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"Immigration Enforcement Is a Daily Part of Our Students' Lives": School Social Workers' Perceptions of Racialized Nested Contexts of Reception for Immigrant Students

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This qualitative analysis examines school social workers' equity work for immigrant students, including their perceptions of immigration enforcement and school climates that support or hinder immigrant student experiences. We conceptually expand understandings of nested contexts of reception and racialized organizations across macro, meso, micro levels, and how they affect immigrant students' educational experiences, mobility, and belonging. Utilizing open-ended responses from a unique national survey data set, we examine school social workers' perceptions of the macro, meso, micro racialized contexts that immigrant students encounter, how school social worker perceptions reflect racial attitudes as part of the racialized organization of schools in which they work, and how such racial attitudes influence their actions and potentially disrupt racial inequality in schools. Discussion of the impact of school social workers' racial attitudes, and perceptions of racialized contexts and how they influence school social workers' advocacy for immigrant students is offered.

Keywords: *contexts of reception, descriptive analysis, equity, immigration/immigrants, mixed-methods, racialization, school social work, sociology, survey research*

Schools expect immigrant students to adapt to new cultural contexts, learn the U.S. educational system, and attain English proficiency (Hernandez et al., 2009; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2001). However, many immigrant students, defined here as children with at least one foreign-born parent, experience barriers to educational and social equity. Immigrant students whose legal status is temporary or who are undocumented often have difficulty accessing resources in school (Gonzales, 2015). Fear and uncertainty associated with immigration enforcement activity negatively affects immigrants' socioemotional health regardless of immigration status (Ayón, 2016; Capps et al., 2020; Yoshikawa et al., 2017). Anti-immigrant sentiment combined with restrictive laws compound these barriers by "othering" immigrant students within schools. Living under the uncertainty of racialized anti-immigrant policies and practices creates symbolic and structural violence (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Schools are also a site of racialization where immigrant students are profiled and encounter complex and at times contradictory messages about belonging, identity, and deservingness (Lee et al., 2017; Verma et al., 2017).

Schools, despite many challenges, can be places that mediate some of these challenges. Past research shows how "institutional agents" can support minoritized students, providing necessary assistance when navigating institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). Such "agents" are often trusted adults in schools, such as coaches, educators, and mental health professionals. While research has examined the role of educators, to date no study has examined how school social workers (SSWs) help immigrant youth navigate barriers in schools and communities.

Research has examined educator advocacy for immigrant students (Crawford, 2018; Dabach, 2015; Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). This research suggests that advocacy increases if actors possess an awareness of how immigration policies, enforcement practices, discrimination, and racism

affect immigrant students' lives (Jaffe-Walter, 2018). While these central actors may shape the opportunities available to immigrant students, other adults in the building may also have an important role, including guidance counselors, ELL (English Language Learner) instructors, and SSWs (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Our study advances the field by exploring the perceptions and interventions of SSWs in immigrant-serving schools to better understand how they view and address barriers to equity for immigrant students. The role of SSW has often been overlooked, perhaps because not every school or district employs them. Yet, SSWs are important actors because they often have key relationships with immigrant students and families, and can act as a bridge between the school, family, and community resources (Rodriguez, Roth, & Villarreal Sosa, 2020). This critical contribution illuminates how SSWs' awareness and perception of the contexts of reception can potentially reduce inequality by helping students access resources and overcome educational and social barriers.

We utilize the nested contexts of reception framework (NCOR; Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018) to examine SSWs' perceptions of how nested contexts shape their awareness and actions toward immigrant students. Previous studies analyze contexts (i.e., federal, state, or local) in isolation. While helpful, our study takes a multifaceted look at how SSWs learn about and counteract the multiple forms of oppression immigrant students face across contexts. We know that these nested contexts vary and that this variation matters for immigrant student educational outcomes, but NCOR provides little insight into *how* schools may challenge or exacerbate the exclusion of immigrant students. Therefore, we also draw on Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations to better understand how schools—and the people who work in them—advance or challenge racialized perceptions of immigrant students. For example, SSWs may challenge prevailing racialized stigmas that are directly or indirectly furthered by the school environment and structure (Ray, 2019; Rodriguez, 2021); however, SSWs' views of immigrant students and their "deservingness" may extend the racialization of immigrant students and affect the services students access (School Social Work Association of America, n.d.; Teasley & Richard, 2017). SSWs' perceptions of other contexts of reception—at city, state, or federal levels—matter for the educational outcomes of the immigrant students in their school. Their perspectives build on previous research about how educators' awareness and perceptions of immigration policy influences decision making and actions (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020).

We analyze data from our larger mixed-methods study, specifically examining open-ended questions from a survey we conducted with SSWs ($N = 517$) in immigrant-serving schools. This unique data set allows us to analyze SSWs' perceptions of immigrant students across contexts. We explore how their awareness of these nested contexts and their racialization of immigrant students influences their efforts to address equity. Our findings underscore that school-based personnel such as SSWs—who are aware of NCOR—are more likely to address obstacles to equity experienced by immigrant students. SSWs are also a product of the racialized organizations (schools) where they work, however, and their perceptions of immigrant students—and the nested contexts that affect them—are influenced accordingly. Furthermore, these micro-, meso-, and macro-level contexts are not static. Awareness of how laws affect immigrants shift, at times in concert with changes in the laws themselves. Below, we review relevant literature, explain our methods, and share findings.

Review of Literature

Schools, Nested Contexts of Reception, and Racialization of Immigrants

While the contexts of reception framework dominates many immigration studies, it also maintains limitations related to the nuances of local, institutional, and societal contexts (described below; Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018). Extensive research exists about how the school is an independent receiving context that shapes the immigrant students' learning, socioemotional experiences, sense of belonging, and access to resources (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). To build on this, we use Golash-Boza and Valdez's (2018) "NCOR" framework, which conceptualizes educational institutions as one of several interrelated contexts which shape educational outcomes for immigrant youth. The NCOR framework expands Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) research to explain how reception contexts affect certain immigrant groups' adaptation outcomes. Golash-Boza and Valdez (2018) suggest that these contexts are not monolithic. For example, an undocumented Latinx student may experience exclusion because federal laws restrict them from adjusting their legal status, but they may attend classes on a college campus that they find welcoming, and live in a state with laws that allow for access to state scholarships (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017; Roth, 2017). Thus, contexts of reception should be understood as a series of interrelated fields.

