

FAMILIES AND MIGRATION

Examining the Causes, Processes, and
Consequences of Migration

Edited by Josip Obradović
and Sampson Lee Blair

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH

VOLUME 32

FAMILIES AND MIGRATION

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN FAMILY RESEARCH

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN
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FAMILIES AND MIGRATION: EXAMINING THE CAUSES, PROCESSES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Josip Obradović was born and completed primary and secondary school in Zagreb, Croatia. He graduated in Psychology from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb. He received his doctorate in Sociology from the same faculty. Not long after graduation, he was employed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Philosophy. He soon received a scholarship from the Ford Foundation and spent six months at Michigan University, Ann Arbor, and six months at the University of California, Berkeley. On his return, he was promoted to Associate Professor. For years, he taught a number of subjects in Sociology and Social Psychology and became a tenured Full Professor. In addition to the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, he taught as a visiting professor at several universities in the United States and Canada. Among others, at New York University and the University of Georgia, USA, the University of Calgary, Canada, and a Fulbright Professor at Colorado College Colorado, USA. He taught a total of over 20 undergraduate and graduate courses in Croatian or English. He held over 30 invited lectures outside Croatia at universities in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. He was a scholar at Pittsburgh University, USA, Birninhgen University, and Warwick University, Great Britain. In addition to domestic professional associations, he was or still is a member of some professional associations such as the American Psychological Association, American Sociological Association, and National Council Family Relations of America. For years, the subject of his interest was Organizational Psychology and Sociology, but 25 years ago, he changed his professional interest. Since then, his professional interest has been marriage and family because in his opinion, marriage and the family are experiencing the biggest changes with significant social consequences today. He published several books and about a hundred scientific theoretical and research papers in Croatian and English language.

Sampson Lee Blair is a Family Sociologist and Demographer at The State University of New York (Buffalo). He received his BS and MS degrees from Virginia Tech and his PhD from Penn State. Much of his research focuses upon parent–child relationships, with particular emphasis on child and adolescent development. He received the *Fulbright Scholar Award* from the US Department of State, wherein he conducted research on parental involvement and children's educational attainment in the Philippines. He has examined a wide variety of relationship dynamics within families. He has published 27 books, in addition to numerous journal articles and book chapters, and has presented over 150 research papers at conferences in the United States and abroad and has served as keynote speaker on numerous occasions. His recent research has focused upon marriage and fertility patterns in China. In 2022, he published *Mate Selection in China*:

Causes and Consequences in the Search for a Spouse (with Timothy J. Madigan and Fang Fang). He has served as Chair of the Children and Youth research section of the American Sociological Association, as Senior Editor of *Sociological Inquiry*, Guest Editor of *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*, and on the editorial boards of *Asian Women, Family Sciences, Journal of Applied Youth Studies, Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, Journal of Family Issues, Marriage and Family Review, Social Justice Research, Sociological Inquiry, International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, and *Sociological Viewpoints*. He also serves on the international advisory board of *Tambara*, at Ateneo de Davao University, in the Philippines. In 2023, he was re-elected as Vice-President (North America) of the Research Committee on Youth (RC34), in the International Sociological Association. Since 2011, he has served as the Editor of *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*. He is a recipient of the *SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching*. Abroad, he has served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Santo Tomas (Manila) and Xavier University (Ateneo de Cagayan), in the Philippines. In China, he has been a Visiting Professor at East China Normal University (华东师范大学), Qingdao University (青岛大学), Shanghai International Studies University (上海外国语大学), and Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (上海财经大学). In 2020, he was initiated into the *NCFR Legacy Circle* of the National Council on Family Relations. In 2021, he received the *Distinguished Career Service Award* from the American Sociological Association's research section on Children and Youth.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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Alina Bărbuță holds a PhD in Sociology and has worked as a Research Assistant on several international research projects, conducted in partnership with Babeș-Bolyai University and the Centre for the Study of Transnational Families (CASTLE). Her doctoral thesis is titled “The Digital Capital Index in the Context of the Transition to the Digitalization of the Social Work System.” She is an Associate Lecturer at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Department of Social Work. Her research interests center on children’s rights, the digital divide among children and youth, digital capital, human behavior and emerging technologies, as well as the participation and social inclusion of young people. Additionally, her research interests focus on the transnational protection of refugees, with a particular emphasis on children and young people.

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Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez is an Assistant Professor in Community Health at the Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University. She earned her PhD in Human Development from Florida State University in 2018, and in 2021, she completed a competitive postdoctoral fellowship in Human Development and Family Science at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has served as a principal and coinvestigator on privately and state-funded research grants and is a Consulting Editor of *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, and *Journal of Latinx Psychology*. She is a pioneer in the study of unaccompanied migrant farmworker youth's health and development using qualitative and mixed-methodologies. Her work aims to understand the mental health and developmental implications of work and life-related stressors and migration decisions among Latin American migrant youth in US agriculture. Her research was recognized twice for excellence by the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and the SRCD Latinx Caucus who each awarded their 2019 Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award. In 2023, she was awarded the National Latinx Psychological Association's Distinguished Professional Early Career Award, and in 2024, she was awarded the Health Science Innovative Mentor Award from the Council on Undergraduate Research.

