Depression among Mexican Immigrant Mothers: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER - ANAYELI LOPEZ, MSW, PHD

ANN ATENCIO, MA

OMHAGAIN DAYEEN, MA

Background

- Between 1990 and 2000, **13 million new immigrants** arrived in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2005).

- **58% (i.e. 6.5 million) undocumented immigrants** in the U.S. are from **Mexico** (Pew Hispanic Center, 2017).

Background

- **Stressors faced by immigrants**: learning a new language, adapting to a new cultural, family separation, discrimination, marginalization (Cavazos-Regh, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007).

- **Undocumented immigrants can experience added psychological distress:** trauma, lack of legal protections, constant fear of being deported, limited resources (Arbona et al., 2010, Sullivan & Rehm, 2005, Díaz-Lázaro, Verdinelli, & Cohen, 2012).

Background

- **Self-efficacy beliefs:**
  - Individual beliefs in his or her ability to influence the conditions in their lives or complete a task (Bandura, 1995).
  - High self-efficacy beliefs helps cope with stressful life events more effectively (Hartely, Vance, Elliott, Cuckler, & Berry, 2008).
  - Low self-efficacy predicts depression since individuals perceive situations beyond their control (Linde et al., 2004)

- **Collective Efficacy**
  - Collective efficacy is associated with lower levels of individual depression (Ahern & Galea, 2011; Mair et al., 2009).
  - Cohesive neighborhoods can provide more social support to residents (Cutrona, Wallace, & Wesner, 2006).

Significance of the Study

- **Parents undocumented status affects children's development and well-being**: increased family stress, fear of deportation, reduced income, poor working conditions, dilapidated housing, and poor access to social services and community supports (Yoshikawa & Kalil, 2011; Yoshikawa, Suarez-Orozco, & Gonzales, 2016).

- Limited number of quantitative studies on this topic

- Use of ecological- and family-based approaches

- Aligns with social work professional values

- More relevant than ever before

Theoretical Framework

- **Stages of migration framework:** multiple factors influence the experience of immigrants during different stages of migration (Pine & Drachman, 2005).

- Multiple **cumulative stresses** could influence the mental health of undocumented immigrants.

Pre-Migration

Transit

Resettlement

Return to country of origin
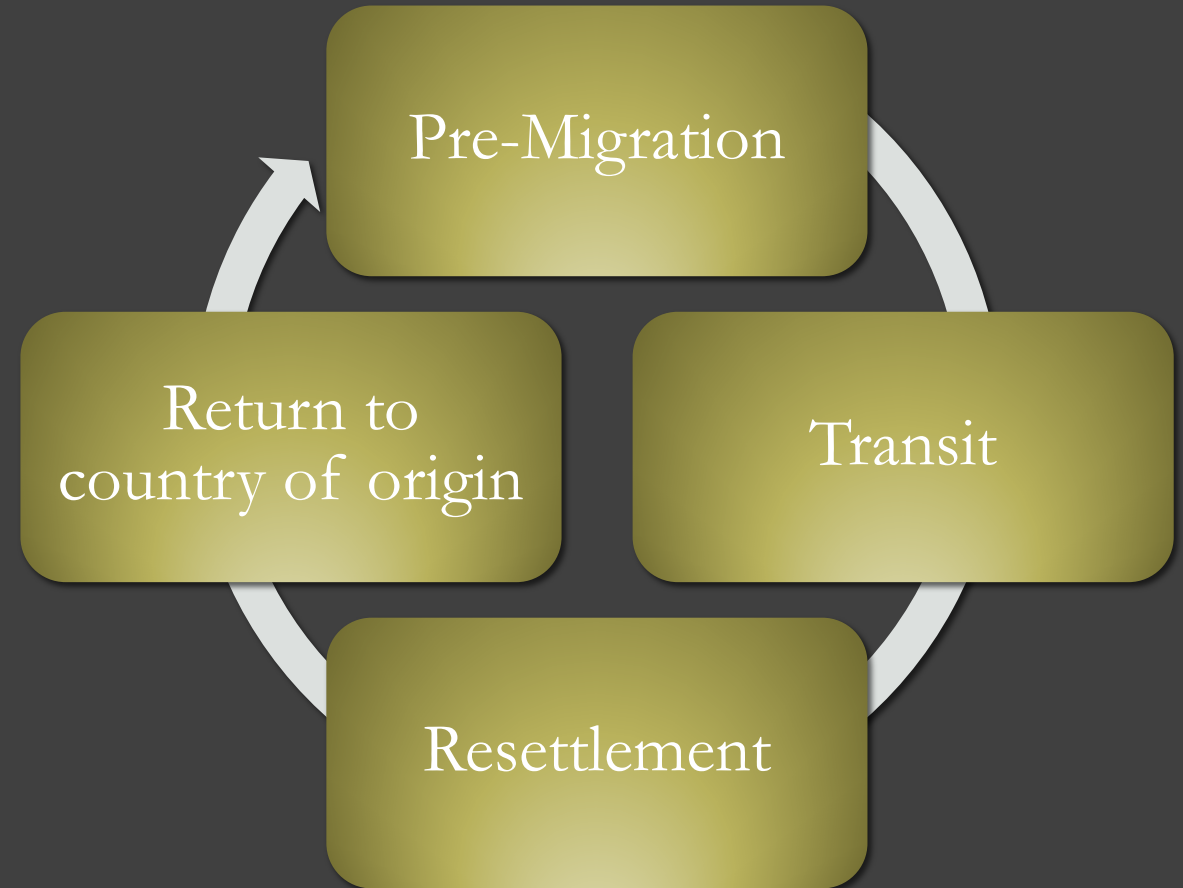
Theoretical Framework

