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Managing Manacles: The Daily Struggles of Unauthorized Latina Mothers in Kentucky

by

Elizabeth Wulf Mandeel

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of

Bellarmino University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY

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Managing Manacles: The Daily Struggles of Unauthorized Latina mothers in Kentucky

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ABSTRACT

Two research questions guided this study: (1) Which barriers to daily life are faced by undocumented Latina mothers in Kentucky; and (2) What resources and strategies do they employ to navigate these barriers? Extant research reviewed has characterized this segment of the population as highly stressed victims of multiple levels of subjugation. Ten undocumented immigrant mothers from Guatemala and Mexico residing in Kentucky were interviewed for this phenomenological study and their responses analyzed using the frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality. As predicted, themes of family separation, difficulties to be able to work, and living without health insurance emerged as major barriers to daily life. However, findings also included themes of personal growth, ingenuity, and positive attitudes to life in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For Khalid, who never wavered.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The contrast between poverty in countries in Latin America and the stability and relatively comfortable standard of living in the United States has historically been a factor for immigration –both legal and illegal- from countries south of the border to the United States. The United States’ recurring need for labor and lax enforcement of immigration law have enabled immigrants to find employment after crossing over a border that, until recently, was rather porous (Mandee, 2014; Passel & Cohn, 2010; 2011). In addition, since the 1960s, conflicts in Latin America have forced would-be immigrants to undertake the risky journey to the north and, more recently, the American appetite for illegal drugs has resulted in the establishment of drug-smuggling routes across, around and under recently- reinforced borders (Becker & Bergman, 2008). Today, while it is expensive and risky to enter the United States without inspection, it is still possible (Becker & Bergman, 2008; Roberts, Alden & Whitley, 2013).

Recent estimates indicate that eleven million immigrants live and work across the United States without authorization (Passel, Cohn & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). The Department of Homeland Security in 2011 defined unauthorized residents as “all foreign-born non-citizens who are not legal residents. Most unauthorized residents either entered the United States without inspection or were admitted temporarily and stayed past the date they were required to leave. . .” (Hoefer, Rytina, & Baker, 2011, p. 2). Of the eleven million unauthorized immigrants, about half are women and over 60% are Mexican (*The facts on immigration today*, 2012). Many unauthorized immigrants are attached to families of mixed status, in which some children who were born in the U.S. are American citizens, while those foreign-born remain

unauthorized (Passel et al., 2013; Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi & Suarez-Orozco, 2011; *The facts on immigration today*, 2012).

Undocumented immigrants face multiple levels of inequality, including that which arises from their racial and class status in addition to their undocumented status which shapes every aspect of their lives, determining how they are thought of and treated, placing them face-to-face with the limitations of the law, shaping their fates, channeling them in limited and limiting directions, and restricting their social mobility and life chances. (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012, p. 3)

In addition to being mostly poor non-white foreigners, a minority in an overwhelmingly dominant English-speaking white culture, Hispanic immigrants without residence papers in the United States are still trying to live and to envisage a better future for their children than they could expect in their home countries, where chronic unemployment, corruption, destitution and conflict have blocked most avenues for advancement (Cleaveland, 2011; Karl, 1995). At this time (early 2015), there is no path for the legalization of unauthorized residents. To be able to subsist without authorization in the United States, they must adapt to the circumstances and try to elude or overcome the multiple limitations imposed upon them by their illegal status. The fact that they remain in the U.S. is testimony that, to many, the difficulties are still worth battling, as the alternative –returning to their home countries- is unthinkable. The quality of life afforded by the United States even to the undocumented is still better than what the immigrant family could have at home.

Statement of the Problem

The daily lives of unauthorized Latina mothers who live in Kentucky are fraught with obstacles, some of which derive from federal law and policy, while others are caused by school

systems or employers (Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011; Chomsky, 2007; Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012). Most of the difficulties are unrelated to any decisions each may have personally made other than crossing the border without inspection. Simply put, daily, these women have to overcome limitations imposed by their gender, cultural heritage, language and by their status as an unauthorized immigrant (Flippen, 2014; Galanti, 2003; Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Katsiaficas & Suarez-Orozco, 2013; Landale & Oropesa, 2007; Lutz, 2006; Reina, Maldonado & Lehmann, 2013; Villenas, 2001). This study will investigate 1) what barriers face these unauthorized Latina women in Kentucky; and 2) how they circumvent or manage these obstacles.

Furthermore, Kentucky is primarily a rural state, since about 90% of its land is either cropland, forest or pasture (Bollinger, Hoyt, Blackwell & Childress, 2014). Of its 120 counties, 60 are defined by the 2012 US *Census of Agriculture* (2014) as “mostly rural” and 25 “somewhat rural.” Kentucky is the nation’s largest producer of burley tobacco and ranks second nationwide in the production of all types of tobacco (Jerardo, 2013). Over half of Kentucky’s land is farmland, and 42 % of Kentuckians live in a rural area (*2012 Census of Agriculture*, 2014). Crucial income-generating industries include agriculture and horses. Kentucky ranks as the first state in the country for thoroughbred horse breeding and for total horse sales (Nutt, Clark, Graycarek, Hall, & Roenker, 2011). Both agriculture and horses are industries where low-wage undocumented Latino workers are concentrated (Swanberg, Clouser & Westneat, 2012). Kentucky is also a poor state; its poverty rate in 2012 was 26.5%, higher than the national average and also higher than states with comparable economies (Bollinger et al., 2014).

Most federal programs exclude the unauthorized; such is the case with food stamps, unemployment insurance and public housing (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012; Suarez-Orozco et al.,

2011; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). However, even though states are subject to the regulations of the U.S. federal government, individual states do have some leeway in interpretation and implementation, resulting in varying circumstances for unauthorized immigrants according to the state in which they reside (Pabon Lopez, 2008). Usually such differences are minor but the implications for unauthorized immigrants can be significant. For instance, some states allow unauthorized immigrants to obtain a driver's license, while others, such as Kentucky, do not (Pabon Lopez, 2008). The director of a Hispanic center voiced the discrepancy when she observed that "the Americans and the legal residents can sign up to receive additional food aid at the Multi-purpose agency because they can show their Social Security card, but undocumented Hispanics can only come here to receive food aid" (Mary Smith¹, personal communication, October 22, 2014). Another example could be access to winter heating assistance; some agencies may require a Social Security number and thus exclude the unauthorized, while others may accept an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and therefore include them (Mary Smith¹, personal communication, 22 October 2014). Finally, service providers often have different policies in different areas. This is relevant in the case of food banks and charity funds (Mary Smith¹, personal communication, 22 October 2014). In *The Facts on Immigration Today* of 2012, it is estimated that almost half of unauthorized immigrants are couples with children; access to any of these safety nets can make a considerable difference to an immigrant household.

Purpose of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to foment a greater understanding of the unique daily circumstances of unauthorized Hispanic mothers who live in Kentucky. While to some members of our society, undocumented immigrants are by definition extra-legal or even

¹ Mary Smith is a pseudonym, as are all other names in this study.

criminal -- an undeserving population that constitutes a drain on resources (Chomsky, 2007; Knickerbocker, 2006) -- to this researcher they are only mothers who are constrained in their choices. This phenomenological study brings the voices of the undocumented to the fore to reflect the realities of their lives. This study is aligned with critical theorists who have “posited that social phenomena cannot be fully understood unless examined via the historic, economic and political contexts in which they are located” (Cleaveland, 2011, p. 570). Inasmuch as being an undocumented immigrant in Kentucky can be considered an “object of human experience” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 163) the phenomenological approach is appropriate, as it seeks to capture the essence of the experience of illegality.

Significance

While much research on women, on Latinos and on Latino immigrants has been undertaken, there has been little research on the undocumented members of these groups. In particular, there exists no published research on the special circumstances of those who reside in Kentucky, although most recent estimates indicate that between 50,000 and 80,000 unauthorized immigrants lived in Kentucky in 2010 and about half of them were women (Baumann, 2014; *The facts on immigration today*, 2012; Warren & Warren, 2013).

Undocumented immigrants in Kentucky are often the subjects of demeaning generalizations that objectify them, such as “they take our jobs” or “Hispanic parents don’t care about school” (Berg, 2009; Chomsky, 2007). Since one way to “dehumanize an individual or a group is to deny the reality of their experiences” (Collins, 1993, p. 33), by allowing their authentic stories to be heard, this study will allow the participants to be better understood by the public and by those who serve it. Fan (1997) concurs: “the more different voices are heard, the more the mainstream becomes aware of the mere existence of those who reside outside it” (p.

1235). This study will have a positive impact on the general reading public as well as on the participants. Since story telling can be an enabling instrument for the oppressed, it is important to let their voices be heard (Fan, 1997). In addition, it will be informative to the American public who deal with Hispanics, helping them to view these women in a more favorable and compassionate light.

Frameworks

The participants of this study are immigrant, Latina, and unauthorized mothers living in Kentucky. Their social identity is complex. Looking at each participant, it is apparent that each is situated at the intersection of various social identities that relate and influence each other. According to Warner and Shields (2013) any consideration of a single identity, such as gender, must incorporate an analysis of the ways that other identities interact with, and therefore qualitatively change, the experience of gender. This relatively recent outlook, an “ambiguous, complex and developing feminist theory” (Cole, 2009, p. 561) has radically changed feminist criticism and is labeled Intersectionality.

Intersectionality. This theory is based on the notion that no person has a single, unified identity. For example, a white feminist may be Jewish, or working-class, or a single mother. Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances (Delgado & Stefancic, 1999). A mother may be Mexican, immigrant and undocumented. By acknowledging the interplay of multiple systems of inequality, Intersectionality can call attention to social justice problems that would otherwise be obscured (Warner & Shields, 2013). It is this interplay of systems of subordination and the location of each participant at a unique intersection of identities that make her and her methods of resolving difficulties unique.

Intersectionality also acknowledges that the multiple crossings of circumstances do not necessarily compound deficits, but can also be a source of strength (Bowleg, 2012).

Cole (2009) has said that “Gender alone does not marginalize, but...the relevant issues for exploration are the multiple interactions between gender and race, class, religion, faith, disability, poverty, sexuality, age and so on” (p. 563). The participants of this study are first-generation immigrants, undocumented, Latina mothers who reside in Kentucky, and there are implications and ramifications of belonging to each group. his study will reveal resiliency as the participants continue to make informed choices that allow them to provide better lives for their children in spite of systemic and non-systemic obstacles. Consequently, the main theoretical stance for this study is Intersectionality.

Critical Race Theory. An additional interdisciplinary framework is Critical Race Theory (CRT), to which intersectionality is closely related. Both CRT and Intersectionality are descended from feminism’s outlook on the relationship between power and the construction of social roles. One of the basic tenets is that racism is ordinary, an everyday experience for people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 1999). Another basic tenet is that the notion of race is socially constructed, and can change according to shifting needs such as the labor market or political expediency. Treviño, Harris and Wallace (2008) have noted that Critical Race Theory “spotlights the form and function of dispossession, disenfranchisement and discrimination across a range of social institutions, and then seeks to give voice to those that are victimized” (p.8). It also “directs attention to the ways in which structural arrangements inhibit and disadvantage some more than others” (Treviño et al., 2008, p. 8). In recent years, it has begun to be accepted that immigration law and policy necessarily imply issues of race (Martinez, 2012). In view of the recent changes in law in the state of Arizona concerning Latinos, Martinez

(2012) also holds that Critical Race Theory, which has been especially developed to examine issues of race, is a suitable lens through which to view Latino immigrants. Finally, a key component of Critical Race Theory is presenting the perspectives of people enduring oppression in order to seek social justice for them (Cleaveland, 2010). The context of all of the study participants' stories is rural Kentucky, in the year 2015 before any immigration reform has been enacted at the federal level. Their stories are to be understood within that context. By verbalizing their experiences, the participants are enabling their voices to be heard. Because injustices are part of people's lives, they will emerge from the participants' narratives and lived stories (Cleaveland, 2011; Cole, 2009; Mendieta, 2012; Villenas, 2001).

Research Questions

Through the authentic voices of the participants, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What barriers exist for undocumented Latino immigrant mothers in Kentucky?
- 2) What resources and strategies do these women utilize to negotiate these obstacles?

Limitations

This study is limited to the state of Kentucky and to the year 2015, before any immigration reform. The program offering Deferred Action status to the parents of American children announced by President Obama in November of 2014 (DAPA) which was scheduled to begin in May of 2015, had been postponed pending the result of a lawsuit from Texas that challenged the President's power to offer it. At the time of the interviews and of the writing of this dissertation, undocumented immigrants remained extra-legal and unprotected.

This study includes citations from different sources. Readers should note that the names used within, whether participants or otherwise, are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the

persons cited. This is necessary because unauthorized immigrants live on the margins of society and are deportable at any time by U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement authorities. Any possibility of identification poses a risk to them. To further diminish the risk of identification, other persons cited have also been assigned pseudonyms and place-names have been changed in this text. The only information divulged is that all the participants live in the state of Kentucky.

Another limitation has to do with the heterogeneity of the Latinos who make up the bulk of the undocumented immigrant population in Kentucky. The largest group is comprised of Mexicans. There are also Hondurans, Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Nicaraguans, as well as small numbers of immigrants from South America (Anderson, Atchley, Aubrey, Gibson, Hurt, & Nutt, 2002). Each of these groups differs significantly in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, and race. It is possible that different national groups in Kentucky have different ways of surmounting obstacles. Since this study involves only Guatemalans and Mexicans, it is conceivable that pertinent information concerning other groups has been excluded.

A further limitation to this study is that the immigrant population from any one country is not homogeneous. For instance, while Mexico's population is mainly of mixed ancestry, there exist large numbers of indigenous, pre-Columbian peoples, as reflected by the presence in Mexico of over 20 Mayan languages, in addition to Nahuatl, the *linca franca* of the Aztecs (Villareal, 2010). In contrast, Guatemala has a majority of indigenous peoples who differ from *ladinos* or mixed-ancestry groups, in many ways. There are 21 separate indigenous languages of Mayan origin in Guatemala, corresponding to at least the same number of indigenous groups (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Therefore, it would be erroneous as well as unethical to reach essentialist conclusions from this study, which involves only ten participants from two

countries. Each participant is situated at a unique point of crossing ethnicities, identities and history and her methods of subsisting in the U.S. may be idiosyncratic.

Definition of Terms

At its origin, “Latino” was “used as a designation for “people whose languages descend from Latin” (Online Etymology Dictionary, n. d.). As such, it includes persons from Brazil, Spain, Italy, and Romania, as well as some countries in Africa like Equatorial Guinea where Spanish is the first language. However, in the United States *commonspeak* “Latinos” refers to those whose ancestors originated in any country in America south of the U.S. border and includes those whose ancestors lived in areas of the U.S. that previously belonged to Mexico (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1999). The word “Hispanic” is frequently used in the same context to indicate those who have roots in Spanish-speaking Latin America, which would exclude Brazil. In the literature, both terms are often interchangeable, in spite of a controversy between scholars over which is preferable (Gracia, 2005; Long, 2013). To some, the term “Hispanic” invokes colonialism, as large populations in Latin America speak pre-Columbian languages and are not mixed with Europeans (Gracia, 2005). According to Gracia (2005), there is room for both terms in discourse, although there are “objections one can bring up against the use of either one” (p. 417). In this paper, both terms will be used interchangeably.

The terms “undocumented” and “unauthorized” immigrant are used as synonyms in this paper. They have replaced the previously accepted “illegal alien” in the media and official publications to refer to persons who reside in the U.S. without a valid residence permit, authorization to work or Social Security card (Merolla, Ramakrishna & Haynes, 2013). The participants in this study were born in Mexico or Guatemala. Each entered the United States without inspection at the border, lacks a current permanent resident visa and has not been admitted under other long-term or temporary visa regulations. Despite not having permission to remain or to work in the U.S., each participant lives in Kentucky and is therefore an unauthorized or undocumented resident.

Although they are generally considered non-White, there a Latino race does not exist. In fact, according to Chomsky (2007), “today, most people inside the academy and outside agree that race and ideas about racial difference are social constructs rather than scientific facts” (XVI). She also notes that even on U.S. census documents it is acknowledged that racial categories should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature, and that the United States government has variously classified Latinos. For instance, before 1930 Mexicans were considered “White” and even in 2010, those persons who self-identified as “Hispanic” were further asked to choose a race category (Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011). Furthermore, it should be clarified that race in the case of Latinos is more than the Black/White binary that is common in the United States (Villareal, 2010). Latinos, in general, have “a complex relation to race, one that is certainly very different from that most U.S. citizens have experienced” (Mendieta, 2012, p. 459). Latino as a descriptor can apply to persons whose aspect is purely African (for instance, the people from the Caribbean) as well as to those who appear purely Caucasian, as well as many other variations in facial and physical form.

Additionally, in Latin America, race can be an indicator of class: the paler people are generally at the top of the economic pyramid while the darker people tend to be towards the bottom (Villareal, 2010).

Sensitivity Factors Surrounding the Study

Due to the fact that unauthorized immigrants are living without papers and are subject to deportation at any time, they are extremely fearful and distrustful of mainstream White Americans, a population to which this researcher belongs. However, in my capacity of Migrant Advocate in Kentucky since 2008, I have had the opportunity to develop trusting relationships with many Latino women, both authorized and unauthorized. Due to possible participant anxiety about being identified, the interviews were not tape-recorded. Written notes were taken during conversations with the participants and supplemented from the researcher's memory to reconstitute the narratives for analysis. Chapter Three details the sampling method, but the reader should know each participant: 1) is an adult woman; 2) was born in Latin America; 3) immigrated illegally to the U.S more than a year ago; and 4) is actively parenting children in Kentucky.

Summary

There are over 80,000 immigrants who reside in Kentucky without residence permits or work authorization. About half of these are women. Although the majority of these are Mexican, there are significant numbers from other Latin American countries (Anderson et al., 2002). Most Latino immigrants are attached to families of mixed status, which means that some members are unauthorized, while others may be authorized or citizens (Passel et al., 2013; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011; *The facts on immigration today*, 2012). Because so many Latinas are mothers and because parenting implies contact with the surrounding context, their stories reveal

how they face multiple obstacles in order to conduct their daily lives. The object of this study is to 1) identify the obstacles they face and 2) identify the resources and strategies they employ to overcome these barriers. The overall objective of this study is a more sympathetic attitude towards this vulnerable population in the pursuit of social justice.

The primary theoretic framework through which their authentic narratives are interpreted is Intersectionality (Mendieta, 2012). An offshoot of Black Feminism, it recognizes that individuals who belong to several oppressed groups perceive discrimination from various systems with a multiplicative effect (Collins, 1998). In addition, elements of Critical Race Theory (Treviño et al., 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999) are integrated into the theoretical framework with the goal of fomenting a greater understanding of the limited choices available to the participants. The ultimate objective is social justice for the participants, and because personal narratives can be enabling instruments, the participants were asked to comment on the barriers they face in their daily lives as well as on their ways of surmounting them.

Extensive precautions have been taken to preserve the anonymity of the participants. These included field-notes taken using only letters to identify the speakers, no audio recording, no written link from the pseudonym assigned to the participant's real name, and no accurate identifying information in the text of the study. It is assumed that if the anonymity of the participants is carefully protected, the study can cause no harm.

I recognize that risks to credibility can arise from being a White, educated U.S. citizen researcher conducting a study of brown unauthorized immigrants of limited education. My hope is that this will be mitigated by the level of trust afforded me by the participants as well as by my efforts at protecting their anonymity. Phenomenological research, in general, attends to the lived experiences of the participants, as seen from their own perspective (Groenewald, 2004) and aims

at “description and interpretation” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 93) on the part of the researcher to present to the reader how the experience felt to the participant. Being an unauthorized Latina mother in Kentucky situates the participants at a crossroads of disadvantage. What obstacles it causes and how they are managed is the object of this study.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter refers to literature on Hispanic immigration in general, the conditions for immigrants in Kentucky, some of what derives from the multiple identities of the participants, and the theories that underpin the study. The participants are simultaneously members of the group of immigrants to our nation, of the smaller group of those immigrants who are unauthorized but yet remain in this country, Latina, as well as mothers of school-aged children, in the state of Kentucky. Immigration to the United States today is at least partly the result of immigration in the past. The literature review is intended as background knowledge about the implications of membership in each of these groups and answers the questions: What do we know about immigrants? What do we know about the large unauthorized population? What do we know about Latinos in general and Latina mothers in particular? What is specific to Kentucky?

History of Immigration from the South

The United States of America has shaped the imaginations and dreams of many (Mahalingam & Rabelo, 2013). Although the United States had already added its first Spanish speakers with the acquisition of Florida in 1819, its victory in the Mexican-American war enabled the U.S. to acquire half of Mexico's territory. By the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war, Mexico ceded all of California, New Mexico and Utah to the United States, as well as most of Arizona, about half of New Mexico, about a quarter of Colorado and a small section of Wyoming (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1999). Although the new U.S. borders remained poorly guarded and people moved freely across them, the numbers of immigrants across the southern border into the U.S. remained negligible until 1910, when civil

war created untenable conditions in Mexico and many began to seek refuge from political chaos in the United States (Barragán, 2009). During the 1930s, however, with Depression-era unemployment, many Mexicans returned home while others were raided and deported in massive numbers (Barragán, 2009). This was the lowest point in immigration numbers from countries to the South of the U.S. Numbers did not remain low for long (Barragán, 2009). In the forties, when American men went to World War II, jobs again became available for Mexicans, especially in agriculture, as farmworkers moved to cities for better-paying opportunities in industry (Bickerton, 2000). The subsequent need for farm labor gave rise to the Bracero Program, a temporary-worker arrangement that allowed millions of Mexican men to come to the U.S. for work on farms. Initially established to fill only wartime need for labor, the Bracero program was re-negotiated and extended multiple times at the behest of American agribusiness, lasting until the early 1960s. Concurrently with the Bracero arrivals, illegal immigration from Mexico skyrocketed, creating pathways across the border that still exist. Crossing the Mexican-American border was not difficult: it involved crossing the Rio Grande river (hence the term “wetback”) and avoiding the usually understaffed Border Patrol (Galarza, 1964).