NCOR suggests that local contexts—such as schools—can attenuate the hostile reception immigrants may experience at the state or federal level, offering a nuanced understanding of how these nested contexts affect immigrant students. Yet the framework does not explicitly address the role that race, racial attitudes, and racial discrimination play in the lives of immigrants, including how such attitudes might manifest in institutions such as schools (Nájera, 2020; Perez, 2020). Immigrants are "racialized groups" (Hochman, 2019, p. 1245) through policy language and popular discourse. For example, anti-immigrant policies at federal and state levels have led to the racialization of Latinos even though the socially constructed label "Latino" is often

conceived as an ethnicity (Gómez Cervantes, 2021; Rodriguez, 2020). Immigration policies that appear race neutral may actually uphold existing racial hierarchies. Such laws use code words such as "illegal alien" to refer to racial themes without directly making those connections (Haney-López, 2006). Research also demonstrates that Whites overwhelmingly hold racist views toward Latinos and view them as culturally inferior. These attitudes are ascribed to Latinos regardless of immigration status or even generational status (Flores-González, 2017). While social scientists consider differences between ethnicity, Whites in everyday language use ethnic terms as fixed racial concepts, constructing Latinos or immigrants as a racial group (Lacayo, 2015). Furthermore, many Latinos consider their national origin or ethnic identity as a racial identity because of their experiences of racialization (Rodriguez, 2020).

Racialization of immigrants also occurs in organizations (Ray, 2019). Consequently, structures, practices, and attitudes in organizations manifest in ways that produce unequal distributions of resources such as wages, services, and positions within the organizational hierarchy. Thus, inequalities persist within organizational hierarchies because dominant groups stratify and restrict resources (Lewis, 2003). In schools, this can happen by lack of quality curriculum and language learning services, assimilationist/English-only programs, or deficit-based perspectives or low expectations toward immigrant academic ability and aspirations.

Organizations such as schools create and reproduce status quo racial hierarchies in multiple ways since racialization is the "the background in which organizations operate" (Ray, 2019, p. 29). These hierarchies decrease minoritized groups' agency, support the unequal distribution of social and material resources, and racialize. Conchas et al. (2020) argue that the reproduction of racial inequality widely occurs in schools due to the racial meanings, attitudes, ideologies and individual racial prejudice expressed organizationally and interactionally. Schools can either reproduce the social order or effect social change—at times depending on how individual actors within schools challenge or reinforce the process of racialization.

School-Based Personnel Support for Immigrant Students

School-based personnel (SBP) interact regularly with immigrant students. Their actions are shaped by their awareness that immigrant students face different contexts of reception that matter for their educational outcomes. Ee and Gándara (2020) surveyed 3,600 educators to find out how SBPs like teachers, counselors, and school leaders perceive the effect of immigration enforcement on school climate. They found that some SBPs, like school administrators and counselors, were more aware of and concerned about the effects of immigration enforcement compared with teachers. Other research suggests that SBPs who are less aware of immigration policy in general—and enforcement activities in particular—may be less responsive to immigrant students' needs (Crawford, 2018). Thus, immigrant students' experiences may remain invisible to school personnel who would otherwise intervene. Meanwhile, research confirms that anti-immigrant policies influence educators' beliefs toward immigrant students. Rodriguez and McCorkle (2020) found limited educator awareness of explicit federal and state-level policies affecting undocumented students (e.g., DACA, availability of in-state tuition) and perceptions that their state policies were more inclusive than in reality. This literature suggests that SBPs are more likely to take actions to support immigrant students if they are aware that these NCOR matter. To date, no study has explored SSW perceptions of these matters.

School Social Workers' Role

SSWs are SBPs who are trained to provide evidence-based interventions to reduce inequality. To best advocate for immigrant students' educational rights, school social work practice must include an awareness of the impact of restrictive immigration policies on children, and address climate issues as a result of an anti-immigrant national or community context (Teasley & Richard, 2017). Similar to educators, SSWs face challenges to advocating for immigrant students due to organizational factors and often a perceived lack of administrator support (Kelly & Stone, 2009) more than individual-level characteristics.[1] Our analysis joins conversations about SSWs, actions and advocacy for immigrant students, and how they navigate the racialized organization of schools.

In sum, we view schools as NCOR that affect immigrant students' educational outcomes, and that are racialized organizations where SBPs' racial attitudes manifest. Our study examines how SSWs perceive the nested contexts, the ways their views of immigrant students are racialized, and those factors shape the actions they take to address equity concerns. We apply the concept of racialization to the school-level context, understanding that racialization processes can exist in ways that shape the distribution of resources, undermine or disempower people of color, and counteract any stated commitments to equity (Rodriguez, 2021). The following questions guided our inquiry: (1) What are SSWs' perceptions of the macro, meso, and micro racialized contexts that immigrant students encounter? (2) How do SSWs' perceptions reflect the racial attitudes of the racialized organization of schools where they work? (3) In what ways do SSWs' actions counteract racialized organizational contexts, if at all? (Table 1).

Research Methods

Design, Instrument, and Sample

Our project uses an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014) with three phases to understand

TABLE 1
Levels of Analysis in Racialized Organizations (Adapted From Ray, 2019)

Level of analysis	Type of analytical frame	Representative features	Conflict over	Application to SSWs in current study
Institutional level (macro)	The racial state	State racial categorization	Group membership	Policies
	Institutionalized racism	Racialized laws (explicitly or implicitly)	State resources	Immigration enforcement
				Public charge
				Trump presidency: anti-immigrant policies and practices
Organizational level (meso)	Schools	Racialized segregation	National inclusion	School and school districts
			Equitable education (access to language services; school resource; quality curriculum)	Community-level practices and attitudes
		Racial segregation	School and district climate	
Individual level (micro)	Prejudice	Stereotypes	Interactions	Deficit thinking
	Racial attitudes		Equality and equity	Perceived cultural deficits
	Implicit bias		Social belonging	Misinterpreting immigrants' trauma

Note. SSWs = school social workers.

how SSWs serve immigrant students in K–12 schools. This article reports findings from the survey's open-ended questions. In Phase 1, we collected qualitative pilot data with a sample of SSWs to inform our survey instrument (Rodriguez, Roth, & Villarreal Sosa, 2020). In Phase 2, we developed an anonymous online survey instrument, which was administered via *Qualtrics* to a national sample of social workers between November of 2019 and June of 2020 (N = 517 respondents). In Phase 3, we conducted follow-up interviews with SSW survey respondents who identified themselves as interested in a follow-up interview[2] (see the appendix).

