participants about whom they would and would not ask for help about domestic violence. Adults and youth spoke of being uncomfortable with seeking assistance for violence from police officers. Participants stated that they were more comfortable seeking assistance with domestic violence from family, friends, and at Latino serving community agencies.

For adults, the decision to call the police depended on their own documentation status, but the consensus was not to ask police or government agencies like Child Protection Services. Some respondents also reported negative experiences with calling police and fear of the possibility of deportation or general mistreatment by police. Cesar shared his experience when he witnessed domestic violence occurring in the parking lot of his apartment complex. Here he describes conflict over a

decision to call the police to help his neighbors, and some regret over the decision to call:

> I was scared because I was thinking, what if they take me and not the person that was causing the problem? My kids were scared asking, "are they going to take you Daddy?" I would tell them no, but inside of me I felt like they were going to take me because he [police officer] was taking the questions farther than were necessary […]. At this moment, I wouldn't call them if I saw a similar case like that happen out of fear of being deported for a problem that I had nothing to do with […] just a bystander trying to help.

Similarly, every youth interviewed for this study reported being scared to call the police. These youth were worried about their families becoming separated by deportation if police were called when violence occurred. For instance, Rose, an 11 year-old participant, described her hesitancy to call: "I'm scared my parents will be taken away. I don't want that to happen". Another 11-year-old, Claudia, spoke to a general fear of police: "they [police] scare me; I don't want to get deported." Some youth questioned whether calling the police would help with domestic violence at all. For example, Jorge, a 15-year-old, stated that "they [police] just aren't gonna care," and another, Amalia, stated that she felt "intimidated" by the police. This hesitancy over whether to call the police was emphasized by three youth who made statements like, "you have to think about what they would do in the case that you don't have documents" and "I don't know if my family would be deported or if I would be deported, it just depends on the situation and the time."

Further, two youth participants expressed that school was not a safe place to ask for help with violence. Amalia shared her views on asking for help from school personnel, explaining she wouldn't seek help from a school counselor or teachers generally. She elaborated on this idea by stating, "Unless there was a teacher that I really trusted, but there are very few of those. I wouldn't go to them because they start getting too many people involved." Overall, child witnesses of violence felt overwhelmingly distrustful about help-seeking in the context of DV and considered how seeking help would trigger immigration questions and government response.

Discussion

Youth PAR researchers from La Voz conducted qualitative interviews with women, men, and children to address the research question "how are immigration policies affecting Latino families affected by domestic violence?" Study findings add to the burgeoning area of research that shows Latino immigrants experience heightened fear, social isolation, and harassment in response to an increase in anti-immigrant policies nationwide (Provine and Sanchez 2011; Toomey et al. 2014; White et al. 2014).

Psychological and Economic Stress in Anti-Immigrant Climates

Experiences of both social and economic marginalization were present throughout participants' responses, in line with the increasing numbers of studies that have documented heightened levels of fear around detention and deportation, family separation, and psychological distress (Androff et al. 2011; Ayón 2017; Ayón and Philbin 2017; Salas et al. 2013). Participants attributed stress, social isolation, and a lack of trust in police, counselors, and teachers to anti-immigrant policy.

Adults in our sample living and contributing to their local economies an average of 15 years described the ways anti-immigrant policy restricted their daily lives. Perceptions of police were characterized by distrust and fear and exasperated by negative experiences of police ticketing or questioning participants in their communities. Participant experiences with police also point to the on-going police presence in a majority Latino community, related to increased profiling of Latino community members (Ayón 2017). Adults and youth in this sample responded by limiting activities pursued outside the home and avoiding unnecessary travel to avoid being stopped by police officers. The fear that both youth and adults expressed in this study has been substantiated by recent research that has found Latino community members may be targeted for traffic violations (Ayón and Philbin 2017). As has been noted in other studies, this restriction in behavior can lead to greater social isolation and limits families' abilities to meet every day needs (Hagan et al. 2011; Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011; Yoshikawa et al. 2013).