The middle of the twentieth century was marked by civil war in several countries in Central America. Strife in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras caused a flood of refugees out of these countries to relatively calm but economically depressed Mexico and thence into the United States (Karl, 1995). Arguably, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (Pub. L. No 99-603, 100 Stat. 2259), which allowed 3.1 million undocumented immigrants to regularize their status, provided the impetus for more illegal immigrants to undertake the journey north in the hopes that they, also, would someday be offered the

opportunity to regularize their status and become legal residents (deGuzman, 2012). In addition, economic trends increased demands for unskilled labor, as the U.S, like “Many Western democracies, [has] embraced neo-liberal economics- an ideology believed to bolster economic growth via de diminution of the welfare state, increased privatization, and deregulated trade” (Cleaveland, 2011, p. 567). Not only agricultural workers are needed; Cleaveland (2010) has noted that demand for labor now includes the need for “low-wage workers by middle-class Americans for work in houses, restaurants and other service jobs” (p. 641). In the 1990s, factors south of the border that encouraged emigration included Mexico’s reduction of subsidies and state assistance for farmers and the privatization of large government-subsidized farms. The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) agreements of the early 1990s opened Mexico’s food, seed and feed markets to competition from Canada and the United States. As a result, peasants there found themselves “unable to compete with mechanized grain exports once Mexican agricultural protection was broken down” (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 641). Jobless, impoverished *campesinos* (peasants) began migrating north.

It was not until after the terror attacks of September 11th that strengthening the southern border became a priority for the U.S. government, as “immigration and national security [became] intermingled in unprecedented ways” (Waslin, 2003, p. 83). Indeed, the attacks put an end to bilateral talks with Mexico and what had seemed to be positive movement towards immigration reform under President G.W. Bush. Until today, in early 2015, no comprehensive reform has been enacted, as increasingly vocal political groups in the U.S. advocate for “severe restrictions on immigrant admissions to the United States and the further curtailment of the rights of immigrants already in the country...under the guise of preventing terrorism” (Waslin,

2003, p. 85). Immigration today is a divisive issue which is reflected by the inability of the U.S. congress to reach any bipartisan agreement on the subject (Rosenblum, 2011). According to Blake (2014) comprehensive reform is well-nigh impossible, and even the temporary Deferred Action executive actions by President Obama have engendered bitter conflict (Sedigh, 2014).

The Kentucky Context

Like elsewhere, most Latino immigrants in Kentucky are attached to mixed-status families that comprise U.S. citizens as well as undocumented immigrants (Fix, 2001). There are multiple patterns of mixed authorization: some families include one unauthorized parent, in others both parents are unauthorized, while other families include both children who, born abroad, are unauthorized and American citizen children who were born on U.S. soil (Fix, 2001). Indeed, an estimated 5.5 million children in the U.S. have unauthorized parents (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

In the state of Kentucky, according to the U.S. Census of 2010, there were over four million Latinos, representing about 3 percent of the population of the state. They are disproportionately represented in low-wage occupations, such as agriculture, construction, the horse industry and service areas such as restaurants or hotels. According to Laufer (2005),

[Latinos are...] working in tobacco, landscaping, horse farming, poultry processing, fruits and vegetables and forestry. These are the people who roof our houses, mow our lawns, paint our houses, wash our dirty dishes in restaurants, and clean our dirty laundry in hotels. (p.23)

In general, businesses and industries in Kentucky mirror the nationwide phenomenon of immigrants filling jobs that have not attracted sufficient native-born applicants (Anderson, Atchley et al., 2002). Moreover, Kentucky's main industries, agriculture and thoroughbred horses, employ many Hispanic immigrants (Nuñez, 2012; Rosecrance, 1985; Swanberg et al., 2012). It should be noted that all Hispanic immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, live in a hostile environment in Kentucky. Extant literature indicates that Latino low-wage workers in the U. S. South are routinely threatened by authorities, employers and by private citizens. All Hispanics are all assumed to be illegal and are the targets of racial profiling, suffering abuse and discrimination (*Under Siege*, 2009).

In Kentucky, undocumented immigrants are prohibited from receiving most public benefits that exist to protect low-income families, with the exception of the federally-funded Free and Reduced School Lunch Program. For a student to be able to eat free or at a reduced price in his school, the only eligibility criterion is one of low income (Kentucky School Lunch Program, n. d.). Consequently, unauthorized poor students typically eat the breakfasts and lunches that are served in their school cafeteria (Kentucky School Lunch Program, n. d.).

The official government online website www.benefits.gov gives an overview of benefits available to residents in Kentucky. Eligibility for different programs can be found on the official state website for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services: <http://chfs.ky.gov>. Most social welfare programs exclude unauthorized aliens:

- The Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamp program is available for U.S. citizens and “some legal foreign residents” (<http://chfs.ky.gov>).

- The Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP) program requires the recipient to be a citizen or a legal alien, and proof must be provided (<http://chfs.ky.gov>).
- The Kentucky Medicaid Assistance Program (MAP) is only available to citizens (www.benefits.gov).
- The Low-income home energy program (LIHEAP) which helps to pay some heating bills in the winter, requires a Social Security card from every person resident in the home, effectively excluding all mixed-status families. A brochure is provided in Appendix A.

In Kentucky, undocumented immigrants are allowed to receive emergency services and temporary health care only in cases of life-or-death (Kentucky Immigration, n. d.). A low-income family of mixed-status can only receive SNAP (previously known as food stamps) and health insurance for the U.S. citizen children and not for the ones who were born abroad.

Furthermore, an unauthorized immigrant who resides in Kentucky is not able to obtain a driver's license. While citizen applicants and holders of permanent residence cards go directly to their local County Court Clerk's office, all others must apply to the Division of Driver Licensing in the state capital and must present documentation attesting to their legal status as well as their residency before being approved (Kentucky Driver's License, n. d.). Consequently, in a mostly rural state without public transportation, unauthorized Latinas break the law each time they drive for they have no license.

Legal workplace protections, in theory, apply to all workers with or without authorization (*Under Siege*, 2009). In addition, by law, undocumented workers are also protected from abusive employer practices (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012). In practice, however:

...Southern states do not have strong enforcement mechanisms to help workers assert their rights. While many states have vigorous Departments of Labor, that simply is not the case for most states in the South. The result is that...workers in the South are largely without recourse when their rights are violated. (*Under Siege*, 2009, p. 10)

For example, Kentucky is one of only 16 states that does not require farmers to have Workman's Compensation insurance for their workers (Kentucky Workman's Compensation, n. d.) even though farm work is one of the most dangerous occupations in the U. S., with fatality and injury rates seven times the national average (Swanberg et al., 2012; *Under Siege*, 2009). As a result, if an unauthorized farmworker is injured on the job in Kentucky, he can be denied medical care, pay for lost wages, or simply fired.

Kentucky's most important agricultural product, tobacco, is one that requires a manual touch at every stage of production (Van Willigen, 1998). From planting plugs of tobacco plants in seedbeds in a greenhouse, to weeding the plants in the field and later cutting off the top flower of each stalk before chopping, staking and hanging the tobacco in a barn, to later stripping the leaves off the stalks and sorting them according to grade, a human is needed. In 1999, it was estimated that 70-80% of tobacco workers were Latino (Swanberg et al, 2012).

One of Kentucky's most iconic industries is the thoroughbred horse industry, where immigrant Latinos make up an estimated 80-90% of the workforce on the backstretch, or stables, of racetracks and on breeding farms (Anderson et al., 2002; Swanberg et al., 2012). Having originated in Spain and crossed the Atlantic with the conquest of the New World, horse culture became implanted in Mexico and remains strong there. This has meant that Mexicans often have skills and experience that are valued in Kentucky's horse business (Najera-Ramirez, 1994; Starrs & Huntsinger, 1998;). According to Kiesler, Vaughn and Kaur (2013), the low-

level niche of the backstretch workers is filled by Mexican and Central American immigrants who are often unauthorized. They usually work as hot walkers, grooms, or exercise riders, all entry-level jobs in direct contact with the temperamental and often dangerous thoroughbreds. The tasks of hot walkers include keeping the barn area clean and cooling the horses down after exercise (Nuñez, 2012). Grooms enter the barn as early as 4 a.m. seven days a week (Nuñez, 2012). Backstretch jobs are the lowest ranking in the racetrack hierarchy (Kiesler et al., 2013). Although the work is dirty, manual, and physically demanding, backstretch workers are usually not guaranteed paid sick leave or vacation time although they are at high risk for injuries and chronic illnesses (Kiesler et al., 2013). They remain low-status, powerless individuals who are especially vulnerable to discrimination not only in their work, but also in their daily lives (Rosencrance, 1985).

There is no doubt that Latinos represent a significant portion of the horse workforce in Kentucky. According to Nuñez (2012), there are so many Latinos working on the backstretch of racetracks in Kentucky that the horses have become “bilingual,” responding not only to Spanish but also to Guatemalan and Mexican variations of commands. In addition, it should be noted that not all horse workers are men, and sometimes entire families occupy the backstretch (Kiesler et al., 2013). Indeed, this study includes a Kentucky mother who cares directly for horses.

The Multiple Identities

Even though Hispanic immigrants loom large in public discourse, most of the extant literature is place-specific and involves small populations (e.g. Cleaveland, 2010; 2011; Flippen, 2014; Galarza-Heras & Lazarevic, 2012; Kiesler, Vaughn & Kaur, 2013; Raffaelli et al., 2012;; Villenas, 2001). The research on unauthorized Hispanic immigrants tends to be

limited to farmworkers and focused on the traditional immigrant gateways; i.e. the Southwest and California (e.g. Barragán, 2009; Brick, Callinor & Rosenblum, 2011; Donato, Wagner & Patterson, 2008; Martinez, 2012). Although some elements can be generalized to Kentucky, others cannot.

Female Hispanic immigrants have been studied extensively through the prism of domestic violence and in connection with their children (Fix & Zimmermann, 2001, Reina, Maldonado & Lehman, 2012; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011), but rarely as workers and never in Kentucky. The participants in this study are simultaneously immigrant, unauthorized, Latina mothers living in the new southern immigrant gateway that is Kentucky. Although some literature, for instance *Under Siege: Life for low-income Latinos in the South* (2009), mentions the circumstances in Kentucky as analogous to North Carolina, this Intersectionalist study presents an original perspective. Insofar as the participants are simultaneously members of each group and yet form a separate category, it is appropriate to summarize what is known about each.

Immigrants

Even though immigrants make up over one-tenth of the U.S. population, and nearly half of them are from Latin America, the Latino presence in Kentucky is relatively new (Anderson et al., 2002; Baumann, 2014). Historically, Latino immigrants have tended to gravitate towards urban areas in the Southwest of the United States, but in recent decades there has been a population shift towards more rural areas where jobs have become available (Raffaelli et al., 2012). Since the 1990s, the immigrant population in Kentucky has tripled (Anderson et al., 2002). Also, even more recently, as some states like Georgia and Arizona have enacted newly restrictive policies towards immigrants, Latinos have been moving within the United States to

new areas. Different places provide different contexts of reception for immigrants, but in general it can be said that rural communities are often ill-equipped or unwilling to welcome and integrate newly arrived Latino immigrants (Raffaelli et al, 2012) and therefore present more challenges to integration. For instance, in Kentucky, many rural communities lack public transportation, affordable housing, and have limited or no bilingual law enforcement personnel, all of which contribute to a lack of social integration for Latino families.

In general, immigration is considered successful when integration into the new society is achieved, in all its social, cultural, economic and political aspects (Reina, Maldonado & Lehmann, 2013). However, these same authors have asserted that integration is simultaneously a gendered and ethnoracialized phenomenon that is affected by the opportunities –or lack thereof- presented by the new community. In other words, not every member of a household achieves integration to the same extent and at the same pace. Women may integrate differently, and more or less, than men.

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that poverty and chronic stress, which include living in a hostile environment and fear of deportation, are positively correlated with domestic violence (Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). In view of the media metanarrative about unauthorized Latinos and the acrimonious public battle on immigration, it can be said that stress is a constant in the lives of the unauthorized (Blake, 2014; Sedigh, 2014; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). It is possible that some domestic violence may be attributed to endless stress. Finally, poverty tends to encourage concentration of certain cultural groups in certain housing areas because only in those areas are the rents affordable to them (Seitles, 1998). Concentration in certain areas may also be the result of the policies of the renters. For instance, certain agencies may scrutinize the

documents of potential renters while others may not. In Kentucky, various factors may combine to restrict mobility of unauthorized immigrants and increase their isolation, such as a lack of public transportation, the financial inability to purchase a car, and Kentucky's denial of driver's licenses to the unauthorized.

Unauthorized

It is important to note that the category of "illegal immigrant" did not exist before 1888, when the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed (Ngai, 2004). Generally, immigration to the United States occurred mostly in a climate of open doors. The White foreigners simply arrived and, if admitted, stayed and became American (Ngai, 2004). Today, however, the influx over the Southern border is Latino and non-White (Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011; deGuzman, 2012; Passel & Cohn, 2011). The United States' contemporary response to the issue of immigrant illegality has been and remains highly contradictory (Espenshade & Belanger, 1998). On one hand, immigration laws have created the category of "undocumented immigrant" for those who, while present in the country, have no authorization to reside or to work. At the same time, the labor market demands the presence of these low-wage workers. States and law enforcement, necessarily sensitive to the needs of the economy, enforce the law to varying degrees. Indeed, while immigration policies are pivotal to shaping immigrant outcomes, "It is institutions that mediate these policies in their implementation" (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012, p. 4). Coutin (1993) argues that as local and state officials interpret the laws regulating immigrants, they create spaces of restrictive immigration enforcement that limit the extent to which immigrants are able to experience their rights in a variety of spheres of life. As a result "the daily lives of undocumented immigrants become saturated with restrictions" (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012, p. 3). Thus has evolved "the construction of 'migrant illegality' whereby

migrants are incorporated *en masse* into the economy of the nation-state while their social presence is criminalized” (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012, p. 3). Espenshade and Belanger (1998) have described the contradictory message as one where undocumented immigrants are “illegal” subjects worthy of disparagement in popular discourse and of exploitation in popular practice.

Research conducted by Hall, Greenman and Farkas (2010) has shown a gross 17 percent wage disparity between documented and undocumented Mexican immigrant men. In addition, they found that although many immigrants start at low-prestige, low-paying jobs but later move on to better ones, “this may not be true of undocumented immigrants, whose lack of legal authorization to work in the United States presents a barrier to switching employers” (p. 495). As all the participants of this study are unauthorized, they too can be expected to have limited employment mobility.

One reason for unauthorized workers’ inability to pursue better pay or work conditions could be use by employers of the online program E-verify (Kentucky Human Resources, 2009). E-verify is a free online database provided by the U. S. government to employers to facilitate checking the eligibility of potential employees. After inputting a Social Security number, the program will show if that number is authentic and also the name associated with that number (Kentucky Human Resources, 2009). Before E-verify, undocumented applicants could just invent a Social Security number and provide it to an employer, but today, this is no longer possible. To work where E-verify is used, an unauthorized worker must obtain (usually, purchase for the sum of several hundred dollars) a Social Security number and obtain identity papers that match that number. As a result, a whole industry of false identity papers has arisen. A complete set (Social Security card and matching ID card) in Kentucky costs around \$200 (Mejía, E., personal communication, September 15th, 2014).

Although the latest and still applicable Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 required employers to ascertain the work authorization status of new employees or face sanctions, this provision has not been enforced. According to Passel and Cohn (2010), the combination of tacit cooperation of employers and the virtual non-enforcement of employer sanctions has allowed large numbers of undocumented immigrants to integrate into the American labor market, where in 2010 they already constituted over 5 percent of the overall civilian workforce,

Although in theory all workers enjoy protection from abusive employer practices, the reality is that the undocumented in Kentucky are vulnerable to exploitation (Cleaveland, 2010; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). This is particularly alarming because the undocumented in Kentucky are highly concentrated in dangerous jobs in the horse industry and in agriculture.

In 2007, Hadley, Galea, Nandi, Lopez, Strongarone and Ompad surveyed undocumented Mexican migrants in New York City and discovered that twenty-eight percent of respondents had experienced hunger and could not afford to buy food in the six months previous to the survey. Since Latino families living in rural farm areas fare worse economically than their urban counterparts” (Raffaelli et al, 2012, p. 561), one can infer that food insecurity affects at least one quarter of Kentucky’s undocumented immigrants, in particular because their lack of legal status excludes them from most social safety nets.

Some research has linked the circumstances in which Hispanic youth live to the violence exhibited in gangs and elsewhere. According to Solis (2003), discriminatory immigration laws and economic relations force migrants to enter “an illegal underground culture of violence later reinforced by labor abuse and even racial or physical maltreatment, along with other problems more common to poor immigrants in general” (p. 19). The state of

illegality can be seen as a violence against immigrants that engenders violent reactions in youth as a way to resolve their inner conflicts (Solis, 2003). According to Chomsky (2007) the American capitalist system allows immigrants, particularly unauthorized immigrants, to form a powerless underclass.

Latina

Mexican, and indeed all Latino migration is known to be a gendered process, where men tend to migrate first while women tend to accompany or follow them later (Donato, Wagner & Patterson, 2008). The journey can be traumatic: in *Under Siege* (2009), 89 percent of female respondents said that the journey was “more violent” for women and often included rape (p. 31).

When they arrive, female immigrants join or form families and have children. Landale and Oropesa (2007) have shown that the percentage of family households is higher for all Hispanics than for non-Hispanic whites and blacks. In addition, they noted, as a result of their high fertility rates, the growth rate for the Hispanic population in the United States in 2006 was four times that of the total U.S. population (p. 382). By analyzing data from the 2010 census, Passel, Cohn and Lopez (2011) concluded that Hispanics accounted for more than half of the United States’ population growth from 2000 to 2010, increasing by 43%. Although research has recognized both national origin and generational differences between immigrant women, all the study participants are foreign-born and therefore are first-generation immigrants, characterized by high acculturative stress, maintenance of the Spanish language, and high fertility rates (Landale & Oropesa, 2007; Lutz, 2006; Villenas, 2001).

There is little literature on the mental health of Latina first-generation immigrants. However, investigators concur that they face major stressors that can include:

moving to a new culture, assuming a minority position in society, experiencing discrimination and prejudice from the majority sector, leaving an extended family network, facing financial strain, struggling with language barriers, and possibly feeling unsafe due to immigration legality and neighborhood safety issues. (Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006, p 1285)

These stressful experiences can also include living in a hostile environment, states of hypervigilance, and the pervasive presence of fear that is synonymous with being unauthorized (Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). In addition, research by Raffaelli et al. (2012) has supported the idea that immigrant Latina mothers who experience discrimination or challenges accessing resources in their communities have lower levels of individual and family well-being. Katsiaficas and Suarez-Orozco (2013) contend that immigrant women face deeper structural challenges than do men:

[in 2008] immigrant women were twice as likely as immigrant men to be widowed, divorced, or separated; were less likely than immigrant men to have a bachelor's or advanced degree; and were more likely than immigrant men to be living in poverty. (p. 287)

Another stressor may be American norms regarding physical appearance and beauty that are different from those in Latinas' home countries. Common Latino features such as dark skin and black hair may be deemed undesirable, and this may impact their psychological well-being (Katsiaficas & Suarez-Orozco, 2013). Furthermore, the negative portrayal of the Hispanic immigrants in public discourse, in the media and even in personal exchanges, can affect their feelings of self-worth, resulting in loss of national pride and depression (Sullivan & Rehm, 2005).

Food insecurity is yet another stress-causing factor, known to be associated to poor physical health and mental health as well as behavioral outcomes among women and children (Hadley et al., 2007). Nationally, Raffaelli et al. (2012) note, food insecurity affects 11.5% of the U.S. population. In contrast, they estimate food insecurity rates for Latino households to be “as high as 53%-60%” (p. 561).

In conclusion, even though there is little research available on the mental health of Latina first-generation immigrants, it can be said that their lives are characterized by extreme and never-ending stress. Of immigrating Latinos, Villenas (2001) asserts, women face the most disadvantage because of their position under the patriarchy that characterizes Latino culture. In addition, being both female and unauthorized entails extra risk, as employers may seek to obtain sexual favors, capitalizing on the woman’s inability to complain:

Latina women in the South face the same workplace challenges that other Latinos face. But, in addition to the other difficulties – wage theft, injuries, discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, and retaliation – they suffer high rates of sexual harassment and crime victimization. (*Under Siege*, 2009, p. 28)

Latina women suffer high acculturative stress, which can be compounded by discrimination, financial strain and language barriers (Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). They suffer high rates of sexual harassment and exploitation (*Under Siege*, 2009). Although there is no literature on the subject, it is acknowledged that the lives of first-generation Latina immigrants are conducted in conditions of extreme stress (Villenas, 2001; Flippen, 2014; *Under Siege*, 2009). Female Latino immigrants may fare less well than men in Kentucky. In addition to the difficulties to integration that characterize Kentucky, such as lack of public transportation, affordable housing and bilingual personnel, female Latino immigrants

also face unfamiliar beauty norms, patriarchal family structures with many children, and frequent sexual harassment. Undocumented Hispanic women are considered to be the most oppressed group (Katsiaficas & Suarez-Orozco, 2013; Villenas, 2001). For this reason, this study involves only women, the weakest of the undocumented Latino immigrants. According to Villenas (2001), immigrating Latinas are the most vulnerable group, because “the racialization of patriarchy and capitalism serves to subjugate women in every way –during immigration, in their job situations, in their roles as transnational mothers, and in their interactions with social services” (p.10). However, while it is indisputable that mostly Latina women (as opposed to Latino men) are associated with receiving social services, Villenas (2001) argues that this is because Latina women engage in the very activities that consolidate settlement of their families such as employment and health and not because they are more needy than men.