Participants and Sampling

There is no existing database of all SSWs in the country. Therefore, building on previous efforts to conduct a nationwide survey of SSWs (Kelly et al., 2016), we drew on multiple strategies to build our sample (Table 2). First, we contacted school social work professional associations. The national association, the School Social Worker Association of America, agreed to send an invitation to all members (an estimated 2,000 individuals). Many state and regional associations also shared information about the survey through newsletters and social media. Second, given that not all SSWs are members of these professional associations, we also built a database of 1,250 active SSWs in districts where their contact information was publicly available. There are over 90,000 public K–12 schools in the United States representing more than 13,000 districts. Given that resource limitations required us to focus on select districts, we used data from the American Community Survey (2018) to identify unified school districts where immigrant-serving schools were likely to be located. We identified 67 districts where immigrants represented at least 40% of all residents. This was a more conservative threshold than other researchers have used for defining immigrant-serving schools (Cortes, 2006), but we were interested in finding schools where SSWs were most likely to be engaging immigrant students. We checked the websites of each of these districts to identify whether they had SSWs and, if they did, whether their email addresses were publicly available. We emailed these 1,250 SSWs on two occasions to invite them to participate in the on-line survey, and encouraged them to forward the email invitation to other SSWs in their network.

Data

The online survey included several open-ended questions which we use as the primary data for this article.[3] The open-ended questions allowed respondents to elaborate specific topics. For this article, we analyzed the open-ended survey questions in order to focus on individualized responses to critical questions about SSW efforts to support immigrant students, the impact of immigrant enforcement on their efforts and on immigrant students' lives, and policy and school climate factors.[4] In short, these questions allowed us to better understand the processes and mechanisms that influence the work SSWs do with immigrant students. Therefore, the unique qualitative data from these open-ended responses provide rich insights into the research questions we address in this article. Not all of the survey respondents answered each of the 11 open-ended questions, but many of them did. Across the 11 questions, we collected 1,738 comments (Table 3).

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Demographics and background information for social worker sample			School context information for social worker sample		
	Count	%		Count	%
Sex			Region		
Female	266	79.2	Midwest	70	20.8
Male	42	12.5	Northeast	91	27.1
Other	3	0.9	South	123	36.6
No response	25	7.4	West	52	15.5
Ethnicity			No response	0	0.0
White social worker	163	48.5	School type		
Social worker of color	146	43.5	Urban	156	46.4
No response	27	8.0	Suburban	135	40.2
Years of experience			Rural or small town	45	13.4
<5	101	30.1	No response	0	
5–10	74	22.0	School level		
10+	157	46.7	Elementary	114	33.9
No response	4	1.2	Middle	42	12.5
Social worker certification			High	88	26.2
Yes	275	81.8	Multiple	88	26.2
No	27	8.0	No response	4	1.2
Not applicable (not available in state)	31	9.2			
No response	3	0.9			

TABLE 3
Open-Ended Questions and Number of Responses

Question	*n*
How is your work with refugee students different than with (non-refugee) immigrant students?	192
Have students who arrived recently encountered any of the following challenges to enrolling? Why?	53
Are there any other characteristics of immigrant students at your school that you think are important for us to understand? Please explain.	150
Do you have a comment about how immigration enforcement has affected your students, their families, and the school, and/or how this has affected your work?	145
How do the language capabilities of front office staff affect immigrant student access to your school?	250
If "yes" (to participating in advocacy for immigrants) please describe the nature of your involvement. If "no," why not?	107
If you responded "yes" (to immigrant students viewing you as trustworthy) how did you build that trust? If "no," why not?	216
Why are these individuals (in your school) viewed as trustworthy by immigrant students?	232
Is there anything else about immigrant students in your school, your school context, or your role that you think would be helpful for us to understand?	95
How did this (international travel) experience affect your work with immigrant students?	149
Are there any aspects of your identity that are particularly important in your work with immigrant students?	149
Total	1,738

Data Analysis

In our analysis, we wrote memos for each respondent that answered at least one open-ended question (Birks et al., 2008). Memos summarized the respondent's background and contextual characteristics—such as school type and location and respondent attributes. We then thematically coded the data using qualitative data analysis software. We engaged in multiple phases of coding including open and analytic coding to connect our data with the conceptual framework of racialized organizations (LeCompte, 2000; Saldaña, 2011). We coded examples of the macro (related to perceptions of policies and politics), meso (related to systems, structures, schools), and micro (related to interactions

and attitudes) levels aligned with Ray's (2019) framework. We have organized our findings around these below.

Limitations

The sample used in this study is not representative of all SSWs or those working in immigrant-serving schools—and, of the respondents who completed the survey, not all of them answered the open-ended questions. Moreover, data are self-reported rather than based on independent observation and are therefore subject to self-report bias. Therefore, our findings are not generalizable and should be interpreted with some caution. However, even with these limitations our unique data set provides valuable insights into the role of SSWs, their views of immigrant students, and actions they take in schools.

Findings

Research has established how immigrant students experience anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive policies, whether at the federal, state, or local levels. In what follows, we provide a window into how SSWs perceive (or not) the impact of policies and practices at these various levels through the lens of racialized organizations, and how this shapes their actions. To answer the research questions, we first summarize how SSWs perceive the impact of NCOR on the immigrant students. As Ray's framework suggests, however, just as some schools may recreate boundaries of exclusion for immigrant students, we find that some SSWs within these racialized institutions do not "see" the impact that a racialized school context has on the lived experience of students.