Renée DePalma received her PhD in 2003 from the University of Delaware (USA). She has taught at the University of A Coruña (Spain) since 2010, where she coordinates the ECIGAL research group dedicated to global citizenship education. She is a founding member of the Galician Queer Studies Network and serves on the Council for Galician Culture. She is currently working on the British Academy/Leverhulme-funded project titled *Monolingual Schools in Multilingual Societies: Rethinking Language and Education in Cape Verde* (2023–2025) and the Spanish Education Ministry-funded project “GLOBOJOVEN” that collaborates with youth in researching their own experiences with Critical Global Citizenship (2024–2027). Publications relating to migration and social justice include *Galician Migrations: A Case Study of Emerging Superdiversity* (Springer, 2017, with Antía Pérez Caramés) and co-authored articles that include “Training Third Sector Workers to Communicate Effectively Through Interpreters: The MELINCO Project Training Course” in *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* (2024), “Doing Family: Nicaraguan Transnational Families' Narratives on Motherhood” in *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* (2021), “Intercultural Priorities Among Immigrant Organizations in Galicia (Spain): Beyond the Offensive and Defensive Binary” in the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (2020), and “What Is Integration? A Comparative View from Immigrants and Municipal Policy” in *International Migration* (2020).

Belén Fernández-Suárez is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of A Coruña, where she is a member of the research group on international migration ESOMI (www.esomi.es). She is a member of the Inter-University Research Centre on Atlantic Cultural Landscapes (CISPAC) and of the International Migration

Research Network IMISCOE. At the end of 2015, she defended her PhD at the University of A Coruña on the analysis of the institutionalization of immigrant integration policies at the regional level in Spain. She obtained an excellent qualification with a cum laude mention and was awarded the Extraordinary Prize for the Best Doctoral Thesis by the University of A Coruña. Her research focuses on migration policies, especially immigrant integration policies, and the study of intra-European migration, especially recent Spanish emigration to Europe. She is currently the principal investigator of the project “Digitalisation of Work and Mobilities in Europe: Return Migration and Digital Nomadism” (REMOTWORK, 2024–2027). Her most recent publications include the co-edited book with Carlos Diz: *No nos vamos nos echan. Las luchas contra la precariedad de la nueva diáspora española* (2024, Tirant). She is also the Editor (with Renée DePalma and Antía Pérez Caramés) of the monograph *Moving as a European Amidst Multiple Crises: Patterns of Belonging and Exclusion*, to be published in the *Journal of International Migration and Integration* in 2025. Her hobbies are photography and traveling. In her daily life, she enjoys walking her adopted dog Xan around the city.

Henry Gonzalez is Associate Professor of Family Studies and Human Development in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at California State University, Sacramento. He teaches courses on parenting, child development, and family stress management. His body of research focuses on identifying strategies to strengthen families, children’s positive development, and parenting, with a special emphasis on immigrant and Latino children and families. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Administration for Children and Families. He received his PhD in Family Studies and Human Development (minor in Public Health) from The University of Arizona.

Iulia-Elena Hossu is a Researcher at the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities and member of CASTLE – Centre for the Study of Transnational Families. She obtained her PhD in Anthropology at the “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, with a thesis on kindred relations. In the past years, she has worked in several projects concerning migration, transnational families, and Roma community. She was a researcher within the project EU Horizon 2020 research project “Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development” – RELOCAL as a member of the DESIRE (Romania) research team and the project “CASTLE – Children Left Behind By Labour Migration” co-financed by the European Union (ICMPD/2021/MPF-357-004). She was a postdoctoral researcher in the national project *Confronting Difference Through the Practices of Transnational Families* at the Center for Population Studies at the “Babeş-Bolyai” University. She has a special focus on visual anthropology, being involved in a number of documentary film productions. She is Co-director of *Valley of Sighs* (2013, Mihai Andrei Leaha, Andrei Crişan, and Iulia Hossu) a documentary about Roma population deportation in Transnistria during World

War II. Her last articles (in English) are : Hossu, I. E., Telegdi-Csetri, A., Birou, M., Hărăguș, M., & Angi, D. (2023). “Not like everyone else”? Transnational families’ relationship in their home society – between stigma and dialogue. *Ukrainian Society*, 81(1), 32–51. <https://doi.org/10.15407/socium2023.01.054> and Vincze, E., Bădiță, C. E., & Hossu, I.-E. Chapter 5: Stigmatization and cultural foundations of spatial injustice. In M. Fritsch, P. Kahila, S. Németh, & J. W. Scott (Eds.), *Spatial justice and cohesion. The role of place-based action in community development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003229681>

