

CONSTRAINED CHOICES: LATINA IMMIGRANTS NEGOTIATING WORK, FAMILY,
AND LEGALITY IN THE NEW SOUTH

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department
of Sociology

Chapel Hill
2018

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ABSTRACT

Holly Straut Eppsteiner: Constrained Choices: Latina Immigrants Negotiating Work, Family, and Legality in the New South
(Under the direction of Jacqueline M. Hagan)

Undocumented people are often described as living and working “in the shadows.” This framing identifies the illegality of migrants as an individual characteristic. Yet federal, state, and local policies are structural features that shape the meaning and consequences of being unauthorized in the United States. Latinas have increasingly joined migration streams and now constitute 46 percent of unauthorized people in the United States.

In this dissertation, I identify the constraints and opportunities for Latina immigrant workers in North Carolina, a new destination state. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 48 women from five North Carolina counties as well as a focus group, I analyze women’s experiences with work, family, and migration across the life course. Women’s accounts revealed that workers’ identities were frequently formed through early labor force participation in their countries of origin. Once in the United States, women’s labor force participation was increasingly constrained by employment restrictions targeting the undocumented at the same time that they faced the pull of family demands as they married and had children.

In response to these constraints, women turned to work in so-called “nonstandard” employment relationships such as subcontracted work and self-employment. In some cases, these arrangements represent a survival strategy associated with exploitation and poor job quality. In other cases, nonstandard employment suggests a “strategy of resistance” in which women create mobility pathways associated with improved job quality and the achievement of work-family

balance. Findings contribute to understanding the macro- and micro-level forces shaping intersectional inequality for U.S. immigrant populations and hold policy implications at state and federal levels.

To all women who cross deserts, rivers, and oceans to seek a better life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am grateful to the women who participated in this research, welcomed me into their homes, and shared their life stories with me. I am very appreciative of their generosity of time, hospitality, openness and willingness to share their experiences—including those that were emotionally difficult to discuss. I can only hope that this research does justice to their stories of struggle and resilience and can inspire more just policies and equitable treatment of migrants and their families in North Carolina and across the United States.

Thank you to the members of my committee: Jacqueline Hagan, Philip Cohen, Arne Kalleberg, Sherryl Kleinman, and Laura López-Sanders for their feedback on the dissertation. Each of your scholarship was influential in shaping my work. Jackie, my chair and academic advisor, has helped me develop as a scholar for more than six years: thank you for providing me freedom in my research endeavors, for years of feedback, and for demanding excellence—you have always pushed me to do the highest quality work. I am grateful to Sherryl for mentorship in writing, qualitative and feminist analysis, and teaching, and for moral support over the years. Thanks to Leah Elms at UNC Sociology for administrative and logistical support.

I am appreciative of my research assistants, Vanessa Canuto and Victoria Crouse, and my transcriptionists, Andrea Lynch and Tania Cadena, without whose excellent work my analysis would not have been possible. *Mil gracias* to the staff at the community organizations who facilitated my recruitment of interviewees, including Kristin, Bety, Mery, Rachel, John, Jenni, Mariauxi, Channa, Jazmin, and Linda. Thanks also to Chris Brook, Hannah Gill, and Blanca Niederhaus.

Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me through my journey through graduate school. I am especially grateful to my friends and fellow grad students in the Department of Sociology, who provided moral support and camaraderie throughout my time in Chapel Hill and beyond, as well as valuable feedback at all stages of this research. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Didem Turkoglu, Mike Dunn, and Sarah Gaby. Sally Morris Cote: thank you for sharing the long-distance writing process with me and for all of your writing and moral support. Donna and Lyn, fellow volunteers at the food pantry, kept me laughing week to week and provided wise perspectives and encouragement. My wonderful sister-in-law, Dr. Erin Eppsteiner, provided helpful answers to several questions related to hospitals, pregnancy, and childbirth. To my parents, Greg, Denise, Betsy, and Rob: thank you for cheering me on, checking in, and for always supporting me—even when you didn't quite understand what it was I was doing. My mother, Denise Straut, began saving for my college education in the mid-1980s (and while a student, herself) and never stopped putting aside a bit of each check, just in case I ever decided to go back to school. This was a big help for defraying the costs of grad school.

I am very fortunate to have an incredibly caring and selfless spouse, George Eppsteiner. Without your steadfast support and encouragement, I would not have attempted a Ph.D. in the first place, much less have persisted through these past six and a half years. Thank you for believing in me, pushing me to believe in myself, and for the sacrifices you have made in the interests in my success, not least, enduring a second bar exam so we could move to North Carolina. I am proud of and inspired by your tenacity and dedication to defending the civil rights of marginalized communities in your career. And thanks for answering all my legal questions. And thank you to Luna, for nine years of sweet and loyal companionship, particularly during the writing process.

This research was generously funded by a Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation and a Mellon Dissertation Fellowship from the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC Chapel Hill. Preliminary data collection was supported by a Pilot Grant from the UNC Chapel Hill Department of Sociology. A Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the UNC Chapel Hill Graduate School provided me the time, freedom, and flexibility to complete my analysis and writing.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CTC	Child Tax Credit
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DAPA	Deferred Action for Parents of Americans
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
ESF	Earnings Suspense File
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HB	House Bill
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986)
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (1996)
ITIN	Individual Taxpayer Identification Number
MOA	Memoranda/um of Agreement
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Area
NELM	New Economics of Labor Migration
PEP	Priority Enforcement Program
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996)
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSA	Social Security Administration
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When I was a girl, when I was around 9 or 10 years old, in the place where I lived were some mountains, and the clouds would come in very low because there was a river. And I would go walking and the clouds were low, and I would go walking in the place where I could see the clouds low and I said, “Someday I will be able to go above these clouds.”

-Alejandra¹

Undocumented people are often described as living and working “in the shadows.” This framing identifies the illegality of migrants as an individual characteristic. Yet federal, state, and local policies are structural forces that shape the meaning and consequences of lacking legal status in the United States. These policies have become particularly restrictive for migrants during the past three decades. During that time, economic restructuring has drawn Latina/o migrants to “new” destinations in the Southeast U.S. to work in a diverse economic landscape in industries like textile manufacturing, meat and poultry processing, and hospitality and service work.

In this dissertation, I identify the constraints and opportunities for immigrant workers in North Carolina, a new destination state, by examining the incorporation experiences of a particular group of migrants: Latina mothers, most of whom are unauthorized. Latinas and children have increasingly joined migration streams, and women now make up 46 percent of the unauthorized population in the United States.² Although their labor force participation rates are

¹All names are pseudonyms. I translated all quotes from Spanish, except for those indicated with asterisks (*). Occasionally, I leave in un-translated, original portions of quotes when I feel they convey better in Spanish. In these cases, I provide parenthetical English translations.

² <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>

low relative to their male counterparts, many immigrant Latinas have entered the U.S. labor market.

In fact, the “feminization” of migration has been associated not only with family reunification but with a demand for migrant women’s labor in the secondary labor market. In the wake of deindustrialization during the late 20th century, the growing service sector drew migrant women to low-wage, low-skill jobs in such industries as service, garment manufacturing, and healthcare (Sassen-Koob 1984; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Demand for female migrant labor also grew in informal niches such as domestic work. As upper-middle-class and middle-class U.S. women—especially mothers—entered the paid labor force at higher rates, they hired immigrant women of color to care for their children and homes (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002).

Latinas, particularly those of Mexican origin, represent the largest proportion of low-wage immigrant women workers in the United States (American Immigration Council 2017b). Many of these women are undocumented. Monica Boyd (1984) suggested that immigrant women experience a “double disadvantage” in the labor market because of their gender and nativity. I argue that undocumented women experience a three-fold disadvantage. They not only experience inequality associated with being female and foreign-born but must also contend with policies that seek to limit the rights of unauthorized migrants.

Migrant women who lack legal status and have low levels of human capital are often relegated to the lowest-status jobs and have limited occupational mobility (Chang 2016; Donato et al. 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Yet studies also find that despite concentration in low-wage occupations, women benefit from migration and U.S. labor force participation. Migrant women’s wages provide resources for children at home and abroad and can increase women’s

household standing (Goldring 1996; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Guendelman and Perez-Itriago 1987; Hirsch 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 1995). Because of these gains, women, more than men, prefer U.S. settlement and are pivotal in deterring return migration (Goldring 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Wampler, Chávez, and Pedraza 2009). In fact, they are less likely than men to return to their countries of origin (Hagan, Demonsant, and Hernández-León 2015; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Reyes 1997; Ruiz-Tagle and Wong 2009).

Still, Latina women in the United States, even those who work, often remain embedded in families in which men's paid labor is considered the dominant source of family income, while women's ideal roles are to provide emotional labor for families (Dreby 2006; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Menjívar 1999; Parrado and Flippen 2005). Although employment opportunities for Latina women are expanded through migration (Parrado and Flippen 2005), they are still burdened by a "second shift" of care work (Hochschild 1989). Compared with native-born women, immigrant women in the United States have lower labor force participation rates, particularly when they are wives and mothers (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017; Donato, Piya, and Jacobs 2014; Read and Cohen 2007) and when they are undocumented (Brettell 2016; Pew Research Center 2015). Drawing on women's accounts, I find that women's family demands and the constraints associated with their status as foreign-born and undocumented are interconnected.

To uncover how migrant women negotiate work and family amid conditions of legal precarity in the United States, I interviewed 48 Latina immigrants living in five counties in North Carolina. We spoke on living room couches and across kitchen tables in their houses, trailers, and apartments and at café tables in urban, rural, and suburban communities. To build rapport with these women, I did volunteer work and built connections with various Latina/o-serving

organizations in these areas. I also conducted a focus group and observed community meetings related to immigration policies and enforcement actions.

In their book on migrant women workers in the new economy, Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild argue that to understand the experiences of “invisible” women workers, we must recognize them as “full human beings... strivers as well as victims, wives and mothers as well as workers” (2002:13). In this dissertation, I highlight both the constraints migrant women experience and the resilience they demonstrate through migrating, working, raising families, and becoming part of North Carolina communities. My analysis is guided by five sets of research questions:

1. What are the economic, political, and social contexts of reception for immigrants in new destination states and in North Carolina, specifically? How do migrants’ experiences in these contexts differ based on gender?
2. What are women’s experiences with work early in the life course and prior to U.S. migration? How do these experiences shape the formation of Latina workers’ identities?
3. How do household dynamics and life course stages shape the decisions women make regarding migration for work or family reunification?
4. Once in the United States, how is women’s labor force participation patterned by family formation and political contexts of reception? How is the experience of negotiating work-family conflict shaped by women’s status as foreign-born and undocumented?
5. Which labor market strategies do women employ to cope with family demands and policies that inhibit them from the formal labor market? What do these strategies suggest about perceptions of job quality and opportunities for mobility in a restricted market?

Scholars who examine immigrant incorporation—how immigrants are integrated into a receiving community—have increasingly recognized that incorporation is shaped not only by the characteristics of individual migrants, but the structural opportunities and barriers they encounter (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasnitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes

and Zhou 1993). In recent years, scholars have identified hostile immigration laws and policies as an axis of inequality shaping incorporation (Abrego 2006; Bacon 2008; Chavez 2012, 2013; Gonzales 2016; Menjívar 2006; Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Menjívar, Abrego, and Schmalzbauer 2016). In answering these research questions, my findings add to this literature by examining how immigrant incorporation in restrictive contexts is gendered. Specifically, I identify how being foreign-born and undocumented exacerbates work-family conflict for women in the low-wage labor market. I also demonstrate how work-family conflict, in combination with restrictive employment policies, constrains women's participation in the formal labor market and shapes the strategies they develop to maintain employment.

I continue this chapter by introducing the theory and literature that frames the findings of this dissertation. I then discuss my research methods in more detail and provide background information about the women I interviewed. Finally, I close by providing an overview of the dissertation chapters that follow.

THEORETICAL FRAMING

Immigrant Incorporation and Contexts of Reception

To answer my first research question examining the economic, political, and social characteristics of new destination communities, I draw on the “contexts of reception” framework of immigrant incorporation outlined by Alejandro Portes and colleagues (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2014). Contexts of reception refer to the structural and cultural characteristics of receiving communities that shape immigrant incorporation. I use this theory to examine the labor market conditions, policies, and social environment that have shaped Latina/o

migrants' incorporation since the mid-1990s with a focus on contexts in new destinations and in North Carolina, specifically.

In doing so, I add to the literature on immigrant incorporation in three ways. First, I extend this framework to include the roles of state and local political contexts. The political contexts of reception in this framework typically refer to the role of federal immigration policy. By drawing on legal theories related to the role of state and local “alienage” policies that seek to regulate the rights of immigrants (Motomura 2008, 2014), the literature on the particular—often, hostile—political contexts in new destination communities (Armenta 2017; Bada 2010; Lacy and Odem 2009; Nguyen and Gill 2016; Winders 2013), and by tracking the development of specific state-level policies targeting immigrants in North Carolina, I argue that incorporation scholars must consider not only federal but also state and local policy contexts. Second, I identify how political, economic, and social contexts are gendered by discussing how migrant men and women's experience, in many cases, distinct interactions and outcomes with policies, labor markets, and social infrastructure. The dominant literature on contexts of incorporation does not consider the role of gender in incorporation (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2014). Third, I demonstrate how economic, political, and social contexts overlap. That is, political contexts, vis-à-vis policies and legislation targeting the undocumented, are intertwined with migrants' economic and social outcomes.

Life Course Theory, Labor Force Participation, and Migration Theory

To answer my second, third, and fourth sets of research questions, which examine women's labor force participation in their countries of origin, their migration decisions, and their U.S. labor force participation, respectively, I draw on life course theory. Life course theory analyzes individuals' life trajectories across different “transitions,” which represent changes in

roles and status. These trajectories are shaped by the timing of transitions, social and historical contexts, “linked lives” to significant others, and by an individual’s agency (Elder 1998a; Mortimer and Shanahan 2003).

Life course theory is a useful framework to trace Latina migrants’ labor force and family transitions across their lives. I use this approach to examine my second research question, which considers the conditions under which women transition to work in their countries of origin. Here, I argue that women’s transitions to work early in the life course and prior to migration build strong worker identities that women maintain throughout later life stages.

I also draw on life course theory to answer my third research question, which considers the conditions under which women make migration decisions. In line with theories that explain international migration at the household level, such as the “New Economics of Labor Migration” (NELM) theory, I found that women’s migration decisions were frequently negotiated in families. However, their life course stages, including marital and motherhood status, determined the gendered household power structures in which they negotiated these decisions and, consequently, how they perceived and positioned their migration strategies. Drawing on this approach, I critique economic theories of migration like NELM that, while considering household dynamics, fail to consider that these dynamics are shaped by gender.

Finally, the life course perspective shapes my analysis in my fourth set of research questions, which consider how women’s U.S. work trajectories are patterned. Specifically, I examine how women navigated labor force participation during transitions to motherhood and how women draw on worker identities developed early in the life course once in the United States.

Work-Family Conflict and Intersectional Inequality

To delve further into my fourth set of questions regarding the family-related conditions and policy restrictions shaping women's labor force participation, I draw on work and family literature and theories of intersectional inequality. A growing body of research has examined how work and family conflict for native-born U.S. women (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007; Damaske 2011; Gerson 1986, 2011; Hochschild 1989; Jones 2012; Stone 2007; Williams 1999). A consistent finding in the literature is that women in the United States, across various social contexts, continue to disproportionately shoulder the burden of "second shift" care work, even when they are in the paid labor force or earn more than their male partners (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Bianchi et al. 2000, 2012; Brines 1994; Gerstel 2000; Hochschild 1989). This second shift creates particular challenges for poor women and women of color in the low-wage labor market who tend to have few structural supports such as access to paid family leave or affordable, quality childcare (Collins 1994; Damaske 2011; Dodson 2007; Perry-Jenkins 2012).

I find that Latina immigrants shared the work-family challenges faced by poor, native-born women, but experienced additional obstacles as migrants and undocumented workers. Theories of intersectionality provide a lens for understanding the ways that Latina immigrants' labor force participation came into conflict with their roles as mothers. Intersectional theory is rooted in Black feminist scholarship and argues that the categories of social difference that comprise one's social location—including race, class, and gender—create an interlocking system that shapes individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression in institutions (Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins 1991; hooks 1989). In addition to race, class, and gender, I argue that consideration of foreign-born status, as well as authorization status, deepens

our understanding of the intersectional inequalities faced by women in the low-wage labor market.

Gendered Policy Outcomes

To explore how political contexts shape work-family conflict and employment strategies among undocumented women—my fourth and fifth research questions—I draw on literature examining the gendered impacts of employment policies targeting immigrants. Since the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), federal policies in the United States have been implemented and expanded to regulate the hiring process through the verification of worker employment eligibility and the enforcement of sanctions against hiring those who are unauthorized (Donato et al. 2008; Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992; Hall, Greenman, and Farkas 2010; Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 1996).

Such policies, although seemingly gender-neutral, often have gendered effects (Boyd 1989; Hagan 1998; Donato and Gabaccia 2015). During the period following IRCA, for example, the consequences of being undocumented for employment have been especially bad for Mexican women (Donato et al. 2008). Moreover, undocumented women have disproportionately low labor force participation rates compared with undocumented men, native-born women, and authorized immigrant women (Pew Research Center 2015).

I add to the literature that focuses on the gendered impacts of immigration employment policies by considering the more recent implementation of state-level restrictions. Specifically, I consider consequences of programs that verify workers' authorization through electronic checks of Social Security numbers upon hiring. I find that women's labor force participation was often made intermittent due to the combination of family transitions and these policy restrictions.

Employment Relations and Immigrant Self-Employment

My final set of research questions examines the labor market strategies women used to cope with work-family constraints and policy restrictions. Here, I draw on work scholarship to examine the conditions under which women's labor in so-called "nonstandard" employment—classified as unregulated work with weak attachments to employers in arrangements including self-employment and sub-contracted work (Kalleberg 2009, 2011; Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000). Scholars have associated concentration in non-standard employment with poor job quality and vulnerability for workers (Flippen 2012; Hudson 2007; Kalleberg et al. 2000; Raijman 2001; Valenzuela 2003). I identify the conditions under which women in these nonstandard employment relationships experienced exploitation and vulnerability but also identify how women achieved job quality through self-employment.

Migration scholars have long found that informal self-employment provides mobility pathways for immigrants who are blocked from standard employment relations (Light 1973; Light and Gold 2000; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989; Raijman 2001; Raijman and Tienda 2000; Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009). Studies commonly focuses on men's self-employment or women's work in family businesses. Attention to migrant women's independent self-employment, meanwhile, has been limited (Brettell 2016). I contribute to this literature by highlighting the role of women's self-employment not only as a survival strategy but a mobility pathway in a restricted market.

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND ANALYSIS

To examine how women negotiated work and family amid the increased and streamlined implementation of restrictive policy contexts at state and federal levels, I relied on qualitative,

inductive methods. I became especially interested in studying immigrant women's experiences with work and family in 2014. In November that year, President Obama announced a new executive action that would provide undocumented immigrant parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents an opportunity to "come out of the shadows and get right with the law."³ The program, Deferred Action for Parents of Americans, or DAPA, would provide eligible undocumented parents with temporary legal authorization to live and work in the United States. I set out to study this policy in action through the experiences of applicants. As it happened, DAPA never materialized and was held up in court throughout my data collection. Twenty-six states, led by Texas and including North Carolina, filed a suit in federal court to oppose the executive action (Foley 2015). Ultimately, DAPA received a Supreme Court "indecision" with a tie vote resulting from Congress's refusal to confirm Merrick Garland, President Obama's Supreme Court justice nominee. Not long after, any hope of DAPA was dashed with the election of an avowed restrictionist Trump administration, which later revoked the program (Bendix 2017).

Despite the failure of this particular executive order, I was able to draw on women's perspectives to study how they interpreted policy implications and how their behavior was shaped by policy shifts. Just as state governments impeded the implementation of DAPA, I found that state-level policies, more so than federal, often shaped the consequences women faced as undocumented people in North Carolina. To examine how women made decisions about work and family in these restrictive policy contexts, I relied primarily on in-depth interviews, supplemented by a focus group and observation at community meetings.

³ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/11/20/obama-immigration-full-remarks/70030636/>

In-Depth Interviews

Sampling and Recruitment Strategy

Between April 2015 and October 2016, I interviewed 48 Latina immigrants living in central North Carolina. I used sequential interviewing guided by case study logic, collecting data until I reached saturation (Small 2009; Yin 2013). Small (2009) argues that it is effective to view in-depth interview projects as a collection of multiple case studies, rather than a “small sample” study. Although a pre-determined sampling method is appropriate for studies that seek statistical generalizability to a population, case study logic is more appropriate for studies that seek to understand a process—those that ask how or why questions (Small 2009:25). Each case, or interview, yields findings that inform the next interview, and, “If the study is conducted properly, the very last case examined will provide very little new or surprising information. The objective is saturation.” (Small 2009:25). I drew on themes that emerged in my initial interviews to develop my interview guide in subsequent interviews until no new information emerged. For example, in discussing their jobs, predictability and consistency in work scheduling emerged as an area of concern for women. I then added questions specific to work scheduling in the interview guide.

I recruited several women through referrals from social service and faith-based organizations as well as community leaders that serve the immigrant population in my target counties: Orange, Durham, Chatham, Alamance, and Wake. In some cases, these organizations/individuals provided me directly with contacts. Community organizations also allowed me to recruit participants at events they held, such as a Toys for Tots distribution, a Mother’s Day flower sale fundraiser, and a conference for Latina immigrants sponsored by a faith-based, non-profit advocacy and legal services organization.

I also recruited women to participate in the study through connections I had in these counties. This included recruiting participants through my volunteer work as a Spanish-language Client Interviewer at a local food pantry where I volunteered for three years and had established rapport with clients. During summer 2016, I volunteered with the Casa de la Comunidad Latina, a social service and advocacy organization that serves the Latina/o community. I led an English conversation class for parents—almost always mothers—who were waiting for their children in a tutoring program and later interviewed some of them. I also recruited interviews from a focus group I conducted at a workers' center associated with the organization (see Focus Group section below).

Using these connections as a base for interview recruitment, I used snowball sampling, asking women to recommend relatives, friends, and neighbors. Snowball sampling is a common strategy for finding hard-to-reach populations like undocumented immigrants (Chavez 2012; Morgan 2008). While some women were shy or reluctant to recommend people, others enthusiastically identified possible participants from their social networks.

Interview Content and Procedures

In-depth, life history interviews covered topics related to family, work, and migration across a time period beginning with women's childhood in their countries of origin until their present circumstances as international migrants settled in North Carolina communities. Interviews were semi-structured: I used an interview guide to organize themes of discussion, with a series of questions or "probes" to draw on in each section. Unlike questionnaires, interview guides are not a "tightly structured set of questions to be asked verbatim," but rather, a "list of things to be sure to ask about" in a "guided conversation" (Lofland et al. 2006:105).

To begin each interview, I filled out a brief form with women's demographic information. During the first portion of in-depth interviews, I used a life-history approach in which I asked women about their pre-migration experiences in their countries of origin. Specific topics of discussion related to family, work, education, and migration. Kathleen Gerson (1986:38) used a life history approach in her research on women's decision-making related to career and family because it allows for examination of "the interplay between social constraints, psychological motivation, and the developing actor... to chart the variety of life paths women take and helps uncover the factors, both structural and psychological, that lead them down their divergent paths." Next, I discussed with women their current experiences with work, family, and living in North Carolina communities, and their goals and intentions for the future. I also discussed with women their perceptions of migration policies and new executive actions, including a focus on the proposed DAPA program (see Appendix A for interview guide).

Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines, all participants provided informed consent. All interviewees agreed to be recorded. Recorded interviews typically ranged between one and two hours in length, although informal conversations following the interviews frequently extended beyond this. I attempted to capture these conversations in field notes that I wrote after most interviews. I conducted all but two interviews in Spanish. Most interviews were conducted in women's homes; some were held in cafés or other public spaces. Women were almost always the only adult in the room during the interview; small children were frequently present. As a token of appreciation for their time, I gave interviewees \$10 grocery store gift cards at the end of the interview.⁴

⁴ I did not use these gift cards as incentives, preferring instead that women participate of their own volition, though it is possible that some of the "snowballed" participants knew they would receive one.

Focus Group

I also volunteered with outreach efforts for the Centro de Trabajadores (CDT), a Workers Center under the umbrella of the Casa de la Comunidad Latina. Together with CDT's lead organizer, Jazmin, we recruited participation for a focus group of women who had used the CDT's services along with some of the mothers from Casa's tutoring program. All were Latina migrants. We provided childcare and refreshments for participants. Four women participated. I developed the discussion guide with input from Jazmin, who included some questions for CDT's use. We took turns leading the focus group, which we conducted in Spanish. With participants' consent, the conversation was recorded and transcribed. Questions related to experiences in the U.S. labor force, including the opportunities and obstacles involved with finding jobs, relationships with employers, workplace safety, balancing work and family, skills, and job goals (see Appendix B for focus group guide).

Observation at Community Meetings

Observation at community meetings represented an ancillary role in my data collection. In March 2015, I began attending information sessions about DAPA to observe how people were discussing the program in public settings. Local organizations, churches, and immigration attorneys began holding information sessions about DAPA almost immediately after its announcement. I attended five information sessions in Orange, Durham, Wake, and Chatham counties. I observed who attended the meetings, the information disseminated, and the resources that organizations provided to applicants. I also observed how attendees perceived this information, and what types of questions and concerns they posed in meetings. I also listened to webinars about DAPA held by national advocacy organizations and research institutes, such as MALDEF (the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) and the Migration

Policy Institute. I wrote field notes during each meeting. Because DAPA never came to fruition, I did not use these field notes directly for my analysis. But, they helped inform my interviews during this period as they provided me with greater knowledge and context for DAPA and immigrant families' concerns more broadly.

By the winter of 2016, organizations that had been holding DAPA information sessions began to transition to holding "*Conozca sus Derechos*" (Know your Rights) workshops, a development I associated with two events. First, a preliminary injunction on DAPA seemed to have dimmed hopes of its implementation. Second, during this period, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted a series of raids targeting Central American mothers and children. These migrants had fled violence and instability, hoping to seek political asylum in the United States. However, their claims were denied and they were targeted for removal by the Obama administration (Musalo and Lee 2017). These raids created fear in immigrant communities more broadly, including among the Mexican women I interviewed who were not targets. Observation at these meetings again provided context that informed my interviews.

Analysis

All recorded interviews and the focus group were transcribed verbatim. I coded transcripts using ATLAS.ti qualitative software following a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006). Constructivist grounded theory views theory as an interpretation, and views data and analysis as constructed by the researcher through interactions with participants (Charmaz 2006:130). I began with an open coding process, in which I assigned codes based on themes that emerged from the data, rather than using pre-conceived ideas. I used a line-by-line process during early phases of analysis, then progressed to focused coding, in which I coded themes that emerged as occurring most often or that appeared analytically important (Charmaz

2006). Finally, I used theoretical coding to conceptualize relationships between focused codes (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1978). For example, codes like “Missing parents in origin Country” and “Supporting parents financially” led to the development of the theoretical code “Transnational daughterhood.”

I wrote analytic memos to organize ideas and “work with concepts rather than raw data” (Corbin and Strauss 2008:120). For grounded theorists, memo writing is a critical part of analysis that occurs between collecting data and writing papers (Charmaz 2006). I began writing memos during the data collection and coding process and used them to make comparisons between data, codes, and categories in order to identify patterns. These memos formed the building blocks of my analysis.

Protecting Participant Identities

To protect immigrants living in the United States without legal status, I have taken steps required by the IRB as well as those that were not required but that I felt were necessary. During my data collection, I avoided collecting last names of participants or storing participants’ addresses. Following IRB guidelines, I received consent from all participants for their participation in the study and for their interviews to be recorded. With the permission of the IRB, I chose to obtain interviewee consent verbally—I believed written consent would create an unnecessary record and anticipated it would make participants nervous. I did obtain written consent from focus group participants.

In this dissertation and its associated manuscripts/presentations, I have taken multiple precautions to protect the identity of participants. All names of participants and their family members are pseudonyms. I also withhold the names of the organizations that helped me recruit participants and use a pseudonym for the organization with which I conducted the focus group. I

do not identify participants' employers (past or present) by name and have attempted to withhold any identifying details of employers. I typically only identify the community in which participants live when it provides context important for the topic at hand, or when the community is easily identifiable by the industry in which the participant was employed. Among the counties I sampled, for example, Chatham County is particularly well known for its poultry plants. In these cases, I typically identify communities at the county level rather than at the city/town level.

A Note on Reflexivity

It is important to recognize how my role as a researcher played a part in data collection and analysis. My position as a white, middle-class U.S. citizen pursuing a Ph.D. places me in a very different social location than the women in my study: Latina immigrants, most of whom had low levels of education and income and were unauthorized. My economic and social location, by and large, confers privileges, while my participants' frequently confers disadvantages. My affiliation with a university also possibly shaped power dynamics in a research relationship with people who are often marginalized in their interactions with formal institutions (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008). Being an outsider can create certain advantages for the researcher, such as questioning ideas that may be taken for granted by insiders (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2011). However, I recognize that my outsider status, in some cases, may have caused women to feel guarded about sharing certain experiences.

Therefore, it was especially important for me to build rapport in order for participants to feel comfortable in an interview situation. Recruiting primarily through organizations and individuals that participants trusted helped me establish trust with them. I also had some rapport through the shared position of being a woman, married, and in several cases, being around the

same age. In addition, although I am not a native Spanish speaker, I speak Spanish fluently and was able to conduct interviews in the women's primary language.⁵

Prior to interviews, I was clear about the basic goals of this study: examining the life, work, and migratory experiences of Latinas in the United States including the challenges they faced. Although the topics were emotionally trying for women—accounts of poverty or abuse, for example—most of the women were eager to tell their stories. Those who seemed nervous at the beginning of interviews typically became enthusiastic about sharing their experiences by the end. To my surprise, when I thanked participants after the interviews, they often thanked me in return, saying, “Sometimes, it’s good to talk,” or “I really enjoyed talking with you and remembering my childhood.” Others expressed that they wished that more Americans knew their stories, which often go untold. Several women seemed happy to help a student and encouraged me in my educational pursuits.

On a few occasions, women reached out to me as a resource, such as asking for help finding legal services, dental care, financial assistance for medical care, or to write a letter attesting to a woman's presence in the United States (in the case of applying for legal residency). I did my best to provide women with resources and information in these circumstances, including the letter.

ABOUT THE WOMEN

Vanessa represents a “modal” woman in my study in terms of demographic, family, human capital, and labor force characteristics. I met Vanessa while teaching the conversational English class for immigrant parents mentioned earlier. Vanessa left Mexico to come to the

⁵ Spanish was not women's only “native language”—some also spoke indigenous languages.

United States at age 20 and was 32 at the time of our interview. She is married, a mother of three, and undocumented. She lives with her husband and children in Orange County, North Carolina. Her children were born in the United States and range from five to 12 years old. Vanessa completed *secundaria* in Mexico, the equivalent of ninth grade in the United States, and moved on to complete some vocational high school. Vanessa wanted to learn English, but her current abilities are low—she said during our interview, “I have been here many years and I don’t know how to speak English.” Pregnant upon arrival, Vanessa chose to delay getting a job until her children were in school, at which point she found a job preparing sandwiches in a small café.

Like Vanessa, most women had lived in the United States for several years, with an average of 14 years (see Table 1.1). Interviewees’ ages ranged from 23 to 54, but most were in their thirties and forties at the time of interview. The average age at migration was 24.5, which allowed me to study labor force trajectories over time and in both prime labor force and family formation years. Nearly all had arrived in the United States undocumented and at the time of the interview, about 80 percent remained unauthorized. I interviewed women from five counties, listed in Table 1.1, to consider diverse economic and social contexts shaping immigrant reception—I discuss these contexts further in Chapter 2.

Table 1.1. Demographic and migration characteristics of interviewees
(n=48; modal categories in bold)

<i>County of residence</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>
Alamance	9
Chatham	4
Durham	9
Orange	19
Wake	7
<i>Country of origin</i>	
Guatemala	2
Honduras	2
Mexico	44
<i>Age</i> (Mean = 38 years)	
<30	1
30-39	28
40-49	15
≥50	4
<i>Years in United States</i> (Mean = 14 years)	
<1	1
2-9 years	5
10-19 years	40
≥ 20 years	2

Employment and education

Because I wanted to study women's labor force participation, I only interviewed women who had worked at some point, for any period of time, since migrating to the United States. Women's jobs were concentrated in the low-wage labor market and two-thirds were working at the time of the interview. Their jobs varied over time, but typically included domestic work as house cleaners and babysitters, hotel housekeeping, food service, and factory work (See Table 1.2). Eighty-five percent of these women had also worked in their countries of origin prior to migration.

In general, women in the sample had low levels of formal education and English ability. Thirty-three women in the sample had less than a high school education. Women typically left school under three conditions (which sometimes overlapped): to work; when their parent—often fathers—did not support their education; or to get married. Vanessa, for example, said that while she was studying in her vocational high school, “My husband proposed that we get married and that we come [to the United States], and we came here.” Cristina explained why she left school after *secundaria*:

During that time... the company where my Dad worked went on strike—it closed. And he was the one who brought the money home. My mom didn’t work... And my two brothers also worked in that company. So there was no more income to keep studying. So, I went to work and since then, it’s just been work.

Even the few women with higher education credentials, including college degrees, were largely unable to capitalize on them because of their undocumented status and/or limited English ability. These characteristics are similar to those of the population of unauthorized migrants in the United States, about half of whom have less than a high school diploma and have low levels of English language ability.⁶

⁶ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>

Table 1.2. Labor force participation pre-migration, upon arrival, and at time of interview
(n=48)

Percent ever worked prior to migration	Common jobs pre-migration	Percent worked after U.S. arrival (within a year)	Common jobs after arrival	Working at time of interview	Common jobs at time of interview
85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agriculture</i> • <i>Domestic work</i> • <i>Factory work</i> • <i>Secretarial/office work</i> • <i>Retail and Informal sales (food, clothing)</i> 	79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Restaurant/food service</i> • <i>Factory work</i> • <i>Commercial cleaning/janitorial</i> • <i>Domestic work</i> • <i>Informal food sales</i> • <i>Food processing</i> 	71%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Domestic work</i> • <i>Restaurant/food service</i> • <i>Commercial cleaning/janitorial</i>

Family characteristics

Like Vanessa, the majority of women I interviewed (31) identified either as married (*casada*) or *juntada*, a long-term relationship considered to be of equal status to marriage in many Latin American countries.⁷ All married/*juntada* women had co-resident male spouses and were mothers. Sixteen women identified as single, divorced, or separated; one was widowed. I oversampled women who were mothers but also interviewed three women who did not have children.

Seven women had at least one child living in their country of origin and can be classified as “transnational mothers”—however, each of these women also had co-resident children living in the United States. Miriam, for example, decided to migrate to support her young son when she became a single mother in Mexico. Later, in the United States, she re-married and had a daughter.

⁷ Women who are *juntada* generally referred to their partners as spouses or husbands. I do not distinguish between married and *juntada* women in this study.

Like Vanessa, most women's children were born in the United States and living with them. Approximately 70 percent of all children born to interviewees were born in the United States. This meant that many women were in so-called "mixed-status" families, in which parents are undocumented and at least some children are citizens. The prevalence of mixed-status families among the women in my sample is representative of immigrant families nationally: an estimated 79 percent of the children of undocumented parents are U.S. citizens (Capps, Fix, and Zong 2016).

Table 1.3. Family characteristics (at time of interview)

Marital & family status	
(n=48)	
Married with children	31 (65%)
Single mothers	15 (31%)
Single, no children	3 (6%)
Children's nativity & transnational parent status of mothers	
(n=45)	
U.S.-born children only	30 (66.7%)
U.S.-born and foreign-born children	9 (20%)
Foreign-born children only	8 (17.8%)
Transnational mothers*	7 (15.6%)
*At least one child lives in country of origin.	

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the next six chapters, I examine the conditions under which Latina migrant women worked and raised families amid the contexts of reception in new destination communities. In Chapter 2, I lay out the economic, political, and social contexts shaping new destination migration in the U.S. South. Within each dimension, I also identify how these contexts are gendered: that is, how men and women are incorporated differently into local labor markets and how policies and interactions with social institutions target men and women differently. This

chapter addresses my first set of research questions to consider the structural factors patterning new destination migrants' labor force participation.

Chapter 3 uses a life course perspective to demonstrate how women formed attachments to work prior to migration and made migration decisions, addressing the second and third sets of research questions. To examine how Latina migrants formed attachments to work prior to migration, I draw on the life-history portion of interviews to analyze the conditions under which women joined the labor force in countries of origin. I found that for many, beginning to work and supporting themselves and family members represented a salient part of their transition to adulthood. Through this transition, women formed strong identities as workers and were socialized to make personal and family sacrifices. Next, I explore how women made migration decisions in gendered family contexts, both for labor migration and family reunification. Often, through migration, women negotiated household power dynamics and contested gendered socialization and norms. This chapter provides insight into the gendered nature of life-course transitions, both pre- and post-migration, for women's work and migration trajectories.

Chapters 4 and 5 respond to the fourth and fifth sets of research questions related to women's responses to family demands and legal constraints. In Chapter 4, I examine how, once in the United States, women experienced restrictive policies and family demands across stages of motherhood that constrained their labor force participation. These findings demonstrate how family-related life course transitions shaped work decisions. They also indicate how work-family conflict is shaped by intersectional inequality—specifically, the inequality associated with being poor, foreign-born, undocumented, and female. This chapter contributes to understanding the factors shaping low labor force participation rates among foreign-born and undocumented women. I also explore the meanings women attach to work, which are rooted in their early work

experiences outlined in Chapter 3, and discuss the social and psychological consequences when intersectional constraints inhibit labor force participation.

Chapter 5 examines how women respond to the pull of family and push of policy restrictions in their employment relationships. In doing so, I uncover women's labor market strategies in a restricted market. I find that increasingly, women turn to work in less regulated, so-called "nonstandard" employment relationships. Through nonstandard work, women demonstrate agency amid employment restrictions. In some cases, through self-employment, they achieve greater work-family balance. These findings have implications for understanding how women evaluate job quality in the secondary labor market and how they create mobility pathways amid labor market restrictions. But their accounts also indicate vulnerability through employment relationships where workers bear the majority of risks.

In Chapter 6, I summarize the findings and contributions from these substantive chapters and highlight the policy implications of this research. I also consider why, despite initial plans to remain in the United States temporarily and the barriers described in Chapters 4 and 5, women decide to stay in the United States for the long-term. These findings reveal the individual-level and gendered consequences of immigration and employment laws. I discuss how policies intended to discourage immigrant settlement and labor force participation are unrealistic in their intentions and instead result in economic and social vulnerability among individuals determined to provide a better future for their families. Drawing on these findings, I suggest future areas for research in a quickly changing policy environment.

Since migrating to the United States thirteen years ago, Alejandra, whom I quote at the beginning of this chapter, has struggled to "go above the clouds." Alejandra migrated from

Mexico to North Carolina to support her daughter when she became a single mother. She is now a re-married mother of two. Her time in the United States has been shaped by ongoing struggles to negotiate work and family in a labor market that severely limited her employment options due to her undocumented status. At the time of our interview, she had recently quit her physically demanding job in a laundry that she associated with detrimental impacts on her health and family wellbeing.

Alejandra recounted returning home in the evening after a 10-hour shift, finding herself incapable of caring for her young son, who, she said, “Asked his dad if I was going to die. Because instead of taking care of the child, he was taking care of me.” Quitting her job, she explained, was, “Not so easy... when there’s no Social Security number” to be able to apply for a new one. Surprisingly, however, Alejandra felt hopeful for her future in the United States, where she envisioned herself as an entrepreneur making and selling baked goods and tamales. She told me that, “[I]n five years, I’m going to have a business...a really established business...”

Alejandra’s account is indicative of the ways work and family conflict for undocumented women in North Carolina—women who are highly motivated to work. In this dissertation, I document the ways that women like Alejandra experienced constraints associated with their status as poor, foreign-born, and undocumented mothers in the low-wage labor market, as well as their strategies to overcome them. In doing so, I demonstrate how women negotiate work and family while living under restrictive policies.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTS OF RECEPTION IN THE *NUEVO SOUTH*

I was imagining a big city. I imagined it very beautiful... full of buildings—like, what you see on TV sometimes: Los Angeles, Miami... I imagined that Carolina was like that, but no. And since I arrived, I liked it, because it's a very beautiful place.

