



The Impact of Disasters among Latinx Undergraduates in California

Graduate School of Education

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Research Purpose:

- Despite the increasing effects of hurricanes and other hazards on university and college campuses over the past decade, little attention has been paid to the impacts on and disaster-related experiences of Latinx undergraduate students in the United States (Kaiser, Sattler, Bellack, & Dersin, 1996; Ladd, Marszalek, & Gill, 2006; Rivera, 2012).
- Research Questions:**
- How do Latinx undergraduates in California define and describe the phenomena of disaster?
 - How do Latinx undergraduates in California describe the impact of disaster in higher education?

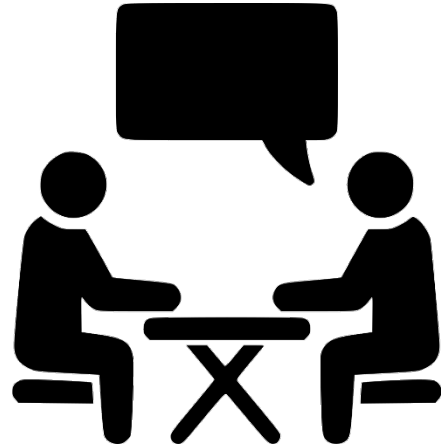
Research Rationale:

- Due to the recent increase in disasters such as COVID-19, it has been established by many researchers that there is minimal research on the effects of disasters on college students (Copeland et al., 2021). However, there has not been a great number of disasters that have impacted college students. Thus, our work is to analyze the role that disaster capitalism plays and how does it impact Latinx undergraduate students.


Methodology:

- Phenomenological Methodology**
- Goal:** *Understand how participants describe “what” and “how” they experienced a common event, feeling, and/or state of being (Moustaskas, 1994).*
- Participant Eligibility:**
- Identify as a Latinx college student who has experienced a disaster (ex. hurricane, pandemic, earthquake, wildfires)
 - Currently reside in the United States
 - Currently enrolled at an accredited not-for profit institution of higher education in the United States.

- Data Collection & Analysis**
- Semi-structured interviews ranging from 45 to 60 minutes, allowed respondents to provide factual knowledge and opinions on the phenomena of disaster (Patton, 2002).
 - We employed elaborate coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)
 - We applied disaster capitalism (Klein, 2007; Bonilla & LeBrón, 2019) allowing for theories to be further complexed from disaster and effect.



IRB:Arts and Sciences IRB APPROVED: Study ID:Pro20000100



Are you a Latinx/a/o undergraduate student that has experienced or currently experiencing a disaster?



CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE:

- Identify as a Latinx/a/o or Hispanic Origin undergraduate
- Is experiencing or has experienced a disaster such as a hurricane, pandemic (COVID-19), earthquake, and/or wild fire
- Currently reside in the United States
- Currently enrolled at an accredited not-for profit university, college or community college in the United States.