SSWs' Nested Perceptions of Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels

SSWs reported that they perceived the impact of an anti-immigrant, racialized NCOR on the lived experience of immigrant students and families at macro, meso, and micro levels. This is important because SSWs explained that this awareness of immigration enforcement and attitudes toward immigrants held significance for their actions toward supporting immigrant students and families. For example, a SSW from a southern state explained that "immigration enforcement is a daily part of our students' and families' lives." Her students "live with the trauma of having had family members deported" and themselves "live in constant fear of being deported." This trauma from the fear of immigration enforcement was referred to explicitly or implicitly (e.g., bullying, deportation, separation, and ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] raids) by approximately 15% of respondents.[5]

The SSW above worked in a school with 90% Latinx (many undocumented) and 10% Black students. She recalled that immigrant students "walk the halls hearing some ignorant staff members calling them 'illegal aliens.'" This SSW revealed the complexity of these nested contexts. For instance, while she viewed her school as welcoming to some extent and the school district held a "DACA Day" during which advocates promoted immigrants' rights, her state adopted restrictive anti-immigrant policies. She illustrated the complexity of nested contests by referencing how conditions in various spheres—micro, meso, and macro—are shifting and evolving: she explained how increased enforcement activity stemming from federal legislation hurts families and youth; referenced supportive distinct-level activities; and described how the local school context became less welcoming due to racialized and biased language used by other staff members.

Similar comments were made by respondents across our sample, suggesting that their role in schools must constantly adapt. The NCOR are not static spheres. Policies change, immigration enforcement priorities shift, and school climate reacts. For example, many SSWs in our research reported the increased hostility toward immigrant students after the 2016 election. They noted that there were more inflammatory and racist comments related to immigration status in their schools. A rural Virginia SSW defined the early period of Trump's presidency as a time when there was

> a lot of fear, concern, targeted statements, bullying, etc. We are isolated somewhat where we are however there is a constant level of fear and bigotry. ICE makes frequent raids in this area so sadly there are always waves of stress related to this.

Similarly, a Missouri SSW noted, "Even shortly after Trump entered office, elementary aged students were affected and playing chase with the premise that one student was Trump and the other students were being chased to get over the wall." These perceptions of the racialized context and impact of Trump-era policies were important to learn from SSWs to understand how they viewed the impact of macro policies and discourses toward immigrants, and manifestations of racial ideology in schools (Lewis, 2003).

These examples reflect how respondents perceive NCOR within the racialized organizations where they work (i.e., the racial state, structures and systems at the meso level, and interactions at the micro level, Table 1; Ray, 2019); the perceived affect these levels have on immigrant students; and how SSWs describe how they attempt to offset the negative impact of these forces. SSWs perceptions of the NCOR linked the macro, meso, and micro levels of contexts. In other words, SSWs understand the racialized discrimination of immigrant students across interrelated contexts.[6] They also commented that the Trump administration policies and initiatives created volatile and hostile anti-immigrant sentiment in their communities. At times, SSWs were unable to intervene in order to promote equity and interrupt the racial discrimination of immigrant students. Our data show the convergence of nested contexts, and how SSWs can take action to disrupt racialization and racial discrimination in

TABLE 4
SSWs Perceptions of Enforcement and the Political Climate

SSW/state	Perceptions of the political climate and enforcement
Suburban/ New York	During the Trump administration there have been various time periods when ICE raids have been conducted on Long Island. We have seen an increase in anxiety among students who may be undocumented either themselves or their parents.
Urban/ Colorado	I would say that immigration enforcement is something my students always worry about. They love their families and worry about separation. The huge cost when they are separated from their families cannot be underestimated.
Urban/ Connecticut	The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States created a significant spike in referrals to school social workers. There has been an increase in undocumented parents being deported leaving their American citizen children behind since the 2016 election. These deportations typically cause decreases in social, emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning.
Urban/ Oklahoma	Families won't take sick children to the doctor for fear of deportation especially during the Trump administration. It is difficult to offer any reassurances due to the chaotic enforcement of the Trump era. ICE previously did not go after school children but now it seems possible they will.

Note. SSWs = school social workers; ICE = Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

some instances, that is, their school, but not necessarily in other interrelated contexts, that is, federal policy.

Macro: Immigration Enforcement

Immigration enforcement and the threat of deportation were commonly referenced by SSWs. When describing how enforcement has affected their students, like the SSW from Oklahoma introduced above, they frequently stated that fear, anxiety and worry, and deportations have become commonplace. We provide additional examples of SSWs' perceptions of immigration enforcement and the political climate to illustrate the theme across contexts (Table 4). These examples show how SSWs perceive the impact of macro-level anti-immigrant policies and practices and the effects of immigration enforcement on immigrant students and families.

Another example of how a macro-level policy incites and sustains fear includes revisions to the public charge rule during the Trump administration.[7] SSWs in our study observed that the confusion about the proposed changes further distanced immigrant families from accessing resources to which they were entitled:

> Some people wouldn't turn in their "lunch forms" for free and reduced lunch prices over the concern it could be used against them. It was hard to say "don't worry" given the current administration's obvious antipathy toward immigrants and refugees. [Urban/ Minnesota]

> Immigrant parents of U.S. born students fear asking for assistance from the government (food, medical, etc.) due to their immigration status. [Urban/California]

SSWs' perceptions suggest that immigration enforcement and the Trump era anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies are macro-level forces that reverberate across multiple contextual layers. Respondents repeatedly emphasized the impact of enforcement and the election of President Trump in particular. A SSW from rural Colorado explained: "When Trump was elected, there were a lot of impacts that were noticeable." Similarly, a Georgia SSW shared, "A year or two ago, families left our area and some family members were deported. And then it's been quieter since then by my school, but other parts of the county have issues." While SSWs were apt to note that immigration challenges are "cyclical," the impact of Trump's anti-immigrant policies was evident.

SSWs perceived that fear among students "ebbs and flows." Yet for students it may not come and go in the way that SSWs in our study describe (Gonzales, 2015). Fear associated with immigration enforcement is likely more of a constant in the lives of immigrant students and families—a "daily presence," as explained by the SSW from Oklahoma—rather than an episodic threat. SSWs may be less aware of this, particularly if they are native-born citizens and White.[8] Evidence for the relevance of the nested context thesis is that many respondents distinguish between local contexts—such as cities and schools—and macro-level forces, showing awareness of these nested contexts and how they matter for immigrant students.

