

**ON THE ROUTES OF LATINX
AMERICAN MIGRATION IN
THE UNITED STATES:
ETHNOGRAPHIES,
NARRATIVES, AND
CITIZENSHIP OF
UNDOCUMENTED
IMMIGRANTS**

**NAS ROTAS DA MIGRAÇÃO LATINA NOS ESTADOS UNIDOS:
ETNOGRAFIAS, NARRATIVAS E CIDADANIA DE IMIGRANTES
INDOCUMENTADOS**

Ciências Humanas • 30/05/2026

REGISTRO DOI: [10.70773/revistatopicos/779999790](https://doi.org/10.70773/revistatopicos/779999790)

Josué Carlos Souza dos Santos¹

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of fieldwork conducted between October and December 2025 in the cities of Palo Alto, Redwood City, and San Francisco, in the state of California, United States of America (USA), using qualitative and participatory research, including participant observation, field notes, and ethnography. The overall objective of this work is to identify the practices of welcoming and social integration offered to migrants and immigrants in the Bay Area, specifically the educational strategies for survival and local adaptation adopted by undocumented immigrants. Articulating ethnographic writing, narratives of experience, and theoretical foundations of the human sciences, this study is divided into two parts, this first part containing the initial considerations that will form the basis of the second part. The results show the fundamental importance of immigrants' reference-groups, language as a device of resistance, adaptation, and survival in the host nation (especially Spanglish), and the centrality of fieldwork in the course of the investigation.

Keywords: Education; Latin American Immigration; Citizenship; Ethnography; Field Research.

RESUMO

Este trabalho apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa de campo que ocorreu entre outubro e dezembro de 2025 nas cidades de Palo Alto, Redwood City e São Francisco, no estado da Califórnia, nos Estados Unidos da América (EUA), por meio de pesquisa qualitativa e participatória, utilizando observação participante, anotações em diário de campo e etnografia. O objetivo geral deste trabalho é identificar as práticas de acolhimento e integração social oferecidas a migrantes e imigrantes na Área da Baía, especificamente as estratégias educacionais de sobrevivência e adaptação local

adotadas por imigrantes indocumentados. Articulado escrita etnográfica, narrativas de experiência e fundamentos teóricos das ciências humanas, este estudo divide-se em duas partes, sendo essa a primeira com as considerações iniciais que serão a base da parte dois. Os resultados mostram a importância fundamental dos grupos-referência dos imigrantes, a língua como dispositivo de resistência, adaptação e sobrevivência na nação de acolhida (especialmente o *Spanglish*) e a centralidade da pesquisa de campo no decurso da investigação.

Palavras-chave: Educação; Imigração Latino-Americana; Cidadania; Etnografia; Pesquisa de Campo.

1. INTRODUCTION

How to write an ethnography that traverses experience and, through it, tells a story that bridges research, science, and life? How to articulate practical, everyday knowledge with the theoretical foundations of authors in the humanities, especially those in Education who work with narratives as experience and ethnographies as a scientific method?

Complex questions that generate equally complex possible answers. In order to understand them, just as with the foundations of phenomenological research, which does not specifically seek ready-made answers but rather the understanding of phenomena through analysis, reflection, and interdisciplinary dialogue, I sought in field research the possibility of understanding the context of Latinx immigrants in the United States of America, specifically in the Bay Area region of California, using as our research *corpus*, that is, the instrument used for data collection, ethnographic research and field findings (notes, tables, and other collections).

Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, the state of California, in the United States of America (USA), received successive waves of Latin American migrants, particularly Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans, who today constitute a significant portion of the population in some of its regions (Pew Research Center, 2025). In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was approved during the Ronald Reagan administration, allowing a large number of undocumented immigrants to have their immigration status regularized by the state. During this period, this law allowed undocumented individuals who had been living in the USA before January 1, 1982, to apply for legal residency (*green card*) and subsequently for American citizenship through naturalization.

Along the routes of this migration, cities have become migrant cities, an inter/multicultural space composed of cultures that move between language, cuisine, flags, ways of seeing the world and interacting with it, communication, educational practices, and community development.

Thus, the research question is: how do non-formal education practices develop in California in the reception of Latinx immigrants?

