



Barriers to and facilitators of community participation among Latinx migrants with disabilities in the United States and Latinx migrant workers in Canada: An ecological analysis

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Abstract

Abstract Individuals migrate to improve their wellbeing and quality of life, and often experience adverse situations, both during the process of migration and once within the host country. The purpose of this paper is to unpack the barriers to and facilitators of community participation, among Latinx immigrants with disabilities in the United States and Latinx migrant workers in Canada, following the Social Ecological Model. The authors draw from an appraisal of existing literature and their own participatory research with Latinx immigrants. Based on this integrative literature review, Latinx experience individual issues such as language barriers and lack of knowledge of the services available to them. At the community level they experience discrimination, limited opportunities for community participation, and lack of opportunities for meaningful employment. At the systemic and policy level in the United States, the anti-migrant political environment keeps Latinx immigrants with disabilities from participating in their communities due to fear of deportation. In Canada, Latinx workers experience the paradox of migration and discrimination.

The discussion of barriers and facilitators is followed by recommendations for community research and action.

KEYWORDS

community participation, disability, Latinx immigrants, migrant workers, Social Ecological Model

1 | INTRODUCTION

Global migration has been a recurring phenomenon in the history of humanity. Both individuals and groups move from country to country for various reasons and during the process, they encounter many challenges (Paloma et al., 2014). Factors that may affect immigrants' community participation include lack of family and social network ties, language and cultural differences, discrimination, barriers encountered in the process of settling down, and finding a job in the new country (Hendriks, 2015; Prilleltensky, 2012). These barriers to community participation are exacerbated by other factors, such as having a disability. In this context, community participation is conceptualized as holding a job, utilizing community services, participating in community and recreational programming, and other forms of interacting with different community settings (Christens et al., 2016).

Research evidence indicates a decline in health and wellbeing among many immigrants, since the expectations and plans set before immigrating are often not met. Instead, many immigrants experience a multitude of adverse situations while adapting to a new society (Paloma et al., 2014; Stillman et al., 2015). Although scholars argue that individuals are agents that construct their lives and have an influence on the context in which they live (Bandura, 2006), immigrants tend to have little control over their environment (Bemak & Chung, 2014). Thus, the demands of the new context and their ability to address such demands impact their overall health and often complicate opportunities to participate in the community.

Immigrant populations from countries of limited resources have a history of exclusion and marginalization, regardless of the country to which they are migrating. Immigrants are often exposed to several disparities and inequalities, such as infringements on social justice, limited opportunities to obtain an education, find employment, participate in community and recreational programming, and live healthy and productive lives (Stillman et al., 2015). Many first-generation Latinx immigrants to the United States and Canada migrate with the purpose of obtaining a better life and escaping persecution, violence, and/or poverty (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

Given the current socio-political climate that villainizes Latinx immigrants in the United States, many Latinx are now living under the threat of deportation and separation from their families (Langhout et al., 2018). Despite the United States' origins as a country of immigrants, those who are not from Anglo-Saxon background are likely to experience racism, xenophobia, and intolerance (Bemak & Chung, 2014). In general, this places immigrants of color at higher risk of discrimination, leading to a greater reluctance to seek services they might need. When including disability, lack of access to health care and social services is heightened, and many times immigrants are excluded from services for the general population, and even those directed at migrants without a disability (Cobb et al., 2017).

Community psychologists have made significant contributions to the study of immigrant populations' wellbeing, acculturation, and participation in the community (see Birman & Trickett, 2001; Buckingham et al., 2018; García-Ramírez et al., 2011). Yet, limited research is available on challenges and supports experienced by Latinx immigrants with disabilities in the United States and the challenges Latinx migrant workers experience in Canada. In this paper we unpack the barriers to and facilitators of community participation among Latinx immigrant families with a member with a disability in the United States and among Latinx skilled workers obtaining employment in Canada. This analysis is conducted across levels of ecological analysis (individual, interpersonal, community/organizational, and policy) with the purpose of developing a series of recommendations for future research and action.