Meso: Perceptions of Community and School Contexts

SSWs' perceptions of the impact of enforcement and racialization extended to community and school contexts. While we know that the devolution of immigration policy to state and local governments has created a patchwork of receiving contexts across the nation (Varsanyi et al., 2012), especially with state laws limiting immigrant access to driver's licenses and local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration, we know less about how communities, schools, and districts are responding. SSWs describe how the meso community and organizational contexts contribute to this dimension of the nested contexts:

> [Our city] relies on the work of immigrants in the poultry industry. This year there was fear and panic amongst our families due to immigration raids at other poultry/meat factories in other states. There seemed to also be an increase in arrests due to driving without a license. Once our families were booked into the local jail an immigration hold was put on them and then they were eventually deported. [Rural/Georgia]

> In my state and county, the 287g program is widely enforced and our undocumented population lives in fear of deportation a great deal of the time. Parents are very reluctant to seek help for their children from avenues like Juvenile Court or law enforcement, even if/when the parent or other family members are being harmed. [Suburban/Georgia]

SSWs identify that state and local policies and practices affect the school and community contexts. For instance, 287g is a local program that allows for cooperation between law enforcement and immigration enforcement, and these partnerships often lead to increased racialized criminalization of immigrants (Arriaga, 2017).

SSWs explain that their schools are resources for immigrant families, "not an arm of the law." A Kentucky SSW stated that her district "is working to define clearly" the extent to which their "property is considered a safe harbor" for immigrants:

> Our city has had ICE raids, family members deported due to violence and other crimes. Children often present as scared and discuss practicing outrunning police, wanting to know how [our school] can be a safe harbor.

This SSW shares the impact of ICE in the community and the fear families live in despite the school as a potentially safe space.[9] Another SSW in a suburban, White district noted, "There's a silence around discussing the issue to school staff. Silence is also to protect themselves from the potential of non-school people from outing them." This SSWs' response reveals the complicated realities in communities and schools, referring to the "political climate of the district." She described an event at one of the schools in her district that provided a *Know Your Rights* workshop which was broken up by immigration authorities who arrived to "check families' documentation." A parent in the community notified ICE that a school in her district was hosting a *Know Your Rights* training for immigrant parents. ICE came and "surrounded the school" and "rounded up parents." These examples connect with how SSWs perceive the racialization of immigrants in the community and school and the interrelatedness of these contexts.

Moreover, this SSW reported "a high tension around this topic with families, community, staff" because not everyone was supportive of welcoming immigrants. These examples show how SSWs might be aware of the impact of immigration-related issues, but are limited in counteracting any discrimination or exclusion immigrants experience. This was noted when the Kentucky SSW was "waiting to hear" if her school was a safe harbor, which was a decision out of her control and fell in the hands of the district. Indeed, even as schools make efforts to improve the climate to be more welcoming, forces from outside the school such as negative community attitudes or policies can damage these efforts.

While some SSWs reported levels of support at their schools, and possibly the district, other respondents describe the negligence of school districts. One SSW from a suburban school in the Northeast, where over half of the students are immigrants, stated,

> The district (like many) does not care. I cannot do as much as I would like due to the red tape, lack of funding, corruption and misappropriation in the school district. It is the "good old boy's"/White men's administration in a town that has a very high number of immigrants and Hispanic/Latino people. It is very sad to see that there is little advocacy.

These SSWs describe both the racialized immigrant policies at the macro level combined with the racialization at the school district manifested through the inequitable distribution of resources, which created barriers for their own action.

SSWs' responses to the challenges vary; however, when SSWs reported an awareness of the racialized NCOR, we observed different actions they took to support immigrant students. An Oklahoma SSW noted, "I advocated really hard for staff to take into account the trauma from deportation threats." Despite respondents offering ways to improve their school's welcoming climate, including forming support teams for all newcomers, pairing immigrant students with nonimmigrant peers to help them adjust to school, curricular adaptations for language learners, and information in multiple languages (Rodriguez et al., 2021), the district and school meso-level climates remain unwelcoming, discriminatory, or unaware of how to support immigrant students.

We unravel the complexity of the nested and racialized contexts of reception, and how SSWs perceive their impact and respond. Specifically, we link examples at the meso level with aspects of racialization, including the "district does not care," because it is made up of "White/good ole' boys" who abandon the needs of Latino/x families who are viewed as "not as educated" alongside the community-level examples of ICE raids and 287g programs, and law enforcement's racial profiling as noted by the SSWs in Georgia, Kentucky, and New York. Across SSW responses, we observed their perceptions of the impact of immigration policies and enforcement, community-level practices and ideologies, and school district efforts to support or not support immigrant students and families. SSWs' awareness of how nested contexts intersect and are affected by racialized surveillance was evident, and often their ability to respond and support immigrant students was limited.

Micro Level: Racialized Attitudes

SSWs are shaped by and shape these contexts with their racial attitudes and ideologies (Ray, 2019). SSWs

acknowledge structural barriers immigrants face while sometimes also holding deficit-based perspectives and racial attitudes about immigrants. We underscore here that racial attitudes are expressed through discourses, often "commonsense" narratives, about racialized groups that on the surface appear innocuous or colorblind, but in effect create ways of thinking about immigrant groups (Omi & Winant, 2014). Racial attitudes, as part of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019), have the potential to reproduce inequality or promote equity (Conchas et al., 2020). Our data showed examples of racial attitudes, including conflating structural constraints in education and economic mobility or opportunity with Latinx immigrant groups' cultural values and the need to prioritize family and employment needs at times (Warikoo & Carter, 2009) and misinterpreting immigrant students' responses to trauma as not caring about school. The Kentucky SSW from above states that deportations have occurred "due to violence or other crimes," echoing the "Latino threat" narrative that criminalizes immigrants at a time when deportations under the Trump administration expanded to all unauthorized immigrants instead of prioritizing those who had committed serious crimes (American Immigration Council, 2018; Chavez, 2013), and without acknowledging that deportations happen from increased racial profiling and criminalization of immigrants (Menjívar et al., 2018).

Conflating Structural Constraints With "Cultural Values." SSWs' racial attitudes were present when some SSWs conflated structural constraints with "cultural values" about education. One example from a SSW in urban Florida explained,

> Sometimes, their families do not promote education, but encourage the students to go to work, as soon as possible. For example, we have numerous undocumented students, who work as roofers, either after school or on weekends or both. When they start making money, they want to drop out of school, because they find that academics are too difficult and that they just need to make money.

These assumptions about undocumented students thinking academics are too difficult reveal underlying deficit-based racialized attitudes. While it certainly may be true that families need to work, we are wary—without further reflection from this SSW—of perpetuating assumptions about undocumented immigrants that can become "commonsense" narratives when groups are racialized (Omi & Winant, 2014). Often, the reality is the limited educational and labor opportunities and exclusion that immigrant communities face, and this necessitates work.

