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**An Epistemic Compass Towards Home: Students' Stories of  
Comunalidad, Educación, Dialogues, and Responsabilidad within  
Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA**

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**An Epistemic Compass Towards Home: Students' Stories of  
Comunalidad, Educación, Dialogues, and Responsabilidad within  
Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

Para mi mamá, papá, y hermanxs. Ustedes me enseñaron como amar y reír.

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## **Abstract**

# **An Epistemic Compass Towards Home: Students' Stories of Comunalidad, Educación, Dialogues, and Responsabilidad within Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

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This thesis examined the stories of Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia within Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA. Critical Race Theory, Freirean Theory, and nepantla guided this study's theoretical framework. These grounded theories spoke to what is silenced by dominant narratives, as well as possibilities for knowledge construction and served as a foundation for the findings. This study centered on the construction and meaning of knowledge, and brought to the forefront ontological concerns such as who has the possibility and ability to teach, to learn, and to question. Through narrative analysis, this study also focused on the epistemic significance of identities. The program participants' voices and experiences underscored themes of educating through comunalidad, languages de educación, fostering comunidad through dialogue, and consciousness through responsabilidad.

Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA provided a space for how program participants situated themselves within UCLA and Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA, as well as how

the education they gained in Proyecto and UCLA nourished each other. Unifying their UCLA and Proyecto educational experiences helped deconstruct the binary between formal and informal education. Additionally, at the center of Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA was a commitment for community service; however, community service found in Proyecto rested on a sense of collective “we.”

“An Epistemic Compass Towards Home: Students’ stories of Comunalidad, Educación, Dialogues, Responsabilidad within Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA” expressed that home embodied an epistemic and agentic significance of “going home.” Home entailed an active resistance that simultaneously deconstructed the binaries between school/home and the institution of education/educación, Educación spoke to the education gained through the institution of education and to the education we develop from our community that provides insight, morals, and values.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

*“The act of writing is the act of making soul, alchemy.”*

— Gloria Anzaldúa, “Speaking in Tongues”

### MY STORY WITH PROYECTO DE JORNALEROS AT UCLA

My parents wanted me to be immersed in Spanish and enrolled me in bilingual education. After the passage of California’s Proposition 227, I lost that right to foster my Spanish within the institution of education. My bilingual classroom was separated and placed into an English-only classroom within the second month of fourth grade. Being separated and placed into English-only classroom became a defining moment in my education journey. I felt like an outcast in my new classroom. I did not understand the curriculum and had no friends. As the daughter of two monolingual Spanish-speaking parents, without a translator, my teacher no longer could communicate with my parents. As a nine-year-old, I my perception of education as unifying force between my family and my schooling became disconnected. Disconnected spoke to a double meaning of my education between the education I received at home and at school.

Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA<sup>1</sup> provided me with synergic opportunities to unite my home education and my university education through language and community. I associated Spanish with family and education. Prior to attending college I spoke Spanish everyday and it served as a way to communicate with my family, while in school I communicated in English. Once I moved 400 miles away from home to attend college, I

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the study, I will use “Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA,” “Proyecto de Jornaleros,” and “Proyecto” interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> Jornaleros or day laborers are individuals who work for hire. In this study, jornaleros gain employment

no longer spoke in Spanish in my everyday life. I felt I was losing my language—I had already lost in within institution of education.

Proyecto de Jornaleros offered me a space to nourish my education within Spanish and English. Spanish and English became educational tools. Education connoted learning the grammatical, phonological, and practical aspects of the languages. Spanish and English also inherently helped conceptualize our world and ideologies. Languages assisted in the conveying of meanings and values. Spanish acted as a means to remain connected to my community and my family, while English offered an opportunity to support the jornaleros<sup>2</sup> in their learning of a dominant language that often marginalizes them. Similar to many of the jornaleros, my aunts, uncles, and parents were immigrations and not fluent in English.

Knowledge through Spanish within the Proyecto space and within my family space came from sense of feeling at home. When I heard my native language, when I spoke it, when I read it, and when I thought in Spanish, I felt at home. Spanish encompassed an epistemic compass toward home. Spanish sustained a vital connection between my community, history, and family roots. For me, Spanish carries with it life and memory. Language entailed relationality because the speaker conveyed their understanding of the world through words; however, the listener held the power to make sense of their word through their interpretation and acknowledgement of what is being conveyed.

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<sup>2</sup> Jornaleros or day laborers are individuals who work for hire. In this study, jornaleros gain employment through day labor centers.

Being a Chicana, low-income, and daughter of immigrants catalyzed my interest to join Proyecto de Jornaleros. I largely defined my identities based on my parents and family's struggle, hard work, and responsibility towards community. I joined Proyecto because the jornaleros reminded me of my family, and because Proyecto provided me the opportunity to work with an older population. Similar to the jornaleros, my parents and family members did not receive more than an elementary school education. However, even though they did not receive much formal education that did not mean they are uneducated. My parents are some of the most educated people I know and instilled in me important values, such as of caring for others. I knew that my parents' education was not limited to the four years of schooling. Joining Proyecto conceptualized my views of education. Proyecto introduced me to a form of education that values diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and is situated within a desire to transform. With my gained view of education, I viewed education more as educación. Educación spoke to the education gained through the institution of education and to the education we develop from our community that provides insight, morals, and values.

Throughout my participation in different site visits I became part of the Proyecto community. Jornaleros provided me with several words of encouragement about the significance of education and the importance of remembering your community. From hearing their personal stories I became aware of the empirical contradictions between equal opportunity, racial equalities, and historical disparities that affect our community and my consciousness. Relational consciousness emphasized the centrality of marginalization and a realization that oppression should be viewed through a "we" lens,

rather an “I” lens, given that marginalization is systemic. Along the same vein, change and transformation could only occur through a collective endeavor. From my interactions with the jornaleros I learned that social justice was accomplished through practice, dialogue, activism, and acknowledgment of diverse viewpoints. These factors shaped and drove my personal passion as a community member and scholar.

I constantly learned from my memories in Proyecto de Jornaleros. Even though I no longer attend site, this study caused me to relive those experiences. The act of remembering inherently facilitated a process of reliving. I remembered waking up early to attend site and wishing I could remain in bed. Attending site reenergized me as a person and as a community member. Dialoguing with the jornaleros provided me with the opportunity to “wake up” from the rigid life of a college student. By rigid, I meant the mechanical life of attending class, reading, writing, taking test, and repeating these tasks. Before I joined Proyecto, I knew something was missing from my education, but I could not exactly pinpoint it. I felt frustrated and alienated. Being a member of Proyecto reminded me why I sought higher education, why I wanted to study political science, and why I felt so conflicted in my courses. Attending site provided me a means to understand the larger oppressive sociopolitical realities, and, importantly, it made me feel connected to my community.

Participating in Proyecto nourished my role as a researcher. I learned the importance of co-creating knowledge with the research participants, where knowledge became a mechanism of change. Proyecto’s usage of popular education contributed to my view of knowledge as vision and hope for change. The philosophy of the organization

and the ability to service with the jornalero population caused me to join and remain a part of Proyecto de Jornaleros for three years during my undergraduate studies. As a result of my experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros, I nourished my views and ever-developing understandings of education, social justice, and consciousness. From numerous dialogues with the other program participants and the jornaleros, I gained awareness of the importance of lived experiences, diverse viewpoints, reflection, and a love of critical inquiry. Overall, participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros contributed to my view of language, identity, and my role as a researcher. The study originated from my undergraduate participation in Proyecto de Jornaleros, where jornaleros and the other program participants became my community.

## **SIGNIFICANCE AND BACKGROUND**

This study focused on current and alumni program participants within a social justice organization called Proyecto de Jornaleros founded in 1999. According to Proyecto de Jornaleros mission statement, Proyecto provides “jornaleros with support and information so that they are able to voice their own opinions and be their own advocate in the community.” Within this study, education diverged from dichotomous ways of thought that oppose and separate informal and formal educational spaces, which challenged the program participants’ education at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) as formal and their education in Proyecto as informal learning spaces.

The goal of this research centered the experiences and voices of Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia and

how they interpreted and experienced Proyecto de Jornaleros. Within this study context, I challenged what counted as education and who had the legitimacy to define, teach and possess it. In other words, I deconstructed dominant perspectives defining who was viewed as educated and what constituted as legitimate education. After interviewing the program participations, I discovered that education should be understood as educación; yet, education and educación were false cognates. In its English usage, education referred to the school institution and academic experience, while educación included formal academic preparation and, importantly, also incorporated family and community ways of knowing, being, and interacting, as well as morals and compromisos passed down through generation (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999).

The program participants' diverse narratives about education spoke to a process and construction of self-awareness and community relationship. Using narrative analysis (Rosaldo, 1989), the study explored how these students described their experiences and dialogued with jornaleros. Interacting and dialoguing with the jornaleros mediated the program participants' experiences and caused them to reflect on themselves, their relationality and responsibility to their community. By centering the lived experiences of the program participants, their voices revealed myriad of ways that education and knowledge are constructed through dialogue. Dialogue encompassed a mutual act of knowledge construction. Mutual act because the speaker [program participants and jornaleros] conveyed their understanding of the world through words; however, the listener [program participants and jornaleros] held the power to make sense of their word through their interpretation and acknowledgement of what is being conveyed. Within the



realm of dialogue the role of the listener and the speaker became integrated by the word. The word became an apparatus to interpret shared knowledge, and when knowledge was shared it became social. Knowledge came from stories and stories came from listening, for both the jornaleros and the program participants in the Proyecto space as well as from myself and research participants in this study.

This study contributes to the field of education and is meaningful in several ways. For one the study revealed the necessity to illustrate dialogue and interactions as legitimate ways of knowing, being, and understanding. The themes of the study illuminated the dynamic ways that knowledge is formed. Second, the program participants' experiences in Proyecto provide a nuanced view of community service as a means to stay connected to their community and challenged the status quo. This study shed light relational and reciprocal discourse inherent in community service. The participants' perception of jornaleros as part of their community impacted their understanding of service. The study also found that Proyecto nourished spaces for *comunalidad*, *comunidad*, and *responsabilidad*. Within the three spaces students framed of how they understood education, built community, and conceptualized their career choices. Overall, participating in Proyecto shaped their university experiences and also the program participants long-term professional aspirations.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Within current research on college students and community service underscored the interplay of benefit and service that is typically conceptualized as relevant only those

being served. When examining college students and community service the race and ethnicity of the students are not centered, as such it could contribute to a colorless and colorblind discourse. The voices, experiences, and perspectives from students of color are essential; especially considering that “college student” in education research about community service tended to refer and/or be synonymous with a White, middle-class norm (Hellman et al., 2006). The dominant perspective of service and the identity of the college student impacted researchers’ analytic lenses and the research participants.

Current research noted that college students positively benefit from community service, yet it offers little social critique and often silences the experiences of students of color who engage in service with a community who has a familiar and/or similar racial background (Gilbride-Brown, 2008; Lott, 2008). Examining community service from the perspective of students of color who engaged in service with members of their community and its transformative capacity disrupt the binaries, and binaries referring to the opposition between the college student who preformed the service and the communities who the students served.

Community service must also be viewed as a continuum of practice, where compulsory, unreflective, or isolated engagement became insufficient (Rhoads, 1997). Service effectively connoted through the praxis that encompassed and embodied it, rather than identifying community service through a single, one-dimensional or programmatic label. With this in mind, I did not seek to illustrate the differing working definitions of community, but rather offered narratives that examined synergies between college

students' participation in service and the impact of serving with members of their community.

The purpose of this study consisted of: (1) examine the narrative of the program participants experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros as expressed by twelve program participants (2) add to the body of literature on college student participation in community service organization and activism (3) investigate the epistemic perspectives that program participants gain from service (4) understand how the program participants understood education as a result of their sense of self and community participation in Proyecto de Jornaleros.

## **RESEARCH AND GUIDING QUESTIONS**

My research question pertained to: How did program participants perceive and understand the dialogue exchanges shared between the jornaleros and themselves? Guiding sub-questions include: (1) How did the program participants define/understand education? (2) How were space(s) for community fostered and nourished? (3) Did participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros influence the aspirations and career choices of its program participants?

## **OUTLINE OF STUDY**

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter two presents an overview of the literature relevant to this study. I provided a brief review on jornalero context, community service and the theoretical perspectives of Critical Race Theory, Freiran Theory, and nepantla used to guide and provide insight to the study. Chapter three details

the methods of narrative analysis, Chicana feminist epistemology, and outlines the research methods. Chapter four provides a portrayal of the twelve participants in relation to Latinidades. The demographic background of the research participants consisted of (a) ten women and two men, (b) six current program participants and six alumni program participants, and (c) ten participants with Latinx<sup>3</sup> background, one participant with white background, and one participant with Indian background. Chapter five elaborates on the narratives and thematic findings of the data. With chapter five, the chapter elaborates on four themes: (a) educating through comunalidad; (b) languages de educación; (c) fostering comunidad through dialogue; and (d) consciousness through responsabilidad. The data incorporated and drew from all twelve participants. Finally, the sixth chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of this study, opportunities, and suggestions for potential future research.

Throughout this study, I focused on terminology and binaries to emphasize the academic power of “naming.” Naming signified an ability to use words beyond the grammatical context. Naming embodied a responsibility to disrupt dominant narratives. I aimed to problematize words and binaries embodied within education, immigration, Latinidades, Latinx, and community service.

The power of naming also served as a guiding to understand home. I built from Carrillo (2016)’s understanding of “home” as “a metaphorical and physical space where struggle and agency develops and nurtures academic identities within activist and

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<sup>3</sup> Latinx is gender neutral that does not abide from the gender binary, as opposed to “Latino/a.” Latinx also refers to people from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

strategic guidance” (p. 23). Home embodied epistemic and agentic significance and a sense of belonging. The act of “going home” entailed an active resistance that simultaneously deconstructed the binaries between school/home and the institution of education/educación, while unifying them through tension within a liminal space. I consciously decided not to use concept of “home” as a theoretical framework because home emerged as a findings of this study; yet, I interwove the notion of “home” because it served as a liminal space within and from the study.

## **THE STORY OF PROYECTO DE JORNALEROS**

### **Jornalero**

I used “jornalero” throughout this study, when referring to individuals who seek employment through an informal economy. The term jornalero encompassed the etymology notion of jornal. In Spanish, jornal defined both a “day’s labor” and “day’s wage” (Ordóñez, 2015). The usage of jornalero described both the individual and the work they preform. The closest English translation for jornalero is day laborer. Throughout this study, I used jornalero and day laborer interchangeably. I prefer to use jornalero because was the terminology used in Proyecto de *Jornaleros* and, more importantly, the jornaleros referred to themselves as “jornaleros.”

## **Proyecto de Jornaleros: Story**

Since 1999, Proyecto de Jornaleros has served the Los Angeles jornalero community. Proyecto originated from the activism of Conciencia Libre (CL)<sup>4</sup>. Conciencia Libre was a UCLA student organization whose mission was to engage in activism through education. CL did not view education as confined by the classroom; rather education was embodied by nourishment of community and radical love. Radical love manifested in the struggle towards social, political, and economic justice, such racial love manifestations resulted in the creation of Proyecto de Jornaleros.

Proyecto de Jornaleros originated from CL's desire to show and honor individuals who died trying to cross the Mexican-U.S. border. Members of CL united with a community organization, the Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA), to make 600 crosses to honor the deaths of immigrants and bring awareness to the violence of Operation Gatekeeper<sup>5</sup> (Tat, 2000, November 2). CL and IDEPSCA had previously collaborated in several activist events throughout Los Angeles; yet, the college students had not engaged with the jornaleros outside of marches and protests. The physical action of constructing 600 crosses facilitated a space where the jornaleros and the UCLA students could engage in dialogue. While jornaleros and college students manually constructed crosses that symbolized the death of migrants, they engaged in a process that centered the act of reliving through the telling of stories: the process of dialogue.

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<sup>4</sup> Closet English translation: Free Consciousness

<sup>5</sup> In 2004, the Clinton Administration enhanced border security in Southern California and increased the border wall between Mexico and the U.S.

Proyecto de Jornaleros began through the act of dialoguing. During the construction of 600 crosses that honor the deaths of individuals crossing the border, the jornaleros began to share their own border stories. Proyecto de Jornaleros was born and still continues to exist from this 600 cross activism experience. The creation of Proyecto de Jornaleros resulted from this activist act, and the dialogue between Conciencia Libre and the jornaleros facilitated the relationship between both parties. Dialogue gave rise to the possibility of the continuity of activism beyond a single event for the jornaleros; yet, the event itself was largely contested on the UCLA campus.

The 600 crosses were placed on a prominent grass area in the campus. The UCLA administration had not approved the placement of the crosses and demanded that Conciencia Libre remove the crosses. CL refused to remove the crosses and accused the UCLA administration of not caring about the migrants' deaths and told the administration they would call Latinx media attention to the administrations' opposition to the significance of the crosses. After hearing CL's threats, the UCLA administration tolerated the 600 crosses' display because they feared media attention. However, several UCLA students viewed CL activism as uncalled for and demanded action from the UCLA administration.

The placement of the crosses resulted in animosity that was noted in the student newspaper. According to a Daily Bruin news article from January 25, 2001, specifically an opinion piece written by a white UCLA student named Paul stated:

While Conciencia Libre and I most likely do not agree politically, I can understand their belief in the need to remember those who have died. I will leave it at that, and not go into the motivation behind illegal border-crossing, or the

impact of domestic economic policies (including corruption and mismanagement) of these peoples' countries (Henderson, 2005, January 25).

Paul's statement articulated two issues. One he opposed the CL activism. Second, he viewed the movement of people across borders as an economic issue, rather than a human rights issue with multiple sites of power. This study argued that the death of human beings, of parents, children, and friends should not be solely viewed through an economic lens. Paul's statement must also be contextualized within the larger sociopolitical reality. As exemplified earlier, California had experienced a rise in nativism and anti-immigration, which could be noted in the Daily Bruin article. Paul's words expressed the importance of documentation (read: permit) in order to have a protest.

The lack of documentation (read: permit and, similarly, U.S. documentation status) brought to light how aggression is seen as validated when individuals do not follow imposed rules. As Paul noted:

I'm not saying that these people should be incarcerated, but, by their representative's own words, these 30 people ("two or more persons") came to the consensus ("an agreement") to raise their display ("a legal purpose") in an area not allowed ("through illegal action").

The Daily Bruin article proceeded to call into question the morals of Conciencia Libre because the organization did not have a permit to erect the display. The Daily Bruin news article concluded by calling for a hold on the university records of Conciencia Libre members; yet, even with these threats, members of CL however did not view a permit as a barrier to stop their activism. CL wanted to bring awareness about the UCLA community.



The Daily Bruin article quoted a member of CL, Mark, articulating that CL made a conscious decision to defy the university policy of applying for a permit and later of not removing the crosses. When asked about CL's decisions not to remove the crosses Mark stated, "[it] was made with the consensus of 30 members." Members of CL made a conscious decision to not seek a permit for the event because they viewed the "permit" bureaucratic red tape. They viewed the permit as working within a dominant system of power. The lack of permit was paralleled with CL's decision to not apply for recognition as an official student organization with UCLA. CL did not apply for recognition because they did not want to be constrained by UCLA institutional policies and wanted to focus on grass-root activism. Even though Conciencia Libre no longer exists, Proyecto de Jornaleros continued to foster and nourish the activism that CL began in 1999 through the creation of the 600 crosses.

I purposefully focused in great length on the 600 crosses' display and the results of the display for three purposes. One, the 600 crosses signified the college students' highlighted the violence occurring at the border. Second, the construction of the crosses constituted a collective endeavor between the UCLA students and the jornaleros, as well as nourished a space where they engaged in dialogue. Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA began through activism.

### **What is Proyecto de Jornaleros?**

Proyecto's mission is to "provide jornaleros with support and information so that they are able to voice their own opinions and be their own advocate in the community."

Proyecto de Jornaleros challenged the oppressive social, political, power and economic conditions faced by the day laborer population, while concurrently fostering and supporting college student activism. The jornaleros performed a critical role in the empowerment of the UCLA students. The site visits consisted of código, English classes, and a food sharing component, as well as quarterly fieldtrips. In this section, I detailed Proyecto site visits, organization structure, código, and the English curriculum.

With the support of Proyecto's community partner IDEPSCA, Proyecto de Jornaleros attended two of IDEPSCA's day laborer sites. One Friday Proyecto attends Downtown Community Job Center and on Saturday they attend the Cypress Park Community Job Center. In 2011, due to the construction and expansion of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority into West L.A., the West Los Angeles Day Laborer Center was removed and Proyecto relocated their Saturday site to the Cypress Park Community Job Center. The Downtown Community Job Center is located in Downtown Los Angeles in a cement-looking building. Cypress day labor center is located in the parking lot of a Home Depot under an overpass. Given the nature of the jornalero profession, there is a fluctuation in the number of jornaleros attending site, usually between 10-15 ranging from 30-60 years in age. Additionally, the jornaleros are primarily, if not always, men. The jornaleros within each site created a welcoming culture found within each location. When I think about the Downtown L.A. and Cypress Park site, what comes to my mind are the jornaleros who attended each site. Each site had its particular culture and dynamics. For example, the Downtown L.A. location loved to

engage in political discussions and the Cypress Park site was filled of laughter and witticisms.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the general body consisted of 15 core UCLA volunteers plus the six project coordinator positions. The numbers of coordinators and core volunteers have remained somewhat consistent with some fluctuations. Proyecto de Jornalero student organization did not run under a hierarchical structure, but had six coordinator positions—volunteer, site, outreach, events, and two financial coordinators. Most of the members of Proyecto de Jornaleros were individuals with a Latinx background, first-generation college students, Spanish native language speakers, and were immigrants themselves and/or had parents who immigrated from Latin America. Throughout my four years with Proyecto de Jornaleros and currently, most of the members of Proyecto are Latinas. The members of Proyecto had a variety of majors, such as Global Studies, physics, Chicano/a Studies, psychology, and neuroscience. The program participants were united in their interests of fostering social justice through education, labor and workplace rights, access to health care, comprehensive immigration reform, and many other critical human rights issues.

During the Proyecto de Jornaleros UCLA volunteer general meetings all members of the organization provided suggestions, feedback, and helped develop the código and English curriculum. Código was created through an act of dialogue. During the meeting, the program participants would also made beginner, intermediate, and advanced curriculum. Proyecto members, with the input of the day laborers, created and adapted the English curriculum so that it centered the jornaleros' needs. The general meeting also

provided a space where the program participants created community within the organization. The general meetings were filled with laughter and the students created a supportive environment, within and outside of the Proyecto space at UCLA campus and the Proyecto space at site.

Each Friday and Saturday, the UCLA volunteers arrived to Downtown L.A. and Cypress Park at 10 a.m. and the jornaleros greeted them. Proyecto de Jornaleros site began by arranging a dialogue circle with chairs, with the UCLA students and the jornaleros sitting among each other, and participating in código. Código consisted of an activity where UCLA students and jornaleros sit in a circle and dialogue around symbols, such as images, music lyrics and/or quotes, with the purpose of fostering a social justice-based educational space. Código was beyond a question and answer session; it encompassed the act of dialogue. Dialogue, at its essence, was based upon an epistemological relationship, in the words of Freire, which are articulated in both Proyecto and IDEPSCA mission statement, “No one educates anyone, and nobody is self-educated; all of us learn from each other, mediated by the world we live in.” Through código, the program participants engaged an epistemological relational process of knowledge re/creation, where the UCLA students engaged in dialogue centered on learning through lived experiences. Dialogue facilitated an environment where contrasting and differing views and voices highlighted multiple truths. Dialoguing did not seek a homogenous truth, but welcomed multiple truths. These multiple truths nurtured a learning process where individuals shared and reflected on their own experiences.

Following código, the jornaleros would self-place themselves into three different English levels: beginners, intermediate, and advance. Most jornaleros would self-place themselves into beginners, followed by intermediate and advance. However, in my personal experiences, jornaleros would self-select themselves in beginners, even when they were truly intermediate or even advance—I always wondered why the jornaleros occurred. Could self-place themselves in beginners because they felt their English was not “good enough”? Did we not know how to construct curriculum? Did they feel more comfortable at beginner because they made fewer mistakes? Was it a mixture of these questions and/or maybe others questions? We continuously asked them but honored their selection.