In order to understand the phenomenon of this migration and its unfolding consequences, this work will be presented in two parts. In this first part, the focus will be on presenting the context of the research and the socio-historical bases of this migration, that is, in the context of California and the San Francisco Bay Area, in the first part of the ethnography with the wanderings through the city and the linguistic considerations, and finally on the specific issues of

different migratory statuses under U.S. law (naturalization, Permanent Resident Card - *green card* holders, etc.).

Data collection took place between October and December 2025 in the cities of Palo Alto, Redwood City, and San Francisco, in the state of California, in the United States of America, and its main methodology was field research based on the principles of Malinowski (1976) and Geertz (1989), which show the unique characteristics of this type of research: the researcher's on-site immersion, spending time with the research subjects building relationships, experiences, and mutual understanding, the dense and in-depth description of their lifestyles in a field diary, and participant observation. This research method revolutionized Anthropology – and other human sciences that adopted ethnography as a method, such as Education – by shifting from armchair anthropology, where researchers described peoples and cultures based on navigation charts and other bibliographic findings from navigators, missionaries, and travelers, but without ever having been with the subjects, to participant observation, that is, the insertion of the researcher into the living environment of the subjects where they live their lives and produce their own ways of seeing and giving meaning to the world, as Silva (2015) points out.

In this sense, this work constitutes an account of experience and at the same time presents the results of a research project on immigration. It is identified as qualitative, ethnographic, and participatory research, and its primary source of research is the researchers' ethnography, articulating field findings with renowned authors in the humanities and data collected in the field, especially regarding the institutions that welcome immigrants in the researched regions. This text, written in the first person but with

other contributions, contains multiple voices, moments, and movements: a multidisciplinary presentation of the results of this investigation.

2. THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF MIGRATIONS AND FIELDWORK

Ethnographic research occupies a central place in the human and social sciences because it constitutes a form of investigation that fits into different areas of knowledge, such as anthropology, sociology, education, human rights, among others. Ethnography consolidated itself from anthropology as an approach focused on understanding the meanings and experiences produced by subjects in their contexts and daily lives, articulating observation, participation, listening, and analytical writing. Fieldwork assumes centrality in this approach, a fundamental methodological and epistemological importance because it is where knowledge emerges from the relationship built between the researcher and the research subjects.

The classic constitution of ethnography finds one of its main founding landmarks in Bronislaw Malinowski. In 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific', originally published in 1922, the author presents a research experience conducted among the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia, describing social practices, economic relations, rituals, and forms of cultural organization. The work inaugurates a specific mode of anthropological knowledge production, based on the researcher's prolonged stay with the studied groups, direct observation of daily practices, and the systematic elaboration of field diary entries. The ethnographic experience formulated by Malinowski establishes in situ insertion as the foundation of the investigation, allowing the researcher to follow

the rhythms of social life, share experiences, and understand the meanings attributed by the subjects to their actions.

By addressing the exchange system known as Kula, Malinowski demonstrates that social phenomena transcend exclusively economic and materialistic explanations, articulating symbolic, affective, political, and cosmological dimensions. The maritime journeys undertaken by the so-called 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific' express complex networks of reciprocity, prestige, and alliances between different island communities. The detailed description of these practices highlights the relevance of participant observation as a methodological procedure capable of bringing the researcher closer to the experiences lived by the subjects in their cultural contexts. In this way, the author constructed his analyses based on observation (participant observation, since he was often invited – or rather, summoned – to participate in their rituals and other daily contacts of the local culture) and writing in a research diary. The author points out the following:

On my morning walk through the village, I could observe intimate details of family life – the natives doing their toilette, cooking, eating; I could observe the preparations for the day's work, people going to carry out their tasks. [...] The field ethnographer must analyze with seriousness and moderation all the phenomena that characterize each aspect of tribal culture without privileging those that cause him more admiration or strangeness to the detriment of common and routine facts (Malinowski, 1976, pp. 25-28, our translation).

In this sense, ethnography is constituted through relationships built between participants in the daily routine of the research. The time shared between researcher and interlocutors' fosters the creation of bonds, mutual experiences, and forms of trust that enable access to the symbolic dimensions of social life. Daily interaction broadens the understanding of lifestyles, forms of collective organization, cultural practices, and the meanings attributed to individual and community experiences. Ethnographic writing emerges from this relational and reflective process as a product of research experience, contact, and phenomenology, with the field diary serving as a space for recording observations, impressions, narratives, dialogues, gestures, silences, and events observed during fieldwork.