2 | CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE SEM

In this paper, we use the Social Ecological Model (SEM), adapted from the World Health Organization model, which includes the analysis of individual level, interpersonal/social, community and organizational, and policy and systemic factors, with interventions aimed at enhancing participation and empowerment of individuals and communities (see World Health Organization, 2008). The SEM has been widely used to guide evidence-based practice, dissemination, and knowledge translation efforts to reduce disparities and promote health and wellbeing (Kumanyika & Grier, 2006). The SEM posits that individuals are nested within different levels of influence, and that the interaction between individuals and these levels impacts behavior. The SEM depicts an individual's behaviors as the result of a complex set of factors at the individual, social, environmental, political, and systemic levels (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2014). Thus, to sustain healthy behaviors and promote positive wellbeing, research must attempt to impact these various levels of influence (McLeroy et al., 1988). Bronfenbrenner (1977) posits that understanding human behavior entails examining systems of interaction between the individual and the environment across multiple settings. What follows is an analysis of barriers to and facilitators of community participation grounded in the SEM.

3 | AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCED BY LATINX WITH A DISABILITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND LATINX MIGRANT WORKERS IN CANADA

3.1 | Background

3.1.1 | Latinx migrants with a disability in the United States

As the Latinx population in the United States has increased (currently about 18.1% of the total population, 58.9 million), so has the number of Latinx with a disability (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Latinx immigrants who have a disability or acquire a disability in the United States are more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed, and are less likely to participate in community programming, and have poor health and rehabilitation outcomes compared to their White and Asian peers (Balcazar et al., 2020; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2013). When Latinx with disabilities are employed, they are likely to be underemployed, underpaid, and/or lack employment benefits. Latinx as a demographic group is also likely to lack supports at all levels of ecological analysis necessary for a healthy and productive life, adding to the disparities resulting from having a disability (Balcazar et al., 2020). Similarly, Latinx families with youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are more likely to report a lower health status and to lack community engagement compared to Whites and Asians with disabilities (Magaña et al., 2016).

3.1.2 | Latinx-skilled workers in Canada

Latinx, make up the third largest immigrant group in Canada (Statistique Canada, 2019) and the second largest group of immigrants in Quebec (Statistique Canada, 2014). In Canada, the Latinx community is a visible minority subject to discrimination and is growing faster than the White population (Statistique Canada, 2019). The majority of Latinx migrate to Canada as skilled workers and, like Latinx migrating to the United States, they seek to improve life for themselves and their families (Hendriks, 2015).

To promote the migration of skilled workers, the province of Quebec created the *Regular Skilled Worker Program*. This program is part of Quebec's immigration policies and was designed to mitigate the labor shortages in

Canada and promote economic growth in the province. However, the aim of economic growth might not be achieved, considering that skilled workers struggle to find jobs that match their skills and learn a new language (Dean & Wilson, 2009). This situation places Latinx skilled workers at risk for low wellbeing and low sense of worth, as for many, the main goal is to find a job and feed their families.

4 | INDIVIDUAL LEVEL BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS

Individual level barriers and facilitators speak to an individual's characteristics and capacities, as well as limitations that may place the person in a vulnerable position (Fawcett et al., 1994). Such capacities may include knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs. An individual's capacities and limitations interact with and influence one another at the different levels of the ecological environment.

4.1 | Individual level of Latinx with disabilities in the United States

Latinx with a disability are likely to have limited knowledge and information about disability rights and services available to them, face language and cultural barriers, and hold varying immigration statuses, which may preclude many of them from participating actively in their communities or seeking needed services (Balcazar & Suarez-Balcazar, 2017; Ruiz et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Latinx children, youth, and young adults with disabilities may experience more severe disabilities due to delay in diagnosis, and/or lack of culturally and linguistically relevant rehabilitation services (Magaña et al., 2013). Often, Latinx immigrant families lack the economic resources for adaptations and accommodations to increase accessibility necessary to enhance quality of life and community participation compared to their peers (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2013).