After the English component of site, we, both the jornaleros and the UCLA volunteers, would share lunch that UCLA volunteers brought, which most often consisted of sandwiches. During the sharing of lunch, the jornaleros would always offer us water and even, at the Downtown location, a jornalero would go to the store and buy drinks. In several instances when the UCLA volunteers did not want to eat a sandwich because they saw it as taking food away from the jornaleros. However, the jornaleros would share that they wanted the UCLA volunteers to share in the meal. Within the Proyecto space, sharing a meal meant more than just eating a sandwich, rather the act of sharing a meal transformed into a moment of *convivir*.<sup>6</sup>

Proyecto’s quarterly fieldtrips, end-of-the-year celebration, and attendance to IDEPSCA hosted events also noted examples of *convivir*. Once a quarter, the UCLA

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<sup>6</sup> I used *convivir* as “the praxis of living together in community” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006, p.4).

volunteers would plan a fieldtrip to a location in Los Angeles; past fieldtrips included the beach, Griffith Observatory, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles Zoo. The purpose of the fieldtrips was to nurture the relationship between the UCLA volunteers and the jornaleros outside of the day labor site setting. Personally, they fieldtrips provided an opportunity to interact with the jornaleros in a location that was unfamiliar to both the volunteers and the jornaleros. The end-of-the-year celebration occurred at the end of the UCLA academic year, past celebrations included mariachi performances, folklorico dancers, loteria, and carne asada. UCLA volunteers attended IDEPSCA hosted events to support to their community partner. UCLA volunteers also took an active role and marched with IDEPSCA during May Day rallies in Downtown L.A. Marching with IDEPSCA, offered the UCLA volunteers to engage in activism with their community with the goal of demanding change for their community.

## **IDEPSCA**

Proyecto de Jornaleros worked with its community partner, Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA),<sup>7</sup> to support Proyecto de Jornaleros' mission, its view on popular education, and its service with the jornaleros. IDEPSCA's mission read as followed:

To create a more humane and democratic society by responding to the needs and problems of disenfranchised people through leadership development and educational programs based on Popular Education methodology. Specifically our goal is to organize and educate immigrants concerned with solving problems in their own communities.

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<sup>7</sup> In English: Institute of Popular Education of Southern California

IDEPSCA began in 1991 with the mission to help in the empowerment of migrant communities in Los Angeles through popular education and community organizing. Specifically, IDEPSCA defined popular education as, “grassroots-accessible curriculum that introduces individuals to the connections between their immediate, personal experiences and larger social challenges, leading to a collective framework for social change.” Popular education elaborated on the need for the curriculum to be relevant to the community learning from it, and, importantly, popular education is a political curriculum and instruction rooted in a desire to use lived experiences for collective change.

IDEPCPA provides a variety of programs that focus on family support, leadership development, and training all aimed at working with communities for collective empowerment. According to IDEPSCA’s website<sup>8</sup>, IDEPSCA has five main programs all based on popular education: (a) Aprendamos Program— a literacy, math, science, and multi-media academic and cultural enrichment program for children and their families; (b) Workers Health Program— is composed of educación en salud, redes y referencias, salud y seguridad en el trabajo, and salud alternativa for day laborers and household workers; (c) Mujeres en Acción—a women collective aimed at ensuring protection and enforcement of the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights (AB 241); (d) VozMob<sup>9</sup> (Voces Móviles)— open-source mobile media platform where people can share their

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<sup>8</sup> IDEPSCA’s website: <http://www.idepsca.org>

<sup>9</sup> In 2011, VozMob won the United Nations-sponsored World Summit Award for mobile application in the “m-inclusion and empowerment” category (Costanza-Chock, 2014).

stories in partnership with the University of Southern California; and (e) finally, the Day Labor Program, which I detail in the subsequent paragraph.

Since 1997, IDEPSCA has operated Day Labor Program at four different day labor centers located in Hollywood, Harbor City, Cypress Park, and Downtown-Fashion District<sup>10</sup>. IDEPSCA's Day Labor Program is partially funded by the City of Los Angeles, with allocation of funds being inconsistent changing from each funding cycle. The labor centers offer a safe location where the jornaleros can seek employment and employers can request workers. The centers not only want to diminish worker exploitation, but also provide jornaleros with IDEPSCA's diverse program opportunities and create a supportive environment.

IDEPSCA's mission and definition of popular education are critical to the development of this study's examination of Proyecto de Jornaleros not only because IDEPSCA is Proyecto's community partner, but also because IDEPSCA provides Proyecto with community organizing and popular education knowledge. As a former Proyecto de Jornaleros project director, I was honored to serve alongside an incredible organization that has the jornaleros' best interest in mind and is community organized.

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<sup>10</sup>Due to funding and location permits, the locations of the centers have constantly changed.



## **Chapter Two: Review Of The Literature & Theoretical Framework**

This study centered on documenting and analyzing how program participants perceived and understood the dialogue exchanges shared between the jornaleros and themselves. In order to examine the purpose of this study, I reviewed literature focusing on the (his)tory of Latinx Labor, jornaleros, college students and community service and activism. Next, I described Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA), the origination of Proyecto de Jornaleros, and the structure of Proyecto de Jornaleros. Subsequently, the third section of this chapter described the intersectional framework of Critical Race Theory, Freirean Theory, and nepantla. Taken together, the theories spoke to what is silenced by dominant narratives, as well as possibilities for knowledge construction and served as a foundation for the findings.

### **LATINX LABOR EXPORTS**

The United States has historically sought cheap labor from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Immigration and migration of individuals, whether undocumented or as temporary labor, fuels U.S. neoliberalism's exploited of Latinx bodies' labor. Latinx bodies were and continually are seen as objects for labor. Both the Bracero Program and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) underscored how U.S. economic politics did not bring about an area of mutual economic development for Mexico and U.S., but rather the two policies supported asymmetrical relations for cheap labor. This study includes literature on Latinx labor exports for two reasons. One challenged the perceived single directional relationship of immigration and labor, which

often ignored the social condition that neoliberalism created and the caused movement of people. Secondly, literature highlights how the U.S. utilized Latinx labor within a capitalist and dehumanizing project illustrated by the multidimensional and intersectional factors contributing and maintaining inequity and subjugation of Latinxs in the United States.

### **Bracero Program**

The Bracero Program (1942-1964) encompassed a critical political and economic bi-national treaty between the United States and Mexico. As a result of the labor shortages from World War Two, agricultural growers urged the government for help and the Bracero Program emerged. In appearance, the Bracero Program guaranteed basic human rights, such as shelter, food, and sanitation, and a minimum wage of 30 cents an hour for the temporary Mexican farmworkers. These Mexican farmworkers became known as “braceros” (Gonzales, 2006), which literally meant individuals who worked with their *brazos* (arms) and performed manual labor.

The power dynamics between U.S. and Mexico underscored the economic context of the countries. The United States’ systemically subjected Mexico’s labor and resources. Gonzales (2006) compared labor exploitation during the Bracero program as a form of colonial labor exploitation. As he argued,

They [braceros] were systematically placed under employer control (as well as state control), segregated, and denied the rights to organize, to bargain for wages individually or collectively, to protest, and too freely change residency or employer... little if any oversight enforced rights and privileges legally accorded to the laborers (p. 2).

By arguing that braceros were a form of colonial labor, Gonzales called attention to U.S. imperialism and the braceros as colonized labor. The author's usage of "systemically" coupled with "little if any oversight" underscored a system of imperialist domination. The braceros were marginalized when they came to the U.S. and were viewed as the product of their manual labor. The braceros were denied the right to organize and change employers illustrated their marginalization and denial of rights within United States.

The Bracero Program not only served to bring cheap labor for the U.S., but also was used by the U.S. to hinder Latinx efforts to demand better wages. Gutiérrez (1995) articulated the tension when he quoted a Mexican-American and their views of the braceros:

I've been following the crops in California for about 12 years, and I still don't know if I'm for or against the braceros. I guess that's because I first came to this country as a bracero myself in 1944, and know something about their problems. But I also know that when the braceros come in, the wages stay very low; that's pretty bad for people who have to earn their whole year's income just during the harvest season (p. 159).

The use of the bracero program raised conflicts within the Latinx community for the purpose of cheap labor and exploitation. Low wages and exploitation were instrumental for U.S. economic development and capitalism; yet, detrimental for the human rights of Mexican nationals.

Both of my grandfathers participated in the Bracero Program. From a personal interaction with my paternal grandfather, I learned that they he, along with the other Mexican nationals, were monitored at all times of the day and could not leave the camp. My grandparents worked long hours and while some men saved their earnings, others spent their wages on alcohol; interestingly, the braceros campsite sold the alcohol. Thus,

even when the bracero campsites paid the bracero their wages, they received money back from their monopoly of utilities, food, and drinks. I remember as a child attending various events to raise awareness and file documentation for wage theft that occurred to both of my grandparents. Unfortunately, even though we filed the documentation on their behalf, both my grandfathers were unable to receive their stolen wages. According to the U.S. government, they were unable to provide *sufficient* documentation.

### **Neoliberalism: NAFTA**

United States neoliberalism directly and indirectly contributed to instability in Latin America, some notable factors were the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Gonzales, 2014). Neoliberalism welcomed movement; yet, movement referred to monetary capital and not individuals (Delgado-Wise & Márquez Covarrubias, 2007). However, U.S. neoliberalism depended on both the movement of monetary capital *and* individuals. The tension within neoliberalism created a system that valued monetary capital, while ostracized and marginalized the individuals it used as cheap labor.

Migration flows into the U.S., however, were viewed within a system of inclusion-through-exclusion. The systemic culture of inclusion-through-exclusion underscored U.S. economic interests in cheap manual labor; yet, simultaneously, the U.S. viewed the migrants performing the labor as disposable (De Genova, 2005). Therefore, neoliberalism research must examine the complexities contributing to the movement of people and the multiple power sites of immigration, in order to better understand the

social, political, and economic realities faced by those who seek to immigrate and U.S. policies.

Gonzales (2006) underscored that, “within the implementation free-trade policies under the mantra of globalization [neoliberalism] and its particular manifestations, NAFTA, the “peaceful conquest” of Mexico, begun in the late 1880s, has continued into the twenty-first century” (p. 50). The powerful quote spoke to neoliberalism, specifically the guise of “free trade,” as a colonizing project. NAFTA has displaced 2 million Latin Americans (Gonzales, 2006) and continues to displace individuals. Notably the U.S. is dependent on Latin American immigrant labor, as well as various service industries. However, public and societal rhetoric placed blame on the immigrants for their immigration; yet, fail to acknowledge the U.S.’s implication in the movement of people and the its economic dependency on cheap labor.

Historically, colorblindness discourse idealized whiteness and the white body, while it supported the perception of the black and brown body as capital. Latinx bodies have historically been Othered and depicted as subperson. Gutiérrez (1995) illustrated how Mexican men have been portrayed as a “breed of cruel and cowardly mongrels who were indolent, ignorant, and superstitious, given to cheating, thieving, gambling, drinking, cursing, and dancing” (p. 204). The malevolent depicting of migrants served to name, categorize, and divide. Stereotypes and negative depictions of the diverse Latinx community were important to the analysis of this study, particularly the perception of “illegal,” “uneducated,” and “freeloaders.”

This study included the perception of Latinx labor exports within the Bracero Program and NAFTA. The U.S. has historically employed migrants of Latinx background as cheap labor, which paralleled the historic employment of jornaleros for day-to-day employment and shared similarities within the inclusion-through-exclusion found within U.S. neoliberalism. Coupled together, the nativist historical traditions based themselves on a false color-blindness discourse, while ignoring the racial, immigration, economic, political, and social complex historical realities. Realities that are interconnected between U.S. society with Latin American countries. In other words, colorblindness ignored the marginalization imposed on immigrants who are people of color, which normalized racism through policy and supported U.S. neoliberalism.

### **Jornaleros**

Jornaleros are members of an “informal economy.” The informal economy consisted of monetary agreements/transactions between the employers and the workers that are typically not reported to the U.S. government; additionally, these agreements do not need to abide to labor regulation (Gonzales, 2006). Jornaleros’ work ranges from a couple of hours to a few days, and consisted of construction, gardening, painting, and other manual employment opportunities (Ordóñez, 2015). Valenzuela and Meléndez (2003) critically noted that jornaleros sought employment due to diverse reasons such as: lack of English fluency, legal status, unemployment, underemployment, and/or recent arrival to the U.S. labor market. As a result of the instability of employment, the

jornaleros often lacked medical insurance, paid sick or vacation time, and enforcement of labor law regulations.

Los Angeles, California has and continues to be a location with a large number of jornaleros. Valenzuela et al. (2006), based on a national survey of 117,600 day laborers in the United States, found that the Western region of the U.S. had the highest concentration of day laborer with 42%, followed by the East (23%), Southeast (18%), South (12%), and Midwest (4%). The changing labor market and decline of state-regulated economic activity has more than likely also contributed to an increase in the number of day laborers throughout the U.S within the last two decades (Ordóñez, 2015). According to UCLA's Center for the Study of Urban Poverty, about 117,600 individuals are working as day laborers or currently seeking work (Valenzuela et al., 2006). Los Angeles and Orange counties are home to more than 20,000 day laborers (Valenzuela et al., 2002).

Jornaleros come from diverse backgrounds. Jornaleros consist of mostly men (Ordóñez, 2015). In California, the jornaleros are largely from Mexico (Valenzuela, 2006). Jornaleros also came from Central and South America. From my experience in the Proyecto de Jornaleros, many jornaleros originated from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and even Brazil; yet, not all jornaleros are immigrants and/or recent arrivals to the United States. Many of the jornaleros come from humble backgrounds and often tend to have little formal education.

Sadly, the rhetoric of “undocumented,” “job stealers,” “illegal,” and “un-American” provided the U.S. with the false legitimacy to abuse the rights of the jornaleros and their perceived disposability. The usage of stereotypes served as a means

of social control. Social control highlighted the continuous, intentional exclusion of jornaleros from the labor market while including them in the informal economy. Compounded by membership in the informal economy and often depicted as “illegal.” Given the negative stereotypes depicting the Latinx population, I wanted to challenge the societal marginalization of this community. The jornaleros are often portrayed as undocumented migrants. Yet, even though not all jornaleros are undocumented, all jornaleros share a common struggle for labor rights and challenge labor exploitation and face a dehumanizing environment that questions their personhood.

Negation of personhood demonstrated the systemic exclusionary culture of the United States. The lack of documentation, such as legal citizenship and residency, defined the ability to work “legally” and, thus, protection against labor exploitation was absent. Societal inclusion-through-exclusion stressed the material value placed on the jornaleros. Jornaleros are often treated and positioned in the shadows of mainstream society, depicted as criminals, and deviants; yet, society often negates the exploitation, abuse, and wage theft the jornaleros suffer. Throughout this study, please keep in mind the realities that can never be encompassed solely through word on a paper.

## **COLLEGE STUDENTS OF COLOR AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Based on an extensive literature on community service from journals and EBSCOhost database<sup>111</sup>, I found that much of the research on college students of color and community service supported the argument that for students of color community

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<sup>111</sup>My search included: community service\* OR "civic engagement" "students of color" OR minorit\* OR latino OR latina OR hispanic OR "mexican american" OR black OR "african american" OR ethnic\* OR race OR racial "college students" OR undergraduates



service should be viewed with a critical perspective (Delgado Bernal et al., 2009; Gilbride-Brown, 2008; Hayes & Cuban, 1997; Myers-Lipton, 2002; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2005; Camacho, 2004). While not meant to be a comprehensive review of the literature on community service, this review on college students of color and community service provided a snapshot of the current landscape around college students of color engagement and their perception of community service when engaging in service with a community who has a familiar background and/or is their community.

Delgado Bernal, Alemán, and Garavito's (2009) study focused on how Latinx college students at a PWI<sup>12</sup> narrated their experiences mentoring Latinx<sup>13</sup> elementary school students. The study expanded the discussion of racial identity into the realm of fluidity by situating their service within a borderland framework. By using a borderland framework, Delgado Bernal et al. (2009) examined how Latinx college students reflected and expressed a continuous sociopolitical transformation, and depicted the fluidity and complexity of their *latinidades*<sup>14</sup>. The study noted how service caused Latinx college students to nourish their ethnic identities, develop language to challenge dominant societal ideologies, become role models for the Latinx elementary students, and motivated them academically. Performing service with the Latinx elementary school students nourished a sense of pride for the Latinxs at the PWI. The sense of pride could be related to the college students' ability to engage with their community, which served an emotional connection to continue their studies. Importantly, the college students did

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<sup>12</sup> Predominantly white institution

<sup>13</sup> My usage of Latinx not the authors'

<sup>14</sup> Authors' italicize

not view their service with the elementary students as a required “community service,” but perceived service as a space to facilitate their own identity development and connectedness to *their* community.

Shaddock-Hernández (2006) also found that college students’ understanding of community was contextual and relational to their identity. The study examined the how Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant and refugee college students understood and made sense of their participation and role in community service. The college students served as mentors for youth who shared their ethno-cultural background. The study strategically positioned the Vietnamese and Cambodian college students as cultural insiders with experiences and expertise. Positioning the college students as insiders brought to the forefront a largely understudied topic in education research focusing on college students and community service: the identities of college students who service members of their community.

Paralleled to the findings in Delgado Bernal et al. (2009), Shaddock-Hernández (2006) underscored how college students of color viewed community service and how service fostered their academic persistence, helped them develop university-community relationships, and created a space where the Vietnamese and Cambodian college students could critique and analyze their university and service experience. The study also found that community service served to affirm the college students’ racial/ethnic identities as Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants and refugees. The college students’ diverse identities as Vietnamese and Cambodian migrant and refugees mentoring youth who shared their ethno-cultural background helped to unpack the role of identities on

motivation and perception of service. Thus, the identities of the college students were critical for this study and its findings. Shaddock-Hernández (2006) expressed a shift in the college students' desire to use social activism as a means to empower themselves and *their* communities.

In “‘It’s Sort of My Calling’: The Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility of Latino Immigrant-Origin Young Adults,” Suárez-Orozco, Hernández, and Casanova (2015) found that many of the Latinx college students identified their catalyst for civic engagement, including community service, developing from their desire to create change for themselves and *their* community. The undocumented students’ provided an important critique of community service within civic engagement discussion, given that they continuously broker and re/negotiate the dominant boundaries of citizenship. In the words of one of the participants: “I like giving to society... and to find myself...I want to give something to this world. So... I want to help out...community does that for me” (p. 94). The participant’s quote underscored how community service as a form of activism and how engaging in service *with* community provides a space to give back to society. Community service as activism motivated and provided a platform where students could contribute towards self, institutional, and community change. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) noted that many times motivation for activism resulted from the participants directly experiencing or witnessing injustices related to race, documentation status, immigration, language, and country of origin. Activism, thus, encompassed a collective relation endeavor, where individuals were motivated to act based on injustices they and other community members’ experienced. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) also noted how

community service embodied a simultaneous, a present-and-future orientation. The present-future orientation underscored a present-day movement towards creating long-term change, specifically for comprehensive immigration reform. The study blurred the line between college student and community service and engaged service as a form of activism.

The literature on college students of color and community service revealed complexities found within engagement. Some scholars argued that community service must be viewed as a continuum of practice, where compulsory, unreflective, or isolated engagement is insufficient (Rhoads, 1997). Critical questions about engagement emerged such as: engagement “for whom,” “towards what goal,” and “from what perspective.” The literature revealed that engagement is more complex than the often dichotomized notion/category created between those in community service and those who do not engage in service. Yet, “college student” in education research about community service tends to refer and/or be synonymous with a White, middle-class identity. A key to answering such questions is through a lens informed by college students who are placed outside of the dominant community service discourse. The rhetoric surrounding community service matters, as it impacts how students perceive their service and how it is examined in research and practice.

Research on engagement within college students of color serving their communities highlighted a gap in the literature, as well as underscored tensions found in community service terminologies and perspectives. Examining terminologies and perspectives from student of color performing service with their communities

underscored community service's transformative capacity to disrupt the binary created between the student who preforms the service and the communities who the students engage with and how service impact and transform the college students performing the service.

The literature on students of color and community service highlighted differing and fluid ways they experienced, perceived, and conceptualized service within identities. Building on the notion of identities, literature on college students of color also focused on community service as a political avenue towards producing social change and activism, and in which community service serves as a means of becoming conscious and reflecting upon one's positionality as college student and as community member.

#### **COLLEGE STUDENTS OF COLOR AND ACTIVISM**

Participation in protests and desire to change the racial climate at institutions of higher education has historically been noted in the research about the experiences and resistance activism of students of color. I wanted to specifically highlight research on student activism at UCLA for two reasons. First, focusing on UCLA provided a means to give context to the cultural climate institution where the alumni program participates attended as well as the current program participants. Second, UCLA has a noted history of student of color activism seeking long-term change within and outside of the institution.

## Latinx College Students

Before I delve into the 1993 UCLA Chicana<sup>15</sup> Studies<sup>16</sup> protests surrounding the creation of the department, it was imperative to note California's sociopolitical climate in the 1990s. As Rosaldo (1993) expressed change demanded by college students involved a two-prong demand within a "civil rights agenda for institutional change and an intellectual agenda for testing ideas and projects against a more demanding and diverse range of perspectives" (p. xv). The 1990s also witnessed the passage of three significant propositions: Proposition 187<sup>17</sup>, 209, and 227 (Acuña, 2007). The propositions aimed to deny social services (such as education and health care) to undocumented individuals, to end affirmative action in higher education institutions, and to eliminate bilingual education. These propositions were clear examples of the legalization of racism. The pull and push factors of globalization resulted in an era of nativism. Nativism supported the rise in the conservative, anti-immigration laws and movements, such as the English-only movement. The nativist political climate of California impacted students of color attending UCLA.

The 1993 UCLA Chicana and Chicano studies protests had a significant impact on the creation of the Chicana/o Studies Department at UCLA. The 1993 protests sought to reverse Chancellor's Charles E. Young's decisions of not supporting the departmental status of the Chicano Studies Program. The protesters worried that the Chicano Studies

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<sup>15</sup> I purposefully use the term Chicana because it is a gender-neutral term that does not abide to a gender binary. When referring to the UCLA Chicana protest, literature uses terms, such as "Chicana and Chicana," "Chicana@," "Chicana/o," and "Chicano."

<sup>16</sup> Currently, the title of the department is: UCLA César E. Chávez Department of Chicana/o Studies.

<sup>17</sup> The California Supreme Court later deemed in Proposition 187 unconstitutional.

Program would be later dismantled, given that UCLA administration did not want to increase funding to the program. Activism on the UCLA campus noted the importance of having Chicano Studies at UCLA. For two weeks, students and community members participated in marches, vigils, sit-ins, and the 1993 hunger strike. The 1993 hunger strike varied in time and consisted of five-six UCLA students, one professor, high school students, and two community leaders (Ochoa & Ochoa, 2012).

The UCLA students advocating for the creation of a Chicanx studies program not only wanted their voice represented in the academia, but also saw the creation of the department as an empowering education space. For example, a Chicano activist at UCLA, in Rhoads (1998), expressed:

We want a place where people can get the kind of service that a university is supposed to provide. What's really important is educating our students. By that I mean not schooling them but truly educating them on their roots, on who they are...What UCLA offers is schooling. They train you. They train you to do things that this society needs in order for the status quo to continue. We wanted a department of Chicano studies to be something more than that (p. 634).

The student's quote conveyed a desire for the Chicanx studies department to have community roots, be of the community, and for the community. The activism also challenged the notion of schooling for an empowerment rooted education to bring about change for the community.

When examining the 1993 protest, one cannot escape the marginalization of women and queer communities within the protests and Chicano Studies Program. Within the hunger strikes several scholars noted the sexist and homophobic factors within the hunger strike and the larger activism. As Soldatenko (2005) argued:

Sadly, the protests took a different turn on May 25 when a small group of individuals, ostensibly to increase pressure for the demands, decided to begin a hunger strike. This group manifested the presence of male-centric, patriarchal, homophobic, nationalist, and traditional political agenda and curricular vision (p. 248).

The hunger strike placed Chicanas at the periphery of the movement, which made them choose between demanding Chicana community rights over women rights. I highlighted this statement to underscore the complexity of activism within the movements. For example, within the larger Chicano studies movement, the voices of women were ignored for *la causa*, where in the feminist movement Chicana had to select their gender identity over their race. Thus, stressing the complexity found within identities and activism.