Clifford Geertz's perspective significantly broadens the understanding of ethnography by emphasizing culture as a web of meanings produced by social subjects themselves. In 'The Interpretation of Cultures' (Geertz, 1989), the author proposes that

the task of ethnography consists of interpreting the symbolic systems present in human practices, seeking to understand the meanings that organize social experience. Ethnography thus acquires a hermeneutic (interpretive) character, in which the researcher interprets the phenomena produced by subjects in their daily relationships.

The notion of 'dense description' formulated by Geertz, occupies a central place in this perspective. Dense description corresponds to the elaboration of in-depth and contextualized analyses of cultural practices, considering the multiple meanings present in gestures, discourses, rituals, and forms of social interaction. Ethnographic work goes beyond the simple factual description of events and seeks to understand the cultural meanings inscribed in human actions. Each social practice is interpreted in connection with the symbolic, historical, and collective contexts in which it is produced, like a web of multiple meanings. According to Geertz (1989):

The ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse: he notes it down. In doing so, he transforms it from a past event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into a narrative, which exists in its inscription, and which can be consulted again (Geertz, 1989, p. 29, our translation).

From this perspective, ethnography articulates different methodological procedures that allow for an approach to the universes investigated. Interviews, informal conversations, participation in collective events, rituals, celebrations, and daily

activities make up a set of experiences that enrich the production of anthropological and social knowledge.

In this way, ethnographic research constitutes an approach deeply committed to lived experience, to the interpretation of cultural meanings, and to the construction of knowledge situated in social relations. Prolonged immersion in the field, participant observation, daily coexistence, writing in a field diary, and thick description are fundamental elements of this approach

3. TO BEGIN WITH: NAMES AND IN-BETWEEN PLACES IN LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRATION

- "*Lo que se ve no se puede ocultar*" ('What is seen cannot be hidden').

Latina immigrant, approximately 30 years old.

The woman who greeted me at the checkout of a well-known pharmacy chain in Redwood City, where I had been buying some groceries, served me in Spanish without even knowing me. It was the first time we had met, and her first words to me were: "*¿Desea algo más, señor?*" ('Is there anything else you'd like, sir?') and I reply: "*Eso es todo, por favor. Gracias.*" ('That's all, please. Thank you'). And I continue: "*¿Cómo sabes que soy latino?*" ('How do you know I'm Latino?'), to which she adds, smiling: "*Lo que se ve no se puede ocultar*" ('What is seen cannot be hidden').

I have been to the United States of America several times before, and whenever I travel I seek to understand places and people through the non-traditional, what lies beyond tourist itineraries and pre-planned, timed experiences. In this new trip, within the context of academic research, ethnographies and narratives walked hand in

hand, composing experiences where the investigation is conducted through the researcher's perspective and the voices of the subjects who inhabit the space-time of the research.

The overall goal is to identify the reception and social integration practices offered to migrants and immigrants in the Bay Area, specifically the educational survival and local adaptation strategies adopted by undocumented immigrants. The period of 2025-2026 was marked by intense political developments in the U.S., including police raids, mass deportations, citizenship revocations, and asylum claims, in addition to other issues related to immigrant rights. In this context, specific social groups such as immigrants need institutional support and allies who offer legal assistance and other types of support, guiding them through complex immigration laws, reception in the host country, and other forms of support such as training, health, and nutrition.

The debate regarding the correct terminology to use when referring to people who migrate under forced conditions is broad and complex. According to Aydos *et al.* (2008), the differences between someone who is forced to migrate and someone who moves voluntarily are necessarily the particular experiences and needs that an individual possesses. In this context, considering the many facets of migratory displacement that include refugees, migrants, immigrants, and others involving legal, social, and anthropological issues, we opted for the term immigrant, understanding it to mean a person who moves between nations in search of better economic opportunities and survival.

The Bay Area encompasses 9 counties and 101 cities in the state of California, divided into North Bay, East Bay, and South Bay. The main

counties include Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, the city and county of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara.

The specific area of coverage of the study is Santa Clara County, where Stanford University is located, and some neighboring counties, such as San Mateo County. The chosen area of coverage, as well as the configuration of the participating subjects, that is, Latinx immigrants, is justified by the large percentage of Latino people who live in these areas, known as the Latinx community.