-Lorena

Historically, Latina/o migrants in the United States settled in what scholars refer to as “traditional” receiving areas in the West and Southwest, including Texas, Arizona, and California, as well as large cities in the Midwest and along the East Coast, like Chicago, New York, and Miami (Singer 2004). Beginning in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, the landscape of Latin American-U.S. migration began changing. In addition to settling in places like Los Angeles or Houston, Latinas/os began coming to smaller cities, towns, and rural communities in the Southeast and Midwest: places like Dalton, Georgia and Siler City, North Carolina (Massey 2008; Odem and Lacy 2009; Zúñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005). “New” destinations states—which include South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Delaware, Arkansas, South Dakota, Nevada, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Wyoming, Idaho, Indiana, and Mississippi—experienced twice as much growth in their foreign-born populations compared to the national rate in the first decade of the 2000s (Terrazas 2011).

Like Lorena in the quote above, several of the women in my sample told me they were pleasantly surprised to arrive in small towns surrounded by *naturaleza* (nature) rather than big cities with skyscrapers, which was how they had imagined the United States. These women came to settle in what Audrey Singer (2015) terms “minor-emerging” gateways—new immigration

destinations that have “little historical record of receiving immigrants, but in recent decades have experienced extraordinary growth in their foreign-born populations.” Minor emerging gateways experienced approximately three times the national rate of foreign-born population growth since about 1990 (Singer 2015).

The women in my sample represent this stream of migrants to new destinations. Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) emigrated directly to North Carolina from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras⁸ during the 1990s and early 2000s. Approximately 23 percent (11 women) migrated first to traditional gateways, including California, Texas, New York, and Florida. Three initially arrived in other new destination states in the Southeast, Midwest, and West. This is representative of Latina/o migration patterns in the new destinations more generally: Mark Leach and Frank Bean (2008) found that about two-thirds of Mexican-origin arrivals in new destinations in the 1990s arrived directly from abroad. Seventy-nine percent of the sample arrived between 1994 and 2004, reflecting a period in which North Carolina emerged as a “magnet state” for Latina/o migration (Johnson and Kasarda 2009). Between 1990 and 2012, the state experienced 550 percent growth in its foreign-born population (Johnson and Appold 2014).

Latina/o migration to new destinations has been shaped by a confluence of political and economic shifts in both sending countries and the United States. Many poor migrants were pushed from their countries of origin in Mexico and Central America beginning in the late 1980s due to economic crises, political upheaval, and economic repercussions from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which ushered in a period of economic integration between the two countries, but displaced Mexican agricultural workers from jobs (Hagan et al. 2015; Hamilton and Chinchilla 1996; Massey 2008; Zúñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005). NAFTA, in

⁸ With one exception, even those who had spent time in other states had spent the vast majority of their time in the U.S. in North Carolina.

conjunction with restructuring efforts following Mexico's 1980s economic crisis, led to Mexico's dependence on external finance and investment, resulting in economic vulnerability and the collapse of the peso in the 1990s. Mexican unemployment increased because private firms were unable to compete with imported goods and manufacturing shifted away from traditional industrial cities to low-wage factories in border cities. NAFTA was especially detrimental to Mexican agricultural employment, as it allowed the free movement of U.S. agricultural goods across the Mexican border (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1996). In the United States, the increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border in traditional crossing areas as a result of the U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986, in addition to anti-immigrant sentiment in traditional receiving areas, deterred these migrants from traditional receiving areas. Around the same time, economic restructuring created employer demand for immigrant labor in construction, manufacturing, food processing, and service industries in the South (Massey 2008; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002; Odem and Lacy 2009; Zúñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005).

Scholars increasingly find that public bureaucracies like schools, social welfare agencies, health care services, law enforcement, and court systems, play central roles in the incorporation of Latina/o migrants in destination communities (Jones-Correa 2008; López-Sanders 2017; Marrow 2009, 2011). In southern destinations, institutional reception of new immigrants has been mixed: in some cases, churches and some public bureaucracies like schools have welcomed immigrants, while others, such as law enforcement agencies, have been more exclusionary (Armenta 2017; Griffith 2008; Jones-Correa 2008; López-Sanders 2012; Marrow 2011; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2009). In many cases, scholars have documented increasingly hostile reception of migrants in new destination communities, particularly as more immigrants brought families and formed communities (Armenta 2017; Gill 2010; López-Sanders 2009; Marrow

2011; Odem and Lacy 2009; Ribas 2015; Winders 2013). In this shifting context of reception, southern politicians have tended to conflate immigration with undocumented immigration, and being Latina/o with being “illegal,” a discourse that has been echoed by the public and in popular imagery (Armenta 2017; Chavez 2013; Lacy and Odem 2009).

In this chapter, I outline the shifting economic, political, and social contexts of reception for Latina/o migrants in this new gateway. “Contexts of reception” is a concept developed by international migration scholars that refers to how the structural and cultural conditions of receiving communities shape immigrant incorporation (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2014). In general, studies focus on three dimensions of reception: economic, political, and social. I draw on this typology to outline the labor market conditions, state, federal, and local policies, and social infrastructure that have shaped interviewees’ incorporation since the mid-1990s.

Economic contexts include the characteristics of labor markets, which entail occupational and industrial profiles, geographic wage differences, labor demand, and employer preferences for particular groups of workers (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). These preferences are often grounded in employers’ stereotypes of which groups, based on nationality, race/ethnicity, and gender, are best suited for menial labor (Espiritu 2008; López-Sanders 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Straut-Eppsteiner 2016; Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Portes and Rumbaut refer to this process as the “positive or negative typification” of migrant laborers (Portes and Rumbaut 2014:209). Positive typification can result in blocked mobility in the low-wage labor market, while negative typification results in hiring discrimination and unemployment.

In my analysis, I use economic contexts of reception as a category to refer to the process of U.S. economic restructuring which shaped the feminization of labor migration flows, the concentration of low-wage, non-union jobs in Southern states, and subsequent labor demand for migrant workers to fill jobs in particular industrial niches. Drawing a connection between political and economic contexts. I also describe how policies enacted at federal and state levels have increasingly restricted undocumented immigrants' access to the labor market in North Carolina.

Scholars examining immigrant incorporation identify the central role of political contexts of reception, which consist of the government policies regulating migration flows, integration programs, and immigrants' rights once in the destination (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Reitz 2002). These policies exist on a spectrum of receptivity ranging from active encouragement to passive acceptance to discouragement (Portes and Böröcz 1989). According to Portes and Rumbaut (2014:139), political contexts set the stage for immigrant incorporation because they determine “the probability of successful immigration and the framework of economic opportunities and legal options” upon arrival. In cases when migration flows are unauthorized, incorporation is shaped “at every step, by the need to bypass the state’s enforcement machinery... ” (Portes and Rumbaut 2014:139). While earlier conceptualizations of political contexts focused primarily on federal immigration policies (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2001), scholars increasingly highlight the importance of sub-federal (state and local) policies in shaping immigrant integration (Motomura 2008; Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2009). In this dissertation, I conceptualize political contexts as the federal, state, and local policies that regulate and control immigrant populations.

Social contexts of reception refer to the presence of an existing coethnic community in the receiving community. Scholars argue that recent arrivals may benefit from integration into ethnic enclaves, which can ease economic integration through access to jobs and training and pathways to entrepreneurship (Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009). However, exploitation may also exist in coethnic communities when individuals profit at the expense of others in their network; often this exploitation is a response to political circumstances that leave migrants ineligible for benefits and concentrated in unregulated work arrangements (Cranford 2005; Mahler 1995)—representing how policies shape economic and social contexts of reception (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). In new destinations, researchers have found that immigrant communities have less developed networks and institutional support from community organizations compared with traditional destinations (Bada et al. 2010; Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Singer, Svajlenka, and Wilson 2015).

In the next section, I discuss the role of economic restructuring in drawing migration to new destinations, focusing on labor market demand in North Carolina and the five counties from which I drew my sample. Then, I outline the evolution of restrictive federal, state, and local policies targeting immigrants' employment and presence while recognizing the welcoming policies of some communities. I close with social contexts of reception by discussing the growth of co-ethnic Latina/o communities in the new south and the limitations of social infrastructure. Within each dimension, I identify how these contexts are gendered: specifically, how men and women are incorporated differently into local labor markets and how policies and interactions with social institutions target men and women differently.

ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

Dual labor market theory provides a useful lens for examining the economic incorporation of international labor migrants. This theory identifies and describes two interdependent labor markets: the primary labor market, which consists of skilled, well-compensated, upwardly-mobile “good” jobs and the secondary labor market, comprised of low-skilled, low-wage “bad” jobs with no benefits, poor working conditions, and little regulation (Doeringer and Piore 1985; Gordon, Edwards, and Reich 1982; Peck 1996). Jobs in the primary labor market typically include white-collar, managerial professional jobs as well as skilled trades, while jobs in the secondary labor market refer to more routinized production and service jobs. Concentration in the primary and secondary market is shaped by structural discrimination on the basis of race, sex, and immigrant status. Historically, as native-born and white workers have experienced upward mobility in the primary labor market, immigrant workers and workers of color have filled demand for jobs in the secondary labor market (Chomsky 2014; Morse 1969; Piore 1979).

Beginning in the mid-1970s, U.S. labor markets underwent fundamental shifts driven by globalization, technological change, and international economic competition. Middle-wage manufacturing jobs were replaced by high- and low-wage jobs in a growing service sector, leading to polarization in the U.S. occupational structure by the 1990s (Hudson 2007; Kalleberg 2000; Wright and Dwyer 2003). During the same period, workers experienced a decline in institutional protections: the strong labor institutions of the post-World War II period gave way to an era marked by weak labor force institutions, deregulation, and market-driven flexibility (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Kalleberg 2011).

The labor migration of Latinas/os to new destination areas is closely linked to these economic and institutional shifts. As corporations sought flexibility and low-wage, non-union sources of “labor made cheap” (Enloe 2004) in response to globalization and economic competition, some went abroad, while others turned to workers in the U.S. South to fill demand for low-wage jobs in food processing, textile manufacturing, and construction (Massey 2008). Southern states have low rates of union coverage as a result of “right-to-work” laws and have state minimum wages set at or below the federal minimum—or no minimum wage at all.⁹

The poor wages and conditions of these jobs pushed away native-born workers. Instead, employers recruited international migrants from the global South. Charles Hirschman and Douglas Massey (2008:10) note that the undocumented, in particular, stepped in to fill jobs because their social locations left them with few options and greater willingness to tolerate instability and poor conditions compared with the native born. Immigrants’ concentration in low-wage jobs thus not only reflects native-born workers unwillingness to do them but employer preferences for a compliant workforce. Employers perceive foreign-born workers to be subordinate and willing to work hard in difficult jobs for little pay without complaint—characteristics that stem from workers’ marginalized social locations that leave them with few job options (Donato and Bankston 2008; Hagan et al. 2015; López-Sanders 2009; Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Zamudio and Lichter 2008).

As dual labor market theory would predict, the polarization of jobs was racialized, with white workers experiencing job growth in higher-wage jobs as Latinas/os concentrated in low-wage jobs (Wright and Dwyer 2003). Erik Olin Wright and Rachel Dwyer’s (2003) analysis of the occupational structure in the 1990s found that immigrants—mostly Latinas/os—filled 64% of

⁹ For rates of union coverage by state see <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t05.htm>; right-to-work laws: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/right-to-work-laws-and-bills.aspx>; minimum wage: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/america.htm>.

jobs in the lowest quintile of median earnings in industries like retail and personal services. Economic restructuring and occupational polarization have also been associated with the “feminization” of migration flows, as women from the Global South migrated to fill demand in industries such as garment production, health care, and personal services (Fernández-Kelly 1983; Sassen-Koob 1984). The feminization of migration streams also reflects the privatization of household services during this period. Responding to cultural and economic shifts, native-born U.S. women increasingly entered the paid labor market during the second half of the 20th century, which created demand for immigrant women’s labor in informal, unregulated labor markets such as domestic household services (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002).

Latinas/os in the North Carolina Labor Force

Reflecting trends in other new destination states, growth in North Carolina’s Latina/o population is tied to labor demand for unskilled and low-skilled jobs with low wages and poor working conditions in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, construction, and service work (Gill 2010; Griffith 2005; Johnson and Kasarda 2009; Kandel and Parrado 2005; Mohl 2003). Demand for immigrant labor was particularly strong during the 1990s under conditions of a tight labor market and low unemployment rates in the state and remained strong through the early 2000s (Johnson and Kasarda 2009). Immigrants’ ties to the North Carolina labor market are evident through their high labor force participation rate, which was 10% higher than that of native-born residents in 2012 (Johnson and Appold 2014).

In North Carolina, local industries have provided community-specific labor niches for Latina/o workers, transforming communities whose historically black-white racial divides have grown increasingly racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse. During the past few decades,

Mexicans and Central Americans began filling labor demand for jobs historically done by African Americans, in manufacturing, agricultural work, and meat, poultry, and seafood processing (Griffith 2006; López-Sanders 2009; Ribas 2015). Scholars have documented the displacement and replacement of native-born workers by Latina/o migrants and intergroup relations during the process.¹⁰

As shown in Table 2.1, Latina/o immigrant workers in North Carolina are concentrated in a variety of new or expanded production and service industries that characterize the state's economic landscape in a restructured economy. Often, in this economy, low-wage workers have little voice: North Carolina is a “right-to-work” state with a hostile climate for labor unions. In 2016, among all states, North Carolina had the second lowest rate of union affiliation, with only 3 percent of employed workers as union members.¹¹ A notable exception includes the unionization of meatpacking workers in the Smithfield Packing plant, which ratified a contract in 2009 after a 17-year battle (Geary 2009; Greenhouse 2008).

As demonstrated in Table 2.1, Mexican and Central American men are concentrated in construction, manufacturing—predominantly, animal slaughter and processing and furniture production—agriculture, landscaping, and waste management. Women are also concentrated in manufacturing but in broader categories—animal slaughter and processing and furniture

¹⁰ In his research on immigrant workers in rural industries, David Griffith (2005, 2006) found that in some cases, Latinas/os' concentration in jobs represents the replacement of Black workers who have moved into better jobs and/or are investing in education. In others, however, it represents displacement that has occurred when employers prefer Latina/o immigrants because they are more subordinate¹⁰. Similarly, drawing on ethnographic research in a Southern factory, Laura López-Sanders found employers used racialized “labor queues” to rank employees and systematically replace Black workers in the lowest-status occupations with Latina/o migrants. Black men responded by antagonizing their Latino replacements to protect their low-level positions, essentially “trapping” themselves in the worst jobs. Drawing on participant observation in a North Carolina meatpacking plant, Vanesa Ribas (2015) found a combination of replacement and displacement. Those Black workers who continued to work in the plant did not express resentment toward their new Latina/o coworkers or perceive them as a threat. Rather, Latina/o workers in the plant were the ones who expressed animosity toward Black, native-born workers, perceiving a relative disadvantage.

¹¹ South Carolina was the only state with lower rates of union affiliation. See https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t05.htm#union_a05.f.1.

production like men, as well as cut and sew apparel manufacturing and fabric mills—in addition to accommodation and food services, retail, health care, and service industries. Compared with their male counterparts, Latinas in North Carolina tend to be concentrated in smaller firms and more isolated work contexts, including hotel housekeeping, private household work, and “back of house” food service occupations like dishwashers (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Flippen 2016; Gill 2010).

Table 2.1. Industry concentration of foreign-born Mexicans and Central Americans in North Carolina, 2015

	All	Men	Women
<i>Construction</i>	25.4%	37%	1.8%
<i>Manufacturing*</i>	16.8%	14.7%	20.89%
<i>Accommodation and food services</i>	12%	7.7%	20.71%
<i>Agriculture</i>	7.8%	9.7%	3.9%
<i>Retail trade</i>	6.3%	4.4%	10.2%
<i>Landscaping and waste management</i>	5.8%	8.2%	0.9%
<i>Other services</i>	4.6%	3.3%	7.1%
<i>Wholesale trade</i>	4.3%	4.5%	3.8%
<i>Services to buildings and dwellings</i>	4.0%	1.68%	8.8%
<i>Health care and social assistance</i>	3.1%	.97%	7.5%
<i>Other</i>	9.9%	8%	14.4%

**Most common sub-categories include animal slaughter and processing, miscellaneous manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, and textile manufacturing*

Source: American Community Survey/IPUMS

Migrant women’s isolated working conditions are associated with reduced physical mobility, limited access to social networks, fewer opportunities for learning English, and a greater likelihood of experiencing sexual assault (Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Deeb-Sossa and Bickham-Mendez 2008). When women leave the labor force in response to family

demands after having children, they face even more isolation in the home and become more dependent on men (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008).

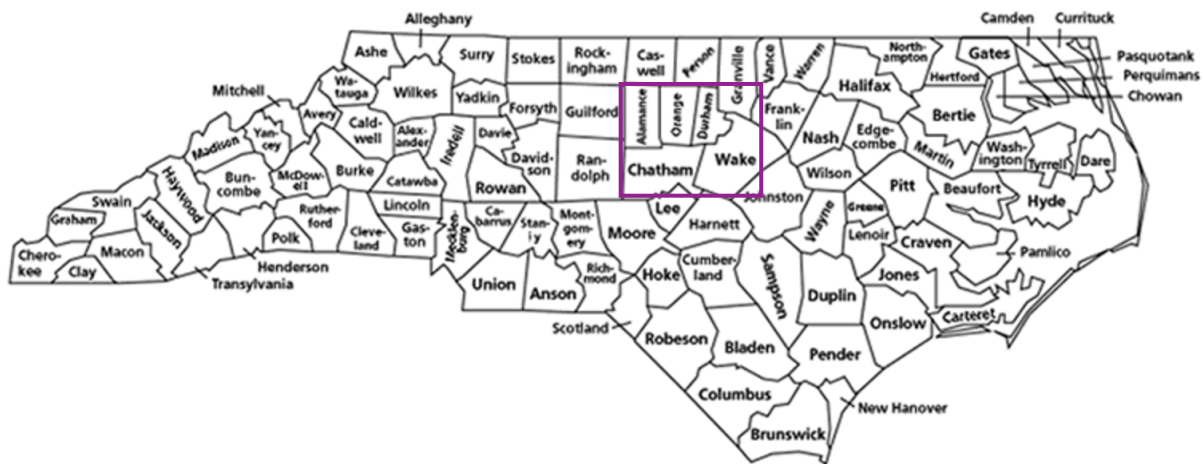
The women in my sample lived and worked in five new immigrant destination counties in North Carolina that experienced dramatic growth in their Latina/o populations during the past three decades: Alamance, Chatham, Durham, Orange, and Wake (see Table 2.2). As depicted in the map in Figure 2.1, these counties are centrally located in the state. It is important to note here that I incorporated multiple geographies to introduce variation in local contexts to diversify a relatively small overall sample of participants. While I consider some differences across these counties, particularly those related to economic contexts of reception, uneven sample sizes across these counties did not allow for reliable and systematic analytic comparisons. For example, nearly 40 percent of the sample lived in Orange County, while only eight percent lived in Chatham County.

Table 2.2. Hispanics/Latinos as percent of total population in five North Carolina counties: 1990-2010

County	1990	2000	2010
Alamance	0.7%	6.8%	11.0%
Chatham	1.5%	9.6%	13.0%
Durham	1.1%	7.6%	13.5%
Orange	1.4%	4.5%	8.2%
Wake	1.3%	5.4%	9.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Figure 2.1: Map of North Carolina counties



Map courtesy of “Carolina Maps” at the University of North Carolina

In Chatham County, located in the Piedmont region, and encompassing towns Siler City and Pittsboro, Latina/o migrants began filling demand for low-wage jobs in the poultry processing industry. The poultry industry in the area dates back to the mid-20th century but did not begin recruiting Latina/o workers until the 1980s (Cravey 1997). As Americans’ preferences for processed meat grew, employers in North Carolina and other southern states actively recruited laborers in Mexico as well as traditional gateways in the U.S. for jobs that the native-born increasingly eschewed because of low wages and dangerous conditions (Cravey 1997; Gill 2010; Stuesse 2016).

In rural communities like Siler City, the growing demand for poultry workers initially drew male migrants, but by the 1990s, women and children came as well (Cravey 1997; Cuadros 2009; Griffith 2005; Silver 2011). This reflects a broader pattern of Mexican migration at the end of the 20th century: facing a militarized border, men who were previously “circular” or seasonal migrants began settling permanently and bringing their families to join them (Massey et al.

2002). The local poultry industry has since suffered significant losses, citing financial losses from the high cost of fuel and chicken feed by the end of the first decade of the 2000s. Two major plants closed in 2008 and 2011, resulting in the loss of approximately 1,500 local jobs (WRAL 2008, 2011). However, agriculture and agribusiness retain a strong presence in the county, accounting for 38 percent of income and a third of the county's employment.¹²

Moving north in the Piedmont to Alamance County, Mexican laborers were recruited to work in the textiles industry, allowing factories "to stay competitive in a quickly expanding and competitive global market," and have been credited with preserving the industry's presence in the community (Gill 2010, 21). Textile manufacturing in the county dates back to the pre-Civil War era¹³ and continues today. Manufacturing employers in the county also include producers of processed plastics, medical equipment, and automotive and electrical equipment. Manufacturing accounted for the largest sector of employment (16%) in the county as of 2015.¹⁴ Like poultry in Chatham County, the Alamance County textile industry has also experienced job loss because of plant and mill closures in recent years (Lavender 2013).

To the east of the Piedmont lies North Carolina's "Research Triangle" of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, representing, Wake, Durham, and Orange counties, respectively. As Table 2.2 shows, the Latina/o population in these counties grew significantly in the period between 1990 and 2010. These counties, each home to major universities, hospitals, and technology companies, have high proportions of skilled workers but also employ many people in service and construction industries. Studies of immigrant incorporation in these counties have documented the growth of Latinas/os in construction, hospitality, and other services (Gill 2010; Hagan, Lowe,

¹² <http://www.chathamnc.org/about-us/statistics-and-demographics/agriculture>

¹³ <https://www.alamance-nc.com/home-1/about-alamance-county/history/new-nation-new-county/>

¹⁴ <http://www.choosealamance.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Alamance-County-Community-Profile.pdf>

and Quingla 2011). To recruit workers, employers in these industries relied on labor contractors and advertised in Spanish-language newspapers in “traditional” U.S. destinations with large Latina/o populations, like Texas, as well as in sending states in Latin America (Gill 2010; Griffith 2005; Kandel and Parrado 2005).

Many of the immigrant workers laboring in North Carolina’s factories, plants, construction sites, hotels, and private households are undocumented. According to estimates by the Migration Policy Institute, as of 2014, nearly half (45.6 percent) of the foreign-born population in North Carolina was unauthorized and most (81 percent) were born in Mexico and Central America.¹⁵ Although employment sanctions against the undocumented have been in place since the mid-1980s, economic contexts of reception have become increasingly regulated and enforced by federal and state legislation that seeks to limit unauthorized workers’ access to jobs.

POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Undocumented people in the United States are subject to legislation at federal, state, and local levels that regulates their access to the labor market, presence in the country, and integration and membership in states and communities. “Immigration outside the law” is policed not only through border and interior enforcement, but also by policies and bureaucratic practices shaping access to employment, driving, and education (Motomura 2008, 2014). Compared with traditional destinations, new destination states in the U.S. South tend to have more restrictive legislation and fewer policies promoting immigrants’ rights and integration (Bada 2010; Lacy and Odem 2009; Winders 2013)

¹⁵ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/NC#>

While the federal government is charged with regulating immigration, several new destination states, including Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee—have proposed, passed, and implemented a series of state-, county-, and municipal-level policies and practices targeting immigrants (Armenta 2017; Lacy and Odem 2009; Nguyen and Gill 2016; Winders 2007). These regulations increasingly control immigrants' rights and lives at work, home, and in public spaces. In North Carolina, these policies include work authorization programs, local law enforcement agencies' cooperation with federal immigration authorities, drivers' license eligibility requirements, an English-language law, and attempts to limit education access among undocumented children. Collectively, these policies and regulations seek to exclude immigrant, and especially undocumented, people from social and economic membership in new destination communities. In doing so, federal, state, and local governments seek to redefine membership based on race, nationality, and citizenship.

Amnesty, Employment Sanctions, and Work Authorization Programs: Making work “illegal”

Current employment restrictions stem from the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), signed into law by President Reagan in 1986. IRCA was a watershed moment for U.S. immigration policy. IRCA paired amnesty provisions for undocumented workers in the United States with harsher immigration enforcement mechanisms targeting the undocumented. These provisions allowed long-term undocumented workers and agricultural workers to regularize their status (Durand, Massey, and Parrado 1999). Jacqueline Hagan found that the outcomes of IRCA were gendered. Women were less able to benefit from these legalization programs because of their requirement to provide proof of employment and documentation of U.S. residence. Compared with men, women tended to work in more isolated and informal environments and therefore had less documentation to prove their employment. They also had fewer weak ties with

U.S. citizens who might provide affidavits attesting to their presence in the United States (Hagan 1998).

Through IRCA, employment verification mandates and federal sanctions shifted responsibility for immigration enforcement from the federal government to employers. The legislation mandated that all employers require new hires to fill out I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification forms with their name, date of birth, Social Security number, citizenship status, and proof of work authorization. These sanctions not only impacted employers but made working an “illegal” activity for the undocumented, as journalist David Bacon (2008, 5) explains: “In making it illegal for the employer to hire them, the law also made it a crime for those workers to hold a job.”

Such restrictive policies have also had uneven impacts on women and men, demonstrating how immigration policies, although seemingly gender-neutral, often have gendered effects (Boyd 1989; Hagan 1998; Donato and Gabaccia 2015). During the period following IRCA, the consequences of being undocumented for employment conditions have been especially bad for Mexican women, who experienced greater wage deterioration, worked fewer hours, and were more likely to be pushed into the informal sector relative to Mexican men (Donato et al. 2008). Women’s concentration in informal, isolated work, like domestic work, has been associated with women’s limited physical mobility, access to social networks, and opportunities for learning English and regularizing their status (Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Deeb-Sosa and Bickham-Mendez 2008). These isolated work contexts are associated with high levels of vulnerability to exploitation and abuse (Hagan 1998; Menjívar and Salcido 2002; Deeb-Sosa and Mendez 2008).

The immigrant employment restrictions introduced by IRCA were elevated with the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) during the Clinton administration. IIRIRA established pilot programs for employment eligibility verification, including the “Basic Pilot” program in 1997. Basic Pilot facilitated the electronic verification of work authorization among newly hired employees by matching I-9 forms against records in Social Security Administration and Immigration and Naturalization Service databases (later, these databases became part of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS]).¹⁶ The program was piloted in five states with the largest undocumented populations: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. By 2003, Congress expanded the program to all 50 states for federal government hires (National Immigration Law Center 2011). In 2007, under the Bush administration, the program was rebranded as E-Verify and added photo matching into the process.

All federal departments and agencies are required to use E-Verify for hiring; however, states largely have discretion over its use for other employers. Specifically, states may implement legislation for use both in state government public sector jobs and in the private sector. Several states have acted to implement E-Verify laws. Yet variation exists within states, and the National Immigration Law Center (2011) notes that not all employers use E-Verify, even in states where it is mandatory. By 2015, 20 states had laws requiring at least some employers to use E-Verify, including Southern new destination states North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi (USCIS 2015). Variation in the implementation of the program has been associated with growth in immigrant populations. States that experienced the

¹⁶ DHS was established in 2002 as a response to the events of September 11, 2001. The department houses U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

largest proportionate increases in their immigrant populations between 1990 and 2006 were most likely to implement E-Verify laws (Newman et al. 2012).

This was the case for North Carolina. In 2011, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation to implement and expand E-Verify incrementally. In October 2012, E-Verify was required for all new hires of private employers of 500 or more employees; by July 2013 it was required for employers with 25 or more employees. In 2015, North Carolina House Bill 318 extended E-Verify from private employers to also include state and local government agencies' hiring of both employees and contractors. In February 2017, House Bill 35, the "Protect North Carolina Workers Act," was introduced to expand E-Verify to include employers of 5 or more workers.¹⁷ Farmworkers, independent contractors, and domestic workers are not considered "employees" for the purposes of state E-Verify requirements and are therefore exempt.¹⁸ States' participation in the E-Verify program represents a broader trend in the role of sub-federal governments in determining the consequences of being undocumented (Motomura 2008, 2014).

Patricia, one of the interviewees in my sample, provided an example of the contrasts that exist between states. She entered the U.S. labor force after she became a U.S. citizen while living in California, prior to moving to North Carolina. She compared the two states:

This is the difference between here [North Carolina] and California. In California, there are more people who don't have documents and they're working. And here... when you first go to apply they tell you, "We are with E-Verify." So for one [without legal status], it is difficult, to get work. Imagine what it's like for those who don't have documents.

Her observation of E-Verify reflects the unequal implementation of the program across states.¹⁹

¹⁷ <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2017/Bills/House/PDF/H35v1.pdf>.

¹⁸ Notably, agriculture is North Carolina's number-one industry.

¹⁹ California's Employment Acceleration Act, passed in 2011, prohibits state agencies, cities, and counties from requiring private employers to use E-Verify (http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_1201-1250/ab_1236_bill_20110909_enrolled.html). Although E-Verify use is *permitted* for new hires, under California state law as of 2016, it cannot be used prior to issuing an offer of employment or to check the status of current

In addition to E-Verify, which was designed explicitly to deter unauthorized employment, undocumented people in the first decade of the 2000s also began encountering problems with employment because of the “No-Match Letter” Program implemented by the Social Security Administration (SSA) in the early 2000s. The SSA enacted this program to alert employers when their workers’ Social Security numbers listed on W-2s (Wage and Earnings Reports forms) do not match the names in the SSA database. When such a mismatch occurs, workers’ Social Security contributions are held in an “Earnings Suspense File” (ESF). The rationale behind the program, reportedly, was to reduce the size of the ESF. The letters report the error and request that employers and employees correct the mismatch (Bergeron, Terrazas, and Meissner 2007).

In its guidance to employers, the SSA advised against terminating “no match” employees—a discrepancy between name and Social Security number does not necessarily indicate lack of immigration status.²⁰ However, many employers did so anyway, perceiving the risk associated with violating employment sanctions, in addition to cutting wages and benefits for workers identified in the letters. Other immigrant workers quit their jobs in fear of the consequences (Bacon 2008; Mehta, Theodore, and Hincapié 2003). A 2003 report by the Center for Urban Economic Development and the National Immigration Law Center found that No-Match Letters became “*de facto* immigration enforcement tools” that “arguably have had more impact than sanctioned immigration enforcement efforts on the employment opportunities of undocumented workers” (Mehta, Theodore, and Hincapié 2003, i). In 2007, DHS attempted to

employees. See http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab_0601-0650/ab_622_bill_20151009_chaptered.htm.

²⁰ Discrepancies can result from misspellings/errors, name changes, and the use of compound last names (which is common among Latina/o populations.)

implement a rule institutionalizing immigration enforcement through the program by holding employers liable for employing unauthorized workers, but it was blocked in federal court.²¹

Both E-Verify and the No-Match Letter Program are responsible for undocumented workers' mounting obstacles to obtaining and retaining employment since the early 2000s. Interviewees had encountered both of these enforcement mechanisms in their employment experiences, and their accounts indicated that they found them intimidating, as I describe in later chapters. This was true even when the programs did not impact them directly. Araceli, for example, was a stay-at-home mother who had no immediate plans to return to the labor force but identified the employment instability that E-Verify was causing in her community. She explained:

Since this, E-Verify, started, there are a lot of people I know, people who say, "I worked in a restaurant for 6 years. But E-Verify came in, I don't have *seguro* (a Social Security number), now I can't work." So—or, "I worked in a factory for 5, 6 years, but E-Verify came in, I don't have a *seguro*, now I can't work." So for those people without work, and they do a job here, another job there... but it's not a full-time job. Like Araceli, nearly all interviewees—working or not—told me that the growing presence of E-Verify and necessity of providing North Carolina employers with a valid Social Security number inhibited the job options of undocumented workers.

Immigration enforcement & deportation threats

In addition to regulations on employment, the undocumented population must contend more broadly with the enforcement of federal immigration policy regulating their presence in the country and their risk of deportation. Immigration enforcement policies are often in tension at federal, state, and local levels. The federal government sets immigration enforcement priorities, which are enforced by federal agencies U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and

²¹ See <https://www.aclu.org/news/court-blocks-government-implementing-flawed-social-security-no-match-rule>. Nevertheless, since 2011, SSA has continued sending no-match letters.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).²² Since the 1990s, United States immigration enforcement has extended beyond the border to include a greater focus on interior enforcement (Kanstroom 2007). Increasingly, ICE has sought to partner with state and local law enforcement in these efforts through programs including 287(g) and Secure Communities. However, states and localities have some control over the extent to which they cooperate, and some have demonstrated resistance.

Through section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which became law under IIRIRA in 1996, state or local jurisdictions may enter into Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with ICE to deputize local law enforcement officers as immigration officers. The program relies on state and local bureaucracies to enforce federal immigration law. Deputized officers can interrogate individuals about their immigration status and issue detainers to hold them until they are taken into ICE custody and placed in removal proceedings. State and local governments are responsible for many of the costs associated with the program (American Immigration Council 2017a). The 287(g) program has been associated with the racial profiling of Latinos by police in North Carolina, creating a climate of fear of law enforcement and the violation of civil liberties (ACLU of North Carolina Legal Foundation and UNC Chapel Hill Immigration & Human Rights Policy Clinic 2009; Nguyen and Gill 2016).

In North Carolina, local jurisdictions' compliance with federal immigration enforcement authorities has been mixed. Five North Carolina county sheriff's offices currently participate in 287(g), including Wake County, one of the counties represented by my sample.²³ Two additional local governments represented in my sample had former relationships with the program: the City

²² ICE is responsible for interior enforcement while CBP has jurisdiction over borders and other points of entry.

²³ <https://www.ice.gov/factsheets/287g>

of Durham, recognized as a relatively welcoming community for immigrants, signed an MOA in 2008 that focused only on criminal violations. The MOA expired after three years.²⁴ Alamance County, recognized for its hostility toward the immigrant population, signed an MOA in 2006 focused on both civil and criminal violations (Nguyen and Gill 2016). In 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil rights suit against the Alamance County Sheriff for profiling Latinos in traffic stops and racist practices in the department and terminated its association with 287(g).

In fact, racial disparities in traffic stop outcomes throughout North Carolina have been widely demonstrated in analyses by political scientist Frank Baumgartner and colleagues (Baumgartner, Christiani, et al. 2017; Baumgartner, Epp, et al. 2017). Between 2002-2013, Latino male drivers in the state were more likely to be searched, receive a citation, and be arrested by police compared with white drivers (Baumgartner, Epp, et al. 2017). Disparities in searches between Latinos and whites in North Carolina are highest in rural jurisdictions with Republican sheriffs—the case for Alamance County (Huerta-Bapat 2017).

Hundreds of jurisdictions across the country have resisted compliance with 287(g), adopting “sanctuary city” policies. These include several cities and major metropolitan areas in traditional receiving areas like Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, as well as some newer and re-emerging destinations such as Tuskegee, Alabama (Rodriguez 2015) and Denver, Colorado (Murray 2017). These cities and jurisdictions are at odds with state and federal demands for cooperation with enforcement efforts. Under the Trump administration, for example, the United States Department of Justice has threatened to cut off federal funding to

²⁴ https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/memorandumsofAgreementUnderstanding/r_287gdurham101509.pdf

sanctuary cities as a deterrence mechanism, though a federal judge recently issued a preliminary injunction against this action (Carter 2017).

As demonstrated in Table 2.3, sanctuary policies were also present among local governments represented by my sample, including Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Durham and Chatham and Orange Counties, which passed resolutions to limit local law enforcement's cooperation with ICE during the first decade of the 2000s. These policies typically include county or city resolutions that law enforcement officers will not inquire about a person's immigration status during arrest and/or will not arrest an individual because of unlawful status. The local governments represented in Table 2.3 tend to espouse consistently Democratic/progressive political leaders. Chatham County rescinded their resolution in 2011 after shifting from a Democratic to a Republican-led County Commission. The Republican board chair described the resolution as "too broad" and not representative of the new board's opinions (Cowell and Schwartz 2011).

Table 2.3. “Sanctuary City” statements and resolutions

City/County	Excerpted text	Date passed
City of Durham	Resolution #9046, Section 2: Unless otherwise required as part of a City officer or employee’s duties, by law or by court order, no Durham City officer or employee, during the course and scope of their employment, shall inquire into the immigration status of any person, or engage in activities designed to ascertain the immigration status of any person.	October 20, 2003
Town of Chapel Hill	Agenda #3a(3), Section 1: It shall be the policy of the Town of Chapel Hill not to arrest or take into custody persons when the sole basis for arresting or taking such persons into custody is that they have or may have committed a civil immigration violation.	February 26, 2007
Town of Carrboro	Resolution No. 123/2005-06 It shall be the policy of the Carrboro Police Department not to arrest or take into custody persons whose only known violation of law is or may be a civil immigration violation.	May 16, 2006
Chatham County	Chatham County Resolution on the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Program, Part A BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that, in continuing its belief of controlling its own destiny...while proudly preserving diverse cultural heritages, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners stands in strong opposition to any local governmental agency contracting with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration laws.	January 5, 2009 *RESCINDED in 2011
Orange County	Passed a “Resolution Opposing the Use of Local Law Enforcement to Enforce Civil Immigration Law and Policy”	January 23, 2007

As of 2015, however, all sanctuary policies in North Carolina were nullified when House Bill 318 was passed, which prohibited sanctuary city policies in the state (Santiago and Burns 2015). Specifically, the legislation states that counties and cities may not “have in effect any policy, ordinance, or procedure that limits or restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws,” nor prohibit law enforcement officers from collecting individuals’ citizenship or immigration status or from communicating the information to federal agencies.²⁵

Some interviewees, like Graciela, who lives in Orange County, were aware of the differences in local policies:

²⁵ <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/House/PDF/H318v7.pdf>

Supposedly, [the sanctuary city policies] aren't going to exist anymore or something, but well, this place—I've seen that this place isn't the same, for example, as Burlington (in Alamance County). My pastor lives there... I've seen they have a lot of *retenes* (traffic checkpoints), and all of that. And here, it's like, you don't see so much of that.

A bill attempting to enforce the anti-sanctuary policy by denying state funding to those cities failed in 2016. Some communities, for example, Durham County, still claim sanctuary policies: in a June 2017 article in the *IndyWeek*, Tamara Gibbs, the Senior Public Information Officer for the Durham County Sheriff's Office stated that, "The Sheriff's Office maintains that the agency does not actively search for or arrest undocumented residents and has never done so under Sheriff [Mike] Andrews's administration." However, there are disputes over the accuracy of these claims, based on recent deportation actions in the county (Willets 2017).

The majority of interviewees lived in former sanctuary city areas in Durham and Orange counties. Yet interviewees in sanctuary cities still reported feeling profiled and threatened by the police. For example, Esmeralda, who cleans houses for a living and must drive to get to her clients' homes, told me she has been pulled over several times in Chapel Hill, saying, "I have had a lot of [bad] luck to be followed by the police so they can give me tickets. And they have treated me terribly when they stop me." She told me that during a recent traffic stop, "[The officer] was threatening me: 'I'm going to report you to immigration that you don't have papers or I will take you to jail... if you don't answer what I ask you.'"

In addition to 287(g), federal-state partnership enforcement exists through the more widely implemented Secure Communities program. The Bush administration established Secure Communities in 2008, which also relies on relationships with state and local law enforcement agencies' participation in enforcing federal immigration law. However, rather than deputizing law enforcement officers to enforce immigration law—the underlying mechanism of 287(g)—

Secure Communities relies on streamlined electronic systems. When individuals are arrested, the fingerprints obtained by state or local law enforcement are automatically run through the FBI. The FBI then sends them to DHS. ICE determines whether individuals are deportable and may then issue a detainer request.

Unlike 287(g), Secure Communities was applied on a state-wide basis—localities were unable to opt out (Kohli, Markowitz, and Chavez 2011). Secure Communities was implemented in all 100 North Carolina counties in 2011 (Cowell 2011). Localities with sanctuary policies, however, would decline detainer requests. Like 287(g), Secure Communities has been controversial. Despite policymakers' assertions that it avoided the problems of 287(g), it was associated with the racial profiling of Latinas/os, the apprehension of U.S. citizens, detaining individuals who had only minor criminal convictions, such as immigration or traffic violations, and lack of due process (Fischer 2013; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Kohli et al. 2011). Further, law enforcement officials have expressed concern that local-federal cooperation in enforcement policies causes immigrant communities to lose trust in local law enforcement (Kubrin 2014). In these cases, immigrants may be less likely to report crimes like intimate partner violence out of fear of the repercussions both for themselves and for the person they are reporting (Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011).