Mothers

While acknowledging cultural differences according to national origin, research has shown that familism is a core value held by Latinos of all national origins (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). Familism refers to a collective, rather than individualistic, orientation and implies that family members prioritize the needs of the family unit over their individual desires (Vega, 1995). Latino families tend to be large and close (Galanti, 2003). Flippen (2014) has noted that the strongest predictors of Hispanic women’s work relate to family structure. Married women with children are less likely to work than all other types of immigrant Hispanic women, probably due to the difficulty of balancing family responsibilities and outside employment. Flippen (2014) refers to and supports Menjivar, who in 2000 concluded that there are, at least in some Hispanic groups, cultural prescriptions against married women’s work

Without stereotyping, it can be said that gender roles within Hispanic families, especially first-generation immigrants, tend to be traditional and characterized by patriarchal authority (Galanti, 2003). The man's job is to work hard and to provide financially for the family, to protect the family, and to be the decision maker, whereas the role of the mother is to cook, clean and care for the children (Galanti, 2003). As mentioned previously, it may be culturally unacceptable for women to work outside the home. In any case, because Hispanic women bear most responsibility for family reproduction, they face work/ family conflict and are often unable to have a job (Flippen, 2014).

One can therefore conclude that rural Kentucky presents systemic difficulties for the integration of immigrants in general due to its lack of public transportation and bilingual law enforcement personnel, and to Latino immigrants in particular who may face poverty and food insecurity. Moreover, unauthorized Latinos who work tend to be relegated, with little chances of mobility, to low-paying jobs in service and agriculture without workplace safety protections. These workers, who for the most part lack health insurance, have few legal protections in case of injury or illness in Kentucky. Finally, Latina mothers face additional disadvantage due to patriarchy and their adherence to familism.

Theoretical Framework

Denzin in 2003 made it clear that in the social sciences, all research reflects the standpoint of the inquirer and must adhere to a theory because "there is no longer a God's eye view which guarantees absolute methodological certainty" (pp. 245-246). No researcher can assume an omniscient perspective, but adherence to a theory will at least ensure a consistency of viewpoint. Also, every researcher must recognize his personal standpoint vis-à-vis his participants, including privilege of whiteness, education and so on. Mendieta (2012) has

summarized it as follows: “To unmask and pinpoint contemporary social injustice demands that the critical theorist be attentive to his or her own locus within the society from which and about which he or she theorizes” (p. 459). To be able to appropriately understand where my participants were located at the intersection of multiple identities, and in the pursuit of social justice for them, I selected the theoretical lenses discussed in the following sections. My standpoint will be elaborated in Chapter Three.

Intersectionality

Mahalingam and Rabelo (2013) have traced the origins of Intersectionality. According to them, Intersectionality grew out of feminism when scholars began to note that most early feminist scholarship was about middle-class, educated, white women, while minority women had other social identities (for instance, race) that were also significant in their lives. Warner and Shields (2008) suggest that the theoretical foundation for Intersectionality grew from the study of inequalities, dominance, and oppression, and that any study of gender must “be understood in the context of power relations embedded in social identities” (p. 807). In 1993 Collins, a pivotal figure in Black Feminism, quoting Lorde’s *Sister Outsider* of 1984, asserted that the oppressor “is planted deep within each of us” (p. 123) and that it is not sufficient to examine gender, race, class...as distinctive social hierarchies. Collins in 1998 proposed Intersectionality as a means to examine how the different systems of oppression “mutually construct one another” (p.63). Thus, an individual’s status, gender, race or any other category are not additive systems of subordination but can act jointly with a multiplicative effect. One of the advantages of Intersectionality is that it recognizes multiple mutually reinforcing levels of subordination. In a groundbreaking article Crenshaw (1991) demonstrated how violence towards women of color is completely different from that directed towards White women.

Abused women of color, who are often burdened by poverty, child care responsibilities and lack of job skills, can take less advantage of the shelters and other supports available to abused White women, even if the resources are not racially discriminatory. According to Crenshaw (1991), women of color suffer at the intersection of gender and class oppression in addition to discriminatory employment and housing practices as well as a high unemployment rate, so they tend to not be able to take advantage of the available resources. Mahalingan and Rabelo (2013) have indeed proposed that the adoption of an intersectional framework would focus on how the “embodiment of various social identities simultaneously affects the lives of an immigrant” (p. 31). Warner and Shields (2013) assert that, “At its core, Intersectionality is the embodiment in theory of the real-world fact that systems of inequality, from the experiential to the structural, are interdependent” (p. 804). Flippen (2014) agrees that Intersectionality is an appropriate lens to study immigrant Hispanic women, because:

...they experience multiple, interrelated constraints on employment owing to their position as low-skill workers in a labor market highly segregated by gender and nativity, to their status as members of a largely undocumented population, and as wives and mothers in an environment characterized by significant work-family conflict. (p. 404)

Each of the participants of this study is immigrant, unauthorized, Latina and a mother.

Although each may also belong to other groups, we know that the afore-mentioned entail discrimination and marginalization. I agree with Villenas (2001) that Intersectionality is useful to examine how Latina diaspora mothers are differently and simultaneously “oppressed as women, as brown people, as transnational laborers, as undocumented ‘citizens’ and so on” (pp. 10-11). Intersectionality is the lens through which I have looked at the literature and interpreted the data.

The participants are not, however, seen only from the deficit perspective. The fact that there are multiple levels of disadvantage, according to Collins (1998), can actually be an advantage, as it enables the participants to have a privileged viewpoint. Mann (2004) supports Collins and explains: “The more layers of oppression that a group experiences has the concomitant affect (sic) of producing the most visionary standpoint. Put differently, the most oppressed group will have the clearest standpoint” (p. 139). There is little doubt that the participants experience numerous layers of oppression, but are there some advantages that can be derived from this? Data and the analysis thereof reveal if the participants have derived any benefit, such as strength, resiliency or self-confidence.

Critical Race Theory

Although W.E.B. Dubois had predicted in 1903 that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line,” (p. 1), it was not until after the Civil Rights era that scholars developed Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a way to study and attempt to understand - with emancipatory aspirations- the situation of people of color in the United States (Treviño, Harris & Wallace, 2008). Its original mandate was social justice in the area of law, but CRT later expanded to include other fields such as sociology, psychology, and education. In the past decades, scholars have begun to use the tools of CRT to consider the lives of other oppressed minorities such as gays and Latinos (Warner & Shields, 2013). Fan (1997) also holds that CRT holds promise for studies in the area of immigration, as it privileges the voices of outsiders by employing story-telling and focuses on the interrelationships of race, gender, and other identity characteristics. Collins, in *Fighting words: Black women and the search for justice* (1989), has defined CRT’s mission as to include study of “institutional practices that actively grapple with central questions facing groups of people differently placed in specific, political, social and

historical contexts characterized by injustice” (xiv). Today CRT is used in such areas as immigration, language rights, sexism, sexual oppression and citizen status to shed light on the discrimination suffered by marginalized populations and to propose radical action for change (Treviño et al., 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). CRT is committed to social justice, and to the tenet that knowledge, obtained through concrete experience, is power (Mann, 2004).

Awareness, or knowledge, builds power because “understanding the ways one is oppressed enables one to take action to change oppressive forces” (Seiler, 2006, no page). Furthermore, from her research on Black gay and bisexual men, Bowleg (2012) has concluded that belonging to multiple subordinate categories can create a space for personal growth. Thus, CRT aims to enable the “voice of color” and to do so, “offers the telling of stories that recount the lived experience of people of color from their own frame of reference” (Treviño et al., 2008, p. 8-9). The concept of people of color and, indeed, the lens of CRT now extend to include Latinos, the largest minority group in the U.S. This study illustrates how extant laws, policy and regulations, however well-intentioned, can have the effect of coercing some women into actions that are dubious or even illegal. Using Critical Race Theory, my aim is to advocate “for justice for people who find themselves occupying positions on the margins” (Treviño, Harris & Wallace, 2008, p.8.),

Story-Telling

Both CRT and Intersectionality have opened academia to the value of “story-telling,” whereby the participant voices how he or she perceives the world. Intersectionality in particular works well with personal experience approaches in “which contradiction and complexity abound, and where the opportunity to ask ‘one other question’ and to explore different and individual connections would seem appropriate” (Cole, 2009, p. 566).

In addition, the narratives can enable the participants to create “counterstories” of their own and to reclaim the dignity and value that is rarely referenced in the mostly deficit-framing public discourse (Villenas, 2001).

Finally, Intersectionalist theory admits the dialogical and discursive nature of the relationship between narrator and researcher. Rather than being only a vector for the narrator’s voice, the researcher is present in the study. Together, researcher and narrator aim to achieve mutual understanding or intersubjectivity, to the enlightenment of both (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). This study involves participants who are, for the most part, on friendly terms with me. While employed by the public school district, I perform outreach duties within the Hispanic community to both legal and unauthorized residents. In order to fulfill that role adequately, I need to have a comprehensive understanding of their lives, so I will benefit professionally from the interviews. Likewise, the participants will benefit, as the interview will allow an opportunity to personally request any of the services and references that I provide.

Critical Race Theory has enabled me to recognize the emancipatory value of the personal stories of the participants, while Intersectionality has supported their appurtenance to different groups with multiplicative effects. Both theories have helped me select the basic design of the study: a phenomenological inquiry that will reveal themes across individuals. Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality are the lenses through which the data will be analyzed as both recognize that multiple levels of disadvantage can have multiplicative effects. Both theories privilege story-telling, and both have emancipatory social justice as a goal.

Summary

The estimated 11 million undocumented residents – of whom more than half are Hispanic- are but the latest wave of a long current of immigration to the United States from the

Southern border (Barragán, 2009; Bickerton, 2000; Cleaveland, 2010; deGuzman, 2012; Galarza, 1964). The fact that they are not White, coupled with the economic recession of the last decade, has pushed them to prominence in public and political discourse. The presence in Kentucky of large numbers of undocumented Latinos is relatively new and reflects a contemporary trend of expansion beyond traditional destinations in the Southwest (Baumann, 2014; Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011; Brown & Patten, 2014). In general, extant literature indicates that membership in the immigrant population, being unauthorized, being Latina and being a mother situate the participants at an unenviable cross-point of disadvantage (Donato, Wagner & Patterson, 2008; Gleeson & Gonzalez, 2012; Hall, Greenman & Farkas, 2010; Katsiaficas & Suarez-Orozco, 2013; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). Researchers who studied hunger among Latino immigrants have estimated food insecurity rates to be as high as 53 percent, compared to a national average of 11 percent (Hadley et al., 2007; Raffaelli et al., 2012). Undocumented Hispanics in Kentucky are excluded from most federal and state-funded welfare programs. However, many have families of mixed status that include some citizen children (Fix, 2001; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011) and so do receive some benefits. The undocumented Latino population in Kentucky, estimated at close to 100,000, is composed mainly of Mexican and Guatemalan nationals (Baumann, 2014). While there are jobs in Kentucky, they are relatively low-skill and low-paid. All Latinos hold to the core value of familism. Latinas, especially first-generation immigrants, tend to live in traditional families characterized by patriarchy (Galanti, 2003; Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006; Vega, 1995). They have high fertility rates (Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011) and, for various reasons often do not work outside the home (Flippen, 2014). The literature indicates that Kentucky, being a mainly rural state, is not a location favorable for undocumented Hispanics. This study will describe the experience of being an unauthorized Latina immigrant in the state of

Kentucky, what barriers it erects, and how some are able to mitigate its effects in order to conduct their daily lives.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Because every study is constructed to some degree, according to Maxwell (2005), “the question you face is not primarily *whether* or *to what extent* you prestructure your study, but *in what ways* you do this, and *why*” (p. 81). This chapter will first explain the reasons behind my choices related to the research design in order to understand what barriers are created by being unauthorized and also how unauthorized mothers in Kentucky negotiate those barriers. Both questions revolve around the idea of undocumentedness, which is the focus of my interest. Undeniably, these women present in Kentucky manage to conduct their daily lives, but living without papers creates extra difficulties that must be surmounted in whatever ways are available to them. This qualitative study will utilize the tools of phenomenology to ascertain what the difficulties are, and also what the participants employ as resources and strategies to overcome them. The second section of this chapter will detail any anticipated threats to validity that have derived from my design, my presence in the study, as well as the actions I took to address both. The third section will explain my methods for gathering data, and the fourth section will describe how I analyzed the data.

Design

Qualitative Methods

According to Maxwell (2005), qualitative methods are particularly suited for studies that aim at “Understanding the particular *context* within which the participants act, and the influence this context has on their actions” as well as “Understanding the *meaning*, for the participants in the study, of the events, situations, experiences...they are involved in” (p. 22-23).

Being unauthorized in Kentucky can be considered a context, since the daily lives of the participants take place within both legal and social constraints, and an aim of the study is to discover how their status influences their daily lives and actions. Moreover, this study also aims to reveal what meanings the participants ascribe to their various lived experiences of being a Hispanic immigrant in a majority White state such as Kentucky. As such, the objectives call for qualitative methods of inquiry.

The research questions and the methods must agree in their philosophical fundamentals, in particular with the ontological and epistemological paradigms that underpin qualitative research. The ontological paradigm at work in this study reflects the idea that there are multiple realities that are all equally valid (Maxwell, 2005). Being unauthorized has affected the participants differently. Their experiences will differ, as will the actions they take to mitigate the difficulties it causes. Since the phenomenon creates a different reality for each participant, qualitative methods are suitable as they embrace the ontology of multiple realities (Maxwell, 2005). How can the researcher know what difficulties are created by being unauthorized? It can only be learned from the participants. The epistemological paradigm of qualitative research applicable to this study implies that all knowledge is subjective and must be gathered from the individuals who possess it (Creswell, 2013). As personal stories are needed to reveal this knowledge, for this reason also, the research questions call for qualitative methods. As most of the participants have had little formal education, a personal interview was chosen as the information-gathering method because the interview method is very direct and can reflect personal expressive style as well as individual views. This choice aligns with the epistemological paradigm of qualitative methods. The axiological paradigm of qualitative research refers to the values that the researcher brings to the study. As previously stated, today

no researcher can aspire to a God's eye view of the world. "*Any view is a view from some perspective*" affirms Maxwell (2005, p.39). With my background, standpoint and biases, I am present in the study, even if I am an outsider and do not share the illegal status of the participants. I am the research instrument (Maxwell, 2005), so who I am matters.

Phenomenology

From a methodological point of view, qualitative research offers several options. Van Manen (1990), an early phenomenologist, clarified the difference between phenomenology and other qualitative methods. He explained, "Generally, the social sciences such as sociology, psychology and ethnography aim at explanation, while phenomenology aims at description and interpretation" (p. 43). In addition, Van Manen (1990) states that the goal of a phenomenological text is to "make us 'see' or 'grasp' something in a manner that enriches our understanding of everyday life experience" (p. 68). My intention was not to explain *why* my participants were unauthorized, but what being so *was like* for them. Since my objective was to first understand and then present what being unauthorized is like, Van Manen and thus phenomenology was selected.

Other methodologists who influenced my work are Vagle (2014), Finlay (2008) and Dahlberg (2006). Vagle (2014) holds that the phenomenological method is not prescriptive but flexible; it must bend according to the research question, which must be before the researcher at all stages of the analysis. He asserts: "In many phenomenological studies it is not necessary, nor even desirable, to ask the same questions in the same way" (p. 79). Since the oral aspect of an interview precludes asking exactly the same question in exactly the same way each time, and since the participants were to be allowed to digress in their replies, phenomenology offered the flexibility I needed. In addition, I followed the data analysis process advocated by Vagle

(2014). Although her work is centered on healthcare, Finlay (2008) clarified for me the concept of essences in phenomenology and Dahlberg (2006) the idea of a lifeworld of the participants.

There are, however, different paths within phenomenology although all of them aim at explicating an element of lived experience, which “may be considered the starting point and end point of phenomenological research” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 57). According to Giorgi (1989), certain features are common to all “variations [of phenomenology], namely that the research is *descriptive*, explores the *intentional relationship* between persons and situations, uses *phenomenological reductions*, and provides knowledge of psychological *essences* or structures of meanings immanent in human experience” (as cited in Finlay, 2008, p. 4). This study aims to first identify, understand, and then describe for the reader the “essence” of undocumentedness. It should “illuminate[s] the essential characteristics of the phenomenon without which it would not be that phenomenon” (Dahlberg, 2006, p.11). The phenomenon of undocumentedness is a social one, constructed by man-made laws and regulations, not an inner perception or feeling, which is experienced by the participants in a myriad of ways. Thus this study does explore what Giorgi called “the *intentional relationships* between persons and situations” (as cited in Finlay, 2008, p.4). Dahlberg (2006) further clarified that the researcher is not who gives the phenomenon its meaning. Rather, “the meaning is disclosed in the researching act that takes places between the researcher and the phenomenon” (p. 12). In other words, the meaning will emerge through an inductive analysis of the interview data.

Ethical and Political Considerations

Immigrants to the United States who are unauthorized are deportable at any time for any reason. Their lives are conducted on the margins of society. They try to work towards goals such as saving money and raising a family without drawing attention to themselves. As

described previously, unauthorized residents in Kentucky have few legal protections and endure high rates of various kinds of abuse (Kiesler et al., 2013; Rosencrance, 1985; *Under Siege*, 2009). Being a female unauthorized immigrant compounds the difficulties. For the most part, female Latina immigrants live in traditional families characterized by patriarchy where the woman is responsible for the home and children (Donato, Wagner & Patterson, 2008; Landale & Oropesa, 2007; Lutz, 2006; *Under siege*, 2009; Villenas, 2001). As Latinas, they espouse the value of familism, which prioritizes family concerns over individual desires. As a result, they experience significant work-home conflict (Flippen, 2014). Deportation must be avoided at all costs because it would mean separation from their children. Therefore, this population is a vulnerable group and, as such, deserving of care on the part of the researcher. In addition, my research goals required me to ask questions on sensitive topics such as how the participants manoeuver to overcome systemic barriers and how they had reached the U.S. without inspection at the border. Some answers could be expected to reveal contentious or even illegal strategies, some of which could have legal ramifications and be cause for deportation. If they were honest with me, they would be incurring risk.

Consequently, it became crucial to protect the participants so that no harm could come to them as a result of participating in this research. I decided that their contributions would be anonymous. I used pseudonyms for all persons named in the text and to alter all identifying details, including names of places and organizations, to avoid the risk of identifying them. Furthermore, out of the numerous potential participants who fit the pre-determined criteria, I only approached those who knew me somewhat, and conducted the interviews in surroundings familiar to the participants; in their homes. To avoid the anxiety that might be caused by the

presence of a recording device, I chose to not tape the interviews. I undertook the task of taking notes by hand and of re-constituting the narratives.

Data Collection

Access and Role

I gained access to the participants through my role in the Hispanic community. Since 2008, I have been the Migrant Advocate in my town. Part of my job consists in talking to farm-working families, both authorized and not. In addition, as a bilingual school employee I have had contact with many Latino families through community work. For instance, for six consecutive years, I assisted Latina mothers to sign up their children for Angel Tree, a Salvation Army-organized endeavor that assures Christmas gifts for the children in low-income families. I interpreted for speakers of Spanish at the annual free clinic for four years. For three days every spring, I assisted Latino parents at a pre-school screening event. I have interpreted for Latino parents at countless functions within the schools. In addition, since 2012 I have been assisting parents with their teenage children's applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a presidential executive action that provides a Social Security number and a three-year work permit for those who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16. Because the DACA application is usually prepared by a lawyer and I have done it for free, my contribution has engendered a lot of good will in the Latino community. As I work for the public schools, not for any law enforcement-connected agency, and also because I do not transfer idle talk, I am considered safe and many confide in me. My contact with Hispanics has facilitated my access to women who fit the criteria for this research.

Of the ten participants in this study, I met seven in my capacity as Migrant Advocate and two through volunteer work in the community. One participant, Amelia, was referred by a

friend who provided a phone number so I could set up an appointment to talk about the study. The children of Lucía and Susana were in the Migrant Program in years past, but are no longer. Natalia's, Claudia's and Marisa's children are currently in the Migrant Education Program. Two of the participants, Antonia and Yvette, previously shared their home with young men whom I had met in tobacco fields. When I visited the boys at home, I met the ladies. The young men are long gone, but the ladies and I have remained on friendly terms. In the past, I had assisted with the DACA applications of the grown children of two participants, Angustias and Liliana, so I had their phone numbers on file and a store of gratitude upon which to draw. When I had explained the purpose of the study and that their participation would be anonymous, no one said no. Every woman I approached agreed to schedule an interview.