In 2015, a demographic study by Ximénez de Sandoval (2015) found that Latinos/as constituted the largest population group in California, a group that includes Hispanics of Latin origin and is divided into distinct groups such as whites, blacks, and indigenous people. According to the study, California is a state frequently used as a benchmark for long-term trends in the United States, as it is the most populous (38.8 million inhabitants) and the richest (with a Gross Domestic Product - GDP equivalent to that of Brazil), according to information from the 2015 census.

Ten years after that study – and in the present day – "for the first time in history, one in five residents in the United States is Latino" (RTP, 2025). Considering a total population of 340 million people in the United States, this recent study, based on Census data, revealed some interesting data. Of this population, the Latino community represents 4.5 million people, registering a record annual increase of 5.5% in the Latino workforce until 2024, reaching 35.1 million workers (between 2020 and 2024). At the same time, in contrast to these data, in the first six months of Donald Trump's administration, the

United States lost 1.4 million immigrants, marking the first decline in the immigrant population since the 1960s (RTP, 2025).

During the many trips made within California during the aforementioned period (October to December 2025, also known as the Autumn Quarter), in the region encompassing the Bay Area, polarizations such as the emerging race for the most robust Artificial Intelligence and/or the next big idea that will generate a new major enterprise like Google, Apple, or Microsoft – debates that inhabit the professional, academic, and local media spheres – contrast with the controversial developments of current US politics under the administration of a politician who possesses an extremist organizational structure, with strong values of the traditional right, neo-nationalist, Republican, and who sees in the MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement an ascent to a modern dictatorship, where economic protectionism, colonialist actions, and policies against minorities, such as immigrants and the LGBT community, gain strength and assume the identity of this necropolitics.

The paths I've taken have allowed me to realize that the Spanish inhabit the streets, sharing the space with English. This language is perceived in the signs of shops, in the speakers on street corners, in street signs and in institutions, sometimes complementing each other, at other times clashing, forming a new way of speaking and communicating, a linguistic variant legitimized by its own speakers, *Spanglish*.

According to Lima (2019), Spanglish, that is, the joining of the words 'Spanish' and 'English' (which also articulates the joining of the two languages), represents the result of contact between languages, a

mixture and/or alternation in the same socio-communicative situation. The author says that:

Spanglish has become increasingly a symbol of resistance and belonging, as it represents not only a "different" way of speaking, but also reveals a stance, the projection of a new identity, in which the preservation and legitimation of distinct linguistic uses become possible (Lima, 2019, p. 129, our translation).

In addition to Spanish and English, it is important to mention that many migrants speak other languages and their variants, such as indigenous languages, which become the basis of their culture and their worldview, especially those coming from southern Mexico and Central America, as is the case with the Mixtec, Purépecha, K'iche' Maya, and other peoples. Furthermore, considering the distinct migrations that articulate culture, language, race, and ethnicity, it would be fundamental to consider, in a future study, the specific challenges faced by indigenous peoples when migrating to another country, taking into account specificities that may resemble those of non-indigenous peoples in some aspects, but differ in many others.

Through my experiences at Stanford University and in other settings, I initially sought to understand what life is like for Latino immigrants in America, including those who are in the process of regularizing their status, also called undocumented immigrants. To this end and considering that the topic is particularly sensitive in necropolitical times, I sought as a strategy to immerse ourselves in local immigrant

reception institutions in order to fulfill this research objective and at the same time understand how the institutional reception of these people occurs.

Necropolitics is a term coined in the human and social sciences, which we adopt here because we consider it a concept that illustrates the current North American political scenario. According to Mbembe (2018), when the State dictates who should live and who should die, whether in a physical or immaterial sense, the maneuver is necropolitical. In contemporary times, power structures legitimize certain races/groups and seek to dispossess others, pushing them towards forms of social erasure, delegitimization of basic civil rights, and a collective project of conflict, hardship, and neglect – the ‘worlds of death’ for these individuals, which includes immigrants.

(...) power operates in a diffuse, capillary way, spreading through a social network that includes diverse institutions such as the family, the school, the hospital, the clinic. It is, so to speak, a set of multilateral power relations (Furtado; Camilo, 2016, p. 35 apud Foucault, 1999, our translation).