Despite the challenges, Latinx have many unique strengths. Adames and Chavez-Dueñas (2017) state that Latinx strengths such as hard work, perseverance, resiliency, and emotional connectiveness are often ignored, yet they sustain Latinx immigrants during times of adversity. Building on Latinx strengths and focusing on enhancing the individual's capacity, community psychologists have developed evidence-based individual-level interventions. One such example is the development of self-advocacy skills among Latinx with disabilities (see Balcazar et al., 2001).

To promote employment opportunities, community psychologists have also proposed individual-level entrepreneurship interventions to help Latinx and other people of color in the United States develop employment options (Balcazar et al., 2014). In this model, people of color with disabilities are trained on how to start their own business with limited resources and the support of a business incubator. A similar model could be adapted in Canada with Latinx workers.

4.2 | Individual level of Latinx workers in Canada

Latinx workers in Canada often experience barriers to finding employment due to a lack of mastery of English and/or French (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). To better understand the experiences of Latinx immigrant workers, the second author and her colleagues are studying immigrant workers' goals through an initiative called the *Personal Project*. Several studies have documented the importance of immigrants' goals in the immigration process. Voluntary migrants often begin the immigration process to achieve a better life for themselves and their families (Portes & Yiu, 2013). The *Personal Project* approach aims to study the importance of the influence of the environment in the pursuit of individual goals (Little, 2017). The projects are pursued in a specific context, and many

influences from the context can affect their continuation and realization. Previous research has shown that the pursuit and success of personal projects promote wellbeing, while their failure can be detrimental (Davis et al., 2013). Our analysis of participants' personal projects showed that certain spheres of the migrant workers' lives are directly affected by the paradox of immigration; a prime example is language learning. Many Latinx migrate to Canada, as well as the United States, lacking English proficiency. Our data suggest that Latinx participants are looking to improve their English and French skills, in part because before becoming a resident of Quebec, skilled workers must demonstrate proficiency in the language.

In all, both Latinx with disabilities in the United States and Latinx workers in Canada may experience similar challenges such as language barriers and limited resources to enable participation in the community. These barriers place them at risk for poor wellbeing and health outcomes and limits their opportunities to participate in their communities.

5 | INTERPERSONAL/SOCIAL LEVEL BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS

The second level of influence is the interpersonal/social level. The interpersonal level refers to the relationships between the individual and their immediate family, friends, and closest social group.

5.1 | The interpersonal level of Latinx with disabilities in the United States

The Latinx individual with a disability is nested within a family unit or social group, which may include siblings, and adults other than parents, such as grandparents, who often play a critical role in the lives of children and youth with disabilities (Whitley & Fuller-Thomson, 2018). Each character within the environment contributes to shaping the individual's own attitudes about disability, knowledge of disability, motivations, behavioral preferences, and expectations. However, Latinx immigrants occasionally leave part of their family support behind in their countries of origin, thus experiencing social isolation, which leads to greater susceptibility to mental health stressors (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

Even when family members are left behind, Latinx tend to seek support within their own communities. Extended relatives, friends, and neighbors may become *compadres and comadres* (a traditional term referring to close friendship). In terms of caregiving support, Latinx females in the immediate family are often cited as being the main support for the person with a disability (Balcazar et al., 2020). Latinx with a disability are also more likely, compared to other ethnic and racial groups and regardless of age, to live with their immediate or extended families, and develop a strong sense of family interdependence (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017; Whitley & Fuller-Thomson, 2018). Although family overprotection of the person with a disability might be contrary to the western values of independence and self-determination, it provides strong support and protects Latinx values.

Similar to the individual level, at the interpersonal level, family members of the person with a disability often report lack of knowledge of disability rights and services. In focus groups we conducted with Latinx families with youth and young adults with disabilities, parents reported experiencing lack of knowledge about disability rights, lack of entitlement to request disability services or advocate for the rights of their children or member with a disability, and lack of knowledge of services in Spanish, among other concerns (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2018). These issues often disincentivize them from participating in their communities and seeking services.