To Miles and Huberman (1994), data is strengthened if “your intentions are unequivocal for informants, what you are studying, how you will be collecting information, [and] what you [will] do with it” (p.266) as the participants will feel less pressure to dissimulate. I was honest with my participants for this study. First, I told them that I was a student in a doctoral program. This was surprising to some in view of my age. Then, I clarified that this was a personal project unrelated to my job, and gave the purpose of the study, i.e. to foment a greater understanding of the difficulties they face as unauthorized Latina immigrants in Kentucky. Finally, I requested their anonymous input on the subject and explained how their identities would be concealed. For this study, my role was essentially that of a sympathetic listener.

Trust. My relationship with the respondents was important in order to elicit data. In the Hispanic community of my town, I am known as a person sympathetic to Latinos and trustworthy to the extent I do not report to any authorities. It has taken years of commitment to achieve this reputation. It has helped that most Hispanics consider that the public schools and

by extension, me, are “safe” in that all children, authorized or unauthorized, have the same rights to public education. As an example, no Social Security documents are required to enroll, the Free and Reduced Lunch Program is available to all students, and even very costly services such as deaf interpreters or speech therapy can be obtained for unauthorized children who need them. Since I began my job in 2008, I have often been privy to information of dubious legality, such as the purchase and use of false identity documents, the details of border-crossings and the ways around obstacles that Hispanics face. A measure of the trust I enjoy are the participants’ stories of the ways they face their barriers, some of which could be called illegal.

Reciprocity. To all participants, this study was presented as an opportunity to voice their opinions on the subject of being unauthorized. One welcomed it by saying “At least I can unburden myself by talking about it” (Liliana, personal communication, December 29, 2014). To each, I explained that the interview was a personal favor, un-related to my job and that her contribution, together with others’ would be used to for a dissertation. However, in most cases, I think women agreed to be interviewed as a gesture of reciprocity in our friendly relations. In my Migrant Advocate role, I am usually the giver and the helper; rarely do the recipients get to give back. No participant asked for anything in exchange for her time. Nevertheless, to a few participants, I had something to give on the day of the interview. In one case, I handed over a free translation that I had performed. In another case, after the interview I helped the participant fill out some legal paperwork. To a third, I gave the contact number of the local Spanish-language Alcoholics Anonymous group. However, to seven participants, I gave nothing but my thanks.

Participant Selection and Sampling

According to Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995), in qualitative research the purpose of sampling is to discover the nature of the universe to be studied. For this paper, the universe is the lifeworld of unauthorized Latinas in Kentucky. To this effect, Coyne (1997) has concluded that: “All sampling in qualitative research is purposefulThe sample is always intentionally selected according to the needs of the study” (p. 629). To answer the research questions, i.e. to identify the barriers faced by unauthorized mothers in Kentucky, as well as to learn what these women do to overcome them, a sample of women who were simultaneously unauthorized, Latina and mothers was needed. In accordance with Patton (1990) who said that the logic behind purposeful sampling is choosing information-rich cases, I selected participants whom I knew had experienced the phenomenon of being undocumented in Kentucky.

The criteria for participants were chosen in advance, following Sandelowski, Holditch-Davis and Harris (1992) who stated that “selective sampling refers to a decision made prior to beginning a study to sample subjects according to a preconceived, but reasonable initial set of criteria” (p. 302), and only later did I search for participants who fit the criteria. Therefore, for this study, participants were selected by criteria-based sampling. Every participant had to be an immigrant, unauthorized, Latina mother. The first criterion, immigrant, refers to a segment of the population of the United States. The second criterion, unauthorized, is the phenomenon under investigation. The third, Latina, refers to national origin and language. I approached only Mexican and Guatemalan participants, as these comprise the majority of the unauthorized in Kentucky (Baumann, 2014). The final criterion was to be actively parenting children, since familism is an important Latino value (Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006) and patriarchy ensures that the mothers, who are mainly responsible for children, interact with the world outside their

home (Flippen, 2014; Galanti, 2003; Villenas, (2001). Finally, among the women in my circle of acquaintance who fit those criteria, I chose those who had been in Kentucky for a number of years, excluding recent arrivals, since undocumentedness as a phenomenon would be experienced over time. Adhering strictly to these criteria enhanced the credibility of the study.

In contrast with quantitative approaches, qualitative studies do not usually have predetermined sample sizes (Kuper, Lingard & Levinson, 2008). It therefore fell to me to decide what would be an appropriate sample size. I followed what Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995) called “Sampling for meaning” (p. 95) which is selection of participants that enables an understanding of the insiders’ perspective of their system, universe or lifeworld. In other words, within the group of women who fit my pre-established criteria, I needed to sample enough to be able to discover their insiders’ perspective. Dukes (1984), guarding against “the danger of either seeing what we want to see- rather than what is there to be seen – or falling prey to the contingent facts of a particular case” (p.200), recommended expanding a small sample to include three, five or perhaps even ten subjects. The aim of this study being to show undocumentedness from the perspective of Latino mothers in Kentucky in order to further understanding about their unique challenges, I decided to include ten participants.

Demographics of Participants

Ten unauthorized Hispanic immigrant mothers were interviewed, whose ages ranged from 38 to 44 years. Seven were Mexican and three were Guatemalan, reflecting more or less the proportions of unauthorized Hispanic immigrants in Kentucky. The participants’ length of presence in the United States ranged from a minimum of 11 years to a maximum of 20 years. Their length of residence in the state of Kentucky ranged from three to eleven years. These

individuals were not newcomers, having had years of experience of the phenomenon under study; that of living without papers.

Half of the participants were married to their partner, while three were in long-term cohabitation relationships. Two were single-parenting as a result of separation.

All participants were attached to families of mixed status, meaning that at least some of the children were American citizens, having been born in the U.S.A. Every participant had children in the U.S. Three of them also left children behind in their home country, from whom they had been separated for years. Most of the participants had little education. One was completely illiterate and one had a few years of training in nursing, not having completed the course. The rest had from a few months to a few years of elementary education.

Six of the ten participants worked at the time of the interviews and four did not. One participant had never worked. One worked with horses, one worked in a factory, two in cleaning, one on a farm, and one engaged in business. However, of the four who were not actively working, three had worked previously in Kentucky. Half of the participants had worked in tobacco in the past.

Interviews

Because I expected all of the participants to have some difficulty in reading and writing, I conducted face-to-face oral interviews with each participant. All the field data was gathered in the early months of 2015. All interviews took place in their homes at various times of day at the convenience of the participants, totaling approximately 18 hours. Each interview lasted between an hour and a half and two hours and was conducted in Spanish. In some homes, children were present but were shooed away by their mothers. After a short friendly exchange, I asked the questions listed in the interview protocol (Appendix B). The questions were

deliberately broad and open-ended, such as “Can you tell me about your work?” For the reasons explained previously, no interviews were taped. I took copious handwritten notes and typed up the interviews within 24 hours. During the reconstitution of text, changes were made to avoid identifying the participant, such as names of husbands and children. These were highlighted in the transcript. I translated some of the interviews informally into English to be read by two of my dissertation committee members who were not fluent in Spanish.

As I drove up in my car through the neighborhood to the home, I observed first the lodgings from the outside and then from the inside. I took descriptive notes in English before or after the interviews and included them in the interview write-up for analysis, except in two cases when I returned to the site because I had forgotten to take descriptive notes on the day of the interview. I wrote analytic memos at various times, sometimes shortly after I wrote up the interview, sometimes weeks later as I interacted with the texts during three rounds of coding. Each interview followed a semi-structured protocol. Out of concern for the rigor and validity of this study, conversations were semi-structured around questions on work, transportation, children and schools, as well as more general questions on injustice, aspirations and fears. Each interview was pre-arranged and I was expected. Every interview followed the same pattern: a short, friendly, personal exchange, followed by the protocol questions. In accordance with Vagle (2014) who says “I err to the side of letting them talk and then taking the responsibility for regaining the focus on the phenomenon” (p.80) the participants were allowed to digress from the topic of the question; the next question being only introduced when the participant stopped talking.

Member checking

After data analysis had revealed some tentative themes, I arranged to meet with four of the participants to validate my analysis. The number was chosen for convenience. Spring had come and some participants were not available to meet with me. At these meetings, I presented the document included in Appendix D and read it aloud to the respondents, pausing to allow them to interject at will. The four participants with whom I discussed emergent themes agreed with me except on the topic of formal marriage. I therefore amended my explanation to reflect their views.

Data Analysis

Procedure

I conducted the interviews during January and February of 2015, as I came into contact with women who, I knew, fit the criteria for this study. Immediately after each interview, I typed up the participant's story with my observations, and read the complete text holistically. At the end of January, I translated the first participant's (Amelia) narrative into English, as well as that of Natalia, to show my advisors the kind of data I was obtaining. Although no coding was begun until I had interviewed all ten participants, some speculative ideas had already emerged from my holistic readings of the narratives, such as the theme described below.

Quantitative element. Upon reading the first interview with Amelia, I noticed that she had frequently mentioned being afraid. I was therefore sensitive to the topic of fear when I interviewed the other participants, and I made careful note each time it was mentioned. However, it was not until later, when I began coding all the narratives, that I resorted to what Miles and Huberman (1994) call "counting" (p. 253), a technique that they consider useful for

increasing the validity of a study. I recorded the number of times every participant mentioned the word “*miedo*” (fear) or a synonym such as “*temor*” (fear) or “*susto*” (fright) in their interviews, excluding the times when they used the word in the sentence “*no tengo miedo*” (I have no fear). This was the only quantitative-type analysis included in this study, the results of which are detailed in Chapter Four.

Qualitative process. I followed the six-step analysis process proposed by Vagle (2014). Underpinning his method is a focus on a “Whole-parts-whole process” that means to always look at focal meanings (or significant statements) in relation to the whole (Vagle, 2014, p. 97). This necessitates a close reading of each individual interview while thinking simultaneously about commonalities and differences (step 1 of the analysis). Vagle also recommends a balance between verbatim excerpts, paraphrasing and descriptions/interpretations, as well as “the understanding that [one] is crafting a text- not merely coding, categorizing, making assertions and reporting” (p. 98). Following Vagle (2014) offered the opportunity to analyze both within and across participants, i.e. to analyze each narrative individually, and then to analyze across codes; for instance, to look at all the statements from all participants related to “crossing the border.” Each interview was coded three times individually (steps 2-5) then the ten interviews were examined across codes, such as work, injustice and so on (step 6). The six-step process recommended by Vagle (2014) is detailed as follows:

Step 1: Holistic reading of entire text. I read the ten documents (interview plus observations) with a focus on my two research questions, noting patterns, commonalities and what appeared to be outliers. The purpose of this step is to become attuned to the whole collection event and to gain a general overview perspective.

Step 2: First line-by-line reading with initial coding. Working on each participant's narrative individually, I began the process of searching for meaning. With the objective of discovering significance behind each statement, I circled the part of text that I considered a "significant statement" and assigned to each a phrase (or code) that described meaning. For instance, I circled from Natalia's narrative "I came directly to Louisville, Kentucky, because my sister was here" drawing an arrow to where I assigned it the preliminary code of "Reasons for coming to Kentucky." To explicate some of my thoughts, I wrote in my journal, which according to Vagle (2014) is an example of "bridling, because it allows one to harness what is being read and thought" (p. 99). In this way, I coded each of the ten narratives. At the end of this step, I had listed some 70 codes (see Appendix C), which I began to cluster into similar categories, such as "Childhood in home country" and "Living conditions."

Step 3: Follow-up questions. I reviewed the notes on the document of each interview and wrote questions about parts that were unclear to me, or about the intentionality of certain statements, so as to "clarify intentional meanings that one predicts, at the early stages of analysis, might be important" (Vagle, 2014, p. 99). I addressed these questions when I returned to the participants after all the interviews and after step 6 of the analysis. One such topic was the formal weddings held late in life by three participants. I wondered why, after years of cohabitation and several children, they had bothered to wed.

Step 4: Second line-by-line reading. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the reduction of the data itself enhances its credibility. With this in mind, I sought to confirm my initial codes but also to assign new, more general ones to statements that were similar in meaning, to result in fewer codes. I also deleted the few parts deemed insignificant, such as the verbal shooing away of the children present at the interview. This step produced one electronic

document per participant of varying length, the shortest of which was about 4 pages and the longest 7 pages, giving me a total of approximately 80 pages of significant statements. On top of each participant's document, I stapled a yellow half-page on which I noted her demographic information, enabling me to keep track of who was who. I began to notice commonalities among participants from the same country, such as mentions of fear.

Step 5: Third line-by-line reading. To articulate analytic thoughts, I continued the process of reduction by re-reading each significant statement for each participant and, in blue, annotating meanings. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend “subsuming particulars into the general” (p. 260). Accordingly, in my notebook, I began to rename some codes and to collapse some into others. I included the changes in the electronic documents. For instance, I subsumed statements about “Shabby housing” into the more general category “Living conditions” and “Accidents at work” into “Living without health insurance.”

Step 6: Subsequent readings across participants' data. In this step, I began to analyze the data per code rather than per participant, to see if there were commonalities in what several participants had said, for example, about their journey. After printing the 80 pages of significant statements, I cut them into strips with one statement on each, followed by my annotations in blue. I organized the strips into piles per the code on each. For example, all the “Problems with being able to work” statements were in one pile together. In all, I had about 40 “tentative manifestations” (Vagle, 2014, p. 99), or emergent themes, about which I memo-ed in my notebook. After re-reading my research questions, I separated the 40 piles into four categories: Introductory information, Barriers, Strategies to overcome barriers, and Achievements. I typed and printed a one-page document on which I listed the emerging themes. This document, provided in Appendix C, is what I explained to the participants for

member-checking. Later, after visiting my advisor, I decided to divide the Barriers and Strategies sections into two: barriers created by a lack of papers and strategies to overcome them, followed by barriers created by being Latino, and strategies to overcome them.

Threats to Validity

Since qualitative research does not depend on numbers for credibility, there is always a preoccupation with “validity threats,” basically “events or processes that could lead to invalid conclusions” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108). Although the threat of just being wrong cannot be completely eliminated, Miles and Huberman (1994) have distinguished between external validity (generalizability of the conclusions to other contexts) and internal validity (the trustworthiness of the researcher, the data and the procedures). According to Finlay (2008), “While phenomenological findings cannot be ‘generalized’ in any strict scientific sense to wider populations, they can prove relevant to other people and settings” (p. 478). Because generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research, external validity is not a concern for this study. Questions of internal validity must be addressed, even if according to Finlay (2008), “However rich and comprehensive, any one [phenomenological] analysis is, inevitably, incomplete, partial, tentative, emergent, open and uncertain” (p. 6). Finally, the reader should not expect any universal truth from this phenomenological study.

Internal validity (the trustworthiness of the researcher, the data and the procedures) is an issue of concern for qualitative studies. According to Dahlberg (2006), the aim of bracketing (or reduction, or bridling) is the “restraining of the researcher’s personal beliefs, theories and assumptions that otherwise would mislead the understanding of meaning and thus limit the researching openness” (p. 16). Its purpose is to allow the phenomenon to “present itself to us instead of having pre-conceived ideas on (sic) it” (Finlay, 2008, p.5). I utilized Giorgi’s

“phenomenological reductions” in that I acknowledge my biases and assumptions and have taken steps to neutralize them and also because I followed an inductive method of analysis whereby themes were allowed to emerge on their own without much interpretation on my part.

Miles and Huberman (1994) have provided suggestions to improve internal validity, the first of which is “checking for researcher effects” (p. 263). The following paragraphs describe how I have attempted to do so.

Assumptions, Biases and Note-taking

Potential assumptions on my part might be considered threats to the validity of my study. Due to my extended contact with unauthorized immigrants, I had some prior idea of the areas in which the participants could have met difficulty. However, it was necessary to avoid directive interviewing and looking for certain things in the data instead of letting the phenomenon emerge by itself. To counter assumptions, I drafted the questions of the personal communication protocol to be as broad as possible, to wit: work, transportation, schooling, and discrimination in Kentucky. The very general topics allowed participants to take their responses in any way they chose, thus avoiding leading questions and reducing researcher bias.

A bias I recognize is an interest in everything Latino. Although I learned Spanish as an adolescent in Spain, I no longer read peninsular literature, listen to peninsular music or delve into peninsular culture. On the contrary, I read almost exclusively works that involve Latin America. My favorite authors are Laura Esquivel and Carlos Fuentes—both Mexican. I have travelled numerous times to countries in Latin America: Ecuador, Costa Rica and Mexico. In the United States, if I see a Latino in need of interpretation, I will always intervene to help. Although I speak French and Arabic as well as Spanish, the same is not true for the speakers of those languages. My inherent bias is therefore a preference for the Latino participant in any situation.

Although this could have influenced my choice of topic for the dissertation, I have accepted whatever interpretations the participants have given me about their experiences of discrimination and racism, whether I agree with their interpretation or not.

In addition, I admit to a strong bias in favor of the victims of social injustice, especially those who suffer from poverty and lack of opportunity. Because I understand, for the most part, the reasons for their choices, I try not to judge. I serve, not for religious reasons, but because I believe in social justice. My concern for the poor overrides respect for rules and hierarchy. For instance, if someone tells me he is working with false papers, I do not divulge that information, even though I know it could constitute fraud or identity theft according to the law. My bias, then, is to be on the “side” of the unauthorized immigrant. For this study, I have managed this bias by following with integrity an inductive process of data analysis, whereby what can be gleaned from the data emerges from the data itself (Creswell, 2013).

Also, I am female and a feminist. I am convinced that a woman’s emancipation is tied to her economic independence. Faced with any domestic conflict, my first sympathy generally lies with the woman. My bias is that I do believe that having a job is key to a woman’s independence, and I am generally unsympathetic to those who choose to not work. I have attempted to mitigate this bias by limiting my comments during the interviews.

Another potential threat lies in that the interviews were not taped as recommended by Saldaña (2013) and Vagle (2014). This was because my previous experience with taping personal communications had been unsatisfactory. Previous to this study, taped personal communications with Latinos of low educational achievement had produced a lower, almost flat, tone of voice, and an extreme degree of caution about what was said. The results were a lack of anything significant and a tape full of long silences as the participants were too afraid of

the recorder on the table to speak. Thus, I decided to not tape the interviews. To counter this threat, I took extended written notes in Spanish on lined paper, rendering as often as possible what the participant said verbatim. In my life, I have taken a lot of lecture notes, and I am used to it. Even though my notes are mostly illegible to others, I am able to reconstitute almost everything as long as I type them up very quickly. I managed this threat by typing up the field notes for this study within 24 hours of the interview.

An additional threat to validity is that most of the data comes from interviews and not from observation. Experiences of discrimination and prejudice do not occur on a daily basis and cannot be anticipated, so I relied instead on the participants' *stories* of those experiences. However, I included in the material for coding descriptive data about the sites where the interviews took place. Since the sites were also the homes of the participants, observational data were pertinent and revelatory.

A final threat to internal validity concerns translation. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish, and I translated them myself for analysis. While I am a competent translator and familiar with Mexicanisms, there exists nevertheless the possibility of error on my part, which must be acknowledged.

Reactivity

The influence of the researcher on the participants is known as reactivity and constitutes an additional threat to validity, particularly in interview studies (Maxwell, 2005). For this study, there are several factors that might have influenced what the participants said to me. First, I am quite a bit older than my participants whose maximum age was 44 years. At the time of writing, I am 62. Second, I am a White American, a member of the dominant majority in Kentucky. Third, I am educated, a teacher. All of these characteristics distinguish me from the

participants and cannot be minimized. However, Maxwell (1941) says: “the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence, but to understand it and to use it productively” (p. 109). To this avail, I have attempted to address reactivity by acknowledging my personal background and the characteristics that have enabled me to collect strong data.

Personal background

I am the product of my past and my attitudes are the result of earlier experiences. After growing up multilingual in Europe, I worked at the United Nations in Geneva and was eventually assigned to Africa where I collaborated with NGOs such as Save the Children and Caritas to alleviate the horrific conditions of refugees fleeing wars in Ethiopia and South Sudan. It was my first time to witness total destitution and hunger. Profoundly shocked, I abandoned the diplomatic social circle and began to look at things around me through different eyes. Later, I moved to Saudi Arabia to teach. Contrary to popular belief, although Saudi Arabia is affluent for its citizens, there is a vast underclass of impoverished foreign workers and illegal immigrants from developing countries. Upon several occasions, I organized food aid for them, taking my children along to awaken their social conscience.

In 2000, I moved with my family from the Middle East to Kentucky where I have continued to teach. During the coursework for my doctorate, I encountered Catholic Social Thought and was astonished by how closely my own philosophy aligns with it (Kammer, 1991). Six years ago, I was re-assigned to the Migrant Education Program by my public school district, enabling me to come more into contact with the large Hispanic community in the town where I live. Since then it has been my privilege to serve Latinos in various ways, aided by my fluency in Spanish. I am known as “*la maestra que ayuda a los hispanos*” (the teacher who helps Hispanics). My job has afforded me the opportunity to get to know hundreds of Latinos,

almost always in the role of helper or giver of physical items or information. As a result, I have remained on friendly terms with many, which was invaluable to enrolling participants for this study.