Following the investigative trails left by these authors, namely Mbembe and Foucault, I understand that this concept of social networks (family, school, among others) dialogues with the concept of reference groups by Gabriel (2011), who defines them in the educational field as those groups that aim to structure a person's way of being, thinking, and acting from their earliest age, and constitute, in fact, references when they are confronted with a

problem in their life, that is, the family, religious, school, professional group, and others depending on the context and life history of the subject.

In this investigation, I also understand that the reference-groups of the immigrants are fundamental to their arrival and stay in the host nation, that is, the United States. These groups structure their ways of moving around the city, feeding themselves, working and earning income, accessing public policies – or participating in them in other ways – and supplementing the elements of their survival.

In the many encounters I had with immigrants, in conversation circles, in citizenship class meetings (to be mentioned later), in academic meetings, and in local businesses, the empirical knowledge that emerges in people's voices, based on their migratory experiences, constitutes scientific knowledge, as it helps to understand how Latinx migration is structured today.

4. MIGRATION CATEGORIES, DOCUMENT REGULARIZATION, AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. immigration system is composed of a multitude of legal categories, administrative devices, and documentary regulatory status mechanisms that produce different forms of permanence and access to rights. In public debate and, at times, even in academic studies, terms such as *green card*, naturalization, documentary regularization, asylum, parole, or TPS appear interchangeably, although they designate quite different legal conditions from each other. In order to better proceed to the more specific analyses of the experience report in part two of this study, it is necessary to understand these different categories that involve

migratory trajectories, border policies, local integration, and educational practices aimed at migrants/immigrants.

First, it is important to understand the differences between immigration status, regularization processes, and citizenship. Immigration status refers to the formal legal condition of a person's permanence before the State. Regularization processes, on the other hand, refer to the legal mechanisms by which an individual can change their immigration status, moving, for example, from irregularity to authorized permanence. Citizenship, in turn, corresponds to the full political-legal bond between an individual and a nation-state, generally obtained by birth or naturalization.

The category "undocumented immigrant" refers to a person who entered the United States without official authorization or who remained in the country after their visa expired. This is a condition of irregular immigration that does not necessarily imply the complete absence of documentation, but rather the absence of valid legal authorization to remain. Several authors point out that the production of "illegal" immigration is also a political and social process, and not just a legal one, marked by racialization, precarious employment, and state surveillance (De Genova, 2002).

The so-called *green card* (officially called the *Permanent Resident Card - PRC*) represents the condition of legal permanent residence (*Lawful Permanent Resident - LPR*). A permanent resident can live and work legally in the United States, access certain benefits, and, after fulfilling temporal and legal requirements, apply for naturalization. Naturalization, therefore, constitutes the legal-administrative process by which a permanent resident becomes a U.S. citizen.

In addition to the categories of permanent residence, there are humanitarian and temporary protection mechanisms. Asylum is granted to individuals persecuted in their countries of origin because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. After a certain period, asylum seekers can apply for permanent residence through the so-called asylum adjustment, that is, the adjustment of status from asylum seeker to permanent resident.

Other mechanisms, however, do not guarantee automatic access to permanent residence. TPS (*Temporary Protected Status*), for example, offers temporary protection against deportation to nationals of countries affected by wars, humanitarian crises, or environmental disasters. Similarly, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) grants temporary protection and work authorization to young people who migrated to the United States as children, but without creating a direct path to citizenship.

There are also discretionary instruments used by the State. Parole consists of a temporary authorization to enter or remain in the country for humanitarian reasons or urgent public interest. Cancellation of removal, on the other hand, is a legal mechanism applied in deportation processes, allowing, under certain circumstances, the cancellation of removal and eventual regularization of stay.

In this context, so-called Citizenship Classes and community-based immigration education programs often serve people in very different legal situations: permanent residents eligible for naturalization, asylum seekers, TPS or DACA beneficiaries, individuals in deportation processes, and undocumented immigrants. These

spaces, therefore, constitute environments for bureaucratic preparation for citizenship exams and also important territories for political education, civic literacy, and the construction of social belonging.