Strong evidence indicates the positive impact of *Promotoras de salud* initiatives (health promoters) in the Latinx community. *Promotoras* are typically leaders from the community who are trained on how to assist others in living healthy lifestyles and promote empowerment and community participation of residents (see Balcazar et al., 2020). Magaña et al. (2017) have successfully implemented a *Promotoras* model with Latinx families with children with disabilities in which peer leaders—often mothers of children with disabilities—are trained as *promotoras* to

empower other mothers of children with disabilities. Another well-known program often implemented along with *Promotoras* is called *Parents Taking Action* (Magaña et al., 2017). In this program, the parents are trained to advocate for services and supports for their family member with a disability.

5.2 | The interpersonal level of Latinx workers in Canada

Family members of the skilled worker may have a hard time understanding why the individual needs to go back to school or further their education when the primary objective is to feed their families (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). Attaining additional education while working or searching for employment places additional emotional and economic pressures on the Latinx worker and his/her family. Often this means taking evening language classes or implementing odd work schedules, consequently reducing time with children and family members.

Many Latinx skilled workers often migrate without their extended families. Family reunification then becomes a personal project. Some of the participants mentioned that saving enough money to finance their family's migration process is one of their goals. This type of personal project reflects *familismo*, a cultural value present in most Latinx families. *Familismo* is defined as the importance of strong family loyalty, closeness, and getting along with and contributing to the wellbeing of the nuclear family, extended family, and kinship networks (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). *Familismo* is a protective factor for Latinx' wellbeing. *Familismo* also translates into seeking strong network ties—kinship networks—with others when family members are not present (Ayón et al., 2010). To that end, the participants of our *Personal Project* study mentioned that they plan to nurture friendships within and outside of the Latinx community, to broaden their support network and enhance integration efforts. *Familismo* is also common among Latinx with disabilities in the United States. In general, Latinx demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty towards their families.

6 | COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS

The third level of influence includes the community, physical, and cultural environments surrounding the Latinx immigrant. This includes interactions with service providers, job agencies, the school system, healthcare organizations, and other community settings frequented by individuals as they engage in their daily lives.

6.1 | Community level factors for Latinx with disabilities in the United States

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Latinx with disabilities are less likely to participate in their communities, be fully employed, and live independently compared to their nondisabled counterparts (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). For Latinx with a physical disability for instance, accessibility of the built environment is critical for participation in the community; while for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, reasonable accommodations of materials and equipment are essential for participation in educational, recreational, vocational, and community activities. Access to inclusive programming at local parks and recreation facilities can enable participation, while poor street conditions, lack of accessible ramps, and accessible environments for people using wheelchairs limit participation. In focus groups we conducted with Latinx youth and young adults with disabilities in Chicago, participants reported a lack of accessible recreational and social opportunities and limited access to transportation as some of the barriers they experience when going out into the community (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2018).

The lack of bilingual and bicultural services and providers and the lack of interpreters exacerbates the disparities and inequalities faced by many Latinx immigrant individuals with a disability (Magaña et al., 2016). Unfortunately, these and other inequities are widely disregarded, in part because Latinx immigrants lack the structural power and support to make their voices heard (Suarez-Balcazar, 2020). Often, they are denied the opportunity to participate in community programming, cannot afford the fees and expenses required in some settings, or there is lack of accessible programming needed to enable their participation (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2018).

Despite the challenges, Latinx with disabilities in the United States benefit from several strengths, including support from one another and family kinship and are likely to live in neighborhoods of predominately Latinx immigrants. This could be a strength, but also becomes a concern due to isolation from the mainstream community. In some of our work, Latinx with disabilities and their families from Chicago have identified local faith-based organizations as one of their main assets. According to the families, this is due to the welcoming nature of places of worship (Suarez-Balcazar, 2020). Parents in our study shared that the local churches provided safe spaces for connecting, necessary services and supports, legal advice, social and emotional support, and opportunities for recreation in addition to accepting the person with a disability. Another strength that Latinx with disabilities have identified includes local community agencies that provide services in Spanish, have bicultural staff, and/or target Latinx families.