Calvin Kunaka is a Zimbabwean scholar with diverse research interests that span various sociological domains. As a Lecturer in the Department of Social and Community Development at the University of Zimbabwe, he is also pursuing a PhD in Sociology from the same institution. His research has delved into the intricate dynamics of migration, both locally and internationally. He has explored the challenges and opportunities that migration presents, shedding light on the complex socio-economic factors that drive people to seek better prospects elsewhere. Additionally, his work has touched upon the realm of urban livelihoods, examining the intricate web of strategies employed by city dwellers to sustain themselves amid the ever-changing urban landscape. Beyond migration and urban studies, he has also ventured into the realms of sports and migration and how it intersects with social inequalities, as well as the deeply concerning matter of gender-based violence.

Sahitya Maiya is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of New Hampshire. Her research program focuses on the connections between family socialization, risk-resilience, and socioemotional and behavioral well-being during adolescence and emerging adulthood in diverse contexts. One line of research highlights how family members such as parents and siblings socialize prosocial behaviors among culturally diverse adolescents and emerging adults. A second line of research underscores the effects of risk (e.g., stress) and resilience (e.g., coping) factors on substance use, school bonding, and prosocial behaviors in adolescents and emerging adults from diverse backgrounds. Through this research, she is committed to understanding ways to support healthy development and well-being in adolescents and emerging adults. She also teaches courses pertaining to adolescent development, parenting, research methods, and theoretical perspectives of human development and family studies.

Lucille Lok Sun Ngan is an Associate Professor and Associate Head at the Department of Social Science at the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. Her research interest lies in the following areas: migration and transnationalism, ethnic identities, family dynamics, gender, aging, and the Chinese diaspora. She has examined critical issues related to the migration trajectories of Hong Kong transnational families, social tensions among diverse migrant groups, fatherhood experiences among second-generation returnees, challenges faced by cross-border

students, social inequalities in East Asia, and multi-generational ethnicity among Australian-born Chinese. Her current research focuses on transnational aging processes of older adults from Hong Kong. Her publications can be found in journals such as *Critical Asian Studies*, *Asian Studies Review*, *Global Networks*, *International Migration Review*, *The China Review*, and *Children and Youth Services Review*, among others.

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Tracy Tang is a Research Technician with the Migrant Youth Health and Wellbeing Lab at the Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University. She recently graduated from Arizona State University in May 2023 with a bachelor's in Biological Sciences with a concentration in neurobiology, physiology, and behavior. She has been a research assistant since her junior year in college and plans to continue her work as she prepares to apply to graduate schools.

Verónica Verdía Varela has a degree in Sociology and a PhD in Social Science from the University of A Coruña, where she is a member of the research group ECIGAL (Global Citizenship Education – <https://www.ecigal.gal/en>). Her doctoral thesis, defended in 2022, addresses integration of migrant communities in Galicia from the perspectives of the principal actors involved: population of foreign origin, migrant associations, nongovernmental organizations in the field of migration, local administration, and school. The study, which adopted a qualitative methodological approach, focused on the experiences of people of immigrant origin and paid special attention to linguistic and cultural maintenance and intercultural relations. Its main objective was to explore strategies of social innovation that can be developed through the synergy between social institutions and communities of immigrant origin, in order to design policies and diversity management programs that actively promote positive intercultural relations and social cohesion. The thesis obtained the qualification of excellent, was awarded a Cum Laude distinction, and received the University of A Coruña's Extraordinary Doctoral Thesis Award. Her professional experience has been focused on two fields: third sector and social research based at the University of A Coruña. Regarding her third-sector work, she has worked in a variety of nonprofit organizations specialized in the field of migration, education for global citizenship, mental health, and social and labor inclusion of people in vulnerable situations. In the academic field, she has participated in research projects investigating the integration of migrant communities in Galicia, children with disabilities in Nueva Segovia (Nicaragua), and Education for Global Citizenship in Galicia and the rest of Spain.

FOREWORD

International migration has never been as intense as it is today. Using World Migration data as an evidence report for the year 2024 of the organization IOM UN Migration, in 2020, 281 million individuals or approximately 3.6% of the world's population migrated; 146 million men, 135 million women, and 28 million children migrated. Millions migrate, but not all successfully integrate into their new environments. Successful integration depends on many factors. Among other things, integration depends on the society the individual comes from, what language he/she speaks, the type of religion, and whether he/she is fleeing war, political oppression, or poverty. In the process of integration, which can sometimes be long-lasting, it does matter what the migrant's gender and education are, socioeconomic status, and how quickly he/she mastered the language spoken in the new environment. Nevertheless, one of the most important factors that helps in integration is the support of others, friends, family, and the wider environment. Migrants behave differently in the process of integration. Some integrate very quickly, while others have difficulties and are separated from the domicile population. The consequence of separation is a lack of inclusion in the new society and compromised personal well-being.