• **Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model:** Bidirectional influences between individuals' development and their surrounding environmental contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

• **The social-ecological environments** of children growing up in unauthorized homes influences their development (Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suarez-Orozco, 2015).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development
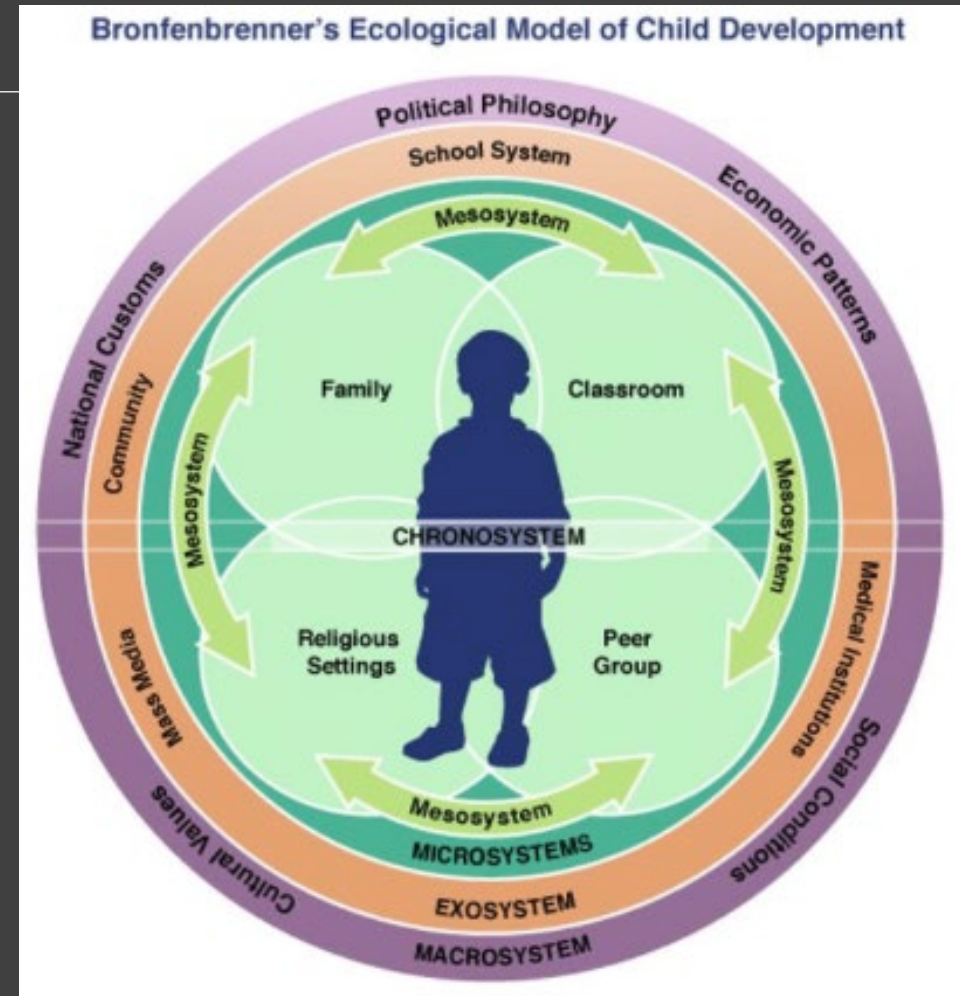
Data and Sample

- Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A. FANS)

  - Cross-sectional data from Wave 1

  - The sample:
    - Mexican origin mothers and their children: Native-born, documented, mixed-status, undocumented

Research Hypothesis

Hypotheses
H1a: Undocumented Status → + Maternal depression (Direct Effect) H1b: Undocumented Status →   - Mother's self-efficacy → + Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)
H2a: Documented Status → - Maternal depression (Direct Effect) H2b: Documented Status →   + Mother's self-efficacy → - Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)
H3:   Collective efficacy → + Mother's self-efficacy → - Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)

Measures

- ## Dependent Variable

  - ### Maternal depression:
    - Composite-International Diagnostic Interview-Short Form (CIDI-SF)
    - Questions related to dysphoric mood (i.e., sadness or anxiety) and amhedonia (i.e., inability to experience joy).
    - Scores of 0.55 or greater were classified as high probability of having major depression
    - To meet classification– symptoms lasted two weeks for most of the day.
    - 0 = not depressed (less than .55); 1 = depressed (.55 or greater)
    - Cronbach reliability score .87

Measures

- **Independent Variables**

  ◦ **Immigration status:**

  ◦ **Maternal Depression**: 1 = native born, 2 = documented immigrant (naturalized citizens or green card holder), and 3 = undocumented immigrant

Measures

- **Independent Variables**

  - **Collective Efficacy:**
    - Three subscales:
      - Intergenerational closure: "parents in the neighborhood know their children's friend,"
      - Social cohesion: "This is a close-knit neighborhood"
      - Informal social control: "neighbors would scold a child who was showing disrespect to an adult."
      - 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
      - The Cronbach's alpha reliability score was .86

Analytic Strategy

- Data screening
- Correlations
- Descriptive statistics
- Path analysis

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers/Household (n = 578)

Variable	%
Mothers/Household Demographic Characteristics	
Mother's immigration status	
U.S. born	20.36%
Documented	**42.50%**
Undocumented	**37.14%**
Lived in the U.S.	
Less than 5 years	8.45%
5–9 years	15.85%
10–19 years	**39.61%**
20 years or more	**36.09%**
Language	
English	31.86%
Spanish	**68.14%**

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers/Household (*n* = 578)

Variable	%
Marital status	
Married	**61.67%**
Cohabitating	12.31%
Single	26.03%
Educational attainment	
Less than high school	**62.91%**
High school	18.35%
College or more	18.74%
Family poverty level	
100% FPL or below	**31.09%**
101–200% FPL	13.65%
201–400% FPL	6.99%
401% FPL and above	**48.27%**