Examples of community-level interventions to empower Latinx with disabilities include the development of advocacy skills and group capacity building (see Balcazar & Suarez-Balcazar, 2017), and culturally relevant training of vocational rehabilitation service providers to meet the needs of Latinx with disabilities (see Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2008), among other efforts.

6.2 | Community level factors for Latinx workers in Canada

Research on economic migration indicates that skilled workers often seek better educational opportunities for themselves and their families (Böhme et al., 2015). Younger Latinx workers in Canada often seek to enter into educational systems and institutions to pursue a degree (sometimes a second degree) that will provide them with an employment advantage in the long run. However, Latinx interactions with different microsystems in pursuit of education may face language challenges (lack of proficiency speaking, reading, and writing French and/or English) and a lack of knowledge of the Canadian educational system and culture. In addition, the lack of English and/or French proficiency makes it difficult for many immigrant families to interact with people in community settings and actively engage in community activities. However, acquiring these language skills does not seem to be sufficient for everyday life and access to employment (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). Once they learn English and French, Latinx workers often have a hard time securing employment, due in part to discrimination and xenophobia (Hirsh & Cha, 2008). This is a prime example of how an individual characteristic (lack of host country language proficiency) interacts with the environment. Like in Chicago, Latinx with limited language proficiency are less likely to obtain needed employment, as well as social and educational services they might need.

On the other hand, some of the facilitators and support systems available to Latinx workers may include access to free English and/or French classes in their communities, access to childcare, and a strong sense of emotional connectedness with communities of Latinx immigrants. In our *Personal Project* study, participants listed goals such as “finding a better job” as important to them. Yet, the employment outlook in Canada might not support such a goal. Workers benefit from communities that they become members of, and this provides another level of support and facilitation. Typically, Latinx workers in Canada tend to gravitate towards living in mostly Latinx communities. This presents an advantage, as they are likely to develop mutually beneficial relationships, a strong sense of Latinx identity, and live in an environment that celebrates their cultural traditions. Yet, like the case of Latinx with disabilities in the United States who tend to live in predominately Latinx neighborhoods, this may prompt segregation.

7 | POLICY AND SYSTEMIC LEVEL BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS

The final level includes laws, policies, rules, and regulations that influence communities, govern societies, and determine educational, legal, economic, and political systems. Disability-related laws have impacted Latinx with disabilities in the United States as well as immigration laws just like Latinx in Canada. The complexity of global human conditions such as poverty helps explain phenomena such as migration patterns to the United States and Canada.

7.1 | Policy and systemic level factors for Latinx with disabilities in the United States

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public entities and transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications accessibility. Unfortunately, many Latinx immigrants with family members with a disability are unaware of the protections of the law, think they may not qualify, or fear discrimination and deportation, and consequently, prefer not to advocate for the rights of a family member with a disability (Suarez-Balcazar, 2020). In addition, per federal laws, undocumented immigrants with a disability are not eligible to receive services after graduating from high school, thus they are left out of programs that support employment, further education, housing, and independent living. Furthermore, some Latinx live in mixed status households—meaning some family members are documented and others are not—and may not seek services out of fear. Due to the current socio-political environment and a fear of discrimination or deportation, they prefer to keep a low profile and limit their participation in the community (Hamilton et al., 2019; Langhout et al., 2018; Nienhusser & Oshio, 2019).

The policies of the current administration—as of 2020—in the United States have turned against Latinx immigrants in particular, including immigrants with disabilities. Countless stories have been reported in which people with disabilities are separated from their families, denied asylum or refugee status, and treated inhumanely (Newman & Shah, 2019). Current policies also discriminate against non-American born individuals with disabilities. In many instances, some immigrant family members may be able to continue their road to citizenship if eligible, but not the person with a disability, who is classified as a charge to the welfare support system and not a contributor (Makhlouf, 2019). In February of 2020, the Department of Homeland Security announced a change in the “Public Charge” rule that may impact many immigrant Latinx and is causing fear and confusion. The new “Public Charge” rule blocks support to immigrants who receive food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, Section Eight housing assistance, Medicaid, and parts of Medicare. Because of this policy, immigrants could be denied green cards, visa extensions, and/or immigration status changes (Protecting Immigrant Families, 2020; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). This is impacting both documented and undocumented immigrants who are currently receiving public benefits, and those who government officials deem “at-risk” of becoming dependent at any time in the future. Given this scenario, it is estimated that millions of Latinx are dropping out of benefits for which they are eligible, rather than risking deportation. This situation is particularly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic; many Latinx immigrants are getting infected, yet are not pursuing medical treatment for fear of deportation, and therefore increasing their risk of death. An August 2020 court order stopped the “Public Charge” policy change, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic hitting the United States particularly hard. Despite this, it is not clear what will happen next or what the current administration will do to challenge that court order.