It is a special problem when it comes to migrant families. Especially if it's about children. They live in less favorable conditions than children of domiciled parents. A special problem for these children is the relationship with their parents and the formation of their identity. Intergenerational misunderstandings and differences compared to parents in the system of values and norms of behavior that can create intergenerational conflicts are also not excluded. Because of the conditions in which they live, education, problem of vertical mobility, and general well-being are often a problem. Many of those issues are treated in this book.

Let us start with the first chapter, "Acculturative Stress and Depressive Symptoms: Results From a Pilot Study Among Unaccompanied Latino Migrant Farmworker Adolescents in Florida Agriculture." It is known and proven in a series of studies that work can be a source of stress, which, if it is long-lasting, can lead to depression. However, we know little about how the stress of acculturation, in adolescents working in a foreign country, affects the appearance of stress and, consequently, depression. In their study, Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez, Sahitya Maiya, Henry Gonzalez, Heidy Sarabia, Tracy Tang, and Evan P. Anderson clearly show and conclude that working in a foreign country for adolescents, even when they live together with their countrymen, has detrimental consequences for their psychosocial adjustment.

Migrations can also be decidedly diverse. We can see the reasons for migration and their consequences, in particular, in the chapter "Contemporary Migration Patterns and Policies: Global Mobility Among Middle-class Families From Hong

Kong.” This chapter describes, in a very comprehensive manner, all the stages of migrations from Hong Kong to Great Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Over the past 50 years, a large number of residents have left Hong Kong, but a certain number have also returned for various reasons. The reasons for leaving Hong Kong are various: political, economic, and the possibility of better education for children in the mentioned countries. However, these migrations were not easy, without problems in adapting to the new environment, as was the adaptation of those who returned to Hong Kong. Lucille Lok Sun Ngan and Queenie Kwan Yee Siu specifically mention serious problems such as leaving elderly parents or the general problems of separated families or relationships in families in general. By reading this chapter, all possible problems characteristic of migration become completely clear to us, especially the relationship between migration and families.

In “The Migratory Experience of Nicaraguan Mothers Working in the Spanish Domestic Work Sector,” Renée DePalma, Verónica Verdía Varela, and Belén Fernández-Suárez present the results of research conducted on three groups of respondents in Nicaragua. It should be emphasized that these are economic migrants who are looking for better living conditions for themselves and their children. The first group is women who work as housewives in Spain, the second group is individuals who take care of their children while they are away, and the third group represents experts of various profiles, such as social workers. Interviews with migrant women who were well prepared before the trip and have experience working as housewives in Spain show that there are many adjustment problems and obstructions they experienced while some were even deported. At the end, the authors propose what should be done to avoid at least some of the problems that the interviewed women talked about.

In “Transnational Romanian Families – CARE Between Distance and Borders During COVID-19 Crisis,” Iulia-Elena Hossu describes the problems of transnational families, which are defined as separated communities whose members live separately, in different countries. The author conducted an online survey on a convenience sample of such families. The aim of the research was to determine how the members of such families behaved during the COVID-19 crisis and how they were treated by different institutions in their own country and in the country to which some of the members immigrated. In particular, how members of transnational families helped each other. The author presents a series of interesting statements by members of transnational families, from which it follows that many institutions from which help was expected have failed. Finally, the author presents proposals that would probably improve the conditions in which transnational families live.

In “Navigating New Cultural Landscapes: Exploration of Interracial Families’ Experiences Immigrating From the United Kingdom to Zimbabwe,” Calvin Kunaka analyzes interracial families and how they behave in an environment that is not always free from prejudice. The author conducted a qualitative study on 10 married couples who came to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, from Great Britain. By presenting the opinions of interracial families about the problems

they face, the author claims that the life of such families is not without friction and problems. A specific problem is the formation of identity in children. Despite the difficulties that such families face, their resilience is great, which facilitates their social integration. The work is particularly interesting because it represents a relatively rare example of research on interracial families and re-emigration or return to the country from which one emigrated.

In “From Departure to Return: The Role of Family in Vietnamese Labor Migration to South Korea,” Nguyen Nu Nguyet Anh analyzes the preparation, stay in South Korea, and return of migrants to Vietnam. The author conducted qualitative research on several smaller groups. The research concludes that, unlike other migrants, especially from Asian countries, Vietnamese migrants regularly after working abroad for several years regularly return home to Vietnam. The family plays a major role in preparing individuals before leaving for migration, taking care of family members who have stayed in Vietnam, and helping immigrants adapt to life in Vietnam after their return from migration. The aforementioned forms of family behavior are an illustration of the collectivist value system that may be more important in Vietnam than in some other Asian countries.