In 2015, the Obama administration replaced Secure Communities with the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP) to refocus enforcement priorities for deportation. Under PEP, the top priority group for enforcement became individuals viewed to be a threat to national security, noncitizens apprehended at the border, gang members, and undocumented people with felony records.²⁶ Under this policy, an estimated 87 percent of undocumented people were protected

²⁶ https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/14_1120_memo_prosecutorial_discretion.pdf

from deportation (Rosenblum 2015). PEP was the enforcement policy that was in place during my data collection period—the Trump administration subsequently reverted to Secure Communities in 2017. Trump’s executive order, “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States,” reverts to broader targeting of immigrants who have been convicted of or charged with a criminal offense, those who “have committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense,” those who have abused public benefits programs, who are subject to a final order of removal, or who, “in the judgment of an immigration officer, otherwise pose a risk to public safety or national security.”²⁷ It also directs ICE to hire an additional 10,000 immigration officers and threatens to withdraw federal funds from sanctuary jurisdictions. The Migration Policy Institute reported that as a result of this action, during Trump’s first 100 days, twice as many individuals who had no criminal conviction were arrested compared with the same time period during the prior year (Chishti and Bolter 2017).

The threat of deportation, which often entails family separation, has harmful psychological and social impacts on immigrants, their families, and the communities in which they live and work (Brabeck and Qingwen Xu 2010; Dreby 2012; Fussell 2011; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Hagan, Rodriguez, and Castro 2011; Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Rodríguez and Hagan 2004). Numerous studies have found that the threat of deportation has chilling effects on immigrants’ participation in social institutions, limiting their membership in communities and redefining their already limited citizenship rights. Individuals at risk of deportation may avoid public services such as healthcare, education, and social services (Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Rodríguez and Hagan 2004). In fact, deportation-focused enforcement deters Latinas/os from accessing public support systems like TANF (cash

²⁷ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/25/presidential-executive-order-enhancing-public-safety-interior-united>

assistance) even when they are citizens (Pedraza and Zhu 2015). Fear of deportation also limits civic and social engagement in activities such as church attendance or English classes and is associated with feelings that one has no rights in the United States (Abrego 2011; Hagan et al. 2011; Jiménez and López-Sanders 2011).

Like U.S. immigration policies targeting employment, the U.S. immigration enforcement system also has gendered impacts. Men—especially working-class Latinos—are disproportionately targeted by deportation policies and represent the vast majority of those deported to Mexico and Central America (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). However, wives and children must deal with the consequences of their removals, which frequently entail the loss of an income and a co-parent (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Dreby 2012; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Women’s fear of deportation and their dependence on men for income and security can also make them more vulnerable to intimate partner violence and less likely to report crimes (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Menjívar and Salcido 2002).

However, in recent cases, women and children have also been the direct targets of immigration enforcement. Between 2014 and 2016, the United States experienced a surge in unauthorized women and children who fled violence and poverty in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to seek political asylum. These women mistakenly believed they would be granted legal status upon crossing. In response, the Obama administration implemented deterrence policies, enhancing border enforcement by opening family detention centers and working with Mexican and Central American governments to try to prevent the migration of asylum seekers. In 2016, ICE began conducting raids on the homes of these mothers and children, which created panic in immigrant communities (Musalo and Lee 2017).

Additional Alienage Policies

Other policies targeting immigrants—both hostile and receptive—have surfaced at the state and county level during the past three decades. Such policies, or “alienage laws,” seek to deter the membership of immigrants in local communities (Motomura 2014). In North Carolina, some of the most impactful policies for immigrant communities are those that restrict access to state identification and driver’s licenses. Additionally, policies focus on English as an “official language” and efforts to deter undocumented children from education in North Carolina public schools. However, state and municipal governments have also passed more welcoming policies in these areas, again demonstrating the mixed and shifting contexts of reception in the state.

One of the first alienage laws dates prior to the influx of Latinas/os in the state. In 1987, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill, later signed into law, which made English the official state language. Democratic Senator Richard Wright, the grandson of Latvian immigrants, sponsored the bill. Another Democratic Representative, Richard Wright, advocated for the bill by claiming that North Carolina needed a “common language” for “political and cultural and a wide variety of reasons” (Pride 1987).

It is important to note that North Carolina’s law is an “English-official” law²⁸, which tends to be less severe than “English-only” ordinances passed in other states (Liu and Sokhey 2014). State agencies like the Department of Revenue, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Division of Child Development and Early Education offer websites and information in Spanish, for instance. During most of the 1990s and during the first decade of the 2000s, Democrats held

²⁸ Specifically, the law states “English is the common language of the people of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina. This section is intended to preserve, protect and strengthen the English language, and not to supersede any of the rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina.” See http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByChapter/Chapter_145.html.

control of the governorship and the state legislature,²⁹ and policies tended to be more welcoming. In 2001, in response to the growing Latina/o population, Governor Mike Easley signed a law requiring that counties and towns with Latina/o populations of six percent or more, based on the decennial census, provide ballot instructions in both Spanish and English (Feagans 2001).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, when most interviewees arrived, undocumented individuals were also eligible for state IDs, driver's licenses, and Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) as long as they were a North Carolina resident (Denning 2009). A Social Security number requirement for driver's licenses was first introduced at the federal level in 1996 for child support enforcement purposes under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Mounts 2003). However, the North Carolina General Assembly interpreted this to include ITINs, allowing undocumented people to continue receiving licenses.

Later, amid national security concerns in the wake of the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, the federal government imposed greater regulation over state-issued identification. In 2005, Congress passed the REAL ID Act, setting federal oversight of states' issuance of licenses and identification cards that are used for purposes regulated by the federal government, like boarding a commercial airplane. REAL ID required proof of identity and of U.S. citizenship or legal status among applicants for such identifications and mandatory reporting to a database of information collected for identifications.³⁰ Because REAL ID does not regulate states' ability to issue driver's licenses—merely state identifications that are used for federal purposes—some states continued to allow individuals without Social Security numbers to drive. Twelve states and

²⁹ https://ballotpedia.org/Party_control_of_North_Carolina_state_government

³⁰ <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/real-id-act-text.pdf>

the District of Columbia allow individuals to gain driving privileges, typically issuing a distinct card that is not valid for federal identification.³¹ Several states have opposed REAL ID, often over concerns about privacy.³²

North Carolina, on the other hand, was quick to adopt Real ID requirements and did not make provisions for the undocumented to retain driving privileges. In 2006, a period when the state remained under Democratic political control in the governorship and state assembly, Governor Mike Easley followed through on Real ID requirements by requiring North Carolina applicants to provide a Social Security number to obtain a license, learner's permit, or identification card. This policy effectively barring undocumented immigrants from obtaining these forms of ID and the ability to drive legally (Denning 2009), with the exception of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. In 2013, the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles began issuing licenses to immigrants who qualified for DACA, an executive action implemented under the Obama administration that provides some protections to immigrants who arrived before age 16, who are often referred to as "Dreamers." These include work permits and "deferred action" from deportation, issued on a two-year basis with the option for renewal.³³ However, in September 2017, the Trump administration announced that it would allow DACA's protections to expire within six months, placing responsibility with Congress to determine a solution for Dreamers.

³¹ California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, Washington; see <http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/states-offering-driver-s-licenses-to-immigrants.aspx>.

³² E.g. Washington (La Corte 2016); Maine (Thistle 2017); Missouri (Thorsen 2017)

³³ DACA recipients had to be younger than 31 in 2012, and have continuously resided in the United States since 2007. It is not a permanent legal status. See <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca>.

In 2015, a North Carolina House Bill was introduced to allow all undocumented people to obtain a one-year driver's license, but Republican opposition to the bill prevented it from moving forward. Republicans have held control of the state House and Senate since 2011 and have had supermajority control since 2012 (Tomsic 2016)—therefore, this legislation is unlikely to change. In the meantime, most undocumented residents must run the risk of driving without a license to get to work. This was a frequent concern among interviewees like Araceli, who said, “Maybe now we don’t want residency. Maybe we don’t want citizenship. But we want a license that can allow us to go around driving safely.”

Natalia Deeb-Sossa and Jennifer Bickham Mendez’s (2008) study found that male migrants were more likely to arrive in the United States knowing how to drive compared with their wives and more likely to arrive prior to the implementation of restrictions on licenses. This often rendered women dependent on husbands for transportation. Since their study, however, any license issued to an undocumented person in the state has since expired.³⁴

Interviewees identified not having a driver’s license as one of the biggest daily challenges faced by the undocumented. Although many interviewees were able to get a driver’s license upon arrival regardless of legal status, they suddenly became unable to renew them when they expired. In response, interviewees tried to limit the amount they drove. Most drove only when necessary and did so cautiously. For example, Perla, who had to drive an hour to get to work, told me how she coped with her fear of driving without a license: “Well every day, asking God that the police won’t get you, that your car won’t break down, that you won’t get into an accident. Always, always one asks God that everything turns out okay.” In some cases, as I will discuss in subsequent chapters, this restricted interviewees’ ability to work.

³⁴ In North Carolina, driver’s licenses are issued for eight years. Since the policy change occurred in 2006, the last individuals to receive licenses would have had them expire by 2014.

Restrictions on identification in the state extend beyond driver's licenses. In 2002, in response to Real ID regulations and heightened anxiety among Mexicans in the United States, the Mexican government began issuing consular identifications, known as the *matrícula consular*, to residents living abroad. The cards include the holder's name, Mexican citizenship, and U.S. address. The cards are distributed to the network of Mexican consulates throughout the United States, as well as traveling mobile consulates. The implementation of *matrículas* among Mexicans in the United States was lauded by local law enforcement officials who cited their utility in facilitating cooperation with police, among other benefits (O'Neil 2003).

In 2015, Republican Governor Pat McCrory signed into law House Bill 318, which barred the use of consular documents—often the only identification available to individuals who no longer qualify for driver's licenses—for use with government agencies or law enforcement. In response to this provision, several North Carolina communities have supported the distribution of “Faith IDs.” These identification cards are issued to undocumented residents by non-profit and faith-based organizations and are recognized as valid by local law enforcement. The program first began in 2013 in Greensboro, NC, in a collaboration between the immigrant-serving organization FaithAction International House and the Greensboro Police Department. It subsequently expanded to other counties in the state, including Alamance, Durham, and Orange, and Cincinnati, Ohio³⁵ with support from law enforcement agencies as well as local immigrant-serving organizations and churches. Faith ID “drives” became particularly urgent following HB 318—an amendment to the law allows police to use Faith IDs to confirm individuals' identities (Grubb 2016).

³⁵ See http://faithaction.org/services/id_initiative/.

In addition to these restrictions on licenses and identifications, policies have arisen related to the education of immigrant children in North Carolina, particularly following the influx of unaccompanied (and undocumented) minor Central Americans in 2014. Multiple North Carolina County Boards of Commissioners passed resolutions in 2014 discouraging undocumented children from attending schools in their counties (Rowan, Brunswick, and Surry) or denied enrollment to unaccompanied minors (Buncombe and Union) even though these actions violated both the state constitution and a U.S. Supreme Court decision that guarantees children public education access regardless of immigration status (Eppsteiner 2014).

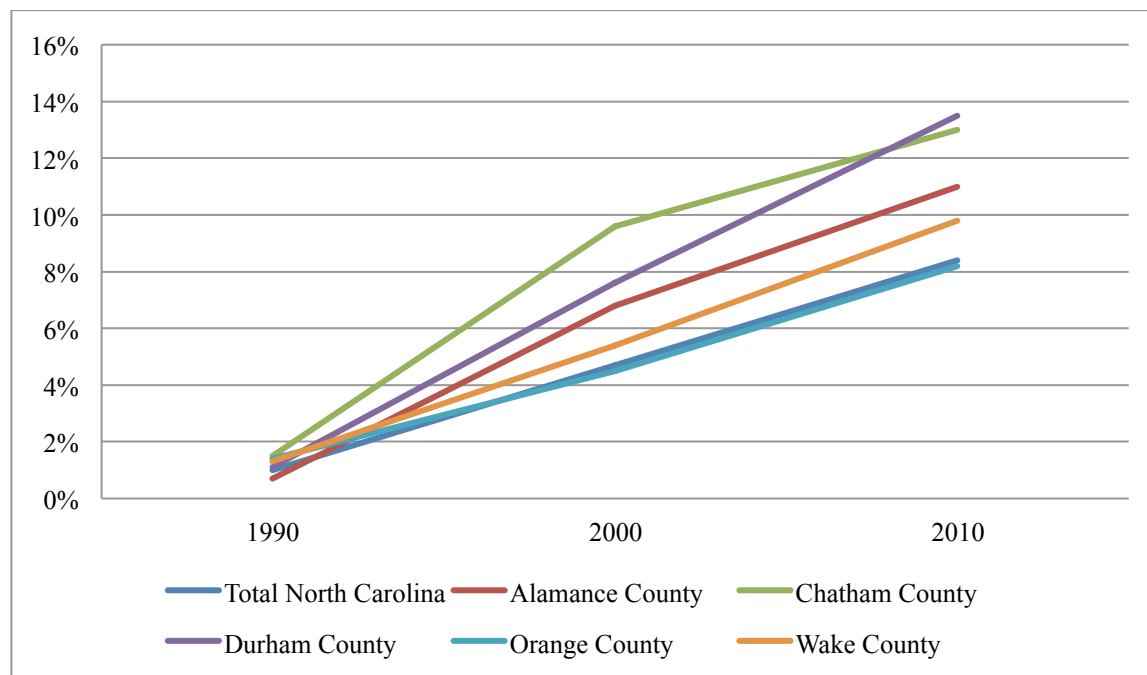
However, in response, other jurisdictions, including several of those represented in my sample—Durham Public Schools, the Durham City Council, Orange County Board of Commissioners, Carrboro Board of Aldermen, and the Chapel Hill Town Council—passed resolutions welcoming unaccompanied minors in their communities and schools. This provides another example of the mixed local contexts of reception in the state. In fact, in a few cases, interviewees told me they chose their housing based on the schools for which their children would be districted. For example, Paola chose to move from Chapel Hill from Alamance County because of her nephews' experience in the Alamance County Schools. She explained, "They said that the teachers were really racist. So I thought about my children and I didn't want them to be there, so that's why I said, 'Let's go to Chapel Hill—it's better there... my sister has always lived in Chapel Hill and she spoke well about it, that they helped you, they had tutors, things like that...'"

SOCIAL CONTEXTS

In the theories of immigrant incorporation, social contexts of reception refer to an existing community of co-ethnics in receiving communities. Scholars have found that the presence of such communities eases immigrants social and economic integration (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). Scholars have also highlighted the role of immigrant-serving organizations and churches in facilitating migrants' incorporation and civic engagement in communities (Bada et al. 2010; Cordero-Guzmán et al. 2008; Fotheringham 2017; de Leon et al. 2009; López-Sanders 2012; Marrow 2011; Straut-Eppsteiner 2017). Research on immigrant integration in new destinations has also examined how Latina/o migrants are incorporated in the black-white racial divide in Southern communities (Griffith 2008; Marrow 2011; McClain et al. 2006, 2007; Winders 2005).

As demonstrated in Figure 2.2, the Latina/o community has grown substantially in North Carolina over the past few decades, and growth has been above the state average in four of the five sample counties (Orange, Chatham, Durham, Alamance, and Wake). Interviewees' accounts corroborated other studies demonstrating that the first Latina/o arrivals in new destination communities faced limited social and institutional support, but over time, the growth of the Latina/o population led to the development of social networks and infrastructure designed to support the community as well as broader cultural acceptance of Latinas/os in many communities (Lacy 2009; Mohl 2003; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2009).

Figure 2.2. Latinas/os as a percentage of state and county population, North Carolina



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Several interviewees arrived before the emergence of a coethnic community but have watched one develop over time. For example, Cristina, who arrived in Durham County in the late 1990s, told me, “In the time that I arrived, there weren’t places to buy things and speak Spanish. But today, today it’s like we were in our country, almost. The only difference is that a lot of people, well, they suffer because of the [restrictive] programs that are here.” The presence of Mexican *tiendas*, restaurants, soccer leagues, and Spanish-language church services have become ubiquitous in many parts of the South (Griffith 2005; Marrow 2011; Mohl 2003). The growth of business infrastructure serving Latinas/os in the state was apparent to Abril, who told me that in Alamance County, “Things have changed a lot. Things like *tiendas Latinas* (Latin markets)—that didn’t exist in ’95. There wasn’t anything. Everything was strange... But now,

we have a *tortillería*, *panadería*, *carnicería* (tortilla shop, bakery, meat market). Now the only thing we're missing is a Spanish movie theatre (laughing)."

In general, interviewees lived in places where the presence of co-ethnics was apparent, such as majority Latina/o trailer parks, apartment complexes, and neighborhoods. Several attended Spanish-language church services, and a few even had children enrolled in bilingual Spanish-English schools. Valeria, who had lived in North Carolina for 18 years, told me, "I think [now] there are schools that take [immigrants] more into account," a change she attributes to the development of social infrastructure through community organizations that have mobilized to advocate for Latinas/os. As an example, she cited the growing presence of interpreters in her children's school district.

As Valeria's account indicates, community organizations are growing to meet the needs of the new Latina/o population in North Carolina. As the Latina/o population has grown in the state, Latino-serving non-profits, including many faith-based organizations, have outpaced the growth of other non-profits (Fotheringham 2017). In his research on Latino-serving non-profits in the state, Eric Fotheringham (2017) identified 1,306 percent growth in "Latino identity-based non profits" between 1995 and 2009. Comparatively, the general rate of non-profit growth was only 99 percent.

Nevertheless, compared with traditional destinations, the recent incorporation of the Latina/o community in new destinations is associated with less developed social infrastructure, particularly in rural areas (Schmalzbauer 2014; Straut-Eppsteiner 2016). Immigrants in new destinations are more residentially segregated compared with traditional settlement areas (Hall 2013) and are more likely to live in poverty and lack health insurance (Terrazas 2011). Xóchitl Bada (2010:18) described disparities in institutional support for immigrant integration across

destination context: “As a general trend and regardless of size, cities with historical traditions of Latino immigration, such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Fresno, and San Jose, are more likely to address the needs of new Latino immigrants than places with smaller historical flows.”

In general, immigrant-serving community organizations in new destination states tend to be fewer, less established, and less prepared for aiding the immigrant population to prepare for policy changes than in traditional destinations states (Singer et al. 2015). Further, community organizations that serve a more general populace are often unprepared to meet the needs of immigrants, who encounter language barriers and difficulty accessing services without Social Security numbers or identification (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Schmalzbauer 2014; Weissman et al. Forthcoming).

In my experience volunteering for a food pantry in Orange County for three years, I was one of few volunteers who spoke fluent Spanish. During most of my time there, Spanish-speaking clients were encouraged to come only during the two or three days each week when a Spanish-speaking volunteer (usually me) would be present. Intake forms asked for the last four digits of clients’ Social Security numbers, solely for the purpose of creating client ID cards using a combination of these numbers and clients’ dates of birth. If individuals did not have a Social Security number, we were instructed to log the client’s name and address in a binder that provided alternative numbers. I spoke to staff about my concerns with this system, explaining how it could not only make undocumented clients feel uncomfortable during intake but that having an ostensible record of undocumented clients could put them at risk. They were receptive and changed the system.

Gendered differences with illegality also manifest through involvement with social institutions. Social forms of exclusion disproportionately impact women, researchers find,

because they are the family members who most often interact with social institutions (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). For example, in their study of Latina migrants in new destinations, Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez (2008:625) found that women were most likely to access social, educational, and medical services for their families, and therefore more likely to encounter “institutional actors who police their access to social entitlements and public resources,” thereby restricting their social membership in communities.

In addition to immigration policies’ gendered impacts on employment and enforcement, scholars have demonstrated the gendered social aspects of legislation. For example, IRCA’s amnesty provisions, mentioned earlier, excluded those who were “likely to become a public charge.” Guidance for determining likeliness to become a public charge included consideration of past receipt of public cash assistance.³⁶ As a result, migrant women who had applied for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program³⁷ were denied amnesty or were dissuaded from applying at all (Chang 2016).

During the 1990s immigrant women were also targeted by limitations on access to these federal benefits programs. Latina immigrants’ reproductive capacity was viewed by anti-immigration advocates as a threat to public resources and decried as the cause of demographic change—or the “browning of America”—in the United States (Chavez 2013:87). As a result, the policing of social entitlements targeting mothers and children has been institutionalized at the federal level. Under reforms passed as part of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), limitations on benefits like SNAP (food stamps), TANF, and Medicaid were extended from undocumented immigrants to include those lawfully

³⁶ See <https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-11261/0-0-0-26097/0-0-0-27373.html>

³⁷ AFDC was the predecessor to TANF, the current welfare system. AFDC was overhauled to become TANF in 1996 under PRWORA.

present in the country for five years after arrival. Further, recall that Trump's 2017 executive order, mentioned earlier, prioritizes the removal of individuals who have "abused" public benefits programs. However, several states, including North Carolina, have made exceptions for prenatal care among pregnant women, regardless of their legal status, through the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (Pew Charitable Trusts 2014).

CONCLUSION

Latina/o migrants living and working in the South at the beginning of the 21st century increasingly face mixed political, economic, and social contexts of reception. Economic restructuring has drawn economic activity to the non-union South and provided new job opportunities in the low-wage labor market. However, mounting employment restrictions make it difficult for undocumented workers to obtain jobs in the formal labor market at all.

Undocumented people are also subject to federal, state, and local policies and actions that put their everyday movement at risk, including the inability to drive legally and a looming threat of deportation amid shifting enforcement priorities and the cooperation of state and local governments in programs like 287(g) and Secure Communities.

Although immigration was historically regulated at the federal level, states and localities increasingly shape policies that are either exclusionary or welcoming to immigrants (Motomura 2014). Despite the economic contributions of the foreign-born population in North Carolina (Johnson and Appold 2014), the state legislature has passed policies that create a hostile political and economic climate for immigrants. Community-level contexts of reception have often been more favorable, but here, too, there are disparities. Sample counties Orange, Durham, and Chatham have passed more favorable "sanctuary" policies, while Alamance and Wake have been

more hostile toward immigrants through participation in 287(g). Yet the state government has attempted to curtail the power of localities through HB318 and other policies.³⁸

Socially, Latinas/os in North Carolina have gained a growing community of coethnics and a rise in organizational and institutional support. However, social infrastructure in new destination states lags behind that in traditional destinations. Further, in addition to their integratory role, social institutions can also serve as mechanisms of exclusion from social membership.

In this chapter, I make three contributions to the incorporation and contexts of reception literature. First, I identify the growing role of state and local contexts in shaping immigrant incorporation. Although the dominant contexts of reception literature focuses primarily on political contexts at the federal level (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2014), scholarship examining these contexts in new destinations highlights the salient and sometimes contradictory role of the state at different levels—not just federal, but also at the state and local levels. States, for example, determine the implementation and extent of E-Verify among private employers and whether adherence to Real ID requirements inhibits access to driver’s licenses. Some states have resisted these restrictions, while North Carolina has embraced them. Yet tension has been evident between localities and the North Carolina state government through local governments’ attempts to limit cooperation with federal enforcement policies through sanctuary policies and local participation in the Faith ID initiative, and the state’s response in passing legislation banning sanctuary policies outright, expanding Secure Communities to all 100 counties, and seeking to limit access to IDs and driver’s licenses.

³⁸ In addition to barring sanctuary policies, the NC General Assembly has come out against local autonomy quite publicly through the recent “HB 2” controversy, in which the state prohibited local governments from passing anti-discrimination ordinances.

Second, I demonstrate how contexts of reception are gendered, as indicated by sex differences in labor demand and occupational concentration, susceptibility to enforcement actions, and interactions with institutions and public benefits programs. Economically, women tend to be relegated to fewer and more isolated work contexts that restrict their ability to form social ties and learn English—and are also more likely to leave the labor market upon family formation, exacerbating these conditions. Politically, women and men have been targeted by enforcement actions in different ways. Men are more likely to be the victims of deportation through interior enforcement. However, women suffer consequences when they lose their male partners' income and a co-parent, taking on more economic and family burden. Women's social membership has been challenged through their interactions with social institutions and federal policies that limit their access to public benefits and penalize them for accessing them at all.

Third, I highlight how economic, political, and social contexts intersect to shape outcomes for migrants. While theories of incorporation tend to separate these contexts, there is much overlap between the political, economic, and social policies and practices shaping immigrant integration in new destinations. Political contexts—specifically, federal and state policies related to employment sanctions and E-Verify—restrict immigrants' access to labor markets, shaping economic contexts of incorporation. Federal and state policies also impact social incorporation through their regulation of public benefits and interior enforcement.

As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, the economic, political, and social contexts of reception outlined above were influential in shaping women's labor force trajectories throughout their time in the United States. Before delving into women's U.S. labor force participation, I turn now to women's pre-migration experiences to first consider their contexts of exit from their home countries.

CHAPTER 3:
BECOMING WORKERS, BECOMING MIGRANTS: TRANSITIONS TO THE LABOR
FORCE AT HOME AND IN *EL NORTE*

Siempre he trabajado. (I've always worked.)
- Renata

Renata, one of 14 siblings, grew up in a “very poor” family in a rural area in Guanajuato, Mexico. She received no formal education, explaining, “My father was always a man who said, ‘No, studying isn’t for women, studying is just a pure waste of time. Why would you need that?’” She recalls him telling her, “[School] is a waste of time for you... I need you all here to help me with the work in the fields.” Renata began working at age 7, planting and tending crops, until she married at 16.

After she married, Renata’s husband migrated to North Carolina where he spent four years working in construction. During this period, she moved in with her in-laws and did not work outside the house. Growing weary of being a left-behind spouse, Renata decided that she wanted to join her husband in the United States: “I told him, well, ‘I partnered myself with another person — with you,’ I told him, ‘To be in a life with you — not for me to be alone. If you’re going to continue in the United States, tell me the truth. It’s better that I go [to join you].’” Renata’s husband returned home to build a house for his family with the money he had saved, and then they crossed back to the United States together in 2004. Despite having saved enough to build their house, once in the United States Renata’s husband realized that economic opportunities in their community of origin were limited compared with the opportunities for

work in North Carolina, encouraging him to pursue migration as a long-term strategy for economic mobility.

Renata told me that when she arrived in North Carolina, “I wanted to work, but [he] never let me work... ‘No,’ he said, ‘What are you going to know about working?’” Despite her husband’s discouragement, Renata found a way to earn wages by babysitting children from neighboring apartments in her home. Renata explained she needed “something to occupy my time,” as well as a source of income to send remittances to her parents.

Renata’s case is an example of how, in many cases, women formed early attachments to work outside the home. Her work history also illustrates how movement in and out of the labor force prior to and after migration was shaped by family circumstances—in her case, often determined by male family authority. Renata’s case also provides insight into the nuanced conditions under which women make migration decisions: even when women follow husbands, they may exert agency in their choice to emigrate and work once in the United States.

To identify patterns of women’s work and migration experiences and the timing of these events, I draw on a life course perspective. Life course theory posits that an individual’s trajectory is broken up by “transitions” which represent changes in roles and status (Elder 1998a; Mortimer and Shanahan 2003). These include work-related transitions, such as the transition from school to work or work to retirement, and family-related transitions, including marriage, parenthood, and divorce. Some transitions are “turning points” which represent “substantial change in the direction of one’s life” (Elder, Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003:8). Values and practices related to work are often shaped by early socialization beginning during youth and continuing throughout adulthood (Dæhlen 2005). Because socialization is gendered, so are labor

force transitions. For example, expectations related to family demands and across the life course often result in women's more intermittent labor force participation (Moen 2015).

Migration also represents a salient transition during the life course that intersects with gender, work, and family. Immigrants' life course unfolds in multiple cultural contexts: often spending childhood in one country, during which individuals learn a particular set of gendered expectations, and adulthood in another country, in which "gendered expectations for how people should behave and believe still exist, but the new gendered expectations rarely align perfectly with the ones in the immigrant's homeland" (Mahler and Chaudhuri 2014:123). Scholars recognize migration as a process that shapes family and work transitions (Jasso 2003; Kilkey and Palenga-Möllénbeck 2016; Kulu and Milewski 2007). Life course transitions can also influence migration decisions (Kley 2011; Lindstrom and Saucedo 2007). A study found that Mexican women, for example, were less likely to migrate after having children, whereas the onset of fatherhood was associated with higher likelihood of migration for men (Lindstrom and Saucedo 2007).

In this chapter, I use a life course perspective to contextualize migrant women's work and family transitions in countries of origin and through the migration process. Many studies of women's labor migration focus only on demand-side explanations of women's incorporation in the U.S. labor market (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Morokvasic 1984; Sassen-Koob 1984) with less attention to women's pre-migration life course transitions and socialization related to work and family. I uncover how women develop identities as workers prior to migration and how they maintain and reshape these identities through migration and family transitions.

I also uncover how women make migration decisions in gendered family contexts. These contexts are often explained from an economic perspective (Parreñas 2001). Even economic theories like the “New Economics of Labor Migration” (NELM), which recognizes that migration decisions occur at the household level (Stark 1993; Stark and Bloom 1985), fail to consider how gender socialization shapes hierarchies of power in households. I critique these economic theories to demonstrate how decision-making in families is a contested process embedded in unequal power hierarchies and gender socialization. I begin the chapter by discussing women’s work and family transitions in their countries of origin prior to migration. I continue with a discussion of the conditions under which women made migration decisions and entered the U.S. labor market.

PRE-MIGRATION WORK AND FAMILY TRANSITIONS

Principles of life course theory are useful for interpreting the conditions under which women transitioned to work in their countries of origin, as well as the consequences of those transitions. First, the life course perspective identifies how the timing of transitions within an individual’s trajectory is important for shaping their developmental impacts (Elder 1998b, 1998a). Scholars have associated adolescence, for example, as a powerful period for identity formation during the transition to adulthood (Gonzales 2011). Among the women I interviewed, their transitions to work frequently occurred during childhood or adolescence. As a result, many of the women in my sample were socialized at early ages to value labor force participation. Entering the labor force was a pivotal pre-migration life course transition through which women formed strong worker identities.

Approximately four out of five women worked in their home countries before migration. Most, like Renata, entered the labor force as children or teenagers to help support their families, often subsequent to dropping out of school—among women who migrated at age 18 or later, approximately 70 percent did not complete high school in their countries of origin. Most commonly, women worked in agriculture, domestic work, factories, offices, and retail and informal sales. For these women, work, more than school, was part of their transition to adulthood.

These women typically came from large families in poor communities. Here life course theory is applicable in its principle that trajectories are embedded in contexts of “place” (Elder et al. 2003). Perla, for example, described her community of origin in Veracruz, Mexico, as “very poor.” She explained, “It was a town—more like a *rancho*, where there wasn’t a paved road, there wasn’t electricity, there wasn’t anything... For women, there was no work. It was more the men, who worked in agriculture.” There was no secondary school in Perla’s community. She explained, “When I was 12, I left school and left my house to go to work” in another community.

A third life course principle posits that individuals’ trajectories are linked to the lives of others in interdependent relationships (Elder 1998b; Elder et al. 2003). Following this pattern, women’s accounts demonstrated how their transitions to work in countries of origin were frequently tied to the circumstances of parents and siblings. Daughters’ labor was often part of a family economic strategy. In some cases, girls worked as unpaid laborers in family enterprises or assisted parents in the fields with crop harvests. About 20 percent of women who worked in their countries of origin were internal labor migrants prior to migrating internationally.

Daughters’ labor force participation and internal labor migration as part of “linked lives” can also be understood through migration theory. The New Economics of Labor Migration

(NELM) theory identifies migration as a household-level decision and response to inadequate labor markets in origin communities. By sending some family members and not others to migrate, households diversify risk (Stark and Bloom 1985). For poor families in rural Mexico, children's labor migration is a common "strategy for survival and reproduction" of these households (Arizpe 2013:72). In a pattern Lourdes Arizpe (2013) termed "relay migration," she found that peasant families, particularly those with several children, maintained their households through a combination of fathers', sons', and daughters' internal labor migration. Older children supported younger siblings by contributing to their education. Daughters typically migrated beginning around age 14 until they married about five years later (Arizpe 2013). As Arizpe's work and NELM theory would predict, I also found that for many women—particularly those from large, poor families in rural areas, daughters' work and labor migration formed part of families' economic strategies.

Camila was one of eight women who became an internal labor migrant during her youth in Mexico. She grew up in a poor, rural area in Veracruz, the youngest child of a single mother, and left school after the second grade. At age 11, her family sent her to be a live-in housekeeper in Mexico City. She described her naiveté at the time: "I didn't even know what [the city] was called when I arrived there." Imagining an 11-year-old child sent to work in an unfamiliar city, I found myself feeling sympathy for Camila, but she challenged my assumptions. First, she told me that being a maid was "easy," compared to the household labor she had done in her own home, such as helping her mother carry heavy firewood while barefoot. When I asked what it was like moving to a new city to work, she recalled, "I was happy... because I was earning money, and now my mother didn't suffer." Camila's description indicates how she was socialized into labor to support her family from an early age.

Through internal labor migration, Camila helped achieve mobility for her family. With Camila's remittances, her mother, who previously lived in a house made of palm and sheet metal, was able to build a brick house. When Camila decided to migrate to the United States with her spouse at age 20, she told me she could do so in good conscience, because, "Before this, I had built my house. My mom now had her house, she had everything. Because I couldn't leave her like that," referring to her mother's previous state of poverty. Camila was proud of this accomplishment: her account demonstrates how worker identity is shaped through early labor force experiences and contribution to families' economic wellbeing.

Contributing to family income was also important for women with younger siblings, a pattern also identified in theories of relay migration (Arizpe 2013). Elder daughters either assumed or were assigned responsibility for helping provide for their brothers and sisters, particularly when parents were unable to do so. Araceli, for instance, left school to work at age 12 to support herself and her younger siblings after both her parents had migrated to the United States. Because her parents' remittances were inconsistent while they sought stable work in the United States, Araceli found a job in retail and, eventually, left school. She explained:

There, the school requires that if we need a book, the student has to buy it. So for me, it was difficult to buy my books. So that's why I stopped studying. It wasn't enough to buy books, buy food, for rent... and also, to buy shoes and clothes for my little brothers and sisters.

A fourth principle of life course theory recognizes that individuals demonstrate agency in the actions they take during the life course, making "choices and compromises based on the alternatives that they perceive before them," which have consequences for their future trajectories (Elder et al. 2003:11). I found that women's transitions to work were not only a result of linked lives but also, their own decisions. In addition to supporting parents and siblings, labor force participation was a way for women to assume responsibility for themselves in the absence

of their families' inability to provide for them. In doing so, women developed a sense of independence and self-reliance.

Like most women I interviewed, Naomi, who had eight siblings, also grew up in poverty. Naomi struggled in school and had been held back several times by the time she reached third grade. Because her parents, poorly paid agricultural workers, were unable to meet her basic needs, Naomi decided it would be better to leave school and work to support herself:

Then I didn't want to keep going to school because I felt like I was too old. There wasn't money [in my family] so I didn't have shoes, and I had to go to school without shoes. So, instead, I wanted to work to buy my things. So that's why I decided to leave school. And I didn't have any problems because my parents, for them, it wasn't so important that I studied. I didn't have a problem.

When she told me she left her home at age 14 to become a domestic worker in another city, I asked if she did so to help her parents. She responded:

It was to help myself... it was difficult, it was a lot of work. But there was no other way, because my parents could not support us because they only—with the little money they had, that little money was for payments they had to make, so they couldn't—there wasn't money to buy food, so we had to work to eat, to buy personal things.

By entering the labor force and migrating at an early age, Naomi followed in the footsteps of her older siblings: her older sisters also worked and a brother had migrated to the United States.

As mentioned above, life course theory demonstrates that the timing and conditions of life course transitions have consequences for individuals' subsequent trajectories. Women's accounts demonstrated some of the consequences of their transitions to work as young women and girls living in poverty. As the above accounts demonstrate, women frequently sacrificed education³⁹ to provide self or family financial support. In the case of women and girls who migrated internally,

³⁹ As of 2005, 46.2 percent of Mexican women had less than a 9th-grade education; however, educational achievement has been increasing: in 1990, this number was 63.2 percent. (Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía).

they also endured family separation. But they also gained some economic mobility, learned self-reliance, and gained labor market experience.

Perla, mentioned earlier, grew up in a family of nine children. She told me her childhood was “very sad” because her mother “didn’t know what she was going to give us to eat. Or if there would be enough food for everyone.” Perla’s older brothers worked in the fields with their father, but she explained there was no work for women in her community. She left school and her home at age 12 to work as a live-in housekeeper in Mexico City, which she described as a “very difficult” adjustment.

After two years, Perla told me she “was getting mature,” and learned how to find different jobs to support herself: “Well, in reality, I had various jobs... I sold bread, I sold tacos, clothing...” By age 14, Perla became savvy to the local labor market and established her identity as a worker: “Now I was older, and, well, *ya me estaba acostumbrando al trabajo* (now I was becoming used to work). So yes, it was better. Every day, doing things better.” Perla’s account provides another example of women’s socialization as workers during youth.

Women also told me that early experiences working in their countries of origin in difficult or “*pesado*” (literally, heavy) jobs, like agricultural work, developed resilience for their careers. For some women, this made U.S. jobs, by comparison, seem easy. For example, Anahí, now a self-employed landscaper and house cleaner, told me she worked in the fields in Mexico as a child to avoid being home where she was the victim of sexual abuse by a relative. This experience made later factory work seem easy when she migrated to the United States at age 14.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Anahí was one of the youngest independent migrants in the sample (she did not migrate with her parents). Migration was another strategy she employed to escape abuse.

I went to work in *el campo*. I preferred a thousand times to be there than to be in my house... I've always worked... And it wasn't difficult for me, to come to the United States and work in a factory... it wasn't so *pesado* in comparison with going, there in Mexico, to the fields, managing cattle or all that.

Considering pre-migration labor force experiences lends insight into the development of women's family, work, and migration trajectories. Women learned to be resilient and find ways to support themselves well before they undertook an international migration journey or before they had the financial support of a husband. Many women had life-long experience in finding work and making personal sacrifices to be able to survive and get themselves and their families ahead. From a life course perspective, these women transitioned to work prior to other transitions of migration and family formation, which cultivated their identities as workers.

As they grew older, women's labor force pathways diverged depending on their family circumstances. Family-related transitions, including marriage, motherhood, and separation/divorce, shaped the social appropriateness and necessity of women's labor force participation, reinforcing the ongoing and gendered role of socialization during the life course (Dæhlen 2005; Moen 2015). Just over half (54 percent) of women were married or "*juntada*" in their countries of origin.⁴¹ These women married at relatively young ages, at a mean age of 19. However, the majority of the sample did not become mothers until they came to the United States. As demonstrated in Table 3.1, about a third (35 percent) had children before migration. Because migration tended to occur around prime years of family formation for women—their average age at migration was 24—whether women had children in their countries of origin or in the United States was largely a function of age.

⁴¹ Five separated from their spouses or became widows prior to migration.

As I discuss in the section below on migration decisions, some women migrated very quickly—within days or months—after marrying. For those who did not migrate immediately after marriage, however, most who had been working stopped after transitions to marriage or childbearing. Camila, mentioned earlier, left her job as a live-in domestic worker when she met her spouse and became pregnant at age twenty. She believed that her boss, whom she described as “strict,” would disapprove of her pregnancy:

It’s difficult there, in Mexico... sometimes they accept pregnant people, and sometimes not. So it made me ashamed for my boss to see me pregnant, because like I said, she was so strict. So I told her, “I’m leaving *señora*.”... You still couldn’t see my pregnant belly.

Like Camila, other women from Mexico indicated that leaving work during pregnancy was the culturally acceptable decision.⁴² Ahumara, for example, had worked as a secretary until she became pregnant and got married at age sixteen. She seemed confused when I asked her to talk about her decision to stop working at this time, saying: “I don’t know—it was like, now that I was going to get married, and it was like a different thing.”

In other cases, women told me that their husbands discouraged them from working. Perla, who had several jobs during her youth, got married at eighteen. Once married, she told me, “My husband didn’t want me to work... He wanted me to stay at home and try to have dinner ready, or to maintain the house.” She also became responsible for caring for her nieces and nephews. Later, Perla had three children of her own, for whom she was responsible while her husband migrated to the United States. During this time she continued to not work outside the home while her husband supported the family with U.S. remittances.

A few women continued working after marriage when it was economically necessary and husbands did not oppose their work. Agustina, for example, had worked out of her home sewing

⁴² Three of the four Central American participants became mothers in their countries of origin: all continued working and all became single mothers.

clothes since childhood. After marrying her husband, she said, “I kept sewing like I wanted to, I continued in *costura* (dressmaking), and he was in the fields. So, we helped each other mutually.” She also continued the work once her children were born.

Women who transitioned to single motherhood in their countries of origin, the case for about half of the women who had children in countries of origin (see Table 3.1), faced particular pressure to work. Miriam left her job teaching night classes and her own studies in a vocational career when she married and moved to a different town to live with her husband’s family. A year later, her husband divorced her while she was pregnant, and provided no financial support for their son. When she became a single mother, Miriam decided to migrate internally to another state to find work:

I had to go to work; to leave my little son... there wasn’t work in my town... I remember that my Dad gave my son money... He told me, “So that you can buy him a cake.” That was always the tradition for the first birthday, a cake and the photo, right? So I said, “No, Dad, I’m not going to buy him a cake, I’m going to buy him clothing because he doesn’t have any.”... So, I was offered a job in Guadalajara, to go work with a family. And I went, but it was very difficult to have left my son.