SSWs' Perceptions of Trauma. Another form of SSWs racial attitudes as part of racialized organizations (Table 1; Ray, 2019) related to perceptions of immigrants' "trauma." SSWs often identified trauma in immigrant students, but were unaware of daily forms of it induced by macro, meso, and micro racialization processes. In other words, naming trauma—which only 15% of our respondents explicitly or implicitly did—especially related to the macro policies or immigration enforcement, deportation, or separation was more prevalent in our data than school structures or interactions at meso and micro levels. Most SSWs focused on the trauma students experienced in their home country or during initial migration. However, there was less awareness or interrogation about the daily microaggressions and racialized trauma of the anti-immigrant context that may affect students. For instance, a suburban Indiana SSW said,

> Immigrant students' needs must be addressed in the area of trauma. Many recall witnessing death/murder, being apart from parents, and it impacts their ability to learn.

Despite the evidence that suggests trauma does not have to only be from a major catastrophic event (Courtois & Ford, 2015)—rather can occur as a result of daily microaggressions in schools and community contexts—SSWs rarely identified racialized trauma in schools and communities despite awareness of immigration enforcement. SSWs used deficit-based language to describe immigrant students' trauma and challenges to integration. These common "integration" narratives are harmful to students' sense of belonging.[10]

SSWs connected the trauma from racialized contexts of reception and their specific actions to support immigrant students. For example, a suburban New York SSW said,

> Many were reporting fear. I created a support group for students with detained or deported parents last year. I try to keep updated with immigration law and educate students and families on their rights. I've advocated to have informational sessions from outside agencies to discuss immigration rights for parents.

This SSW's action counteracted racialization processes in schools but were less frequently reported overall.

The findings demonstrate how racialized attitudes manifest through SSW interactions and observations at their schools. We found a range of racial attitudes toward immigrants. Racial attitudes are part of the fabric of racialized organizations, and because of this, have the capacity to reproduce inequality or promote equity. We found SSWs to be perceptive of how the macro, meso, and micro nested contexts were racialized. The racial attitudes that manifest through SSWs interactions in schools varied in their level of criticality, which can be problematic for supporting immigrant students. Despite some ad hoc actions that counteracted racialization, we raise the concern about racial attitudes and their propensity to influence actions and reproduce inequality in schools, particularly when trauma is misunderstood as an individual deficit rather than the result of systemic oppression.

Discussion

This study's examination of SSWs' perceptions of the racialized contexts of reception makes a critical contribution to the field. Our project elucidates SSWs' perceptions of the impact of racialization processes across different contexts in which SSW carry out their work and how they disrupt them or are limited by them. Returning to our research questions, we answered how SSWs perceive the macro, meso, and micro racialized and NCOR, and how their racial attitudes reflect, in some cases, the racial attitudes embedded in their schools and communities. Our analysis suggests that these contexts are often in flux as new policies emerge. These factors change how immigrant students experience NCOR—and how SSWs perceive and understand what these contexts are and why they matter. Many respondents referenced Trump-era policy shifts and anti-immigrant sentiment that accompanied his time in office. SSWs must be aware of how micro, meso, and macro contexts are shifting so that they can better respond to the evolving ways that immigrant students are racialized as a result. We also showed how SSW actions counteract and complicate the racialized organizations where they work. By asking and exploring these research questions with a unique data set from SSWs, we contribute to existing literature on how educators' awareness of the impact of contexts of reception and actions support or hinder immigrant students in schools. Next, we discuss the usefulness of racialized NCOR, SSWs perception across these racialized NCOR, and impact of their micro-level interactions in schools.

First, the utility of this NCOR framework provides a way to understand how SSWs perceive the impact of racial discrimination in policies and practices across intersecting contexts of reception. SSWs navigate these racialized NCOR as they work to serve immigrant students and families as schools respond to both the federal context of racialized immigration policies and the local policies. Following Ray's (2019) concept of racialized organizations, we examined SSWs perceptions across nested, macro, meso, and micro contexts—both SSWs' perceptions of these forces and how they are interrelated. We call for understanding how racialized organizations maintain the unequal distribution of social and material resources, and often mask these detrimental practices through formal pro-equity rhetoric, "commonsense logic" or "race evasive discourses" about perceptions of immigrants' academic aspirations and acumen, need for English proficiency, and false narratives about integration (Hurie & Callahan, 2019). At times, the reliance on logic that these are individual deficits of immigrant students rather than structural forms of racial oppression was evident. Within nested, racialized organizations, racial attitudes and ideologies circulate and manifest through actions that either reproduce inequality or disrupt it (Conchas et al., 2020).

At the macro level, which Ray (2019) refers to as the racial state, SSWs perceived immigration enforcement (ICE), governed by U.S. Department of Homeland Security with expanded power under the Patriot Act, as a major factor impeding on immigrants' lives. At the meso, community and school level, SSWs named specific practices through local law enforcement cooperation with ICE through 287g programs and community surveillance, and a lack of "care" from school districts about immigrant equity. Importantly, SSWs identified macro- and meso-level forces and yet not always identified micro-interactional level racial attitudes of their own even if they could recognize it in other personnel in their schools. This is a key aspect of utilizing Ray's (2019) framework because actors operate within racialized systems and are often caught up in racially blind or evasive discourses and practices to protect themselves and to avoid complicity and responsibility (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Hurie & Callahan, 2019).

At the micro level, we observed SSWs' racial attitudes: conflating structural constraints with cultural values, linking discipline and criminality with immigrants, and trauma-informed approaches as racial blindness. We examined these racial attitudes because they are part of racialized organizations and can help critical personnel promote equity or reproduce inequality through service delivery and decision making. In many instances, SSWs' racial attitudes and awareness shaped how they served immigrant students, and in other cases, we found some of the deficit-based discourses to be prevalent and potentially detrimental.