A large number of refugees from Ukraine emigrated to Romania due to the war. How they feel is the subject of: “*I Feel a Permanent Tension, a Waiting [...] Suspension Temporality in the Context of Ukrainian Refugees in Romania.*” Alina Bărbuță and Mara Birou conducted qualitative research by interviewing 20 refugees living in Cluj Romania. The starting point was the theory of Urie Brofenbrenner about the factors of different levels that affect an individual’s behavior. In this work, they are micro, meso, and macro levels. The results show that all three levels have an effect on the behavior of refugees. We especially emphasize the action of the macro level. The value of the research is that it very clearly shows the feeling of uncertainty and temporariness in the life of forced refugees. Their study is not only intriguing and revealing but reveals significant practical implications.

Collectively, the authors of this volume have provided tremendous insight into the causes, processes, and consequences of migration. As noted multiple times, throughout this volume, the decision to migrate is rarely a simple one, the journey itself is often fraught with peril, and the impact of migration upon families can be quite substantial. We hope that the valuable research provided by the authors in this volume will not only provide greater understanding about migration but also serve to foster and encourage future research. We extend our most sincere thanks to the authors, the peer reviewers, and the wonderful staff at Emerald Publishing for bringing this volume to fruition.

Josip Obradović
Sampson Lee Blair

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CHAPTER 1

ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS: RESULTS FROM A PILOT STUDY AMONG UNACCOMPANIED LATINO MIGRANT FARMWORKER ADOLESCENTS IN FLORIDA AGRICULTURE¹

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ABSTRACT

Unaccompanied Latino migrant farmworker adolescents (LMFA) confront a myriad of stressors while working in US agriculture. While work-life-related stressors can contribute to depressive symptoms among this vulnerable population, there is limited information about the effects of acculturative stress on depressive symptoms among this unique population. In a sample of 36 LMFA in Florida (ages 15–20; Mage = 17.81 years; standard deviation (SD) = 1.24), we examined associations among acculturative stress, and their respective subscales, with depressive symptoms. A series of linear regressions were specified with one stressor (i.e., acculturative stress) at a time and depressive symptoms as the outcome, while controlling for the effects of age and monthly income to test the study hypotheses. As hypothesized, acculturative stress and their respective subscales were positively associated with depressive symptoms. Age, but not monthly income, was also positively associated with depressive symptoms at a statistically significant level. Overall, findings suggest that although unaccompanied LMFA in US agriculture might live and work among other Latino adolescents and adults, acculturative stressors in a foreign land are detrimental to their psychosocial adjustment in the United States. Implications for practice and research are discussed.

Keywords: Unaccompanied Latino adolescents; migrant farmworker adolescents; acculturative stress; depression caseness; US agriculture; unaccompanied migrant youth

INTRODUCTION

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that 70% of child labor (112 million children) can be found in agriculture ([Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2024](#)). Even though agriculture is the largest employer for youth, there are more male youth workers in agriculture than female youth workers ([Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2020](#)). In the vast majority of cases, 72.1% of children work as part of a family unit, but 28% of child laborers are paid workers ([International Labor Organization & United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2020](#)). Regardless of whether migrating youth are officially “children” (i.e., aged 17 or less) or have arrived at legal adulthood (i.e., aged 18–20), migrating without family poses substantial risk for exploitation, maltreatment, and trafficking ([Van de Glind & Kou, 2013](#)). To illustrate, in the United States, agricultural work ranks among the most hazardous occupations ([National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2018](#)), yet adolescents ages 14–24 account for 18% of the entire US crop labor force ([Fung et al., 2023](#)).

In the United States, 75% of all farmworkers are Latinos, predominantly male (68%), and foreign born from Mexico (61%) where over half of farmworkers (58%) are authorized to work in the United States ([Fung et al., 2023](#)). In addition,

85% of farmworkers get paid an hourly wage which ranged from \$13.72 to \$15.56 per hour, based on time with employer and experience, and worked an average of 43 hours per week (Fung et al., 2023). Nevertheless, males reported working more hours (45) than female farmworkers (38), and among younger workers, those aged 14–17 years old worked an average of 36 hours while those aged 18–21 and 22–24 years old worked an average of 41 hours and 37 hours, respectively (Fung et al., 2023).

Among the farmworker adolescent population in the United States, three subgroups can be differentiated. First, rural youth who work in agriculture at their family's farm. Second, immigrant youth who migrate and work side by side their parents. Last, youth who migrate alone, without the company of their parents, to work in the United States, also known as unaccompanied migrant youth (Peoples et al., 2010). Every year, thousands of unaccompanied Latino adolescents migrate to the United States to find work and financially provide for their families through remittances (Canizales, 2023a; Heidbrink, 2020). Indeed, the adolescent migrant population in the United States has been growing over the past decade, and in 2023, Central American migrant adolescents (i.e., from countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) in the United States reached a number of 200,000 (Peri & Reem, 2023). Most concerning is that unaccompanied Central American minors (younger than 18 years old) accounted for 75% of the total of 222,000 United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encounters with unaccompanied youth arriving at the United States–Mexico border from October 2021 to March 2023 (Ward & Batalova, 2023). This marks a demographic shift: in 2009, unaccompanied youth from Mexico accounted for 83% of all unaccompanied youth apprehensions, yet in 2023, unaccompanied Mexican youth accounted for just 20% of all unaccompanied youth encounters at the United States–Mexico border (Congressional Research Service, 2023).