Strength of the data

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data is stronger if the field worker is trusted, the respondent is alone with the field worker, and the data is collected in an informal setting. For this study, the interviews were planned to enable the participants to feel at ease: I was familiar to all the participants, the interviews were conducted alone with me, in Spanish, in the homes of the participants, and in a casual conversational tone. My language abilities and familiarity with the Latino experience in Kentucky have favored me as a field worker. As a result of years of teaching, my Spanish can be characterized as almost native. I understand almost all Latino colloquialisms. In addition, I understand what could be termed the jargon of the Latino immigrant. For instance, I know that “*papeles chuecos*” means fraudulent Social Security numbers and not “twisted papers,” and that a “*coyote*” is not an animal but a smuggler specialized in bringing people to the United States.

As an analog to the concept of statistical power for quantitative studies, Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995) proposed the concept of “qualitative clarity” to “include two components, theoretical grounding and sensitivity to context” (p. 102). Because my study was constructed on the frameworks of intersectionality and critical race theory, it fulfilled the first requirement for clarity. The second requirement, sensitivity to context, refers to being constantly attentive to intrusions into the analysis by the researcher’s own biases and interpretations. By following a meticulously inductive process of data analysis with very little creative interpretation, I fulfilled the second requirement for qualitative clarity, as defined by Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995),

according to whom “Qualitative research requires a critical stance as to both the kinds of information and the meanings discovered, and to the analytic categories guiding the interpretations” (p. 104).

Summary

This qualitative study aims to discover the meanings constructed by the participants of their experiences being unauthorized immigrant Latina mothers within the context of Kentucky. The method selected is Phenomenology. Steps were taken to protect the anonymity of the participants who were selected by criteria-based sampling. Data was collected through personal interviews with the participants, to whom I had access through my employment as Migrant Advocate. Data analysis was performed according to the six-step process recommended by Vagle (2014) which offered the possibility of analyzing both within and across participants. To bolster internal validity of this study, my personal background and prejudices were disclosed, as well as my possible influence on the participants. The data was strengthened by adhering to the concept of “qualitative clarity” proposed by Luborsky and Rubinsten (1995) and by member-checking with the participants after data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to understand the barriers encountered by unauthorized Latino mothers in Kentucky, and also which resources and strategies they use to negotiate them. All the participants had in common their appurtenance in the group of immigrants to the U.S., in the group of Latinos, and in the group of the unauthorized residents of Kentucky. Even with these criteria in common, each respondent was situated at a unique intersection on the grid of identities due to other factors, such as family background, childhood and experiences. The respondents, like all human beings, did not spontaneously appear from a vacuum to participate in this study. Each was the product of her past that has led her to the unique point of intersecting identities at which she is located. Therefore, it will be first necessary to take an in-depth look at each participant's history and present circumstances to provide a deep context for the findings. The opening to this chapter will provide thick description about the participants for this study and how they came to be living in Kentucky.

Secondly, the single over-arching theme of fear that emerges from the data will be reported and subsequent sections will explicate 22 themes that emerged from the analysis. These 22 themes have been separated into five sections, the first of which refers to barriers created specifically by not having legal residence/work documents in the United States, to wit: family separation, driving, work, living without health insurance, and minor shopping obstacles. Following the barriers I will explicate how these difficulties are mitigated by the respondents; the resources and strategies they employ to overcome them. A second section will describe five barriers created for the respondents not by a lack of authorization, but simply by being Latinas; having a different skin color and lacking fluency in English. These five obstacles are: unfair police, living conditions, verbal abuse, difficulty getting aid, and the bullying of

children at school. The barriers are followed by some of the resources and strategies which enable the participants to negotiate these five obstacles. In the last section of this chapter I will discuss five themes that have emerged from the data related to positive outcomes for the participants.

The Participants

Every respondent fit the criteria of immigrant, unauthorized, Latina mother living in the state of Kentucky. Their ages ranged from 38 to 44 years and they had been present in the United States between 11 to 20 years. All had less than a high school education. Each was immediately identifiable as Latina; dark-skinned with straight black hair. Every participant was attached to a family of mixed immigration status, meaning each had U.S.-born citizen children. Although the interviews took place in Spanish, the three Guatemalan participants spoke two indigenous languages of Mayan origin as a first language and Spanish as a second language. All of the participants were born into poor, large families in rural areas. Most of the participants came to the United States to join relatives who were already here. Every respondent paid or borrowed a large sum of money to finance an often harrowing crossing into the U.S. led by a people-smuggler. Table 1 presents an overview of the participants and includes the salient details for each.

Table I

The Ten Participants.

Name	Salient details	Years in		Drives
		USA	KY	
Amelia	Mayan Indian, illiterate, cohabiting 2 American children, 3 Guatemalan children (grown) Self-employed, buy-and-resell Has American doctor friend	14	12	No
Antonia	Mayan Indian, ex-maid, cohabiting 1 unauthorized daughter in US, 4 American children Unemployed, worked previously Was rear-ended and arrested anyway	14	14	Yes
Susana	Mayan Indian, picked coffee, newly married 1 unauthorized daughter in US, 4 American children	17	17	Yes
Natalia	Mex., alcoholic dad, single 2 American children Cares for horses in stables	15	15	Yes
Claudia	Mex., ex-widow, newly married 8 American children (in blended family) Does not work, prefers field work to hotel	19	3	Yes
Marisa	Mex., quit after 9 th grade, cohabiting 4 American children Cleans office and a factory at night	20	3	Yes
Yvette	Mex., owns cows, cohabiting 2 daughters in Mex. in school, 3 American children Her husband is foreman of the farm	13	11	Yes
Liliana	Mex., studied nursing, newly married 1 unauthorized daughter in US, 2 American daughters Works in a plastics factory	14	14	Yes
Lucía	Mex., separated 1 adult son in Mexico, 1 unauthorized daughter, 1 American daughter Has American brother-in-law Housekeeper in a hotel in the city	10	10	Yes
Angustias	Mex., married, never worked 4 unauthorized adult children in US, 1 American son	11	11	No

The Guatemalans

Amelia. She was a short middle-aged Mayan with heavily accented Spanish, completely illiterate. She was born in a one-room thatch hut in a small Indian community on the side of a mountain in Guatemala, unreachable by car as there was no road. Amelia already had three sons when her husband, in a fit of jealousy, threw her out of their house. With her children, she went to live with her father in the shack where she was born. Her father accepted them but said: “You can live here but you must support them yourself. I am too poor to feed your children” (interview, January 12, 2015). Amelia thought about going to the United States to earn money to feed her sons, but she did not have the necessary funds to pay for the trip. Her father’s wife put Amelia in contact with a Guatemalan man in Florida who agreed to lend her the money if she would come and live with him. Having agreed and received the funds, Amelia departed for the U.S., but during her journey she met Gilberto, her present partner. Together, they arrived in Oklahoma and together, they worked to pay back the man in Florida for his loan. Amelia and Gilberto had two children in Kentucky, although Gilberto had another family back home. On the day of the interview, her appearance bore testimony to her origins; she wore a long skirt reminiscent of a *corte*, the long wraparound skirt typically worn by Guatemalan Indians. Although the interview took place when there was snow on the ground, she wore flip-flops on her wide, flat feet. All of her toes were crooked and chipped, and the big nail on her right foot was broken, indicating that she walked barefoot for a long time. Amelia did not work at the time of the interview. She bought and re-sold second-hand furniture and other items. However, she had worked in tobacco previously.

Antonia. Belonging to another indigenous group, she spoke a Mayan language different from Amelia’s. Antonia, was only able to attend elementary school for a few years.

After that, she worked as a maid, and even then, her father would come to collect her salary for it was needed in the home. She was able to read and write. She understood English but was hesitant to speak it. She crossed the U.S. border with her partner and infant daughter 14 years ago and spent two weeks locked up in a house on the American side of the border until Antonia's father, who was in Kentucky, paid the smuggler \$3,500 to release them. Then, they headed directly to Kentucky to work and repay the debt. At the time of the interview, her teenage daughter was still unauthorized like her parents, and Antonia had 4 more U.S.-born citizen children. Antonia did not work at the time of the interview, but had held many jobs in the past, including cleaning and tobacco.

Susana. She was fluent in a Mayan language and Spanish although she only attended school for a few months, as her family could not afford the expenses. Instead Susana, as a small child, worked harvesting coffee beans. Coffee trees are low, more a bush than a tree, and the berries are picked over several months as the harvester picks only the ripe beans, leaving the immature ones for another day. Susana wore a basket around her waist that, when full, weighed almost as much as she did. In her teens, Susana had a daughter with a man who left them to work in the United States. Susana waited in Guatemala for 8 years but he never returned. Very sad, she accepted the invitation from her brother in Kentucky to join him. Susana crossed the border into Arizona with her sister and her brother-in-law, on foot, walking for one day and one night, leaving her 9 year-old daughter in Guatemala. Susana and her daughter were separated for 10 years, until the girl came to Kentucky on her own to reunite with her mother. In Kentucky, Susana met a man from her village. They lived and had four children together. Recently, they had married and displayed their wedding photo on the wall of their living room. On the date of the interview, Susana reported that she only worked during part of the year, in tobacco.

All the Guatemalans had bleak childhoods characterized by poverty and want. As a result, Antonia and Susana could barely read and write, and Amelia not at all.

The Mexicans

Although all of the participants grew up poor, the Mexican participants fared a little better during their childhoods than the Guatemalans who, self-identified as indigenous, grew up in isolated rural communities in the mountains.

Natalia. Tall, slender and attractive, Natalia was single, although she had two American children. Growing up, she had seven siblings and a father who was alcoholic. With her parents, there were 10 people in the house, and her father when drunk was so violent that Natalia's mother would hide in a closet when she saw him staggering down the road. In one of his rages, he pulled a knife on his daughter and tried to stab her. Natalia started working in the mornings when she was eleven in order to be away from the house before attending school in the afternoons. With the 10 pesos she earned daily by cooking, cleaning and caring for her older sister's children, Natalia paid for the bus ride to school for herself and two smaller brothers. As soon as she finished elementary school, still trying to distance herself from her father, she moved to a job in a nearby town. At the seafood restaurant where she worked, she met a man who came and went frequently to the United States. He offered to lend her \$1700 and introduced her to a trustworthy contact who would take her to the U. S. border. A series of smugglers each accompanied Natalia and her sister on a certain segment of the trip from their town to Kentucky. The actual crossing into Arizona, according to her, was easy. Natalia said: "I did not suffer much. We only had to walk one whole night" (interview, January 25, 2015) before they were picked up in a van on the American side. Natalia's worst experience was the four days she spent in the crowded van as it was driven around the country, dropping people off at various locations,

as she was almost the last one to be dropped off in Kentucky. Natalia and her sister both worked at a stable caring directly for horses. Her children's father was also in Kentucky but because he drank heavily, they were separated. The interview took place in the trailer that she shared with her sister and her nephew at the stables where the sisters worked.

Claudia. Her father was a Mexican farmworker with six children. As his eldest, she began to work to help support the family right after elementary school, in the fields on various farms and then, as her godmother owned a food cart, helping to prepare food for sale in the streets. At the age of sixteen, Claudia eloped with her boyfriend. They crossed the U.S. border together easily in 1996 before settling in Alabama and having three children. Previously widowed in Alabama, Claudia had followed her second partner to Kentucky, blending her own three children with five of his. At the time of the interview, she did not work because she cared for the youngest of the family, a toddler. Claudia had had much experience in agriculture which she professed to enjoy more than working in a hotel.

Marisa. Marisa's father had promised that he would support his children's studies, but because he was a bricklayer, in her words "he could only afford our needs, not our wants" (interview, February 28, 2015). Unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices, Marisa quit school after the 9th grade, as did two siblings. Only one brother was able to withstand the financial hardship and completed his studies in law. Marisa came to Kentucky with her second partner after spending a decade in New York with her first husband. Marisa had four U.S.-born children; two by each husband, and spoke some English. She worked at night, cleaning offices and a factory. According to Marisa, her family was very insular; they rarely went out and had few friends.

Yvette. As there were no schools nor jobs in her village in rural southern Mexico, choices were limited for Yvette after elementary school. So, very young, Yvette married a soldier and shortly thereafter, bore two daughters whom she left in Mexico when she came to the U.S. with her ex-soldier husband. At the time of the interview, she had not seen her elder daughters in 12 years. In Kentucky, Yvette and her husband worked for a farmer raising crops and cattle. They sent money to Mexico so the older daughters could continue to study. They also had 3 U.S.-born children with them on the Kentucky farm. Of the ten participants, Yvette had the worst time coming to the United States. Yvette and her soldier husband walked for five days and six nights through the Arizona desert. In 2002, it cost them \$1800 each.

Liliana. After middle school, Liliana had entered vocational course in nursing in Mexico when she became pregnant. The father of her child abandoned them at once. Later, a man who knew her situation invited her with her baby to come to the United States with him. In Kentucky, they had two daughters together, making three daughters for Liliana. In their home, numerous religious images reflected the importance of church for the family. Liliana and her husband both worked the same shift in the same plastics factory. At the time of the interview, Liliana's eldest daughter had become the single mother of a little boy. Both lived with Liliana.

Lucía. Her two husbands had been womanizers, and she was separated at the time of the interview. When she came to the United States 16 years ago, she left two children in Mexico. When she returned for them two years later, only the youngest agreed to come with her to Kentucky, so Lucía had been separated from the eldest boy for 15 years. Lucía also had a little US-born daughter. She was living in the house of authorized relatives where she said, "The only thing I own is the mattress I sleep on" (interview, February 2, 2015) and worked as a

housekeeper in a hotel. Lucía did not talk about her own crossing, but she told the following story:

When my sister was deported to Mexico, her 6 year-old daughter stayed with me in Kentucky. My sister tried to come back to be with her daughter, but the *coyote* (people-smuggler) at the last minute tried to force her to carry a package of drugs across the border. My sister refused, so she was not able to return to the U.S. And so her daughter remained living with me (interview, February 2, 2015).

Angustias. Over 15 years ago, Angustias's husband who was working in Kentucky sent for her and their three small children. The first time, they were caught by the border patrol and sent back to Mexico. On the second attempt, they arrived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they were led to a house and not allowed to go outside. Angustias said that the lady of the house was friendly, fed them well and allowed them to watch TV, but because the neighbors might alert the police of their presence, even the children had to stay inside for the whole month, until Angustias's husband had finished paying the *coyotes* for their crossing and sent a friend in a car to pick them up. During the interview in her mobile home, Angustias described herself as stressed. She did not drive and had never worked outside the home. Her grown children lived nearby, and she had one US-born son. Angustias reported engaging in a bible study once a week with a Spanish-speaking American friend. Angustias had one small US-born son.

Thus the respondents began their life in the United States already burdened psychologically as well as financially. Some had left children behind, and all had left their families to embark on a dangerous journey to an uncertain future that began with a debt. The United States was less than welcoming, as each respondent began her stay as an unauthorized

immigrant, limited in her choices by her lack of papers and marginalized by poverty, appearance and lack of English.

Living in Kentucky

A total of 22 themes emerged from the data; ten related to barriers, seven related to strategies, and five that describe final outcomes for the participants. Figure 1 depicts the themes and provides an organizational model of the order in which they are discussed. All of the themes are overshadowed by a single major theme: that of fear.

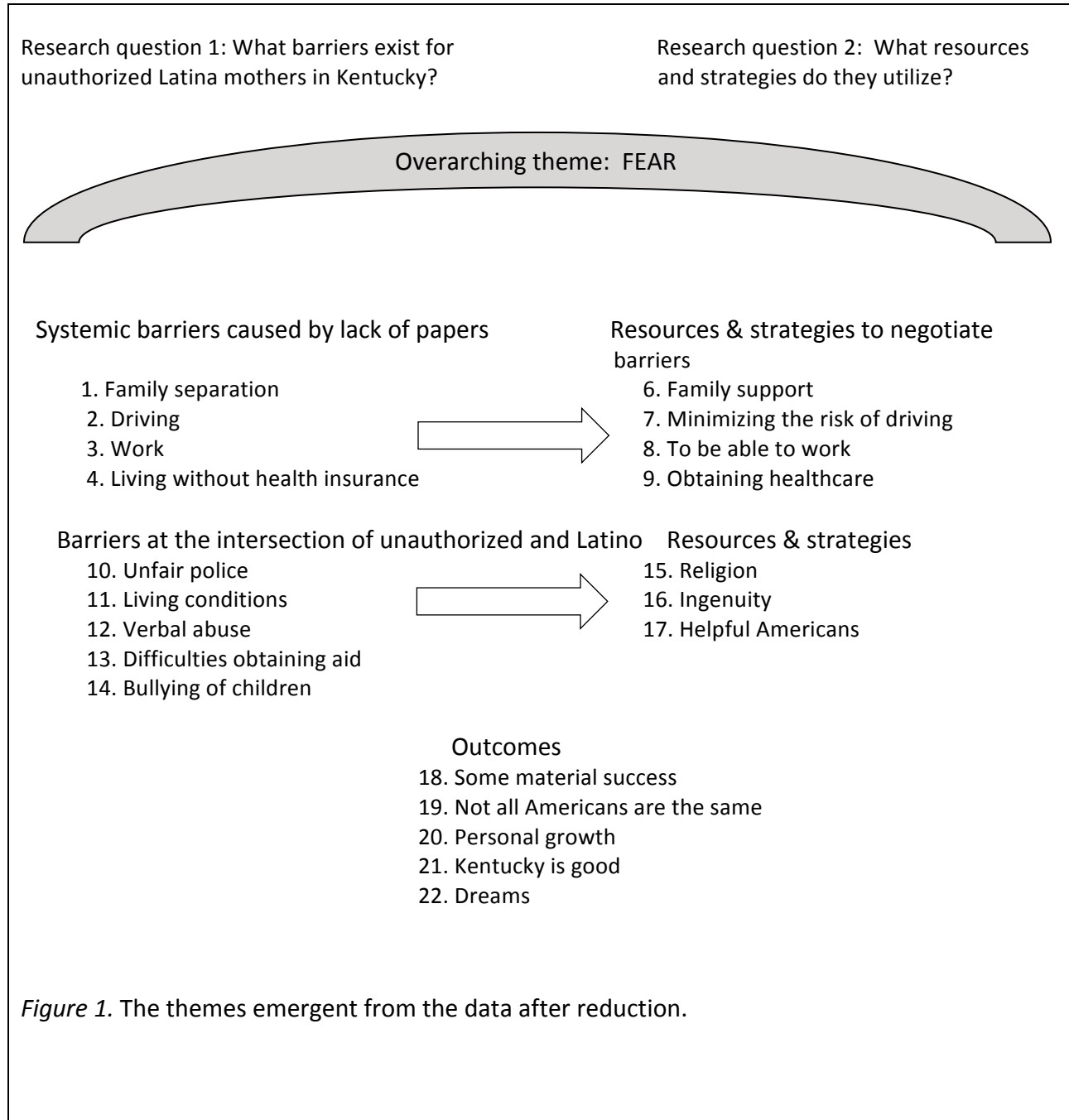


Figure 1. The themes emergent from the data after reduction.

Overarching theme: Fear

There is one recurring motif that is prominent in all of the discourses. It permeates the lives of the unauthorized: the theme of fear. Every participant mentioned fear at least once, and the highest number was 8 times. Undeniably, fear is part of the essence of undocumentedness. Fear was present differently in the stories of the Guatemalans and the Mexicans. Fear was mentioned most frequently by the Guatemalan participants: Amelia (8 times), Susana (6 times) and Antonia (5 times). The following sections detail, in order of frequency of appearance, the origins of their anxiety.

Fear was ubiquitous in Amelia's daily life. Her biggest fear was that her youngest children will be taken from her if she is deported, as they are American. She was also afraid that she would be discovered as an illegal resident because she engaged in a buy-and-resell business without any license and without declaring any taxes. According to Amelia, she had to do this business because she cannot work without papers, and she was too afraid to use someone else's Social Security number and a false ID to be able to work. She was also afraid in a physical sense. She had been verbally abused on several occasions at a thrift shop by a certain American woman who owned an automobile decorated with distinctive stickers. When Amelia observed that car outside the thrift shop, she did not enter because Amelia was afraid the lady would hurt her. Amelia's fear was paralyzing; she never reported any injustice or discrimination because she was afraid. Finally, uneducated Amelia believed fears cause physical illness. She remarked that her partner, Gilberto, had diabetes because he had "many fears" (interview, January 12, 2015).

Antonia's greatest fear was also losing custody of her children if she were to be deported. Because she was once arrested while the American lady who rear-ended her was not, Antonia

believed that the police in the town where she lived were racist and unfair toward Hispanics. When an American yelled at her and threatened to call immigration, she got very scared and she cried, but she did not remain a helpless victim. Antonia went straight to the top administrator to complain, and the man was eventually removed from his post.

Susana had achieved a materially comfortable life in her house in Little Mexico, but fear was ever-present. She mentioned fear twice in connection with driving. She was also afraid of having to borrow money, of having to raise her children alone and of her husband's losing the well-paying job that provides luxuries such as a single-family house and the SUV that stands in her driveway. Her greatest wish was to have papers so she could stop being afraid all the time.

Angustias, the respondent who did not drive or work, mentioned fear four times, the most of any Mexican. She reported that previously, her greatest fear was being deported, but that at the time of the interview, it was something altogether different. Her husband had no health insurance and worked on trees, so she was most afraid of accidents at his work. He had been injured twice before and was the only breadwinner. Angustias was afraid it might happen again.

Fear was mentioned by Liliana three times in connection with her work in a factory. She was afraid of the machines she operated and she felt the supervisor was unfair. While she wished she could change her job, she was also afraid of losing it because, as she said, "it is not easy to find a job when you don't have papers" (interview, February 13, 2015).