### **DREAMer<sup>18</sup> Movement**

In the landmark *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) U.S. Supreme Court decision, the Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children must be given access to K-12 education regardless of their legal status, as well as barred public school districts from charging tuition based on documentation status (Negrón-Gonzales, 2014). Yet, *Plyler* does not pertain to colleges or universities. Undocumented students at UCLA are enrolling and graduating from UCLA despite the legal system, rather than because of it. The undocumented student movement at UCLA offered a clear example of student activism within the UCLA space and the larger U.S. context.

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<sup>18</sup> Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) would provide a pathway to legalization for undocumented students; the DREAM Act was first introduced in 2001 and continues to be reintroduced. In 2010, the Act passed the House of Congress but failed to gain enough votes in the Senate.



Improving Dreams, Equality, Access and Success (IDEAS) at UCLA, undocumented student organization, served as a key organization for undocumented students at UCLA. IDEAS's mission was based on four pillars: community service, fundraising, membership, and activism. Through the AB540 Project, UCLA students counseled and tutored undocumented high school youth. Fundraising component offers scholarships to undocumented students. The membership component provided small group supportive networks. IDEAS offered resources to support students at UCLA, called for comprehensive immigration reform, and supported access to institutions of higher education. Through activism, IDEAS engaged in immigration reform at the national level, while at the local level they partook advocacy at the UCLA campus and the Los Angeles area. During the protests IDEA members wear graduation caps and gowns to symbolize their identity as an undocumented student.

Undocumented undergraduates and allies at UCLA also participate in advocacy through publishing books that focus on their undocumented identity, activism, and undocumented student resources. In 2008, UCLA student published *Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out*, which portrayed the stories of eight undocumented students (Madera et al., 2009). The book included sections on legislation since 1980s, personal interviews, and described Improving Dreams, Equality, Access and Success (IDEAS), an undocumented support organization at UCLA, and incorporated immigrant rights resources. Following 2012, *Undocumented and Unafraid: Tam Tran, Cinthya Felix, and the Immigrant Youth Movement* (Wong et al., 2012) depicted the stories of two DREAMers that passed away, as well as centered the

undocumented youth movement. Finally in 2015, *Dreams Deported: Immigrants Youth and Families Resist Deportation* noted youth's stories of deportation and national immigration campaign. The undocumented students published books as a political and awareness tool for other undocumented students, allies, and individuals seeking information.

In the light of the importance of social justice and activism, scholars have called for the desire to examine the parallels between community service and activism, where advocacy and community service have a synergic effect on each other. In order to present a more encompassing argument of students' overall actions towards creating social change and their motivations for engagement in community service, this study proposes examining the interplay of community service and advocacy. Literature that focused on both community service and activism for college students of color offer a space to investigate the significance of serving one's communities, understanding of service within the realm of activism, and vice versa. With the rise in media attention surrounding court cases on affirmative action in admissions and student protests calling for change on the racial climate on college campus, higher education institutions will most likely see an increase in activism.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Members of Proyecto de Jornaleros actively negotiated their understanding of education and their relationality to society. By diverging from dichotomous ways of thinking, I opposed the separation of informal and formal educational spaces, such as

viewing Proyecto as informal education and UCLA as formal education. Examining beyond a dichotomous way of thought also provided a means to center dissonance and tension and challenge the separation between rationality and emotion, where rationality was viewed as an entity of the mind and emotions as an object of the body. I aligned my work with research scholarship that speaks to action and reflection. The central mission of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso 2002), Freirean theory (FT)(Freire, 1970), and nepantla pedagogy (NP)(Ranft, 2013; Keating, 2006; Anzaldúa, 2002) involved an understanding of the social world and its unjust realities, as well as the possibility for transformation rooted in identities, education, and agency found in and from Proyecto de Jornaleros.

### **Critical Race Theory and Latinx Critical Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Theory (LatCrit) not only served as theoretical tools, but also offered active possibilities to combat racial inequities. Racism, racial power, and racial stereotypes systematically diffused into all aspects of society (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995). CRT brought to light the race and racist practice manifested in education and in the lives of people of color. Identity markers defined socially constructed realities, and social construction underscored materialized realities. In other words, identity markers impacted how individuals' experience, understand, and are shaped by the world.

I used CRT in education outlined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) to guided the examination of racialized lived experiences, intersected with sexuality, age, class, power,

and gender identity markers. The five critical elements at the foundation of critical race methodology entailed:

1. The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination,
2. Challenge to dominant ideology,
3. The commitment to social justice,
4. The centrality of experiential knowledge,
5. The transdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, pp. 25-27).

CRT challenges dominant ideology. Ideologies maintain and create a means of thought that carves and disseminates categorical “order and meaning to the social and political world in which we live” (Darder, Baltodano, Torres, 2003, p. 13). Ideologies lead to dominant narratives of what constitutes knowledge. Within a dominant narrative framework, ideologies serve as a framework that underscores hegemony. Hegemony serves as “a process of social control that is carried out through intellectual and moral leadership of a dominant sociocultural class over subordinate groups” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 13). CRT opposed social control, hegemony disseminated ideology into politics, societies, cultures, economics, and pedagogies within context.

Race and racism, as stated by Omi and Winant (1994), occur in a historically racial and situated context. Omi and Winant exemplified the complexity of race when they stated:

The task for theory is to explain this situation. It is to avoid being the utopian framework, which sees race as an illusion we can somehow ‘get beyond,’ and also the essentialist formulation which sees race as something objective and fixed, a biological datum (1994, p. 55).

The quote above articulated that theory and theorizing do not produce a clear understanding of a subject. Race should not be essentialized into a racial experience and/or manifestation and should not be viewed as a solely biological characteristic.

Within this research, Critical Race Theory served as a means to critique the notion of race. Race has materiality and real implications.

Critical Race Theory's centering race is highly questioned, especially in relation to creating a false hierarchical structure with white, male, heterosexual, middle-class embodying the epitome of a societal norm. Scholars argue that the social construction of race nourished and maintain a racial hierarchy and oppression system that privileges Whiteness (Banks, 1995). This study aimed to use race as a social justice tool to examine the impact of race on life experiences, sociohistorical, and dynamic realities of the research participants. Omni and Winant (1994) argued that to simply perceiving race as an ideological social construct obscures the realities and impacts of racial subjugation.

LatCrit expanded on CRT by focusing on issues imperative to the Latinx pan-ethnic community, such as accent, national origin, language, phenotype, immigration, documentation status, surname-based oppression, culture and other important factors for the diverse Latinx identity (Suárez-Orozco, Hernández, & Casanova, 2015; Urrieta, Méndez & Rodríguez, 2015). Within the Proyecto site, power was found within the English and Spanish language of communication. English became an avenue for empowerment and Spanish was situated within a sense of community. LatCrit problematized the racial Freirean-based and dichotomized discourse that centered race and anti-essentialist discourse, such that it emphasized intersectional and multiple identities of being Latinx.

LatCrit provided an avenue to examine the compounding and larger sociopolitical everyday realities of the jornaleros and the program participants within the Latinidades.

LatCrit also supported Latinidades because it contributed to a discourse that viewed difference as being interconnected by togetherness and connectedness. Togetherness and connectedness supported consciousness-raising rooted in changing the societal realities of the Latinx community. Consciousness came with a sense of urgency and a central component of Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA; however, the definition and understanding of consciousness was framed and depended on the differing and common politics, life experiences, and identities of the members. Consciousness also rested on the critical examination of power dynamics and configurations, in terms of privilege. Individuals develop and nourish their consciousness based upon their lived experiences, struggles, and tensions. LatiCrit not only offered a theoretical critique, but also entailed the nourishment of the strengths within Latinx communities, strengths that entailed resiliency, motivation, and community.

Taken together, CRT and LatCrit were appropriate theories for this research because they focused on racialized identities and on the narratives shared by the program participants and jornaleros. CRT and LatCrit were not just theoretical sites that challenged Eurocentric Western dominant discourse, but also highlighted the unacknowledged or multifaceted spaces of privileges, where and within one re/inscribed the oppressive conditions one seeks to combat. Focusing on CRT and LatCrit emphasized the centrality of marginalization a realization that oppression should be viewed through a “we” lens but rather an “I” lens, given that racism is systemic. CRT and LatCrit helped to affirm self and communal praxis and synergies of intersectionality towards the focus on transformation of oppressive realities.

## **Freiran Theory: Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy scholars focused on asking why and how knowledge gets formed and why and how some interpretations of reality are legitimized and upheld by dominant culture while others are not (Darder et al., 2003). This study centered on the construction and meaning of knowledge, and brought to the forefront ontological concerns such as who has the possibility and ability to teach, to learn, and to question. Critical pedagogy also illustrated the importance of consciousness, praxis, and dialogue. It held that schooling and education were reproduced and inscribed in social, economic, racial, and class marginalization, while at the same time schooling and education had the ability to transform and raise consciousness. Critical pedagogy opposed a programmatic, formulaic approach to education. In relation to curriculum and instruction, there was no one approach to education; rather critical consciousness argued that all people have the capacity to produce knowledge.

In relation to the ontological question, critical pedagogy addressed the marginalization of society that contribute to inequities and unjust conditions, as well as the control over the production and reproduction of knowledge. Education was not only engaged through theoretical, programmatic or technical realms, but also reconceptualized along spiritual, human, and political realms. Education facilitated moral and political practices that provided students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand students' power as critically engaged citizens. Freire (1970) asserted that the current banking method of education domesticated students, creating students who are

receptacles or containers and dependent on the teacher for knowledge. Students became passive observers of society and remained subjected to its oppressive conditions.

Critical pedagogy spoke to the concept of hegemony and the dominant social, economic, political, historical and cultural power configurations through consciousness. Critical consciousness, or conscientização, was at the heart of the purpose of liberation, resistance, transformation, and development. Conscientização supported a continual process in which people named and identified a social problem, examined the cause of the problem, and discovered solutions to it (Freire, 1970). As a liberatory and revolutionary project rooted in hope, Proyecto de Jornaleros encompassed a space for transformation and centered on transformation beyond a social and ideological critique of the word.

In the words of Freire: “Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action...there is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world” (Freire, 1970, p. 87). The first phase toward the development of consciousness involved learning to “name the world.” Naming allowed individuals to identify and categorize their everyday experiences and became a prerequisite for transforming the societal status quo. Naming encompassed the simultaneous combination between reflection and action with the goal of nourishing social, political, and economic change. Critical pedagogy provided a means for Proyecto de Jornaleros to examine race, class, documentation status, gender, and labor exploitation.



A dialectical view of knowledge preformed an essential role for praxis. Praxis thrived when subjectivity is comprehended in its contradictory, dialectical, dynamic relationship with objectivity, from which it originated (Freire, 1970). Praxis sought to investigate the connections between knowledge and the values, norms, and standards held by the dominant society, since all knowledge is formed within historical context of a larger societal milieu. FT constituted a regenerating process used for continuous explanation of the obscured dimensions of reality. Praxis embodied the synergies of action and agency. Praxis not only reinforced consciousness, but also catalyzed it. People's situation in the world impacted their interpretation, view, and engagement within it. In relation to action and reflection, theory without practice became "blind activism," while practice without theory became "abstract verbalism" (Darder et al., 2003). Theory and practice worked together to transform reality through the word.

Freirean theory of critical pedagogy provided the opportunity to re/frame the power dynamic found in the program participants and jornalero relationship, especially given that, as college students, the UCLA students inevitably brought with them power of the academy. A reciprocal relationship was at the heart of popular education space that critical pedagogy provided. The teacher-student involved a dialectical relationship where both continuously moved from and between a role of learning and teaching. In the teacher-student relationship, teaching could not occur without learning, as well as involved knowing, re/knowing and making meaning of what is being taught and how knowledge is situated or not between one's understandings. Educational scholars argued for the use of critical pedagogy as an avenue for reconstructing and liberating the

education field (Darder et al., 2003). Education was not only transformative for society, but also for the self because it challenged the objective, unbiased, neutral dominant discourse and narrative.

A Freirean approach to critical pedagogy was critical to this study because it noted that Freire's work lacks a direct emphasis on women's lives and voices. Freire highlighted class oppression but failed to address the gendered experiences of women who are oppressed (hooks, 1994). Reading of the world engaged a continuous process of making and remaking. Within our internal dialogue, our positionality was dependent on our making sense of the world. Through internal dialoguing our reality and experiences were shaped by what constitutes knowledge(s) and who has the ability to define truths. An objective interpretation of reality lead and contributed to a single-oriented interpretation of knowledge and truth, as well as hindered the possibility of multiple, plural knowledge and truth realities, especially given the intersectionality of identities.

Dialogue facilitated an opportunity to nourish solidarity and cooperation, while engaging critically beyond a question and answer method. Dialogue challenged dichotomous thinking that situated the self versus the other; within the act of dialoguing the other became a part of the self. Dialogical in purpose and nature and entailed a goal of liberation and transformation. However, dialogue did not aim to provide an answer, but rather it nourished reflection upon an understanding of reality and how to situate the words of others. Reflection involved itself a form of action.

## **Nepantla**

Nepantla serves as a quintessential liminal theory for challenging the simplistic, problematic dichotomies that have historically subjugated and oppressed people to possibility for transformation; such dichotomies separated the self from community. Nepantla, as a liminal space, offered a living concept where “the outer boundaries of the mind’s inner life meet the outer world of reality (Anzaldúa, 2002b, p. 548). Nepantla harmonized the inner and outer expression of the self through community. The outer expressed desire for social transformation was connected and nourished by the internal transformation of the self. The transformation of the self did not aim to create a dichotomy, but rather transformation acknowledged the multiple selves found in an individual’s identities. The process of transformation centered on what is being silenced, hidden, subjugated and/or ignored. This study used nepantla to examine the social processes where the self and the pedagogical space of Proyecto de Jornaleros nourished a space for interactions, dialogue, reciprocities, and tensions.

Through nepantla (Nahuatl word for ‘in-between space’), Anzaldúa challenged the history of colonization of the mind, as well argued for consciousness development as a result of intersectional spaces of identities (Pacheco, 2014; Keating, 2006). As Anzaldúa wrote:

Nepantla is the site for transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures... Living between cultures results in ‘seeing double,’ first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent. Removed from that culture’s center, you glimpse the sea in

which you've been immersed but to which you were oblivious, no longer seeing the world the way you were enculturated to see it (2002b, p. 548-549).

I purposefully quoted Anzaldúa who emphasized the complexity and ingenuousness of nepantla. As a dynamic process, identity and the intersectional work of Gloria Anzaldúa was central to understanding space. Nepantla involved contradictions and tensions that are constantly being negotiated, as well as underscored the importance of theorizing from our stories, lived experiences, and how we (read: subject) makes sense of their role in society through reflection.

Nepantla centered “what might be produced, from the middle of identities, locations, beliefs... this *inner* work in nepantla indeed leads to *public* acts and collective transformation, and that work begins in nepantla” (Ranft, 2013, p. 211). Nepantla pedagogy emphasized the power of spaces and the social location of the juxtaposition of social categories such as gender, race, class, sexuality that shaped an individual's life experiences, and these experiences contributed to the re/negotiation and reflection of one's identity.

This study examined the relationship between space and place and its impact on identity construction. Identity construction exemplified how space and identity shaped the locality of experiences and how these experiences were connected with larger societal factors. Identities conflicted with each other; yet, conflict should not be perceived through a negative, deficit lens, but rather conflict produced growth and transformation. Nepantla embodied a space for transformation. Nepantla conveyed:

The place where transformation is possible, but more important it is the magic and the potential for magic within that place. Because of this potential, the concept of

nepantla... has agency... Once something has agency (activated by ritual or action) the results of agency can be unpredictable (Cortez, 2001, p. 367).

By reflecting on our identities, we began a continuous process of naming, fostering dissonance, and examining intersectionality with the purpose of questioning power and reflecting upon believed truths. Dissonance acted as an apparatus to re/examine our past and present without gaining consciousness of self, and spoke to an agency in our everyday life, a means for possibilities.

My usage of identities should not be understood as an autonomous, simply physiological self-identity, but rather identities entailed a social process towards collective recognition. Nepantla helped moved beyond Cartesian dualistic subject and object rationality, as well as supported and nourished a historical-contingent consciousness rooted in revoking subjectivity a priori and objectivity. Collective responsibilities and accountabilities noted a differentiation between the perceived Western conceptions of the autonomous self-identity with critical agency (Denzin et al., 2008). Spaces became a site for empowerment through the re/examination of identity and the re/construction of identities as mediated within collective responsibilities and accountabilities within time/development framework.

Time/development was understood not as linear and stage dependent, but rather it contained tension, resiliency, and transformation situated within community. Time/development complexified the self and the other, as *nos/otras*, given that nepantla was situated as a form of liminal space. *Nos/otras* underscored and encompassed a space where, “philosophy and praxis enabling us simultaneously to acknowledge and to bridge the distances between self and other. Drawing from ‘us’ and ‘them’ closer together,

Nepantla theory made possible forms of unity that do not demand sameness but rather posit commonalities” (Keating, 2006, p. 10). The Other was defined as the un/known in the reality of self, where one began to analyze our current understanding of self, where I (read: yo soy) unified within the multiple identities of the self and collective “we” (read: nos/otras).

Nepantla was useful in examining Proyecto de Jornaleros focused on internalized internal/personal and external/societal configurations as an opportunity for transformation (Ranft, 2013). Nepantla assisted in the consideration of how the experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros, specifically the interactions with the jornaleros, are situated within the identity of the program participants. Epistemologically, nepantla pedagogy nourished consciousness within the larger societal context and facilitated multiple and intersectional individual/collective levels. Nepantla deconstructed and reconstructed societal discourses that synergistically combined the program participants and jornaleros. The program participants and the jornaleros became rooted in nos/otras and comprehended as being in community with each other.

This study theoretical framework centered on Critical Race Theory (CRT), LatCrit, Freirean theory (FT), and nepantla enhanced a nuanced examination of college students of color and community service by providing a racialized lens, critical pedagogy perspective, and offering a means to examine relationality and self. Critical Race Theory centered the need to examine the sociopolitical realities that Proyecto de Jornaleros strived to change. By focusing on LatCrit, this study stressed the importance of community with the community service of students of color. Freirean Theory stressed the

pedagogical stand of the organization and addressed the educational possibilities and transformations, such as analyzing the student-teacher relationship and the education institution. Nepantla illuminated the opportunity to deconstruct the imposed binary between the self and community. Nepantla aided the study provided a means to investigate how the participants in Proyecto understood their relationship with the jornaleros, as well as provided an opportunity to investigate identities.

Added by the noted theoretical framework, this study analyzed the epistemic significance related to participation in Proyecto de Jornaleros, specifically the program participants' interactions and dialogues with the jornaleros. Dialogue and the act of retelling engaged in a process of reflection, where reflection embodied the exploration of lived experiences. This study centered on how the program participants epistemic stand impacted how they developed consciousness about oppressive social political realities, aided by a Critical Race Theory and LatCrit analysis, reexamined their definition of education, supported by a Freiran Theory investigation, and viewed themselves in relation to the jornaleros, assisted by a nepantla inquiry. This study particularly noted how the program participants' knowledge centered on relationality and on multiple subjectivities.

## **Chapter Three: Methods**

This chapter outlines this research study's methodology. The research methodology should not be seen as separate from the study, given that each chapter of the study informs and builds upon each other. The research methodology consisted of approaches that centered the lived experiences of the program participants including narrative analysis and Chicana feminist epistemology research approaches. These research approaches provided a framework to examine the impact of participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros on the identities and epistemologies of Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia's lived experiences. Following the research approaches, I included the study's research questions, sample and data collection for interviews, document analysis and, finally, data analysis.

### **NARRATIVE ANALYSIS**

The narrative analysis used in this research study is based on Rosaldo's (1993) notion of truths. According to Renato Rosaldo (1993), narrative "emphasizes that culture requires study from number of perspectives that these perspectives cannot necessarily be added together into a unified summation" (p. 93). By arguing that interpretations and experiences should not be used to fabricate a unified summation or "claim a monopoly on truth" (p. 93), Rosaldo (1993) contends against the act of creating and/or finding



dominant truth within a given culture.<sup>19</sup> Dominant truth wrongly seeks to prove validity and objectivity of experiences, yet does not acknowledge that truth is created to comprehend and make sense of those experiences. This study decentered dominant truth and views truths as plural. Plurality of truths centers the differing, similar, and ambiguous truths found in the program participants' experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros. Narrative analysis provided the opportunity to examine how the program participants defined their truths within Proyecto de Jornaleros, as well as underscored patterns, contradictions, and tensions about the ways the participants perceived the impact of dialogues and interactions with the organization. The themes noted in the study do not try to define the experiences of the program, but serves as guides to understand the twelve program participants' truths. The program participants' truths were also situational based on their current understandings of their experiences in Proyecto at the time of their interview.

Narratives analysis noted the importance of the spatio-temporal dimensions of the interviews (De Fina & Perrino, 2011). Spatio-temporal dimensions brought to the focus the interviewee's narratives context and depiction of narratives as a segment in the research participants' life, yet, at the same time, challenges a fixed view of space and time. The former and latter statements could be perceived as contradictory, but are not. In this study, the program participants' narratives were viewed as produced within a specific social, racial, political, and historical contexts. The program participants' contexts provided lenses in which to make sense of their narratives. The unfixed view of space and

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<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this study, I use culture as the culture created and supported within Proyecto de Jornaleros. The program participants' ways of knowing, values, and behaviors nourished the organization's culture.

time emphasized the importance of memories and remembering. The research participants' articulation of their memories through narratives transcends the tri-dimension of past-present-future spaces. In other words, through the act of sharing memories, all the research participants engaged in making sense of, negotiating, and examining their lived experiences with Proyecto de Jornaleros. Making sense of, negotiating, and examining became a space where all program participants relive their experiences in the organization and illuminate the continuous process of learning from reflection.

This study's usage of narrative analysis also rejected the role of the researcher as an objective researcher with objective inquiry, as well as viewed research as co-constructed between the researcher and the research participants (Jacobs-Huey, 2002). The act of rejecting objectivity spoke to the political nature of narrative analysis-based research. Within the political nature of research, the researcher's and research participants' roles and their relationships became central to inquiry and unpacking. In other words, the researcher located herself within her research and her relationship with the research participants. The narratives analysis found in the study derived not from speaking for the research participants, but rather from speaking with them. The argument of co-construction did not negate the power of the research, given I selected, interpreted, and excluded narratives. Co-construction and rejection of objective research entailed continuous actions on behalf of the researcher.

## **CHICANA FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY**

Delgado Bernal's (1998) "Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Education Research" and its revisited work entitled, "A Chicana Feminist Epistemology Revisited: Cultivating Ideas a Generation Later" by Delgado Bernal, Pérez Huber, Malagón and Vélez (2012) played a central role in this study's methodology. Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE) illuminated the relationship between epistemology and people's ability to make sense of and name their worlds. As noted by Delgado Bernal, CFE "goes beyond quantitative versus qualitative methods, and lies instead in the methodology employed and in whose experience and realities are accepted as the foundation of knowledge" (1998, p. 558). Chicana feminist epistemology underscored the theoretical and analytical aspects of inquiry and what is seen as knowledge. My aim in using CFE was not to simply reflect my experiences in Proyecto and to convey how those experiences hold epistemic significance in how I analyze this study. Chicana feminist epistemology signified not a reframing of dominant narratives, but rather a working outside of the dominant discourse.

I used CFE to aid in the deconstruction of dichotomized and one-dimensional examinations, to illuminate multiplicities found in spaces of identities' negotiation. Multiplicities of identities (e.g. race, culture, language, class, sexuality, gender, languages, immigration, and documentation status) are intersectional and impact our ways of knowing, sources of strength, and tensions. Intersectionality of identities brought to light varying foundations of knowledge. Knowledge construction became interconnected to identities and vice versa. We continually recreated spaces and

questioned what ways of knowing are being omitted in the current spaces. Epistemology, therefore, spoke to the knowledge based on our identities that guided our perspectives.

This study originated from my “cultural intuition” that drew from work of Dolores Delgado Bernal (1998) on Chicana feminist epistemology.

My personal experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros provided me with cultural intuition and sensitivities from which to interpret the words found in the narrative data. CFE introduced me to the concept of cultural intuition. Cultural intuition helped inform me of my identities, politics, knowledges, and truths. Intuition called me to embrace dissonance and the unknown with the research process. I am conscious that my own interpretations and understandings of the narrative analysis inevitably impact this study. The emotional endeavor helped develop my identity as a researcher. Throughout the conduction of this study I encountered several emotional inner tensions in thinking about my role as a researcher. I also rejoiced after every interview.