Miriam left her son in the care of her parents and sister while she worked as a live-in domestic during the next four and a half years, explaining that the separation was difficult but necessary. She explained, “It’s very difficult to see your son, that you have to go and to see him cry, say ‘*No te vayas* (don’t go),’ and that broke my heart. But, well, there are things we have to do because the situation obliges us.”

These accounts indicate how changes in family structure shaped women’s pre-U.S. migration labor force exits and entrances, demonstrating the gendered nature of these transitions across the life course (Moen 2015). Some women followed cultural scripts or husbands’ authority by leaving the labor force after marriage or childbearing. For women who became

single mothers, the pressures associated with being the primary provider for a child propelled women to remain in or return to the labor force and often inspired migration decisions.

Table 3.1. Family characteristics upon U.S. arrival (n=48)

Women without children	64.6% (31)
Single	41.7% (20)
Married	22.9% (11)
Women with children	35.4% (17)
Married with children	18.8% (9)
Single mothers	16.7% (8)

U.S. MIGRATION DECISIONS

For much of the 20th century, men dominated Mexican labor migration flows to the United States. Women began joining their male relatives for purposes of family reunification once men's circular migration was disrupted by border militarization and when men benefitted from amnesty provisions of the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986 (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993, 2010). Yet the "feminization" of migration flows at the end of the 20th and early 21st centuries also reflects women's increased labor force participation at home and abroad as well as responses to structural demand for immigrant female labor (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Espiritu 2008; Nash and Fernández-Kelly 1983; Preibisch and Grez 2010; Straut-Eppsteiner 2016). Further, one study of Mexican women migrants found that even when those surveyed reported migrating primarily for family reunification, they often joined the U.S. labor force after arrival (Kanaiaupuni 2000).

Although women are increasingly joining labor migration streams, participants indicated that the conditions under which they made and framed their migration decisions were often shaped by the gendered expectations of women in their households and communities. Most told me that when they were young, migration was not something they planned or even considered. For example, when I asked Araceli how, as a young girl, she imagined her life would be as an adult, she told me, “I thought I was going to stay in my country (Mexico). I never thought I would come here.” This included women whose family members were migrants. Most women had been socialized to believe that migration was for men. Ahumara, whose father migrated to the United States when she was a child, told me she never thought about migrating as a girl because, “Only the men are the ones that come. Because the men come to work.”

Most women framed migration as an unplanned event that happened in response to either economic hardship or family separation. For the former group, women decided to migrate in response to frustration or desperation amid a lack of jobs or poor earnings in their origin communities and inability support themselves and their families. For the latter, it represented a means for family reunification with parents or partners living in the United States.

In both cases, however, migration represented a turning point in women’s trajectories and one that was frequently associated with labor force participation. Nearly all interviewees cited plans to work upon U.S. arrival, even if they were migrating primarily for family reunification. The majority (79 percent) of women began working within a year of arrival to the United States, although all but one lacked authorization to work.⁴³ Women also indicated how these migration decisions and subsequent transitions to the U.S. labor market were shaped by their stage in the

⁴³ Matilde migrated on an H-2B visa. However, in an exploitative employment situation, she quickly broke her contract and became undocumented. In a previous study on H-2B workers, I argued that single women without children (unlike transnational mothers) were best positioned to take these actions (Straut-Eppsteiner 2016).

life course. Below, I discuss the conditions and life course stages that determined whether women migrated for employment-driven or family-driven reasons.⁴⁴

Becoming Providers: Migration for Transnational Family Support

More than half of women (26) in my sample migrated primarily to seek employment, including five women who were married at the time of migration. These women indicated that they left for the United States to find better opportunities to support themselves and, often, their families. From a life course perspective, migration to support family members in countries of origin demonstrates how “linked lives” (Elder 1994) shape migration decisions and labor force participation. Beginning in the 1980s, migration scholars challenged dominant explanations of migration that focused only on individual economic decisions.

As mentioned above, the New Economics of Labor Migration theory identified households, rather than individuals, as the units of analysis for migration decisions (Stark 1993; Stark and Bloom 1985). This theory predicts that individuals make migration decisions jointly with nonmigrating family members in a “contractual arrangement,” suggesting the interdependence of household members (Stark and Bloom 1985:174). The migrating family member’s remittance dollars represent important sources of economic development for poor households in communities with inadequate labor markets.

However, scholars have criticized NELM for failing to consider how these household decisions are shaped by unequal, gendered power relations (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; De Haas 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). For example, studies have found that men’s labor migration to support family abroad affirms their accepted gender roles as financial providers, while women’s

⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that in a minority of cases, women undertook labor migration as a form of escape from personal circumstances in countries of origin, rather than as a way to help family financially or for family reunification. These circumstances included abuse, turbulent family relationships, depression, and feeling exploited in one’s job in their community of origin. In these circumstances, women viewed migration a pathway to emancipation.

labor migration to do the same challenges expected roles as providers of emotional labor (Dreby 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). Because Latina women's solo migration often transgresses social norms, their labor migration is typically couched in family obligations: either providing for children or for aging parents (Abrego 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Malkin 2004). Women, for example, tend to describe their migration as "helping" families (Malkin 2004; Straut-Eppsteiner 2016). In other words, women are "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987) by framing their labor migration in terms of family support.

When women participate in labor migration streams, the guilt associated with their separation from family prompts them to remit consistently and faithfully to family back home to prove their migration is worthwhile (Abrego 2014; Straut-Eppsteiner 2016). Scholars have documented cases in which daughters send more remittances to families of origin than sons (Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003; Rindfuss et al. 2012; Vanwey 2004) and transnational mothers remit more consistently than fathers (Abrego 2014).

As with transitions to work in countries of origin, life course principles including linked lives, individual agency, the importance of place, and the timing of transitions can be applied to understand the conditions under which women became U.S. labor migrants. Migration provided women an avenue to fulfill roles as family providers amid inadequate economic opportunities in their communities. Women who did not yet have children were able to support their parents and siblings without sacrificing the responsibilities of motherhood. In other cases, women who had become single mothers reframed their responsibility as becoming financial providers for children amid the absence of husbands' support. Through their labor force participation, women were able to maintain worker identities through which they also reinforced and, sometimes, reimagined their family responsibility as daughters and mothers.

Transnational Daughterhood

Women who migrated with the goal of being primary earners tended to transition quickly to the U.S. labor force.⁴⁵ Prior to forming their own families, women, particularly elder daughters, prioritized sending remittances to support parents and siblings. Just as family financial need induced labor force participation in countries of origin, it also influenced U.S. labor migration.

Fatima, who supported her mother and younger siblings through her secretarial job in a factory in Mexico, decided to migrate at age 25 because she heard that she could find work and earn more money in the United States. Fatima's labor migration decision was an extension of her role as a worker and family provider in Mexico. However, her account also demonstrates the life course principle of agency in transitions. Fatima told me she was curious about the United States: her father was a U.S. migrant and she wanted to experience the country for herself. She explained: "I came because I said that I wanted to help my mother and my siblings to study... [My mom] did not want me to come either, but, well, I wanted to know what it was like to be here... you understand?" Fatima had begun working at age 12, helping her mother selling wares in a market stall. Her father's remittances were inconsistent and Fatima became a primary earner in the household. This position gave her some autonomy in her decision to migrate, despite her mother's objections. Shortly after arriving in 2000, Fatima found work as a hotel banquet server. Fatima's work schedule was unpredictable and she often had to work late nights and weekends. This unpredictability was compatible with her life stage—not yet a wife or mother. She

⁴⁵ Among women who were not following husbands or parents, U.S. migration was made possible by social networks of migrant family and friends who provided information and resources for crossing. Having access to migrant networks both increases the odds of individuals' migration and reduces the risks and costs of migrating (Massey et al. 1990, 1999). Nearly all women had friends or relatives in the United States who introduced the idea of migration and made movement possible by sharing information and resources for crossing. While some women relied on female networks, the male-centered culture of migration meant that frequently, the other migrants women knew were men, including fathers, brothers, uncles, and cousins.

explained, “At the time, I didn’t have children and I could work at the hour I wanted and do what I wanted.”

Lorena, from Guatemala, also migrated to the United States prior to marriage and motherhood. She decided to migrate when her sister returned from the United States:

She talked to me a lot about [the United States] and she told me that she was going to go back, and that, well, it was a country of many opportunities: that one worked and you earned your money and things like that. And, I made the decision to come [with her] when she decided to come back the second time.

Shortly after arriving in North Carolina, Lorena was hired in a full-time factory job, where she remained for four years. Next, she found a full-time job in a fast food restaurant and added a second job in a Latin *tienda* (a small market targeted to Latina/o clients). During this time, Lorena reported working 17 to 18 hours per day. When I asked her how she managed to work such long hours, she responded, “Well since I was alone and didn’t have a spouse, nor children, for me it was better to be working.” She explained that she sent a substantial portion of her income to her parents:

I sent them money every two weeks. I sent them—if I earned \$600 in two weeks, I would send them half. You see, one has to pay bills here too and everything... They used it because my mom had been diagnosed with cancer. And they used it to pay for the medications.

Lorena was accustomed to working to help her family: as a child, she helped her parents with the coffee harvest.

As Lorena’s case indicates, women felt particular pressure to migrate when their parents were sick and needed help paying for medical costs. In another example, Matilde migrated after her mother needed a kidney transplant. Unlike the majority of women in the sample, Matilde had never worked prior to migration. Although she wanted to go to college to study law, Matilde’s

father insisted she emigrate to find a way to help support her mother's medical costs. Aside from an older sister with developmental disabilities, at 19, she was the eldest of her siblings:

My dad, with his *campesino* salary, he couldn't pay for all the costs she had. So since I was the oldest, and my siblings were all younger, I decided to come here to the United States to send money to buy her medications and pay for my mom's dialysis... Well, in reality, I didn't make the decision. My dad pressured me so much to come... he used to say that he didn't want women (daughters), that it would have been better if we were all men, because sometimes people have the idea that if you're a woman, you can't support the family at all... He would look at me doing homework and he got mad and would say that when I grew up, I was going to eat books, things like that he told me. So when I made the decision to come here, really, I didn't want to come. I remember that I came crying on the bus...

Against her will, Matilde found a job as a seafood processor through a recruiter in her hometown and migrated to work with an H-2B temporary worker visa. While many women's identities as workers were developed prior to migration, Matilde became a worker at the same time she became a migrant.

While several studies of women's international labor migration have examined the role of transnational motherhood and left-behind children (e.g. Abrego 2014; Dreby 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2005), cases like Fatima's, Lorena's, and Matilde's suggest that "transnational daughterhood" presents a distinct social role and labor migration strategy. Often, these women are the oldest children in their families, demonstrating the importance of sibling order in household migration decisions (Arizpe 2013). These findings confirm NELM's argument that individual migration decisions are made in concert with nonmigrant family members, but also build on the theory. In Fatima's and Lorena's cases, women demonstrated agency in their decisions to migrate, although they reinforced that these decisions were also an extension of family economic support.

Matilde, meanwhile, indicates how labor migration is not always autonomous, but a decision made within family hierarchies. Her case serves as a reminder that women's entrance in

labor migration is not necessarily a measure of independence or empowerment and that gendered hierarchies shape household decisions. This highlights the gender disparities in power that older, male relatives may have in these decisions when the migrating member is a younger, unmarried woman, a part of the household process that NELM fails to recognize. It also shows how women's life course stage shapes their ability to negotiate migration decisions.

Transnational daughterhood became a source of emotional distress when women couldn't be with parents as they aged, became ill, or died. In recent years, border militarization has made conditions exceedingly difficult and dangerous for daughters to return home, particularly as they become responsible for their own children and families in the United States, a theme to which I return in Chapter 6.

Transnational Mothers

Other women migrated to support children across borders. Nine women were transnational mothers who left children behind in their countries of origin when they migrated. Most (7) of these women were single mothers and all began working shortly after arriving. Transnational mothers typically migrated with the goal of helping their children "get ahead." Usually, the children's fathers were no longer supporting the family and women took on the role of breadwinner. In these cases, women's migration decisions were influenced by "turning points" in which they became sole providers for their children. For example, Magdalena and her husband separated in Mexico when she told me she could no longer tolerate his constant infidelity. From this point, he withdrew support from her and her three children. She described, "He didn't even know if his children had shoes... he didn't know if his children were eating. From that point forward, I was responsible for them. From that point forward, I was father and mother for my

children.” Magdalena left her three children with her mother in Mexico and joined her brother in North Carolina in 1999, finding work in a poultry plant shortly after arrival.

Studies of transnational parenthood find that families tend to view fathers who are labor migrants as honorably supporting their families (Dreby 2010; Parreñas 2008; Schmalzbauer 2015). Men’s relationships with children depend on their ability to be good providers, but transnational mothers, in addition to providing economic support, are expected to do emotion work (Dreby 2006; Hochschild 1979). When migrant women take on the role of migrant laborer and become transnational mothers, they tend to feel more guilt over their separation from children than men (Dreby 2010). These women also face “stigma, guilt, and criticism” from members of their origin communities (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997:552). However, mothers reconcile these transgressions with the knowledge that their work allows them to provide for their children’s basic needs (Parreñas, 2001).

Separation from children was emotionally trying for women like Magdalena, who said, “I felt terrible because I left my children. I had never been separated from them. But it’s a necessity.” Magdalena had not worked in Mexico, explaining that there were few jobs for women in her rural community. She told me she decided to migrate, “To fight for my daughters... From the time I arrived here in the United States, I started to work to *sacar adelante a mis hijas* (to get my daughters ahead).” By being “mother and father,” Magdalena reframed her family role as one of financial, in addition to emotional support.

Women described working long hours to make the sacrifice of separation worthwhile. Alejandra left her young daughter with her parents in Mexico, when a male friend—a former schoolmate—encouraged her to migrate to North Carolina and loaned her money to help pay for the crossing. She described supplementing her full-time job in a laundry with informal sector

work, cleaning houses and ironing in the evenings as well as making and selling food: “Because I knew that I had the necessity to save money because my daughter was in Mexico, and I always had the idea that my daughter would study in private schools.”

Alejandra described her schedule, working from 7 in the morning until 10:00 at night: “Tiring. Sometimes I still have shoulder problems from ironing so much, but I had to work so much because I had to send the money [to Mexico].” Before bringing her daughter to join her in the United States, Alejandra told me proudly that she accomplished her goal: “She always studied in private schools.” Transnational mothers, like women without children, had the flexibility to work these long hours, as Alejandra pointed out: “Like if I had had my daughter [with me in the U.S.], it would have been different. But I didn’t have to get home.”

Part of helping children “get ahead” typically included saving enough to bring them to the United States. Most women did not envision long-term separation from their children as a viable choice. Seven out of the nine transnational mothers, including Magdalena and Alejandra, brought their children to the United States. In the meantime, mothers who left children behind typically left them in the care of their own parents—therefore, the categories of transnational mother and transnational daughter are not mutually exclusive, as women felt responsibility to support not only their children but also the grandparents who cared for them.

Migration for Family Reunification

About 44 percent of the sample (21 women) migrated primarily for family reunification to join husbands (16) or parents (5). Several (11) joined husbands who were already in the United States; five migrated together with husbands who had U.S. experience and wanted to

return after marriage. Undocumented women's migration as associational migrants is a reflection of changes in U.S. migration policy.⁴⁶

During the Bracero agricultural labor program in the mid-20th century (1942-1964), U.S. policy encouraged men to maintain families in Mexico while they worked seasonally in the United States (Cohen 2011). Subsequent to this program, even when male Mexican laborers were more likely to be undocumented, lack of enforcement at the U.S.-Mexico border continued to facilitate this "circular" migration. When the border became more militarized in the period following the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, however, the difficulty and danger of crossing have inhibited men's ability to work in the United States and return home regularly to families in Mexico (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). When men could no longer return home to their families, wives and children began joining them in the United States (Cerrutti and Massey 2001). In her ethnographic work of women and men's migration decisions, Victoria Malkin (2004:84) found that women have claimed a place in migration through family networks and that both women and men increasingly prefer migration as a "joint venture" that "promises a more respectable social location" for both husband and wives.

Some women migrated together with their husbands soon after marriage, reflecting a trend in the migration of newly married couples (Malkin 2004:84). Commonly, husbands had prior U.S. experience and wanted to return with their new wives. Vanessa, who met her husband in school in Mexico and who had never previously considered migrating, provides an example of how marriage and migration went hand in hand. She told me, "When he was 17 and I was maybe 16, he came to the United States. And then, maybe three years later, he came back, and he

⁴⁶ Women's migration for family reunification is also associated with policy change among authorized migration streams, stemming from the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act that prioritized family ties as eligibility criteria for migration. In 1986, when three million migrants—mostly men—received legal status through provisions of IRCA, they were able to bring their wives and children.

proposed that we get married and that we come [together to the United States] and I told him yes.” Vanessa’s mother and father “didn’t really like the idea” of her migrating, because she would be far away but “they respected the decision, since now I was married, well, now I could come [to the United States] because although maybe they didn’t like it, I could come because now I was married.” Once women were married, parents no longer had jurisdiction over daughters’ migration decisions.

Migrating with a husband was a socially acceptable strategy for some women who had aspirations to migrate prior to marriage. Ximena, for example, told me that her father, a U.S. migrant, discouraged her from migrating when she was a teenager. Ximena compared her experience as an unmarried young woman to that of her sister, who came to the United States as a married woman together with her spouse:

“*Pa*,” I told him, “ I want to go [to the United States] too.” And he told me, “No,” he says, “If you don’t get married, you can’t come.” ... In my town, it’s like if a young woman [migrates] alone, it was like—a lot of things that people would say to the family. But since my sister was now a *señora* (married woman) that is, now she wasn’t a *muchacha* (girl). So they didn’t say anything about her. So that’s why my dad told me... “No, first you get married, and then later you can come with your husband.”

Ximena told me she married while “still young” at 16. When her husband planned to migrate to the United States shortly after the marriage, she insisted on coming with him: “I told him, ‘If you’re going now, I’m not staying.’ ... I really wanted to come.” In her case, the appropriateness of her migration hinged not on age, but on her marital status. Ximena’s account demonstrates how women can leverage their socially accepted “traditional” gender roles as wives “to resist patriarchal expectations, even as those very resources also reinforce conventional gender expectations” (Kleinman 2007:105).

Similarly, Esmeralda told me that she had expressed interest in migrating while single, but that her father, a migrant himself, forbade her:

He said, “No, because the border is very dangerous, they rape girls, they kill them, it is very dangerous. And if one day you marry, and your husband wants to take you, that’s ok. But as long as you are here with me taking care of you, I’m telling you no.”

Later, Esmeralda did migrate with her husband. She explained:

He was going to come, but he was going to come alone, and I told him, “No, well, [I’m coming] too.” Because sometimes couples that get together in Mexico, the husband comes and they spend a lot of years here without going back to Mexico... [because] they can return, but then they can’t go back to the United States... and he said yes, that that was ok, that we could both come.

Ximena’s and Esmeralda’s accounts demonstrate that women, in some cases, find it easier to negotiate migration decisions with husbands than fathers.

Like Esmeralda and Renata from the opening narrative at the beginning of this chapter, some women migrated to join husbands because they did not want to become long-term “left-behind” spouses, demonstrating how fear of abandonment inspires women’s migration (Chavez 2012; Malkin 2004). Similarly, Patricia told me she decided to migrate to the United States three months after her husband did, explaining: “I didn’t want to be there [in Mexico] and just see my husband once a year.” These cases indicate that even when women’s migration occurs in the context of family reunification, women can demonstrate agency in these decisions: following husbands in migration does not always indicate that women are passive participants.

Women’s accounts indicated that husbands, too, wanted to avoid family separation.

Camila, for example, stayed behind with her infant son when her husband migrated to the United States. Six months later, he encouraged her to join him:

He says, “Well come here so that you can help me pay the debt [for crossing].” And I say, “And if I come, it’s going to be the same [debt].” “No, well then with us both working we’ll pay it. Come here, because I miss my son.”... Well, so I got a loan and came with my son to the border.”

Similarly, Teresa remained behind for a year in Mexico with their son when her husband migrated. Teresa had heard crossing was dangerous and was reluctant to migrate. However,

Teresa's husband convinced her to join him in North Carolina with their son, because he believed the family would be better off there:

I told him "Oh no, I'm not coming. It's really terrible [to cross] and with our son especially." He told me, "No, no it's not bad."... He said it was peaceful here. He told me, "Here, our son will be able to go to school. It's very safe." ...He said, "Here, one feels free, because here there is security... the children can play outside. One can go out at night. The school is close." And I was encouraged.

In other cases, family migration was linked to parents. Five unmarried women migrated to reunite with parents in the United States. When parents migrated first—a common strategy because of the risks, uncertainties, and costs of migration (Dreby 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Orellana et al. 2001)—daughters were sometimes hesitant to join them, particularly once they had already entered the labor force at home. All but one of these women expressed reluctance to join their parents. For example, Neftali, whose mother and father lived in the United States, migrated when her mother insisted it was inappropriate for her and her siblings to remain behind alone, although, 25 at the time, she felt self-sufficient:

I didn't think about emigrating until my mother arranged it... They left [my siblings and me], and we were fine there, because I had my job. I was the secretary for the representative in my town. My sister was a kindergarten teacher in another town. There was no need for us to come. We sold clothing every weekend... I think there was no need [for us to come], but since my mom didn't want—we were two women and one man and she didn't want to leave us there, she wanted us all here, so that's why she brought us.

Neftali's mother believed that it was inappropriate, in particular, for her unmarried daughters—though adults—to be living on their own. She recalls her mother telling her, "I don't want you to be there because you are women. I don't want you to be alone." Meanwhile, her parents allowed her younger brother, who was not yet 18 and had trouble getting a job in the United States, to return to Mexico.

Family Migrants in the U.S. Labor Force

Women who migrated for purposes of family reunification were also labor force participants. More than half (12 of 21) of family migrants joined the labor force within a year of arrival. Wives', and sometimes, daughters', contributions to household income were important to pay migration debt, support families' cost of living in the United States, and provide remittances to parents and relatives who remained behind.

Camila, for example, stopped working upon pregnancy in Mexico. After crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in 2000 with her 8-month old son to join her husband, however, she amassed \$10,000 debt for their journey. Women reported paying *coyotes* several thousand dollars per person to cross, depending on year of arrival and their departure point, and often had borrowed the money from a family member, friend, or a *prestamista* (moneylender). These loans typically accrued interest, even when they were from family, creating an incentive to pay back the debt as quickly as possible. To pay back the money, Camila quickly found a job as a hotel housekeeper. She began working eight-hour days, six days per week. Accounts like hers reinforce that women who migrate for family reunification are not necessarily dependents, but often, equal participants in the labor force. Through migration, they reassume worker identities.

In fact, some women told me that husbands who did not want them to work in Mexico changed their minds in the United States when wives' contributions to family income became necessary. Recall, Perla, who had worked extensively throughout her youth but whose husband wanted her to stop working after they married in Mexico. After she joined him in Chatham County in 2006, she quickly found work in a poultry plant, explaining: "Well, when I arrived here, here I knew that everyone, everyone has to work because it's not enough for one person to

work, it's not enough. And being here, since the beginning, I said I was going to work." Her account provides an example of how expectations of work and family shift across borders.

Women who migrated to join parents also joined the labor force. Abril migrated to the United States in 1995 at age 17, reluctantly, together with her siblings and parents, who came to the United States because they faced a dire financial situation in Mexico. After arrival, Abril told me that her parents owed money to their *coyote* to pay for their journey, and, as the eldest child, she had to go to work to help them pay the debt and support her younger brothers and sisters.

Abril's family first moved to rural Florida to work on a farm that the *coyote* owned. She said her parents enrolled the younger children in school, but not her:

It was just me left, and I asked my mom again if she could help me so that I could go to school, but she said, "It's that we don't have money. You have to help us to work." Well, so I stayed, crying, but then, well, I like assimilated to all of this, and I stayed. And then, then I didn't have any more interest. Then I forgot about school. I started to work instead.

Abril's account indicates how she was socialized to prioritize family financial support over human capital investments like education. It also demonstrates how birth order shapes parents' expectations that older children work to support younger siblings (Arizpe 2013). Migrant parents are often described as the "sacrifice generation" who give up opportunities for their own mobility to provide for their children's mobility (Foner and Dreby 2011; Kasnitz et al. 2009). Yet Abril provides an example of how older children of the "1.5 generation"—individuals who migrate during adolescence—may also give up opportunities for their younger siblings.

The remaining 43 percent of family migrants did not work upon arrival. Commonly, this happened when married women's husbands discouraged them from working, particularly when women were pregnant or had young children upon or soon after arrival.⁴⁷ Itzel told me she had

⁴⁷ In addition, two women who migrated to join their parents did not join the labor force because they were minors attending school full time—however, other women (Anahí and Abril) did enter the U.S. labor force as minors.

worked “ever since I can remember” in Mexico. She migrated soon after marrying her husband. Before migrating, Itzel explained, “My idea was that I would work [in the United States]. But, well, I couldn’t do anything of the sort... When I got here to live, my husband told me, ‘You are not going to work, but if you want to, you can go to school.’” When I asked why her husband did not want her to work, she explained, “Because his job was all day and he wanted someone to serve his food (laughing)... And then later I ended up pregnant.” In the next chapter, I explore further how family demands associated with motherhood and male authority constrained women’s work.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I drew on life course principles including the roles of the timing of transitions, linked lives, place, and agency in shaping the conditions under which women began working in countries of origin, migrated to the United States, and joined the U.S. labor force. These findings demonstrate the importance of considering women’s pre-migration experiences in shaping their later trajectories and highlight the utility of a life course perspective for framing this approach.

Many of the women in this study had long-term experiences with work, commonly beginning at early ages in countries of origin. Through early labor force participation, women supported themselves and their families, learning to become self-reliant and independent. They were also socialized to sacrifice their own education and family separation to pursue paid work opportunities. Later family transitions shaped women’s labor force participation in countries of origin, in some cases, leading women to put work on hold. In other cases, it was stimulated by single motherhood.

I provided insight into the changing conditions under which women made migration decisions and negotiate these decisions within gendered family dynamics. Interviewees' accounts demonstrate the utility of incorporating gendered analysis into household-level migration theories like NELM. Increasingly, women are migrating not just as associational migrants to join family, but also as labor migrants. In these cases, women maintain and develop their identities as workers through the migration process. However, women's labor migration was typically framed as a family obligation and a strategy to provide support to parents, siblings, and children across borders. This shows that women's worker identity must be negotiated with appropriate family roles as daughters and mothers and demonstrates how, through migration, women navigate gendered socialization and norms surrounding labor migration. Specifically, transnational daughters and mothers validate their places in the U.S. labor market by reinforcing their family roles as providers to parents, siblings, and children across borders.

When women did migrate primarily for reunification with husbands, they were not necessarily passive followers. Wives, for example, made claims to their marriage ideals of remaining together with husbands by pursuing migration and rejecting status as "left-behind" wives. Migrating as a married couple also lent legitimacy to women's claims to migration amid parents' opposition. In other cases, husbands were the ones to reject a transnational family situation and implored wives and children to join them. The costs of migration and supporting oneself in the United States means that, regardless of the reason for departure, migration was often a turning point associated with labor force participation. In several cases, women pursued work subsequent to migration even when it meant subverting male authority. However, as women grew older and formed families in the United States amid shifting immigration policies, staying in the labor force was not always tenable, a finding I discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4:
*ENTRE LA ESPADA Y LA PARED**: LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN AN ERA OF
RESTRICTION

**Between a rock and a hard place*

Adelina migrated to the United States from Mexico without authorization in 1999. Within a month after arriving in Chatham County, North Carolina, she purchased a Social Security number that allowed her to get a job working the night shift in a local poultry processing plant, a major employer for immigrants in the community at the time. At work, she met the man who would become her husband. They became acquainted during breaks and soon moved in together. After about two and a half years, Adelina said she was “run out” of the plant because her employer discovered her papers were invalid but she quickly found a job in another poultry plant. Around this time, Adelina became pregnant and worked well into the eighth month of her pregnancy. After her son was born, Adelina took one month to stay home with her baby and then went back to work. She and her husband worked opposite shifts to avoid hiring a childcare provider because they did not trust anyone to watch their baby.

When Adelina became pregnant again three years later, she and her husband had begun sending their son to a neighbor who provided childcare in her home. One day, Adelina left work early and, upon arriving at the babysitter’s home, realized that she had given her son’s food and diapers away to other children. Adelina also complained that another child had bitten her son there. She explained her response to this situation: “So I said, ‘You know what? I’m going to leave my job. I don’t want to leave my son in childcare anymore. He doesn’t need to be

suffering.’” After her second child was born, Adelina found a job working the night shift in a textile factory, which allowed her to care for her children during the day. She stayed in this job for almost a year when, once again, her employer discovered that her papers were invalid and she lost her job.

After subsequently finding a new job at a furniture factory and then losing it after only a few months, Adelina left the labor force. She explained, “From there, my husband said, ‘You know what? It’s better that you dedicate yourself to care for the boys, because, whatever happens, they need you.’” Growing family demands along with her inability to hold a stable job without a valid Social Security number have made work untenable for Adelina. Her husband also struggles to maintain consistent work because of his undocumented status and the expansion of E-Verify.

In addition to the economic strain of being out of the labor force, Adelina demonstrated an internal struggle with her loss of worker identity. During our interview, Adelina seemed overwhelmed by her situation, as her toddler scampered around the room amid scattered toys. She described being the primary caregiver for her children as a 24-hour a day job that she finds “stressful.” Adelina told me she has “always liked to work.” Like the women profiled in Chapter 3, she detailed a long history of labor force participation, beginning during childhood in Mexico: “My mom, since I was little, sent me to work in houses: doing chores, washing dishes, little errands. Since I was 8 years old I started to do this.” Despite a career of low-wage, often physically demanding jobs, Adelina valued paid labor force participation. She viewed staying home as a full-time care worker as depressing, but framed it as fulfilling her responsibility as a mother:

The truth is that for me, for me... it really depresses me. It is very stressful to be here alone, shut in, all the time, always doing the same thing, the same, the same. But I try to

breathe and I say, “Ay, it doesn’t matter. This is what I was chosen for and it doesn’t matter, I have to do it for [my kids].”

Adelina’s case demonstrates how undocumented Latinas’ labor force trajectories were shaped by a combination of both family circumstances and legal constraints on their employment—conditions that shifted over time. Her account illustrates four sets of findings, beginning with the often-intermittent nature of migrant women’s labor force participation. Interviewees’ labor force participation rates were relatively high shortly after arriving in the United States. However, for many, labor force participation was interrupted and about 14 percent fewer women were working at the time of interview than after arrival. Nearly all women had either taken at least some time out of the labor force or experienced job churning (moved in and out of jobs) since coming to the United States, suggesting that even when women are in the labor force, their participation tends to be intermittent, as Adelina’s case demonstrates.

The second finding Adelina’s account reveals is the role of family transitions in shaping labor force participation—specifically, how women experienced work-family conflict as they became mothers. Women’s labor force participation shifted in response to changing family events across the life course. This finding is reflected in the international migration literature: specifically, marriage and motherhood tend to depress Latinas’ labor force participation (Donato and Gabaccia 2015; Flippen 2014; Flippen and Parrado 2015; Read and Cohen 2007). Family demands also create work-family conflict among native-born women (Collins 1994; Damaske 2011; Dodson 2007; Stone 2007; Williams 1999), but these conditions seem to be exacerbated for the foreign-born. In 2010, for example, married Mexican-born women had labor force participation rates that were approximately 20 percent lower than married U.S.-born women (Donato and Gabaccia 2015). Adelina’s case points to the additional constraints faced by migrant women and particularly those who are undocumented.

The third finding highlighted in Adelina's account is the role of political and social contexts of reception in shaping women's labor force participation. Restrictive policies, including the implementation of programs like E-Verify and No-Match letters, occurred concurrently with women's family transitions. Meanwhile, the relatively underdeveloped social infrastructure in new destinations (Bada 2010; Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Weissman et al. Forthcoming) and lack of labor unions meant that women had few social supports for work-family balance and no collective voice in employment relationships. Together, these findings suggest the dynamic role between women's work-family conflict, hostile political contexts, and less developed social contexts of reception in a new destination community in constraining women's labor force participation.

Drawing on these first three findings I argue that understanding the legal and family contexts that constrain women's labor force participation is important for solving the puzzle of Latina women's low aggregate rates of labor force participation. We know that Mexican-born women's labor force participation rates are especially low, compared with U.S.-born women and other immigrant groups (Donato and Gabaccia 2015). We also know that Mexican-origin women are also more vulnerable to employment instability—measured as joblessness and involuntary part-time work—than white, native-born women (de Anda 2000).

Gender and migration scholars have tacitly attributed to low participation rates to Mexican women's high rates of undocumented status (Brettell 2016). In fact, compared with documented women and documented and undocumented men, undocumented women have the lowest rates of labor force participation (Pew Research Center 2015). However, legal status alone is not enough to explain these depressed rates. Undocumented men, for example, have disproportionately high rates of labor force participation (Pew Research Center 2015). As Adelina's case demonstrates,

linking micro-level family transitions together with macro-level political and social contexts provides a more comprehensive explanation of women's labor force participation.

Other research has begun to examine the relationship between family and legal contexts in Latinas' labor force participation. A survey of Latinas in the Durham area, for example, found that undocumented status was not statistically significant for single women's employment but was significant and negatively associated with married women's (Flippen 2013). However, studies have not examined the family and policy conditions shaping Latina migrants' labor force participation across the life course and how changes in policy contexts matter. I demonstrate the importance of a life course perspective and the recognition of shifting policy contexts (Silver 2018) for understanding the factors that shape women's labor force participation over time and across family transitions.

Further, beyond explaining labor force participation rates, Adelina's story highlights how the pressures of family demands and employment restrictions came into conflict with women's identities and social roles as workers, my fourth thematic finding in this chapter. Interviewees typically made many sacrifices to come to the United States: they undertook dangerous border-crossing journeys and nearly always left behind loved ones to find economic mobility. Awareness of these sacrifices, the pressure to remit to families in origin countries, and often, long-term affiliation with paid work, heightened their desire and need to participate in the labor force.

In this chapter, then, I examine how work-family conflict is exacerbated by being foreign-born and undocumented in the low-wage labor market amid the increasingly restrictive political and economic contexts of reception in North Carolina, outlined in Chapter 2, and across prime years of family formation. I address two research questions: 1) Once in the United States, how is

women's labor force participation patterned by family formation and political contexts of reception? 2) How is the experience of negotiating work-family conflict shaped by women's status as foreign-born and undocumented?

I continue this chapter by examining how women's employment became criminalized and constrained over time through the implementation of restrictive policies. Then, I discuss how the shifting demands of family care work across the life course intersected with their social locations as migrant women with low levels of human and legal capital. I examine both how family labor constrained paid labor and how paid labor constrained women's roles as mothers. I close by discussing women's attachments to paid labor force participation and the consequences that result when work-family conflict and/or undocumented status push women out of the labor market.

LACKING "SEGURO BUENO": THE CRIMINALIZATION OF WORK

U.S. immigration enforcement no longer occurs only at borders, but within the interior in concert with other institutions—notably, the labor market (Abrego and Gleeson 2014; Goldstein and Alonso-Bejarano 2017; Gomberg-Muñoz 2010; Griffith 2011; Newman et al. 2012), demonstrating the overlap between political and economic contexts of reception. The growing implementation of federal immigration policy through labor policy—via programs like E-Verify and No-Match letters—has suppressed the rights of an already vulnerable workforce (Gleeson 2010; Gomberg-Munoz and Nussbaum-Barberena 2011; Milkman, González, and Narro 2010).

North Carolina, like other new destination states, implemented and expanded E-Verify alongside the growth of its Latina/o immigrant population (Newman et al. 2012). To remind the reader, E-Verify is an electronic verification system through which employers determine new

hires' eligibility to work in the United States. North Carolina is now one of nine states in the country that require the use of E-Verify for all or most employers (Smith 2017)⁴⁸—that is, its use is required among most private employers, but there are some exceptions for small businesses. Specifically, the state requires E-Verify for hiring among private employers with 25 or more employees. Yet even prior to North Carolina's implementation of E-Verify in 2012, interviewees reported some difficulty maintaining consistent employment because of the No-Match Letter program, which, through the Social Security Administration, sent letters to employers and employees when employees' Social Security numbers and names did not match the information in the SSA database (Bergeron et al. 2007).

For the women in my study, the majority of whom had lived in the United States for several years, the implementation of these programs represented a shifting context of reception. Specifically, they led to the “criminalization” of work—that is, work, a necessary activity, become an illegal and contested terrain for workers. Women described local labor markets that were initially accessible but became more exclusionary subsequent to their arrival. Enhanced employment verification made their previous strategies for getting jobs “without papers” largely obsolete. Women able to get jobs relatively easily when they arrived in the late 1990s and early 2000s without legal status were no longer able to do so by the time I interviewed them.

Esperanza, for example, migrated in 2002. After she arrived, Esperanza reported having no problem being hired without a Social Security number. In her first job, in a pizzeria, she worked under the table. In subsequent jobs in fast food restaurants, she was able to get a job by using a tax ID or using false documents that she purchased: “I just went and filled out an application, but

⁴⁸ Other states include Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah. See <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/e-verify-improvements.aspx>.

they didn't check Social Security numbers, I remember. And now, it's really difficult! ... 'Fill [the application] in on the computer and put your Social Security number.' Now it's not as easy as before." She told me that currently, "Wherever you go, [employers] ask for a Social Security number. Before—no. Before, I remember—15 years, 13 years ago, no. Now, everything is more difficult." Her statement reflects the current widespread requirement that workers prove legal work authorization upon hiring. The "*seguros falsos*" (invalid Social Security numbers) employed in response to the implementation of I-9 forms following IRCA no longer pass muster against electronic, internet-based verification systems that share information with federal agencies, such as SSA and the Department of Homeland Security.

Like Adelina in the opening narrative, some women lost their jobs when an employer discovered their number wasn't valid. Magdalena, a former poultry processing worker who got a job using false documents when she arrived in 1999, explained, "Because now, when one works with papers that aren't yours, the time comes and they tell you that these papers *ya no te sirven* (don't work for you anymore)." When the invalid papers no longer worked, women experienced job churning, moving in and out of jobs, and some were pushed out of the labor force either temporarily or permanently.

Before Esperanza's oldest child was born in 2009, she had been working at a fast food restaurant. Her husband, meanwhile, was unable to maintain stable work as a construction laborer. After a two-month maternity leave, they agreed she would go back to work at her job at a fast food restaurant while he stayed home with the baby:

And I was working there three months when the manager told me: 'Esperanza... I checked and your Social Security number isn't valid... I'm really sorry, but you're fired.' And he let me go. So I was desperate because my husband wasn't working and I wasn't either... The manager told me, "You're fired, but if you find me a good number, I'll give you a job again." But, where am I going to get a good number?

Women also told me they faced legal consequences and threats for using false documents. Abril, for example, was caught using invalid documents while working in a hosiery factory. She was prosecuted and served a short jail sentence, though her lawyer ultimately helped her avoid more serious consequences. In another example, Magdalena, a single mother, received a No-Match letter because she used another person's Social Security number and birth certificate to get her job at a poultry plant. Magdalena told me she called the IRS as the letter instructed. She recalled her phone conversation:

They say, "We're going to send you to *migración* (ICE)..." "You know," they say, "That this is a crime?" I say, "Yes, I know." "So why are you using another name [that doesn't match your Social Security number]?" "Because I arrived as an immigrant and *a uno no le queda de otra* (one has no choice). I have my children and I have to support them."

Through these experiences, women learned that not only would false documents no longer work for obtaining employment but that to try to use them was a risky endeavor that involved interactions with bureaucratic officials who could threaten their presence in the country. Teresa, in another example, told me she decided to leave her job at a fast food restaurant after a No-Match letter exposed her for having "invented" a Social Security number:

It turned out that it was a *seguro bueno* (real Social Security number)... [My boss] told me to go to... the Social Security office because the number didn't coincide with my name. And I said, "Ay *no*, how am I going to go to the Social Security office if it's not mine?" I know I invented it. No, I had to leave.

E-Verify and No-Match letters disciplined workers by denying their claims to work in the formal labor market and challenging their status as family earners. These findings demonstrate how workplace enforcement through these programs represents a "soft" enforcement tool that disciplines undocumented workers and denies their claims to membership and belonging. Although it does not use "hard" enforcement tactics like detention and deportation, E-Verify heightens fear and insecurity among workers and limits their claims to rights in the workplace

(Goldstein and Alonso-Bejarano 2017). In Teresa's case, it limited her perceived right to be in the workplace at all—although she had not yet been terminated, she knew she “had to leave.”