Fear was less conspicuous in the narratives of five Mexican participants, yet it was not absent. Yvette and Natalia mentioned being afraid twice each, while three respondents mentioned it only once: Marisa the factory-cleaner, Lucía the hotel housekeeper, and Claudia the stay-at-home mother of a blended family. Marisa had the highest level of education, and like Claudia, came to Kentucky after living in another state. The three participants whose interviews

included fewer references to fear were the same ones who expressed most satisfaction with their lives in Kentucky.

The lives of all the respondents for this study included some degree of fear, which is a motif throughout all of the narratives, due to the multiple levels of disadvantage that derive from the intersection of the participants' identities.

Barriers Facing the Unauthorized

All of the participants for this study lacked a residence permit to live in the United States and, more importantly, also lacked a Social Security number. From analysis of the data, the following five themes were revealed related to barriers erected specifically by a lack of legal papers.

Family separation. The data indicated that separation from their relatives is a core component of the unauthorized's lives. Because they do not hold documents that would allow re-entry into the United States, once they have settled, unauthorized immigrants generally remain apart from their relatives with negative consequences for all. Analysis of the interview data indicated that separation from their relatives was a major concern for half of the participants. Amelia said:

I left my sons in Guatemala with one of my brothers, but because of poverty, he too had to leave for the United States. He entrusted my sons to another brother who mistreated them. He never gave them the money I sent them. He beat them and forced them to work in the fields. My youngest son suffered the most. It was so bad that, at the age of 16, he decided to come to the U.S. to escape his uncle. (interview, January 12, 2015)

Susana related her separation from her daughter as follows:

I left my eight year-old daughter with my mother in the village. For years thereafter, my mother would not send her to me, because she said my husband is not my daughter's father and maybe they would not get along. Eventually, my daughter grew up. She wanted to come [to the U.S.] so she did, and now she lives here [in Kentucky], with her husband and two children. (interview, February 18, 2015)

Yvette had not been able to hug her two older daughters for over 12 years. She and her ex-soldier husband lived and worked on a farm in Kentucky while raising three smaller children who were born in the U.S. The American-born children had never met their older sisters. Yvette voiced her dilemma:

When we came, I left two daughters with my mother. I haven't seen them in 12 years. In the beginning, the separation was difficult, but I think they have gotten accustomed to it now. They understand that we have to stay here [in Kentucky] to earn the money for them to stay in school. Without the separation, they couldn't study. We talk on the telephone, we Skype and we write to each other on Whatsapp. Every night I communicate with them. My girls are now 19 and 17 years old. (interview, February 18, 2015)

As mentioned previously, Yvette's greatest wish was to have papers, so she could travel back to Mexico to see her daughters. Lucía, the Mexican respondent who worked in a hotel, explained why she first came to the U.S. alone. She said:

My husband was a womanizer and we divorced in Mexico, but our relations remained...good, so I left my son and my daughter with their father when I came to Kentucky. Two years later, I returned to get them but my son, who was 15 at the time,

refused to come with me. So only my daughter is with me here [in Kentucky].

(interview, February 2, 2015)

Angustias's greatest wish was related to her separation from her relatives:

I would like to return to Mexico one day to see my family. I have three sisters and four brothers that I have not seen in 10 years. One sister died and I was not able to go to the funeral. (interview, February 24, 2015)

Thus, it can be said that the separation of families is a major barrier to the well-being of the undocumented, especially for those who left children in their home countries.

Driving. Although the participants said that they can purchase and register an automobile using only their ITIN (taxpayer number), and they could insure it without legal papers, it is not possible for the unauthorized to obtain a driver's license in Kentucky. Participants agreed that the barriers erected by not having a driver's license were by far the most difficult to negotiate. That someone must drive is a given; few businesses offer home delivery and those that do, are not patronized by poor Latinos who shop mainly at discount establishments and large retailers. All eight participants who drove learned in the United States "by necessity," they said, without passing any written or skills test. Therefore, they broke the law every time they got behind the wheel. Every time they drove a vehicle, they were vulnerable to being stopped by the police at any moment. The participants for this study reported being stopped for a variety of reasons: for not wearing a seatbelt, for not stopping at a traffic light, for ignoring a stop sign, at a roadblock. In Kentucky, much depends on the individual law enforcement official, who may decide to issue a warning, arrest the driver, impound the vehicle, or simply issue a ticket. Some participants reported understanding on the part of officials. For instance, Natalia said:

I was only stopped once, in the Kroger parking lot, in the time of snow. The officer gave me a ticket, but he didn't take my car, maybe because I had a baby or maybe because he was kind. I don't know. (interview, January 25, 2015)

Likewise, Lucía expressed her gratitude to a Kentucky judge in these terms:

In 11 years, I have had two problems for no license. The first time, I went to court and paid \$480. Six months later, I was stopped again and I had to return to court, but the judge was good to me. Because I am the sole support of two daughters, she sentenced me to wear an ankle bracelet and allowed me to drive to work and back, so I could continue to earn for my children. (interview, February 2, 2015)

One, however, had a very different experience. Antonia reported spending 13 hours in detention when she was pregnant with her youngest child:

I was driving one day when a Black woman, 70 years old, rear-ended me. It was her fault and I was 7 months pregnant. The policeman looked at her insurance card (it was later found to be false) and let her go, but he took me to jail for driving without a license. It was her mistake, not mine, but she was a citizen [and I was not.] It is unfair for the police to take a 7-months pregnant woman to jail for driving without a license, when I didn't do anything. (interview, January 19, 2015)

Similarly, Susana reported spending one day and one night in jail after being stopped for driving without a license. In Kentucky, the consequences for driving without a license are often significant and monetary: the driver is issued a summons and must appear in court, where the judge sets a fine and orders monitoring for two years. For 24 months, the driver must appear every month at the monitoring office and pay a monthly fee of \$25. Antonia said: "When they catch you [driving without a license], you have to go to court, pay the

fine and also the monitoring for two years” (interview, January 19, 2015). Angustias had the following opinion of the monitoring process: “...In reality, [the monitoring] doesn’t do anything. It’s just another way to get money from the poor” (interview, February 24, 2015). If the individual is caught driving again during the 2-year monitoring period, the fine is larger and may include jail time. While Antonia is still bitter about being arrested while pregnant, she does recognize the integrity of the government:

The whole affair cost me about \$2,500, between the fine, the court costs and the monitoring. But I must admit, if you fulfill everything right, [the government] gives you back some of your money. To me, they returned about \$1,700 of the \$2,500 that I had had to borrow. (interview, January 19, 2015)

In the minds of the unauthorized participants who drive “by necessity,” fear of being stopped is always present. In the 10 participant interviews, fear was mentioned in connection with driving without a license 9 times. There is little the participants can do to minimize the risk except limit their driving and hence their mobility.

Work. Unauthorized immigrants lack a government-issued Employment Authorization card and a Social Security number. As indicated on the instruction sheet on how to apply for a Social Security card (Appendix E), the former is required to obtain the latter. The participants in this study indicated, though, that it is the Social Security card with the number on it that is crucial to obtaining work. Previous to the availability of the E-Verify program, the unauthorized could invent a Social Security number and have a false card made to match it. This is what Liliana did: “Before, I worked in a plant nursery, and I also worked in a factory painting steel parts...for cars, I think. But in those places they started to check Social Security numbers, and I had to leave” (interview, February 13, 2015). Today, however, this is no longer an option. The

following five sections explain the difficulties faced by the unauthorized Latina participants in Kentucky who want to work.

Lack of choice about jobs. Eight out of ten participants commented that, for persons who cannot present authorization, the kinds of employment available to them are few. Angustias believed that “the jobs are limited. For example, women can only clean houses” (interview, February 24, 2015). She characterized the jobs available to the unauthorized as “unstable,” adding that her husband had had to change jobs many times: the maximum length of time he had worked in one job was two years. Susana observed that “Of course there are difficulties to work if you don’t have papers. Without them, I can only work in tobacco or cleaning houses, and tobacco pays only \$8 an hour” (interview, February 18, 2015). Antonia included Mexican-owned stores in the list of possible jobs, but she added “the hours are long and the pay is little” (interview, January 19, 2015). Natalia said “I have to work in a place where they don’t ask for papers, like this stable....I can’t work in a factory without a Social Security” (interview, January 25, 2015). Amelia expressed the situation best. She said “You can’t work without buying [false] papers” (interview, January 12, 2015) and because she was too afraid to do so, she earned money by buying and re-selling used furniture.

The only job that the participants agreed was easily available to the unauthorized was working in tobacco, as farmers hire them by the hour without requiring any documents. However, they noted, tobacco work is seasonal and dependent on the weather. Even the owners of big farms need only one or two workers to tend the seed beds in the spring, and planting is mechanized. It is only during the summer and fall that farmers must hire many workers to top the plants (i.e. remove the top flower from each stalk), cut the stalks, hang them in barns and later, strip the tobacco leaves by hand from the stalks. The five participants who had experience

in tobacco noted that the work is physically hard; topping and cutting take place under the summer sun, hanging means a risky climb into the barn rafters, and stripping is performed standing in dusty unheated barns. In addition, the pay is low. Antonia recalled: “For stripping, this year, they paid \$9 per hour, but we got no breaks during the day and only half an hour for lunch, which was not paid. We worked 9 and a half hours every day” (interview, January 19, 2015).

Dependency on the “patrón.” A problem common to the unauthorized who have been able to find work without providing false papers, such as in agriculture or horses, is their dependence on their boss. Such workers are keenly aware that their employer knows that they are undocumented, so they must keep the boss (*el patrón*) happy in order to keep their job. Sometimes this dependency can be a challenge. Natalia, who worked at a stable caring for horses, described it succinctly:

I am grateful [to the bosses] because they hired me even though I am undocumented, but in exchange I have to accept their conditions. Without a Social Security, one has to submit....Here I have to accept what the *patrón* is willing to give me, even if it is little, because I have no choice. (interview, January 25, 2015)

About her bosses, Natalia said:

The *patrones* are not bad, but sometimes they say one thing and then change their minds....They are amicable but they do not want to spend money, and they also don't want to certify that I pay for my rent and utilities with extra work hours. This means that the food stamp office thinks I am living free and they give me less in food stamp money. (interview, January 25, 2015)

Lucía, who worked in a hotel in a nearby city, attested that she had had to change hotels because, each time, the management adopted a new way to calculate her wages.

First, they paid me my 80 hours at \$8.5, and because I would work 100-120 hours, they paid me the rest in cash. But later they changed the system, and I left to come to this hotel, because here they paid per room, not per hour. But here also they have recently changed the system of payment. Before, I used to do my rooms at \$4 per room, but now if there are rooms that stay occupied, if some clients stay more than one night, they don't pay for cleaning those rooms. (interview, February 2, 2015)

Claudia who was raising her blended family of 8 children, related a similar experience of the boss changing her mind. Last year, she worked as a housekeeper in a hotel, where the owner promoted her from cleaner to supervisor with a higher hourly wage. Claudia accepted, but only received the higher amount for two checks. After that, without any notice, the owner calculated her pay at the lower hourly wage of a cleaner. Unauthorized Claudia was not in a position to protest, so she quit.

Workplace abuse. Most of the participants opined that injustice at work is frequent for the unauthorized mothers who work in Kentucky. Liliana experienced extortion before she even got the job. She declared “They made me pay \$300 to be hired there, but they accepted my false Social Security.” At the worksite, supervisors are unfair. About the factory where she toils with her husband, Liliana says:

They made my husband work a lot, a whole lot. A recent arrival who was friends with the supervisor would take breaks of two or three hours, just sitting there, talking with the supervisor. My husband had to do all the work for him. (interview, February 13, 2015).

Liliana also complained that in her early days at the factory, “the supervisor made fun of me. He would assign me two machines, and not let others help me. Then, he laughed at me, saying I was slow” (interview, February 13, 2015). About the stables where she worked, Natalia considered that there were not enough employees, that her work was too hard, and that she earned too little. She declared:

I start at 9 and work until 5 o'clock, six days a week, and we take turns feeding the horses on Sundays. There used to be more, but now we have 24 horses and only 3 employees. We have to take the excrement in a heavy barrel on a wheelbarrow far away to dump it. We have to brush and prepare the horses for the trainer, putting on tack that we have cleaned. We also have to maintain the stables; mow the grass, paint the fences, spread and rake sawdust, and throw bales of hay up in the barn. There are also the extras that we share among the three of us. My extra is to clean the offices. My salary is \$350 per week. (interview, January 25, 2015)

Antonia, who said that the unauthorized can find work in Mexican stores, remarked that the pay offered is very low. One of her unauthorized friends worked in a local Hispanic shop, six days per week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. without any break, and only earned \$340 per week, or \$4.72 per hour.

While some employers are kind to their employees and help in different ways, others are not. Natalia's bosses at the stable were unwilling to declare her earnings accurately, so she was awarded less in food stamps for her children. She was also unable to build credit. Recently, she “tried to buy a used trailer and [I] was denied a loan because, on paper, I make too little and I have no credit history” (interview, January 25, 2015). Angustias also, related that her husband Javier has:

...suffered racism in his jobs. Once, the employer lost his chewing gum. Although there were other guys present, he accused Javier. My husband said: “I am fed up with being treated differently from the others” and he quit that job. At another job [in construction], the *patrón* would say: “No, there is no work for now. Wait a few days.” But Javier would see him at the construction site working with his crew. The *patrón* gave them work, but not to Javier. (interview, February 24, 2015)

Living without health insurance. None of the participants for this study had any health coverage, even though the jobs they or their spouses performed could be quite risky. Natalia highlighted that, at the stables: “My job can be dangerous. So far, I have been lucky and I have only been stepped on by the horses. My toe swells and the nail falls out” (interview, January 25, 2015). Liliana’s husband, however, at the factory once injured his wrist very badly, and Angustias’s spouse also. Because Liliana’s husband works under another name with a corresponding Social Security number, he does have insurance and his accident was covered. When accidents happen to an undocumented employee, sometimes the boss contributes money for healthcare, but other times he does not. When the participants fall ill, they “go to the pharmacy and buy what I can to treat myself” (Natalia, interview, January 25, 2015). When that fails, they go to the hospital. The triage nurse records their name and address, and they are billed later for services. For the most part, the unauthorized are not eligible for the charity programs offered by the hospital, so their treatment results in debt. Antonia, for instance, related that two years ago she had difficulty breathing and had to be taken several times to the emergency room of the local hospital. At the time of the interview, she had outstanding bills of over \$9,000 which she had been unable to pay. Without insurance, providers require payment in cash, which is often unavailable. Natalia recalled one such occasion:

Once my back hurt so much that I could hardly walk. A friend drove me to the chiropractor and paid \$35 for my visit. But the chiropractor was supposed to be three times a week, and I couldn't pay that amount, so I only went that first time, and then once a week. Even so, it helped me and I got better. (interview, January 25, 2015)

Angustias related the way her husband's present employer, who knows Javier is unauthorized, reacted when her husband was injured on the job. The first time, Javier cut himself on the leg with a chainsaw, but "his boss did not take him to the hospital. He just said to go home." The second time, Javier injured his back and "was in bed for four days. The *patrón* did nothing for him. We were very afraid Javier would never be able to work again, but with great effort he got up, and now he can work (interview, February 24, 2015). All of the participants' US-born children were eligible for Medicaid, so they received coverage from the state, but any children born abroad remained uninsured. Six participants, Amelia, Antonia, Sonia, Lucía, Liliana and Angustias, had children living with them in Kentucky with no health coverage at all.

Minor shopping obstacles. Two other difficulties mentioned by the participants were returning purchased items and obtaining prescribed medicine. Wal-Mart, for instance, requires a government-issued photo ID to return any item, even if the purchaser has the receipt for the item. Most pharmacies, in particular Kroger and Wal-Mart pharmacies, also ask to see a government-issued photo ID to dispense prescribed medicine. Because unauthorized immigrants cannot obtain a government-issued ID, this adds another level of difficulty to their lives.

In conclusion, it can be said that the lack of legal authorization to stay and work in the United States does erect systemic barriers for undocumented Latina mothers in Kentucky. Analysis of the data provided by the participants of this study revealed that the most significant

of these obstacles are separation from relatives, driving, difficulties related to work, and living without health insurance.

Resources and Strategies

To negotiate these systemic barriers, unauthorized Latina mothers in Kentucky utilized the supports and employed the strategies available to them. In the following sections, I will describe four themes that emerged from analysis of the data related to how the participants negotiate these systemic barriers.

Family support. Nine out of ten participants described both providing and receiving strong support from their relatives within the United States and abroad, proving that *familismo* is both a resource and an obligation. For instance, even though Amelia reported many financial problems, she proudly told me that “I have been able to help my father roof his house with corrugated iron” (interview, January 12, 2015) replacing the palm thatch which harbored insects and rats. The brother in Guatemala who mistreated her sons had personal expectations from his sister. He “was angry and asked me: why do you send money to your sons and not to your brothers?” (interview, January 12, 2015). Amelia does not speak to that brother, but she has another sibling living in Kentucky to whom she is close. She mentioned him as a person to whom she could appeal when she was in trouble: “My brother and I borrow money from each other. I can always count on him” (interview, January 12, 2015). Antonia has a younger brother who lives in her house and shares household expenses, and she has sent money many times to Guatemala for different reasons; when someone is ill, to go to the doctor or to pay for medicines, when babies are born, to buy school uniforms for her nephews, or simply for Mother’s Day. She has even borrowed to be able to remit funds if they are urgently needed in Guatemala. Susana’s older sister previously lived in Kentucky. Before she returned permanently to Guatemala, she

gave Susana her Social Security number. This number was what Susana used previously when she worked at a fast food restaurant, although at the time of the interview she planned to work only part-time during the tobacco season. The help provided by family is reciprocated: that sister's two US-born children, aged 19 and 17, at the time of the interview, lived with Susana.

For the Mexicans also, family is both a resource and a duty. Natalia reported: "I first came to Kentucky because my sister was here" and her trip was undertaken with another sister, with whom, "together [we] bought a car." and "together [we] worked on the same horse farm, and we lived together" (interview, January 25, 2015). Then, Natalia's single sister got pregnant and had a baby with hip dysplasia. Even after surgery, the baby was in a plaster cast "from her ankle to her waist" (interview, January 25, 2015) for many months and Natalia found that "My sister needed me. She worked in the morning and I worked in the afternoon and thus we took care of the baby" (interview, January 25, 2015). In the meantime, Natalia had met the father of her children. She related that "He lived in [Corbin]. He said that he wanted to spend his life with me, but I couldn't leave my sister" (interview, January 25, 2015). After some initial hesitation, Natalia's boyfriend moved in with the two sisters and the baby.

Claudia also claimed she had support from relatives. She maintained close contact with her deceased first husband's brothers in Alabama by phone and also by taking the children to visit several times a year. Although during the interview Marisa asserted that "We don't go to parties nor to church. We are always here in the house. Even my older children don't go out" (interview, February 5, 2015), she introduced me to her mother-in-law who was visiting from Mexico and when I returned to Marisa's house for member-checking, the father of her two younger children asked me to help him locate their uncle who had been detained at the border. As mentioned previously, Yvette and her husband worked on a farm to provide for the daughters

they left in Mexico and for Yvette's parents with whom the girls live. Lucía had been both the provider and the recipient of family support. When her sister was deported, Lucía raised her little niece for "almost five years until in December of 2011. Because she missed her mother, she asked to return to Mexico. A week later, she was sorry, but it was too late. Today she lives with her mother in Guanajuato" (interview, February 2, 2015). On the other hand, Lucía's other sister lives in Kentucky where she married an American of Puerto Rican descent, and these citizen relatives have helped Lucía considerably. For instance, Lucía and her two daughters shared a room in their well-appointed house where, she said, "The only thing I own here is the mattress I sleep on" (interview, February 2, 2015) and the car she drove as well as the car loan are in their name. Liliana, the ex-nursing student, had an extended sense of family. She said: "I get support from my brother, who lives here, and also from my brothers in my church" (interview, February 13, 2015). Alone, Angustias did not mention family as a source of support. On the contrary, when Angustias's brother-in-law lived with them years ago, he sexually abused her 10 year-old daughter. The episode had severe psychological consequences for the girl and caused a permanent split in the family.

In conclusion it can be said that the value of familism, while entailing obligation, can be considered a resource for the undocumented. In the United States, relatives who are citizens or authorized residents will often help overcome barriers such as the inability to present a government-issued ID.

Minimizing the risk of driving. Data indicate that fear of being stopped while driving is an important stressor for the participants, who fear both the monetary consequences and the possibility of arrest. In general, the participants negotiated this barrier by limiting their driving. Liliana never drove at night. Antonia who was arrested while pregnant, only drove when her

husband was not available. Susana drove “only to buy food or to take the children to the doctor” (interview, February 18, 2015). Natalia said “I make the sign of the cross every time I get in my car” (interview, January 25, 2015). Yvette still did drive when necessary but “only below the speed limit and without any mistakes, because I don’t have a license” (interview, February 18, 2015). Marisa said she drove: “but always with fear and the hope that I will be lucky enough to not be stopped, because I only carry my tax-payer number, not a license” (interview, January 28, 2015).