CFE nourished my desire to engage in this study because it caused me to reexamine my researcher identity nourished by a self-reflecting process. CFE provided opportunities to engage in a self-reflecting process of examining why I wanted to conduct research on Proyecto. The reflecting process caused me to wonder if I was conducting research *for* the Proyecto community, writing *about* the Proyecto community, and/or writing *with* the Proyecto community. I still do not have answers to these questions; however, the values of accountability to the Proyecto community guided my axiology. I wanted to deconstruct the binary opposition between my role as a researcher and the research participants. I wanted the narratives of the program participants to speak for

themselves and worried my voice, as a researcher and graduate program participant, would overpower their voice. I wanted to highlight the powerful ways of knowing and being that derive from the research participants experiences in Proyecto and, more importantly, from their dialogues and interactions with the jornaleros. Listening to the experiences of every participant reminded and motivated me to continue this study. I know that after I submit this study I will continue to have an emotional connection to Proyecto de Jornaleros.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

My research question: How did program participants perceive and understand the dialogue exchanges shared between the jornaleros and themselves? Guiding questions included: (1) How did the program participants define/understand education? (2) How were space(s) for community fostered and nourished? (3) Did participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros influence the aspirations and career choices of its program participants?

### **SAMPLE & DATE COLLECTION FOR INTERVIEWS**

Current program participants were recruited for the purpose of examining how participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros impacted their identity and their aspirations after their time with the organization. Program alumni were recruited for the purpose of examining how participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros impacted their identity and thinking after their time with the organization. I identified many current program participants through key informants, which I knew from my previous involvement in Proyecto de Jornaleros. I also outreached to potential program participants via e-mails

and snowball sampling. I recruited program alumni participants from my previous involvement in Proyecto de Jornaleros. This research project consisted of twelve research participants (N=12) ranging from 19 to 28 years of age. The demographic background of the participants consisted of (a) ten women and two men, (b) six current program participants and six program alumni participants, and (c) ten participants with Latinx background, one participant with white background, and one participant with Indian background. The proportion of women to men highlighted the gender representation in Proyecto de Jornaleros. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of all participants.

Before starting the interviews, I presented the participants with the research participant material. They received the informed consent form and we discussed the information covered in the form, including the purpose, goals, and any risks associated of the study, and I provided them with a copy of the consent form. I emphasized their right to release their data, and to withdraw from the study at anytime. I used a digital voice recorder to record all interviews. I started recording the interview until after I dialogued with the research participants and reconnected with the participants I knew, as well as introduced myself to the participants I had not met. I had a conversation with the research participants before the interview because I wanted to create a welcoming environment.

Since the method of this project consisted of narrative analysis, the interviews were semi-structured to allow the participants to elaborate on their experiences with Proyecto de Jornaleros. Interview questions were designed specifically for this study. Each interviewee did not answer the same questions, but I did ask similar questions.

Interviews were conducted in English. Some program participants used Spanish words and phrases throughout the interview, especially when referring to their desire to join Proyecto. Many stated that they joined Proyecto because they missed speaking in Spanish. Interviews differed in length, with some lasting 45 min to two hours. Interviews took place at a location where the participants felt safe and comfortable. The interviews and transcriptions took place in the Fall 2015 semester. All hard copies of transcriptions were stored in a secure location at my residence. Following the transcription of each interview, I sent the participants a copy of their transcription. I asked them to review the transcriptions and provide their opinions on themes, omissions, and if they wanted to expand on a topic. To ensure the protection of participants' identity, emails were given codes as identifiers.

## **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The organization's flyers, recruitment pamphlets, mission statement, and English curriculum were examined. Proyecto's flyers and recruitment pamphlets provided insight into the words used to promote the program with prospective program participants. Reviewing the mission statement held a critical component in examining the goal of the organization for the jornaleros and the program participants, its educational framework, and its view on social justice. Examining the organization's English curriculum provided the opportunity to view the content of the curriculum. Content was important because, as noted by the organizations' mission statement, the organization wanted to develop curriculum the jornaleros deemed relevant.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

I manually transcribed all interviews. I used software to reduce the tempo of the interview recording, in order to hear the interviewees' words slower and clearer. I decided to manually transcribe the interview for three reasons. I paid close attention to the research participants' tone when answering and/or asking questions. Secondly, I wanted to ensure the correctness of the recording. Finally, manually recording provided me the opportunity to re/listen to the interview. By re/listening to the interview, I was able to examine segments as well as the entirety of the interview. I was also able to reflect on my own positionality within the interview. I asked myself: "what am I likely to not perceive due to my own socialization positioning" (Chilisa, 2012, p.179).

During critical moments of the interview, I stopped the interview and took notes. Interview transcriptions included repetitive words and phrases, pauses, expressions such as "hum," "you know," or "like," due to clarity, these are omitted in the narratives presented in chapters four and five. I transcribed, read the written transcriptions, generated ideas of the emergent themes, and developed further inquiry questions. This study consisted of four themes: (a) educating through comunalidad; (b) languages de educación; (c) fostering comunidad through dialogue; and (d) consciousness through responsabilidad.

Narrative analysis provided a means to examine how the program participants defined their truths within Proyecto de Jornaleros (Chilisa, 2012; Sanford, 2003). Truths bring to light the sociopolitical context of realities. As Chilisa (2012) argued, "qualitative research is characterized by multiple realities and therefore multiple truths" (p.165). It is



important to note that each narrator characterized the space in which to speak from and challenge power structures. Additionally, lived experiences mediated one's truths. As Chilisa (2012) powerfully articulated, "all stories are considered to carry a part of the solution or truth." (p. 280) Her statement helped me better understand the reality of narratives. Narratives are not about having a correct answer, or an absolute "Truth," especially since they are situated/mediated by lived experiences.

I used narrative analysis to understand the interplay of words, knowledges, ideas and other ideologies within the narrative. The narratives presented does not aim to essentialized the experience in Proyecto de Jornalero nor the identity of the research participants. Narrative analysis also paralleled Hall (2000) articulation of identity as:

Identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and instructional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies (p. 17).

Using Hall's perspective, we can understand narratives presented impacted by the identities of the program participants at the given time of the interview. When reading the thesis, please keep in mind that the identities of the program participants are always shifting and contextual.

Narrative analysis also focused on the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer. My research notes were critical in further understanding the study's findings and analyzing the interview protocol. Throughout the interview I took research notes and did not disrupt the interview. I took most of my notes after I conducted the interview. I noted questions from the interviewee participants, as well as the questions I generated for myself. I also took note of similar words used throughout all interviews. I tried to write

down concepts the research participants addressed. At different intervals of the data collection, I made sense of my notes about the data. As a researcher, I have a responsibility to my work guided by my accountability to the research participants who placed their trust in me.

## **Chapter Four: Program Participants Profiles within Relational Latinidades**

*“I usually say Latina, Mexican-American or American Mexican, and in certain contexts, Chicana, depending on whether my audience understands the term or not.”*

— Sandra Cisneros

Relational Latinidades motivated the program participants to join and remain a part of Proyecto de Jornaleros. Multiple Latinidades also highlighted the myriad and complexity of the Latinx identities should not be limited to what characteristics, such as skin color, language, country of origin, and generation status, define who are and are not Latinxs. Latinidades highlighted that Latinx identity embodied complexity of identities, as well as epistemological stances. In this section, participating in community within Proyecto de Jornaleros nourished program participants’ identities and provided the opportunity to unpack the dichotomous relationship between the self and the other. The connection between epistemology and identities rested on how an individual in a collective participated in the continuous process of world making and understanding the self in relation to one’s community.

The collective “we” became central to the participants understanding of their Latinidades. Relational identities spoke to Villenas (2015) question of “how I/we might recreate myself/ourselves in other people’s company while other people are also transformed in my/our company” (p. 72). The deconstruction of the Western conception of enlightenment entailed a deconstruction of Descartes’ infamous phrase “Cogito ergo sum” or “I think, therefore I am” (Descartes, 1637/1960), entailing a relational I/we and nos/otras (read: we/they). In this chapter I elaborate on Latinidades and then described

Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia' identities in relation to Latinidades. Within the portrayals, the program participants' Latinidades were brought to the forefront.

Collective identity within the Proyecto space became largely situated within the multiple relational realities of Latinidades. The program participants noted that they identify as Latinx not necessarily because of a single factor but through a variety of factors, and had varying experiences within the Latinx communities. I used the term Latinidades in plural to connote the intersectional and the nexus of identities. Three of the program participants were born and grew up in Mexico, one called home a place with few Latinxs, two had grown up in a primarily Mexican community, many wanted to improve their Spanish, and several wanted to improve their English. Multiple Latinidades highlights the myriad and complexity of Latinx identities that should not be limited to what characteristics, such as skin color, language, country of origin, and generation status, define who are and not Latinxs. Latinidades encompassed not only characteristics, but also individuals' views and epistemological positions.

Identities were fundamentally connected to and nourished through one's epistemological stands through space of authoring (Moya, 2002). The connection between epistemology and identities rested on how an individual and communities participated in a world making process through a space of authoring. I use world making to signify the relationship between identities, knowledges, and experiences. Identities, knowledges, and experiences factor into individuals' social location, and how they interact with the world (Moya, 2002). The program participants' narratives highlighted

the epistemic significant of identities. Epistemic significance of identities illuminated ways in which the program participants constantly examined, questioned, and understood their identities and highlighted the dynamic identity process. Spaces are not fixed but are mediated and transformed through dialogic self.

The space of authoring spoke to an inner discourse, “where one is persistently addressed and in the process of answering” (Chang, 2013, p. 32). I argued that the space of authoring encompassed a simultaneous individual and collective space. The authoring space provided an opportunity for the program participants to name and explore their world. Naming and exploring their world allowed the program participants to negotiate their identities based on relational identities with others, which contributed to the development of the collective “we.” Identity impacted the programs participants’ motivation to join Proyecto de Jornaleros and to serve the jornalero community. Their words conveyed and highlighted the dynamic, fluid modes of identity construction and authoring.

Interacting with the jornaleros and the other program participants caused the program participants to examine the multiple realities of Latinidades. Within Proyecto de Jornaleros, the program participants dialogued with jornaleros from various Latin American countries. For the program participants, especially second-generation students, being in Proyecto provided them with an opportunity to hear about their experiences growing up in several Latin American countries, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Belize, and Brazil.

## **MIA**

At the time of the interview, Mia called Mexico City home, she was a second-year, undergraduate student at UCLA studying Physics, and wanted to pursue a career in science. Mia is of Mexican and Chinese descent. When I first interviewed Mia, I was fascinated by how she situated her identity in Proyecto, as well as how she negotiated it within the Proyecto and UCLA context. When I asked how she identified herself, she reflected on inner tension and dialogue and highlighted the dynamic space of identity construction. She articulated how she had “always identified, before coming to UCLA, as Mexican. If someone were to ask me if I am Mexican, I would say, ‘yes 100 percent Mexican.’” However, having a Chinese last name and phenotypically looking Asian, she stated, “apparently I don't look Mexican. I know I have an Asian background, I am aware of my Asian roots and I am proud of them.” Her involvement in Proyecto impacted how she understood her identity in that:

Going to site, makes me question what it is to be Mexican... I sometimes compare people of Latino descent to people born in Mexico...it makes me wonder what it means to be Mexican... to what extent is it valid to say that I am Mexican and you are not or to what extent are we all Mexican, if our traditions and ways of life defines our identity.

Through my conversation with Mia, I learned that she continuously tried to negotiate and re/examine her Mexican identity in relation to other individuals of Latinx background. When she stated, “I sometimes compare people of Latino descent to people born in Mexico” her words reflected her longing to understand her Mexican identity within the United States. Growing up in Mexico, Mia did not question her Mexican identity because everyone around her was Mexican. Coming to the U.S. and interacting

with second generation Latinxs caused her to question her relationality with them, especially because she had received comments from individuals attending UCLA who questioned her Mexican background.

Mia's motivation to join Proyecto de Jornaleros stemmed from identifying with the jornaleros and a sense of desire for community. She is currently attending UCLA as an international student from Mexico City, where her family currently resides. She became drawn to Proyecto de Jornaleros because she felt homesick. In her words, "I miss my home, I miss my food, and I miss my family." When she made this statement, I heard the tone of her voice change. The topic of immigration in a pursuit of opportunities caused her to feel inner tension. She not only moved away from her family, but also the larger social context she called home. She felt isolated in a foreign land and Proyecto provided an opportunity to reconnect to individuals who shared a similar background as her. As she powerfully noted:

I want to give back to my country something that I cannot give. I am helping my people in a different country, so that is why I became part of Proyecto...I joined Proyecto because I felt a little identified with the jornaleros. I know it is different conditions...I am here to study and they came here to work...yet we go through similar things. We are in a new country and have a new language, traditions, customs, and ways of living.

Participating in Proyecto allowed an emotional connection Mia felt to her Mexican identity and the different aspects that nourished her identity, such as the Spanish language, and Mexican gastronomy. Being a part of Proyecto de Jornaleros provided a space for comunidad in a different location, yet similar to Mexico. The similarities rested in a strong Mexican presence in L.A. and the difference in the diversity of the Latinx community. Mia commented how she was able to hear the experiences of jornaleros who

came from several Latin American countries. Space should be understood as a mechanisms for critical reflection that nourished community connectedness. Discourse became important to examining the dominant narrative of what connoted Latinx in the U.S. and working towards deconstructing the binary of that limited Mia's identity as Mexican. Mia used her lived experiences to reflect and then negotiate her identity.

### **MARINA**

At the time of the interview, Marina called Tijuana, MX home, she was a fourth-year, UCLA student studying toward a degree in English, and wanted to pursue a career in journalism. Marina is of Mexican descent. For Marina, Latinidades created a space and discourse to examine the complexities of being Latinx. When I asked Marina if interacting with the jornaleros impacted how she understood her identity, she responded yes. Similar to Mia, Marina connected with the jornaleros transnational identities. Marina elaborated on how the jornaleros were able to “take their own experience and they are able to use them to formulate these ideas of the world and their identity.” She then stated:

When I learned about being a *fronteriza*, I thought that it embodied my experiences. I realized that there couldn't be just one word that embodies one experience because everyone's experiences are different. I think that is the one that closest resembles mine.

Marina's interactions with the jornaleros provided her with the opportunity to formulate ideas of the world and authoring. Her identification as a *fronteriza* underscored her ability to define Latinidades and situate her *fronteriza* identity within the complexity of Latinidades.



Marina authorized her *fronteriza* identity related to her sense of *Latinidades*. *Latinidades* was based on Marina's ability to use her lived experiences to define her. Marina's identification as a *fronteriza* also brought to light the importance of lived experiences for authoring identities. Her identity as a *fronteriza* was nourished by her daily crossing of the border from Tijuana to attend school in San Diego, during her k-12 education. Marina's mother accompanied her everyday to the United States and waited until she got out of school. Her identity as a *fronteriza* also highlighted her parents' desire to receive an education in the U.S. In essence, her identity as a *fronteriza* encompassed a transnational identity that influenced how she named the world. *Fronteriza* connected the realities of two countries that she carried and influenced how she understood the world. Within *Proyecto*, she wanted to learn about the *jornalero*'s lives and how they formulated their identities based on their lived experiences.

#### **KASSIE**

At the time of the interview, Kassie called Malibu, California home, she was a third-year, undergraduate student at UCLA studying Philosophy, and wanted to work in the policy and/or law field. Kassie is of Mexican descent. Kassie grew up in the affluent beach city of Malibu, California, where she also attended school. Kassie felt different from the rest of her peers in relation to race, economic status, home language, and culture. Her parents were immigrants from Mexico, and moved to Malibu because a family member's employer provided them employment in a vineyard. She was neither wealthy nor white like the rest of her peers. Kassie recalled several instances when she

felt isolated from her classmates. For example, a white, native English speaker classmate became angry that she scored higher than him in an English test. Her classmate then told her that he could understand if she scored higher than him on a Spanish test, but English was “his language.” Another instance of microaggression she recalled occurred when she brought pan con cajeta to her high school. Kassie was really excited to show her classmates, but they taunted her. When she enrolled in UCLA, she was excited because, even with its low numbers of Latinxs, UCLA had a higher enrollment of Latinxs than her previous schools.

Kassie expressed that she joined Proyecto because she viewed the jornaleros as members of her community and because the organization was based on popular education. The following passage conveyed how participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros nourished her cultural identity and affection to her community. As she stated:

My parents are immigrants from Mexico... I joined Proyecto to be connected with my culture... it makes me feel that I am still working with my community and learning from other Latinos...I don't think that service should be defined as I am serving the jornaleros, they are also doing service because we are helping each other ... community is this unity to help... I see the jornaleros as part of my community.

Kassie’s words that she joined Proyecto to be “connected with my culture...with my community and learning from other Latinos” exemplified that she saw Proyecto as a unifying force between her culture, family, and university experience. Her articulation that her parents are immigrant from Mexico followed by stating that participating in Proyecto sustained her culture and her culture coupled community and knowledge. By coupled community and knowledge, Kassie stressed the culture as a form of community

knowledge. Community knowledge focused on the learning through participating and learning from others.

Kassie connected the relationship between community service and community. As she stated, “I don't think service should be defined as I am serving the jornaleros, they are also doing service because we are helping each other ... community is this unity to help... I see the jornaleros as part of my community.” Her words highlighted the reciprocity found within service; as she stated, “we are helping each other.” When I later asked her what she meant by helping each other, she conveyed that the Proyecto de Jornaleros space entailed a reciprocal relationship that could be viewed as a supportive environment. Reciprocal relationships were vital to learning to be in community with the jornaleros and be in unity. Service became a unified force that legitimized and built from the knowledge of the service participants and jornaleros. Latinidades noted a unified community within diversity of the Latinx community.

## **VALENCIA**

At the time of the interview, Valencia called Stockton, California home. She was a fourth-year, undergraduate student at UCLA studying Sociology and Chicana/o Studies, and wanted to seek a career in law and/or policy. Valencia is of Mexican descent. When I asked Valencia how she identified herself she articulated:

When I asked Valencia how she identified herself she articulated:

I feel that a lot of us second generation individuals base our identity on our parents struggle...when I first became involved in Proyecto, I would think ‘oh I know everything.’ I had experienced a lot therefore I know everything, but participating in Proyecto I learned that I don’t know everything... I guess in that

respect, I learn to check myself a little bit better; I'm still in that process of doing that. Even though I learn something there is always something new to learn about somebody.

Valencia verbalized that as second-generation children we “base our identity on our parents struggle.” I could not agree more. Her words remained in my heart because she uttered those that message with passion and hope. Valencia noted that the struggles her father faced with English motivated her to serve the jornalero population. She also communicated that the jornaleros struggle and strengths reminded her of her parents and caused her to reflect on her identity. When she stated, “oh they are like my dad” she expressed that she saw her father in the jornaleros struggles. Similar to the jornaleros, her father was a hard working individual striving to provide the best for her family. Her identity as a Latina, working-class, and daughter of immigrants motivated her life and provided her with strength she spoke about. She expressed how she saw her parents struggle financially and, more importantly, witnessed their resiliency and love.

While a hundred miles away from her home, Proyecto de Jornaleros provided Valencia a space where she could engage in identity negotiation. She affirmed that before she participated in Proyecto she believed she knew “everything.” Everything conveyed knowledge about the world and the knowledge found within it. Yet, her perception shifted when she joined Proyecto. As she expressed, “I learned to check myself a little bit better; I'm still in that process of doing that.” By “checking myself,” she noted the ability to examine her relationality with others and how knowledge became constructed through community and relationality, rather than as an individual level. The last part of her statement illustrated that learning embodied an active verb and did not have a finite end

because “there is always something new to learn about somebody.” In the proceeding chapter, I articulate how Valencia viewed the relationship mediated by lived experiences.

#### **ELENA**

At the time of the interview, Elena called San Diego home, she was a fourth-year, undergraduate student at UCLA studying Global Studies, and wanted to seek a career in immigration law and/or immigration policy. Elena is of Mexican descent. When I asked Elena how participating in Proyecto impacted her identity she expressed how interacting with the jornaleros helped her remain connected to her community. As she expressed:

Interacting with the jornaleros has allowed me to stay connected with the “real Los Angeles”... I feel like being with the jornaleros keep me honest to myself and keep me focus on what I wanted to do not only like graduating, but doing something with my life.

Elena’s message conveyed powerful a message about Proyecto. Her statement caused me to relive my experiences in Proyecto because she underscored the importance of being “honest.” Honest conveyed more than just an individual action, but her honesty was rooted in learning about the “real Los Angeles.”

For Elena, the “real Los Angeles” encompassed the Day Laborers Centers, the elementary schools she volunteered at in South Central L.A., and other locations outside of the UCLA campus. As she stated, “being with the jornaleros keeps me honest to myself and keeps me focus.” Interacting with the jornaleros provided her a means to learn about the “real Los Angeles” from community members, and caused her to reflect on why she wanted to pursue a degree. Elena’s honesty was not only related to an individual notion, but rather honesty rested on a collective “we.” Her honesty was related not to

being honest to herself, but rather her honesty was also found in her relationship to her community. Elena shared with me her passion for law and policy. By being honest, she spoke to the epistemic significance of her identity as a Latina and her desire to use her identity for change to the immigration institution that separated families, and negated their personhood as undocumented individuals. Through law and policy she wanted to help bring about change in the immigration system and wanted to promote labor rights.

### **PACO<sup>20</sup>**

At the time of the interview, Paco called Mexico City and L.A. home. Paco graduated from UCLA in 2015 with a degree in Psychology, and worked as a clinical researcher. Paco is of Mexican descent. In 2009, Paco immigrated from Mexico City. At first, he did not want to come to the U.S. and enrolled in the Mexican military, but it was not what he was expecting. He viewed the military as too rigid and mechanical; yet, from the military he gained an ability to be disciplined and he wanted to use that discipline for the cultivation of his mind. However, he could not afford any universities in Mexico and he decided to move to the U.S. because he wanted to pursue higher education. When he arrived in the U.S. he enrolled in community college and worked full time as a custodian and after six years he transferred to UCLA.

Paco shared that being able to interact with the jornaleros made him feel great. The interactions felt “like coming back to my roots, it made me feel like I was in Mexico.” Proyecto provided Paco a space where he could nourish his identity within the

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<sup>20</sup> Even though Paco, graduated from UCLA he still was an active member of the Proyecto. For the purpose of this study, he would be viewed as a current program participant, as oppose to a program graduate.

U.S. and made him feel welcomed. When I asked Paco how he defined his identity, he voiced:

If you asked me this question four years ago, I would say Mexican. But, now, I would say Latino. Before I came here [U.S.], I had this idea that all the people who speak Spanish are Mexican. When you come here [U.S.] you learn about the diversity in Latinos. I expanded my vision [of Latinidades] because I did not want to segregate myself. At site, there are people from Mexico, El Salvador, and Peru. It makes a difference to know there are people outside of Mexico in Latin America.

Paco exemplified the shift in how he defined himself in relation to his Latinidades. Four years ago he defined himself as Mexican and now he defined himself as Latino. The shift in his identity highlighted the reality that identity is a continuous, unending process of becoming and relational. Paco became Latino because of his relationality with other Latinos from Latin America. When he was in Mexico, he had the preconception that all Spanish-speaking individuals were Mexican. However, coming to the U.S. and interacting with jornaleros from diverse countries, he realized the importance of viewing Latin America as diverse and, yet, unified through its Latinidades.

Paco's definition of Latinidades also impacted how he defined service. When I asked him if Proyecto de Jornaleros was a community service project, he responded yes. However, his definition of service was connected to his relationality to the jornaleros. As Paco stated, "The jornaleros are the community and we are working with them. They are part of the Latino community, specifically the jornaleros of the Latino community." Paco saw the jornaleros as his community and challenged the depiction of community service. He did define Proyecto as a community service organization, but his definition of service rested on a sense of collective service with one's community.

## **ESTEFANÍA**

At the time of the interview, Estefanía called L.A. home, she graduated from UCLA in 2015 with a degree in Political Science, and worked for an L.A. councilmember. Estefanía is of Mexican descent and a first-generation college student. When I asked Estefanía how she felt participating in Proyecto with the jornaleros, she articulated:

They [jornaleros] care about me and care about us [program participants] and they shared wisdom with us— kind of just trying to help us and motivate us to go forward. They helped make the project [Proyecto] more like a family... They [jornaleros] remind me of my uncles. I feel that I know them [jornaleros] already.