One prime example that illustrates the interaction between individual factors, community, and systemic factors, is the fact that in the United States, Latinx immigrants have the highest rate of disability acquired on the job (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). This is, in part, due to multiple factors including the lack of English proficiency (individual level) to read and understand instructions when managing dangerous equipment, but also due to the oppressive situations they may experience when employed (community level). This may include a lack of interpreters or translated materials provided when handling heavy and dangerous equipment on construction sites and

industrial sites. It may also include lack of protective gear, lack of training provided by employers, overworked and underpaid conditions, and lack of laws that protect their rights (policy level). These workers experience the paradox of immigration—they are needed in construction and farm work, yet are ignored by the system once they acquire a disability while on the job. There is also a lack of laws to protect the rights of Latinx migrant workers that may provide adequate training, full benefits, and protective gear to all employees.

7.2 | Policy and systemic level factors for Latinx migrant workers in Canada

Migration policies in Canada target highly educated individuals with the economic means to support themselves. The more experienced and qualified an immigrant, the more likely he or she is to be accepted as a permanent resident in Quebec. However, recent migrants (migrated less than 5 years ago) have lower employment rates than older immigrants and native Quebecois. In 2017, the unemployment rate of recent immigrants in Quebec was twice as high as the unemployment of native Quebecois (Wassermann et al., 2017; Yssaad & Fields, 2018).

As part of Quebec's immigration policies, skilled workers must fulfill a series of criteria to be accepted by the immigration department (e.g., language proficiency). These criteria are designed to assess and select the best candidates according to their social and professional profile. This selection process aims to assess the potential to integrate into the labor market from candidates that prove to have the necessary characteristics to live in Quebec. Derailing their initial goal, the personal project of obtaining a job to pursue education may present an immigration discrepancy between the initial motivators (migration policies) and a context (settlement policies) that prevents many immigrants from fully participating in the host society (Little, 2017; Stillman et al., 2015). New skilled immigrants face a paradox: they are targeted by Quebec's immigration policies, but these policies do not translate into full access to the labor market. Migration policies do not appear to create effective hiring policies in the public and private sectors and do not facilitate the recognition of diplomas obtained abroad (Yssaad & Fields, 2018). As a result, Quebec may not be able to take advantage of the skills of selected immigrants. In return, skilled immigrants do not realize their projects to their full potential, as suggested by the province's official statements.

Discrimination against Latinx is a pervasive problem in Canada as well (Reskin, 2001). The consultation board on systemic racism, created in 2017, is one of the main efforts in Quebec to counter racial discrimination. This board named racial discrimination as a problem that affects many new immigrants in their access to employment, justice, health services and education. This board proposed that racial discrimination is not simply a question of individual attitudes but requires a serious examination of the role of institutions in accounting for social inequalities. The consultation board on systemic racism has three main objectives that seek to work in favor of the general wellbeing of immigrants and openly speak of patterns of social injustice towards immigrants of color. Their objectives clearly aim to raise awareness and inform and engage the Quebec population in the fight against systemic racism. This board also aims to develop a dialogue and collaboration between all stakeholders involved in the fight against systemic racism, including community leaders, and leaders from public institutions. Ultimately, the board invites the Quebecois society, to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of people of color, and work for real equality between all people. Future research and practice promoting employment and wellbeing of Latinx immigrants should focus on enhancing support systems and removing barriers to job security, such as discrimination.