Figure 1. Path diagram for the mediation model (*n* = 578).
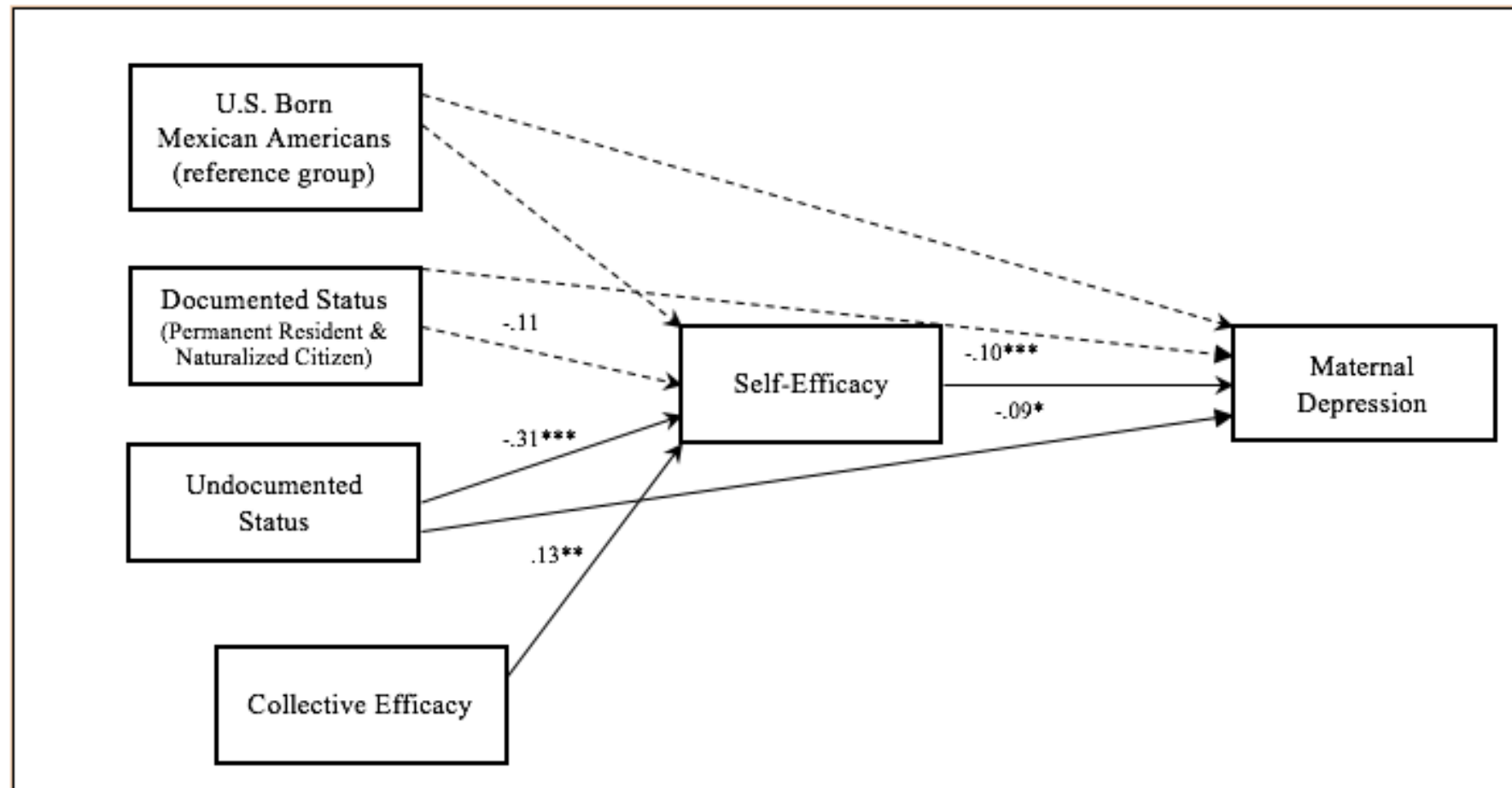
Note. χ^2 = 0.53, *df* = 1, *p* > .05; CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = .020. *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Results & Discussion

- **H1:** Undocumented mothers had **fewer symptoms of depression** compared to documented U.S. born Mexican American mothers.
  - Consistent with immigrant health paradox (Alegría et al., 2007a).
  - Not consistent with stages of migration (Pine & Drachman, 2005).

- **H1a:** Undocumented mothers had **lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs**, which predicted symptoms of **depression**.
  - Undocumented immigrants may have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy due to sense of helplessness (Samaniego-Estrada, 2014; Arbona et al., 2010).
  - High self-efficacy has been linked with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003).
  - Helps to individuals feel that they have control over their lives. (Linde et al., 2004; Maciejewski, Prigerson, & Mazure, 2000).

Results & Discussion

- **H2:** Not significant for documented immigrants

- **H3:** Collective efficacy increased self-efficacy
  - Neighborhood processes influence individuals' perceptions of themselves and consequently, their emotional state (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009).

Policy Implications

- At the state levels, some state policies allow undocumented immigrants to access health insurance, obtain a driver's license, allow undocumented students to compete for financial aid, and protect undocumented workers from employer retaliation (Yoshikawa, Suarez-Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2016).

- In the long-term, comprehensive immigration reform; the harm brought about by unauthorized status including fear of deportation, associated stigma, and blocked opportunities could potentially be decreased.

Practice Implications

- *Promotora programs* inform immigrants about their rights and raising awareness of available resources Hilfinger Messias, Sharpe, Castillo-Gonzalez, Trevino, & Parra-Medina, 2016).

- Increasing self-efficacy and collective efficacy by engaging immigrant women in political advocacy (Gates, 2017).

- Strengthening Families Program, has been found to improve family relationships, improve parenting skills, and reduce problems behaviors among families facing adversities (Orte, Ballester, March, & Amer, 2013).

Limitations

- Cross-sectional data

- Representative of the population of Los Angeles County only

- Data collected between 2001-2004

- Naturalized U.S. citizens were lumped together with permanent residents to create a category called "documented immigrants".

- Data does not include variables that could measure cultural protective factors, acculturation, acculturative stress, and trauma

Thank you!!!

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