Introduction
The COVID-19 pandemic presents a health risk to grocery store employees, farmers, and other food system workers (Park et al. 2020). Low-income individuals, communities of color, and non-US born citizens are more likely to be exposed to the novel coronavirus due to crowded and intergenerational living spaces (Thakur et al. 2020). In addition to poor living conditions, these particular workers tend to receive insufficient training and have less autonomy in the workplace in comparison to their white-collar counterparts (Cubrinic 2020). Grocery store workers, in particular, have been experiencing high anxiety and stress in the workplace which may make them more likely to quit their jobs (Kantamneni 2020). In contrast to grocery store workers, white-collar workers have a better chance at mitigating their risk of contracting the novel coronavirus by working remotely (Harper 2020). As a consequence, low-income workers are put at a disadvantage because their job requires them to work in person. This research will explore the structural vulnerability of female grocery store workers from Latin America during the pandemic.

Background
Native Americans, non-Hispanic Blacks, and the Latinx community are more likely to contract and die from the novel coronavirus than any other racial or ethnic group (Thakur et al. 2020). The Latinx population, for example, are susceptible to the egregious effects from the virus because they are more likely to have a chronic illness (e.g., diabetes and obesity) in comparison to their white counterparts (Gil et al. 2020). In addition to disparities in well-being, the Latinx population is the least likely out of any racial or ethnic group to have health insurance (Gil et al. 2020). Researchers (e.g., Gil et al. 2020; Kantamneni 2020; Thakur et al. 2020) have identified a correlation between poor health outcomes from COVID-19 among ethnic and racial minorities within the US. However, researchers have failed to examine the experiences and health perceptions among female grocery store workers from Latin America. The purpose of this research is to gain in-depth accounts of grocery store workers, while exposing the health and social inequalities among Latinx migrant women during the pandemic.

Theoretical Framework
Healthy Migrant Hypothesis posits that immigrants are comparably healthier in comparison to their native born counterparts (Abraído-Lanzca, Dohrenwend, Ng-Mak, and Turner 1999). Latinx migrants, for example, have lower rates of cardiovascular disease and cancer despite being more likely to be low-income and less educated than their native-born white counterparts (Abraído-Lanzca, Dohrenwend, Ng-Mak, and Turner 1999).

Structural Vulnerability can be understood as “a product of class-based economic exploitation,” that in which impinges upon one’s emotional and physical well-being (Quesada, Hart, and Bourgoin 2011:340). Female grocery store workers from Latin America may be more vulnerable to the spread of the novel coronavirus in large because of their low socioeconomic status (SES) and an increased likelihood of living in an intergenerational household.

Methods
This research study will employ naturalistic and participant-observation to investigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of five female grocery store workers from Latin America. The researcher will draw on Schensul and LeCompte’s (2013) ethnographic methods in participant-observation. In particular, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews in tandem with more casual observations within the grocery store. This method will help the researcher build rapport and understand the social environment of the participant (Schensul and LeCompte 2013). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted over Zoom at the convenience of the study participant.

Limitations
Research findings may generalize knowledge based on the use of a small sample size and the exclusive focus on five female migrants. As a result, research findings will fail to shed light on the male perspective. This research also generalizes the Latinx population as it focuses on individuals originally from any country in Latin America.

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References

This image depicts the physical barriers put in place to separate customers and fellow employees in Mill Valley, CA.

This picture was taken at a grocery store in Mill Valley, CA during the panic shopping in March, 2020.