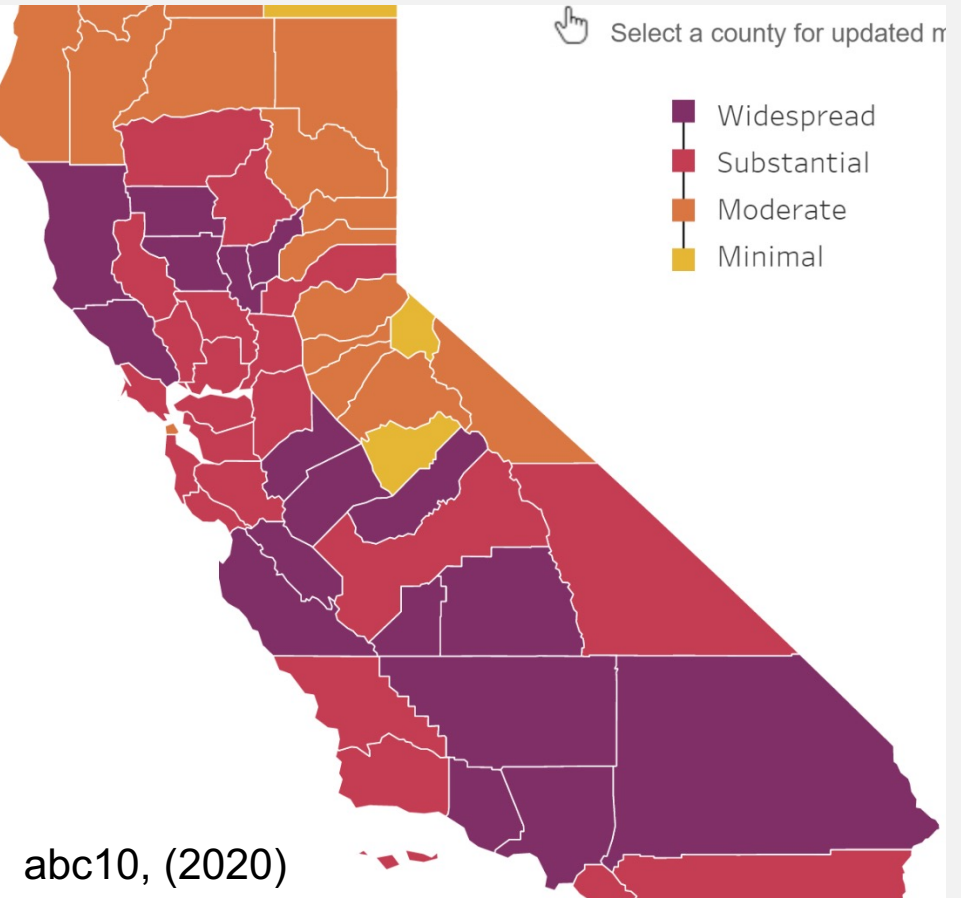
PARTICIPATION INCLUDES:

- A virtual online interview for up to 60 minutes


IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT: NICHOLE M GARCIA, PHD AT NICHOLE.GARCIA@GSE.RUTGERS.EDU OR SCAN QR CODE



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Preliminary Findings:

- Participants**
- Roman** - 22-year-old, Chicano, undergraduate senior Criminal Justice major, California State University system in Southern California.
 - Isset** - 21-year-old, Chicana, undergraduate senior Kinesiology major at a private college in Southern California.
 - Laura** - 19-year-old, Chicana, first-generation undergraduate sophomore, Economics major at a community college in Southern California.

- Q1:** (Re)defining disaster beyond resilience
- Participants defined disaster as anything that affects you and the people you care about mentally, emotionally, and physically.

- Q2:** There were psychosocial, social, and academic development effects discussed in participants. Students were led to experience these effects:
- High levels of stress and depression
 - Coping (adaptive/maladaptive)
 - Little to no institutional support
 - Peer to peer support
 - Major and career choice

Quotes:

- Isset** - “I define a disaster as something that can affect you both. I want to say, mentally, but also like I guess, physically, in a sense, because I know there are some disasters that can lead to house loss or financial issues. But I also know certain disasters can affect you mentally as a person.”
- Laura** - “I don't have that set schedule, and it was just really overwhelming and it's really easy for me to work and be like, I'm I don't want to eat, or I don't want to do anything else until this is done. But clearly, there's just a ton of tasks for me to do, then it's like, Okay, well then, when do you get up and eat and do these things? So, I lost like 10 pounds within the first month and got a little bit sick after that, it was then where I was like okay. I need a break. I need to get out of here. Like, I'm physically like I'm losing my mind and getting sick. I literally have lost 10 pounds and I'm tiny like weigh 125 and went down to 115. And I've only been able to gain like three pounds back from that”
- Roman** - Dr. Garcia - “Do your professors do anything that you feel like it's working for you or that may be innovative?” Roman - “No.” Dr. Garcia - “Nothing you enjoy?” Roman - “I don't want to say it like that, but it's just... like I said, I'm not learning. I don't care what I'm learning, sadly anymore. I used to, but now since everything is so focused on a grade. I just want to get my grades.” “And I say that because me personally, I feel like I'm hitting the threshold of learning that I'm tired, I'm done.”

Discussion:

- As the United States faces a changing demography in which the Latinx population is the largest ethnic group;
 - Research in higher education must be compelled to prepare to enroll, retain, and matriculate this student population
 - For Latinx communities a rising fear, anxiety, language barriers, limited access to health care, and basic necessities has only widened the educational achievement gap for K-20+ educational settings.
- Our research argues that disaster is not an isolated process, in fact, for the Latinx population it has historically been an on-going process that illuminates the structural violence of inequities.*

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