Overall, individual, interpersonal, community/organizational, and systemic issues do not occur in isolation. These levels interact with and influence one another. Although many individual-level interventions focus on enhancing empowerment and advocacy skills, such skills are put into practice at the interpersonal, community, and often systemic levels. Table 1 highlights examples of barriers to and facilitators of community participation discussed in this paper.

TABLE 1 Barriers to and facilitators of community participation of Latinx migrants with disabilities in the United States and Latinx migrant workers in Canada

Level	Latinx migrants with a disability in the United States		Latinx skilled workers in Canada	
	Barriers	Support	Barriers	Support
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited knowledge about rights and services Language and cultural barriers Less likely to be employed Severe disabilities and delay in diagnosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard-work, resiliency, emotional connectiveness Self-advocacy skills Individual level entrepreneurship interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination Language barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Project based on immigrants' goals Strong desire to improve-learn the language and further education
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social isolation Family lack of knowledge about rights and services Varying immigration statuses among family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong sense of family interdependence and support Health <i>promotoras</i> who empower families to participate in the community Peer mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understanding from family members as to why continued education is necessary Social isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Familisimo</i> which promotes Latinx workers to broaden support system Strong family support
Community/ organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility of the built environment for people with physical disabilities Lack of service providers that are bilingual Denied opportunity to participate in programs (discrimination) Cannot afford fees for participation Lack of accessible programming Isolation from mainstream community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live in predominately Latinx neighborhoods Local faith-based organizations Community agencies that provide bicultural and bilingual services Interventions that provide support and build the advocacy capacity Vocational rehabilitation service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge of educational systems Language barriers Barriers to achieve further education Discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live in predominately Latinx neighborhoods Strong sense of Latinx identity Community programs that offer free English and French classes Access to childcare
Policy and societal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of discrimination and deportation Unaware of the laws that protect them Undocumented immigrants with or without a disability cannot access public benefits after high school Current administration and changes in regulations causing collective fear and anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy skills and understanding of rights developed in individual and interpersonal level applied at the systemic level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination as the systemic level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation board on systemic racism to improve immigrants' access to employment, justice, health services and education

8 | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ACTION

Based on the analysis of barriers and supports experienced by Latinx with disabilities in the United States and Latinx migrant workers in Canada, we present the following recommendations for future research and action.

8.1 | Promote social justice and equity at multiple levels

Barriers to participation in the community, are considered a social justice issue (Stronks et al., 2016). Social justice is about protecting the human rights of all people at all levels of the ecological system. By adopting a human rights framework, stakeholders at multiple levels are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights (World Health Organization, 2008). According to Austin (2001), "The central assumption of the rights paradigm is that every person can make certain claims based solely on their humanness" (p. 184). Despite Latinx individual agency, Latinx immigrants are not always allowed to make such claims, as their rights are often violated (Suarez-Balcazar, 2020; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2019). The development of policies and practices should incorporate a social justice framework that aims to recognize Latinx communities as right-bearers and to ingrain mechanisms for participation at all levels. Such policies may include expanding community and employment services and offering bilingual and bicultural services. At the individual level for example, interventions may focus on building the personal skills that could allow people to learn about their employment rights, or acquire knowledge about available supports and services for family members with disabilities.

8.2 | Address discrimination through an intersectional approach

Evidence suggests that Latinx experience racism and discrimination across the various SEM levels, which contributes to wellbeing inequalities and lack of community participation (Hirsh & Cha, 2008; Langhout et al., 2018; Magaña et al., 2013). Grouping together Latinx communities as having one generalized experience overlooks unique experiences and should, therefore, consider other aspects of identity that condition a person's experience. Evidence suggests that Latinx immigrants with disabilities experience quadruple discrimination—for their ethnicity, migration status, language spoken, and disability (Balcazar et al., 2020). Future research should engage in understanding how the multiple discriminations Latinx experience operate within the community and at the systems level. This requires cohesive efforts by experts from different fields to share evidence of Latinx experiences and monitor the impact of policies on the different dimensions of discrimination. At the individual level, interventions may explore the strategies and skills needed to challenge and navigate discrimination.