To be able to work. The respondents for this study did not all work at the time of the interview, but nine out of ten had worked in the past, using a variety of strategies to circumvent their lack of authorization. The most common strategy reported in the data was to seek out employers willing to knowingly hire an unauthorized immigrant. Antonia, Susana, Claudia and Yvette’s tobacco-farmer employers were all aware of their workers’ status. Natalia’s bosses at the stable were aware also. Marisa, who cleaned a factory and offices at night, was employed by a subcontractor who herself was hired by the owners of the businesses. Marisa’s direct supervisor, the subcontractor, was aware that Marisa was unauthorized, even if the administrative offices of the factory, who issued Marisa’s salary checks, were not. However, the participants concurred that working in any area other than cleaning or agriculture requires a Social Security card. Susana used her sister’s name and Social Security card to work in a fast-food restaurant. Although Amelia had worked successfully in another state in a meat-processing plant under false papers, she became afraid to buy a new Social Security number in Kentucky after her partner was arrested in a sting operation for attempting to sell falsified identification papers and was deported to Guatemala. At the time of the interview, he had already returned illegally to Kentucky and had been working in agriculture for two years, but Amelia, acutely

aware of the possible consequences of having false documents, asserted: “If you use another person’s name, you are never at ease, and I am too afraid to do it” (interview, January 12, 2015). Liliana and her husband both worked under different names in their factory, while Lucía worked under her own name in the hotel but with an invented Social Security number.

An additional strategy to be able to work is self-employment. Analysis of the data disclosed that restrictions to working have engendered, in some respondents, a laudable sense of entrepreneurship. Although Amelia was not young and could not read or write, at the time of the interview she was running her own business of buy-and-resell. Amelia rented a stall in a local flea market where she re-sold furniture, decor and clothing that she either obtained for free from different charities, or that she purchased from yard sales and Goodwill. Similarly, Yvette, who lived on a farm and helped raise cattle and tobacco, had also been able to earn an extra income. According to her:

I told the *patrón*, I needed to save for my children. So with his permission, I bought 6 newborn heifers for \$200 each and raised them by hand on the bottle. Today, my 6 meat cows are out in the pasture with the *patrón*’s cattle, but mine have green tags on their ears while his have yellow tags. My cows have grown and are now pregnant. I will sell the males and keep the females. (interview, February 18, 2015)

Fortunately, the owner of the farm agreed to feed and treat Yvette’s cows like his own. She also raised turkeys and chickens for sale.

Obtaining healthcare. Living without health insurance is a major impediment for the all the participants and their foreign-born children, although their American children receive coverage from the state. School-aged unauthorized children must provide proof of vaccinations as well as vision, hearing and dental screenings, and this is a major expense for their parents. The

participants opined that rural Kentucky has few free clinics, and visits to hospital emergency rooms result in prohibitively high bills. For example, Antonia said “I have a big debt that I have not been able to pay. It is about \$9000 dollars for treatment in the emergency room two years ago” (interview, January 19, 2015). When she becomes ill, she goes to the one free clinic in her town, but the wait for an appointment is long. Antonia also made use of another strategy: in a nearby town, there is a public clinic that charges for visits on a sliding scale, according to the family’s income. In order to be seen there, Antonia brought a letter from the place where she volunteered hours in cleaning, a center that assists immigrants. For the health screenings required by school, Antonia attended community health fairs to obtain the necessary forms for her unauthorized daughter. Because Lucía worked under her own name and an invented but unquestioned Social Security number, the hotel where she cleaned had offered a healthcare plan, but Lucía could not afford it. She decried: “For me alone, it was \$47 every two weeks, but if I included [my unauthorized daughter] Daniela, the cost went up to \$270 every two weeks. I can’t pay that much” (interview, February 2, 2015). Natalia, who cared for horses, had had several health-related episodes in the 15 years she had been living in Kentucky. Shortly after her arrival:

[I] got a job in a Mexican restaurant. The owners opened at 8 o’clock, but [my ride] left me outside at 7 in the morning. It was winter, and after a week of waiting outside in the cold, I got sick. Without papers, I couldn’t go to a hospital, so I had to stay in bed and get well by myself. The [American woman I lived with] would rub me with Vicks.

(interview, January 25, 2015)

Years later, having felt a lump in her back, she went to the free clinic in her town, where it was determined to be a cyst. She recalled: “They drained it right there and it healed quickly. Later, the clinic called to give me the lab results. It was only a cyst, nothing more” (interview, January

25, 2015). As related previously, when Natalia hurt her back on another occasion, she saw the chiropractor only as often as she could afford, not as often as was prescribed.

Angustias, isolated because she did not drive or work, had benefitted from her friendship with an American administrator at the local charity clinic. Because she was diabetic, she was referred to the University of Kentucky for an eye exam. Her administrator friend accompanied her and was able to observe that there, Angustias was enrolled temporarily in Medicaid, and received a card valid for two months (Kellory, telephone call, April 22, 2015).²

It was illiterate Amelia who had been most successful in securing medical care; she had befriended an American physician living near her house.

[The doctor] is an older, retired gentleman who has been very good to me and my family. One day, my brother Germán got a piece of tin from welding in his eye. We went to the doctor's office, he still it owns although he is retired, but the office staff refused to receive Germán, saying they needed a Social Security number. I called the doctor on the telephone. Immediately, he came to the clinic and scolded the employees. Then he took the instruments and looked in Germán's eye himself....He always treats me when I am sick and gives me free medicine. See? Here are my pills for high blood pressure that I got from the doctor. (interview, January 12, 2015)

In conclusion, it appears undisputable that the unauthorized face systemic barriers in Kentucky that arise mainly from their lack of legal documents. These barriers which include separation from family, obstacles to work and drive, as well as a lack of health insurance, are negotiated by the respondents in whatever ways are available to them. For some, systemic obstacles are

² Neither the American friend nor I had ever heard of this happening before. If not an error, it would represent a significant improvement over the opportunities available to the unauthorized today. However, to date it remains an inexplicable exception.

mitigated by drawing on family support and by using various strategies to be able to earn money, obtain healthcare, and avoid being arrested for driving.

Barriers at the intersection of unauthorized and Latino

The data from the interviews revealed that the participants also faced other barriers that were unrelated to a lack of a work permit and Social Security card. These obstacles constitute a further disadvantage at the intersection of identities of the participants. It appears that these obstacles stem mainly from the poverty which characterizes their lives, their lack of fluency in English and from the discriminatory attitudes towards Latinos of members of the American public. The following sections will describe the difficulties faced by the participants as well as some of the strategies they employ to overcome them.

Unfair police. No participant made any distinction between the city police, the country police or the state police forces, but several alleged that the policemen in Kentucky are unfair to Hispanics, in particular at traffic stops. Antonia was detained after she was rear-ended by an American woman who was allowed to leave the scene of the accident. Susana testified that she spent one day and one night in jail for driving without a license. Lilitiana related that her husband was stopped for no apparent reason in Elizabethtown, and Angustias's husband, stopped at a red light for not wearing a seat belt, spent a day in jail before being released. A significant amount of the fear that permeates their lives is attributable to law enforcement. The analysis revealed that every participant believed that the police in Kentucky unfairly target Hispanics when they stop drivers to check for drivers' licenses.

Living conditions. The data concerning the living conditions of the participants came from researcher observation and from information provided by the respondents. First, none of the

participants in this study owned their homes; either they rented or the housing was provided by their employer. Table 2 provides a summary of their living arrangements.

Table 2
Housing of the participants.

Name	Accomodation	Location & Details	Occupants
Amelia	Old 2-storey house	3 bedrooms, on hill close to downtown, w/ peeling paint, cracked window panes, junk in back yard.	7 (2 children)
Antonia	Old ranch	2 bedrooms in downtown, w/ moldy bathroom, tiny yard.	9 (6 children)
Susana	New 2-storey house	3 bedrooms in Little Mexico, 2 miles from downtown, w/ tiny yard.	8 (6 children)
Natalia	Single-wide trailer	at horse stables, 5 miles from town, 5 feet from next building on both sides.	3 (2 children)
Claudia	Double-wide trailer	3 small bedrooms, nice, spacious, mobile home park, 1 mile from downtown.	10 (8 children)
Marisa	2-storey house	3 bedrooms in Little Mexico, 2 miles from downtown, no yard.	6 (4 children)
Yvette	Old farmhouse	on employer's farm, 8 miles from town, shared with other male farmworkers, 1 bathroom for all. Yvette's family occupy the living & dining room on ground floor.	8 (3 children)
Liliana	Small townhouse	2 bedrooms in Little Mexico, 2 miles from downtown, no yard.	6 (3 children)
Lucía	Relatives' new house	3 bedrooms in Little Mexico, 2 miles from downtown, no yard. Lucía and her 2 daughters occupy 1 bedroom.	3 (2 children)
Angustias	Single-wide trailer	2 bedrooms in run-down trailer park, downtown.	4 (2 children)

Half of the respondents lived in a neighborhood covering around 30 blocks, about two miles from town, where there were detached single-family dwellings as well as apartments.

This is little Mexico, where the rental office does not check the Social Security numbers provided by the renters against their names, so it is possible for the undocumented to lease housing. As long as the residents pay regularly, no questions are asked. The inhabitants are mostly Latinos, although there are some blacks and some poor white Americans.... Up to a dozen people live in each apartment. There are families, roommates, acquaintances, newly-arrived friends and relatives. The office's files are in order: one family per apartment, and the rent is paid on time, \$700 cash. (field note, February 13, 2015)

In Little Mexico, there were no community centers, no shops, no churches and no public transportation. Even on the affluent streets of single-family houses, there were no gardens, few trees and no play areas. Each home had a tiny strip of green in the front. Of all the respondents for this study, only Susana and Marisa lived in single-family houses in the "high" part of the neighborhood, where each narrow façade pointed towards the street and although detached, the home was just a few feet away from the neighbors. Overcrowding was common. Hotel worker Lucía also lived in a separate two-story house in Little Mexico that was fully furnished with matching pieces—but it all belonged to her sister and her American husband. Lucía and her two daughters shared one bedroom upstairs. Other than Susana, Marisa and Lucía, all the other respondents had homes of lesser status. Liliana, whose nursing career was never completed, rented a small 2-bedroom townhouse in the inferior part of Little Mexico, where:

You drive up a hill and then you see, laid out before you, 6 or 8 identical long barracks that face each other across a parking lot, all the way down and into a curve to the left.

Every building has a row of identical black doors with tin numbers attached; 200, 202, 204, and so on. You cross a concrete sidewalk and another building begins; 300, 302, 304....Not a playground nor a shop in sight, just endless buildings with black doors to the street....Outside some doors sit forgotten, dirty toys. There are Christmas lights, although it is February. Flattened beer cans and cigarette butts litter the sparse grass in front of the black doors. (field note, February 13, 2015)

In another part of town, Amelia lived in a shabby white two-story house. She shared the rent with various relatives and used her back yard as a repository for the second-hand items that constitute her business:

...behind the house is a junkyard. There are a few matching iron chairs without cushions, a frying pan, several large boxes, a refrigerator with the door hanging open and some tools that I don't recognize...I walk carefully between a plastic laundry basket containing hangers and empty cans of beer, smashed flat....inside we sit on ripped vinyl chairs at an unsteady card table in the dark kitchen. (field note, January 12, 2015)

Three of the respondents for this study lived in mobile homes; Claudia with her blended family of eight children, Natalia on the stables property, and Angustias in a crowded trailer park, notorious for its crime rate, in the middle of downtown, "located on a hill and composed of two parallel pot-holed streets with trailers on both sides. Every mobile home is different. Some are new, but most are in various stages of dilapidation" (field note, February 24, 2015). On these bleak over-populated streets: Angustias lived there with her husband and two daughters. Two of her grown children, having married, lived nearby in other rented mobile homes. Because Angustias did not work and did not drive, she was mostly confined to "[a] shabby gray trailer with a wooden porch. On it, there are various items: an old pair of men's boots, crusted with

mud; a plastic bucket, a child's pink dresser, and some crates of soda" (field note, February 24, 2015).

Finally, farmhand and cow-owner Yvette lived with her husband, 3 children and several single men in a run-down house between some barns and pastures. Yvette with her family occupied:

the ground floor, in what once was the dining room and the attached living room. Other male farmhands live upstairs. All share the gray moldy bathroom which smells like urine and damp. They take turns cooking food in the kitchen with peeling walls. (field note, February 18, 2015)

Yvette and the farmhands inhabited what used to be the childhood home of the farmer for whom they worked, Ryan Pitt, who lived in a fancy house in town. Farmer Pitt used the decrepit old house to house his workers. Thus, with one exception, all the participants resided in substandard and overcrowded housing, due to the general poverty which characterizes the intersection at which the unauthorized dwell.

Verbal abuse. Seven out of ten participants reported being verbally assaulted by Kentuckians, and three reported experiences of yelling and insulting. Amelia, for instance, recalled:

There is one fat *molla* [African-American woman], of my age, who has a white car covered with University of Kentucky stickers. One day we were both in the thrift shop and I picked up a plate that she wanted. She pushed me and scratched me, saying "Get out! You are not a U.S. citizen!" Every time she sees me, she mistreats me. Another day she said: 'Don't come here anymore! I don't want to see you here!' That day I cried, but I held my tongue and didn't answer. (interview, January 12, 2015)

Marisa, who had four American children and worked at night cleaning a factory, alleged that some of the workers present on the night shift “act like you smell bad” and “look at you as if you are nothing” (interview, January 28, 2015). Moreover, she related the following story:

Last Christmas someone gave my daughter a gift card to Cracker Barrel restaurant, so we went there to eat. Because I am unfamiliar with American foods, I didn't know what to order....Then we overheard the server talking to another server, saying “They don't speak much English” in such an offensive manner! ...Treating us as if we were inferior...I am never going back to that place. (interview, January 28, 2015)

Natalia, the stable-hand, attributed her bad experiences to her lack of English, saying:

“Sometimes in the shops the sellers yell at me and bother me because I don't understand them. It makes me so angry sometimes. They are rude to me even though I am a customer in their establishment!” (interview, January 25, 2015). She also recounted that when her sister had the baby with hip dysplasia, the two sisters went desperately from doctor to doctor in search of treatment for the baby. She described how the first doctor rejected them emphatically in a very mean way. She did commend the second doctor who was much nicer and helped them to arrange the operation for the baby. Similarly, Yvette recalled an instance when, at a flea market, her ex-soldier husband entered an army-surplus shop and became interested in a military-type duffel bag:

The owner of the shop asked: “Are you going to buy it? If not, get out of here!” My husband, very offended, replied “Why? Do you think I don't have enough money to buy it?” and dropped the bag on the counter. Now he won't go to the flea market at all. What a racist old man! (interview, February 28, 2015)

Yvette added that a man who shared her house did not patronize Wal-Mart or Lowe's because one day he was told by a customer "F...ing wetback! Get out of my way!" (interview, February 28, 2015) and an employee who heard did nothing about it. Angustias, whose daughter was sexually abused as a child, had been waiting for an answer to her application for a U-visa, a special category of visa for victims of abuse. She described how, for years now:

I go every week to the District Attorney's office to ask about my daughter's visa. Now the secretaries make comments to each other, in English, and imply that we are bothersome, that they are sick of seeing us. They say this case isn't going anywhere, that there is no movement. It makes it worse for us to hear their asides. I just don't know what to do. Sometimes I despair....(interview, February 24, 2015)

While these experiences are not directly related to the participants' lack of papers and are instead related to their race, these examples occurred in everyday situations and contributed to a general climate of hostility facing the participants. Furthermore, these behaviors are not limited to the general public. The following section will discuss other instances of mistreatment from among the various agencies that exist to serve the disadvantaged.

Difficulties obtaining aid. Even though all the participants were undocumented, because any child born in the U.S. is automatically a citizen, not all of their children were unauthorized. It ensues that the participants' citizen children can receive federal food aid, in Kentucky called Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP - previously known as food stamps) as long as their parents' income does not exceed federally-set limits. However, the amount of food-stamp money each family receives is calculated only on the number of American citizens in the home and excludes undocumented parents and children. Antonia, who has four children, only receives food stamp assistance for three as her eldest daughter is undocumented.

She explains, “And the [food stamp] money only lasts for less than half of the month” (interview, January 19, 2015). In addition, several respondents for this study alleged maltreatment on the part of employees at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, where food stamps are awarded. Amelia attested:

Once, a lady there threatened me. She asked: “why don’t you work? You always ask for assistance, but you never say you are working. You Hispanics get more assistance than Americans. I answered “But the aid is from the government, not from your pocket.” Later she said “You know that if we call immigration, they will take you to jail. You have no right to be here. You have to go back to your country. You have to work. And don’t repeat to anyone what I said to you.” I was very offended, but I didn’t say anything because I need the food stamps. When I returned to the office on another day, she was gone. (interview, January 12, 2015)

Angustias also implied a similar experience when she commented: “I would like to say to the workers who give the assistance, that if they don’t like to do this job, then they shouldn’t do it. Why do they have to treat people badly? We are also human” (interview, February 24, 2015). In contrast to the food stamp office, Angustias related that once when she had no money to pay her electric bill, she appealed to a local church, where the official not only paid her bill but, unsolicited, gave her “a big, very big bag of food” (interview, February 24, 2015). At the food stamp office, Angustias recalled:

...the lady in the office said: “Go sit down.” So I did. And I waited and waited and no-one called me. Finally I found a Puerto Rican who speaks Spanish and English, and she helped me get across to the social worker. If you don’t speak English, many times you are just ignored. (interview, February 24, 2015)

Stable-hand Natalia recalled being ignored there, and also had a further complaint about the Cabinet. She claimed:

They sometimes take decisions without my permission. See? I have two kids, and one of them is on Passport medical insurance, and the other is on Wellcare. They used to both be on Passport, but someone changed [it], without my signing anything. I do not agree that they can just make changes without asking me. (interview, January 25, 2015)

The participants reported difficulties accessing aid at other agencies as well. In the town where Antonia lived, there was a Community Center that distributed food, but “they give preference to the men over women with children. Many of the men are just lazy drunks who don’t want to work” (interview, January 19, 2015). Also, she claimed that “there is injustice because the employees hide donations and food for their friends and they don’t give to those who really need it” (interview, January 19, 2015). Finally, Antonia had criticism about the food, remarking: “They give things that we don’t eat, like canned goods and deer meat. Sometimes the food they give has expired. It would be better if they gave us a coupon to buy what we do eat” (interview, January 19, 2015). While the Community Center distributes boxes pre-filled with donated food, Antonia would rather the Center emulate a church in her town where “Once a month, they let you choose your food items from the shelves” (interview, January 19, 2015). Finally, ex-nursing student Liliana mentioned another agency: “It is in the Health Department that they treat us with contempt. There is a woman there who treats us very badly” (interview, February 13, 2015).

The data from the participants in this study indicate perceived injustices and complaints about the agencies that exist to serve the underprivileged. The Latina mothers who go there for assistance feel belittled, ignored, and resent the probing questions.

Bullying of children at school. All the participants expressed satisfaction with their children's public schools. They appreciated the curriculum and commended the school personnel. However, seven out of ten respondents for this study affirmed that their child had been bullied by other children. All three Guatemalan participants alleged that their children had been victims. Amelia told the following story: "Once an American boy said ugly things to my [elementary school-aged] son and hid his library book. I told this to the teacher who searched and located the book. But we never reported anything because we are afraid." Antonia's daughter, aged 8, was insulted on the school bus. Another child "told my daughter that she was a stupid Mexican and that his parents hate Mexicans. He yelled at my daughter, who arrived home in tears. And we are from Guatemala, not from Mexico!" Susana also testified to a comparable experience concerning one son who has always been overweight:

When he was in the fifth grade, because he is a little fat, other children made fun of him and said ugly things. My son would arrive home and, would roll up into a ball of blankets on his bed. Until the day when he told us what was happening. (interview, February 18, 2015)

Susana was complimentary of the school authorities whom she contacted at once. She said: "I don't know what they did, but no-one ever teased my son again" (interview, February 18, 2015).

Marisa, the factory cleaner, related a story much the same as Susana's:

One day my [elementary school-aged] daughter came home from school crying. Another girl had said bad words to her and had threatened to hit her. I called the school and talked to the team leader of the fourth grade. The next day, the principal had spoken to both girls and the problem was solved. (interview, January 28, 2015)

Three respondents, however, were unsatisfied with the school and accused the school authorities of dismissing their allegations. Lucia declared:

Last November my daughter was hurt in school. They sent her to me all banged up and with bruises on her forehead. Even the pediatrician thought I had hit her, and questioned me. My daughter said that a boy had been hitting her in school. I wrote a note to the teacher but she did not reply. Later, I visited her and she said “these are accidents that happen...we will investigate.” She asked if I wanted to change my daughter’s classroom, but why should I change my daughter if it is another who is hitting her? Finally I said that if the school didn’t do anything, I would go to court. (interview, February 2, 2015)

Claudia, who came to Kentucky from Alabama, related that when the family first arrived three years ago, her oldest daughter was bullied in her high school.

They bothered her, and insulted her, saying she was fat, she was short. It continued until one day a girl slapped my daughter in the school restroom. I spoke to the principal but he didn’t do anything. He even asked if I had any proof. (interview, February 5, 2015)

So Claudia took matters into her own hands. She obtained the cell phone number of the aggressor and called her. The girl answered rudely and alleged that her brother was a gang member, but the bullying of Claudia’s daughter stopped.

For the participants, being Latina creates barriers *in addition* to those which ensue from a lack of authorization. Readers will recall that intersectionality posits that the level of disadvantage created can be more than just the sum of the obstacles.

Resources and Strategies

Being at the intersection of undocumented and Latina creates barriers erected by poverty, lack of English, and by the racist attitudes of some Kentuckians. The following sections describe

the resources and strategies they employ to negotiate these barriers. In general, Latina mothers rely on religion, on their own ingenuity, and on helpful Americans.