Accounts like Teresa's and Magdalena's tenuous run-ins with the Social Security Administration and the IRS reflect other scholars' findings that bureaucratic officials—including school staff (Jones-Correa 2008; Marrow 2009), health and social services professionals (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; López-Sanders 2017; Marrow 2009) and police (Armenta 2017)—increasingly act as gatekeepers to mediate immigrant incorporation processes. These actors are especially powerful in new destinations, where social infrastructure is less developed and political contexts tend to be hostile toward immigrant communities (Bada 2010; Odem and Lacy 2009).

Although the criminalization of work affects both men and women (Gleeson 2010; Gomberg-Munoz and Nussbaum-Barberena 2011; Griffith 2011), I argue that it can be especially detrimental to women's labor force participation under conditions of the concurrent gendered family demands they face. At the same time that women faced legal barriers to employment, many also struggled to balance family care work demands. Below, I outline how women experienced work-family conflict at various stages of motherhood and how the ability to balance work and family was constrained by the conditions of being foreign-born and undocumented.

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT ACROSS STAGES OF MOTHERHOOD

Scholars typically refer to work-family conflict as a tension between social roles in which participation in one realm—family or paid work—inhibits fulfilling the responsibilities of the other (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Voydanoff 1988). Increasingly, researchers point out the utility of a life course approach for examining work-family conflict to

take into account “historical and cultural context and change” (Bianchi and Milkie 2010:715). Further, scholars have pushed for the recognition that both realms entail labor. As Joan Williams (1999) points out, the distinction between “work” and “family” often devalues women’s work in the domestic sphere and proposes the terms “market work” and “family work.” I conceptualize work-family conflict as the ways family caregiving demands inhibit women’s paid employment, as well as how the conditions of paid labor inhibit women’s ability to fulfill gendered demands for caregiving work and the qualities they associate with “good” motherhood.

The majority (about 87 percent) of mothers in the study gave birth to children in the United States. Pregnancy, childbearing, and early parenthood are particularly salient periods during which mothers tend to pull back from the labor force (Cohen and Bianchi 1999; Hynes and Clarkberg 2005). Women, both poor and middle-class, foreign-born and native-born, make labor force decisions based on what they perceive to be best for their families amid the varying structural constraints of their jobs (Gerson 1986; Stone 2007; Dodson 2007; Damaske 2011). I find that in many ways, poor migrant mothers experienced work-family constraints similar to those of poor native-born women documented by work-family scholars, such as inadequate access to affordable and quality childcare and inflexible schedules (Boushey 2003; Dodson 2007; Press, Johnson-Dias, and Fagan 2006; Williams and Dolkas 2012). Yet as Latina immigrants, particularly for those without legal status, they experienced additional constraints during family transitions, which were shaped by the particular conditions and availability of work for women with precarious legal status and low levels of human capital, and access to childcare amid a lack of female kin networks. Below, I discuss the challenges that women faced during pregnancy and while raising pre-school and school-aged children.

Trabajos Pesados: “Pre” Motherhood Work-Family Conflict

One factor that created work-family conflict for these immigrant mothers was related to the types of occupations in which they concentrated in the U.S. labor market. Global economic restructuring during the late 20th century and the movement of U.S. women into the labor market created demand for Latina immigrants in low-wage, low-skill jobs in the secondary labor market (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Hudson 2007; Morokvasic 1984; Piore 1979; Sassen-Koob 1984). The gendered, racialized, and class dimensions of labor markets are evident in the high concentration of poor immigrant women of color in specific occupations, which are often physically demanding, like domestic service work, hotel housekeeping, and manufacturing (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Espiritu 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Sassen-Koob 1984; Zamudio and Lichter 2008).

In North Carolina, according to 2015 American Community Survey data, Mexican and Central American women are highly concentrated in manufacturing jobs in animal slaughter and processing, furniture production, cut and sew apparel manufacturing and fabric mills. They also have high rates of participation in accommodation and food services, retail, health care, and service industries. Women in my sample commonly worked in domestic and commercial cleaning (as private house cleaners, hotel housekeepers, cleaners of newly constructed homes, and janitors), poultry processing, textile and other manufacturing, and food service work. Laboring in such industries is frequently associated with poor health outcomes. Compared with native-born U.S. workers, Mexican and Central American workers are more likely to be concentrated in physically demanding jobs (Zavodny 2015) associated with occupational fatalities and hazards, such as physical strain and repetitive motions (Hall and Greenman 2015).

Those who are undocumented are especially vulnerable (Enchautegui 2008; Hall and Greenman 2015).

Moreover, gendered labor demand for migrant workers exposes men and women to different occupational health and safety risks. Compared with native-born men, male Latino immigrants, who are concentrated in relatively dangerous construction and agricultural occupations, have higher fatality rates (Chávez, Edelblute, and Korver-Glenn 2016; Dollar 2016; Hall and Greenman 2015; Orrenius and Zavodny 2009b). Latina immigrants, meanwhile, tend to be concentrated in cleaning occupations and have higher rates of occupational injuries, such as musculoskeletal disorders and physical trauma, than native-born women (Buchanan et al. 2010; Hall and Greenman 2015; Orrenius and Zavodny 2009a). Ethnographic accounts describe repetitive strain, musculoskeletal pain, exposure to chemicals, burns, and other physical injuries in the industries in which immigrant women in North Carolina were concentrated, including and meat and poultry processing (Ribas 2015; Striffler 2002; Stuesse 2016), domestic and commercial cleaning (Chang 2016; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Liladrie 2010) and restaurant work (Gleeson 2012).

Nearly ninety percent of the women I interviewed reported most recent jobs that required physical labor and/or standing on one's feet for most of the day.⁴⁹ While work-family conflict is typically associated with issues that arise once children are born, for migrant women in low-wage, difficult jobs, the physical demands of their work came at odds with women's perceived motherhood responsibilities even before children were born. During pregnancy, this responsibility was to be a protector of the fetus they carried to ensure a safe pregnancy and delivery of a healthy child.

⁴⁹ Among the five women whose jobs I did not consider physically laborious, three had college degrees and had worked in skilled jobs.

Several women, along with their husbands, were concerned about the safety of remaining in their “*trabajos pesados*,” or “heavy jobs,” during pregnancy. In these situations, there was an implied fear of miscarriage. In fact, 11 women in the study told me during the course of their interviews that they had experienced high-risk pregnancies or miscarriages.⁵⁰ These fears are not unfounded: medical research confirms that physically demanding working conditions are associated with a higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (Mozurkewich et al. 2000).

Ximena, for example, told me she and her husband struggled with infertility for several years. At the time she finally became pregnant, she worked cleaning hotel rooms:

So then my husband told me, since we had been together so many years, if we wanted to have a family, and he told me, “Now you’re not going to work,” he said, “because we’ve been waiting many years and that job is *pesado*, and if you keep working there, and something happens to you...”

I asked Ximena what she thought about this, and she responded, “Well I quit, because... if I say, ‘No, well it’s that it’s not *pesado*,’ and I keep working—and I didn’t know if my pregnancy was going to be normal or if it was going to be risky, so I left.” Ximena indicated that she was able to do so without serious economic consequences: her own earnings were poor while her husband had stable employment in a restaurant. She later went back to work part-time cleaning houses.

Similarly, after experiencing a stillbirth, Esperanza stopped working in a fast food restaurant when she became pregnant a second time, despite reassurance from her doctor that work did not cause the condition that led to the stillbirth:

My husband said, “Now, just in the house, *nada de trabajo* (no work).” We decided [I wouldn’t work] because we were afraid. Even though what happened to me didn’t happen

⁵⁰ I did not systematically ask interviewees about high-risk pregnancy or miscarriage so it is possible that the number who experienced this was even higher. Compared with native-born women, Latin American immigrant women in high-immigration countries, including the United States, have higher risks of preeclampsia and eclampsia, disorders that manifest with high blood pressure and are associated with pregnancy complications, maternal death, preterm birth, and perinatal death (stillbirth) (Urquia et al. 2014). Further, two interviewees told me they experienced a miscarriage during or shortly after their border crossing experience.

because of working. Because the doctor said, ‘You’re not sick, you’re pregnant. The same thing is not going to happen to you, but if you feel more at ease [not working], then fine.’”

In addition to the perceived risks to pregnancy by workers and their partners, Lorena’s account indicates how employers may view pregnancy as an undesirable characteristic of workers, reflecting a struggle many women, foreign and native-born, face in the labor market (Byron and Roscigno 2014; National Partnership for Women & Families 2016). Undocumented women, however, have relatively little power to contest this discrimination. Lorena told me that when she was pregnant, she tried to find work, but that her husband warned her, “Nobody is going to give you a job.” Nevertheless, Lorena tried to apply for a job as a hotel housekeeper. When she did, she was turned down:

They told me, “No,” because it was very dangerous because I was pregnant, I could fall, and then they would be the ones responsible for hiring someone who was pregnant in the company. So then I didn’t want to keep looking [for work].

Realizing this was a violation of U.S. labor law,⁵¹ I asked Lorena whether she thought this employer’s action was legal. She responded:

Well, you see, since one isn’t legal in this country, one can’t do anything. I believe that—well, yes, it’s illegal, because imagine it, denying someone work. But we can’t do anything else—unless we’re legal, we have papers—but otherwise, we can’t do anything.

Lorena felt that because of her legal status, she had no right to recourse in this situation.

In most cases, *trabajos pesados* were only sufficient to push women out of the labor force when their husbands had reliable work, like in Ximena’s, Lorena’s, and Esperanza’s cases. Other women remained working during pregnancy in physically demanding jobs. In some cases, women’s employment situations impeded their ability to receive proper prenatal care or to take care of their own health during pregnancy and post-partum. For example, Alejandra continued

⁵¹ <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/pregnancy.cfm>

cleaning houses six or seven days per week during a high-risk pregnancy when her husband—who was abusive and whom she later divorced—was not working:

During my pregnancy, I worked, and then when my daughter was born, I was just home the 40 days⁵² and then I started to work cleaning houses. And I was the one that provided the money for the house because my husband was never working. And when I got home, sometimes, from work, he was already really drunk.

As a result, Alejandra told me she experienced depression and weight gain, lamenting, “I went back to work too quickly and I didn’t take care of myself.”

Similarly, Sandra, a mother of four, told me she has high-risk pregnancies due to eclampsia. However, she continued working for a restaurant/caterer through her last pregnancy until the day before she was induced to give birth, because she was the primary earner in her household. She said, “I developed a lot of varicose veins, and I had one... a vaginal varicose vein. It was very large, and it hurt me a lot to walk. But I worked until the end [of my pregnancy.]”

Some women indicated that employers were to blame for creating demanding work conditions for pregnant and postpartum women. Adelina, from this chapter’s opening narrative, recounted angrily her experience working in the poultry plant during pregnancy:

If you asked for permission to go to the bathroom, they told you, “I didn’t tell you to get yourself pregnant.” And they didn’t give you permission. So what I did was not drink so much water, because if I didn’t [drink], I didn’t have to go to the bathroom as much... So I put up with that.

Although she had disdain for this employer, Adelina also seemed angry with herself while recounting this situation, saying that during this period she was “very foolish” and “didn’t think.”

In some cases, the conditions of *trabajos pesados* pushed women out of the labor market. In others, when women had to work, they sacrificed prenatal care and their own health. In both

⁵² Most women observed the “*cuarentena*,” a 40-day postpartum period during which time they did not work.

sets of cases, these outcomes arose because of the physically demanding conditions of the jobs in which most interviewees were concentrated. Further, Lorena's and Adelina's cases demonstrate that employers may view pregnant migrant women as undesirable employees, fail to hire them (in Lorena's case) or refuse to make reasonable—and legally required—concessions such as providing breaks. These cases suggest that women without legal status may be especially vulnerable to exploitation during pregnancy—undocumented workers are often hesitant to report labor violations because of fear of reprisal on the basis of their legal status and the threat of deportation (Gleeson 2010; Weissman et al. Forthcoming).

Immigrant women, particularly those of Mexican origin, work in more physically demanding jobs than native-born women (Zavodny 2015). My findings demonstrate how women's concentration in these "brown-collar" jobs (Catanzarite 2000) shapes workers' physical and mental health. For women, who feel a heightened duty to protect their health and safety during pregnancy, the physical demands of these jobs can put their roles as workers in conflict with the responsibilities of motherhood. However, they are often the only realistic job options available to women, placing them in a tenuous situation—some may leave under these conditions, while others cannot afford to do so. Further, the power differential between employers and undocumented, low-skilled workers places them in vulnerable conditions in which they are unlikely to request concessions or contest discrimination if they do remain in the labor market.

Lacking "Confianza" in Childcare

Scholarship on gender and migration commonly frames migrant women as *providers* of childcare (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001), without interrogating the challenges they face as *consumers* of childcare in their roles as working mothers raising children

in the United States.⁵³ Childcare challenges faced by women in my sample included lack of family networks to provide care, the inability to afford paid childcare, and/or concerns regarding the quality of childcare they could afford. The constraint of childcare was, in many cases, heightened by husbands' desire for their wives to be primary caregivers.

Finding reliable and affordable childcare is a struggle for many poor and working-class mothers in the United States (Boushey 2003; Dodson 2007; Willams and Dolkas 2012), and problems with childcare present a barrier to full-time work among poor women (Press et al. 2006). Working-class women in the United States who cannot afford formal child care tend to rely on family members as childcare providers (Willams and Dolkas 2012). Kin care networks are especially widespread among working women of color, which not only benefit working mothers but their care-providing relatives who depend on the income from babysitting (Uttal 1999).

Unlike native-born women workers, these women—migrants in a new destination with less developed social networks—often lacked local female kin networks in the United States on whom they might otherwise rely for help. Vanessa, for example, said that it was difficult to become a new mother in the United States because: “I, for example, don’t have a sister, I don’t have a mom here, cousin—I don’t have anyone. But you learn to *luchar tú sola* (fight by yourself).” Her case demonstrates how the social contexts of reception through the presence of a co-ethnic community shapes immigrant incorporation (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). Because women lacked family networks to provide care, they turned to the private market where they paid out of pocket for childcare. Despite lacking family networks, women tended to live in housing areas, including trailer parks and apartment complexes, with high concentrations of

⁵³ More attention has been paid to the care chains of women who are transnational mothers—see Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2001.

other Latina/o migrants. Through word-of-mouth from friends or co-workers, women were usually able to find a nearby Latina who provided childcare in her home in these neighborhoods.

In some cases, women said that the cost of care was formidable because of the low wages they and their husbands earned. Vanessa, for example, delayed working until her children started school and she could find a job to work around their schedules. She explained, “Working with children is very complicated, because you have to find someone to care for your children, and we don’t earn much to pay someone to [do that].” Anahí told me that although she kept working after her first child was born, she left her minimum-wage job in a factory once her second was born because the cost of childcare for two became prohibitive: “To go to work for \$20 or \$30 a week and leave my children alone, that wasn’t a good deal (laughing).” The cost of childcare also presents a barrier to poor native-born women’s labor force participation (Press et al. 2006). However, immigrant families have less access to government income and work supports like childcare subsidies.

Non-citizen children are ineligible for benefits like SNAP (food stamps) or child care subsidies. The U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents are eligible for public benefits programs, including child care subsidies for low-income families through the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (Matthews 2017). However, mixed-status families—a term used to define families in which one or both parents are undocumented but at least one child is a U.S. citizen—tend to be less likely to participate in public services because they misunderstand their eligibility or are deterred by fear of deportation (Capps et al. 2005; Capps, Hagan, and Rodríguez 2004). The fear surrounding undocumented status has heightened in the years since these studies were published, so we can expect these disparities to be even higher today. In my sample, some women enrolled older pre-school aged children in the Head Start program, but few discussed

accessing childcare subsidies. In general, the women I interviewed were leery of accessing public benefits, explaining that they sought not to be “a burden” on the country and that they preferred to “get their children ahead by themselves.”⁵⁴

Women’s most common childcare strategy, and the most affordable option, was to identify a friend or neighbor—always another Latina immigrant—who did not work outside the home and took in children for \$10 to \$20 per day. This reflects a pattern of low-income Latina/o immigrants’ reliance on more informal childcare arrangements and low use of center-based care compared with other families (Brandon 2004). However, these arrangements led to concerns over the quality of care in several cases. In some instances, women had great confidence in these informal childcare providers, but many women and their husbands were distrustful of them. The low wages paid to these babysitters—often, \$15 for 8 hours of care, demonstrates the co-ethnic exploitation present in these care networks. This represents a trend of the exploitation of more recent arrivals who are less familiar with local labor markets by more established immigrants, which has been documented among a variety of immigrant groups in different industries (Cranford 2005; Li 2017; Mahler 1995; Morales 2011; Rosales 2014). When political and economic circumstances place migrants in vulnerable positions in which their networks are resource-poor, they instead rely on “networks of exploitation” (Cranford 2005).

Several women reported the inadequacy of providers they had hired, often citing specific instances of having “caught” them providing poor care. These occasions were pivotal moments for deciding to take time out of the labor force. Lorena, who was unable to find work while pregnant, eventually went back to work in a factory after her children were born. However, she

⁵⁴ Mothers I encountered while volunteering at a food pantry often assumed their families were ineligible for SNAP (food stamps), even when they had U.S. citizen children. Other women, like Adelina, had misperceptions of these programs. She told me she has applied for food stamps twice but that other people she knows told her it was “bad” because “later, [the government] will take the money away from the children when they are adults.”

subsequently left the labor force, in part, over concern about the quality of childcare. She cited a bad experience hiring a childcare provider, a neighbor in her apartment complex who Lorena said she “didn’t know very well”:

I’ve never liked leaving my daughters with another person. The people that I leave them with, I don’t know if they’re going to take good care of them. If they’re going to feed them on time...I had an experience with my daughters when I left them with someone for a time when I was working in a factory. And my older daughter tells me that she doesn’t want me to leave her there again because the woman was yelling at them a lot. She was a neighbor. I didn’t know her well, she lived near here, and, then my older daughter was crying and telling me this. And, as a mother, well I don’t want anyone to do something to my daughters. So, well, I decided it’s better not to work now and to dedicate time to them.

Like Lorena, women typically felt that it was their responsibility “as mothers,” to ensure that children had proper care.

Lorena’s account of her labor force experience indicated that her childcare issues represented a tipping point after experiencing multiple obstacles: she also told me it has become increasingly difficult to find work because she is undocumented and employers are now “checking papers,” and that she struggled with transportation to work—the factory was 30 miles away. Meanwhile, her husband was able to support the family with earnings from his construction job. Her account indicates how women experience overlapping constraints to work, but that lacking trustworthy childcare becomes a breaking point.

Some women described more egalitarian relationships in which spouses worked opposite shifts to balance work and children. In other cases, however, husbands used their authority to decide unilaterally that wives should stay home with children and out of the labor force. Their demands were couched in the rhetoric of unaffordability or untrustworthiness. For example, Teresa told me her husband “didn’t let” her work after she arrived in North Carolina with their young son and became pregnant shortly thereafter: “Because we didn’t know anyone and he said

that he didn't trust me leaving our son with someone to watch him, that I didn't know people. And in daycare, well, what they charged was very expensive."

In contrast to the cases described above, women who were single or whose partners did not have stable or sufficient income could not leave the labor force because of inadequate childcare options. Camila, for example, told me that because of the poor quality of childcare she has received, she decided not to have more children. Camila migrated when her son was 8 months old. In debt \$10,000 to a cousin for their migration journey, she quickly found work as a hotel housekeeper, hiring a neighbor to babysit her son. She told me, "Sometimes he came back hurt. All scratched up, crying, with a swollen eye... I couldn't do anything, because, where else am I going to leave him? Because I had to work to pay the debt." When her second son was born nine years later, she took a year off to stay with him. Because her son was a U.S. citizen, he was eligible for a daycare subsidy. However, even with access to formal childcare through the subsidy, she described poor treatment:

It was the same. They mistreated him in the daycare. Scratched, punched. I reported it. They said it was an accident, that it wouldn't happen again. So I took him out... Once again, I left him with people (informal providers)... And it was the same... In that time, they charged \$10 [per day]. So I gave the woman 15—15 dollars so that she would take good care of him... And now, I don't want more children. I would like to have another child, but no, because they suffer a lot here.

Camila was the sole provider for her family at the time of our interview. Her husband works in landscaping, a seasonal and unstable job, and was not working at the time. Most women responded to work-family conflict by pulling back from the labor force, while Camila chose to limit her family size because she had to work. Though different responses, both represent how inadequate childcare renders work and family incompatible.

These accounts demonstrate how lack of access to affordable, quality childcare contributes to work-family conflict among low-income families more generally. In addition, the

particular conditions of accessible childcare arrangements—informal, inexpensive, and frequently, untrustworthy—among the undocumented women in my sample, who largely lacked kin networks and rarely accessed subsidized childcare, demonstrates how this conflict is exacerbated for the foreign-born and undocumented. These conditions were shaped by the contexts of reception in a new destination in which women had less access to established co-ethnic networks or social supports (Bada et al. 2010; Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Odem and Lacy 2009; Schmalzbauer 2014).

Waiting at the Bus Stop: Ongoing Pressure to Balance Paid and Care Work

Once children entered primary school, a great deal of the childcare burden was lifted for mothers. No longer faced with the cost of daylong care or concerns over the suitability of providers, those women who left the labor force were usually able to return to work. However, they continued to face family pressures. School days are shorter than full-time workdays, and mothers and fathers preferred to have a parent present with their children during non-school hours. Summer vacations also posed challenges. Further, even when children were old enough not to need a babysitter, parents valued face time with and supervision of adolescents.

Several women told me that to be a “good” mother, one had to spend time with their children. Some women compared themselves to other parents they know—usually mothers—who spend too much time working and not enough time with their children, indicating the scrutiny that women experience among their peer group. These women explained that they were cautious to balance their own labor force participation with dedication to their children.

In this way, the struggles faced by women in my sample were similar to those faced by poor, native-born women in the United States, who tend to have little flexibility in their schedules (Dodson 2007). Like accounts of low-income, native-born mothers (Dodson 2007;

Edin and Kefalas 2011; Lareau 2011), women told me that being there for children was important to support their education, make them feel loved, and to protect them from *vicios* (vices), such as drugs or gangs. This “motherwork” (Collins 1994) was important for ensuring children’s safety and wellbeing, as well as cultivating intergenerational mobility. Paid labor and providing for one’s family was also considered important, but focusing *too* much on paid work at the expense of one’s children was associated with bad mothering.

Neftali, a mother of two, told me it was important, as a mother, to “take good care of your children,” and explained that she knows other mothers whose “kids come home on the bus and they’re not there waiting” because they are at work. She compared herself with these mothers: “I’m always the one who’s there, but for the majority, no—their job is more important than their children, they let their children come home alone, they don’t know if anything happens.”

Neftali had previously worked without authorization but decided to stop doing so while in the process of applying for legal permanent residency to avoid any problems. Neftali’s son Juan Carlos, age 4, has special medical needs, providing an additional constraint to work. She said other women have told her it will be “easier to work when [both] children are in school,” but Neftali disagreed. Her partner, out of concern for Juan Carlos’s health issues, was not supportive of her working, and in particular, did not want him to ride the school bus because he thought it was unsafe for his condition. Neftali received a work permit after a years-long process of applying for residency and was eager to begin working, but recounts that her partner said, “‘You want to work? You have to find yourself a job where you can pick him up and bring him to school, but my son is not going to get on the bus.’ Or [he says], ‘Are you missing something?’ He says, ‘because that’s why I work all day.’” Neftali was responsible for bringing Juan Carlos to his many doctors’ and therapy appointments during the day. She was able to find a part-time

janitorial job working in the evenings in order to be with Juan Carlos during the day. Neftali's boss would allow her to bring the children to work with her until her husband could pick them up.

Although women thought it was important for fathers to spend time with their children, and several gave examples of their husbands' involvement with children, most said that caring for children was primarily their responsibility. Cristina, a self-employed house cleaner, whose husband works in landscaping, explained that this was because men's work was less flexible:

...They're worse off than us [women] because they have a different schedule. The men are really tied to their job. Until the evening, and then they come home tired... They're barely at home, in my case... [My husband] leaves in the morning at 6, and returns at 6 or sometimes later... their schedule is always going to be full-time. Few fathers have the luxury of having a schedule that's half time. They can't because of the economy and the father is the one that... provides money for, for everything.

Cristina works as a self-employed house cleaner and is careful to arrange her schedule around her children's needs, including picking up her younger child from school every day (in fact, she paused our interview to do so while I waited in her dining room).

Yet even when women were primary earners, and in a few cases, men were primary caregivers, women still felt pressure to be available for their children. Camila, mentioned earlier, who was the sole provider for her family, told me she decided to stay in a hotel housekeeping job with poor working conditions because her schedule allowed her to see her children off to school in the morning and usually, to arrive home before they did: "I put them on the bus. I don't let them go alone. That's why I put up with, with my job. Because I have the opportunity to arrive late." Camila's case demonstrates again how the work-family issues faced by low-income women are exacerbated by the limited job options for undocumented immigrant women. Camila is unauthorized, speaks no English, and has a second-grade education. While these circumstances

certainly restrict her employment to the low-wage labor market, she indicates that her motherhood responsibilities exacerbate her already limited job options.

Not having a flexible schedule, meanwhile, made it difficult to balance work and family and sometimes created an irreconcilable conflict, as in Constanza's case. Constanza worked full-time at a factory while her husband stayed home with their two young children because he could not maintain consistent employment in construction. She told me that although she was working, she thought it was important to be present for events like her children's medical appointments. Her husband cared for the children during the day, but Constanza told me, "Nevertheless, I felt that it was necessary that I went... because, well, it isn't the same as when someone tells you, 'The doctor said this and that.'" A previous supervisor was sympathetic and allowed her to balance her paid work with these family responsibilities.

When a new, less flexible supervisor came in, however, Constanza was faced with an ultimatum. One day, she requested time off when her son was about to start pre-K. Constanza wanted to see him off at school on his first day and she and her husband shared one car, which complicated their ability to take him to school and for her to get to work. Her request was rebuffed by the new supervisor, who, she said, told her to decide: "Your son or your job." Constanza took the morning off to take her son to school and her younger child to a doctor's appointment. Upon arriving to work late, she was fired. This happened in 2013. She told me that because of E-Verify restrictions, she has since been unable to find another job. Constanza's case indicates how the consequences of employment restrictions targeting the undocumented combined with work-family conflict result in women's intermittent labor force participation. Undocumented women move in and out of the labor force to cope with family demands, just like

native-born women. Unlike native-born women, however, their undocumented status increasingly renders them unable to easily reenter the labor market.

“I WASN’T BORN TO BE SITTING IN THE HOUSE”: VALUING PAID WORK

Interviewees did not always find dignity or pride in their individual jobs but typically assigned great value to paid work. Of the 15 women who were unemployed or out of the labor force at the time I interviewed them, only one said that she was satisfied with the arrangement.⁵⁵ Others expressed frustration with legal restrictions, family demands (including husbands’ opposition to their work), health problems, or a combination of these factors that prevented them from working. Although women were cautious to describe how they prioritize their children’s needs, they also indicated, more subtly, that they valued and craved work outside the home. For many, paid work was a central part of their identity. In several cases, this identity was tied to long trajectories of labor force participation starting at early ages—recall that 85 percent had worked prior to migration—and their desire to maintain some level of financial independence.

Constanza described losing her job as a traumatic event and a turning point that represented a change in her status from primary earner to stay-at-home wife and mother:

That was my job. It was where I earned money to sustain my family. It was where I earned money to send to my mother [in Mexico]. It was... a really awful change for me because I was traumatized, I was very depressed... I didn’t want to be at home. I wanted—I cried, looking at the four walls, and if I went out—where was I going to go out? You know, if one goes out, it’s to spend money, and where am I going to get money to spend? For me, it was very difficult. It is difficult.

In many cases, leaving the labor force results in women’s isolation. For example, Constanza reported losing a social network of friends at work, who provided one another with “moral

⁵⁵ Araceli is a mother of five young children, ranging from age 2 to 11. Her husband is stably employed as a painter. She told me, “For now, I prefer it this way, because [my children] are still small and they need me. But, then when they are in school I can go back to work part-time.”

support.” When women lost work-based social networks, they had to look elsewhere to develop social ties. Constanza told me that eventually she began making friends with the other mothers when she dropped her son off at school: “To make friends with people, I would say ‘Hi,’ and if they answer you and you chat, that’s how I started to get to know more people. Because, since, like I just told you, my world was only my job, I only knew people from work, no one else.”

In addition to the immediate loss of her social network, which took time to rebuild, Constanza struggled with the loss of her worker identity. Constanza had worked to support her family since childhood. As a young girl in Mexico, she sometimes skipped school to help her father, an agricultural worker, during the bean harvest. After leaving school as an adolescent, she worked as a live-in domestic worker to help support her family when her father was hospitalized. She migrated to the United States, where she believed she would have better earnings potential to continue supporting her parents. Her account demonstrates how the loss of work is associated with the loss of identity, psychological wellbeing, financial security, and social support. Other women echoed these sentiments.

These women associated time out of the labor force with depression, stress, boredom, and feeling shut in. This was likely compounded by many women’s fear of driving without a license, which led them to avoid unnecessary travel outside the home—work, however, was considered a necessary activity. Teresa, who worked part-time helping a friend clean houses in response to losing a formal-sector job because of her undocumented status, inability to afford daycare, and her husband’s distrust of informal providers, told me bluntly, “I don’t like to be closed up in the house. I feel like—like a prisoner... It stresses me out.”

Some also indicated a reluctance to be overly reliant on their husbands for financial support. For example, Anahí told me she left her job in a factory when her second child was born

because her minimum-wage earnings weren't enough to make paying for childcare and gas worthwhile. During this period, however, she found other ways to supplement her income, including selling Avon, "So that I would have a little extra money for me. To not be asking [my husband] all the time." When she went back to work, Anahí described a sense of relief: "Although I love my kids, but—uh, all the time in the house with them... they consumed me entirely. And to get out a little bit was less stressful, it helped me a lot."

As Anahí's quote above indicates, women are never "not working." When they leave the labor force, they transition to full-time care work responsibilities, which some found overwhelming. Magdalena, mentioned earlier in this chapter, provides another example. She left the labor force in 2011 when her employer at a poultry processing plant discovered that her "invented" Social Security number did not match up with her name and gave her 90 days to present a valid one. At the same time, she was diagnosed with cancer and became unable to remain standing all day for her job. At the time of our interview, Magdalena lived with her adult daughters, who are single mothers, and cared for her grandchildren during the day. She lamented being out of the labor force:

I tell my daughters, 'Ay, I would like to go to work now.' I want to work. I want to help them. I don't know. I say, 'I wasn't born to be sitting in the house.'... Well, although I'm not sitting, I tell them, I'm worse off than if I were working because with [my grandchildren], I have to clean the house, I have to cook, I have to do everything...

When I arrived at Magdalena's trailer home for our interview, she was cleaning the floors and caring for her two young granddaughters. Magdalena felt that other people, including neighbors in her predominantly Latina/o trailer park, judged her for not working outside the home: "There are people outside that say, 'That lazy woman... she doesn't want to work.' But people don't know the life one has."

Low-wage, low-prestige work can be a source of pride for stigmatized individuals to demonstrate their independence and work ethic (Newman 2009). More specifically, taking pride in work is a strategy for undocumented workers to maintain self-esteem amid the stigmas of illegality (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010). Given political rhetoric and popular discourse that dichotomizes foreign-born Latinas/os in the United States as either “hard-working Mexicans” on one side or undeserving, criminal, and government-dependent burdens on the other (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010), it is understandable why individuals like Magdalena may choose to identify with work. In these cases, worker identities become “moral identities,” through which women affirmed their value as “good” immigrants (Kleinman 1996:5).

During my data collection, some interviewees were aware of and sensitive to portrayals of Latinas/os as criminals in the heated political climate leading up to the 2016 presidential election.⁵⁶ Romina, an undocumented house-cleaner, told me, “If one comes to this country, one also comes to contribute... to work and everything, I mean honorably. We’re not robbing anybody, we’re not doing anything bad.” Some, like Cristina, who arrived undocumented but later became a naturalized U.S. citizen, were proud to tell me that they had never claimed government benefits: “We’ve liked to work and get our children ahead by ourselves. Although we’re poor at times, you know? Sometimes one doesn’t have much, but—I’ve never asked for [food] stamps.”

Others described their greater ability and willingness to withstand difficult jobs relative to American workers. As Anahí described, “Let’s say, in tobacco you’re not going to see an American [worker] or in construction... the Hispanics work harder.” Vanessa, who prepares

⁵⁶ E.g. see <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/10/20/from-mexican-rapists-to-bad-hombres-the-trump-campaign-in-two-moments>.

sandwiches in a café, described to me the strong work ethic that she believed she and the other Latina/o workers espoused compared to Americans.

But all of us, the Hispanics that are working there... the Americans are good workers, too, but we are very *duros para trabajar también* (we are also very tough when it comes to work). We are very—strengthened in this aspect of work, and there are times that [the Americans], “Oh I don’t want to work any more, I’m tired now.” [We respond,] “Oh, don’t worry, we will finish the work.” Because we take strength from I don’t know where (laughing).

These comments reflect findings of immigrants’ economic contributions at the population level in both North Carolina and nationally. A 2014 study report from the UNC Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler Business School found that immigrants in North Carolina, compared with native-born residents, were more likely to work and less likely to rely on government benefits like cash assistance or health insurance. Even accounting for immigrants’ high rates of use of services like public education, in 2010 immigrants—and Latinas/os, specifically—provided a net economic benefit to the state through consumer spending and tax revenue (Johnson and Appold 2014). Authors James Johnson and Stephen Appold argued that immigrants’ contributions were particularly important as the state faces population losses, population aging, and economic dependency in rural areas.

At the federal level, research also demonstrates that the undocumented pay taxes, contributing \$11.74 billion per year (Gee et al. 2017) but have low participation in safety net programs, especially compared to poor, native-born families (Ku and Bruen 2013). Despite immigrant women’s lower rates of labor force participation compared to immigrant men or native-born women, they disproportionately fill demand for jobs in low-wage service and light industrial occupations as maids and housekeepers, textile workers, and agricultural product sorters (American Immigration Council 2017b).

For many women in my study, a positive sense of self was tied to being workers as well as mothers. Women were proud of their work ethic and having withstood *trabajos pesados* in both their countries of origin and in the United States. Their accounts show that work has intrinsic value for individuals, even when it is done in the secondary labor market. It also allows them to claim a rightful place in a country where they feel an increasing sense of unease over policies that render their daily presence in the country, employment, and driving as “illegal” activities.

CONCLUSION

Labor force participation can become incompatible with motherhood when *pesado* jobs are perceived to put unborn children at risk, when parents lack access to quality and affordable childcare, and when work inhibits women’s ability to “be there” for their children. The pressures of these conditions are heightened when men assert their status as breadwinners and dissuade wives from working.

Native-born women in the low-wage labor market also struggle to maintain consistent work, particularly given the employment requirements of current welfare policy, which require women to stay in low-wage jobs with few opportunities for mobility while lacking adequate supports for childcare (Dodson 2007; Edin and Kissane 2010; Hays 2004). Yet I find that undocumented women’s options are even more constrained. Since the expansion of E-Verify, it is increasingly difficult for undocumented women to obtain or move between jobs in the low-wage labor market.

Work-family scholars have found that some low-income women choose to leave jobs when they experience disappointment with the conditions of their jobs or blocked labor force mobility (Damaske 2011; Gerson 1986). These women cycle in and out of work, believing they will be

able to find better employment or choose to devote themselves full-time to unpaid family labor. In contrast, the undocumented women I interviewed typically did not feel they were in a position to be particular about their working conditions. Several were even willing to withstand jobs that had detrimental effects on their health rather than face unemployment. This is because undocumented women have increasingly fewer options for any kind of work.

At the same time, women and their husbands are often unwilling to risk the wellbeing of their children, however, if they feel they do not have an adequate childcare provider or if their job puts unborn children at risk. Like native-born low-income mothers (Dodson 2007), participants believed they have a moral obligation to choose the safety and well-being of their children over inflexible work arrangements; for the undocumented, the stakes of leaving the labor force are much higher. In addition to leaving work, several women told me that work-family conflicts, including inadequate childcare, demanding schedules in low-wage work, and their desire to spend time with their children during non-work hours, led them to give up on English classes, an important human capital investment in the low-wage labor market (Cobb-Clark and Kossoudji 2000; Hall and Farkas 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001).

Interviewees' accounts indicate that undocumented women are caught between the proverbial rock and hard place of family "pull" factors and structural "push" factors when making decisions about work across stages of motherhood. Like their native-born counterparts (Collins 1994; Damaske 2011; Dodson 2007; Hochschild 1989; Stone 2007), participants faced the "pull" of family and gendered expectations for reproductive labor. What differs, however, is that the "push" factors for undocumented women are often tied to their legal precarity, the conditions of low-wage, "immigrant jobs," and restrictive political contexts that made it difficult to get and keep jobs.

Immigrant women leave the labor force not because they desire to leave their low-wage, often physically taxing, jobs; many derived meaning and pride in working, which often stemmed from the worker identities they formed in their home countries. Instead, working sometimes becomes untenable in the conditions they face. When they do remain in the labor force, shifting policy restrictions, together with family demands, have made them increasingly likely to move into nonstandard work arrangements, such as self-employment or subcontracted work in the informal sector—a theme I explore further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: MAKING IT WORK: STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL IN A RESTRICTED LABOR MARKET

Perla migrated to the United States in 2006. She worked for seven years deboning chickens in a North Carolina poultry processing plant (*pollera*), together with her husband. Both undocumented, they purchased Social Security cards to get their jobs. She described it as a “*trabajo pesado*” with long hours and difficult conditions that induced bodily harm—conditions that have been well documented in the poultry industry (Oxfam America 2015; Stuesse 2016):

I was sometimes working from 7:45 in the morning to 3:00 in the morning... I came home with my hands so swollen that I couldn't even wash dishes. Or my fingernails would fall out... So, [my kids] would always see that I was coming home in pain.

Despite the difficult conditions of this job, Perla said it provided economic mobility for her and her family. She told me the poultry plants were a benefit to the community compared with the few employment opportunities that are available now:

The *polleras* really helped the people. A lot of people—there were many people who did better thanks to the *polleras*. And there were opportunities for men and women, and young people, and everything. It was a lot, a lot of help, that for us—the *polleras* were something very positive for our lives.

After seven years, poultry plants that had once been major employers in Chatham County had begun to close down and Perla lost her job. Two large plants closed in 2008 and 2011 citing financial losses from the high cost of fuel and chicken feed, which resulted in the loss of approximately 1,500 local jobs (WRAL 2008, 2011). When Perla later went to apply at the remaining plants, she could no longer be hired without a valid Social Security number. She

explained, “They have to be—now they do not accept illegal [papers]. They have to be original (valid) papers.... And, well, we don’t have that.” She then heard a radio ad for a job at a recycling plant over an hour’s drive from her home, applied, and was hired—the employer “didn’t check ID.” She stayed in the job for three years, risking the commute without a driver’s license, until that plant closed down.

After that job loss, because of E-Verify restrictions, Perla could no longer find what sociologists refer to as “standard” employment. Standard employment refers to a relationship in which an employee works directly for and is compensated by a single employer and in which work is done at the employer’s place of business on a fixed schedule (Kalleberg 2000; Kalleberg and Marsden 2015). In Perla’s case, because of her undocumented status, she could not be hired directly by a poultry plant. Instead, she entered into a “nonstandard” arrangement, working for a *contratista* (labor contractor), traveling around the state to vaccinate chickens on farms, together with her husband. Perla associated her move into subcontracted work with the loss of wages and benefits, including paid vacations, holidays, and health insurance, and an unpredictable schedule, explaining:

Now, we work with our [real] name, with a contractor... but what happens? We do not have vacation, we don’t have anything, nor health insurance, nothing... At times there are consecutive weeks [of work] without even a day of rest. For us, there are no Saturdays, there are no Sundays... Like today, we’re not working. They tell you in the moment. There’s no day where they tell you, “Well, this date we’re not going to work,” so that you can make plans. Or, “We’re going to go to this place,” no. But we never know when we are going to have time off, when we are going to work.

Perla said that if she takes a sick day and “the boss gets mad,” she loses two days of work “as a punishment.” She told me that workers sometimes travel for hours in a van provided by the contractor to get to their work sites but are not compensated for their travel time.