Unaccompanied Latino migrant adolescents can be found in the US agricultural industry (Carlos Chavez et al., 2022, 2023). Unlike the children of farmworkers, who sometimes accompany parents in the fields, unaccompanied adolescent farmworkers confront additional stressors because they are, in essence, children in an adult world who navigate the United States without the company of their parents. Unaccompanied LMFA work in US agriculture despite confronting a myriad of stressors (i.e., social isolation, loneliness) that negatively affect their mental health such as depressive symptoms (Carlos Chavez et al., 2021). In addition, previous research among Latino migrant farmworker has shown that various forms of stress such as perceived stress (i.e., self-perception of the levels of stress due to tangible taxing events, personal agency, and coping mechanisms experienced by an individual; Cohen et al., 1983) are associated with depressive symptoms (Kiang et al., 2010). Although adolescents from rural and impoverished villages in Latin American countries are often expected to partake in adult responsibilities in the household (López et al., 2010), the adult responsibilities that LMFA in US agriculture must take on are of a different kind and must be done without their parents. Thus, we could expect a different mental health response for LMFA compared to youths in their homes in Latin America. Unfortunately, there is scarce information that examines stress among this population. One of the few examples showed that

77% of a studied cohort of unaccompanied Guatemalan farmworker adolescents met the classification for depression caseness² (Carlos Chavez et al., 2021).

More research is available describing the effect of stressors on mental health among adult Latino farmworkers, where stressors related to farmwork and acculturation are correlated with depressive symptoms among this population (Keeney et al., 2023; Maldonado et al., 2024; Ramos et al., 2015). Previous research has highlighted how work conditions, safety climate, acculturative stress, social isolation, and family separation are associated with depressive symptoms among adult Latino farmworkers (Arcury et al., 2018; Pulgar et al., 2016). Specifically, previous research has shown that depressive symptoms (CES-D³) are higher among Latino farmworkers than the general US population (Hovey & Magaña, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). Crain et al. (2012) found that work-related stressors were associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms, although perceived stress was only associated with anxiety symptoms among adult Latino farmworkers. However, little is known about the effects of stress, particularly acculturative stress, on depressive symptoms among unaccompanied LMFA in US agriculture, and there is no reason to expect that LMFA would experience the same responses as their adult counterparts. The present pilot study provides a more nuanced insight on the acculturative stressors present in LMFA lives that can help delineate the specific needs of these adolescents for their optimal adaptation and health in the United States.

WHO ARE MIGRANT WORKERS AND WHAT IS MIGRANT FARMWORK?

In the context of US agriculture, a migrant worker is “a person who reported jobs that were at least 75 miles apart or who reported moving more than 75 miles to obtain a farm job during a 12-month period” (Fung et al., 2023, p. 11). Migrant farmwork can take various forms: a worker may migrate internationally (i.e., from Mexico to the United States) or domestically within and across states to perform agricultural work (Grzywacz et al., 2010). Unaccompanied H2-A temporary migrant workers and undocumented migrant youth who reside *temporarily* in the United States are examples of this. To obtain an H-2A temporary visa, the applicant needs to be at least 18 years old (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2023). In 2022, a total of 684,000 H2A non-immigrant admissions took place where 96% of all admissions were for Mexican H-2A workers (654,891) (US Department of Homeland Security, 2022) to perform US agricultural work. An H-2A visa comes with a maximum period of stay of up to three years (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2023), but the age requirement may incentivize Latino migrant youth to

²The CES-D scale ranges from 0 to 60 points, and individuals who score the threshold of 16 or above meet depression “caseness” (Radloff, 1977; Shean & Baldwin, 2008) and are considered to need to use of mental health services (Alderete et al., 1999; Hiott et al., 2008).

³The Center for Epidemiologic Studies–Depression (CES-D) scale (Radloff, 1977) has adequate internal reliability among Latino migrant farmworker populations in the United States (Alderete et al., 1999; Hiott et al., 2008; Hovey, 2000; Vega et al., 1985).

find alternative pathways to migrate and find work in the United States as is the case with undocumented LMFA (Carlos Chavez et al., 2021).

ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

Acculturative stress is defined as a stress reaction in response to situations that challenge cultural understanding (Berry, 2006). Specifically, acculturative stress originates in the process of adapting to a majority culture (Berry et al., 1987) due to the uncertainty inherent in adjusting to a new culture through the adoption of core practices, values, and culture (Bhagat & London, 1999). It is one of many stressors Latino farmworkers face while working in US agriculture (Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002b). For Latinos, acculturative stress manifests in the task of selectively adopting or resisting US mainstream culture while maintaining or letting go of their heritage culture (Wang et al., 2010). As such, acculturative stress may be particularly salient among LMFA, especially for those who are unable to return to their countries of origin. Acculturative stress includes discriminatory experiences, lack of English language fluency, a lack of social and monetary resources, and a lack of a sense of belonging in US society, but it is not limited to these factors either (Hovey & Magaña, 2000).

Among unaccompanied Latino migrant adolescents in US farmwork, acculturative stress is important for three core reasons. First, for LMFA in the United States, the push and pull of demands (e.g., being away from family, finding work, embracing US cultural values), opportunities (e.g., generating income, ability to provide for parents and siblings, moving up the economic ladder), and constraints (e.g., barriers to integration to mainstream culture, inability to speak English, geographic location) may influence LMFA's cognitive appraisals of how well or not they are able to deal with stress, adaptation, and assimilation in the United States (Kossek et al., 2005). Second, acculturative stress is associated with poor mental health outcomes among Latino migrant farmworkers in the United States (Alderete et al., 1999; Finch et al., 2004; Hovey & Magaña, 2000, 2002c). Particularly, previous research has shown that [im]migrant Latino men experience moderate acculturative stress (Torres et al., 2024), and high levels of acculturative stress are associated with high levels of depressive symptoms among Latino migrant farmworker adults in the United States (Hovey & Magaña, 2000; Kiang et al., 2010). Moreover, among adult farmworkers, acculturative stress is not only positively associated with depressive symptoms but also with lower odds of mental healthcare utilization (Maldonado et al., 2024). Third, there is limited information about the effects of acculturative stress on unaccompanied LMFA in US farmwork. Particularly, LMFA confront a very unique situation: while they are “managing,” on their own, a migratory lifestyle away from their parents and kin, they are also confronting acculturative stressors (e.g., social, familial, environmental, attitudinal; Mena et al., 1987) not previously experienced in their communities. Without a cultural knowledge base upon which to draw, in order to cope with acculturative stress, unaccompanied LMFA may feel pressured to follow US norms and expectations to avoid discrimination

(Mena et al., 1987). Although high levels of acculturative stress have been found to be associated with depressive symptoms among US-born Latino adolescents (Hovey, 1998; Hovey & King, 1996), to date, little is known about the impact of acculturative stress on mental health among unaccompanied LMFA.

THE MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF ACCULTURATIVE STRESS

Acculturative stress is defined as pressures involved in the acculturation process that can negatively contribute to poorer health (Berry et al., 1987). Acculturative stress is a multidimensional construct (Castro-Olivo et al., 2014; Rodriguez et al., 2002) referring to pressures to adopt to US culture *and* to retain one's cultural heritage (Wang et al., 2010). On one hand, acculturative stress can be experienced based on pressure to speak English and become more oriented toward mainstream US values and behaviors. On the other hand, acculturative stress may also take the form of pressure to speak Spanish and remain/become more oriented toward Latino culture and values (Rodriguez et al., 2002). Whereas most Latino cultures encourage collectivistic values (i.e., cooperation, interdependence; Castillo et al., 2008) and familistic values (Roos et al., 2022), it is possible that adopting more individualistic US mainstream values may lead to a successful work trajectory. However, doing so may conflict with LMFA's own family values and expectations (Castillo et al., 2015). This dissonance between US culture and Latino heritage culture may lead to acculturative stress (Cano et al., 2014). As a result, acculturative stress can lead to poor psychological adjustment among LMFA.

USING AMBIVALENCE AS A GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Psychological and sociological ambivalence provides a critical framework to examine the stressors and mental health realities among LMFA in US agriculture. In particular, ambivalence is the driving force behind acculturative stress as defined and discussed in the present study. We define ambivalence here as an individual's subjective intrapersonal dilemmas in regard to motives, behaviors, and emotions (Weingardt, 2000), and the surrounding social structures are at times incompatible with socio-cultural expectations of individuals (Coser, 1966; Merton & Barber, 1963). An example pertinent to male unaccompanied LMFA in US agriculture is the cultural expectation that men are the financial providers for the family, yet sufficient employment opportunities are not available in their countries of origin (Zenteno et al., 2013). Herein lies the potential for emotional ambivalence, paradoxically having to leave the family behind to financially provide for the family (Carlos Chavez et al., 2021; Grzywacz, Quandt, et al., 2006). Furthermore, LMFA provide for two households: their left-behind parents and siblings, and their own, in terms of day-to-day personal expenses in the United States (Canizales, 2023b; Carlos Chavez et al., 2022). Thus, LMFA, driven by the need to fulfill moral obligations toward the family (Canizales, 2023a), may not

only migrate to the United States for work during their early adolescence years (Carlos Chavez et al., 2022; Heidbrink, 2018) but also endure hardships in US agriculture where LMFA prioritize income gains over their health (Carlos Chavez et al., 2023). Herein lies another example of ambivalence, where working in the United States to provide for one's family may come at the price of family separation, loneliness, and homesickness (Martinez, 2019).