Similar to other program participants, Estefanía's statement highlighted that Proyecto nourished a sense of family. Family encompassed collective education development that became rooted in wisdom. Wisdom itself was based on community knowledge and a desire to bring about change. Seeing the jornaleros as her uncles helped deconstruct a dichotomous separation between service participants and service provider within dominant community service research. Estefanía's expression that the jornaleros reminded her of her uncles drew attention to the fact that she saw the jornaleros as part of her community and that impacted how she defined her relationality to them.

## **DANIELA**

At the time of the interview, Daniela called L.A. home. She graduated from UCLA in 2013 with a degree in Political Science, and worked in a publicity and event company. Daniela is of Mexican descent. Daniela attributed her authorship through a third space context where she understood her Latinidad. Her definition of third space



defined where “you are not from here, you are not from there.” She further described authoring of third space where she continuously:

I tried to make a space...I think that everyone is always creating a space where they fit in...That is how I identify myself as...trying to make a place where I can make an impact.

Her identity became interconnected with everyday actions and based on the potential to impact society. Daniela situated her identity within a context of making a difference and rooted within relational identities. As she expressed, “my identity is based on the things that I commit my time to and the people I surround myself with.” She explained that her identities became situated within commitment to others. Commitment to others did not connote simple hours of service towards other, but rather connectedness. Daniela expressed that she wished to participate in Proyecto because she identified with the jornaleros as part of her community and to find home. Her interaction within Proyecto contributed to understanding of space within where she defined her identities based on serving others.

## **PERLA**

At the time of the interview, Perla called Los Angeles-San Fernando Valley home, she graduated from UCLA in 2012 with a degree in English, and worked with an immigrant attorney on social media/advocacy outreach platform. Perla is of Mexican descent and a first-generation college student. Perla exclaimed that Proyecto provided her with a space to interact with jornaleros from various Latin American countries. Growing up in a primary Mexican community in the San Fernando Valley, she had not extensively

interacted with Latinxs who were not Mexican. Being part of Proyecto provided her the opportunity to examine her understanding of Latinidades and her relationship to members of community. As Perla expressed:

I grew up in a place where everybody looks like me... my high school was 90 percent Mexican maybe we had two Asians ... so most of my interactions were with Mexicans and even the Asians sort of assimilated with Mexican culture. So my first interactions with other people who were not Mexican was when I went to college... I went to site and a lot of the jornaleros were Latinos from Guatemala and El Salvador...it [Proyecto] opened my eyes to other [Latinx] groups... it is not that it opened my eyes to other groups, it led me to interact with other groups and that showed me that Latinos are different...I am Latina, my Spanish is not the best... but I am still Latina that is how I identify. I don't fit the mold for what people think of as Latina, but that does not matter...it does not make me any less Latina.

Perla's passage foregrounded that relational identities situated within Latinidades entailed an active act of reflection of the self. Reflection of the self became situated within the nexus of identity negotiation.

Identities entailed spaces for transformation and possibilities towards negotiation. Identity negotiation, in Perla's instance, called attention to the nourishment of identity situated with community. By sharing that Proyecto provided her the opportunity to "interact with other [Latinx] groups...and showed me that Latinos are different" followed by "I don't fit the mold for what people think of as Latina, but that does not matter...it does not make any less Latina," she focused on how her gained reexamination of Latinidades impacted how she defined herself. Her definition of Latina was not based on her ability to communicate in Spanish, but rather her relational identity with other Latinxs. By exploring her relational identities with other Latinx, she began to reexamine her Latina identity not defined by her fluency in Spanish. Perla defined her Latina

identity not based on a binary between who is able to identify or not as Latinx. She understood Latinidades as a complex, fluid, and relational.

## **INGRID**

At the time of the interview, Ingrid called Northern California home, she graduated from UCLA in 2012 with a degree in Anthropology and Spanish Community & Culture, and was enrolled a bilingual teaching certification program. Ingrid is white. As a student with a different cultural background than the jornaleros, Ingrid empathized that from interacting with the jornaleros she learned about a community that she was not familiar with:

For me, I do think that I did some teaching but I also did a lot of learning... learning from the community not just sitting in the ivory tower... you can do as much as you want, write a zillion papers and documentaries, that is one way of knowing. Until you actually live it or speak to people directly to their context there is a lot of knowing that you don't have... You can one, see the asset the community has to offer and to offer whatever unique assets you have from your background or your education to that community.

Ingrid message conveyed the importance of becoming engaged and learning from the community she wanted to work with. Her goal was to become a bilingual teacher and saw Proyecto de Jornaleros as an opportunity to learn from her future students' communities. However, she did emphasize that the community she was working with was not her community. As she stated, "For people like me [white], I was learning about a community I was not familiar with." Ingrid acknowledged that she did not have a Latinx background and that her relationship with the jornaleros was different from the other program participants.

Ingrid brought to light how relational Latinidades were situated within a sense of connectedness. Connectedness illustrated a sense of belonging with the jornaleros and the overall Proyecto environment. By overall Proyecto environment, I illustrated community within the dialogue, English classes, and camaraderie. As she stated:

I feel that I always wonder about that, especially as a white student. I was very aware of my position of privilege and still as a [future] teacher aware of them. I really didn't want to come across as this person that was going to teach them English and save them, so I was pretty conscious of that. I don't know if that is how I came across...there was a little bit of feeling out a place ... I don't know if that was I projecting it... I got to a point where I was there, because I want to be there and that was great. I did not know and I wasn't going to hold it against them, if that was even anything that they were thinking. But I did wonder sometimes.

Ingrid's comments highlight how her identity as a white person contained privilege and a sense of exclusion. Ingrid's privilege and sense of exclusion manifested from her relational identities. She did not have a Latinx background and fought against having a "white savor " approach that would teach the jornaleros English. As Ingrid mentioned, sometimes she felt that she did not belong and did not know how the jornaleros felt about her participating in Proyecto. Ingrid's narrative illustrated the multidimensionality of identity, specifically how it related to how she positioned herself in relation to the jornaleros. Her words spoke to how the space of authoring is not fixed but dependent on a sense of connectedness.

## **PALOMA**

At the time of the interview, Paloma called San Diego home. She graduated from UCLA in 2015 with a degree in Political Science and Psychology, and was applying to

law school. Paloma is of Mexican descent. Paloma shared the power of the Proyecto educational space and its impact on her identity, “I always considered myself an insider to the struggles facing Latinos...joining Proyecto opened my eyes to my own privileges and being able to get an education on my own privileges and how there are so many intersectionalities within the community.” Paloma’s words conveyed an emotional connection to the jornaleros as being members of her community. As a conscious Latina, she was aware of the vast inequities faced by the Latina communities. Participating in Proyecto facilitated a space where Paloma could engage in examining her epistemic privilege.

Epistemic privilege underscored the relationship between knowledge and social location. As Moya (2003) articulated epistemic privilege is defined as:

The simple fact of having been born a person of color in the United States or of having suffered the effects of heterosexism or of economic deprivation does not, in and of itself, give someone a better understanding or knowledge of the structure of our society. The key to claiming “epistemic privilege” for people who have been oppressed in a particular way stems from an acknowledgement and ability to understand experiences...that can provide them with the necessary information to discern how hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality operate to uphold existing regimes of power in our society (p. 38).

Viewing Paloma’s previous comments underscored the importance of an epistemic privileged lens; her articulation of “an education on my own privileges and how there are so many intersectionalities within the community” highlighted the relationship between identities, knowledge, and Latinidades. For Paloma, Proyecto consisted of an education space where she could question her understanding of Latinidades. Latinidades entailed multiple intersectional oppressions and privileges. The education that she noted included

an examination of her relationality within the jornaleros, as she referred to the jornaleros as members of the community.

## **DAN**

At the time of the interview, Dan called Sacramento, California home. He graduated from UCLA in 2014 with a degree in neuroscience, and was enrolled in medical school. Dan is of Indian descent. Relational Latinidades were also shaped by how one understands the self and one's societal membership. Throughout our interview, Dan did note that he moved in and out of a sense of belonging within Latinidades, especially related to how he felt the jornaleros perceived of him. Dan was conflicted to call the jornaleros *his* community, because they did not share a similar cultural background.

Dan expressed his inner tensions of being privileged economically, being Indian, and a non-native Spanish-speaker. He stated how he had created a self-constructed barrier not only between himself and the jornaleros, but also with the other UCLA students. As he stated, "I learn through my experience that sometimes the community that you most identify yourself with and what the principles are can be one in the same." As Dan further engaged with the jornaleros, his perception as an outsider shifted and he felt a relational identity situated itself within a sense of connectedness. Dan did not continue on perceiving himself as an outsider, but rather felt the inner tensions and possibilities that he held for himself defined his Latinidades. Latinidades, thus, was not limited to race and ethnicity; however, race and ethnicity did help in the feeling of being in community.

## **RELATIONALITY AND HOME**

Joining Proyecto for the participants was about staying connected with their community while they were in the “UCLA bubble.” Daniela, Perla, and Ingrid used the terminology of the “UCLA bubble,” which consisted of the location of UCLA (within close vicinity to the affluent Platinum Triangle—Bel Air, Holmby Hills, and Beverly Hills), the exclusionary aspect of higher education and the lack of diversity within the student body. The UCLA bubble signified a contrast to the Latinx and working-class communities that many of the program participants had been raised in and called home.

The program participants underscored the importance of situating their family and themselves within the same community as jornaleros. The program participants understanding of community also aligned with Yosso’s (2005) description of familial cultural wealth as, “cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship” (p. 79). Community, thus, was understood beyond blood. Kinship was community. All of the Latinx participants noted that they were attracted and remained involved with Proyecto because the jornaleros are members of their community. For example, Valencia, Paloma, Estefanía, and Daniela stated that the jornaleros reminded them of their uncles. Specifically, Paloma noted that her desire to be involved in the project rested on the fact that she had uncles that had been jornaleros. Valencia and Paloma also noted that they had experiences teaching their parents and families English. Service within Proyecto entailed more than just hours performing the service, service entailed a connection to serving members of our Latinx community.

Latinidades disrupted community service discourse. The program participants sought to understand how the jornaleros impacted their understanding of community. The program participants' narratives challenged the binary that placed in opposition the identities of the jornaleros and the UCLA students. Oppositions that placed the UCLA students as service providers and jornaleros as service recipients that divided the community in two. Latinidades within Proyecto encompassed a sense of community. Analyzing and disrupting the binary provided the opportunity to examine positionalities and how these positionalities affect the view of community service.



## **Chapter Five: Findings**

The findings articulated in this chapter should not be seen as separate. In response to my central research question, “How did program participants perceive and understand the dialogue exchanges shared between the jornaleros and themselves?,” Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia’ narratives articulated four critical themes: (a) educating through *comunalidad*; (b) languages de educación; (c) fostering comunidad through dialogue; and (d) consciousness through *responsabilidad*. These four themes were not separate entities; rather the themes informed and sustained each other. For example, the theme of languages the educación was interrelated with fostering comunidad through dialogue. Spanish became not only a mechanism for communication, but also toward community building. Overall, Proyecto de Jornaleros connected the program participants with a sense of home. Home became an epistemic and agentic metaphorical and physical space where they negotiated their identities within UCLA space and the Proyecto de Jornaleros.

### **EDUCACIÓN THROUGH COMUNALIDAD**

Hablando se entienden las cosas.

—Mexican proverb

The theme of educación through *comunalidad* derived from a collective process, where *comunalidad* and educación supported one another. My usage of *comunalidad* derived from Mexican scholar Martínez Luna (2009) articulation of *comunalidad*—community ethos— as:

“La comunalidad no es una suma de normas, obligaciones que puedan extenderse simplemente repitiendo un valor. La comunalidad no es una actitud que pueda enseñarse en el discurso. Por el contrario, se debe comprender que es una vivencia...que lleva a su reflexión...la reflexión es resultado de una acción que como tal primero se da y en su segundo momento se analiza” (p. 137).

Martínez Luna argued that sum of rules or obligations did not define comunalidad. Comunalidad entailed experiences fostering reflection, where reflection was understood as an act of action followed by an analysis of the action. Martínez Luna on comunalidad stemmed from indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico that challenge Western colonial ways of knowing, being, and interacting. This study centered comunidad as a means to deconstruction of the individualistic, Western conception of the institution of education.

Daily teachings and lessons defined education through comunalidad (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006). Educación then was understood as an epistemic journey that entailed comunalidad with the jornaleros.

I centered my analysis on Valenzuela’s (1999) conception of educación as:

Educación is a broader term than its English-language cognate. It refers to the family’s role in inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as a foundation for all other learning. Through inclusive formal academic training, educación additionally refers to competence in the social world (p. 23).

I selected Valenzuela’s definition of educación for three reasons. First, it noted that the Spanish term for educación was not a direct translation for education, rather educación encompasses notions beyond formal institutionalized education.

This section underscored the nuances found in education as educación. Second, the definition included ways of knowing and being passed down through a familiar and

community based educación. The second reason was critical to this chapter because, as the program participants articulated, families and the jornaleros did not have more than an elementary school education. However, this did not mean that they are uneducated, but rather their educación rested on their values and lived experiences. Finally, Valenzuela's (1999) definition focused on the implication of educación and the reality that all knowledge is formed within historical contexts and larger societal milieus. Even though the program participants' understandings and experiences differed, they shared similarities. Similarities rested on the intrinsic relationship between affirming the complexities of education. The theme brought to light the comunalidad as an epistemological movement of viewing education as educación. Education became understood as an epistemological journey that entailed a reflexive consciousness, where "educación refers to a dialectical form of education because it is inclusive of what is thought and learned in all social spaces, including home and community" (Villenas and Moreno, 2001, p. 674).

This section will elaborate on how the research participants comprehended education based on a sense of comunalidad and the complexity of education. I use "institution of education" when referring to a formal school curriculum and instruction, while I wrote "educación" or "education" writing about space in which to learn in community and formal school curriculum and instruction.

## **Popular education**

Proyecto de Jornaleros used popular education as the guiding pedagogy. The program participants' narratives emphasized the importance of popular education and how it impacted their perception of education. One of the central guiding principles of the organization, popular education philosophy, was embedded in the mission of Proyecto. Popular education deconstructed and supported a process where the teacher (read: knowledge holder) and students (read: the known) became co-learners. The program participants viewed the jornaleros as knowledge holders. Drawing from popular education re/constructed the teacher-student power relationship and nourished a community of learners. The power discourse of knowledge found within the relationship between power and knowledge played a vital position within the examination of popular education.

The examination of popular education focused on transforming the validation and purpose in which knowledge is understood. Dan eloquently described popular education as:

Popular education is the idea that students and jornaleros would function both as teachers and students... you know and there is this duality...that we provide a service but the jornaleros were providing a service to us...and in that nexus there was this incredible connection that developed with becoming conscious with different realities...and on the other side for the jornaleros they got to learn very important skills that with relevance to their day to day life. Not necessarily something that we deemed relevant, but they gained relevant to what they were doing. And we learned about what was relevant to them...all of the sudden there was a two way street of education, where no one was or is really a teacher, but no one is really a student. You occupy both spaces and I think that was really a guiding principle of popular education.

Dan word's spoke to the power of popular education as an avenue to challenge the dominant discourse of knowledge and who has the legitimacy to define it. Within the Proyecto education space, the jornaleros and the students were viewed as teachers and learners. The dual role as a teacher and learner opposed the dominant construction of education being equated to the institution of education where one individual (read: teacher) defined and possessed knowledge. Additionally, the curriculum via the English classes incorporated and based itself off relevant topics and concepts for the jornaleros, such as learning how to pronounce certain work tools for construction, landscaping, painting, and other work trades and skills.

The program participants were adamant on not being called teachers by the jornaleros and were aware of their privilege and position as college students, and they preferred to use terms such as *compañera/o*<sup>21</sup>. Several program participants commented that, even though they would tell the jornaleros to refer to them as *compañera/os*, the jornaleros continued to call the program participants "teachers." *Compañera/o* underscored a sense of camaraderie between the college students and the jornaleros, challenged the perception of who held knowledge, and centered the importance of lived experiences. The program participants' position of privilege as college students was omnipresent in their minds and translated to a relative position of influence. The jornaleros and the program participants were agents of knowledge who shared lived experiences. Lived realities helped fostered the space of relational education. Learning

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<sup>21</sup> *Compañera/o* refers to a companionship/allyship. The word has specifically significance in relation to the political movement and civil wars in Central America.

about the jornaleros' lived experiences became a motivating factor for why many students continued their involvement in Proyecto de Jornaleros.

Popular education also supported an education-based curriculum on what the jornaleros deemed relevant. Input from the jornaleros supported relevancy within the curriculum. The program participants illustrated how Proyecto used popular education to create curriculum that focused on the jornaleros' needs. All twelve of the program participants shared their desire to ensure that the curriculum found in the English language classes was relevant to the jornaleros. Perla emphasized "they [jornaleros] are not traditional students so why would their curriculum be traditional." By calling the jornaleros not traditional she argued that the curriculum they received should be based on a standardized English curriculum or lesson plan, rather the English language curriculum was made contextual and useful for the jornaleros.

Valencia shared that her goal, as the current curriculum coordinator for Proyecto, is to "understand their [jornaleros] needs to the best of my ability, so I can develop curriculum that is good for them. If we are just doing our own curriculum without asking them, the whole idea of Proyecto would not be what Proyecto stands for." Valencia's words highlighted that the Proyecto education space incorporated more than just teaching the English language, but through relevance one could examine the importance of deciphering the jornaleros' realities outside of the Proyecto educational space.

In the case of the English classes, a central objective was to work alongside the jornaleros to develop English curriculum pertinent to their everyday needs, such as construction tool terminology, price quotes, or simply how to ask the employer to use the

restroom, while other times the program participants did not use the curriculum and focused on answering the jornaleros' questions. Several program participants articulated their frustrations and apprehensions with the English language curriculum. They felt that when the curriculum was not necessarily based on the jornaleros' needs, it strayed away from Proyecto's goal of serving the jornalero community through a reciprocal relationship. Serving the jornaleros entailed a reciprocal relationship, where not only did the program participants benefit from their interactions with the jornaleros, but also the jornaleros.

The desire to have education be relevant to implementation was further stressed by the continuous budget cuts faced by IDEPSCA as Elena stated:

Both [day labor] centers have received budget cuts, so they are trying to make the jornaleros run their own labor center. So right now, I think that it is especially important to teach them or guide them on how to answer a phone or like, hum, e-mail prices of certain work, so I think right now it is very important for the center to continue operating.

Elena's passage articulated that Proyecto, as a social justice organization, should not base itself on a one-way relationship of service, but rather collaborative educational reciprocal relationships be nourished. The fulfillment of a reciprocal relationship would entail supporting the jornaleros so that they can run the sites, and self-run the organization. Reciprocal relationships entailed a space where *all* members of Proyecto de Jornaleros, including the program participants in collaboration with the jornaleros fostered a sense of community within the Proyecto. Within a reciprocal relationship, the program participants and the jornaleros supported each other and nurtured the Proyecto space.

## **Education: Shades of grey**

Proyecto problematized who has the legitimacy to define it. Viewing education as educación affected the program participants' view of the jornaleros. As Marina expressed:

I realized that a lot of jornaleros have not been to school... and they tell me things I did not know about. They really teach me in more ways than I teach them. They take their own experience and they are able to use them to formulate ideas of the world...I think that is the most valuable skill anyone can have.

Marina powerfully defined the jornaleros as educated. Their education encompassed ways of knowing that are rooted in trusting intuition. Trusting intuition illustrated the ability of communicating our negotiation of identity mediated by lived experiences. The ability to use lived experiences as a mechanism to “formulate ideas of the world” underscored that education became rooted in epistemic knowledge found within lived experiences.

The program participants' view of education holds the realities, values, and truths that each individual's experiences held. Estefanía articulated by saying that she saw education as “an important resource that somebody can have to better help you understand the world, but also understand yourself.” The research participants' epistemological stands on educación provided context and framework to name their world. Estefanía's statement paralleled Moya's (2002) concept of epistemic privilege that elaborated on the relationship between knowledge and matrices of power. Epistemic privilege exemplified the connection between knowledge, power, and identity. The triad of knowledge, power, and identity impacted as:



Special advantage with respect to possessing or acquiring knowledge about how fundamental aspects of our society operate to sustain matrices of power...what is being claimed is not an a priori link between social location and knowledge but a link that is historically variable and mediated through interpretation of experience (p. 90).

This quote stressed the connection between the awareness that originated from knowledge and the connection to identity. Knowledge derived from one's social location within the multiplicity of oppressions and privileges. Estefanía examined herself in relation to the world and, critically, to the power dynamics of her social location, as well as gained the language to name her realities and reconceptualized them to understand ground your experiences.

After interviewing Perla, I realized that not only did she note a shift in her definition of education, but also her words also understood the complexity of education, sometimes even prior to joining Proyecto. Perla underscored the relation to her parents and family and the critical nature of viewing education as educación through her concept of "different shades of grey." As she expressed:

Education has different shades of grey...my parents are some of the most educated individuals. My mom dropped out of the third grade and my dad dropped out of high school because of lack of opportunity...I think that for people to look at education and solely see it as an institution it is not.

Perla articulated the complexity of education by questioning who can be viewed as educated. She argued for a re/examination of how education was defined, such that we being to explore the "shades of grey" within our understanding of education and what it means to be educated. Perla's words expressed that her parents are educated individuals even when they did not received much formal education. Formal education being classified by the traditional institutionalized education. Perla's testimony noted that her

parents are well educated. She defined an educated person as someone who has strong values, morals, and a passion for perseverance.

Perla also spoke to the “lack of opportunity” to receive an education. Thus, highlighting who gets to receive an education is mediated by larger sociopolitical realities. For example, her dad could not complete high school because he had to work and provide an additional income to his family. However, even though Perla’s dad no longer attended the educational institutions, it did not mean he stopped gaining educación. For Perla, education was a continuous life endeavor not exclusive to degree.

Valencia also underscored the notion of education containing “shades of grey.” Her family members shaped her understanding of education. As she stated:

From seeing my family members who did not go to school, I know that they are really knowledgeable. I do not think that education is limited to something that you pay for or are force to go to when you are a child. I think that education is institutionalized, but I don't think that is should be. I don't think that you can only be educated, if you are enrolled in school.

Valencia explained a need to re/examine how we understand education. When she made the statement above, I could sense the emotional connection she held to verbalizing that members of her family are highly educated. Her family’s education was rooted in the values of being a “good person,” such that education was viewed as social. Social in its relationship to how one interacts with others. Valencia’s statement underscored that education was a collective education, where knowledge became social when it was shared with others..

Knowledge came from stories and stories came from listening, for both the jornaleros and the program participants. Valencia also defined education as knowledge

that is not “limited to something you pay for” stressing that education encompassed something beyond a monetary value. In other words, paying for education and/or having money did not make an individual educated. As Valencia noted, having money did not quantify education, given that she did not view the purpose of earning a college education as solely monetary aspiration. For her, the purpose of education was coupled with desire for transformation, a purpose that I further delved into in a previous section in this study.

Valencia’s expressed her desire to reimagine education and question who is viewed as possessing education: “I think that education is institutionalized, but I don’t think that is should be.” This powerful statement reverberated that she viewed her family ways of knowing as possessing value. She also underscored that the institutionalization of education was limited by being exclusionary, especially of people of color, from high quality education, curriculum, and knowledge creation.

Taken together, Perla’s, Valencia’s, Marina’s and Estefanía’s narratives provided a lens to examine what the “shades of grey” in education connoted. Throughout this study, the “shades of grey” illuminated education as *educación*. The program participants’ understanding of *educación* mediated by popular education opposed the dominant definition of education based upon what it is means to be educated and to educate. Participating in Proyecto provided the program participants an avenue to examine their understanding of *educación*. *Educación* embodied the passage of community knowledge. Throughout the interviews, the program participants expressed how their understanding of education changed because it was resituated as *educación*.

## **Legitimacy to define education**

Daniela also spoke about the importance of questioning the relationship between education and the perception of who is educated. In her words:

It kind of helped me learn that you learn that your education means more if you are able to talk about it to everybody else. So that is an example of how it impacted my definitions, especially social justice and things like that. I think these men were all very smart and a lot of people passing by in the streets might think that they are lazy and are just waiting around for people to give them a lot of money for just laying some bricks. They might think that they are not just as intelligent as that high power lawyer in a suit in his Porsche.