Based on this information, we have prepared a glossary with the main categories and terminologies of the US immigration system:

Table 1. Glossary with the main categories and terminologies of the US Immigration System

Terminology	Other terms used	Definition	Status before the law
Undocumented immigrant	<i>Undocumented immigrant, unauthorized immigrant</i>	A person who entered without official authorization or remained after their visa expired	Irregular immigration status
Document regularization	<i>Legalization, adjustment, immigration relief</i>	Process for obtaining legal authorization to remain in the country	Depending on the process
Green Card	<i>Permanent Resident Card, LPR (Lawful Permanent Resident)</i>	Legal permanent residency document in the USA	Legal permanent residence
Permanent resident	<i>Permanent resident</i>	Person authorized to live and work permanently in the USA	Regular immigration status

Naturalization	<i>Naturalization</i>	The process of obtaining U.S. citizenship	Transition to citizenship
Citizenship	<i>Citizenship</i>	Full political and legal link with the State	U.S. citizen
Asylum	<i>Asylum</i>	Protection granted to people persecuted in their countries of origin	Protected legal stay
Adjustment of status due to asylum.	<i>Asylum adjustment</i>	The process by which asylum seekers apply for permanent residency	Regularization process
TPS	<i>Temporary Protected Status</i>	Temporary protection for nationals of countries in crisis	Regular temporary stay
DACA	<i>Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals</i>	Temporary protection for young migrants who arrived in childhood	Temporary protection
Parole	<i>Humanitarian parole</i>	Temporary authorization to enter or stay for humanitarian reasons	Temporary stay authorized
Cancellation of removal	<i>Cancellation of removal</i>	Legal mechanism that suspends deportation in certain cases	Possible regularization
Deportation	<i>Removal</i>	Process of forced removal from the country	Loss or absence of legal status

Status adjustment	<i>Adjustment of status</i>	Changing from one immigration category to another within the U.S.	Administrative/legal process
-------------------	-----------------------------	---	------------------------------

Source: Author's own elaboration (2026).

5. ENDING WITHOUT A PERIOD: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

How to conclude such a complex, multi-layered subject that continues to unfold in other current events? The writing of this work coincides with various events concerning Latin American immigrants in America, especially undocumented ones, targets of necro-predatory political maneuvers. In an attempt to find some points of closure, I begin this section in the same way I presented the writing of this work and also this investigation: with questions.

Driven by these concerns about the lives of immigrants in America, I chose to approach it from the point of view of political-educational strategies for the local integration of Latinx immigrants in California and divide the study into two parts. In this first part, we presented the theoretical foundation of ethnography, based on Malinowski (1976) and Geertz (1989), which made it possible to understand that ethnography is a theoretical and methodological approach that originated in anthropology but was adopted by other areas of the human and social sciences, becoming established as a scientific theory and method. Then, I discussed the names and in-between spaces of Latin American immigration in the United States, ethnographically documenting the wanderings through the city, the encounters with immigrants, and the possibilities that arose from these perspectives.

Then, I also discussed immigration categories, specific issues of document regularization and citizenship in the United States, which included the development of a glossary with the main categories and terminology of the U.S. immigration system (naturalization, permanent resident card - *green card holders*, among others). In this way, and based on these issues, I arrive at some concluding points.

First, the influence of their reference-groups (Gabriel, 2011) is fundamental to local integration into the host community. Their reference groups are: family, the group established in citizenship classes, friendships with other immigrants, the religious group (considering that many frequent religious spaces such as temples and churches), and the institutional groups formed in the projects they are part of. These groups continue to be support networks for sharing useful survival information, such as opportunities, job openings, free distributions of food and non-food items, and other communications.

Second, language is a mechanism for adaptation in a new culture (learning English) and at the same time represents the survival of other previously practiced cultural elements (practice Spanish). The combination of the two languages identified in the field research, converted into *Spanglish*, becomes simultaneously a linguistic variant and a popular dialect, a new language that represents resistance, adaptation, and survival. As we pointed out earlier, this is also compounded by indigenous languages, the foundation of the culture that guides worldviews and other perspectives on the world, helping to give order and meaning to life.

Thirdly, and finally, field research was central to the development of a mixed, interdisciplinary, and intercultural work that used different

methodologies (ethnography, field findings, bibliographic notes, research diary, theoretical references, etc.), articulating the collected data with Paulo Freire's theory of popular education, to be presented in part two of this study, especially on the theme of conscientization. I believe that there are other questions to be asked and other research possibilities, so these contributions conclude, but do not finalize, since research, like life, moves, shifting between problematizations, contexts, histories, and experiences, such as the migration of these people to a new destination.