In terms of work, scholars have documented how migrant adolescents often experience ambivalence in three ways. First, adolescents who migrate with their parents or family have divergent experiences from those who migrate unaccompanied (Diaz-Strong & Gonzales, 2023; Sarabia et al., 2022). For example, when unaccompanied adolescents migrate for work, they are often treated as minors but ultimately work alongside adults. Second, these adolescents also experience acculturation pressures due to their age – while they are expected to have an “easier time” adopting to US culture and society, they often lack the support to do so. Finally, these adolescents must also *grow up fast* and become adult-like due to the very circumstances of migration, creating ambivalent role strains (Ngo, 2012).

THE PRESENT PILOT STUDY

While there have been efforts to determine predictors of poor mental health among Latino migrant farmworker adults (Arcury et al., 2022; Grzywacz, Hovey, et al., 2006; Hiott et al., 2008), there is limited information about acculturative stressors as predictors for depressive symptoms that are independent from agricultural labor among LMFA in US agriculture. Thus, this pilot study had two main goals: (1) to determine the association between acculturative stress and depressive symptoms and (2) to assess levels of depression among LMFA in US agriculture. We tested the following hypotheses:

H1. Acculturative stress is positively associated with greater depressive symptoms.

H2. Acculturative stress types (i.e., social, attitudinal, familial, and environmental) are positively associated with greater depressive symptoms.

H3. A significant proportion of the sample (more than a third, based on findings from previous studies discussed earlier) will meet the criteria for clinical depression caseness.

METHODS

Participants

In order to participate in the study, youth had to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) identify as Latino male, (b) be between the ages of 13–20 years, (c) be born outside the United States, (d) must not be living with parents, (e) have Spanish as a native language, and (f) must have work experience in US agriculture. Data for this pilot study came from a larger mixed-methods research body

which has been described in other studies (Carlos Chavez, 2018; Carlos Chavez et al., 2022). Specifically, we employed a convenience sample of male participants ($N = 36$; aged 15–20; 47% minors (<18 years), 53% non-minors (>18 years); 78% from Guatemala; 19% from Mexico, 3% from Honduras; 86% undocumented) from a farmworker enclave in South Florida during Spring 2018. More than half of the participants (58%) made between \$60 and \$400 per week. Approximately 81% (29) of all participants self-identified as migrant workers (“I am a migrant worker, I move from place to place to perform farm work”). Most participants (83%) were financially helping their parents (refer to Tables 1.1–1.3).

Participants’ assent and informed consent were elicited in Spanish. All participant recruitment procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Florida State University (approval number: HSC#: 2018.23301). Study design, data analysis, manuscript preparation, and write up took place at Arizona State University with IRB approval number: STUDY00014632.

Data Collection

Data were collected in person by the first author. In order to recruit participants, the first author resided in the farmworker enclave in South Florida throughout the entire duration of the data collection, visiting food markets, shopping at flea markets, and attending healthcare fairs to recruit potential interested participants. Moreover, the first author individually approached young workers (Monday to Sunday) at different locations, including soccer fields, parks, parking lots, bus stops, inside charitable organizations, outside a technical/trade school, outside convenience stores, and outside farmworker housing to share the purpose of the study and to invite them to participate in it. Additionally, collaboration with small store owners and food sellers allowed the first author to post recruitment flyers in Spanish on their bulletin boards as well as recruit potential participants outside or adjacent to their shops.

If young workers indicated being interested in participating in the study, then they were asked follow-up questions to check if they met the eligibility criteria. If young workers were not interested, then the first author thanked them for their time and did not disclose participation criteria to them. If youths agreed to be part of the study, then the first author read and explained in detail the assents (for minors) or informed consents (for youth over 18 years old) in Spanish and obtained verbal assent or consent from youths. Youths who agreed to participate and youths who did not were not systematically counted. Nevertheless, on any given day, the number of youths who refused/declined to be part of the study were much larger than the participants who agreed to participate in the research. Some of the reasons for refusing/declining to participate in the study included lack of time, not being interested, being too tired, being busy running household errands, lack of trust, and concerns about youths’ own documentation status. Youths who agreed to participate were arriving from work, were on their way to buy food, on their way back from eating at a restaurant/food stand, in line to order food (i.e., fruit salads, prepared meals), eating near the fruit salad shops at the flea market, were shopping at the flea market, were riding their bikes, or were coming to a technical/trade school for afterwork classes. Subsequent snowball approaches