Daniela argued that the jornaleros should be viewed as educated, hardworking, and determined individuals. She also challenged the conception that material wealth and academic degrees equate to being educated. Daniela conveyed that material wealth can be taken away, but educación remains. Educación inherently resisted the status quo of education because it opposed the conception of who has the legitimacy to define education.

When I asked Mia about her definition of educación and education, she expressed her understanding of education and educación as a characteristic possessed by an individual. As she described:

When I say educación... When you say, es una niña muy educada, which not only refers to someone who has gone to school and it also refers to values of that person. She knows her manners. If you say it in English, she is an educated person. You immediately are, at least I do, relate it to being or going through college or school. So yea. I never thought of that difference or comparison. From education, I get that idea that going to school and from educación I not only going to school but also your values, morals, your manners. Things that you are taught at home almost. I don't know if that makes sense.

Mia underscored that education and educación are false cognates. Additionally, Mia's statement helped address the education ontological concern: what counts as education and who has the legitimacy to define, to teach, and to question knowledge. She made statements in English and Spanish highlighting the difference of the words. In Spanish, "education" linked values and morals to a person's character, so a person is defined as "educated" when they possess principles. She also rooted educación within the home and how a person interacts with society. In English, "education" connected formalized education (read: institution of education) defined the person as "educated." Mia's narrative illustrated how a person's understanding of education became mediated by their reference.

Similar to Mia, Paco also expressed his understanding of education with the context of his upbringing and attendance of education in Mexico. When I asked Paco about his understanding of education, he expressed education as an academic journey. However, when I asked him about educación, he instantly recalled his experiences in Mexico. He expressed:

Education is a set of knowledge. When I hear educación in Mexico, it meant educación. Educación does not necessarily relate to going to school and college, but also having values and being polite. In Mexico, educación is a bigger umbrella term than here in the U.S. In the U.S., when you say education you think of being educated through a college degree.

Paco conveyed that educación is not the same as education. Paco situated his understanding of educación within the Mexican context and the institution of education within a U.S. context. Educación centered and was defined by the individual, rather than

the institution of education. Thus, educación became verb because individuals preform and live education.

Interestingly, when I asked Mia and Paco if participating in Proyecto had an impact on their understanding of education, they both did not have a clear answer. They expressed that Proyecto introduced them to popular education. For example, Mia explained the power of popular education and the deconstruction of the banking model of education as:

I think that you learn more from it than from question and answer about how do you know about this or what do you seen in the picture. I like how jornaleros interact with us. I liked how you discuss a topic and then you come not with a conclusion but something that you can take away home and reflect upon it. I think that is only gathered through a discussion and dialogue, not through a question and answer basis. I think that you get more things to reflect. You get more insightful things per say from a dialogue than from a question and answer-based education.

Yet, when I inquired about the relationship between Proyecto and her definition of education, she stated, “I really don't know.” Mia’s answered paralleled Paco’s response of “Maybe, not sure.” After they answered the question about education, in their separate interviews, I wanted to unpack their answers. Mia and Paco were the only two program participants did not convey a change in their definition of education. They were also the two participants that moved called Mexico home, given that Mia was an international student from Mexico and Paco had moved from Mexico in 2009. Additionally, they both analyzed and centered education from an individual level, rather than at an institution level. Did their lived experiences in Mexico impact their view of education inherently as educación? When I asked them to provide their understanding of “education,” why did they focus on the individual? Where their other factors at play?

## Education at UCLA and Proyecto

Through an act of internalization, the program participants partook in knowledge production. The knowledge production rested on educating through comunidad. Through comunidad, you are emotionally investing in the process of educación. Dan reiterated that their UCLA experience encompassed a blending and merging of their experience in Proyecto and the UCLA classrooms. In Dan's words:

I was learning so much...because it was a different way of learning. I was both learning and teaching in the same space. I was learning and teaching from experience, and it made it more relatable more digestible. In science, there is a term *in vivo* experience, as opposed to *in vitro*, in *in vitro* you are learning everything in a petri dish and breaking it down. That's how you learn. That is kind of how I comprehend my UCLA experience; someone breaks it down for you. When I compare my experience of Proyecto it is more about... you learn so much more about the world around you, from people's experience and those experiences stick to you so much, so much better than sometimes a lecture about what's really happening and how someone really felt about it. You can decide whether you can internalize it to your experience or contrast it to your experience ... it makes Proyecto so interesting. It was so different and so educational at the same time.

Dan's narrative highlighted the intricacy of knowledge and educational space construction. He stressed the reciprocal relationship between learning and teaching. For Dan, participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros provided a means to explore and question his traditional education via his UCLA classroom experience. His scientific based explanation exemplified the importance of learning through lived experiences versus just through standardized curriculum and instruction; as such he highlighted the interplay of education as educación. Educación became a means to listen, reflect, and contextualize reality. Dan expressed the active role in deciding and deciphering, if you want to internalize what you learn or merely contrast it to your experience.

Valencia elaborated on the educational space offered by popular education and, similar to Dan, she compared her education experiences in different educational spaces.

As she expressed:

Before I joined Proyecto, I had never heard of popular education. I really I think that is one of the reasons I am attracted to it. In my own learning process, I cannot really learn when there is someone that is making me feel that they are above me, if that makes any sense... Proyecto is communal work. Everyone is teaching someone. Unlike here, it [at UCLA] is very Western, one person is teaching instead of a communal learning.

Valencia's words exemplified that her way of knowing and epistemological stand were integral to her understanding and perception of education. She liked Proyecto's popular education philosophy because it challenged the banking system of education. The banking system of education, exemplified in the works of Freire (1970), a teacher-centric model of education that situated students as passive receptors of knowledge, as well as focused on standardized teaching through a one-size-fits all approach without taking into consideration the lived experiences of students.

Valencia's understanding of education rested on learning through group collaboration. She later stated that the courses she received her highest in grades in incorporated group projects and challenged the traditional/formal construction of the classroom. Valencia articulated that traditional/formal construction of the classroom placed the teacher as the center of knowledge and standardized curriculum and instruction. As she articulated:

I do not remember learning very well from formal education. All the classes where I done really well are because I did hands on things, as opposed to PowerPoints and tests. It has mostly been projects where I'm actually learning from...I do not think that the model they have in high school or even in middle school is that great.



The understanding of education based on family and community funds of knowledge allowed Valencia to challenge the dominant interpretation of knowledge. For her, education should not be synonymous with Eurocentric knowledge. Valencia's passage articulated not on the need to develop curriculum and instruction that focuses on group projects, but that she wanted to deconstruct and renovate the current education institution and incorporate learning through communal work.

Mia underscored the importance of lived experience and, as a physics major; she expressed the lack of what she referred to as the human presence and communal work. As she voiced:

I think that my major is lacking of that human presence. It is very scientific very mathematical, but it is not really human...I value life experiences I gain in Proyecto because I don't get them in a classroom environment...[furthermore] you can have a class of ethnics or a class of morals but you don't get to experience it. You can read about Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, but you don't get the life experience. It think that going to site teachers you that. You can see experience. Talking to jornaleros you can see their experience, their emotions, and I think that is when you learn, you actually learn.

Mia's message not only illustrated the lack of human based curriculum, but also educational emotional connection she gained through the Proyecto space. Through Proyecto, she participated in knowledge construction rooted in the jornaleros' lived experiences. The jornaleros lived experiences provided a mechanism for experiencing educación. Educación embodied a form of experimental learning. Experimental learning included learning through experiences. They might not have much of a formal education, but they have lived experiences that they shared with the program participants. However, different from traditional interpretation of experimental learning, the learning occurred

within a reflective process on other's experiences. Other's experiences supported educating through comunidad because, as members of the Proyecto's community, learning entailed a collective endeavor rooted in lived experiences.

At its essence education not only served as a vehicle for learning, but, importantly, as a part of the struggle to improve society. Elena articulated this notion when she stated, "education is like cultivating our minds. Not only in math or history, but also like in how the world interacted and how we could do something to make those interactions more efficient and more productive for everyone." When I asked Elena if her interacting with the jornaleros impacted how she defined or understood education, she stated that education serves as a tool for change. As a tool of social justice, she wanted to use her education to bring about change for community. In her words: "I want to educate myself, to be able to like actually do something, you know, actually do something like reach someone and help others that I wouldn't have been able to do if I didn't have this education." Listening to Elena communicated the power of education for the possibility for change.

Proyecto provided a space for how program participants understood how educación was situated within UCLA and Proyecto, as well as how the educación they gained in Proyecto and UCLA nourished each other. Unifying their UCLA and Proyecto educational experiences helped deconstruct the binary between formal and informal education. The experiences in Proyecto also impacted how the program participants viewed the jornaleros and the purpose of education within social justice and change discourses and learning from the community.

Through active participation in Proyecto, the program participants changed their perception of education to one that unified their education within UCLA and their education situated within the larger Los Angeles community classroom. Education was not restricted to the day laborer center, but rather the university students took with them this education back to UCLA. Proyecto's philosophy and epistemology was not only in the Proyecto space, but also in their UCLA classrooms. Educating was situated within an inner tension and struggles to understand education experiences. For program participants, these interactions linked and connected their educational experience in Proyecto to their educational experience at UCLA. This did not create a separation of educational spaces, given that they supplement and nourish each other. The narratives of the proceeding three program participants exemplified the relationality between the knowledges gained through participating in Proyecto and its affect on their overall UCLA educational experience.

#### **LANGUAGES DE EDUCACIÓN**

She was educated in English and learned it is the only acceptable language in society, but Spanish was the language of her childhood, family, and community.

– Ana Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers*

The theme of languages of educación originated from a desire of home. Languages of educación exemplified that words have and carried within them life and memory. Educación is informed and fostered through language and involved a reciprocal and collaborative process. In this section, this study highlights how the languages of

communication, in this respect English and Spanish impacted the experiences of the program participants. Spanish is the native language for ten of the program participants and accounted for all Latinas, and an internal nostalgia for Spanish contributed to their desire to become and remain a part of Proyecto de Jornaleros. Many shared how Spanish holds an emotional, familial, and communal connection for them. The act of speaking Spanish fostered a sense of being at home, especially for the ten of the Latinx program participants whose native language is Spanish. Taken together, the use of Spanish, English, and Spanglish offered a reflective space to examine the power of language.

The código and English component of site highlighted the interplay of English and Spanish. In other words, código was in Spanish and prior to the English component inherently in English. I do not aim to create a dichotomy between English and Spanish because they are interrelated. Yet, it is important to note the components sequence in relation to the power dynamics of language. By first speaking in Spanish, the program participants nourished their sense of vulnerability and openness to learn Spanish in collaboration with the jornaleros. Many of the program participants noted that their Spanish oral communication could be improved. They were aware of their possible mistakes when they spoke in Spanish and that the jornaleros might correct them. Trust in the Proyecto space was built on Spanish. In order to foster community, confianza needed to emerge between the student volunteers and the jornaleros and being able to correct one another was important. This mutual vulnerability meant something to the configuration of language power because the program participants could expect a similar vulnerability and openness from the jornaleros to learn in collaboration with them.

## **Spanish: A gateway to lived experiences and culture**

Dan and Ingrid shared that they felt they were outsiders within the Proyecto space for two main reasons: they were non-native Spanish speakers nor had Latinx background. These two reasons created tensions and dissonance for them in the Proyecto de Jornaleros space. Ingrid and Dan brought to light the process of developing community through language. They both spoke of the tension they faced conversing in Spanish and their desire to learn the language to be able to communicate with the jornaleros.

Ingrid commented that when she first joined Proyecto she had difficulty communicating and understanding when Spanish was used. However, after studying abroad for a year in a Spanish speaking country for her third year in college, when she participated in Proyecto in her fourth year, her improvement in Spanish impacted her community building. She was able to share her ideas and ask questions without Spanish being a barrier. When I asked Ingrid how one language of communication had impacted her experience she responded:

I think that was one of those things that made those experiences so valuable. I am learning to communicate with people I previously could not because of the [Spanish] language barrier. I am working with them. English will help them break down barriers that they currently cannot communicate with and I think that was one of the powerful things was the language aspect of it. We were going there and we were going there to speak to them in Spanish first. We would go in there and we would have the dialogue, in mostly in Spanish, and I think that also set a tone too. Like we are not there to be like, ‘you are in America and you should speak English.’ We were there to engage with them and going there and making sure they were also comfortable.

Ingrid shed light on her struggle with Spanish and afforded a lens to examine her relationality with the jornaleros. She illustrated how the power of learning Spanish and

English and how being bilingual helped break down barriers. Different than the other program participants, Ingrid's comments did center on the jornaleros learning English and noted how Proyecto supported the jornaleros in learning English as a means for them to deconstruct the language barrier and community with society.

Dan expressed that in the beginning he did not speak much in Spanish, as a non-native Spanish speaker he hesitated to use the language. Dan explained:

I look forward to speaking in English and I felt bad about this...I had questions but I didn't feel comfortable asking those questions in Spanish...I felt that Spanish was a barrier... but the more I spent time...I realized that as much as Spanish was a barrier for me for the jornaleros it was a gateway...Spanish was their gateway to really express themselves and that is when I realized I needed to speak more Spanish. I wanted to learn because that gateway meant so much to them... the day laborers had showed me that they had the ability to forgive me for their mistakes it was kind of cool. They forgive my [Spanish] mistakes ... and they were able to openly express to me and I was able to ask my questions. I felt that the dialogue became more constructive when I finally came to the realization [speaking] in English was almost selfish for me.

As Dan developed relationships with the jornaleros, he started speaking in Spanish and opened a gateway to sharing experiences and culture; similarly, he shared his Indian culture and experiences with the jornaleros. Developing a sense of connectedness entailed a process situated with feeling a sense of connectedness. Dan hesitated to speak in Spanish because he was not fluent and not being fluent caused him to feel isolated. Feeling isolated did not stop him from participating in Proyecto. Dan continued to attend site because he felt an emotional connection with the jornaleros and wanted to learn from them. The emotional connection he felt caused him to nourish his Spanish through dialogue. Dialoguing in Spanish provided him the opportunity to learn from the

jornaleros. Spanish became not only a mechanism for communication, but also allowed for community building.

### **Spanish: As a feeling at home**

The program participants whose native language was Spanish shared a sense of connectedness through their Spanish language. Specifically, the active desire to speak Spanish signaled their emotional connection to the language, a language that connected them to their comunidad while at UCLA. Throughout the interviews, when asked if the language of communication impacted their experience in Proyecto, I noticed that the program participants born in the United States frequently mentioned their yearning to further develop fluency in Spanish. Many of them mentioned that outside of the Proyecto space they would not use their Spanish language. Some mentioned that sometimes they felt strange dialoguing in Spanish because they had not used in a while. However, soon after they began using Spanish, the strangeness faded.

Spanish also connected to the jornaleros and the program participants, given that they viewed the jornaleros as members of their comunidad. Mia expressed her connection to the jornaleros and to Proyecto de jornaleros, as an English learner:

I learned about Proyecto at the enormous activity fair...what caught my attention is that they [Proyecto de Jornalero volunteers] were speaking in Spanish. I think they were the only organization at the time or at least from what I saw that had a title in Spanish... I was raised in Mexico and I was homesick. I really like Spanish... I am not even native English speaker. If I would to choose between Spanish and English, I would chose Spanish...I personally sometimes do not feel comfortable in English ...Once I was doing intermediate and we were working on idioms...I don't know these things because I did not learn them. When I was teaching this, I was as confused like the jornaleros... I think that at that point, I was in the same position as the jornalero.

Learning English became an emotional connection for Mia and connected her to the jornaleros. Mia's words spoke to how her identity is intrinsically connected to her Spanish language and her identity as an English learner. Mia's narrative highlighted that learning English consisted of struggle and perseverance for both herself, as a college student, and the jornaleros. As a native Spanish speaker, she connected to the jornaleros in their pursuit to learn English.

Paco joined Proyecto de Jornaleros because its name called his attention, since Proyecto's name is written in Spanish and believed that, in his words, Proyecto "might relate to me." Paco told me that he related to the jornaleros because he also came to this country speaking another language and seeking a better life. When describing his relationship with the jornaleros, Paco always articulated how much he related to the jornaleros. As he stated, "they [jornaleros] are not just people in need of help. They are people like me! They came here trying to find a better life and help their families. I see the jornaleros as my community, as my people." Paco originally joined Proyecto de Jornaleros because the language of the organization was written in Spanish; however, he remained a part of Proyecto even after graduating from UCLA because of the connection that made him feel at *home*.

Valencia voiced how the Spanish language connected her to the jornaleros and her desire to remain in Proyecto de Jornaleros:

I love speaking Spanish...I do speak Spanish outside of the Proyecto setting. I speak it at home. I speak it with my family. In class, I do not. I feel very comfortable speaking Spanish, even if it is not the best and even if they correct me...but it feels like home speaking Spanish, and I mean we joke around in Spanish it is like a good atmosphere.



Valencia's words conveyed strong emotion. The Spanish space in Proyecto meant a lot to her because it felt like home to her. She had been raised speaking Spanish and Spanish signified a connection to her family. As someone from Northern California, she was several hundred miles away from her family and she missed them. Her message of love toward Spanish was contrasted to how she perceived English. She expressed that learning English did not erase the underlying social, political, and economic injustices.

English held capital because language and fluency also relate to the power that one holds. As Valencia articulated:

My dad, himself, he has been here in the US for a very long time but he was a farmworker before. He did not need to learn English. He worked with a boss who learned Spanish... When he became a janitor ...he had to learn English because they did not respect him. Before I transferred [to UCLA], I was the one filling out my dad's work orders ... and writing the emails for him. So when I learned about Proyecto, I am like 'oh they are like my dad.' It was familiar because it was something I was used to...English is such a weird language. Like with my dad, he can learn English, but people still do not respect him at work. But I don't really know. Learning English does not take away the inequalities...they are just going to express themselves differently. I have been trying to figure this out.

Valencia's narrative powerfully conveyed two critical examples of English as an instrument of power. First, her statement centered on her father illustrated that learning English did not define fluency in the language. In other words, fluency in English was largely associated with the power of the speaker of the language. Valencia's words paralleled with Prieto and Villenas (2012) powerfully message of the significance of language-brokering experiences. As Prieto and Villenas (2012) articulated:

We came to an early awareness of power relations in the adult world—how money and value were distributed, who mattered, and what knowledge counted. We became keenly aware of how our parents were, or would be, treated as Latina/o immigrants, hoping with all our might that the store clerk, the doctor, or

the teacher would treat our parents con respeto (with respect) as we translated (p. 417).

Translating within language held tension. Tension stressed the societal power within the languages. For Valencia, Spanish conveyed home; yet, in the outside world, Spanish held a marginalized position. She wanted respect for her father.

Valencia's narrative also underscored that language is beyond a grammatical nature, but also indicated a power to categorize in order to differentiate (Bourdieu, 1977). For Valencia's father and the jornaleros, English was the dominant language held by those in power. Learning English did not deconstruct the hierarchical societal power that marginalized Latinxs. English brought to light the U.S. social realities, given that it is not apolitical and carries with it the asymmetrical power relations between the speaker and the listener. Valencia articulated that, even though English served as a tool for her father to communicate with society, Spanish connected her with her community and family. Spanish would always hold a strong connection to her heart.

Estefanía communicated how Spanish provided her a means to learn the language from her community. The jornaleros served as her language educators. As she expressed,

I feel that the jornaleros would always correct me. They would say "no se dice así." I would be like, "okay." I was being corrected, but then they were being corrected all day. They were probably being told, "oh you are saying it wrong." I had to take myself back... this is also a learning experience for me and I am getting a lot from it. For me, it is hard because I don't think I speak Spanish the best out of the group [UCLA volunteers]... I don't feel like leading the dialogue because I don't know what I am going to say. I would start stuttering and I am like, "I don't know"...¿Cómo se dice esto?... For me, it [speaking Spanish] was difficult but it was also a learning experience at the same time.

Estefanía's message conveyed how learning Spanish was a continuous goal for her. She did not really speak the language outside of her household, and felt a decrease in her

Spanish proficiency. Estefanía noted how the jornaleros corrected her and the tension she felt with the correction, as well as how she would not engage in dialogue because she feared stuttering. At the same time, with the support of the jornaleros, she improved her Spanish. Estefanía's narratives underscored a tension and affection found within language of educación. Estefanía's had grown up speaking Spanish and wanted to "improve" her Spanish because Spanish is the language of her *home*.

The languages of communication, in this respect English and Spanish, impacted the experiences of the program participants. The program participants' words brought to light the power of language. For the Estefanía, Valencia, Paco, and Mia, Spanish connected them with their family, parents, and it metaphorically acted as a bridge connecting their languages, while Dan and Ingrid viewed Spanish as a gateway into lived experiences and cultures. Spanish and English contained tension and a sense of home. The program participants shared how Spanish held an emotional, familial, and communal connection for them. The ability to speak English provided the program participants with the privilege to use the language for the benefit of our community: the jornaleros.

#### **FOSTERING COMUNIDAD THROUGH DIALOGUE**

La paz es hija de la convivencia, de la educación, del diálogo. El respeto a las culturas milenarias hace nacer la paz en el presente.

—Rigoberta Menchú Tum

The theme of fostering comunidad through dialogue emerged from convivencia. Convivencia entailed a sharing of knowledges, truths, lived experiences, and served as

“the praxis of living together in community” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006, p.4). Dialogue also centered the power of theorizing from lived experiences mediated by and yet not determined by social locations. Thus, dialogue served as a tool to ground knowledge. As Prieto and Villenas (2012) distinctly expressed, “theory and the production of knowledge cannot be disassociated from people’s lived experiences” (p. 414). Theory and knowledge recognized the epistemic significance of knowledge. Fostering comunidad though dialogue rested on learning and listening to others. The act of learning and listening centered on situating how others’ perspectives can be interpreted within one’s life experiences and understandings. Thus, dialogue consisted of an educational community endeavor, where life experiences and understandings encompassed forms of knowledge. Dialogue also encompassed critical learning moments developed with the purpose for transformation (Freire, 1970). Thus, dialogue was embedded in the larger socio-political, historical, gendered, and racial/ethnic discourse.

Several program participants noted that dialogue built community when it encompassed an openness to hear diverse voices and experiences. As Mia expressed, “you come not with a conclusion but something that you can take away home and reflect upon.” She, along with other program participants, articulated that dialogue does not exemplify a question and answering technique, rather it embodies a space that centers the self, community, and an epistemological connection. For example, Elena and Dan shared similar perspectives of the importance of listening and reflecting on different perspectives. Dan expressed:

We were talking about issues about how we feel and when we responded they would respond. And all of a sudden we had this extremely intelligent dialogue,

that was not so much about who was right nor who was wrong, but rather breaking down an issue and examining its different aspects and really gained an appreciation of different perspectives... I felt like in general that really characterized dialogue for me very educational, but not necessary trying to make a certain point on our value judgment.

Dan's narrative described the critical elements of dialogue, such as listening to diverse viewpoints and reflecting upon what one hears. Dialogue, in the Proyecto space, was not based on agreeing on a final answer, rather dialogue focused on "breaking down an issue and examining its different aspects." Breaking down an issue stressed the essential need to unpack the complexities as well as examine community. Community based on differing, similar, and/or not aligning perspectives found within community members.

As a recent immigrant from Mexico, Paco how going to site caused him to reflect on his life and the comunidad space that Proyecto provided him. As he stated:

Going to site is so rewarding and I remember where I come from, and I keep going to site because I enjoy it. If I am having a bad day or a bad week, just going there [to site] I forget about everything and it does not matter what's I going on. I learned from their hard work and not to give up.

Paco's statement centered how Proyecto de Jornaleros offered a community space of healing and reflection. When Paco made the statement, I could hear excitement in his voice. Even though Paco already graduated from UCLA and has employment, he continued to go to site to be apart of those incredible dialogues. He also continued to go to site because site provided him a space to remember where he came from. Going to site and dialoguing with the jornaleros and other program participants revitalized him and dialoguing made him feel a sense of home.

Dialogues also held epistemic significance for the program participants. When I asked Elena if there was any dialogue that stood out to her, she took a long pause and

began explaining. She did not exactly remember who the jornalero was or when the conversation occurred. Through this experience, Elena realized the privilege of dialogue and learning from the jornaleros. During that conversation, the jornaleros told her “you have really pretty hands. I have rough hands.” The statement made her feel confused. The jornalero then proceeded to say that when he has a daughter he wishes that she would have hands like hers. Elena remembered the jornalero saying, “I want her to have hands like yours because I know she had a good life.” Elena’s conversation with the jornalero stood out because it sparked in her to reflect on the significance of hands. Hands became a symbol of manual labor and success and a prism into someone’s life, into their lived experiences. It also caused her to reflect on the larger economic factors that caused the jornalero to have rough hands. “We realize those [learning from lived experiences] privileges more than anything,” conveyed Elena. Elena expressed that she was open to reflect on the knowledges and experiences the jornaleros’ shared, as well as how she situated that experience in her life.