In a neighboring county, Esmeralda, who arrived in 2000, also works in a “non-standard” employment arrangement as a self-employed house cleaner. Esmeralda previously cleaned hotel rooms and prepared food in a restaurant before moving to a cleaning company. In that job, she was mistreated by her employer but stayed for four years. When I asked why she stayed, she explained she could no longer move jobs because of the implementation of E-Verify: “They changed the rules and that’s when they started to ask for Social Security... She [my boss] didn’t ask for *seguro*.” Eventually, Esmeralda found a way out through self-employment. Like Perla, she does not receive benefits or paid vacations through her job. Yet she lauds relatively higher levels of autonomy, such as control over her work schedule: “I always start at 8:00 [a.m.], but you see, if I rush and I finish quickly, I leave. And if I want to work all day, I can work all day. But I only work always from 8:00 to 2:00, because my son—I pick him up from school.”

Despite legal restrictions on the employment of the undocumented, most women in the sample (71 percent) were working for pay at the time of the interview, as demonstrated in Table 5.1. Like Perla and Esmeralda, however, close to two-thirds had turned to work in what scholars refer to as “nonstandard” employment arrangements, usually in the informal sector. Castells and Portes (1989, 12-13), define the informal economy as being “unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated.” The absence of the regulation is present in different aspects of informal work, including the status of labor—that is, informality/non-regulation of wages and benefits—and working conditions.

Both categorizations of work—“formal/informal” and “standard/nonstandard” refer to the level of regulation in work: informal and nonstandard work both imply paid work arrangements that are largely unregulated by the state. The standard/nonstandard distinction, which I employ in this chapter, is particularly useful because it refers to specific types of relationships between

employers and employees and offers a practical classification. Nonstandard employment relationships include self-employment, contract work, temporary work, and involuntary part-time work by workers who would prefer to work full time, and typically involve weak or no attachments to employers. There is little or no regulation in these employment relationships, which are associated with lower quality jobs and greater risks for workers concentrated in the secondary labor market (Kalleberg 2009, 2011; Kalleberg et al. 2000).

Workers in these non-standard employment relationships are exempt from North Carolina E-Verify requirements, which are only mandated for “employees.” The current iteration of the legislation does not consider as “employees” farm workers, independent contractors, or private household domestic workers who work on an intermittent basis.⁵⁷ This also reflects federal hiring requirements, which mandate that employers verify employees’ authorization to work using I-9 forms. Under requirements enacted by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and amended by the Immigration Act of 1990 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996, these federal requirements for employment authorization also include exemptions for workers hired through labor contractors and domestic workers.⁵⁸

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<http://www.ncleg.net/Applications/BillLookUp/LoadBillDocument.aspx?SessionCode=2015&DocNum=1471&SeqNum=0>

⁵⁸ https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Verification/E-Verify/E-Verify_Native_Documents/E-Verify%20Manuals%20and%20Guides/M-274-Handbook-for-Employers.pdf

Table 5.1. Standard and non-standard employment at time of interview (n=48)

Total working	71% (34)	Jobs within category
“Standard” employees	35% (12)	
Authorized to work	33% (4)	<i>Janitorial, food service work, skilled office work</i>
Not authorized to work	67% (8)	<i>Factory work, retail sales, restaurant/food service work, hotel housekeeping, house cleaning (for cleaning company)</i>
Nonstandard employees	65% (22)	
Authorized to work	14% (3)	<i>House cleaning, landscaping, janitorial</i>
Not authorized to work	6% (19)	<i>House cleaning, janitorial, babysitting, multi-level marketing sales, agricultural, food service work, florist, construction</i>

Research on nonstandard employment relationships builds on dual labor market theory. As a reminder to the reader, dual labor market theory conceptualizes labor markets in two ideal types: the primary labor market, which consists of skilled, well-compensated, upwardly-mobile “good” jobs and the secondary labor market, comprised of low-skilled, low-wage “bad” jobs with no benefits, poor working conditions, and little regulation (Doeringer and Piore 1985; Gordon et al. 1982; Peck 1996). Scholars associate a growing divide between standard and nonstandard employment relationships with the increasing polarization or “dualism” of labor markets and job quality in the United States and other advanced industrial economies (Cappelli 1999; Hudson 2007; Kalleberg 2000, 2011; Kalleberg and Marsden 2015).

The concentration of immigrant workers in unregulated, “bad” jobs in the low-wage labor market is well documented (Catanzarite 2000; Chang 2016; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Raijman 2001; Valenzuela 2003). Increasingly, evidence points to the concentration of immigrants in non-standard employment specifically, and

implications for poor job quality and vulnerability in these arrangements (Flippen 2012; Hudson 2007; Kalleberg et al. 2000; Raijman 2001; Valenzuela 2003). Compared with other racial/ethnic groups, Latina/os, and particularly non-citizen Latinas, have the highest employment concentration in nonstandard jobs in the secondary labor market (Hudson 2007). In nonstandard employment arrangements, immigrants are exposed to higher levels of “bad” job characteristics, like low pay and no benefits, than native-born workers (Kalleberg et al. 2000). Among the undocumented, nonstandard employment has been associated with employment instability and lack of benefits, regardless of workers’ levels of human capital (Flippen 2012). Kenneth Hudson (2007:306) argues that the U.S. has experienced a “new labor market segmentation,” finding that “nonstandard work arrangements and citizenship now rival sex and race” in sorting workers into poor quality jobs. These studies explain poor job quality as an outcome of concentration in secondary labor markets.

In this chapter, I examine the legal and family conditions under which women entered nonstandard work arrangements, including self-employment, informal part-time “quasi-employment,” and subcontracted jobs. I also analyze the implications of different nonstandard work arrangements for perceived job quality. In doing so, I answer two guiding research questions: (1) Which labor market strategies do women use to cope with family demands and/or policies that inhibit them from standard employment relationships in the formal labor market? (2) What do these strategies suggest about women’s perceptions of job quality and opportunities for mobility in a restricted market?

In addition to considering how nonstandard work shapes job quality, I examine how job quality influences movement into nonstandard employment relationships, particularly in the case

of self-employment. Scholars of work and labor markets argue that job quality is best measured through both economic and non-economic benefits (Armenta and Gleeson Forthcoming; Clark 2005; Kalleberg 2011; Sengupta, Edwards, and Tsai 2009). Moreover, studies suggest that perceptions of job quality are influenced by gender and family characteristics—in some cases, undocumented Latina migrant mothers in the low-wage labor force value schedule flexibility over wages (Armenta and Gleeson Forthcoming; Gleeson 2016). I found that for mothers, schedule autonomy and/or predictability to balance work and family are highly salient for shaping positive perceptions of work. When mothers are unable to gain noneconomic benefits in standard employment relationships, they turn to nonstandard work as a *strategy of resistance* to achieve work-family balance and avoid exploitation. In other cases, however, nonstandard work, particularly, subcontracted arrangements, represented a *strategy of survival* for workers in a restricted market. These arrangements were associated with poor job quality.

In the next section, I provide context on the types and categories of nonstandard jobs women were engaged in. I continue by discussing the conditions under which nonstandard employment was a strategy of resistance for women and those in which it was a strategy of survival, discussing both positive and negative implications for job quality.

CLASSIFYING WOMEN'S NONSTANDARD JOBS

Out of 27 women who were currently or had recently been employed in non-standard work, nineteen (70 percent) had transitioned from standard to nonstandard work, while eight had only been employed in nonstandard arrangements since their arrival. Women's nonstandard jobs were typically in service industries, which, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, represent the fastest growing sector of employment in the U.S. labor market (Henderson 2015). In this

sector, most immigrant women with low levels of human capital and/or who lack legal status find jobs in domestic work (Chang 2016; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). This is particularly the case for women from Mexico and Central America (Hagan 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Repak 2010).

Middle-class American couples have long hired poor immigrant women and women of color to perform reproductive labor in their households (Diner 1983; Glenn 1992). By the end of the 20th century, as middle-class U.S. women, especially mothers, entered the paid labor force at higher rates, reproductive labor became even more commodified as dual-earner families increasingly hired women of color from the Global South to care for their children and clean their homes (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). As Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2002:4) explain, “The lifestyles of the First World are made possible by a global transfer of the services associated with a wife’s traditional role... from poor countries to rich ones.” Compared with other sectors, in-home workers like maids and nannies are disproportionately female and foreign-born (Shierholz 2013). Domestic service in the United States is largely unregulated (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001).

Survey data consistently demonstrate Latina immigrants’ concentration in domestic work in cleaning and childcare, restaurant work, and factory work. A 2013 survey of undocumented Latinas/os found that women were most highly concentrated in housekeeping (26%), childcare (19%), restaurant (16%) and factory work (15%) (Guillen-Woods 2013). My analysis of American Community Survey data, using five-year estimates 2011-2015, also shows that non-citizen Mexican and Central American women in the labor force were also most highly concentrated in cleaning occupations, working as maids, housekeeping cleaners, and janitors and

building cleaners (20.74 percent). Among those in cleaning occupations, about a third worked in services to buildings and dwellings, followed closely by private households (about 30 percent), and traveler accommodations (15.55 percent). Childcare workers were 3.38 percent of the sample. Women were also concentrated in restaurant and food service industries as chefs and cooks, food preparation workers, and waitresses (11.12 percent). Other common occupations include cashiers (4.52 percent), agricultural workers (4.17 percent) and childcare workers (3.38 percent), and packers and packagers (3.29 percent) (Ruggles et al. 2017). In North Carolina, Flippen's (2014:415) survey of Latinas in the Durham area found women most highly concentrated in cleaning (31.9 percent), food service (29.6 percent), and factory work (11.6 percent).

Following these patterns, the most common non-standard occupation among the Latina migrants in my sample was *limpieza de casas* (cleaning houses) either as self-employed or as an employee for another self-employed woman. In addition to *limpieza*, women were self-employed in other service work such as babysitting. Table 5.2 below shows that self-employment was the most common category of nonstandard employment, accounting for just under two-thirds of nonstandard workers.

Women also worked in hospitality, food service, and commercial cleaning industries, typically in subcontracted employment relationships. As Table 5.2 demonstrates, about two out of five women in nonstandard employment relationships were in subcontracted employment relationships. By classifying workers as subcontractors, rather than employees, employers are not held to the I-9 requirements of the Immigration Reform and Control Act or North Carolina E-Verify requirements, nor the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Subcontracted workers are ineligible for many FLSA protections including minimum wage, overtime,

unemployment or workers' compensation. Some employers purposefully "misclassify" workers under this status to avoid these regulations (Carré 2015; Gleeson 2016). I consider women who work in the formal economy for labor contractors, who serve as mediators between workers and employers—such as hotels and retail stores—to be in "formal" subcontracted relationships. Women's accounts revealed that these contractors included both native-born and foreign-born people, though I did not systematically collect information about them. I classify women who work in the informal economy for other self-employed housecleaners—who were always other Latina immigrants—to be "informally" subcontracted because it is a mediated employment relationship.

A few women worked part-time in their husbands' businesses, reflecting findings in the international migration literature on immigrant women's incorporation in family enterprises to sustain households (Chai 1987; Dallalgar 1994; Espiritu 2008; Light and Bonacich 1991; Min 1998; Valdez 2011), which, is often viewed as an "extension of women's domestic roles" (Brettell 2016:113). Others did in-home sales for multilevel marketing companies such as Avon or Tupperware, which is a culturally acceptable and increasingly common job for women in Mexico (Cahn 2008; Hagan et al. 2015) and which immigrant women in the U.S. view as an accessible mobility pathway (Armenta and Gleeson Forthcoming). Women were usually introduced to these multilevel marketing companies through other Latinas.

Frequently during interviews, self-employed women and those who worked part-time for another woman or in a family enterprise initially stated that they were not working. In their research on Mexican immigrants' informal self-employment, Marta Tienda and Rebecca Raijman (2000: 295) derived the category "quasi-employment" to refer to part-time, informal

work done by individuals—especially women—who, when questioned, did not initially identify as being employed:

... Individuals often misstate their labor force status in response to questions about employment status and respond differently if probed about sources of income. Thus, the "quasi-employed" includes individuals who initially report themselves as being out of the labor force (e.g., students, homemakers, retirees, unpaid family workers), but who, when queried about various ways they make money, admit to participating in market activities, either as employees or as self-employed.

This classification “acknowledges ambivalence” about labor force participation and the informality of employment relationships. The invisibility of women’s economic activity was also documented by Dallalgar (1994:554), who studied Iranian women entrepreneurs in Los Angeles and found that their participation in family businesses was “underestimated and underrecorded in official documents.” Quasi-employment represents the third category of non-standard employment in Table 5.2, accounting for just over a quarter of women in nonstandard employment.

Table 5.2. Nonstandard employment categories at time of interview
(n=22; Categories are not mutually exclusive⁵⁹)

Self-employed*	64% (14)
Sub-contracted**	41% (9)
“Quasi-employed”	27% (6)

**Includes working for husband/in family businesses*

***Includes working for formal labor contractors as well as informal work for other women*

Women’s accounts indicated that they concentrated in informal, nonstandard work as a response to both employment restrictions and family demands. In many ways, concentration in nonstandard employment represents a strategy of survival: these are often the only options available to women who are restricted from the formal labor market. Yet in several cases,

⁵⁹ For example, one woman cited both working for a subcontractor and self-employed house cleaning. Quasi-employed women spanned both categories.

women demonstrated some agency through their employment decisions as they resisted state restrictions and male authority.

STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE THROUGH SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND QUASI-EMPLOYMENT

In some cases, nonstandard work was associated not just with survival in a restricted market, but was a resistance strategy to achieve greater job quality and work-life balance. In fact, some women indicated that they preferred these arrangements to standard employment relationships. The most common pathways to resistance—that is, those employment arrangements that allowed women to best negotiate work and family as well as legal restrictions—were self-employment and quasi-employment. Migration scholars have long found that informal self-employment provides mobility pathways for immigrants who are blocked from standard employment relations because they lack legal status, have low levels of education and English, or face discrimination (Light 1973; Light and Gold 2000; Portes et al. 1989; Raijman 2001; Raijman and Tienda 2000). Informal self-employment can also serve as a secondary activity to supplement inadequate earnings from low-wage jobs (Raijman 2001). Beyond serving as “survival,” studies have found evidence for gains in autonomy, earnings, and occupational mobility among Latino immigrant men in unregulated jobs in industries like gardening and construction (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009; Valenzuela 2001).

Attention to the gendered dimension of self-employment and women’s informal self-employment, meanwhile, has been limited (Brettell 2016:112). Yet some case studies suggest that gender shapes type of self-employment as well as the reasons migrants enter into self-employment in the first place. Raijman’s (2001) study of informal entrepreneurship among Mexican immigrants in Chicago, for example, found that men’s and women’s self-employed occupations are distinct. Self-employed women tend to be concentrated in fewer occupations

than men, primarily personal domestic service and food and clothing sales—work that typically allows them to combine paid work with unpaid household activities. Amada Armenta and Shannon Gleeson (Forthcoming), using a study of undocumented Latina migrants in Philadelphia, found that migrant women used temporary, informal employment as a way to balance childcare responsibilities and negotiate husbands’ pressures for them to stay at home.

I found that pathways to self-employment reflected multiple considerations. In some cases, self-employment was a response to being blocked from or experiencing exploitation in standard employment relationships, which, in many ways, parallels the literature on men’s self-employment as a “survival strategy” when facing restricted markets (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009; Valenzuela 2001). In addition, self-employment and quasi-employment represent responses to work-family conflict, demonstrating how concentration in nonstandard employment is gendered. Through self-employment, women can exert agency over male authority and state restrictions on their employment.

Gaining schedule control and work-family balance through self-employment

Control over work schedules is an important indicator of job quality, particularly given the rise of dual-earner families in the contemporary labor market (Kalleberg 2011). Work schedules are sites of control contested by workers, family, and employers, and scheduling control represents an axis of stratification in labor markets. Higher-wage, skilled jobs confer more autonomy and flexibility in schedules, while workers in the low-wage labor market have little control to set their own schedules to balance work and family (Clawson and Gerstel 2014; Henly and Lambert 2014; Henly, Shaefer, and Waxman 2006; Presser 2005).

Because the women I interviewed typically had low levels of education (more than two-thirds had less than a high school diploma) and few were proficient in English, the formal sector

jobs available to them—notwithstanding legal obstacles—were low-autonomy jobs like hotel housekeeping, food service, and factory work. Women’s accounts demonstrate how, under these conditions, self-employment represented a strategy for seeking work-family balance and avoiding the work-family conflict that women faced across stages of motherhood, such as the challenge of finding affordable and reliable childcare and the pressure to “be there” for children.

Through self-employment, mothers gained control over their work schedules. This allowed mothers to organize work around their children’s schedules and avoid hiring childcare providers. Self-employed women were able to negotiate their working hours such that they could participate in school activities, be home with children after school, and help with homework—tasks they associate with being a good mother. Some women mentioned bringing their children to work with them when necessary, for example, when children were pre-school aged or during school vacations.

This finding was apparent in Matilde’s case. After marrying and having children in the United States, Matilde was cautious to balance work with motherhood. She left the labor force for a few years while her children were young, explaining that she did not trust childcare providers because she had a negative experience with a neighbor who had been caring for her son. Later, she went back to work, arranging gift baskets for a franchise business. She stayed in the job for three years, explaining that the wages were good, but the work was highly seasonal and the hours unstable. Matilde described herself as active in her community and in her children’s education. To her dismay, in this job, she was unable to get permission to attend meetings and events at her children’s school. Because the job was incompatible with her priorities as a mother, Matilde sought greater flexibility through self-employment as a house cleaner, explaining, “I aspired to do something better.”

According to Matilde, self-employed house cleaning was a better option for her to balance work and family. She explained: “The person soliciting your services never tells you, ‘I want you to come at certain hours.’ They always say, ‘What time can you come?’ ... So this job gives me the opportunity to make my own schedule.” Matilde told me she is usually able to finish her work and return home around 3:30 when her children arrive home from school. She takes them to karate class, helps them with homework, and talks to them about their day. She explained, “I have always thought that the parents that don’t dedicate time to their children—their children look for attention in the wrong people. In the people that... could get them into drugs, alcohol, delinquency, these things.”

Graciela provides another case of using self-employment to cope with work-family conflict. Graciela left the formal labor market when she quit her job at a daycare center. She liked the work, and her boss even paid for her to take classes at a community college to become licensed as a childcare provider.⁶⁰ However, Graciela explained she could not stay because, “I could never find a reliable person to care for [my daughter],” describing gross mistreatment from one provider. She could not afford to enroll her daughter at the center where she worked, saying “It’s just rich people that go there.” She told me, “So when I got pregnant with my second baby, that was then I thought, I said, ‘I’m not going to go through this again.’”

I said, ‘I am going to leave my job, I am going to dedicate myself to my family.’ The first thing I thought of was to sell food, so that I could work in my house. I was always thinking about what my mom did with us when we were small—that she had never left us, never sent us to a babysitter. She worked from home.

Drawing on the influence of her own mother during her childhood in Mexico, Graciela started making and selling food to members of her church. Next, she started babysitting and

⁶⁰ Graciela possessed a “Not Valid for Employment” Social Security card, which she obtained through her father, a legal permanent resident. Although she did not have legal permission to work, the card helped her get the daycare job.

cleaning houses for former clients at the daycare, which eventually evolved into a house-cleaning business. Now, Graciela sets her own hours:

I only work during the morning. After 2:00, I can't... I have to be at home. I have to make dinner for [my children], and wait for them to get home from school. And now I'm home all afternoon with them. Now nobody watches them for me. Just me. So, this has helped me, having this flexible job. Now, I don't work full time... I can't do it. If I had a full-time job, from 8 to 5 in the evening, I couldn't do it.

For some women, the benefits of schedule flexibility made self-employment worthwhile even when they had legal status. Cristina, for example, is a naturalized citizen and has been self-employed for several years, first as a nanny and later as a house cleaner. She had previously worked in a factory and fast food restaurant until she had children, which prompted her movement to nonstandard work. She explained:

What helped me a lot at the beginning is that I could bring my son [to work]. I didn't have to find someone to watch him for me, and he was always with me. Later he started to go to school, and my work schedule allows me to go pick him up. Drop him off and pick him up. So that is good. I think I'm fortunate in this respect because I see how moms suffer with their children because they start work earlier and leave work later. Who is going to wake them up, who is going to take them? But for me, yes, it has worked for me, this job, so I don't want to move [to another job].

From exploited to entrepreneur: Dignity and mobility through self-employment

Self-employment was also a strategy for avoiding exploitative employment relationships, to which low-income Latinas/os, particularly the undocumented, are susceptible. For Latina/o immigrants with low levels of human capital and/or who lack legal status, self-employment may be viewed as an opportunity to achieve job satisfaction and autonomy and avoid discrimination and mistreatment in the low-wage labor market (Valdez 2011). Even though employees,⁶¹ regardless of legal status, are protected by labor laws including the Fair Labor Standard Act,⁶²

⁶¹ Recall that subcontracted workers, however, do not receive FLSA protections.

⁶² <https://www.dol.gov/dol/fact-sheet/immigration/RetaliationBasedExerciseWorkplaceRightsUnlawful.htm>

the threat of deportation makes undocumented workers particularly vulnerable to employer abuses like wage theft, violations of safety and hours regulations, and sexual harassment and intimidation. A report by Ruth Milkman and colleagues found that among low-wage workers in Los Angeles, undocumented women had the highest rates (54%) of minimum wage violations (Milkman et al. 2010:44).

Undocumented workers often feel that reporting abuses puts them at risk, and employers exploit the knowledge that workers are unlikely to report violations to authorities (Armenta and Gleeson Forthcoming; Fussell 2011; Gleeson 2010, 2016; Milkman et al. 2010). Recent cases in North Carolina demonstrate that undocumented workers' fears of filing claims are not unfounded. In April 2017, six undocumented hotel housekeepers filed a claim against a Hilton in Charlotte after experiencing a decade of sexual assault, harassment, and intimidation from their boss, who threatened to report their unauthorized status if they complained (Gordon 2017). In Roxboro, an undocumented Mexican restaurant worker, Miriam Martinez Solais, filed wage theft charges against her employer. When she complained, the employer hired a private investigator to investigate her legal status. Martinez Solais was ultimately successful in the case—in 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor forced her employer to pay her \$70,000 in back wages and agree not to threaten or intimidate future employees (Locke 2016).

Many potential claims go unreported, however. A survey by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) found that more than 40 percent of low-income Latina/o workers in Southern states had experienced wage theft, yet 80 percent said they were unaware of how to report violations to enforcement agencies. Claims that are reported may be unresolved: when workers file claims, misunderstandings of bureaucratic processes, unclear legal procedures, and inability to provide evidence frequently prevent them from succeeding (Gleeson 2016). Even when

workers do not file claims, however, they may demonstrate agency by leaving jobs with hostile work environments—Armenta and Gleeson found this to be especially true among undocumented women (Armenta and Gleeson Forthcoming).

The women I interviewed recounted unjust treatment from employers that included intimidation on the job, racist treatment, denial of breaks, health and safety violations, and a few cases of wage theft. Those who experienced poor treatment from employers valued and aspired to the opportunity to become their “own boss.” Although the exploitation of domestic workers has been well documented (Chang 2016; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001), women self-employed in *limpieza* cleaned multiple houses and considered the people whose houses they cleaned to be “clients” rather than employers. In doing so, they avoid the uneven power relationships faced by domestic workers who provide childcare and cleaning services full-time for a single family—particularly live-in domestics who rely on employers for housing.⁶³ Live-in domestics’ work environments also inhibit access to social networks, which blocks occupational mobility and are associated with feeling isolated and depressed (Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Women in my sample who had multiple house-cleaning jobs, meanwhile, lived in their own homes and communities and felt some control in their employment relationships, despite being in an unregulated industry.

Esmeralda, who is undocumented, told me, “I have lived many experiences in jobs where they have treated me badly for not speaking English, or because the people are racist.” In particular, Esmeralda described mistreatment from a former U.S. boss who ran a house-cleaning business where she worked for four years. Her boss threatened to report Esmeralda and her coworkers to ICE: “‘You all are illegals, the day I want, I can send you to migration,’ she would

⁶³ While several women I interviewed had been live-in domestics in Mexico, only one had done so in the United States.

say, and it was terrible.” This mistreatment eventually influenced Esmeralda to find her “own houses” and become self-employed:

She wouldn’t let us [take a lunch break] and if she saw us—because she came to inspect the house—well if she found us eating, she would grab our food and throw it at us. She was really bad. And then I decided to leave her, and I said, “I’m going to find my own houses,” and that’s how I’m my own manager, my own boss.

For women whose undocumented status and low levels of human capital limit their options, self-employment often seemed the best way to avoid mistreatment by employers. After starting her own business making and selling Mexican food, Valeria returned to the formal sector to work in a chain diner for a time because she needed the extra income. She said that going back to standard employment was difficult because “I got used to working *por mi cuenta* (for myself).” She also described being the victim of wage theft by her employer:

I would work and there were times that they didn’t put down all your hours... Sometimes [people] don’t pay you what they should. They pay you—like you’re Hispanic. During the day, sometimes they would rob me one hour, and then you’re accumulating [missed hours] during 15 days, a lot of hours... I left.

Valeria returned to entrepreneurial work: she and her husband bought a food truck, and later, a floor-laying business. Valeria and her husband were likely especially cautious of exploitative employers: when they first arrived in North Carolina, they came under the auspices of a labor recruiter who contracted them to work as dishwashers in a restaurant. At the restaurant, they suffered hours abuses, wage theft, and Valeria was sexually harassed by her boss. She and her husband escaped, leaving nearly all their things behind in their employer-provided housing.

Beyond avoiding abuse, self-employment provided women with the pride of building a business. Matilde spoke proudly of the housecleaning business she had started and gave me her business card for “Matilde’s Cleaning,” a professionally printed, color card that promised “Best Quality Service” and listed Matilde as “Owner.” Women who worked as house-cleaners

frequently gave me these cards, often asking me to recommend them to friends and family to grow their client base. These women viewed self-employment as one of the few possibilities to create opportunity structures while being undocumented and facing state restrictions on formal sector employment. Matilde, for example, once took vocational courses in cosmetology, only to find out she was unable to apply for a license to work in the field because she was undocumented.

Finally, although I did not systematically collect data on wages, some women's accounts indicate that in addition to the noneconomic benefits of self-employment, self-employed house cleaning paid well. During interviews, some women explained they were compensated at a higher rate than in the low-wage jobs to which they would likely be relegated in standard employment in the formal sector. For example, when I asked Esmeralda about how she envisions her work options in the future, she told me:

I'm going to stay cleaning houses because I like it—it's not that I like it so much as that it pays well... If I work 3, 4 hours in a house [I earn] 100 dollars, and in a job, for example in a restaurant, they aren't going to pay you \$100 in four hours. You need to be there all day, and you're still not going to earn \$100.

Despite these benefits, self-employment, particularly cleaning houses *por su cuenta* (on one's own), was not a realistic strategy for all women: it required some level of financial capital, including a car to drive to clients' houses and some level of risk—particularly, the willingness to drive without a license if undocumented. Romina, for example, works part-time helping other women clean houses. She wants to start her own house-cleaning business, but said, “I don't have this opportunity,” because it would require driving without a license to find new clients and she “tries to drive as little as possible.”

Building up a repertoire of clients' houses took time and required some level of social networks. Having ties outside the immigrant community was valuable to develop a client base. Matilde got started through contacts she had from a local community organization. Graciela capitalized on relationships she had built with parents at the daycare where she worked. Not all women had these connections. For example, Camila, who works as a hotel housekeeper, told me she would prefer to clean houses to have a more flexible schedule: "I'm trying to find [houses] but I don't know where [to look]." Women who were self-employed house cleaners also tended to live in more densely populated, middle-class communities. Those in poorer, more isolated rural areas were less likely to consider cleaning houses an option, demonstrating the importance of local social contexts.

Further, the physical labor involved in the job made it unsustainable in the long term for some women. Graciela, for example, had recently applied for U.S. residency (her husband was a U.S. citizen) to expand her job options despite the relatively high wages she earned cleaning houses:

The moment will arrive when I need [legal status]. I tell my husband, "I'm not always going to work cleaning houses." I'd like to have a good job. A part-time, for example... In the [local university]... Cleaning houses, they pay me \$20 an hour. And I know I'm not going to find that pay in another place... But, I'd like to be in a place that's more *tranquilo* (calmer). This job requires a lot of effort. They're three hours of work, but they're really tough, you could say. It's vacuuming, it's cleaning, washing bathrooms, the kitchen. It's a job. It's ok. But it's a lot, the job. And in the future, I don't see myself like this. I want [to be] in another area. You understand? To advance in another area.

Matilde, who was in the process of gaining a work permit through a U visa, planned to remain in her cleaning business for the long-term. The U visa is available for crime victims and their spouses and dependent children. Matilde qualified through her husband, who was the victim of an assault. However, her goal was to formalize the business once she had legal status, then hire other women to do the cleaning while she handles the administrative part of the business.

Resisting husbands' objections through quasi-employment

In addition to feeling pressured to schedule work around children's needs, work-family conflict also arose when women's husbands opposed their work outside the home. Informal, part-time work can allow women to remain earning wages while fulfilling gendered expectations for care work and household labor, as Armenta and Gleeson (Forthcoming) found among undocumented women in Philadelphia who sold food and products through multi-level marketing companies like Mary Kay, Amway, and Herbalife. I found that in several cases, informal work done on a part-time basis served as a compromise that allowed women to subvert control from male partners to remain in the labor force and balance work and family, particularly under the conditions of being restricted from the formal labor market. However, I found that women often did not initially define their activities as "work."

Following Tienda and Raijman (2000), who found that Mexican migrant women they surveyed in Chicago tended to underreport their labor force participation, I classified women as "quasi-employed" when they did not initially identify as working but later revealed some paid work activity. I found that some women interpreted "work" as full-time employment or employment in the formal sector. Those who worked informally and fewer hours downplayed the significance of their paid work. Working alongside husbands in family businesses, occasional babysitting or house cleaning, and selling cosmetics or household goods through multilevel marketing companies was mentioned by women off-handedly, and many did not consider these activities sufficient to constitute a "job." For example, at the beginning of my interview with Valeria when I asked if she was working currently, she told me, "No, no I don't have a *trabajo así fijo* (a fixed job like that). It's like I'm not working. I'm, uh, I help my husband."

Valeria had worked consistently since she was 12 years old. However, she told me that her husband wanted her to stop working when their three children became adolescents, saying, “They are going to say that we don’t give them enough attention.” Valeria resisted this demand by working part-time laying floors for her husband’s construction business:

Well, I’ve always liked to work. I, since—I’m talking about my whole life, I have always worked. I always worked. My mother instilled this in us. So with time, my husband told me he didn’t want me to work anymore, and I started getting depressed... No, well, I’m very much one who makes my own decisions, you know? So I started to go [to work] with him. I didn’t ask him. I went.

Although Valeria values her identity as a worker, she is careful to negotiate employment with her responsibilities as a mother, which she is able to do in this informal, part-time job. She explained how she achieves this balance: “When [my children] need things at school, I stay [home from work]. I know I don’t have to go. And, like right now, I have to pick them up at 1:00, so that’s why I stayed home. Things they ask me for, here I am.” Women like Valeria did not consider the reproductive labor they did in their own households as “work.” They internalized the social construction of work as something that is done for pay and hence devalued their own care work (Daniels 1987).

Similarly, I was confused when Teresa, another interviewee, told me she wasn’t working at the beginning of our interview. Just a few days before, I waited for Teresa outside her home for 45 minutes during our scheduled interview time until she called me to reschedule, saying she got stuck at work. Yet during our interview, when I asked if she was working currently, she responded, to my bewilderment, “No. Only my husband works.” Perhaps my confusion was visible: she then added, “I just go to help—a woman, to clean a house.” Later in the interview, Teresa revealed that she works two or three days per week, about 16 hours per week.

Teresa had lost her full-time job working in a fast food restaurant when her employer discovered a discrepancy with the Social Security number she provided. In addition to legal restrictions, Teresa's husband forbade her to work full time until her youngest daughter entered pre-school because he does not trust childcare providers. Teresa found ways around both the legal restrictions and her husband's objections to her work by finding this informal, part-time arrangement with a friend—her husband “allows” her to leave her daughter with a babysitter on an infrequent basis.

In addition to the house-cleaning job, Teresa also told me she sold Tupperware, although her husband “didn't like the idea” of her going to other peoples' homes, where “sometimes there are men who lack respect.” Teresa convinced him that she could hold her Tupperware events (known as *fiestas*/parties) in her own home or the house of a friend, that only women were involved with Tupperware, and that she could bring her young daughter along.

These examples suggest that informal quasi-employment is used by women not only to better balance work and family and avoid employment restrictions in the formal labor market but also as a cautious subversion of patriarchal control (all but one of the “quasi-employed” women were married). By reconstructing work as something done on an occasional basis and as “helping” someone else, women are deferring to the demands placed on them as mothers, but also demonstrating a subtle resistance to men's authority. These accounts illustrate immigrant women's resilience in the face of both restrictive employment policies and male authority. They also corroborate Tienda and Raijman's (2000) suggestion that surveys measuring women's labor force participation may underestimate women's work. More meaningful measures of women's labor force participation should account for informal and quasi-employment.

Yet women in these circumstances were unable to pursue the full-time labor force participation they sometimes desired. Interviewees' accounts indicate that when they pushed the issue with their husbands, husbands pushed back, telling wives that they worked so that they didn't have to, and in doing so, claimed men's proper roles as providers and authority figures. They couched these decisions surrounding issues related to childcare, which they framed as women's proper role. For example, Itzel, who babysits and sells Avon, said:

I feel like if I worked in another job it could be that we would be better off. But he tells me, "You're going to work for only so much money, and you'll have to find someone to care for the children." He says, "I'll work Saturdays if you want... I'll earn in 2 days [what you earn] working in one week."

Strategies of Resistance and Implications for Mobility

Within "strategies of resistance," women's accounts suggest that self-employment is the most realistic pathway to mobility in a restricted market when considering subjective measures of job satisfaction. I argue that for women who have the social and financial capital to form small, informal businesses in niches like cleaning houses, there are greater opportunities for achieving job satisfaction, work-family balance, and autonomy than exist in standard employment in the formal sector.

Work scholars have demonstrated that in the contemporary labor market, there is a "new social contract" for workers, who can no longer rely on career ladders and stable employment from a single employer during their careers—instead, they must chart their own career pathways by changing employers (Cappelli 1999; Osterman et al. 2002). Although this literature typically refers to white-collar employment in the primary labor market, scholars have demonstrated similar pathways to mobility in the secondary labor market. Jacqueline Hagan and colleagues (Hagan et al. 2015; Hagan et al. 2011), for example, identified the strategy of "job jumping"

among construction workers. As these workers gained relevant job skills, they were able to gain occupational mobility by moving into better jobs.

Some women in my sample also shared past strategies of job jumping in the secondary labor market in industries like restaurant work, but found them increasingly constrained by E-Verify. Sandra, for example, started out in the United States with no labor force experience. After working in a Mexican restaurant, she heard about a better-paying job in a café preparing catering orders. As she developed her work skills and English proficiency, she was promoted to managing all catering orders, a job in which she found satisfaction because she felt appreciated by her superiors: “I really liked working there. The man who was my general manager told me I was his gold star. And I liked it. I liked to feel that they appreciated me.” She lost the job, however, when the franchise was sold to a new owner who “fired everyone without papers.” Sandra was able to transfer her skills to get a managerial job at a fast food restaurant that did not check her documents, but considers this a step down, describing how she feels she is treated poorly and “always gets the blame” when things go wrong. When I asked if she tried looking for other jobs, however, Sandra told me, “No, because now wherever you go, they always ask for *seguro*, and they check it [make sure it is valid].”

By contrast, women who were self-employed avoided these constraints and had some opportunity to achieve job satisfaction, gain schedule control for work-family balance, and to grow a business. Laura, for example, gained experience working in restaurants and eventually opened a bakery together with her husband. She told me that too many women use undocumented status as “an excuse” not to succeed, and served as a motivational speaker for a conference for Latina women that I attended. While Laura’s statement ignores the very real

structural barriers to mobility for undocumented workers, her case does suggest that workers can resist these structures by creating their own mobility pathways.

STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL THROUGH SUBCONTRACTED WORK

Concentration in nonstandard work, however, was not always indicative of women's empowerment. For other women, nonstandard work represented a strategy of survival when they were blocked from remaining in the formal labor force rather than a preferred strategy for work-family balance, avoiding exploitation, or creating one's own opportunity structures. This was most frequently the case for women who concentrated in subcontracted employment relationships. However, in a few cases, self-employment was also a survival strategy, particularly among women who worked as childcare providers. Workers in these arrangements associated their nonstandard work with negative aspects of job quality and their employment relationships suggested little room for mobility.

Martina's experience depicts a trajectory of nonstandard work as a strategy of survival, and with it, highlights multiple aspects of poor job quality. Martina is an undocumented, single mother of four who migrated from Mexico in 2001. Her account demonstrates the conditions under which women are pushed from formal sector work into informal, nonstandard employment and the precarity present in these arrangements. Martina spent several years working in restaurants, first washing dishes, and later as a cook. She told me, "I love working in a restaurant." Martina particularly enjoyed her last job, explaining that it was reliable, she had a considerate boss who let her take time off to attend her children's appointments, and that she even received paid vacation. Martina lost her job when the restaurant changed management in 2009 and fired all employees without valid Social Security numbers. She told me that since that

time, it has become very difficult to find standard, formal-sector employment: “Wherever we go right now, we look at the application that they have and they have E-Verify. So now, we might as well not even fill out the application.”

After Martina lost her job, the only work she was able to find was cleaning houses for another woman. She told me this work was inconsistent and believes she was paid unfairly. While cleaning houses, her employer earned \$150 per house, out of which she was paid \$20 or \$30 for three to four hours of work, indicating the inequality that can exist between women who clean houses *por su cuenta* and the women who work for them. Martina explained, “There are people who are taking advantage of one, because one doesn’t have papers so they pay you very little. They are paid well and you have to do the majority of the work, and they pay you very little.” After a year, Martina said there was no longer enough work in this job: “Because they only want you when they need it. If not, they do it alone and they earn more.”

Here, Martina’s experience reflects a pattern of coethnic exploitation documented in the international migration literature. These studies have found that in low-wage labor markets, established migrants take advantage of newer arrivals (Cranford 2005; Hagan et al. 2015; Mahler 1995; Repak 2010; Rosales 2014). Martina’s case suggests that exploitation that exists not only on the basis of U.S. experience—she had already worked in the United States for several years and in multiple jobs. Rather, her example demonstrates the inequality between migrants with unequal legal status and how this inequality can be exacerbated by employment verification programs.

After losing her house-cleaning job, Martina turned to informal entrepreneurial work, selling jewelry she made door-to-door to people she knew:

... I have the *alma de negociante* (soul of a businessperson)... And I started to sell earrings and necklaces... What I needed was money. And when I need money and I have an

emergency, I say, “However [I can earn].” As long as it’s money that’s earned well, however I can do it. I started to sell earrings... At people’s houses, places where I know a lot of people.

Martina told me she did this for about two years, saying she “did well,” until she was thwarted, again, by her undocumented status—this time, by driving restrictions, which rendered her unable to renew her driver’s license.

Wherever you go, they put *retenes* (checkpoints) to check licenses... One time, in just one week they gave me two tickets, they stopped me twice in just one week. One on Wednesday and the other on Sunday, and then I got discouraged... That time I paid like \$600, with the lawyer and the tickets, I think [are] \$240... Then I had to stop selling my things. And now I’m working in cleaning.

Martina’s current part-time job, cleaning department stores, is a subcontracted work arrangement. She viewed this employment relationship as an exploitative one:

I know that the store pays him too, so he pays me—it’s exploitation (laughs). Sometimes I say—I laugh, and I say, “*Dios mio, cómo es posible, que—somos los esclavos modernos.*” (“My God, how is it possible that—we are the modern slaves.”) They take, at least 30-50% of what the store pays and they pay us... and with this [system] it has had its flaws because the man sometimes gives us the check and it doesn’t have funds. And we’re calling, “Hey, your check doesn’t have funds.”

Martina would like to study cosmetology and work doing hair and nails but said the education is not worth pursuing because no one will hire her without legal status. Her narrative demonstrates the multiple forms of precarity associated with nonstandard work arrangements. Nonstandard work—especially subcontracted work, but also “survival entrepreneurship”—was associated with unpredictable work schedules and lack of voice in employment relationships.

Alondra provides another example of nonstandard work as survival. Unlike women who transitioned from standard to nonstandard work, nonstandard work has always been Alondra’s strategy for maintaining employment to support her family. Alondra works as a subcontracted banquet server at a luxury hotel. She is a mother of five children, including one with special needs. She told me that since she and her husband arrived in 2004 they have never attempted to

purchase invalid documents to find standard work because they fear legal repercussions. She explained how she entered subcontracted work in the face of being blocked from the formal sector:

[A neighbor] knew that I had arrived from Mexico and that I had a sick child, and that I needed to work. And she told me, “You want to work?” And I, “Yes.” And she took me where a man was who contracted people. He told me yes, that I could start working... [I work] at the Jersey Inn... they give me my schedule and he [the contractor] pays me. That is, I’m a contractor of his—he contracts me. Because to work there [directly for the Inn], you need documents.