Second, we found that SSWs' racial attitudes were critical for serving immigrant students. This finding relates to our third research question about how SSWs' actions counteract racial attitudes and racialization processes toward immigrants. At times, their efforts to support immigrant students countered the impact of racialization at the school level and challenged the bias and deficit thinking by teachers or other school staff. Some SSWs engaged in advocacy to support immigrant students outside of school, such as writing letters of support for parents in deportation proceedings. These activities aimed to thwart the impact of a hostile nested context of reception experienced by immigrant students. Other SSWs in our sample supported immigrant students by carving out safe spaces within schools, providing legal resources about immigrant rights for parents, and directing immigrant families to available services in the community. In a few cases, SSWs utilized creative strategies such as creating networks of adult support for unaccompanied minors or even transporting immigrant children or family members out of a neighborhood in efforts to avoid detention. Such actions are also explained in light of the SSW's perception of how the nested context of reception affects immigrant students.

Implications

While the immigration policy landscape evolves and immigrants' fear increases, many SSWs displayed awareness of racialized policies and practices that influenced their

actions. The variety of actions SSWs engage in as they advocate for immigrant students demonstrates the consequences of schools as racialized contexts of reception. This "ad hoc" advocacy has been documented in the literature about how educators support undocumented students, and the risk of such approaches (Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2020). Instead, scholars have called for increasing policy awareness for SBP, specifically as it concerns the educational and social rights of vulnerable immigrant students, demanding that schools remain protected spaces. This includes protection from negative racial attitudes that perpetuate exclusion (Dabach, 2015; Jefferies, 2014).

For SSWs, navigating a racialized school context can require finding ways around school policies, such as the SSW who enlisted the help of other parents in the community to provide transportation, food, and emotional support—without letting the school know that such interventions were happening to avoid being told such actions were not permissible. Not surprisingly, SSWs, even if they acknowledged the needs or challenges immigrant students face felt constrained in their schools or districts. SSWs in schools with less support face isolation, frustration, or burn out. As one SSW stated, "I am always working to make our school a better place for immigrant students, but it is hard when it is such a big school and the whole community isn't working to make the place more welcoming." These sentiments were common as SSWs worked in isolation at times to serve immigrant students. As we continue to learn from critical SBP, we call for interrogating racialization processes in NCOR. These processes, sometimes overt or subtle, impede immigrant mobility and belonging. Our contribution to the fields of social work and education illustrates the need to understand SSWs perceptions in order to potentially reduce inequality for immigrant students in racialized organizations. However, future research ought to continue to interrogate racial attitudes and racialization processes in schools and interactions.

Conclusion

Immigrant students face systemic exclusion in the schools. Schools are racialized institutions that can compound the hostile reception that immigrants experience from other spheres, which limits access to resources. The hostility radiates from multiple sources located in various nested contexts: the threat of deportation and other harsh enforcement practices, xenophobia, and racism at the federal, state, community, and school levels.

We built on the notion of NCOR to better understand how contexts are racialized (Ray, 2019; Rodriguez, 2021). Our data show how SSWs perceive the impact of these layered contexts on immigrant access, mobility, and belonging, and then make decisions about how to promote equity for immigrants. These social workers understand that these contexts can lead to different educational outcomes and social mobility for immigrant students. However, we also show how SSWs' racial attitudes and ideologies manifest in the articulation of their understandings of the contexts. Future research should continue to leverage tools to examine the interaction of NCOR and not shy away from importantly uncovering racial attitudes that influence individuals' actions to advance racial and social justice for immigrant students.

Appendix

We determined scale reliability prior to selecting our focus on the open-ended responses for this article. The survey was composed of five sections: (1) school context, (2) immigrant population served, (3) social worker perceptions of the impact of immigration enforcement on students and their families, (4) institutional context/culture and the social worker's role, and (5) the social worker's identity. We developed the following three scales: (A) Social Workers' Perception of the Impact of Immigration Enforcement Scale (nine items), (B) Social Workers' Extent of Action Scale (16 items), and (C) Social Workers' Perceptions of Local Support Scale (six items).

The first scale, *Social Workers' Extent of Action Scale*, included 16 items that related to the various actions social workers might be expected to take as they work with immigrant students and their families. Initial scale analyses suggested a sufficient level of internal consistency with a reliability estimate (Cronbach's α) of .878. Most of these items were related to direct services provided to immigrant students and families (i.e., attending IEP [individualized education program] meetings, making home visits, assisting with school registration, providing mental health counseling, etc.). Other items on this scale related to actions social workers took to refer immigrant students and families to external services (i.e., legal, counseling, mental health, and medical services). In an effort to gauge the extent to which social workers engaged with immigrant students and families in these ways, responses were provided on a 4-point Likert-type scale with 1 = *never*, 2 = *almost never*, 3 = *sometime*s, and 4 = *frequently*.

The second scale, *Social Workers' Perception of the Impact of Immigration Enforcement Scale* included nine items that focused on the extent to which social workers perceived enforcement efforts (i.e., efforts to apprehend, detain, and/or deport immigrants) to affect students at their school and their families. More specifically, these items asked about impacts related to increased student absences, behavioral and/or emotional problems, and academic challenges as well as expressions of concern by students, families, and schools. With relation to each item, social workers were asked indicate the extent to which they perceived each of impacts as occurring within their school on a 4-point Likert-type scale with 1 = *no*, 2 = *a little*, 3 = *some*, and 4 = *a lot*. Items marked as "Do not know" were treated as missing.

Initial scale analyses suggested a high level of internal consistency with a reliability estimate (Cronbach's α) of .901. The third scale, *Social Workers' Perception of Support Scale* measured the extent to which social workers' felt supported in the schools and districts they worked within as they worked to meet the needs of immigrant students and their families. Specifically, the six items on this scale asked about the support provided by district offices, school administration, classroom teachers, guidance counselors or school psychologists, front office staff, and other social workers in their school or district. Initial scale analyses suggested an adequate level of internal consistency with a reliability estimate (Cronbach's α) of .839. Once valid responses were identified for inclusion in the survey data analysis, multiple imputation was used to handle missing data. For valid cases on each scale, missing responses were imputed using the multiple imputation procedure in IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 26. Variables related to social workers' backgrounds (i.e., years of experience, gender, and ethnicity) and the schools they worked in (i.e., urbanicity, school level, and geographical) were used as predictors in the imputation process. Furthermore, since an initial review of the missingness in the data suggested that there were some patterns, monotonicity was not assumed during the imputation procedures. Following these imputation procedures, estimates of the internal consistencies of the three scales were recomputed and the results indicated that all three scales remained sufficiently reliable. We share this as context for the survey