Participants also identified barriers for obtaining work, such as not having a license or lacking proof of citizenship through E-Verify. Regardless of citizenship status, adults reported feeling a negative shift in how they were treated by employers and other employees. Findings by White et al. (2014), similarly reported that Latina women found it harder to find work after Alabama's anti-immigrant legislation. Experiencing verbal harassment and going unpaid for work was reported by several adults in our sample. This type of marginalization and discrimination of immigrant workers of color has been the subject of a larger body of research that finds immigrant Latinos are paid lower wages, are often underpaid, and given menial work tasks when compared to non-immigrant workers (Massey and Bartley 2005). Thus existing economic vulnerability of immigrant workers combined with anti-immigrant laws create exceptionally challenging conditions for immigrant Latinos.

We found that participants shared the experience of becoming targets of verbal and physical violence at work, school, and within their own neighborhoods and communities. Overt verbal, and even physical harassment in the workplace was described by adult participants, while youth participants described bullying at school and expressed the perception that immigration policies targeted them specifically because of being Latino. Latino youth are already at-risk for experiencing discrimination at school (Bosma et al. 2017; Cahill 2010; Gurrola et al. 2016), and research on youth bullying in the context of immigration is beginning to emerge. Because research has demonstrated relationships among exposure to DV, bullying, and other forms of interpersonal violence (Berk and Schur 2001; Dasgupta 2008; Duke et al. 2010; Glass et al. 2009; Gupta et al. 2009; Rennison 2010), our findings suggest that anti-immigrant climates could be a considerable risk factor for experiencing increased violence for immigrant Latino families.

Perceptions of Policy Impact on DV and Help Seeking

The results of this study extend the body of research on Latino families who have been affected by domestic violence in important ways. With regard to the impact of anti-immigrant policy on the incidences of DV, women in our study more often viewed anti-immigrant policy as exasperating DV situations. In contrast, male participants tended to view anti-immigrant policy as a deterrent that added weight to the perceived consequences of violence perpetration. It is possible this finding reflects perspectives of individuals referred for perpetration vs. those that experienced violence from a partner. Research with larger samples should explore the potential difference in perceived occurrence of violence by gender in immigrant Latino communities, particularly as Latina immigrant women report immigrant status itself is used as a control tactic by partners (Dutton et al. 2000).

Study findings also suggest that state immigration laws may act as a barrier to seeking DV services, placing immigrant families at greater risk. These barriers may also explain in part lower rates of service utilization by Latina survivors (Dutton et al. 2000; Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011; Ingram 2007). Youth in our sample were mixed in their perceptions of how policy might impact the occurrence of DV but were particularly hesitant to consider seeking help from police or schools due to fear of family separation. Findings echo those of Vidales et al. (2009) who found that after an incident of controversial police immigration enforcement, residents were less likely to report crimes, held more negative perceptions of the police, and felt less accepted in the community. Past research has found that Latina women prefer to turn to family members, church, or community organizations for support around DV (Zarza and Adler 2008).

Because some children may have U.S. citizenship while the parents do not, youth participants expressed fear of separation from parents if they were to call police officers or talk to teachers and counselors about violence at home. The experience of having mixed citizenship status within a single household may increase a child's sense of responsibility and guilt in disclosing violence. Since as many as one in ten Latino children live in a household with at least one unauthorized parent (Passel 2006), our findings suggest anti-immigrant policies have the potential to further destabilize families affected by DV.

While the purpose of PAR studies is not necessarily to generalize to larger populations but rather to engage community members in local research, it is important to note the limitations of this study. Findings mainly represent the views of a small group of Latino immigrants predominately of Mexican origin in a metropolitan region of Georgia and may not generalize to other Latino communities. Immigrant Latino samples may be more difficult to recruit given fears about revealing documentation status, as is reflected in the study findings. However, given specificity of the target group (Latino families affected by DV), our sample size is comparable to other studies with Latino immigrant populations, and only slightly smaller than survey studies with the same target population (e.g., Hancock et al. 2014). This study highlights the need for further research in areas exploring intersecting social issues within diverse communities. Larger scale mixed methods studies that follow participants longitudinally, measuring fear, discrimination, and violence over time would substantiate our findings.