8.3 | Promote interventions that build advocacy capacity

Individual, community, and systemic level programming need to promote advocacy for Latinx and empower people to advocate for social justice and equity. Incorporating advocacy as a perspective in future interventions provides communities the opportunity to develop the capacity to identify and articulate their needs and to advocate for policy change (Luque-Ribelles et al., 2017). Therefore, future research should seek to understand and identify ways that Latinx immigrants in the United States and Canada cope with the stressors they experience, as well as how they develop resiliency that sustain their hard work ethics and wellbeing. In parallel, interventions should develop advocacy capacities of other actors at the community and organizational levels (i.e., health care providers, local leaders) to advocate for Latinx communities to ensure accessibility and quality of services while holding their institutions accountable to social justice principles.

8.4 | Promote systemic change through engaging multiple stakeholders.

The SEM underscores the importance of engaging in policy change to address inequalities. Wolff et al. (2017) emphasize the development of strong coalitions among diverse stakeholders to address inequalities. According to the authors, such stakeholders should include Latinx community members and leaders, local policymakers, providers, community-based organizations, and researchers and practitioners. For example, as seen with the Canadian case, the consultation board on systemic racism is a good opportunity for bringing together multiple stakeholders, including policy makers. This should promote the participation of Latinx immigrant workers to share their experiences and priorities. Perhaps this model should also be introduced in the United States, as a similar consultation board on systemic racism could conduct badly needed assessments of the extent of racism and most importantly, the ways in which systemic racism can be reduced and eventually eliminated. From this perspective, multiple stakeholders at all levels of the ecological system and from different sectors can act as advocates within their own spaces, coordinate efforts, and share resources with each other (Philbin et al., 2018).

9 | CONCLUSION

The unfolding of barriers and facilitators experienced by Latinx immigrants with disabilities in the United States and skilled workers in Canada, across the ecological system, illustrates the complex factors at the individual, community, socio-cultural, and policy/systemic levels that contribute to inequalities. Yet, despite the challenges and barriers experienced, Latinx tend to adapt, develop resiliency, and rely on sources of support at the interpersonal, and the community/organizational levels.

The SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) refers to the concept of adaptation, which addresses the interactions between individuals and their ecological environments, and that might be relevant to generate systemic change. This interaction is described as an ongoing dynamic interplay between the individual and the environment. As the environment places demands on the individual, the individual adapts; likewise, as the individual places demands on the environment, the environment changes. For example, the built environment may include severely cracked sidewalks or crumbling ramps, causing youth with disabilities who use wheelchairs to adapt by taking a different route when traveling in the community (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020). Conversely, if youth with disabilities and their families advocate for accessibility and inclusion when there is a lack thereof, the community may adapt, providing accessible opportunities for enhancing health and wellbeing. These demands may come from any layer of the environment: family and peers, local organization, community, or policymakers, and may support or hinder participation. Likewise, Latinx skilled workers may adapt to jobs for which they might be overqualified or for which they have limited experience.

Latinx immigrants in the United States and Canada experience similar barriers and support systems, yet the socio-political context is somewhat different. The United States has adopted stricter immigration laws and the current political environment is clearly anti-Latinx (Latz et al., 2019; Langhout et al., 2018). While in Canada, immigration laws favor skilled workers and immigration laws tend to be more flexible. Latinx immigrants in both the United States and Canada are targets of discrimination and xenophobia, resulting in them living in constant fear and stress (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Finally, to advance the research on the inequalities experienced by Latinx immigrants in the United States and Canada, it is essential to address community participation barriers and to augment supports. To create innovative practical solutions and interventions, community psychology should produce new knowledge of participation equity in collaboration with the Latinx community. As such, the Latinx community needs to be meaningfully engaged in research efforts to advance this agenda (see Suarez-Balcazar, 2020). This requires a stronger understanding of the interaction between the person and the environment, a

commitment to social justice and health equity, a promotion of community-engaged research, and the active pursuit of systemic policy changes.

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