Open Practices

The data and analysis files for this article can be found at: https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/157741/version/V1/view

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Notes

1. Without administrative support in schools, SSWs engaged in serving minoritized populations can expect to experience resistance from colleagues or school leaders if working in a school that has not yet begun to address issues of structural racism. There is limited scholarship regarding the racial identity of the social work practitioners and how it shapes their practice. Fletcher (1997) and Goode-Cross (2011) examine the impact that practitioners of color have for same-race clients. Practitioners of color may hold higher awareness of the impact of historical and current oppression and discrimination on client behavior (Goode-Cross, 2011). Green et al. (2005) explored the racial attitudes of White social workers noting that while White social workers were generally positive about racial–cultural diversity, their actions and affective attitudes suggested a different view. For example, White social workers were more ambivalent in supporting affirmative action, reluctant to express a desire to have close relationships with people of color, and 12% of the sample ($N = 257$) did not believe that racism continued to be a major problem. Given the previous literature, we anticipate that White SSWs and SSWs of color may have different levels of awareness of the immigration policy and enforcement contexts and may be willing to take different levels of risk to support immigrant students (Rodriguez et al., 2021). The racial identity of SSWs may affect their perceptions of immigration enforcement and its impact and, in turn, the support they provide immigrant students (Ee & Gándara, 2020). Future analyses will be conducted.

2. During data cleaning, we excluded cases by scale such that those cases missing more than one third of the responses for a particular scale were excluded from analyses relating to that scale. The number of responses required per scale were as follows: 11 of 16 the items on the social worker actions scale, six of the nine items on the enforcement scale, and four of six the items on the support scale. Any case that met these criteria on at least one of the three scales was included in the final subset used during data analysis. This resulted in a total of 336 cases in the data analysis subset, with 310 valid responses on the actions scale, 304 on the enforcement scale, and 311 on the support scale. This explains the variation in *N*s in our survey data analysis. For the data set in this article, 120 out of the 517 responded to the open-ended survey questions.

3. The survey's close-coded questions addressed domains such student demographics, barriers to equity, and the scope of SSW activities.

4. In our statistical analysis, which we report elsewhere, we examined regional differences prior to this article and found no regional differences in our statistical analysis, and yet in the open-ended responses, SSWs reported more complex examples of the state-level policies and impact of immigration enforcement surveillance, particularly in southeastern states. We did not have sufficient quantitative data to support this, so we examined the open-ended responses to reveal the complexity of SSW perceptions of regional differences.

5. While space limits us from providing additional data about how SSWs characterized trauma as a key factor that shapes immigrants' experiences, we note here that 15% of our respondents in the open-ended comments referred to trauma explicitly or implicitly by explaining the impact of family separation and deportation. Of the 33 comments in our data set, this SSWs' response reflects the role of trauma in immigrants' everyday lives. She said, "Some of my school families are currently dealing with deportation letters and state/federal legal requirements. Other families are already facing immediate deportations. The family unit is also greatly affected by deportation. Many school families has been divided as result of deportations. These impacts extend beyond the nuclear family to grandparents and other relatives. Many students have experienced behavioral changes in eating and sleeping habits, and emotional changes such as increased crying, anxiety, anger, aggression, withdrawal, and a heightened sense of fear, difficulty concentrating and the ability to do school work. The number of students in our school has been declining for several months now, in some cases, due to family deportations. My work has been impacted by trying to address family separation that leads mainly to mental health illness in our students, which impacts not only the student's learning abilities but family relationships as well."

6. For organizational purposes, we discuss the interrelatedness of these nested contexts and then talk through the macro, meso, and micro contexts. SSWs perceive the interrelationship of these levels.

7. In U.S. immigration law (INA § 212(a)(4)), the public charge rule can affect an individual's visa or adjustment of status (ILRC [Immigrant Legal Resource Center] report). The term "public charge" has historically been interpreted to refer to receipt of public cash assistance or dependence on long-term, government-sponsored care. In 2018, however, the Trump administration proposed changes to the rule to include other benefits, including health care and nutrition programs.

8. Elsewhere, we analyzed the relationships between SSW race/ethnicity and the extent of actions. We found slight differences between social workers of color and White social workers. We found social workers of color tended to have more awareness of the immigration of immigration enforcement and how racialization affected the everyday actions of immigrant students. This was consistent with the limited previous literature on the topic; it is rare in the social work research to report about social workers of color given that 70% of the profession is White female. Social workers of color in our sample reported a more nuanced understanding of marginalized groups, and have a greater awareness of how historical and current experiences of oppression can contribute to the problem or affect client behavior (Goode-Cross, 2011). The perceived impact of support may be more important to practitioners of color as they face particular risks in school settings, navigating microaggressions they experience from colleagues as well as the racialized experiences of students. We share this aspect of our data set as context.

9. Another example of SSW perceptions was when a SSW from New York said: "For 2 years there was a pervasive anxiety, uneasiness in our community. However, our city and county took an active stance against ICE and Trump's immigration policy. We declared ourselves a sanctuary city/county. We held town meetings and our fire/police officials affirmed that immigrants were safe. Nonetheless, it has been an uphill battle to grow parent participation."

10. The data showed only 15% of respondents mention trauma, so we are limited insofar as other SSWs did not mention trauma as a factor. We think this is important that when it was discussed in 33 comments, it was complicated or it was not discussed at all in the 1,738 comments we received in the open-ended responses, which supported our decision to refer to the trauma argument as racialized blindness. The absence of discussing trauma is important for SSWs actions. Other educational researchers have even referred to this as evasiveness. For example, Hurie and Callahan (2019) use Flores and Rosa's (2015) "raciolinguistic ideologies" framework (p. 21) and concept of the "white listening subject" (p. 9). Raciolinguistic ideologies refer to the degree of variation in how speakers are valued which is contingent on racialization processes; the White listening subject is defined by their tendency to "hear" deficiency in anything vocalized by a person of color. Hurie and Callahan's (2019) findings suggest the entrenchment of institutional structures in schools and programs for Latinx immigrant students labeled as language learners. In effect, centering language learning and integration discourses such as the SSWs in our study, this is an attempt to frame the discourse in racially neutral terms, which reveals the underlying structure of "whitestreaming" (p. 8). White epistemology dominates race evasive discourses and allows school actors to remain uncritical of structural inequities.

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