Alondra works special events like weddings, and her hours are often long and unpredictable. Because she is subcontracted, she feels little control over this schedule and does not receive overtime. Alondra said her schedule is seasonal and “always changes”:

They tell me, “We’re going to give you your schedule and you have to be available for us for those 5 or 6 days.”... It’s *pesado*... Sometimes, since there are weddings on Saturdays and we have to work the wedding and after, well sometimes we finish at 12, at 1 [a.m.] and then the next day they have their breakfast and we have to go back to work the breakfast. Sometimes we work 18 hours.

Alondra was aware of stark differences in the conditions of work between workers like her and those who are employed directly by the luxury hotel where she works. She believes her situation would be better if she worked for the hotel and not a *contratista*:

I would work less and I would be less tired, because, well, I know people who [are permanent employees] and they work in the morning and they earn more than I do working all day, they earn better. They earn overtime, they have insurance; they have benefits, paid vacation.

Other women lamented that they couldn’t count on their nonstandard work arrangements to provide sufficient hours. I consider Agustina, who provides informal childcare in her home in a majority Latina/o trailer park to be a survival entrepreneur because she turned to self-employment only in the face of being blocked from the formal labor market, where she would prefer to work. Agustina, 54, is divorced and her children are adults—work-family balance does

not provide a motivation for her self-employment. She explained, “It’s better that I don’t even look [for work] because, well, you have to go with a good Social Security number, well... so then why should I go, right? It’s better that I stay here with the children that I take care of.” She said that if she did have a Social Security number, she would try to find a more stable job: “It’s not the same as to have something where, sometimes they come, sometimes they don’t come. Something secure. In a job where you know that every weekend, or every two weeks, you’ll have a check. And this [what I do now] is not secure.”

VULNERABILITY IN NONSTANDARD WORK

While subcontracted workers and survival entrepreneurs tended to experience the lowest levels of job quality, some forms of worker vulnerability were present in all types of nonstandard work, including self-employment. Women across these categories experienced moments of powerlessness with either employers or clients, including those who were self-employed.

Esmeralda’s account demonstrated how, even as “her own boss,” she remains vulnerable to her clients. While leading an English conversation class with a group of Latina mothers, I encouraged them to document situations during the week where they wished they knew how to say something in English. Esmeralda, who was in the class, asked me in Spanish how to tell her client that she forgot to pay her last week. Subsequently, Esmeralda asked me to meet her one-on-one to help her with English. During our meeting, she told me that some clients “forget” to give her a check and wanted me to help her practice asking for payment in English. During that session, I wrote, “I think you forgot to give me a check last week” in her notebook and practiced repeating the phrase with her. Esmeralda did not indicate that she was experiencing wage theft—clients eventually paid her—but that week-to-week, her wages could be unreliable. Although

self-employment reaps benefits like more control over scheduling, there remains a sense of vulnerability in these employment relationships because they are unregulated.

All nonstandard workers bear risks in unregulated employment relationships. During a focus group, Renata, who worked cleaning houses on an occasional basis together with her friend, also shared an anecdote that demonstrates how client relationships can be fickle. She told the group, with her friend confirming, that a client once complained because there were hairs in her bathroom after they cleaned it. Renata responded by explaining that this happened because the client left her pets loose in the house while the floor was wet.

And she says, “Oh, be more careful next time.” I tell her “Yes, OK.” So then we were going to go [back] the next Monday... She just sent us a message, Sunday night... telling me, “Thank you very much, I don’t need you to clean my house anymore.” ... However you look at it, we’re killing ourselves cleaning everything perfectly, *y la señora no le parece* (and the woman doesn’t like it).

Self-employed women who had clients with whom they maintained good relationships were also subject to losing them when they moved away.

Nonstandard workers also typically lacked health insurance that would cover them in the event they were injured on the job. Women in the focus group I conducted with a local workers’ center said that they had not reported on-the-job injuries, including Renata, who had fallen while cleaning a house. She did not report the injury to her client, but said she could not work for a week because she was unable to walk. Jazmin, an organizer at the workers’ center with whom I co-led the focus group asked the women, “Do you think that it is part of the job to get hurt?” Women responded, “Well yes, I’d say so,” and “Me too.” These health and injury risks also extended to other forms of employment, including in the formal sector. Esperanza, another participant, explained that she frequently was burned working in the kitchen of a fast food

restaurant, but that “If one doesn’t even have insurance, why am I going to report it? ... If they call 911, then you get the bill. And you [still] have to work.”

Beyond consequences related to insecurity and exploitation, women who worked “under the table” also expressed concern over their inability to build credit and pay taxes to achieve goals like homeownership, entrepreneurship, and legal status. For example, I asked “quasi-employed” Teresa if she had considered applying for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA). DAPA was an executive action initiated by President Obama in 2014, which would have provided the parents of American citizens with work permits and a reprieve from the risk of deportation.⁶⁴ Teresa is the parent of an American citizen, and, based on the information she provided me in our interview, would likely have qualified. Teresa had heard about DAPA, but told me that she assumed deferred action was out of reach because she and her husband worked under the table:

I don’t know anything. I haven’t even asked... I tell my husband, I don’t think we would even qualify [for DAPA] because, well, what they ask for is that you are paying taxes consistently, and right now, we haven’t paid taxes since, um, 2011, 2010, since then we haven’t paid taxes. Because since then, I haven’t worked in [the fast food restaurant], he entered in this company where they don’t pay him with a check, and he can’t pay taxes. And so I say, well, we’re not going to qualify for this program... I think this is why we haven’t made the effort to ask.

In fact, DAPA eligibility did not hinge on having paid taxes.⁶⁵

Abril’s case provides another example of the perceived disadvantage of working under the table. A mother of two, Abril received a work permit through a U visa for crime victims about a year prior to our interview—she qualified after being the victim of an armed robbery.

⁶⁴ DAPA never materialized. Several states objected to the executive action. It was held up in courts, ultimately receiving a Supreme Court 4-4 “indecision” with a tie vote resulting from Congress’s refusal to confirm nominee Merrick Garland for the vacant seat, which happened toward the end of my data collection period. I interviewed Teresa in May 2016, before the Supreme Court’s tied vote upheld the lower court’s decision.

⁶⁵ Formal employment records would help prove continuous residence (a requirement of the program), but Teresa likely could have secured other documents to prove this like children’s school records, health records, or utility bills.

She told me she would be able to apply for permanent residency in two and a half years. To prove her continuous residence during the waiting period, her lawyer's office advised her to save documentation, such as paychecks, to prove that she has not left the country during the two-and-a-half year waiting period.

Although Abril had been in the United States without leaving for 21 years, she was worried about her ability to prove her residency over this period. Before we started our interview, she asked if I would write a letter attesting to her presence in the country on that day. Abril's concern stemmed from not having a standard employment relationship—at the time of our interview, she was working informally for her husband, who owns a cleaning franchise. Although she had a work permit, she had recently left a formal-sector job working in a restaurant because her schedule was incompatible with her family responsibilities:

Because I wasn't seeing my daughters, because with them in school and me working... and when I came home, they weren't there, they were in school... and it was chaos... Now I have two months working for my husband. And the only thing is that I don't know if, if a check that he writes me by hand, is going to work.

Abril was trying to find a formal job to maintain a record of employment. Prior to our interview, I helped Abril fill out a job application for a cleaning business, but the job didn't work out because the employer wanted her to work the second shift, from 3:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., during which time she said she needed to be home with her husband and daughters.

As a mother, Abril felt a higher burden to be present for her children. She gave me an example of a weekend when, while she was working at the restaurant, one of her daughters was hurt by an errant piñata stick at a party. Abril felt guilty about not being there with her daughter: "I felt, I feel sad, because, well, 'Where is Mom?,' especially. Also the dad. But I feel like dads are a little less careful. Like mothers, we are—we want to be there for everything."

There are currently few pathways to legal status for undocumented workers with low levels of human capital. Yet women's accounts suggest areas of concern for the possibility of proving residency in the event that future immigration reform passes. This reinforces the importance of previous findings that the gendered nature of institutions like work and family shape women's ability to benefit from seemingly gender-neutral policies—for example, Hagan (1998) found that women's concentration in informal employment with more limited social networks placed them at a disadvantage for qualifying for legalization under IRCA.

CONCLUSION

Latina immigrants without authorization in the low-wage labor market face multiple employment constraints. Legal restrictions, particularly the expansion of E-Verify, increasingly inhibit options to work in the formal labor market. Like other women, the working mothers in my sample also faced family demands and the gendered expectations of mothers and wives as primary providers of reproductive labor. Further, in some cases, job options were impacted by economic recession and restructuring that led to the closure of manufacturing and food processing plants in local communities. Plant closures were commonly discussed among women from Alamance County, which historically has been home to a strong manufacturing base. All four interviewees from Chatham County recounted the closure of local factories, particularly in the poultry processing industry. Those from Orange and Durham counties also mentioned factory closures. The loss of manufacturing jobs since the late 20th century due to automation and outsourcing has been a disruptive force for many workers in the U.S. labor force. For undocumented workers who face increasing restrictions on their work, these disruptions have dire consequences.

Women's concentration in nonstandard employment relationships, including self-employment, working informally for others, and subcontracted arrangements represented strategies to cope with these labor market barriers. In some cases, women's decisions to work informally can be framed as strategies of resistance, through which they demonstrate agency over restrictive policies, exploitative employers, and male authority. Self-employment, in particular, allowed women to be their own bosses and set their own schedules, which allowed them to achieve greater work-family balance—an important component of job quality. These findings defy the common assumption that immigrant women's domestic work in the secondary labor market is inherently exploitative. In some cases, self-employment was a way to subvert exploitation and create mobility pathways that were no longer available in the formal labor market. Assuming immigrant women are victims in these employment circumstances denies their resiliency amid restrictive conditions.

In other cases, nonstandard employment represents a strategy of survival: a way to remain working, but a response to having few or no other options in a restricted labor market. Subcontracted employment relationships were particularly precarious: workers in these arrangements were highly dependent on a labor contractor in unregulated and sometimes exploitative arrangements. They did not have the scheduling control that self-employed women gained, nor did they earn fringe benefits, even when non-contracted colleagues in the same jobs did, as in Alondra's case. Some vulnerability was also present in self-employment. Agustina's example as an informal child care provider, for example, shows how she turned to self-employment not as a path to upward mobility, but because she felt she had no other option in a restricted market. Accounts like hers suggest that women's autonomy in informal self-employment should be interpreted with caution.

Some negative aspects of job quality and risks were pervasive across these nonstandard employment relationships, even in resistance strategies, because of their unregulated nature. Inherent in nonstandard relationships was inequality in the risk shared between workers and their employers or clients. Further, workers lacked formal employment status and documentation necessary to build credit and the potential to prove work and/or residency for legal status. In addition, while most women I interviewed did not have health insurance, nonstandard employees were especially unlikely to have coverage, making them vulnerable to health hazards that could arise in physically demanding jobs like cleaning, as in Renata's case.

Together, these findings demonstrate the harmful impacts of states' use of the E-Verify program, which seeks to limit employment to only those with legal authorization. Currently, nine states—primarily in the south—require E-Verify for all or most private employers (Smith 2017).⁶⁶ However, in the current political climate it may become mandated at the national level. Recently, Republican Congressional Representatives, with support from the Trump administration, introduced legislation to expand E-Verify nationwide. The Legal Workforce Act of 2017 would require all employers with one or more employees to use E-Verify within 24 months of the bill's enactment.⁶⁷ Mandatory, nationwide E-Verify has also been considered as part of a compromise to address protections for DACA recipients (Kim 2017). Women's accounts demonstrate that E-Verify will likely not prevent them from working, as intended. In fact, women demonstrate resilience in the labor market, despite growing constraints. In a system often stacked against them, they find ways to "make it work" and earn wages. Expansion of E-Verify, instead, would likely lead to more workers moving to nonstandard employment

⁶⁶ States include Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Utah.

⁶⁷ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3711>

relationships in the informal labor market, where they are exposed to greater risks and vulnerability, contributing to the marginalization of women in an already low-wage, low-skill labor market.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

I, as an activist, can tell you that it is very difficult to go to a community and tell someone, “You have rights. You have rights to health, you have the right to housing, you have the right to an education. This is the most basic.”... Because we have that stigma to be in a country illegally. You don’t have the right to anything. And later, you have the other stigma that in your country, they didn’t pay attention to you—that’s why you emigrated. You understand? There aren’t opportunities. Here, they’re going to pay attention to you much less, because you weren’t born here.
- Lizbeth

Applying for a job, paying income taxes, and driving one’s children to school are routine activities that most people in the United States take for granted. However, for migrants in the United States, federal and state governments set the conditions under which they are able to work, go to school, raise families, and make plans for the future. When they implement restrictive policies, essential activities like working and driving become illegal activities. As Lizbeth, an undocumented single mother, points out in the quote above, the stigma of illegality seeps beyond the boundaries of specific policies. In many cases, those without legal status believe they have few protected rights in the communities where they have spent several years working and raising families.

Lizbeth was keenly aware of the disadvantages she faced. Having studied two years at a university in Mexico and nearly completing U.S. vocational training in a marketable trade (construction management), learning some English, and gaining years of experience in skilled occupations—most recently, as a community organizer and interpreter—she was one of the few participants in this study with relatively high levels of human capital. Nevertheless, Lizbeth had recently become unemployed at the time of our interview because of her legal status. Reflecting

on her 19 years in North Carolina, she told me that conditions for migrants “have gotten worse and worse and worse and worse.” Yet Lizbeth was determined to stay in the United States.

Reflecting on her decision to migrate from Mexico—at the time, a single mother, worker, and university student—Lizbeth expressed regret at not having tried harder to make things work in her country of origin. Now that she has built a life in North Carolina, she said, “For me to leave here is to repeat, once again, the same history.” At the time of our interview, she was planning to start a small business in one of her areas of expertise, interpreting or construction. An activist—we met at a somber rally the week of the Supreme Court’s indecision on DAPA—she was also determined to continue advocating for equitable policies and serving as a resource for other migrants. Lizbeth is one of the thousands of women in North Carolina who have embedded themselves in communities across the state, seeking to create better lives for themselves and their children in spite of obstructive policies that seek to prevent their membership. In the previous four chapters, I uncovered the restrictive conditions under which these women live and work in North Carolina, as well as their resilience in work, migration, and family experiences. In doing so, I demonstrate the gendered process of immigrant incorporation in an era of restriction.

These findings reflect the continuation and growth of restrictive policies over the past three decades that have sought to inhibit immigrants’ employment and presence in the United States. Stemming from federal restrictions and sanctions against the employment of unauthorized workers in 1986 under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (Bacon 2008; Chomsky 2014; Donato et al. 2008; Durand et al. 1999; Hagan 1998; Massey and Bartley 2005), immigrants’ employment and broader access to membership in communities has become increasingly constrained not only through federal legislation but also state and local policies (Armenta 2017;

Lacy and Odem 2009; Motomura 2014, 2008; Newman et al. 2012; Nguyen and Gill 2016; Winders 2007).

My findings make three contributions to literatures on gender and migration, immigrant labor force incorporation, and work-family conflict. First, I demonstrate the social importance of work for migrant women in the low-wage labor market and trace the development of worker identities to labor force participation early in the life course. Second, I contribute to theories of intersectionality, which identify how categories of social difference, typically race, class, and gender, form an interrelated system of inequality. Specifically, my findings build on intersectionality to highlight the conditions under which being undocumented and foreign-born exacerbate work-family conflict for women in the low-wage labor market as they experience family-related life course transitions. I found that policy restrictions, combined with work-family conflict, create employment instability and vulnerability. However, my third set of findings demonstrates the conditions under which women exert agency amid labor market restrictions and create mobility pathways in the informal market when formal pathways are blocked.

In Chapter 2, I drew and expanded on immigrant incorporation theory and “contexts of reception” literature (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2014) to identify the overlapping economic, political, and social factors shaping immigrant reception in new destination areas. By focusing on the case of North Carolina, specifically, I argue that political theories of immigrant incorporation, beyond focusing on federal policies, must take into account the growing role of states and localities in shaping the conditions of immigrant labor force incorporation and settlement. I also add to literature on immigrant incorporation by highlighting the ways economic, political, and social contexts are gendered.

For example, economic restructuring and labor demand in Southern states like North Carolina drew Latina/o migrants seeking work opportunities. This demand created a receptive labor market for migrant arrivals who found opportunities to earn wages in the low-wage labor market, often in gendered niches. For women, opportunities existed in manufacturing, service jobs in retail, hospitality, food service, and in domestic work in private households. However, the development of restrictive employment policies—first at the federal and then at the state level—have made it increasingly difficult for workers without authorization to gain jobs in the formal labor market. Enforcement mechanisms targeting the undocumented have also been expanding in states through programs like 287(g) and Secure Communities, which intertwine the role of local law enforcement with federal immigration enforcement. These programs tend to target men for deportation, resulting in family separation and the loss of a co-parent and earner for women and children (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Hagan, Castro, and Rodriguez 2010). Meanwhile, women, who are most likely to access services for their families, tend to experience social and political hostility in their interactions with bureaucrats and service providers when seeking public benefits, medical services, and social services (Chavez 2013; Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008). Such public bureaucracies, including schools, social welfare agencies, health care services, law enforcement, and court systems, play central roles in the incorporation of Latina/o migrants in destination communities (Jones-Correa 2008; López-Sanders 2017; Marrow 2009, 2011).

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated the utility of a life course perspective for analyzing migrant women's labor force trajectories. Women's accounts revealed how worker identities were frequently formed through early labor force participation in countries of origin. For them, going to work represented a significant turning point in their transition to adulthood prior to other life

course transitions of family formation and U.S. migration. In some cases, the transition to work included internal migration to other cities. These pre-migration work experiences developed women's senses of self-reliance and independence and socialized them to make personal sacrifices, including family separation, to help their families "get ahead." Women sometimes used these early work experiences—often in low-paid, difficult jobs—as a frame of reference for their U.S. jobs, which they deemed "easier" by comparison. The process of U.S. migration, which was highly associated with labor force participation, reinforced worker identities and the value of self-sacrifice.

I also contributed to theories of migration by considering the conditions under which women made migration decisions. Extant theories tend to focus on economic explanations of migration. Some of these theories, such as the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), recognize that migration decisions occur at the household level (Stark 1993; Stark and Bloom 1985). However, they fail to consider how gender socialization shapes hierarchies of power in households. Women's accounts demonstrate that we must consider how migration decisions—whether for labor migration or family reunification—are made in gendered household contexts. For example, many women discussed overcoming their own and others' expectations that U.S. migration was more appropriate for men than women. In cases of labor migration, women contested gendered socialization and norms by renegotiating expectations of their roles as daughters, mothers, and wives to include family economic support. Here, the role of life course stages was also apparent. Prior to marriage, these expectations were specific to women's status as unmarried daughters, subject to their parents' authority. Upon the transition to marriage and/or motherhood, women's migration was no longer subject to their parents' authority and they generally had more agency to migrate. This was especially the case for single mothers. On the

other hand, as wives, women sometimes had to negotiate migration decisions with husbands. In cases of migration for family reunification, specifically, some women demonstrated agency in their decisions to migrate by rejecting the role of “left-behind wife” to join their husbands.

In addition to demonstrating women’s claims to agency in the migration process, these findings suggest more broadly how migrant family arrangements are changing. In fact, in some cases, men also indicated a preference for family settlement versus absentee marriage and fatherhood. Both sets of cases indicate how wives and husbands claim their right to settle together in the United States as circular migration becomes difficult or impossible amid militarized borders (Massey et al. 2002). These findings suggest how border enforcement reconfigures migrant family arrangements—even when men migrate first, women often choose to join them and raise children in the United States.

I traced the development of women’s labor force trajectories in the United States in Chapter 4, identifying how they were shaped by both changes in family structure and changes in policy over time. I found that work-family conflict was exacerbated by intersectional inequality—specifically, the conditions of being female, foreign-born, poor, and undocumented in the low-wage labor market. Through this approach, I uncovered the reasons why Mexican women tend to have depressed rates of labor force participation and experience employment instability. Most women arrived under conditions of relatively welcoming labor markets. Over time, however, labor markets become more exclusionary through the implementation and expansion of programs like SSA No-Match Letters and E-Verify, which criminalized work for the undocumented.

At the same time women faced employment restrictions, they were forming families and experiencing family-related constraints across stages of motherhood. These findings demonstrate

how life-course events shape women's labor force participation. In some cases, work-family conflict began during pregnancy, when the *pesado* jobs available to undocumented women with low levels of human capital posed perceived and real physical harm. Once children were born, and especially until they entered school, women frequently struggled to find trustworthy and affordable childcare. The very low wages paid to their co-ethnic childcare providers suggest networks of exploitation of other migrants, a pattern frequently found in migrant communities (Cranford 2005; Li 2017; Mahler 1995; Rosales 2014).

While women valued labor force participation and derived a sense of pride in working, they were cautious to balance work with the qualities they associated with good mothering, such as “being there” for children even when direct care was no longer necessary as children became adolescents. These family demands led to churn, or inconsistency, in labor force participation and jobs, during a period when it has become increasingly difficult to re-enter the labor market or get hired in a new job. The push of labor market restrictions and the pull of family sometimes resulted in women's withdrawal from the labor market, which conflicted with their worker identities and had detrimental social and psychological consequences.

These findings demonstrate that cross-sectional measures of labor force participation at one point in time provide little explanation of the conditions shaping women's work. It is more useful to consider how both individual and structural changes shape women's labor force participation over time. This approach is useful for uncovering the factors shaping undocumented women's relatively low aggregate rates of labor force participation, which lag behind those of authorized immigrant women and undocumented men (Pew Research Center 2015).

As circular migration slows and more women form families in the United States, scholars must consider how having co-resident children shapes women's labor force trajectories. Among the children born to women in my study, 70 percent were born in the United States. With few exceptions, women also brought children born in their countries of origin to the United States. These women must negotiate work with the day-to-day demands of raising children in the United States, which poses barriers to labor force participation. International migration and family scholarship has more frequently considered the experiences of transnational mothers, who must cope with the psychological and social consequences of family separation but who are able to devote themselves fully to work to support their children living abroad (Abrego 2014; Dreby 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2001, 2005).

In Chapter 5, I examined how women responded to the push of labor market restrictions and the pull of family in their employment relationships. Often, I found that women turned to unregulated, "non-standard" employment arrangements, including self-employment and subcontracted work. Despite the more precarious nature of nonstandard work documented in the literature (Flippen 2012; Hudson 2007; Kalleberg et al. 2000), I found that for some women, self-employment represented a "strategy of resistance" through which they created their own opportunity structures, which have become inaccessible in the formal labor market. Self-employed women gained control over their schedules to achieve work-family balance, avoided mistreatment and exploitation by employers, and achieved a sense of pride in their accomplishments. These findings challenge how we consider job quality in the secondary labor market and suggest that perceptions of job quality are gendered. Specifically, for women who are mothers, schedule autonomy and predictability is highly valued. In addition, the pattern of "quasi-employment" documented in the chapter—women who downplayed their economic

activity—demonstrates women’s strategies to subvert husbands’ objections to their work. Quasi-employment indicates that labor force participation can be nuanced and that official measures may undercount women’s employment (Donato and Gabaccia 2015).

Other forms of non-standard work, including subcontracted work and some self-employment circumstances, however, suggest strategies of survival associated with exploitation and lower levels of job quality. These findings suggest that the type and conditions of employment relationships are important for shaping job quality in the secondary labor market. Yet there were some indications of vulnerability across non-standard work, particularly, the disproportionate risks workers bear in unregulated employment relationships and the inability to document work or build credit when wages are earned under the table. Women’s accounts demonstrated that policy restrictions like E-Verify will not prevent them from working, as intended. In fact, women showed resilience in the labor market, despite growing constraints. For them, non-standard employment represented a strategy to remain in the labor market and continue to earn wages. The expansion of restrictive programs like E-Verify, however, exposes workers to greater risks and vulnerability, contributing to the marginalization of women in an already low-wage, low-skill labor market.

To conclude this analysis, I now consider the broader outlook for the women in this study. What have they gained through migration to make them remain in the United States amid these conditions? What other restrictions do they continue to face outside the labor market? What options exist for adjusting their status? Finally, I explore the implications of their experiences for state and federal policies targeting immigrants and the undocumented population.

OUTLOOK AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Social Consequences of Undocumented Status

About 80 percent of the women I interviewed remained undocumented at the time of the interview. Although not citizens by law, undocumented people have benefitted from other social, cultural, and economic rights in the United States and develop a sense of belonging in their communities of settlement (Chavez 2013). Policies that restrict access to rights and privileges, however, “redefine the value of citizenship” for undocumented people and limit their claims to membership (Chavez 2013:13–15). Increasingly, sub-federal laws shape immigrant incorporation, and in restrictive contexts, seek to deter the membership of immigrants in states and local communities (Lacy and Odem 2009; Motomura 2014; Singer et al. 2009). In addition to the employment obstacles described in previous chapters, interviewees faced restrictions that inhibited membership in North Carolina communities, such as being unable to build sufficient credit to buy a home or the fear and indignity associated with not being allowed to renew a driver’s license.

Esperanza, for example, learned to drive and got a license in 2002, which expired about five years prior to our interview. She described driving with an expired license as, “Horrible, because it gives me so much anxiety.” Esperanza was first pulled over about a year after her license expired when she was driving home from work late at night. That time, the officer let her off with a warning. Subsequently, while driving back from a store with her son, she was pulled over and received a \$220 ticket. She told me that the police officers who pulled her over admonished her to renew her license, but said, “They know that we can’t renew them. You think they don’t know?” She told me that she is afraid to drive now because of the fear that there will

be a *reten*, or checkpoint. Women frequently discussed their anxiety about *retenes*. Immigrants and advocates have argued that these checkpoints are used by police to target immigrants throughout the state (Ball 2012; Hoffman 2017; Schultz 2017) and scholars have documented racial profiling in stops and searches of Latino drivers (Baumgartner, Epp, et al. 2017).

When I asked if she worried about deportation, Esperanza responded:

Yes, [I worry] because of my children. What am I going to do? ... We have to drive; we have to drive *a fuerzas* (by force), because who is going to come to help you, to pick you up and everything? They know that all of us Hispanics don't have a Social Security number—we drive out of necessity. Yes or no? Imagine, to get to work, you can't drive because we don't have a license. Who is going to give us money?

In addition to psychological distress, interviewees described the financial costs of driving without a license—tickets, lawyers, towing and impound lots—as a major financial strain for their low-income families. They compared such costs to “another week of food” or “a week of work for you.” Women and their husbands faced an unfortunate paradox: to support their families, they usually had to drive to get to work. Yet in doing so, they faced the possibility of losing a significant portion of their income.

Women also contended with hostile policies at the federal level, particularly those related to interior enforcement. In 2016, a wave of arrests targeting Central American mothers and children created fear in immigrant communities. These individuals were recent arrivals who had crossed into the United States with the expectation they would be granted political asylum—however, in most cases, their claims were denied (Linthicum and Bennett 2016; Musalo and Lee 2017). Community organizations that had previously been holding optimistic information sessions about the possibility of deferred action for youth and parents instead sponsored “Know Your Rights” sessions, which provided guidance for how to react in encounters with law enforcement and/or ICE agents. To reduce the chances of being detained, some interviewees told

me that they tried to limit leaving the house for only necessary activities. For many women, fear of removal was centered not on their own deportation, but on the consequences for their children, as Renata, a single mother, described:

Sometimes, yes, I worry because I have my three children... What if, God forbid, one day they're in school and [ICE] comes, and well, I'm alone here? Or sometimes I get home a little before the bus comes from their school, and well, one starts to think in this way, and one tries to go—well, to only go out just to work and from work to home... I really hardly go out. I go out sometimes when I have to go to meetings at my children's school, when I have to go out to buy medicine at the store.... It's not so much fear of deportation, but the fact that one is here, you don't have papers, you don't have a license, and later, well, the children are small. Imagine if they take me to Mexico. My children, what are they going to do? Who are they going to give them to?...The children will stay here and suffer. I say no, *díos mío, padre*, I always say no—if they want to kick me out to Mexico, that they kick me out with my children.

In another example, Adelina debated whether it was worse for mothers or fathers to get deported:

If they get the father, on one hand, that's good, because the mother can stay with the children. But if they take the mother, what does the father do with the children? If the father is the one who has to work. Or if they take the father and the mother, what happens to the kids? It's something that they don't think about... [the children] don't know how to live alone.

Renata and Adelina's concerns are applicable to millions of children and their parents in the United States. According to recent estimates from the Migration Policy Institute, 5.1 million children in the United States live with at least one undocumented parent. Seventy-nine percent of these children are U.S. citizens. Among all states, North Carolina has the largest share of children of immigrants who have an undocumented parent (47 percent) (Capps et al. 2016). Even the possibility of parents' deportation has detrimental impacts for families (Brabeck and Qingwen Xu 2010; Dreby 2012; Hagan, Castro, and Rodriguez 2010).

"Your Children Keep You Here": Making Sacrifices and Avoiding Return Migration

These conditions beg the question: why stay in the United States amid restrictive policy contexts? In fact, we know that net migration from Mexico has fallen in recent years and that

more than a million migrants returned to Mexico between 2009 and 2014 (Gonzalez-Barrera 2015; Passel, Cohn, and Gonzalez-Barrera 2012). Nevertheless, many undocumented Latina/o migrants who arrived in previous decades are settling permanently and those who are parents have an especially strong incentive to remain (Moran-Taylor and Menjívar 2005; Valdez, Valentine, and Padilla 2013; Wampler et al. 2009; Winders and Smith 2012). Immigrant parents, when realizing the social and economic mobility barriers they face, often persist in settlement because of the opportunities they envision for their children—particularly, access to education. (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001)

Several interviewees told me that they had initially intended their U.S. migration to be temporary. Their goals, typically, were to spend a fixed amount of time earning wages in the United States and then return to countries of origin within one to three years. Then, chuckling, they would tell me that 10, 12, or 17 years later, they are still here. Moreover, the majority of participants told me that they planned to stay for the foreseeable future, even amid frustrations with their legal status. Some held hope that one day after their children were grown, they might retire in their countries of origin. But most had long-term plans to remain in the United States, primarily for the benefit of their children. Interviewees frequently discussed how through U.S. migration, they achieved a standard of living that allowed them to better meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and healthcare. Over time, interviewees who did not plan to stay in the United States began to make investments toward settlement. Women found that their earnings went farther in the United States and allowed them to purchase cars and other goods, as well as to save enough money to send to family members in countries of origin. They saw their children gain access to high-quality education that they believed to be superior to the options for public education in their countries of origin.

Adelina, for example, told me that her children “keep” her and her husband in the United States. Frustrated by lack of work opportunities and job quality, the feeling of having to “hide,” the inability to get a driver’s license, and experiencing discrimination and profiling, she and her husband have considered returning to Mexico. However, she said they stay for the benefit of their U.S.-born children.

Sometimes I get to thinking and I say, “Ay. We’re the stupid ones, why are we here, if we could be better off in our country?” The problem is that when you make a life here, you have a family. Then, it’s very difficult for you to leave. If I were a single person that didn’t have a family, I’d go quickly. And if I’m not happy, I’d come back. But now, with children, and now that they want to make their own decisions, now it’s very different. There’s my brother-in-law. He told me, “I’m going [back to Mexico] when [my daughter] finishes high school.” Then she was in college, now the other [child] is in college, and they never left. Why? Because your children make you change your thoughts and you think about how they are going to be better off. So now that’s going to be our case.

Similarly, discussing the challenges faced by the undocumented community and the uncertainty surrounding the 2016 presidential election, Romina responded, “Well, the only thing you can do to make a future [here]—more than anything—is to focus on your children.” She believes living in the United States affords her children security and a better education. She also fears violence in Mexico:

You don’t think about returning to your country... because now, one thinks only about your children. I say, here there are more possibilities that they study, that they develop as people... people even tell me, “You don’t like your people, your country,” I don’t know what. I say, “I love my country. I would like to return. But with this government we have right now [in Mexico], it is almost like giving your children a rifle.”

Women I interviewed explained that they stay in the United States, even amid difficulties with jobs and legal status, because they believe their children have greater opportunities than in their countries of origin.

Mothers—most of whom had low levels of education—believed that their children’s educational opportunities in the United States were better than those in their countries of origin.

Most expressed positive perceptions of children's schools, and several volunteered in their children's classrooms. Esperanza, for example, told me she has never considered returning to Mexico because of the quality of education offered by U.S. schools:

Because I see in Mexico, where I'm from... where I was raised... the schools are very — nothing like the ones here. Nothing like the ones here. Well, I say that for my children, for the future of my children, as long as they don't kick me out, I will stay here."

In addition to education, the availability and quality of healthcare were also considered benefits for children. Interviewees typically did not have health insurance, but most had Medicaid for their citizen children and even undocumented children received care from local clinics. Vanessa remarked about the quality of health care provided by hospitals, noting that in Mexico, quality healthcare is out of reach for the children of parents who cannot pay, while in the United States, "It's like something fundamental. So, you go falling in love with all of this, because you don't want your children to go to a place and suffer like maybe you did, so here there are a lot of really, really, really good things."

By choosing to remain in the United States for their children, however, women often sacrificed being with the family members who remained behind in Mexico and Central America. They were unable to return across a militarized border to see parents, siblings, and in a few cases, children. Scholars have identified the trauma of long-term family separation for mothers and children, exacerbated by restrictive immigration policies that constitute a form of "legal violence" targeted toward Latina immigrants (Abrego 2014; Abrego and Menjivar 2011).

The women in my study, who mostly had children living in the United States, more frequently struggled with separation from parents. Their accounts point to the long-term strain of transnational daughterhood. Several women discussed the emotional difficulty of separation from aging parents, who, in some cases, they had not seen in more than a decade. Some

participants spoke of guilt and regret over being unable to return home to see parents and relatives who had died since they left. While a few women had previously been able to return home to countries of origin for visits, they indicated that crossing the border undocumented has become too dangerous to risk it again—especially now that they were mothers.

Naomi, for example, returned home for two months after her first year in the United States in 1999. After a very difficult second crossing attempt, she decided never to do it again. She told me, “I haven’t been back to see my parents. They’re still alive, but no—I don’t want to go through the same thing again, and especially now that I have children, I do not want to put my life in danger. Before, I didn’t have children.”

Like Naomi, women indicated that with motherhood, their priorities shifted from families of origin to their own children, as Renata, who had recently separated from her children’s father, explained. She has not seen her parents and sisters in 13 years. Renata said she stays in the United States because she believes it is in the best interest of her children:

... Now that I’m alone, well, it’s more difficult for me, to have hopes to return to Mexico. I can’t return to Mexico with my three children if here it is sometimes difficult for me to earn a check... imagine, in Mexico, where am I going to be able to earn to maintain my children? I say, no, a thousand times, I will stay here. Because my sisters say, “You’re not going to come to Mexico?” “No,” I tell them, “One day maybe,” I say, “But for the moment I have to *sacar a mis niños adelante* (get my children ahead), I have to give them a good education.” And right now I think more about my children than about my family [of origin]. Because now my family is my children... I’m very sorry for my parents, but, well, my family is my children, right now they are the ones that need me.

These findings contribute to understanding the multitude of ways that U.S. immigration policies reshape transnational family configuration and restrict rights to family reunification (Menjívar et al. 2016; Weissman et al. Forthcoming).

Possibilities for Gaining Legal Status

At the time of the interview, only three women had achieved permanent legal status. A fourth was in the process of applying for residency. The majority of interviewees remained without authorization at the time of interview because they had few pathways for gaining legal status. The consequences of “illegality” for a significant group of U.S. residents have implications not only for the federal government, but also for states like North Carolina and its localities. The Pew Research Center (2016) estimates that 43 percent of North Carolina’s foreign-born population is unauthorized—the second highest rate in the nation.

For undocumented people who decide to stay in the United States, then, what are the options for adjusting their status? Multiple failed attempts to pass meaningful immigration reform during past decades, including a failed bipartisan bill in 2012 (MacGillis 2016), have left approximately 11 million people who lack authorization without a concrete path to permanent membership in the United States. The most realistic options for the undocumented women in my study to adjust their status included the family preference system, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and the U visa for crime victims. I discuss each in turn.

For immigrants who do not have high levels of skills or education to qualify for employment sponsorship, green card eligibility typically hinges on sponsorship from an immediate relative (parents, spouses, or adult children) who is a U.S. citizen. Three interviewees, all of whom were undocumented at the time of arrival, turned to family-based migration to adjust their status. One woman, after a years-long process, had just received legal permanent residency through sponsorship from her father, who was the beneficiary of amnesty provisions from IRCA in 1986. Two women adjusted their status through their spouses: one was still undocumented but in the process of applying for residency, the other had already gained citizenship. However, most

married women's husbands were also undocumented, few had citizen parents, and none had U.S. citizen children who had reached age 21, the required age to petition sponsorship for parents.

Two women in my sample had received temporary protection from deportation and a work permit through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. DACA was implemented under an executive order by President Obama in 2012 and is considered a band-aid response to Congress's failed attempts to pass immigration reform. DACA provides youth recipients "deferred action" from deportation and a work permit for renewable two-year periods. In North Carolina, DACA recipients can receive driver's licenses. DACA does not provide a path to citizenship, but recipients can adjust through other pathways, including family-based and employer-sponsored status.⁶⁸ To qualify, individuals must have arrived in the United States before age 16 and before 2007 and have been under age 31 in 2012. Although the rights and protections associated with DACA were limited, these women still experienced it as a great benefit. For example, Anahí, who migrated to join her sister and work at age 14, said that the period waiting to hear about her DACA application was "the longest six months of my life," and that when she found out she was approved in 2013, she spent "more than a week celebrating" with her children. However, the age requirements of DACA meant that most women were ineligible: women's average age at migration was 24. Further, the Trump administration announced in September 2017 that it would allow DACA to expire, imploring Congress to find a solution for so-called "Dreamers." Congressional bills have been introduced, including the bi-partisan Dream Act and Republican-sponsored RAISE Act, with a push to find a legislative "fix" by the end of 2017 (Rubin 2017; Wire 2017).

⁶⁸ One "loophole" that may allow DACA recipients to adjust their status relates to restrictions on undocumented people who have entered the country illegally, which can prevent them from family or employer sponsorship. DACA recipients can get permission to leave the country and return under a provision called advance parole—when they come back, they re-enter the country lawfully, which helps them meet the requirements for adjustment of status. See https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/prac_adv-daca_advance_parole_fam_pet-20160531.pdf.

For most women, their best chance of gaining legal status was being the victim of a violent crime. Eight women moved toward adjusting their status through a U visa for crime victims. The U visa was implemented as part of the Violence Against Women Act in 2000. Individuals are eligible for U visas if they are the victims of “qualifying criminal activities,” which include intimate partner violence, rape, sexual assault, felony assault, and kidnapping, among others. Spouses and children of victims also qualify. Eligibility requires having “suffered substantial physical or mental abuse” as a result of the crime as well as assisting law enforcement in their investigation of the crime. The U visa is a nonimmigrant visa, meaning it confers temporary status. It allows petitioners to remain legally in the United States for four years and obtain work authorization. After three years, U visa holders may apply for permanent residence if they have been physically present in the United States and remain compliant with law enforcement. The visa has an annual cap of 10,000 petitioners.⁶⁹

Among the eight women who applied for a U visa, half had received the visa, including one woman who had since gained legal permanent residency and then citizenship through the process. The other four were still in process and waiting to hear the status of their application. Most qualified because they were victims of intimate partner violence. One interviewee qualified through being the victim of an armed robbery. Two qualified through the spousal provision—both had husbands who had been assaulted. Women were typically referred to the U visa through intermediaries like social workers or other women who had received one.

Knowledge of the U visa was not ubiquitous—other women who discussed being victims of intimate partner violence remained undocumented and did not indicate knowledge of the possibility of the visa during interviews. Abril told me she had gone years between being a crime

⁶⁹ <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes/victims-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status/victims-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>

victim and learning about the U visa. She told me that she was a victim in an armed robbery in 2004, but did not learn she could apply for a U visa until 2011 when she heard about it from an acquaintance who had also been held up at gunpoint. Carmen, the victim of intimate partner violence, told me she “didn’t know her rights” until she was connected with a social worker in the hospital where she gave birth, who, she said, “started to tell me what my rights were.” The social worker helped Carmen press charges against her spouse. The court-appointed attorney Carmen later worked with informed her about the U visa. Unless they encountered such intermediaries, however, women were largely unaware of such options.