Keeping in mind the diversity of experiences within Latino immigrant groups, implications for the wider Latino community clearly emerged from the study. Participatory research methods have the potential to increase community involvement and action around issues like immigration reform and DV. The results of this study can inform policy at multiple levels. In the context of DV, both youth and adults in the present study reported distrust of formal support systems, like police and school personnel, except for Latino-specific organizations. With this in mind, schools should explore ways to provide safe outlets for students to disclose about violence in the home without fearing deportation for themselves or other family members. This could include by partnering with cultural-specific centers or by revisiting policies that mandate a governmental response to students' disclosures of violence (e.g., mandatory reporting policies). At a broader level, immigrant populations and the public need accurate information about victim's rights, including families' abilities to receive support and services regardless of their immigration status.

La Voz Juvenile: Process and Impact

This study builds on the strengths of first and second generation Latino immigrant youth by engaging them in the process of

examining the perspectives of members of their community on new immigration policies. Using PAR, youth were encouraged to view themselves as experts of their own lived experiences. Youth researchers gained skills to share and increase knowledge about immigration within their communities. Academic researchers also gained rich information on a topic that would have been difficult to obtain on their own. La Voz has disseminated findings from this study in presentations to Latina community leaders, academic audiences, as well as in a blog post for a national domestic violence resource center. Not only did youth researchers lead the study, but they also continue to contribute to the dissemination of study findings, reflect on their experiences, and seek ways to take action and advocate on the part of the Latino community (Rodriguez et al. 2015).

Reyna, a member of La Voz (and third author), shares the experience of distrust of police reported by participants in this study. Acknowledging the experience of witnessing her parents threatened with deportation multiple times, Reyna chose to pursue a bachelor's in political science with a minor in criminal justice and history. For this author, spending time as a youth researcher conducting studies, interacting with participants, and watching changes happen led her to challenge herself in education and to take what she's learned to continue to work towards change.

Aida recalls that initially, interviewing study participants for this study felt awkward; she did not think people would be open about sensitive subjects. She quickly learned La Voz Juvenile made others comfortable; People spoke freely. From her perspective, adults from her community leave their countries where they grew up in and love for better opportunities; for themselves, their children, and their future. Within her own family, she is constantly reminded of the sacrifice made by her parents (it was a must to go to college, though she never questioned why). Currently, this La Voz member works as a licensed practical nurse and is completing the educational requirements to become a registered practical nurse.

Griselda owns her own studio salon and is enjoys creative writing in her spare time. She builds on this concept of shared understanding between youth part of the broader community under study by tying her experience of PAR to a growing critical consciousness about her own immigration experience. In thinking about friends and how and why they migrate to this country, she considers whether they were scared. Of course, but what draws families from their home countries is promise of better opportunity and equality. During the years of the study, this author lost friends in the increasingly anti-immigrant climate as whole families returned to their countries of origin. This La Voz member recalls learning about civil rights movements in school and feels her work on this study is aligned with the recent movement for immigrant Latino rights.

In closing, by leveraging an existing university and community partnership, our youth authors were able to design a study that documents the perspectives and experiences of Latino community members affected by DV and living in an anti-immigrant climate. While the results demonstrate some of the challenges facing Latino immigrant communities in the U.S., they also provide guidance for community practice and future research. To use the words of the fourth, PAR gives youth a voice among adults, so long as they are willing to listen and learn.

Acknowledgements The researchers would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to earlier versions of this paper: Josephine V. Serrata, Ph.D., National Latino Network for Healthy Families and Communities, Casa de Esperanza; Alvina Rosales, Ph.D. Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, and Julia Perilla, Ph.D., Georgia State University.

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