Elena believed that the jornaleros have differing and similar views based on their lived experiences. Specifically, the jornaleros’ experiences in the United States mediated their understanding of society. In her words:

I think that it’s very interesting how, I don’t know, I see a lot of diversity in the sense that some jornaleros are like, ‘oh no we are rejected in this country’ and some where like ‘oh we have a lot of power and Latino vote is very powerful.’ So, to me, seeing two different points of views that can come out of their experience, but also how they integrate the news events. I think that it shows me a lot about how the society has treated them.

The statement made by Elena spoke to lived experiences as forms of knowledges. The diverse perspective brought to light the jornaleros’ views on the power of Latinxs in the

United States. Elena's narrative emphasized, "how society has treated them [jornaleros]," impacted how the jornaleros situate their perspectives. Some of the jornaleros argued that Latinxs are placed at the margins, while other jornaleros underlined the strength of the Latinx community. Elena's narrative stressed that the jornaleros' experiences impacted their perspective on the Latinx community's influence in the U.S. and provided a window to their lives. Lived experiences impacted how individuals understood and situated themselves and their positionality within the larger social context.

Mia's narrative connected the relationship between larger social context mediated the jornaleros' perspective on the power of the Latinx population in the United States. As she stated:

They are pretty intelligent, they are educated and most of them know more than I do about politics, L.A., their community, and how things work. For instance ... someone proposed to change the word alien to something else. Some jornaleros didn't know that the word alien was used to label migrants... [Yet] a jornalero stated, 'whatever we are called... We will not be part of this country and we will be seen as the other.'

The jornaleros' level of awareness about political issues impressed her. She recalled the particular conversation because a jornalero stated, "Whatever we are called... We will not be part of this country and we will be seen as the other." The jornaleros' statement caused her to realize that terminology changes little when the inequities remain. Inequities speaking to the marginalization and social exclusion that make the jornaleros (in)visible. Invisibility underscored the inhumane treatment they received with the larger context that denies them human rights due to their documentation status, race, age, and several other factors. Visibility portrayed the dominant discourse of jornaleros as "unworthy" immigrants who "steal" American jobs. Mia noted that she was not familiar with the U.S.

and L.A. political context and the jornaleros often served as her teachers. They taught her about the realities outside of the UCLA walls. Mia conveyed a clear instance where dialoguing became learning experience for program participants.

The program participants shared their lived experiences with the jornaleros because community-building involved the engagement of all members of the community. The program participants shared that through dialogue they also became a key source of knowledge. The dialogue between the Latina program participants and jornaleros about heteronormativity illustrated the relationship between lived experiences and knowledge production.

In their individual interviews, Marina, Valencia, and Kassie commented on an example where the topic of gender and sexism emerged. At a Proyecto site visit, the UCLA volunteers showed a video of catcalling in Mexico City, through the lens of a woman experiencing the incident. During this conversation, some of the jornaleros could not understand why catcalling offended the woman. The dialogue then shifted to the Latina program participants.

Marina underlined the need to be aware of the historical context of realities. She also saw it was their responsibility as Latinas to challenge the dominant heteronormative ideologies. As she stated:

I have grown in that specific time period there is a lot more acceptance than can be seen as different from heteronormative values. I try to understand where some of the jornaleros' comments come from and also be able to respond to them and express how they are being redefined during this time period.



Marina wanted to engage in a dialogue to understand the jornaleros' perspective, rather than viewing them as merely sexist. For her, dialogue encompassed a sharing her realities and experiences as an educational transformative tool.

The fact that three program participants spoke to the significance of the catcalling conversation stressed the analysis of community through dialogue. The program participants affirmed that dialogue should not be seen as a moment when people agree on an issue and/or share the same viewpoints. The Latina program participants shared their experiences and their negative view of catcalling. They mentioned that, after the jornaleros heard them share their life experiences and opinions, some of the jornaleros reexamined their position and outlook. Dialogue offered an opportunity to understand different views based on multiple perspectives. The jornaleros listened and reflected on what the Latina program participants noted as a negative situation and the jornaleros articulated a reexamination of their perception of catcalling based on what the program participants shared. Multiple perspectives called for a disruption of dualistic thought. Dualistic thought preserves itself on the construction of binaries between "either/or" and "us/them." Viewing the sexist conversation as us/them (read: us versus them) placed the jornaleros who had sexist thoughts as opposite to the Latina program participants. Yet, the sexism that occurred should not be romanticized. This study argued that viewing dialogue within an us (read: program participant) versus them (read: jornaleros) limited possibilities to learn through dialogue and hinder possibilities for change.

Dialogues also offered the program participants opportunities to reflect on their perceptions. For example, Daniela articulated how her most memorable dialogue

experience occurred when the jornaleros had a different perception of the dialogue. In the words of Daniela:

I remember one time we showed Calle 13's "Latinoamérica." We thought it was going to be amazing. We [UCLA volunteers] relate to it and everything like that. All I remember hearing from the jornaleros... "he [the vocalist] is a drug addict." They [jornaleros] had a negative reaction to the video. They had a negative perception of the singer... they [jornaleros] also started talking about the reason they came to America and their journeys. I think that dialogue helped us see the big age gap... I think that in every generation the younger people are more like let's fight and do something. We need to be heard. They [jornaleros] were like, "oh that is not the way it is." We [UCLA volunteers] had a completely different perception of what is going on. They [jornaleros] tended to be more conservative. I think that is what we took for granted. They [jornaleros] had different experiences. They came from Guatemala, Central America, Sur America and, well, right now Guatemala, El Salvador they are going through and had a violent period. I am not really sure of the truthfulness of the facts that I am saying right now. They came to the U.S. during a different time... this current pop music and the way the young people perceive the world is different than how they perceive the world. What do they think of as the necessary message that we need to give out to the world? I think that was the most interesting dialogue... I learned a lot from hearing their [jornaleros] reactions. I think that is the [dialogue] one that I remember the most.

Daniela believed the jornaleros were going to like the song because she and the other UCLA volunteers liked the song. However, the jornaleros had different perspective of the song and the artist. Daniela expressed that the jornaleros views on the song might be mediated by their lived experiences in their home countries. She admitted that she did not know the truthfulness of the facts she stated; yet, she noted the importance of individuals' perception to name their world Naming of the world entailed using lived experiences as knowledge references. Daniela's also articulated the importance of not centering

Fostering comunidad through dialogue centered an environment unified with the multiple complexities and dependent identities of the self and collective "we." Dialogue offered a space for the creation of collective knowledge. Collective knowledge through

dialogued entailed a reciprocal process where the program participants decided how they interpreted the shared lived experiences within their own life. The program participants shed light not only on the importance of dialogue as lived experiences but also as ways of knowing.

### **CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH RESPONSABILIDAD**

The future belongs to those who cultivate cultural sensitivities to differences and who use these abilities to forge a hybrid consciousness that transcends the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality and will carry us into *nosotras* position bridging the extremes of our cultural realities.

—Gloria Anzaldúa,  
*Interviews/Entrevistas*

The theme of community *responsabilidad* nourished a *compromiso* through *conocimiento*. *Conocimiento* entailed active shift within a frame of reference, centrality of action, and a space for agency (Anzaldúa, 2000). *Conocimiento* “connects the inner life of mind and spirit to the outer worlds of action. It promotes self-awareness and self-reflectivity in relation to others,” where *conocimiento* conveyed an “embodied knowing/knowledge and awareness” (Villenas, 2015, p. 76). *Conocimiento* must thus be understood as a relational and, importantly, as an embodied process within the self and mediated by one’s social context. The theme of community *responsabilidad* was at heart of understanding consciousness as agentic entity derived from home. Home represented community for the program participants. Community responsibility for change nourished a desire to bring about change for their community.

Consciousness should not be perceived as a homogeneous or comparable among individuals, but rather consciousness was situational and contextual and did not have a defined definition. The program participants acknowledged that social change was also mediated by how one situates the self within the larger societal context. Consciousness involved a process rooted in an individual and community. Analyzing the fundamental relationship between consciousness and *responsabilidad* made visible a sense of belonging to the community, interpreted, and sustained and understood by each individual.

Consciousness evolved from a negotiation of the multiple sense of self within community responsibility and community love, specifically with the Latinx community. Community responsibility focused on a desire to work with the community for the betterment of their community. Community love spoke to the emotional connection between the program participants and their future aspirations to synergize towards change. Change was contingent upon how program participants thought and acted in their everyday life. As conscious beings, the program participants noted the complexity of change. Many program participants shared that activism should be viewed as everyday actions, and sometimes even inactions within praxis. Consciousness through *responsabilidad* was rooted within praxis, given that praxis compromised conscious acts and reflections. Taken together, actions and reflections fostered a dialectical process where, as subjects, the program participants began to interpret their reading of the world. Within the realm of transformation, praxis became an apparatus and essential process providing the program participants an opportunity to become active subjects of their

history. Proyecto provided a space for the program participants to investigate their subjectivities. The program participants' subjectivities were multivocal, in constant tension and renegotiation through identities. The interpretation of reading the world transforms awareness of our realities towards a critical reading of them (Freire, 1970). The critical reading of the world permitted the opportunity to engage with and be part of transforming realities of their world.

The program participants' narratives brought to light that consciousness involved a process that was nourished by interacting with the jornaleros and examining their career/professional aspirations. The program participants shared a common belief that service was in fact an inherent political act, moving between Proyecto sites and the larger societal arena. Participating in the Proyecto de Jornaleros supported the relationship between consciousness and educación as both traditional education rooted in a desire towards social justice. Within Proyecto, the program participants used educación as a tool for foster change. Their interactions with the jornaleros nourished their educación within academia. The program participants saw their university degree as instrument to support their desire to bring about social change.

Daniela purposefully joined Proyecto because she was not satisfied with "just going to class and then going back to my dorm. I had more to give the world as a college student than just going to classes." Daniela emphasized the importance of remaining connected to her community and seeking to find home within her college environment. Finding home entailed an active action to engage within the Los Angeles community. She expressed that being in a classroom environment provided her valuable education;

however, she felt that she a connection to the Los Angeles community outside of Westwood. Her words voiced that, for her, education should be nourished by multiple spaces.

Daniela spoke to the need to examine why Proyecto de Jornaleros existed. The examination included what the causes and push and pull factors are that sustained immigration.

You have to be conscious about how American works and how interactions between the U.S. and other countries affect people. How that affects immigration and the movement of people. You have to be knowledgeable of what happens at an international scale...there are reasons why we are all here together. There is a reason why Proyecto exists. There is a reason why these men are here.

Daniela conveyed a critical aspect related to consciousness and the jornaleros' context. For her consciousness was rooted in understanding the historical and current context that support the power configurations of inequities. The power inequities manifested and supported immigration by the jornaleros to Los Angeles. Similar manifestations had caused Daniela's family to immigrate to the United States.

Ingrid noted that consciousness rested on the awareness of the tension inherent in one's identities, and understanding of the multiple selves. Consciousness was the ability to be aware of one's own privilege. As Ingrid expressed:

I think that part of it is dismantling systems of oppression and creating a more just world. I think that over arching theme in Proyecto and part of dissemination systems of oppression is recognizing that they exist, which is a big one for many people. How they exist and how they intersect. I think that most everyone can see oppression somewhere see it in history, recognize that it still exists, what forms it takes, and how oppression intersects so you be oppressed in one line but you might be the oppressor in another line...If you are part of the oppressor, what does it mean and then realizing that now it is time to move forward and dismantle. That means doing the work going to your family and in my case and people in my position of privilege and going back to my family and being like this shit is wrong

and this is why it is wrong. We have been part of this and are part of this... not just being like, “oh my gosh # all the things,” but in your daily life and recognizing whatever prejudices you might have and actively working to change them.

Ingrid examined and re/examined her location within the larger social arena. Additionally, Ingrid highlighted the interconnectedness between consciousness and activism. She defined activism as a daily practices, including reactions, actions, thoughts, and reflections.

Ingrid’s narrative spoke with Anzaldúa’s statement of the connection between conscious and knowledge. In the words of Anzaldúa (1987), “knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. ‘Knowing’ is painful because after it happens I can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before.” (p. 70). For Ingrid, activism did not connote a pursuit of a terminal utopia, but activism was a processes that could dismantle oppressive matrices of power and actively, continuously foster change. She was conscious of her whiteness and the power that came from its social location within society. As a future bilingual teacher, Ingrid conveyed a sense of responsibility used curriculum to support their empowerment of her students.

Perla’s narrative noted that interacting with the jornaleros fostered a sense of responsibility, which fueled her desire to pursue immigration law. She understood that immigration law might not be as lucrative as consumer law but the basis for her selection is on making a difference. She recalled her experiences and gained knowledge in Proyecto through humility. As she stated:

There is a lot to learn from them from the jornaleros. I know that it had a big impact to me...with the whole immigration debate that is going on I have a different perspective... my parents are not immigrants...not to say that all

jornaleros are immigrants or undocumented or anything like... when I think about immigrants there are those who view it just a political issues. I do not see it as a political issue I see it as a social and human issue... you are separating families.

Perla's statement brought to the forefront the reciprocal nature of action and reflection, as well as the significance that came from their experiences and interactions. Perla's statement highlighted that consciousness through *responsabilidad* is also linked to identity negotiation based upon lived experiences. Consciousness caused Perla to reflect on why she wanted to be a lawyer. Her lived experiences in Proyecto and her family nourished her reframing of the law profession. She now wanted to study immigration law because she views immigration as a human rights issue. From her interactions with the jornaleros, she heard their stories about how the lack of documentation status separates families, causes wage theft, and marginalized them. Even though the jornaleros had documentation, they experienced inequities and violations of basic human rights. Perla's narrative spoke to the power of consciousness and identity negotiation.

Similar to Perla, Elena articulated how participating in Proyecto and her consciousness nourishment impacted her career choice. Elena desired to bring about change through law or policy. For Elena, she wanted to not simply invest in temporary solutions/alleviations, but work towards permanent societal change. Elena also beautifully conveyed this message:

I mean of course I cared about being aware of things but was not really conscious about the issues...I always cared about helping other but I never knew how, and I never understood how, and I feel that Proyecto has actually given me a lot of answers in that sense. If take a labor and workplace study class, I might be able to learn about things that impact the jornalero, but when I go to site, I can actually see it. I can actually, like, understand the impact and how that affects them...so I don't know if I would go into labor law...or maybe immigration policy. I don't know yet. I really do want to make them [jornaleros] proud. I really want to do



something with my life in which I can gain enough knowledge. But also, like I guess, political power to do something bigger than what I am doing right now. I don't know yet, but I do want to do something that I know that they would say, 'oh she was with me those years.' You know like that. I don't know if that is too cheesy.

Elena's narrative illustrated her consciousness development process and what it meant for her. She expressed that her participation in Proyecto supported and motivated her to seek answers for the injustices the jornaleros' experienced. She articulated that in her academic classes she gained knowledge about the larger social context that caused the injustices. Elena also emphasized that as a result of attending Proyecto site and interacting with the jornaleros, she could more deeply see the injustices at play.

Participating in Proyecto nourished her consciousness through the emotional connection she felt with the jornaleros. For Elena, consciousness became situated within community responsibility, where community and responsibility synergize each other. She viewed her gained academic education as providing her the political power to bring about change. Her interactions with the jornaleros supported her power to bring about change through a career in law or policy. Elena stated "I do want to do something that I know that they would say, 'oh she was with me those years'." This illustrated that even though she is still determining her career, her gained consciousness as responsibility will guide her career choices.

Paloma also located her involvement in Proyecto as nourishing her sense of responsibility to foster change through the legal system. As she articulated:

I think my involvement in Proyecto played a major role in why I am pursuing a legal career... I always considered myself an insider. After joining Proyecto I gained newfound social awareness...I became more aware of the unequal system ... from all the things the jornaleros would tell us and it opened my eyes to all

these issues... I learned a lot outside of the effect of the inequalities when I was working with the jornaleros.

Similar to Paloma, Valencia also sought a career in the legal system. She joined Proyecto largely because the jornaleros reminded her of her family, but also because she heard false promises about creating a day labor center in her Northern California hometown. She expressed that politicians would say that they would help in creating a day labor center; however, day labor centers were never created. Her frustration with the lack of action and her interactions with the jornaleros supported her career aspirations.

Back home there are so many bad lawyers. I want to be one of the good ones. But then, being a lawyer does not take away all the bad things that are happening...I also want to get a masters in public policy, so I can lobby for something better...I just need to get all the titles I can get, so that people can take me seriously...seeing my parents struggle economically and struggle seeking acceptance in the U.S. shaped my understanding of life and what I want to do with my life.

Valencia articulated that a central factor in her professional aspirations drew from community membership, and membership nourished a desire to bring about social change for the community. When I further asked what she meant by “all the titles I can get,” Valencia conveyed that her identity as a Latina came with privileges and also oppression. Oppression related to the societal perception of Latinxs as uneducated and also as marginalized. Home for Valencia encompassed an agentic significance to use her degrees to translate to action and improvement for her community.

Through a career in journalism, Marina wanted to use her career as a means to educate. She wished to center the voices of individuals that have been marginalized by a dominant narrative and wants to use journalism as a platform to challenge inequities. Marina continued her involvement in Proyecto because she “found myself invested in

their stories.” Interacting with the jornaleros helped her see the power of using lived experiences as a means to share knowledge. She had already written two journalism pieces highlighting the life of the jornaleros. For Marina, as well as other program participants, jornaleros’ stories embodied education. Education rooted the jornaleros lived experiences they shared with the program participants. Sharing stories became a means to pass down knowledge.

Through a career in medicine, Dan wanted to make medicine more “equitable so that our system produces opportunities for everyone.” In an interview, Dan further expressed that dialoguing with the jornaleros caused him to situate his career in medicine within “justice in medicine not just in science.” Justice within the healthcare system nourished Dan’s desire to serve underserved medical communities and introduced him to new ways of questioning and reflecting on his future career, and how he situates the lived experiences of other communities and others.

The program participants’ consciousness mediated by the voice of the jornaleros’ experiences, grounded their knowledge and spoke to the sense of responsibility supported by community. Consciousness, ultimately, involved a commitment not only to the self, but also to others within a commitment to liberation. Consciousness entailed not only being aware of social problems, but also how, as individuals, you are contributed or not to the problems. Consciousness contextualized the multidimensional, interesting identities and the privileges and oppressions in identities. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that the participants perceived consciousness as something that must be continuously fostered, as well as questioned throughout daily inner tensions and every

day actions. The program participants' consciousness-raising resulted from their examination of the larger social political factors and power. The current program participants and alumni program alumni participants are, or will be entering professions in teaching, local government, medicine, law and policy.

In closing of this chapter, I provide a review of the findings. Below are the central components of this thesis:

(a) Educating through *comunalidad*: By diverging from dichotomous ways of thinking, educating through *comunalidad* opposed the separation of informal and formal educational spaces, as well as challenged the false cognate between English's education and Spanish's *educación*. Examining beyond a dichotomous way of thought also provided a means to center dissonance and tension between how the program participants understand education. *Educación* encompassed formalized education and ways of knowing and being that are passed down through a familiar and community based *educación*. *Educación* was understood as an epistemic journey that entails a reflexive collective consciousness.

(b) Languages de *educación*: The languages of communication, in this respect English and Spanish, impacted the experiences of the program participants. The program participants shared how Spanish held an emotional, familial, and communal connection for them. Trust in the Proyecto space was built on Spanish; thus decentering English as dominant. *Confianza* needed to emerge between the student volunteers and the *jornaleros* and being able to correct one another was important. Mutual vulnerability meant something to the configurations of language power because the program participants

could expect a similar vulnerability and openness from the jornaleros to learn in collaboration with them.

(c) Fostering comunidad through dialogue: Dialogue encompassed a mutual act of knowledge construction. Mutual act because the speaker [program participants and jornaleros] conveyed their understanding of the world through words; however, the listener [program participants and jornaleros] held the power to make sense of their word through their interpretation and acknowledgement of what is being conveyed. The act of learning and listening situated how others' perspectives can be interpreted within one's life experiences and understandings.

(d) Consciousness through responsabilidad: Consciousness through responsabilidad was rooted within praxis, given that praxis was comprised by conscious acts and reflections. Consciousness emphasized a collective endeavor through knowledge. Knowledge came from stories, and stories came from listening and experiencing. Within the realm of transformation, praxis became an apparatus and essential process that provided the program participants with an opportunity to become active subjects of their history. Proyecto provided a space for the program participants to investigate their subjectivities. The program participants saw their university degree as instrument to support their desire to bring about social change. The program participants shared a common belief that service was in fact an inherent political act, moving between Proyecto sites and the larger societal arena.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion and Reflections**

This study is fundamentally a story about a community who cared for each other. Although this study focused on the Perla, Ingrid, Dan, Estefanía, Paloma, Kassie, Paco, Daniela, Marina, Elena, Mia, and Valencia' narratives in Proyecto de Jornaleros, their narratives must be understood as in community and mediated by the jornaleros. What makes this study a story of community via educación is that the jornaleros supported the participants' education outside and, simultaneously, within UCLA. I selected the title of this thesis, "An Epistemic Compass Towards Home: Students' stories of Comunalidad, Educación, Dialogues, Responsabilidad within Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA," not only because it underscored the themes of this study, but also because words symbolized the significance of home.

While each program participants' experiences were inevitably different, given their unique lived experience, they expressed a desired to find home. Home became an epistemic and agentic metaphorical and physical space where they negotiated their identities within UCLA space and the Proyecto de Jornaleros. In this chapter I (a) revisit the central research questions, theoretical framework and findings; (b) articulate implications, further research; and (c) provide a personal reflection.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK REVISITED**

The central research question of this study is: How did program participants perceive and understand the dialogue exchanges shared between the jornaleros and themselves? Guiding questions include: (1) How did the program participants

define/understand education? (2) How were space(s) for community fostered and nourished? (3) Did participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros influence the aspirations and career choices of its program participants?

This study examined the narratives of the twelve program participants experiences in Proyecto de Jornaleros, added to the body of literature on college student participation in community service organizations and activism, investigated the program participants' epistemic perspectives gained from serving with the jornaleros, and investigated how the program participants understood education as a result of their sense of self within community.

Three bodies of literature framed this study: labor history, college students and community service, college students and activism. The labor history section highlighted how the U.S. has historically sought cheap labor from Mexico and other Latin American countries and supported a system of inclusion-through-exclusion. The literature on college students and community service stressed the importance of studying college students of color and their desire to engage in community service. College students of color and activism emphasized how identities nourished activism.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Theory (LatCrit), Freiran Theory (FT), and Nepantla examined the interplay of identities, educational, and societal realities. LatCrit expanded on CRT by focusing on issues imperative to the Latinx pan-ethnic community, such as national origin, language, immigration, documentation status, culture and other important factors for the diverse Latinx identity (Mahmid, 2015). FT illuminated possibilities to reimagine education. Nepantla encompassed a space where

individuals could examine their multiple inner and outer selves, and combat dominant social structures. Together CRT, LatCrit, FT, and nepantla provided working frameworks affirming the intersectional praxis and synergies to transform oppressive realities. The self emerged as the object of inquiry and thus growth and transformation that moved from an individual-based world to one mediated by reciprocal collective responsibility and accountability. CRT, LatCrit, and FT, nepantla challenged the simplistic, problematic dichotomies that have historically subjugated and oppressed people from possibility for transformation.

## LESSONS

As noted in this study and the body of literature of curriculum pedagogy, popular education rested on learning within community. The program participants *lived* critical pedagogy through the act of sharing and learning from lived experiences. By engaging with popular education, the program participants were introduced to an education that challenged and worked away from a Western conception of education. Western conception of education being understood as an individualistic, teacher-centered approached, with a Euro-centric curriculum. Critical pedagogy through popular education shifted the Western conception of education to one based on a community ways of knowing that reconceptualized the definition of education.

Participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros caused the program participants to question their perception of education. The program participants saw themselves and the jornaleros as knowledge holders and knowledge producers. By situating themselves and



the jornaleros as knowledge producers and knowledge holders, the program participants answered the education ontological concern: what counts as education and who has the legitimacy to define, to teach, and to question knowledge. Additionally, as a result of their sense of self within community, the program participants' narratives exemplified many nuances at the heart of their perceptions of education. For one, many volunteers already had an understanding that education was not limited to formal education, especially given that their parents and/or family members often did not receive more than a primary education.