REFERENCES

AYDOS, Mariana; BAENINGER, Rosana. DOMINGUEZ, Juliana Arantes. Condições de Vida da População Refugiada no Brasil: trajetórias migratórias e arranjos familiares. *In*: CONGRESO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN LATINOAMERICANA DE POBLACIÓN ALAP, III, 2008. **Anais [...]**. Córdoba - Argentina. Rio de Janeiro: ALAP, 2008. Available at:

http://www.faed.udesc.br/arquivos/id_submenu/1416/artigo_sobre_refugiados_2008_mrj.pdf. Accessed on 15 jan. 2026.

DE GENOVA, Nicholas P. Migrant “Illegality” and Deportability in Everyday Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, v. 31, p. 419–447, 2002. Available at: <https://www.icmigrations.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/De-Genova.pdf>. Accessed on 17 may. 2026.

FOUCAULT, Michael. *Em defesa da sociedade: Curso dado no Collège de France (1975-1976)*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1999.

GABRIEL, Gilvete de Lima. *Narrativa autobiográfica como prática de formação continuada e de atualização de si. Os grupos-referência e*

o grupo reflexivo na mediação da constituição identitária docente. Curitiba: CRV Editora, 2011.

GEERTZ, Clifford. A interpretação das culturas. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara, 1989.

LIMA, Thábata Christina Gomes de. Spanglish: O que é, como surgiu e por que se fala. *In*: SAVEDRA, M. M.; PEREIRA, T. C. A.; GAIO, M. L. M. (Org.). Repertórios Plurilíngues em Situação de Contato. 01 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Edições LCV: LABPEC, 2019, v. 01, p. 129-140. Available at: <https://labpec-uff.com.br/documentos/SAVEDRA-PEREIRA-GAIO%20-%20Repertorios%20Plurilingues%20em%20situacao%20de%20contato.pdf>. Accessed on 14 jan. 2026.

MALINOWSKI, Bronislaw. Argonautas do Pacífico Ocidental. Os pensadores. São Paulo: Abril, 1976.

MBEMBE, Achille. Necropolítica. 3. ed. São Paulo: n-1 edições, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Hispanic Population in California, 2025. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/10/22/key-facts-about-us-latinos/>. Accessed on 13 may 2026.

RTP. Pela primeira vez na história, um em cada cinco residentes nos Estados Unidos é latino. RTP, 2025. Available at: https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/mundo/pela-primeira-vez-na-historia-um-em-cadacinco-residentes-nos-estados-unidos-e-latino_n1689229. Accessed on 14 jan. 2026.

SANTOS, J. C. S. Field Diary. Corpus of research by Josué Carlos Souza dos Santos as a Visiting Student Researcher at Stanford Graduate School of Education. Palo Alto - CA, Aug. 2025. (Typed).

SILVA, Vagner Gonçalves da. O antropólogo e sua magia (2a. Edição). 2. ed. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2015.

XIMÉNEZ DE SANDOVAL, Pablo. Latinos já são o maior grupo populacional da Califórnia. El País Brasil, 09 jul. 2015. Available at: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2015/07/09/internacional/1436459402_261971.html. Accessed on 14 jan. 2026.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was made possible thanks to the support of Dr. Rebecca Tarlau, Associate Professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Education, Stanford University (USA), with guidance, supervision and support. Thank you for opening doors for me and for allowing me to live part of a dream that seemed distant, almost impossible. I also thank the Lemann Center/Stanford University for the scholarship as Visiting Student Researcher appointment in 2025.

The Lemann Center is part of Stanford Graduate School of Education and its mission is to encourage and support improvements at all levels of the Brazilian education system, with a special focus on expanding opportunities and improving outcomes for students historically disadvantaged by race, region, and social class and is structured around three lines of action: (1) advanced education and training for students and visitors who share its objectives; (2) academic research aimed at improving educational policies and

practices; and (3) the creation of innovative organizations and programs aimed at driving a movement for change.

Special thanks also to the Immigration Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA), especially to Glen Olson, Citizenship Education and Civic Engagement Program Manager, for allowing me to participate as a volunteer in one of your programs. I would also like to thank Professor Vivian Brates from the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages at the Stanford School of Humanities and Sciences for introducing me to Glen and IIBA.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants – direct or indirect – in this research, especially the Latinx immigrant's community who migrated to the United States in search of a better life, giving new meaning to their stories, experiences, and life trajectories.

¹ PhD candidate in Education at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo. E-mail: [acesse o artigo original para visualizar o e-mail](#). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1172-5763>.