Further, aggressive enforcement actions under the Trump administration may hinder women from pursuing U visas at all. In 2011, under the Obama administration, DHS issued a memorandum regarding cases involving crime victims, explicitly mentioning victims of domestic violence.⁷⁰ The memo stated, “In these cases, ICE officers, special agents, and attorneys should all exercise all appropriate prosecutorial discretion to minimize any effect that immigration may have on the willingness and ability of victims, witnesses, and plaintiffs to call police and pursue justice.” In February 2017, then- DHS Secretary John Kelly issued memoranda rescinding guidance from the 2011 memo.⁷¹ That month, an undocumented woman was detained in a Texas courthouse while seeking an order of protection from an abusive partner (Mettler 2017). In March, the Los Angeles Police Department reported that among the city’s Latina/o population, reports of sexual assault and domestic violence had dropped 25 percent and 10 percent, respectively, compared with the same period the previous year (Queally 2017). In

⁷⁰ <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/prosecutorial-discretion/certain-victims-witnesses-plaintiffs.pdf>

⁷¹ <http://www.tahirih.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Summary-of-Feb-20-2017-DHS-Memos.pdf>

Denver, the same month, the City Attorney reported that her office dropped four domestic violence cases because the undocumented victims feared deportation (Stern 2017).

In a survey of social services agencies conducted by the Tahirih Justice Center (2017), 78 percent of agencies stated that immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking reported concerns about contacting the police. Three out of four reported that immigrant survivors expressed concerns about going to court and 43 percent of advocates said they worked with survivors who dropped their cases entirely because of these fears. These events are particularly troubling given that for immigrant women, the barriers are high for reporting intimate partner violence in the first place. Scholars have found that women's fear of deportation and their dependence on men for income and security make them more vulnerable to intimate partner violence and less likely to report crimes (Deeb-Sossa and Bickham Mendez 2008; Menjívar and Salcido 2002). Again, this demonstrates the gendered consequences of laws targeting immigrants and the policing of immigrant women's interactions with social institutions (Chavez 2013; Menjívar et al. 2016).

Among the eight women who had received permanent or liminal status, two chose to remain self-employed in successful house cleaning and landscaping endeavors, four found jobs in the formal sector, and two were in the process of applying for formal sector work. Those in the process of applying for a U visa had high hopes for improved employment options with a work permit. Guadalupe, a U visa applicant who works in a subcontracted employment relationship cleaning new construction homes, told me she hoped to find a better-paying job in a restaurant by having a valid Social Security number. She also said being able to get a driver's license would allow her to drive wherever she needed to go to find a well-paying job.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform at the Federal Level: Benefits for Workers, Families, and the Economy

That undocumented women's most realistic chance at gaining a work permit is to be the victim of abuse or assault has powerful implications for the U.S. immigration system and the values implicit in immigration policy. Particularly given unsafe conditions and poor economic opportunities in many Latin American countries, it is not only inhumane but also highly unrealistic to expect that the problem of undocumented immigration will "fix itself" through mass deportation or voluntary return migration on a large scale. Parents of U.S. citizens, in particular, have much to gain through permanent settlement. Comprehensive immigration reform is the most reasonable option to provide these individuals and families a pathway to membership and greater access to basic human rights like work, healthcare, and housing.

Even a slow, incremental approach toward legal membership would improve the quality of life for the mothers and families in my study. Frequently, women told me things like, "Maybe we don't want citizenship, but we need a driver's license." Based on interviewees' accounts, I am confident that the opportunity to work toward permanent residency and citizenship would result in greater investments by migrants: investments in their own human capital (education and English) and economic and civic investments in their communities.

Given relatively high rates of poverty among children of immigrants (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2017), it is crucial for policymakers to consider how restrictive policies targeting undocumented adults are also impacting millions of U.S. citizen children. More than five million children live with an undocumented parent and 79 percent of these children are U.S. citizens. Three-quarters of these children live at 185 percent of the federal poverty line (Capps et al. 2016). Studies of mixed-status families frequently point to the detrimental effects of parents' undocumented status and the associated threat of deportation on children's opportunities and

outcomes. Examples include chilling effects for the uptake of the WIC nutrition program (Vargas and Pirog 2016), ordering and receiving child support (Xu, Pirog, and Vargas 2016), and Medicaid use (Vargas 2015). Children of undocumented parents are less likely to be enrolled in pre-school (Capps et al. 2016).

Families with undocumented parents are also at risk of losing access to the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC). The tax bills passed by the House and Senate in 2017 require that filers provide a Social Security number and work authorization to claim the CTC—previously, undocumented workers could file for the credit using an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number). According to estimates from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, this change will cause one million immigrant children in low-income families to lose this benefit, which has been associated with better educational outcomes for low-income children (Marr et al. 2017; Sherman and Mitchell 2017).

Eighty-six percent of these children have parents who would have qualified for DAPA, President Obama’s proposed deferred action program for the parents of American citizens, which would have provided work authorization and protection from deportation (Capps et al. 2016). The immigrant mothers I interviewed were highly motivated to participate in the labor force. Reluctant to draw on social services, they valued being able to provide for their families without assistance. Yet it is difficult for them to do so sufficiently given restrictions they face to work. It seems a common-sense policy solution that facilitating parents’ ability to work and live legally in the United States will abate these high rates of poverty. Yet the conditions of women’s work-family conflict outlined in this dissertation must also be taken into account for comprehensive policy solutions. Access to affordable and quality childcare will be necessary for migrant women to be able to participate in the labor force consistently.

Migrant women motivated to work in the U.S. labor force also provide an opportunity for the United States to match workers to occupational demand. For example, migrant women could fulfill demand for health professions to meet the needs of the aging baby-boomer cohort. Home health aides are predicted to represent the third fastest growing occupational category in the United States between 2016-2026.⁷² Median wages for this career are \$22,600. High demand in this low-wage industry could provide a career choice for migrant women with low levels of human capital that would provide some scheduling predictability and control. Women are unlikely to invest in the training necessary for these careers, however, if they are unable to capitalize on them.

Opportunities for Communities and States

At this point, comprehensive immigration reform appears to be an unrealistic goal. Yet states and communities have some influence over the conditions affecting undocumented workers, including the protection of worker rights. States and communities shape the presence of unions and workers' centers. Such institutions are crucial for enforcing workers' rights through "lateral enforcement" (Fine and Lyon 2017), yet they are noticeably absent in central North Carolina.⁷³ As a right-to-work state with a supermajority Republican legislature, the expansion of unions seems highly unlikely.

However, North Carolina communities that have previously expressed solidarity for their immigrant community members, and who are now prohibited from instituting sanctuary policies,

⁷² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf>

⁷³ The AFL-CIO lists one workers' center partner in Western North Carolina. The workers' center I encountered in central NC was primarily a day laborers' center that had been established not out of a goal for worker empowerment, but in response to appease a town government's crackdown over a popular corner for day laborers. The center worked to prevent wage theft and provided a safe place for workers to make contacts with employers. However, few women frequented the center, which catered primarily to construction laborers. The center had few connections with employers for women. I interpreted the low turnout of women (4) for our focus group—and the staff member who collaborated with me agreed—that this was symptomatic of disengagement between the center and immigrant women workers in the community.

could provide other forms of support through the facilitation of workers' centers. Examples of regional organizations supporting women workers include the Matahari Women Workers' Center in Boston, La Colmena in Houston, and the Miami Workers Center. Communities should also undertake efforts to protect workers rights in subcontracted employment relationships—without cutting women out of these opportunities—through agreements to enforce reasonable wages for overtime and the prevention of wage theft.

Beyond workers' rights, states also shape access to employment. Women's inclination toward self-employment to achieve work-family balance suggests that investment in small business development for women would be another practical solution. This would allow women to invest in their own skills and to legally develop small businesses to achieve mobility through self-employment. These programs should incorporate training so that women are well versed in their rights as self-employed workers: rights they will be much more likely to defend if they are not experiencing legal precarity.

The expansion of E-Verify is unlikely to reverse. Yet more occupational opportunities could become available to workers through a small relaxation of occupational licensing requirements: allowing workers to obtain occupational licenses with tax ID numbers rather than Social Security numbers. This would broaden women's limited options in the restricted labor market. Women, for example, are permitted to clean houses without a Social Security number—domestic workers are excluded from North Carolina E-Verify regulations. However, they are excluded from receiving occupational licenses in niches like cosmetology. Being able to pursue the education, training, and licenses for such vocational careers would provide more employment options for women like Matilde, who was frustrated to learn that she could not sit for the licensing exam after pursuing vocational education in cosmetology because she did not have a

Social Security number. Such opportunities would provide options for workforce development and women's and families' socioeconomic mobility.

I also argue that it is not in states' interests to restrict undocumented residents' ability to drive legally—a right that most interviewees had at the time they arrived in North Carolina. Without a major public transportation network, driving is necessary for individuals to get to work and conduct the quotidian activities of life. As local police departments must be aware, people will continue to drive without licenses. They will find workarounds to get cars registered. Yet they do so with great trepidation and anxiety, and frequently limit the amount and distance they will drive. It is possible for states to meet federal REAL ID requirements and still provide driving privileges to undocumented residents. Twelve states and the District of Columbia permit undocumented people to get driver's licenses.⁷⁴ Providing access to licenses would ensure that people are driving with proper credentials and insurance. I also anticipate it would be a boon to local economies through greater investments in cars and ancillary products and services. Interviewees also indicated to me that they would like to travel more in the state, but were afraid to do so, suggesting the loss of tourism dollars for North Carolina communities.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The theoretical contributions and policy implications I have identified in this dissertation are limited in size and scope by the small sample of women in the study and my focus on a particular area in one state. Comparative research is warranted to contrast the contexts of reception across traditional- and new-destination states as well as across varied contexts of

⁷⁴ California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. See <http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/states-offering-driver-s-licenses-to-immigrants.aspx>.

reception among new destination states. Researchers should examine how differences in alienage policies shape outcomes for migrant workers.

For example, neighboring Virginia also is a new immigrant destination and is the only state in the Southeast that has no E-Verify requirements for private employers. A comparative study between states would give greater insight into how sub-federal policies shape gendered modes of immigrant incorporation. Researchers might examine whether women experience less work-family conflict in states and cities with more favorable employment policies and/or greater access to public benefits like subsidized childcare. Comparisons of states on the basis of occupational licensing requirements—specifically, whether or not they require a Social Security number to obtain licenses for occupations in “female” niches like cosmetology—would also be a valuable area of inquiry. This would demonstrate how state policies shape women’s opportunities for self-employment outside of domestic service and their likelihood of investing in education and training in English language and vocational skills. Relatively small and uneven sample sizes across counties also made it difficult to draw comparisons in women’s experiences across the five counties represented by women in the study. As a result, comparisons of local contexts of reception at the county and city level remain relatively underdeveloped in this analysis. As a continuation of this project, I plan to augment the samples of women in Alamance, Chatham, and Wake counties to develop comparisons of local contexts of reception across social economic, and political spheres.

Future research could also consider a broader gendered analysis of the intersection of work-family negotiations and policy shifts by also interviewing men in families. The analysis in previous chapters relied exclusively on women’s accounts of their experiences and, in some cases, their interpretations of their husbands’ experiences. Scholarship on gender and migration

has, historically, tended to either focus exclusively on women's experiences or compares men and women in isolation from one another. These approaches tends to obscure that men's and women's experiences are interrelated parts of gendered migration and settlement patterns (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999). Recent qualitative studies have incorporated men's, women's, and children's experiences in their analyses, resulting in rich understandings of family relationships and how gender operates in the migration and settlement process (Abrego 2014; Dreby 2010). As such, interviewing women's husbands for this study would have provided a deeper perspective on how gender operates in family units.

Another limitation of this study is that it is based on interviews collected at one point in time, relying on interviewees' past recollections. To fully examine women's labor force trajectories in a dynamic policy environment, repeated interviews over time would be beneficial. As a continuation of this study for a book-length project, I plan to return to the field to conduct follow-up interviews given the rapidly changing policy environment under the Trump administration. Repeated interviews also would be useful for following women's life course trajectories as they continue to age. What will happen, for example, once women's children become adults and leave the home? Women's prospects for retirement also pose an area for future research, particularly, whether women will choose to return to their countries of origin during later life course stages.

Given rapidly changing politics at federal, state, and local levels—and given a particularly hostile environment for immigrants under the Trump administration—scholars should continue to examine the development of restrictions targeting immigrant communities, as well as resistance to those restrictions. How will states and localities continue to respond to federal action or inaction? In North Carolina, localities' actions have been pre-empted by a state

ban on “sanctuary cities.” In some cities, such as Miami, mayors have been complicit with broadened federal enforcement actions (Mazzei 2017). However, other city mayors are pushing back against federal regulation and designating their cities as sanctuaries despite threats of federal funding cuts, as in the recent case of New York City (Robbins 2017). Scholars should examine whether such city and state actions lead to a further polarization of contexts of reception for migrants—and, moreover, whether these contexts change migrants’ destination choices.

In addition to considering the impacts of these policies for immigrants and their families, researchers should examine their impacts on labor markets. For example, will alienage policies contribute to labor shortages in high-demand sectors? We know that migrant populations, throughout U.S history, have provided critical sources of labor in low-wage jobs that native-born workers eschew. The Bracero agricultural program in the mid 20th century provides one historic example among many (Cohen 2011). In more recent years, as detailed in this dissertation, migrant populations have met the need for demand in manufacturing and service jobs, finding loopholes in I-9 requirements to avoid legal restrictions on unauthorized employment. Future research should consider whether restrictive policies, including the expansion of E-Verify in states, deter migrant women from filling growing demand in low-wage occupations like home health care and personal care aides.

Finally, if workers continue to be pushed underground with few opportunities to adjust their status, how will they respond in their occupational decisions? Will self-employment continue to provide a mobility pathway for workers in a restricted labor market? My findings suggest scholars should examine the social and economic barriers to and/or opportunities for self-employment, particularly, the role state- and local-level contexts and family characteristics have in structuring these opportunities. Research suggests there exist opportunities for mobility

in the secondary labor market and in immigrant self-employment, specifically (Hagan et al. 2015; Raijman 2001; Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009). Men's and women's informal self-employment is concentrated in different economic niches (Raijman 2001), however, migrant women's informal unemployment remains understudied (Brettell 2016). While the in-depth interviews in this study have provided some insight, a multi-sited approach drawing on ethnographic observations will be particularly useful for answering these questions and exploring women's mobility pathways in restricted markets.

Romina decided to migrate to the United States in 1998 to reunite with family and seek a better life. While she knew about the hazards of crossing to the United States and the possibility of dying en route, she decided the risk was worth it, explaining, "So great was my stress and so great was my courage, I said, 'I prefer to die [on the journey] than keep living like this.'" Living and working in the United States has led to an increased standard of living for Romina and her four U.S.-born children. However, she faces many restrictions stemming from state and federal policies targeting the undocumented. For example, she has a car but cannot renew her expired driver's license. She feels profiled by the police and is fearful of driving. She misses her parents in Mexico but cannot risk visiting them because crossing the border has become even more dangerous. Because she does not have a Social Security number, she could not maintain her full-time job with a cleaning business and now works part-time helping other women clean houses. Despite these challenges, Romina is determined to remain in North Carolina.

Women like Romina often are highly motivated to migrate to the United States, willing to endure great risks and sacrifice their homes, communities, family, and friends in pursuit of better opportunities. Increasingly, however, undocumented, Latina immigrants face constraints that

restrict their labor force participation and social membership in U.S. communities. And yet, to deny that women achieve any benefit from migration underestimates their own agency in migration decisions and the decision to remain in the United States long-term. The resilience and persistence undocumented women demonstrate across the life course are suggestive of their capacity to contribute to their new communities as workers, mothers, and community members. According to Xochil, an undocumented worker, mother, and community activist, Latina migrants like herself must “keep fighting... *Somos como mariposas* (we are like butterflies)... We go where we can live with dignity.”

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Interview # _____

Date _____

1. How old are you? (¿Cuántos años tiene usted?) _____
2. Where were you born? (¿Dónde nació usted?)
Country (País): _____
City (Ciudad): _____
3. Where do you live currently (city)? (¿Dónde vive usted actualmente-cuál ciudad?)
4. What is your highest level of education (¿Cuál es su nivel de escolaridad?)
5. What is your marital status (¿Cuál es su estado civil?)
 - A. Married (Casada)
 - B. Separated/divorced (Separada/divorciada)
 - C. Single (Soltera)
 - D. Widowed (Enviudada)
6. Do you have children? How old are they? (¿Tiene hijos? Cuantos años tienen?)
 - A. Yes (Sí)
 - B. No
7. How many children do you have? (¿Cuántos hijos tiene usted?) _____
8. How many of your children were born in your country of origin? _____
(¿Cuántos de sus hijos nacieron en su país de origen?)
9. How many were born in the United States? _____
(¿Cuántos de sus hijos nacieron en los estados unidos?)
10. How long have you lived in the United States _____ años/meses
(¿Por cuánto tiempo ha vivido usted en los estados unidos?)
11. Are you working currently? (¿Está usted trabajando actualmente?)

A. Yes (Sí)

B. No

a. Have you ever worked? (Alguna vez ha trabajado?)

12. Where do you work/what type of job? (¿En qué trabaja usted?)

13. Is your husband working currently? What does he do? (¿Está trabajando su esposo actualmente? ¿Que hace?)

A. Yes

B. No

INTERVIEW GUIDE/PROBES

CHILDHOOD: FAMILY AND SCHOOL

Primero me gustaría platicar de su niñez. *First I would like to talk about your childhood.*

Probes:

- Cómo era el lugar dónde usted vivía mientras era niña? *Where did you grow up? What was it like?*
 - Era rural o urbano? *Was it rural or urban?*
 - Cuáles tipos de trabajo eran comunes en su comunidad? *What kinds of jobs were common in your community?*
- Cuándo usted era niña, quién vivía en su casa? *When you were growing up, who lived in your household?*
- Cual era el nivel de escolaridad de sus padres? *What was your parents' education level?*
- Trabajaba su papá? *Did your dad work?*
 - Qué hacía? *What did he do?*
- Trabajaba su mamá? *Did your mom work?*
 - Qué hacía? *What did she do?*
- Y cómo era para usted de joven, tener (los dos padres trabajando/una madre que quedaba en casa)? *What was it like growing up with (two parents who worked/a mother who stayed home/etc.)?*
- Y cuando era niña, quien hacía el trabajo de la casa? *Who did the work inside your home?*
 - Por ejemplo, quién en su casa cocinaba, limpiaba, lavaba, cuidaba a niños? *For example, who did the cooking/cleaning/washing/caring for young children?*
- Cuándo era niña, conocía a muchas mujeres que trabajaban fuera de la casa? Por ejemplo, tías, vecinas, amigas? Era común en su comunidad que las mujeres trabajaran? Qué hacían? *When you were young, did you know many women who worked outside the home? For example, your aunts, neighbors, friends? Was it common in your community for women to work? What kind of work did they do?*
- Trabajaba usted cuando era joven? Podría contarme de esa experiencia? *Did you work when you were young? Could you tell me about this experience?*

- Cuántos años tenía cuando empezó a trabajar? *How old were you when you started to work?*
- Qué tipo de trabajo hacía? *What kind of work did you do?*
- Cómo era? *What was it like?*
- Estaba usted estudiando mientras trabajaba? *Were you in school while you were working?*
- Cuando era niña, había inmigrado a los estados unidos a trabajar alguien en su familia? *When you were young, did anyone in your family migrate to work in the United States?*
 - Podría contarme de esa persona? *Could you tell me about this person?*
 - Quién era? Para cuánto tiempo? Qué tipo de trabajo hacían? Dónde fueron? *Who/for how long/what kind of work/where did they go?*
 - Y cómo era para su familia? *What was that like for your family?*
- Cuando era niña, como imaginaba usted su vida de adulta? *When you were young, how did you imagine your life would be as an adult?*
 - Quería usted estudiar? *Did you want to go to school?*
 - Quería usted una carrera? Que tipo de carrera? *Did you want to have a career? In what?*
 - Quería usted tener una familia? *Did you want to have a family?*
 - Pensaba en ir a vivir en otro país? *Did you think about moving to live in another country?*
- Cómo era su experiencia en la escuela cuando era niña? *What was your experience like in school when you were a girl?*
 - Le gustaba estudiar? *Did you like school?*
- If education is high school or less: Usted me dijo que su nivel de escolaridad era X. Podría contarme que estaba pasando en su vida cuándo se paró de estudiar? *You said that your highest level of education was X. Can you tell me about what was going on in your life when you stopped going to school?*
 - Alguna vez había pensado usted en ir a la preparatoria/universidad? *Did you ever think about going to high school/university?*
- If some college or more: Podría usted contarme de su experiencia en la universidad? *Would you tell me about your university experience?*
 - Qué estudió? *What did you study?*
 - Cuáles eran sus metas en estudiar? *What were your goals in going to college?*

PROBES FOR WORK IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

- ¿Alguna vez trabajó usted en (país de origen)? *Did you ever work in (Country of origin)?*
- ¿Cuál fue su primer trabajo? ¿Podría contarme un poco sobre este trabajo? *What was your first job? Could you tell me about it?*
 - ¿Cómo consiguió este trabajo? *How did you get the job?*
 - ¿Cuántos años tenía usted? *How old were you?*
 - ¿Dónde vivía usted cuando trabajaba X? *Where did you live when you were working in this job?*
 - ¿Qué hacía en este trabajo? *What did you do in this job?*
 - ¿Fue tiempo completo o tiempo medio? *Was it part-time or full time?*
 - ¿Habían partes del trabajo que les gustaba? ¿Cuáles? *What parts of the job did you like?*

- ¿Habían partes del trabajo que no les gustaba? ¿Cuáles? *What parts of the job did you dislike?*
- ¿Cuáles eran las partes más difíciles de este trabajo? *What were the most difficult parts of this job?*
- ¿Por cuánto tiempo quedó en este trabajo? *How long did you work in this job?*
- ¿Cuándo dejó este trabajo? Podría explicar su decisión de dejar este trabajo? *Why did you leave?*
- Y después, consiguió otro trabajo? *After you left, did you find another job?*
- (REPEAT) OR ask about circumstances in which they take breaks from LF

PROBES FOR MIGRATION:

Podría contarme de su experiencia de inmigrarse a los estados unidos? *Could you tell me about how you came to immigrate to the United States?*

Probes:

- Cuando vino a los estados unidos? *When did you come to the United States?*
- Cuáles eran las razones por cuales quería dejar (país de origen) y venirse a los estados unidos? *What were the reasons you decided to leave (origin) and come to the United States?*
- Cómo hacía esta decisión de venirse? *How did you make the decision to come?*
- Por cuánto tiempo pensó en quedarse en los estados unidos? *How long did you think you would stay in the United States?*
- ¿A cuál lugar decidió de ir? *Where did you decide to go?*
- Cómo decidió el lugar dónde iría? *How did you decide on this location?*
 - ¿Conocía alguien en este lugar? *Did you know anyone in this place?*
 - ¿Qué había escuchado de este lugar? *What had you heard about this place?*
 - ¿Cómo imaginaba que sería en este lugar? *How did you imagine it would be in this place?*
- Cómo llegaba usted a los estados unidos? *How did you get to the United States?*
 - Venía sola o con otras personas? Quién? *Did you come by yourself or with others? Who?*
 - Probe about crossing experience
- Cuando vino a los estados unidos, ya tenía hijos? *When you came to the U.S., did you already have children?*
 - Inmigraron sus hijos junto con usted? *Did your children migrate with you?*
 - If not: Cuénteme de esta decisión? Por qué no vinieron sus hijos con usted? *If not: tell me about this decision*
 - Y ahora viven sus hijos aquí o todavía quedan allá? Puede contarme como es tener sus hijos allá? *Do your children still live in (country of origin)? Could you tell me what that's like?*
 - ¿Con que frecuencia puede verlos? *How often do you see them?*
 - ¿Con que frecuencia están en contacto? *How do you stay in contact?*
 - Tienen planes de venirse a los estados unidos? Por qué (no)? *Do they plan to come to the United States? Why or why not?*
- Probe about recent arrival experience: cómo era, con quién vivía, etc. *(How was it, who did you live with, etc.)*

WORK IN U.S.

- Antes de inmigrarse, pensaba usted en trabajar en los estados unidos? *Before you migrated, did you plan to work in the United States?*
 - En que tipo de trabajo pensaba? Por qué? *What type of job did you think about? Why?*
- Desde que se ha venido a los estados unidos, ha tenido algún trabajo acá? *Since you have lived in the United States, have you ever had a job here?*
- ¿Cuál fue su primer trabajo? ¿Podría contarme un poco sobre este trabajo? *What was your first job? Could you tell me a little about this job?*
 - ¿Cómo consiguió este trabajo? *How did you get it?*
 - ¿Cuántos años tenía usted? *How old were you?*
 - ¿Dónde vivía usted cuando trabajaba X? *Where did you live at this time?*
 - ¿Cómo llegaba a trabajo—tenía usted carro? *How did you get to work? Did you have a car?*
 - *En este tiempo podía uno sacar una licencia de manejar? At that time, could you get a driver's license?*
 - ¿Qué hacía en este trabajo? *What did you do in this job?*
 - ¿Fue tiempo completo o tiempo medio? *Was it full time or part time?*
 - ¿Habían partes del trabajo que les gustaba? ¿Cuáles? *What parts of the job did you like?*
 - ¿Habían partes del trabajo que no les gustaba? ¿Cuáles? *What parts of the job did you dislike?*
 - ¿Cuáles eran las partes más difíciles de este trabajo? *What were the hardest parts of this job?*
 - ¿Cómo eran/son los supervisores en este trabajo? *What were your supervisors like?*
 - ¿Normalmente, como era/es su horario en este trabajo? *Normally, what was your schedule like in this job?*
 - Es/era un horario fijo? *Was/is it a set schedule?*
 - Recibe/recibía días feriados? Vacaciones? *Did you receive paid holidays or vacation?*
 - Que hace/hacía, por ejemplo, si usted está enferma y quiere tomar un día? Sí su hijo/a está enfermo/a? *What would you do, for example, if you were sick and you wanted to take a day off? Or if your child was sick?*
 - ¿Por cuánto tiempo quedó en este trabajo? *How long did you stay in this job?*
 - Cuándo dejó este trabajo? Podría explicar su decisión de dejar este trabajo? *When did you leave this job? Could you tell me about your decision to leave this job?*
 - Y después, consiguió otro trabajo? *Did you find a new job?*
- (REPEAT) OR ask about circumstances in which they take breaks from LF
- (If lived elsewhere first): Cómo fue que usted llegó a vivir en Carolina del norte? *How did it happen that you came to live in North Carolina?*

MARRIAGE/DIVORCE

- If ever married: Cuántos años tenía cuando se casó o conoció a su pareja? *How old were you when you got married/met your partner?*

- Dónde conoció a su esposo/pareja? *Where did you meet your spouse?*
- Podría contarme cómo era su vida cuando se casó/se juntó con su pareja? *Could you tell me about your life when you got married?*
 - Cómo conoció a su esposo/pareja? *How did you meet your spouse?*
 - Trabajaba usted? *Were you working?*
 - Trabajaba él? Qué hacía? *Was your spouse working? What did he do?*
 - Y después de que se casaron, dónde vivían? *After you got married, where did you live?*
 - Trabajaba su esposo después de que se casaron? En lo mismo? *Was your husband working after you got married? In the same job?*
 - Trabajaba usted? Qué hacía? *Were you working? What did you do?*
 - Podría contarme de las responsabilidades de la casa que tenían usted cuando estaba recién casada? *Could you tell me about the type of household responsibilities that you had when you were first married?*
 - Y cuáles eran las responsabilidades de su esposo? *What about your husband?*
 - Después de que usted se casó, seguía trabajando? Alguna vez ha parado de trabajar? Podría contarme de esa decisión? *After you were married, did you keep working? Did you ever stop? Tell me about that.*

If divorced:

- Cuantos años tenía o cuando fue cuando se separó de su esposo? *How old were you or when did you separate from/divorce your spouse?*
- Podría contarme de esa experiencia? *Could you tell me about this experience?*
 - Podría explicar las razones por cuáles se separaron? *Could you tell me about the reasons why you separated?*
- Todavía está usted en contacto con su ex-esposo? *Are you still in contact with your ex?*

CHILDREN

- Cuándo nació su primer hija/o? *When was your first child born?*
 - Cuántos años tenía usted? *How old were you?*
 - En el año antes de que tuvo el bebe, trabajaba usted? *During the year before you had your baby, were you working?*
 - Seguía trabajando usted después de que se nació? *Did you continue working after the baby was born?*
 - Podría contarme de esta experiencia? *Could you tell me about that?*
 - Podría usted tomar una licencia de maternidad? *Were you able to take maternity leave?*
- OR**
- Podría explicarme de la decisión de parar de trabajar? *Could you me about your decision to stop working?*
 - Por cuánto tiempo se paró de trabajar? *For how long did you stop working?*
 - Regresó usted a trabajar? Cuándo regresó? *When did you go back to work?*

- Trabajó su esposo? *Was your husband working?*
- Y con sus otros hijos, podría contarme de sus experiencias con decisiones de trabajar? *Could you tell me about your experiences with work with your other children?*
 - Y eso fue en (país de origen) o estados unidos? *Was this in (country of origin) or the U.S.?*
- Quién cuida a sus niños mientras usted está/estaba trabajando? *Who cares/cared for your children while you are/were working?*
 - Cómo hizo para encontrar a alguien para cuidar a sus hijos? *How did you find someone to watch your children?*
- (If worked since kids) Cómo es/cómo era ser madre trabajadora? *What is it like for you to be a working mother?*
 - Algunas veces hay/habían retos que usted enfrenta/ha enfrentado como madre trabajadora? Podría usted darme algunos ejemplos? *Are there any challenges you face/have faced as a working mother? Could you give me examples?*
- En su opinión, cuales son las cualidades de una buena madre? *In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good mother?*
- Y cuáles son las cualidades de un buen padre? *What are the qualities of a good father?*

CURRENT JOB

If working currently:

- Por cuánto tiempo cree usted que quedaría en su trabajo actual? *How long do you think you will stay in your current job? Why?*
- En cinco años, que tipo de trabajo cree que tenga usted? Cree qué sería diferente de lo que está haciendo ahora? Y en diez años? *Five years from now, what kind of job do you think you will have? Do you think it will be different than what you are doing now? And in ten years?*

Not working currently:

- Podría contarme de su decisión de no trabajar fuera de las casa? *Could you tell me about your decision not to work outside the house?*
 - Cómo hizo esta decisión? *How did you make this decision?*
- Alguna vez ha pensado en regresar a trabajar? Por qué o por qué no? *Have you ever thought about going back to work? Why or why not?*
- Usted cree que en algún punto en el futuro, va a regresar al trabajo? *Do you think that at some point in the future you will go back to work?*

Both

- Qué es lo que le gustaría hacer en un mundo perfecto--prefería trabajar o no trabajar? Por qué? *In a perfect world, what would you like to do---would you prefer to work or not work? Why?*
- Cuál sería su trabajo perfecto? *What would be your perfect job?*
 - Cree que es posible que consiga este trabajo? *Do you think it is possible to get this job?*
 - Por qué/no? *Why/not?*

- Qué tendría que hacer para obtener este tipo de trabajo? *What would you have to do get this kind of job?*
- De manera realista, ¿cómo se espera que sería el resto de su carrera trabajando? *Realistically, how do you envision the rest of your working career?*
 - Por qué cree que sería así? *Why do you believe it will be this way?*
- Qué es lo que le gustaría hacer en un mundo perfecto--prefería trabajar o no trabajar? Por qué? *In a perfect world, what would you like to do---would you prefer to work or not work? Why?*

Civic engagement

- Mientras no está trabajando, que hace usted o su familia en su tiempo libre?
 - Asiste usted a una iglesia? Cuál? Cómo es? Como sabía de esta iglesia? Aparte de la misa, hay otras actividades en la iglesia?
 - Es usted parte de algún organización en la comunidad? Cuénteme de esta organización. Cómo se enteró de la organización? Por cuánto tiempo ha participado en la organización? Que hace usted con la organización?

IMMIGRATION STATUS/POLICY

- Algunas veces se siente usted que enfrenta retos relacionados con su estatus de inmigrante o con su estatus legal? Podría contarme de esos retos? *Do you ever feel that you face any challenges related to your status as an immigrant or related to your legal status? Could you tell me about these challenges?*
- (If undocumented) Si usted tendría papeles aquí, cómo imagina usted que su vida sería diferente? *If you had legal status, how do you imagine your life would be different?*
- (If documented) Cómo fue que usted pudo obtener un Green card/ciudadanía? Puede contarme de su experiencia? *How did it happen that you could get a Green Card/citizenship? Could you tell me about your experience?*
 - Usted cree que su estatus rinde beneficios que otros no tienen? Cómo? *Do you think your status provides benefits that others do not have? How?*
- Cómo es vivir en [community name] como inmigrante (sin papeles)? *What is it like to live in [community name] as an immigrant (without papers)?*
 - *Probe about strategies used to cope with any challenges mentioned*
 - Cómo es vivir en Carolina del Norte en su experiencia? *What is it like living in North Carolina in your experience?*
- Siempre ha sido igual, vivir aquí, o habían cambiado las cosas? Cómo? *Has it always been like this, or have things changed?*
- Alguna vez sigue usted noticias sobre las leyes de inmigración o el tratamiento de los inmigrantes en los estados unidos o en Carolina del Norte? *Do you ever follow news about immigration laws or the treatment of immigrants in the United States or in North Carolina?*
 - Qué ha escuchado? *What have you heard?*
 - Cómo escuchó de esto (esta ley)? *How did you hear about this/this law?*
 - Que piensa usted de esta ley? Va a impactar a usted o su familia? Cómo? *What do you think about this law? Will it impact you or your family?*

- Ha escuchado usted del programa DAPA (acción diferida para padres)? Qué sabe usted de esta programa? *Have you heard about the DAPA program? What have you heard?*
- Ha escuchado usted de algunas redadas que han pasado? Qué piensa usted de lo que está pasando? *Have you heard about the raids that have happened? What do you think about what's happening?*

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- Cuáles son sus planes para el futuro? *What are your plans for the future?*
- Cuáles son sus metas para si misma? Y para sus hijos? *What are your goals for yourself? And for your children?*

DAPA questions (later redacted from interview guide)

- Usted ha escuchado del nuevo programa de acción diferida para padres que se llaman DAPA? *Have you heard of the new deferred action program for parents called DAPA?*
- Qué sabe usted de DAPA? *What do you know about it?*
- Cómo escuchó de este programa? *How did you hear about this program?*
- Y qué pensaba al principio cuando escuchó del programa? *What did you think when you first heard about it?*
- Si todo sigue con el programa, tiene planes de aplicar? Por qué? *If DAPA is implemented, do you plan to apply? Why?*
- (If married): Y va a aplicar también su esposo/pareja? Y por qué quiere aplicar él? *Is your husband applying for DAPA? Why does he want to apply?*
- Ha empezado usted preparando la aplicación? *Have you started preparing your application?*
 - Cuáles son los documentos necesarios? *What kind of documents do you need?*
 - Cómo ha sido el proceso? *How has the process been?*
 - Hay alguien que le está ayudando a aplicar? Quién? *Is anyone helping you with this process? Who?*
- Ha asistido usted a alguna taller o sesión informativa sobre DAPA? *Have you attended any workshops or information sessions about DAPA?*
 - Cuáles?/Dónde? *Which ones/where?*
 - Eran útiles? *Were they helpful?*
 - Qué aprendió en estos talleres? *What did you learn?*
- Cree usted que DAPA le va a ayudar a la gente en la comunidad? Cómo? *Do you think DAPA would help people in this community? How so?*
- Cuáles son sus expectativas de lo que usted personalmente vaya a obtener de DAPA? *What are your expectations of things you personally would gain from DAPA?*
 - Cómo imagina usted que serían diferentes las cosas si califique usted para DAPA? *How do you imagine things might be different for you if qualify for DAPA?*
 - Cómo cambiarían las cosas para su familia? *How might things change for your family if you qualify for DAPA?*
- Tiene algunas preocupaciones acerca de este programa? *Do you have any concerns about DAPA?*

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

*Note: the focus group was conducted in Spanish. English translations of the questions are provided in italics.

WELCOME

Introduce La Casa Latina and CDT, moderator(s), note taker

Metas del grupo focal/goals of the focus group

- Entender sus experiencias laborales, las habilidades que tienen, habilidades que les gustaría desarrollar, los retos que han enfrentado en el trabajo o en obtener trabajo, y como podemos mejorar los servicios de CDT / *To understand your work experiences, the skills you have, the skills you would like to develop, the challenges you have encountered at work or in finding work, and how we can improve our services at CDT*
- No hay respuestas “correctas” ni “incorrectas” / *There are no “correct” nor “incorrect” responses*
- Queremos escuchar de todos / *We want to hear from everyone*
- Antes de hablar, por favor diga su nombre. Pero evite el uso de apellidos para proteger la confidencialidad de todas las participantes / *Before speaking, please state your name. But avoid using your last name to protect the confidentiality of all participants.*

Consentimiento/Consent

- Explain Confidentiality
- Permission to record the conversation
- Have all participants sign consent form

ICEBREAKER

Introductions – (first) name, where are you from, how long have you lived in NC, how many kids, are you working currently, what is your job

QUESTIONS

1. Experiencias en el mercado laboral/labor market experiences

- (Holly) Normalmente, cómo hace para buscar trabajo? *Normally, how do you go about finding work?*
- (Holly) Han enfrentado alguno obstáculos en encontrar trabajo? Cuáles? *Have you encountered any obstacles finding work? Which?*
- (Jazmin) Cuáles son los problemas que hayan tenido con sus empleadores? *What are the problems you have had with your employers?*
 - Alguna vez ha pasado que su empleador no le ha pagado lo que había prometido? Qué pasó? Lo reportó? *Has it ever happened that your employer didn't pay you what they had promised? What happened? Did you report it?*

- Alguna vez han enfrentado acoso sexual en su trabajo? Qué pasó? Lo reportó? *Have you ever experienced sexual harassment at work? What happened? Did you report it?*
- Alguna vez han enfrentado discriminación o racismo en su trabajo? Qué pasó? Lo reportó? *Have you ever experienced discrimination or racism at work? What happened? Did you report it?*

2. Balancing work/family (Holly)

- Para las mujeres que tienen hijos, ¿quién cuida a sus hijos mientras usted está trabajando? Cómo ha sido sus experiencias de buscar cuidado de niños? *For the women who have children, who cares for your children while you are working?*
 - Alguna vez ha tenido problemas en buscar alguien para cuidar a sus hijos? *Have you ever had problems finding someone to care for your children?*
 - Alguna vez ha tenido problemas con la persona que cuida a sus hijos? *Have you ever had problems with the person who cares for your children?*

3. Safety (Jazmin)

- Levantando la mano, ¿Algunas veces tienen que usar químicas en sus trabajos? *With a show of hands, do you ever use chemicals in your jobs?*
 - Cuáles? Cree que entiende bien cómo usarlas en una manera segura? *Which chemicals? Do you think you understand how to use these safely?*
- Levantando la mano, ¿usan equipo de seguridad en sus trabajos? *With a show of hands, do you use safety equipment in your jobs?*
- Levantando la mano, ¿alguna vez han sido lastimada en el trabajo? *With a show of hands, have you ever been injured at work?*
 - Cómo/qué pasó? *How/what happened?*

4. Skills (Jazmin)

- Cuáles son las habilidades que ustedes han aprendido en sus trabajos? *What skills have you learned in your jobs?*
- Tiene interés en aprender nuevas capacidades o habilidades? Cómo qué? *Are you interested in learning new skills or abilities? Like what?*
- Levantando la mano, ¿alguna vez ha pensado en aprender la construcción o carpintería? *With a show of hands, have you ever thought about learning construction or carpentry?*

5. En qué podría ayudar CDT (Holly)

- Levantando la mano, quién ha escuchado del CDT antes de esta reunión? *With a show of hands, who has heard of CDT before this meeting?*
- Qué saben de este centro? *What do you know about the center?*
- Levantando la mano, ¿alguna vez han utilizado el centro? *With a show of hands, have you ever used the center?*
 - Para qué? Como era su experiencia? *For what? What was your experience?*
- Qué les gustaría ver en el CDT en el futuro para las trabajadores? *What would you like to see CDT offer workers in the future?*

6. *Goals (if there is enough time)* (Holly)

- Cuál sería su trabajo ideal? Por qué? *What would your ideal job be? Why?*
- Prefieren ustedes trabajar para otra persona, una compañía, o por su cuenta? Por qué? *Do you prefer to work for another person, a company, or for yourself? Why?*
- Alguien aquí ha trabajado o está trabajando por su cuenta? *Has anyone here ever been self-employed?*
- Cuáles son los beneficios de trabajar por su cuenta? Cuáles son los obstáculos? *What are the benefits of self-employment? What are the obstacles?*

7. *Conclusion*

- Hay algún otra tema importante que no hemos discutido? *Is there another important topic that we haven't discussed?*

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