Education within Proyecto encompassed ways of knowing that are rooted in their intuition mediated by lived experiences, values, morals, and perseverance. Proyecto provided a space for program participants to understand how education was situated within UCLA and Proyecto, as well as how the education they gained in Proyecto and UCLA nourished each other. The program participants exemplified the relationality between the knowledges gained through participating in Proyecto and its affect on their overall UCLA educational experience and lived experiences.

Co-constructing theories from lived experiences exemplified a continuous process of sharing in word and recognition of community knowledge. Sharing of word disrupted the dichotomy between college student [read: program participants] and service recipient [read: jornalero]. Jornaleros provided a window into community knowledge. Community knowledge shapes an individual's epistemic stance. Community knowledge spoke to specific collective context, memory, and history, which offered an apparatus to articulate agency within identities. Within community knowledge, individual identities became

mediated by their community identities. In other words, individual's identities became a product of their community identities and knowledge.

The outer expressed desire for social transformation was connected and nourished by the internal transformation of the self. The transformation of the self did not aim to create a dichotomy, but rather transformation acknowledged the multiple selves found in an individual's identities through *el conocimiento* or consciousness. Anzaldúa (2002) understands consciousness as:

The knowledge that exposes your fears can also remove them. Seeing through these cracks makes you uncomfortable because it reveals aspects of yourself (shadow-beasts) you don't want to own. Admitting your darker aspects allows you to break out of your self-imposed prison. But it will cost you. When you *wool el oscuro*, digging into it, sooner or later you pay the consequences—the pain of personal growth. (p. 553)

The connection between one's epistemology and identities rested on how we continuously recreate and remake our world. Additionally consciousness has inherent tension, dissonance, and ambiguity, strength, and power. Knowledge of oppression motivated the program participants to transform society and serve with their community.

The narratives of the program participants noted how Proyecto de Jornaleros became a significant factor to ground Critical Race Theory and through LatCrit. LatCrit also supported Latinidades because it contributed to a discourse that viewed difference as being interconnected by togetherness and connectedness. Togetherness and connectedness supported consciousness-raising rooted in changing the societal realities of the Latinx community. Consciousness came with a sense of urgency and a central component of Proyecto de Jornaleros at UCLA; however, the definition and understanding of consciousness was framed and depended on the differing and common

politics, life experiences, and identities of the members. Consciousness also rested on the critical examination of power dynamics and configurations, in terms of privilege.

I used CRT in education outlined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) to guided the examination of racialized lived experiences, intersected with sexuality, age, class, power, and gender identity markers. The five critical elements at the foundation of critical race methodology entailed:

1. The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination,
2. Challenge to dominant ideology,
3. The commitment to social justice,
4. The centrality of experiential knowledge,
5. The transdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, pp. 25-27).

CRT challenges dominant ideology. Ideologies maintain and create a means of thought that carves and disseminates categorical “order and meaning to the social and political world in which we live” (Darder, Baltodano, Torres, 2003, p. 13). Words and terminology speak to a connection between discourse and ideology, and give meaning and reference to the understanding of what entails service.

At the center of Proyecto de Jornaleros was a commitment for community service. This study highlighted the importance of examining relationship between the college students and how they express their relationship to the community they are serving. An important subtheme emerged pertaining to the college students’ terminology used to describe community service, such as service *to help*, service *for*, and/or service *with* the community. The community service found in Proyecto de Jornaleros underscored the educational and community space that develops when college students performing service *within* their community and engaged in a reciprocal relationship. A reciprocal

relationships was vital for the program participants be *in* community with the jornaleros and be *in* unity that disrupted dominant notions of community service.

The program participants in this study disrupted the dominant view of service as the college students providing the service to a community. For example, Kassie stated, “I don't think service should be defined as I am serving the jornaleros, they are also doing service because we are helping each other ... community is this unity to help... I see the jornaleros as part of my community.” Her words highlighted the reciprocity found within service; as she stated, “we are helping each other.” This study underscored that the college students’ perception of service impacted their understanding of the goal and mission of Proyecto de Jornaleros as an organization. The goal and Proyecto’s mission was not to preform one-time service to help a community, rather to engage in the community for a long-term impact even after they no longer physically preform the service within their community.

All of the program participants with Latinx background shared that they participated in Proyecto because they viewed the jornaleros as members of their community. For the program participants, attending UCLA did not mean they lost a connection to their Latinx communities. The program participants disrupted a dominant literature that creates a dichotomy between service participants and service recipients. Service entailed a reciprocal relationship where the program participants and the jornaleros supported each other and nurtured the Proyecto educational space. A collaborative process defined the Proyecto educational space. Within the Proyecto

educational space, the program participants and the jornaleros continuously move from and between a role of learning and teaching within community.

This study extended the scholarly conversation on service-learning. The field of service-learning has been growing in recent years. Service-learning, however, does not have a clear definition nor pedagogy. Often service-learning incorporates a university classroom instruction with a community service-learning component (Rhodes, 1997; Myers-Lipton, 2002; Camacho, 2004). Through service-learning college students engage in curriculum that informs their service or vice versa. Should service-learning be apolitical or political? This question is at centered of current service learning discourse, especially within service-learning learning outcomes. Both apolitical and political service-learning frameworks want college students to develop a sense of cultural awareness, leadership skills, and critical thinking skills. However, this study's findings support a need for service-learning to be political. Service-learning should support college students to view themselves as agents of change.

Service-learning needs to have a critical and racialized lens that examines the sociopolitical power configuration found in society. This study's findings supported the usage of critical race theory framework as an essential intersectional, theoretical tool that offers service-learning the possibilities center race. This study underscored that the racial background of the program participants played a significant role for their understanding of their service. A critical race theory lens provides the study with framework to examine the dismantle systems of inequalities. My understand of critical service-learning and its

possibilities to foster agents of change builds from Marullo's (1999) view of service-learning as:

If implemented properly, [service-learning] should be critical of the status quo and should ultimately challenge unjust structures and oppressive institutional operations. It is the analytical component of service learning that gives it revolutionary potential, because it is precisely this component that will reveal the systemic, social nature of inequality, injustice, and oppression. Service-learning is also revolutionary to the extent that it creates a partnership for change among community and university actors. (p. 22)

By using a critical race theory lens in service-learning, the racial background of the college students and, importantly, of the community they serve are centered. Centering race in service-learning must also not abide by colorblind discourse, victorious narratives, or tensionless lens. As this study highlighted, race should not be understood as the just the racial background of individuals, rather their racial background has materiality and real implications.

#### **DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study focused on the experiences of the program participants. For future research, I suggest interviewing the jornaleros. The interviews would need to be conducted in Spanish and/or English. Before the interview the researcher must build a relationship with the jornaleros. Building relationships will require the researcher to view the jornaleros as individuals rather than mere interviewees/research participants. Interviewing the jornaleros will provide the opportunity to examine their perception of Proyecto de Jornaleros and the program participants. Some critical questions to ask the jornaleros are: How do you understand your identity? How do you understand education?

How do you feel about participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros? What do you see as the goal of Proyecto de Jornaleros? Why do you participate in Proyecto? Do you find the English curriculum impactful? Do you find the código component of site impactful? Do the languages of communication [Spanish and English] impact your experience? What are your perceptions of the UCLA students?

This study focused on the narratives of six current program participants and six alumni program participants. I suggest further longitudinal research. Interviewing both groups of the program participants in five years will provide the opportunity to further examine the career/professional aspirations of the participants. Additionally, given that all the participants have graduated in five years and most likely do not participate in Proyecto de Jornaleros, conducting a second interview could be compared to their first interview and how they understand their experiences in the organization.

### **Education as Popular Education**

The implications of this study highlight the possibilities of using popular education as an effective pedagogical tool that moves away from the banking system of education. In the current education environment where high-stakes testing has taken over, the classroom is further implementing a banking methodology approach. Education should not only be engaged through theoretical, programmatic, or technical realms, but also incorporate the knowledge found within the student's communities, and also facilitate an environment where teachers can be provided with the necessary tools to foster critically engaged citizens. Education should encompass moral and political

pedagogies and facilitate consciousness. Consciousness through social justice is inevitably a journey towards collective empowerment for social change, where education serves as a tool to support the empowerment of students, of educators, and of communities.

This study also highlighted the importance of examining the complexities embedded within educación. Viewing education as educación calls for a shift from a traditional, Western paradigm of education. Educación includes the academic preparation and also incorporates and recognizes community forms respect and of knowledge. For students of color, especially, viewing education as educación helps to unify their community knowledge(s) and their knowledge within the institution of education. The institution of education often serves to marginalize students of color. The institution disempowers students of color whose identities and community knowledges are viewed as outside of the norm.

### **Emergent Bilinguals**

This study underscored how languages are integral to identity negotiation. This study also sought to highlight the importance of supporting emergent bilingual who are able to communicate with diverse communicates. All of the program participants of Latinx background were native Spanish speakers. They were able to communicate in Spanish with members of their community [read: jornaleros] because they had a working understanding of Spanish. While attending UCLA, many program participants noted that dialoguing in Spanish with the jornaleros was one of the few, or if not the only, spaces



where they used Spanish. Spanish nourished a powerful, nostalgic community connection they missed. For the program participants whose native language was not Spanish, learning Spanish provided a gateway to learn from the lives of the jornaleros.

Yet, the English-only versus bilingual education debate often hides the real issue being contested: the politics of language. In doing so, the manipulation of the language of instruction and curriculum denies emergent bilinguals their native language. There have been a variety of labels to describe students who are not proficient in English, including English learner (EL) and emergent bilingual to name a few. Each categorical label has its own connotations and limitations affiliated with it. EL underscores the issues of inequity in educating students who have yet reached proficiency in English, while the term emergent bilinguals centers bilingualism and does not suggest a limitation in comparison to those who speak English (García, 2009; Hopkin, 2011). Bilingualism is often not viewed as the possibility to speak two languages; rather bilingualism often creates an *Othering* in the normalized curriculum and instruction that negatively differentiates between dominant English and minority language speakers. Within the current English-only education system, often learning English constitutes a time period characterized by being monolingual in one language to becoming monolingual in another. In other words, in our current English-only education curriculum, instruction supports an environment where emergent bilinguals inevitably become English speakers.

When provided the high quality resources and content instruction in their primary language, emergent bilinguals continue to develop their bilingualism. Emergent bilinguals need to be provided with high quality and research supported programs that

strive to not only teach them English, but also foster a bilingual and bicultural identity. We need to combine the advocacy of the pedagogical and societal benefit of being bilingual and bicultural. Given that in many of the arguments the identities of the students are not examined. As a former EL student who benefited from bilingual education pre-California's Proposition 227, I witnessed the power of bilingual education on my personal identity and my ability to communicate with my predominantly Spanish-speaking family. I have also witnessed the impact of lack of bilingual education on my younger siblings who were not provided with the opportunity to nourish their native language, and thus negatively impacted their bilingual and bicultural identities.

### **Community Service**

Future studies on college students of color and community service must consider the unique participation of students of color. This study has implications for both educators and student leaders who are involved in organizing community service experiences in higher education. This study suggests five recommendations for further inquiry into college students and community service.

This study recommends that student leaders in community service. The community service organizations must be guided by the needs of the community not the reverse. Student leaders should continuously reflect on the mission of the organization and their fulfillment of their mission. Engaging in community service also requires the students leaders to view spaces of knowledge production beyond their university walls. As this study has shown, educational space and education moments are not limited to

formalized education. However, I do not seek to romanticize the educational space within community service. Student leader within community service organizations need to develop and continuously nourish a communal environment. In order to do critical community service, you need to first build community. Building community requires that the student leaders are aware of the power configurations within serving. Power configuration found their position as a member of the academia and as a leader in their organization.

Community service is most often seen as college students, whether of color or not, performing service with communities of color who are seen as "underprivileged," "poor economically and socially," and "filled with societal nuisance." Thus, placing the college students within a benevolent position of power. However, in order to truly perform service, college students, especially white student, must deconstruct their "white savior" mentality. During my undergraduate studies, I witnessed too often college students claiming their desire to "help" and change communities only after performing "service" one time and/or "consciously" using a colorblind lens. In order to challenge the deficit perspective, building for the findings of this study, I recommend that students understand their understanding of social justice as it relates to community services. Social justice should be seen as a goal and a process, as such it has no clear, defined end.

One possible direction for further research centers on the need for a critical and racialized lens applied to community service with the aim of troubling the silence of the voices of students of color and the predominant voice of white college students. Using a critical and racialized lens also disrupts the victorious narrative that situates community

service within a “white savior” ideology, toward usually communities in “need.” White savior ideology placed the college students as “saving” the communities they serve and often view service through an apolitical lens. This study recommends examining how different racial/ethnic populations define service.

Supported by the findings of this research, I recommend viewing community service through development of a social justice lens. Viewing community service through a social justice lens aids in the examination of social justice and consciousness, as well as underscores the research tension in whether service has political ends. Moreover, studying consciousness-raising within community service students will provide an opportunity to understand the long-term impact of such service. Some potential research questions are: How and when does community service serve as a venue for consciousness-raising and social justice? What factors promote a social justice-orientation in service? Does participating in service impact how college students define consciousness and social justice?

Research on community service overly focused on hours of participation as the marker for engagement; yet, simply noting hours of participation does not analyze why students engage in service. A second suggestion for future research examines motivation factors for engaging in community service, as well as if motivation factors for service impact how students understand their service. Some potential research questions to ask college students of color who engage in service with their community: How do you define service? What factors motivated you to engage in service? Why do you continue to give service? How does service impact your life?

This study also recommends examining the mutual and reciprocal relationship between college students and the communities they serve with. Research should unpack the dominant, individual-centered discourse of service, in order to analyze the communal and reciprocal impact of community service and how engaging in service provides a learning environment for students.

In order to present a more encompassing argument of students overall actions toward creating social change and their motivations for engagement in community service, this study proposed examining the interplay of community service and advocacy. Literature could focus on both community service and activism for college students of color as a space to investigate the significance of serving one's communities, understanding of service within the realm of activism and vice versa, as well as the synergic effect between community service and activism for college students of color.

### **Jornaleros**

The U.S. has historically supported a dominant narrative that defines jornaleros by the product of their manual labor; however, the finding of this research exemplified the jornaleros as highly educated individuals and critical members of their community. The jornaleros are educated individuals who are knowledge producers. Sharing lived experiences provides a context to understand and critique society. The program participants' noted how interacting with the jornaleros provided the community with ways of knowing rooted in lived experiences.

Jornaleros should be treated with respect and honored as full members of society. Comprehensive immigration reform provides a step towards toward “legalization” and incorporation into U.S. society. Through my personal interactions with the jornaleros, they shared that immigration reform alone cannot change the social, political, and economic conditions that marginalize the jornalero population. Arguing for comprehensive immigration reform should not be perceived as a debatable topic. Comprehensive immigration reform is a human rights issue.

Jornaleros are important members of our communities and societies. However, we, as a society, continue to place them at the margins.

## **REFLECTION**

As I conducted this study, I realized that the research process began when I was an undergraduate at UCLA. Throughout this hectic process of writing, there were many instances where I felt insecure and overwhelmed. However, I remembered my fond memories of the jornaleros. I remembered sharing multiple Subway sandwiches, attending the L.A. Zoo, engaging in incredible political discussions that caused me to reflect and question my political science degree, being given a handmade necklace, and receiving a “thank you” card during my last site visit. Through the act of remembering each of those experiences, I relived them. Those limitless memories motivated me to complete this thesis.

Proyecto de Jornaleros supported and encouraged me to critique, to challenge, to welcome tension, and, importantly, to be in community with others. Respectfully,

through participating in Proyecto, I gained the skills to be a researcher. My educación unified my higher education studies at the University of Texas at Austin and UCLA with my Proyecto community in Los Angeles, CA.

I am honored to write my M.A. thesis on Proyecto de Jornaleros, and acknowledge that this study is not a finished project. My experiences in Proyecto go beyond written word and enter a terrain of embodied experiences that offered a space to relive memories with Proyecto de Jornaleros and continue to learn from the jornaleros and Proyecto participants. Sinceramente, gracias.

## Appendix A: Images

**Image 1, Proyecto de Jornaleros' Logo**



(Source: Proyecto's mission statement)

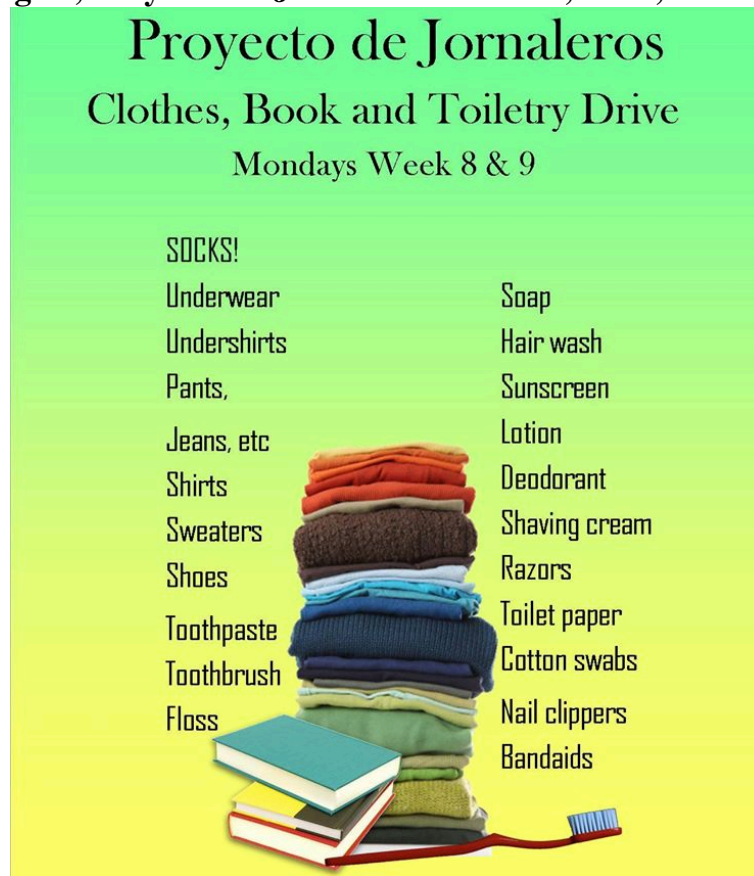
**Image 2, Proyecto de Jornaleros' flyer**



(Source: Proyecto de Jornaleros achieve)



**Image 3, Proyecto de Jornaleros' Clothes, book, and toiletry drive**



(Source: Proyecto de Jornaleros achieve)

Código



(Source: Proyecto de Jornaleros achieve)

Image 5, Proyecto de Jornaleros' código example  
Código



Fig. a



Fig. b



**Image 6, Proyecto de Jornaleros' curriculum example**

abastecimiento	supply
acero de refuerzo	reinforcing steel
alambrado	wiring
asfalto	asphalt
toma de corriente	outlet
clavos	nails
enchufe	electrical plug
línea eléctrica	Powerline
metro	meter (39.37 inches)
químico	chemical

The drill needs to be plugged into the \_\_\_\_\_.

El taladro tiene que estar conectado en la \_\_\_\_\_ para funcionar.

We do not have electricity because the \_\_\_\_\_ is damage.

No tenemos electricidad por que la \_\_\_\_\_ está dañada.

The road feels smoother because new \_\_\_\_\_ was put in place.

El camino está más blando porque \_\_\_\_\_ nuevo fue colocado.

I use the hammer to put the \_\_\_\_\_ through the piece of wood.

Use el martillo para martillar los \_\_\_\_\_ en pedazo de madera.

Be careful when working with \_\_\_\_\_ because they might be dangerous.

Ser cuidadoso cuando estés trabajando con \_\_\_\_\_ porque poden ser peligrosos.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is a three-prong plug.

El \_\_\_\_\_ es de tres clavijas.

(Source: Proyecto de Jornaleros achieve)

### Image 7, Proyecto de Jornaleros' curriculum example

#### **Saludos en Ingles**

Hello: Hola. (jelou)  
Good morning: Buenos días. (gud morning)  
Good afternoon: Buenas tardes. (gud afternun)  
Good evening: Buenas noches. (gud ivning)  
Goodbye: Adiós. (gudbai )  
See you soon: Hasta pronto. (sii iú sun)  
See you tomorrow: Hasta mañana. (sii iú tumorrou)

#### **Frases de cortesía del idioma inglés**

Thank you: Gracias. (tenkiú)  
You are welcome: De nada. (iú ar welcom)  
Nice to meet you / Pleased to meet you: Encantado de conocerle. (nais tu mit iú)  
I'm sorry: Lo siento. (aim sorri)  
Excuse me: Disculpe. (exkius mi)  
Welcome: Bienvenido. (welcom)

#### **Aprender a presentarse en inglés**

How are you?: ¿Cómo está usted? (jau ar iú?)  
Fine / Very well, thanks, and you?: Bien / Muy bien, gracias, ¿y usted? (fain / veri wel, tenks, an iú?)  
What is your name?: ¿Cómo se llama? (wot is ior neim?)  
My name is...: Mi nombre es... (mai neim is...)  
How old are you?: ¿Qué edad tiene? (jau old ar iú?)

#### **Frases útiles para entablar una conversación**

I don't understand: No entiendo. (ai dont anderstan)  
I don't speak english: No hablo inglés. (ai dont spik english)  
I speak a little bit of english: Hablo poco Ingles. (ai spik a lirol bit af english)  
Do you speak spanish?: ¿Habla usted español? (du iú spik spanish?)  
Could you repeat that, please?: ¿Puede repetir, por favor? (cud iú ripit, plis)  
Can you speak more slowly, please?: ¿Puede hablar más despacio, por favor? (can iú spik slouli, plis?)

#### **Preguntas de entrevista:**

Tell me about yourself: Hábleme sobre usted (teul mi abaut iurself)  
What work can you do: ¿Qué clase de trabajo hace? (wat ken iu du)  
How much is the salary?: ¿Cuánto es el salario? (jau mach is da salari)

(Source: Proyecto de Jornaleros achieve)

## **Appendix B: Guiding interview questions**

### **Background:**

- What did you hope to gain from your university experience?
- Why did Proyecto de Jornaleros become a part of your university experience?
- Given academic work, for what reason(s) do you continue to be involved in Proyecto de Jornaleros? What do you hope to gain with your involvement?
- What do you believe is the overall guiding principles of Proyecto de Jornaleros?
- How do you define popular education?

### **Identity:**

- Can you tell me how you define and understand your identity?
- Has participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros impacted your identity and/or how you define your identity? If so, can you provide an example(s)?
- What was your perception of the day laborers? How do you believe they perceived you or your role as the college student?
- What did you believe was your role as a volunteer as a member?

### **Interaction:**

- How was it like participating with other UCLA students how was that like in Proyecto?
- Do you find dialogue section of site exchanges between yourself and the day laborers impactful? If so, can your provide an example that stood out to you?
- Do you find English language component of site impactful? If so, can your provide an example that stood out to you?
- Did the language of communication impact your experience?
- Why do you think day laborers continue to be involved in the organization?
- Can you tell me a time when interacting with the day laborers impact you?

### **Communication:**

- What does *consejos* mean to you? Did the day laborers provide you with *consejos*? Did those *consejos* affect you? If so, can you tell me about an experience?
- How did you approach the advice or views of the day laborer and/or fit them with your lived experience?
- Can you provide an example of one or more topic that you discussed with the day laborers that impacted you?

### **Consciousness-raising:**

- How do you define consciousness, social justice, and education? How does an individual develop/nourish consciousness, social justice, and education?

- Has interacting with the day laborers impacted your understanding of consciousness, social justice, and education? (Emphasize on how defined education before participation in Proyecto)
- How did feel on your last site, the last day you went to site?
- So if you could go back to sure for example tomorrow or something or is there anything that you like to tell the jornaleros? Or any particular jornalero that you would like to talk to don't have to give names?
- Is there anything that you wished you had done differently during your time with Proyecto de Jornaleros specifically with the day laborers?

**Current Students:**

- What are your goals for Proyecto this upcoming school year?

**Graduation:**

- Do you incorporate your experience in Proyecto de Jornaleros in your everyday life and/or work?
- Tell me about your future academic or career goals?
- Is there anything else about participating in Proyecto de Jornaleros that you would like to share?

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