Religion. To various degrees, all the respondents for this study manifested allegiance to some organized form of Christianity. To Amelia, God was the ultimate redresser of injustice. When asked how she advised her children to respond to verbal abuse, she said: “I tell them to not answer. To leave it in the hands of God. I don’t know if it is good counsel or not, but that is what I tell my children.” To Natalia, God was the protector. She made the sign of the cross every time she drove her car out of the stables, in the hope that she would not be stopped by the police. Liliana displayed a 1-foot tall crucifix as well as multiple other religious images on the wall in her living room, and mentioned her church brothers when she talked about family support. A large reproduction of Michelangelo’s Last Supper hung over Marisa’s dining table, and a Virgin of Guadalupe was prominent in Antonia’s front room. It is my personal knowledge that Antonia’s children have all been baptized within the last year, and that her teenaged daughter has just performed, with great pomp, her first communion at a Catholic church in a nearby city (I attended the post-ceremony party). Angustias testified that she and her American friend meet every Friday night in her mobile home and engage in a bible study. In addition, when faced with verbal abuse, Angustias told her children: “to be quiet and don’t answer anything. Leave it in the hands of God, because violence doesn’t take you anywhere.”

A further indication of the importance of religion for some participants is the fact that they recently married in church, as evidenced by the recent wedding photographs displayed in their front room. Claudia, Susana and Liliana married in the last year in the presence of all their children. According to Marisa, these late weddings are an attempt to “put things right with God,” since sexual relations outside of marriage are universally forbidden in Christianity. Claudia also

reiterated that extramarital relations go against church teachings, and added that she married in church last July in order to “stop sinning” (interview, February 5, 2015).

Ingenuity. After citizenship or legal immigration status, household income limits determine eligibility for SNAP benefits. For hardly-educated Spanish-speakers in a predominantly educated, White world, some participants employed creative strategies to counter unfavorable circumstances. One example was Susana, the only respondent for this study who declared an income too high to receive SNAP (food stamp) benefits. In her interview, Susana revealed that her husband had a good job in a food distribution plant. Although her husband was unauthorized at the time of the interview, he did have a legal work permit years ago when he was hired: “When his work permit expired, he tried to renew it but he was denied. So he continues to work under his old Social Security number at the same company, where he has been promoted” (interview, February 18, 2015). When Susana showed the Cabinet her husband’s pay stubs, his salary was too high to receive SNAP benefits. Consequently, Susana’s family did not receive any.

The other 9 participants received food assistance for their citizen children, although some admitted to various kinds of subterfuge to qualify under the income guidelines. For instance, Amelia admitted that she had never told the food stamp office about her buy-and-resell business because “they would take away my assistance and I need that to feed my children.” (interview, January 12, 2015). Similarly, Yvette did not declare any income for herself and only half of what her husband earned in order to continue to receive assistance. In fact, she said: “This is why we asked the *patrón* to pay half of [my husband’s] salary in cash and half by check. I only tell the food stamp office about the amount on the check” (interview, February 18, 2015). Other participants employ analogous stratagems. For instance, Marisa simply presented herself as a

single parent raising her four children on her factory-cleaning salary alone. As she was not married to the father of her two youngest children, this was legally correct although he was present in the home between the tree-work jobs that he performed under another name, and did bring in an income which remained undeclared to the food stamp office and other agencies that require income information. Likewise, Antonia only declared the income that she and her partner earned by working part-time in tobacco. To the food stamp office, she submitted the letter in which the tobacco farmer stated how much money was paid to them. Antonia did not declare the main part of their income which came from landscaping jobs.

It is evident also that food stamp benefits are very important to their families, even if the benefit is calculated solely on the number of American citizens residing in the home, excluding the unauthorized members of the family. These benefits are so crucial to the household food budget that the respondents are willing to endure mistreatment and to engage in falsification in order to assure that their continuation.

Helpful Americans. The majority of participants had at least one American on whom to rely for assistance in times of need. Seven participants acknowledged varying degrees of support from Americans. As mentioned previously, an American doctor was a special friend of Amelia's family. In addition to providing healthcare for her extended family, he also helped in other ways. For instance, he often hired Amelia's daughter to help with dog-related chores at his home. He paid her generously, thus providing pocket money for the girl. Whenever possible, he gave rides to Amelia who did not drive and responded at once to emergencies. Antonia also had many American friends. As an example, she related that several years ago, when her husband was unable to work for several months after a car accident, "an American woman came to my house and gave me \$350 to help with my rent" (interview, January 19, 2015). Antonia claimed friendly

relations with many Americans, from policemen in her town and ex-teachers of her children, to various farmers. She was particularly appreciative of the special friendship she shared with the Catholic nun who leads the Hispanic Center. Susana did not claim any personal friends, but she did feel valued and supported by the American staff at her children's schools, including this Migrant Advocate. She said "There is no racism in the schools" (interview, February 18, 2015). Likewise, factory worker Liliana acknowledged that a certain young American man often helped her oldest daughter, mother of her little grandson. Lucía, on the other hand, claimed many friends, in addition to the "courteous and appreciative" (interview, February 2, 2015) American guests at the hotel where she worked. In her own words: "Yes, I have many American friends. We work as a team. There are Whites and Blacks. We have a good relationship of mutual friendship and support" (interview, February 2, 2015). Lucía even acknowledged a special male friend:

He is 45 years old and divorced. He works in maintenance. He says he likes me a lot and that before, he never noticed any Mexican. He says we will get married and travel together. He is afraid of most Mexicans. He says they are aggressive, that they shoot with pistols, but I say no, it's not like that. (interview, February 2, 2015)

Distinctively, cattle entrepreneur Yvette counted her employer among the American friends of her husband. According to her, this farmer is understanding and helpful. For instance, some of the vehicles that Yvette and her husband possess are registered under the farmer's name, and he allowed her to keep her six personal cows among his cattle, feeding them as his own. In addition, Yvette asserted "My husband has several American friends. They are all wealthy farmers and they respect him a lot because of his knowledge of animal care, and farm things..." (interview,

February 18, 2015). Finally, Angustias who did not drive or work nevertheless had two active friendships with American women. She explained:

I have two American [female] friends. One I met from church and the other from English class. The one from church... has helped me a lot. My youngest son has many medical problems. He has no delays, but he has learning disabilities, and this friend has taken us in her car many times to the Evaluation Center without ever accepting money for gas. So, as she won't accept money, I invite her to eat here [at my house]. (interview, February 24, 2015)

Three participants, however, did not report any American friends. They claimed only Latino friends and relatives provide them support. In general, analysis revealed that having American friends can be very helpful to Latino mothers and that a lack of fluency in English does not seem to be a barrier to these positive relationships.

Outcomes

The unauthorized Latina mothers in Kentucky who are the respondents for this study were situated at the cross-point of multiple identities which each entail different types of disadvantage. Intersectionalist theory posits that these multiple obstacles may result in a level of disadvantage that is greater than the sum of the individual obstacles (Mahalingam & Rabelo, 2013; Warner & Shields, 2013). Consequently, it can be said that, due to their membership in multiple oppressed groups, the participants face numerous and great barriers to be able to conduct their daily lives. It would be understandable if their attitudes towards the American experience had hardened into prejudice and acrimony. To my surprise, however, analysis of the respondents' data indicated five uplifting themes: a measure of success, a recognition that not all Americans are the same, evidence of personal growth, and the sentiment that Kentucky is a good

place to be. The final theme, wishes for self and children, reflects a desire for authorization and educational achievement. Each theme is discussed in a subsequent section.

Success

Despite their mostly substandard living conditions in Kentucky and the other barriers they encounter, the participants had achieved a significantly higher level of physical comfort than they had had before emigrating. Most outstanding was Susana, who hardly attended school due to poverty and instead picked beans from coffee trees during her childhood. Once an abandoned single mother, at the time of the interview, Susana was happily married in a single-family house with “a small living room with a wide staircase leading to the second floor, a gas fireplace topped by a mantel, and a hall leading to the kitchen at the back” (field note, February 18, 2015). Every respondent who drove owned a car. Susana possessed a small black SUV that on the day of the interview was parked in her driveway. Most notably, Susana’s family income was too high for her American children to qualify for food stamps. Similarly, Yvette and her ex-soldier husband had attained some degree of material success from the farm where they worked, as evidenced by their ownership of several automobiles. Yvette said: “You could say that [my husband] is [his employer’s] foreman....Our white van that you see outside is registered in the name of the *patrón*, but our other cars are in my husband’s name” (interview, February 18, 2015). The eldest daughter of a farmhand with five children, Claudia worked in the fields to help support her siblings. In Kentucky, she lived in a mobile home that appeared shabby from the outside, but the interiors were well-appointed:

Inside, there is a large foosball table on one side with many pairs of children’s shoes lined up beneath it. The lady and the toddler have been lying on the couch: the blankets

are still there, draping to the floor. A large flat-screen TV is on in the background....The trailer is large, comfortable and warm (field note, February 5, 2015).

Marisa, whose bricklayer father could only afford his children's "needs not [their] wants" lived in an overcrowded house in Little Mexico, but "three cars crowd the driveway. Up three steps and into a spacious living room with a large flat-screen TV, an ATV parked along one wall and two or three bikes. A comfortable couch forms a U" (field note, January 25, 2015). Amelia, the Guatemalan Indian born in a palm-thatched shack, lived in a large but old two-story house with a back yard filled with the second-hand junk that constituted her business. Even though Amelia was in debt, she had accomplished quite a bit: she had supported her second son's university studies, she had bought a tin roof for her father, and she had built a house in Guatemala. On the day of the interview, we sat in her kitchen, where:

On the counters, there are six-packs of beer, crates full of soft drinks, dozens of bottles of water, bags of salty snacks. On the stove, an open pot of beans. Through the open doorway, a TV is on in the next room. Everyone except us is watching cartoons. (field note, January 12, 2015)

In conclusion, it can be said that, while still substandard according to American norms, the material conditions of the participants showed improvement after their arrival in the United States.

Not All Americans are the Same

Despite the generally hostile climate in Kentucky and the different types of abuse participants endured the respondents for this study still manifested a commendable lack of prejudice towards the natives of their host country. In response to the unambiguous interview question "How do you feel towards the Americans in your neighborhood?" six participants said,

in effect, that the population is not homogeneous. Amelia, who described multiple instances of discrimination and even physical abuse while simultaneously enjoying a friendship with a retired physician, acknowledged, “Not everybody is the same. There are many good Americans and also there are bad ones” (interview, January 12, 2015). Fellow Guatemalan Antonia, who claimed many American friends, echoed Amelia’s discernment when she said: “Some Americans can be trusted, but not all” (interview, January 19, 2015). Susana, the third Guatemalan who lived in a relatively posh house in Little Mexico and whose husband earned too much for food stamps, contended that she had good relations with all her American neighbors, White and Afro-American or, as she politely called them, “the dark-complected ones” (interview, February 18, 2015). Despite her positive neighborly relationships, Susana did state “Not all Americans are the same” (interview, February 18, 2015) and denied having any American friendships except with school personnel.

In the same vein, Marisa, who cleaned a factory during the night shift where some workers “look at you as if you stink,” nevertheless acknowledged that others “are friendly and say hello.” About Americans in general, Marisa remarked, “Not everybody is like you [this researcher] and enjoys helping Hispanics” (interview, January 28, 2015). During her interview on the farm where she lives and works, after saying that they had many American wealthy farmer friends, Yvette commented, “In general, Americans of the lower [social] classes are more racist than the rich” (interview, February 18, 2015) implying also that there are differences between Americans. Finally, five participants did not explicitly state that Americans are not all the same: stable-hand Natalia, hotel worker Lucía, stay-at-home mom Claudia, factory worker Liliana and non-driving Angustias. Of that group, Lucía claimed to have excellent relationships “of friendship and support” with her American co-workers at the hotel and even an American

boyfriend, while Angustias specified that she had two American friends, one of whom she met every Friday for bible study.

In conclusion, most respondents reported that positive interactions with Americans outstripped negative ones. These different kinds of contacts enabled participants to reserve judgment on the population as a whole and to, admirably, still look upon Americans with goodwill.

Personal growth

Living in the United States, albeit as an unauthorized immigrant, had enabled the participants to evolve in positive directions. Eight out of ten had learned to drive, the same number had developed cross-cultural friendships, five had learned to communicate in English and several had attained a degree of self-assurance in their relationships with men. Years ago, as Migrant Advocate, I was visited by a distraught Yvette who had just discovered that her husband was having an affair. However, on the day of the interview, Yvette's attitude had changed:

No, I am not afraid of my husband leaving me. I am so over that fear! Now I know what men are like, but every time I fall, I become stronger. Some say that bad things happen because God is punishing us, but that's not true. For me, every fall is a new lesson.

(interview, February 18, 2015)

Yvette had begun to take ownership of her own life. Comparing her first marriage to her second, Claudia noted the strength she had acquired and the reasons for the change:

I am not afraid my partner will be unfaithful. My first husband cheated on me for two years and even had a baby with his White American mistress. All that time he humiliated me and insulted me, and I suffered in silence. But since he died, I am living my life very differently. I have learned to say things clearly, to speak up. I became stronger. When

my first husband brought his lover's baby to my home, something died inside me....I believe that if one has been through certain [bad] experiences, one shouldn't let them happen again, no? If [my second husband] is interested in another woman, that will be the end of this relationship. I will keep on going by myself. (interview, February 5, 2015)

Most notable is Claudia's last sentence: "I will keep on going" which signifies that even if her second marriage fails, she will not be destroyed. Hotel housekeeper Lucía, whose two husbands were unfaithful and who, at the time of the interview, was single and parenting two daughters, categorized bad experiences into those that could be overcome and those that could not. For Lucía, losing a husband was surmountable, as was losing a job. One could get over both. Lucía declared her ability to "support my daughters by myself, with no help from anyone. We will see if my daughter's father begins to pay child support, for to date he has paid almost nothing" (interview, February 2, 2015). Even Guatemalan Susana, who did not work, depending instead on her husband's relatively high salary, declared that if he did leave her "I would be able to raise my children by myself" (interview, February 18, 2015). Of all the respondents for this study, factory cleaner Marisa expressed the most inner strength. She denied being afraid of deportation, of debt and of being found out as an unauthorized worker. About losing her job, she said, "There is always some way to work....I can work and take care of [my children] alone" (interview, January 28, 2015).

Such self-confidence had so empowered two respondents that they were able to proffer generosity to others. Liliana's advice to a potential new immigrant to her town was "To put forth the effort. We Hispanics must help each other. [The new person] must not give up. There is always a way to victory" (interview, February 13, 2015). Likewise, fearless Marisa offered, "If

someone arrived who was very needy, I would help her to find work, even if it had to be at my own job” (interview, January 28, 2015).

Kentucky is good

Regardless of the constraints and discrimination, six out of ten respondents upheld Kentucky as a good place for them to be living. Of the other four, only two criticized the state and its people, while the other two made no comment at all. Unemployed and non-driving Angustias, whose daughter was abused, was the most disapproving. She said, “Kentucky is bad because they don’t like Latinos. And they teach their children at a young age to be racist” (interview, February 24, 2015). Marisa, on the other hand, noted specific shortcomings. In her mind, Kentucky was less than receptive “because here there are no interpreters. [Interpretation] is done by telephone. And if they don’t understand you, here in Kentucky they don’t put forth the effort to try. In the clinics, in restaurants...” (interview, January 28, 2015). Amelia and Antonia did not opine about Kentucky at all.

The other six respondents expressed favorable judgments about Kentucky. Stable-hand Natalia, for instance, felt that “Kentucky is a little freer than other states [for unauthorized immigrants]. In some other places, [we] can’t even go outside to the street” (interview, January 25, 2015). Claudia, who lived in Alabama previous to her first husband’s death, approved of Kentucky because she felt less harassed by the police than in Alabama, adding that “I don’t think there is much racism in Kentucky” (interview, February 5, 2015). Farmhand Yvette, who worked in Arizona with her ex-soldier husband before coming to Kentucky, mentioned that:

The atmosphere in Arizona was very tense. I felt in danger, so thanks to a friend, we came to Kentucky...I believe that there is less racism here than in Arizona or California,

perhaps because there are more gangs there. Here there are fewer gangs. (interview, February 18, 2015)

Mexican factory-worker and ex-nursing student Liliana was appreciative of the assistance she received in Kentucky. Approvingly, she said, “[The food aid] is good, because they help us. We are not from this country and they still help us, whereas in Mexico there is only corruption” (interview, February 13, 2015). About Kentucky, hotel housekeeper Lucía asserted, “There isn’t much racism. Only maybe 20% of racism” (interview, February 2, 2015). The most complimentary respondent was Guatemalan Susana who proclaimed emphatically “I believe that Kentucky is a good place for immigrants....In Guatemala there is no money to be able to study, and here there is” (interview, February 18, 2015). One can therefore conclude that, although there is certainly room for improvement, on the whole Kentucky is viewed in a positive light.

Dreams

As part of the interview, each respondent was asked to describe her dreams. Nine out of ten participants’ greatest desire was to have legal papers in the United States. However, the reasons for wanting to be legal differed among the respondents.

Five of the participants yearned to go home to see their relatives. Antonia would love to “be able to return to my country from time to time. I haven’t seen my parents in 15 years, nor my sisters. Some of my brothers have been here [in the United States], but not all of them” (interview, January 19, 2015). In a similar vein, Amelia hungered to “hug my parents in Guatemala” (interview, January 12, 2015). Claudia explained that she had missed her mother most and for years to see her mother had been her greatest wish. However, Claudia explained, recently her mother had been granted a tourist visa to travel to the U.S. and her arrival was imminent. Claudia mentioned another reason for wanting to go back to Mexico. After her first

husband died suddenly in Alabama, his body had been repatriated by the Mexican Consulate. She had vowed to take her children to visit their father's grave. Angustias also expressed the desire to return to Mexico to visit her relatives, living and deceased. She specified, "I have three sisters and four brothers whom I haven't seen in ten years. One sister died and I couldn't go to the funeral" (interview, February 24, 2015). For farmhand and cow owner Yvette, who left her two eldest daughters in Mexico 12 years ago, the desire to go home was tempered by the economic realities. To her wish, she added a caveat: "[My dream] is to have papers, so I could return to Mexico to see my daughters. But I would have to come back here to work, because one earns so little in Mexico" (interview, February 18, 2015).

Six respondents wished for legal papers for reasons related to work. Amelia was almost lyrical, exclaiming:

My dream is to be given a work permit, so I can work and save money. It doesn't matter if we are able to eat or not [on the money we earn], but just give me a permit! I will work hard....My dream is to buy land and never have to borrow money again. (interview, January 12, 2015)

Hotel housekeeper Lucía longed to establish roots in her adopted country. She wished for "papers so I can have stability in the United States. My only wish is a solution for [unauthorized] immigrants. I don't want to be rich, or beautiful, or young. Only to be legal" (interview, February 2, 2015). Antonia, who was unemployed at the time of interview but previously had held many jobs, aspired to financial independence. She said, "My dream is to get a stable job where I can earn money to buy a piece of land in Guatemala and build a house. For that, I wish to be legal" (interview, January 19, 2015). Fellow Guatemalan Susana, in spite of her family's relatively high income, expressed her desire for papers for more psychological reasons, saying,

“I would like to have our papers, to be able to drive and work. So I can stop being afraid” (interview, February 18, 2015). Similarly, Marisa who has four American children and cleans a factory at night, was more concerned about how she is treated. She wished for a “Work permit so I can be legal...so that no matter where I go, no-one can reject me because I am undocumented” (interview, January 28, 2015). Finally, stable-hand Natalia also wished for papers. She explained:

I would like a job that pays me by check so I can declare my taxes. I would like a Social Security [number] so I can build credit, to be able one day to buy a house or a property that would be an inheritance for my children. (interview, January 25, 2015)

Only one participant had a wish other than for legal papers to remain in the U.S. Liliana wished for two things; to be able to attend English classes, and to finish her studies. At the time of the interview, her 12-hour work day at the factory prevented her from attending the English classes offered by her church at 6 p.m. and, as she said, “In Mexico, I completed middle school and I studied nursing for two years. But I didn’t finish” (interview, February 13, 2015). Interestingly, the data revealed that, despite their unauthorized status and the daily risk of deportation, seven of the ten respondents envisaged their future in the United States, whereas only three indicated that they would like someday to return permanently to their home country.

In their replies, six participants added their dreams for their children, which for each respondent included at least one U.S. citizen. Angustias, with three grown children and only one still in school, described a most general ideal. She said: “I would also like for my children to have stable lives with everything they need. I don’t ask for riches or big things, only for a peaceful, problem-free life without discrimination” (interview, February 24, 2015). Despite the differing status of their children, the other five mothers’ dreams all reflected a desire for

educational achievement. After spending her childhood picking coffee beans instead of attending school, Susana hoped “that my children take advantage of the opportunity they have here [in the U.S.] to study. I always encourage them to study” (interview, February 18, 2015). Antonia, who worked as a maid without completing elementary school before coming to Kentucky, had more precise aims for all of her children, including the undocumented one. She wanted them:

To study until they have a diploma so they can work. Not in McDonald’s, not in tobacco, not as a hairdresser. I would like for them to be nurses or teachers. The truth is, we are here [in the U.S.] so they can study. Otherwise, I would already be back in Guatemala. (interview, January 19, 2015)

Ex-nursing trainee Liliana, who at the time of the interview was working in a factory, echoed Antonia and Susana’s sentiment, saying: “My dream for my daughters is that they finish their studies, so they don’t have to suffer like I do in physically-demanding jobs” (interview, February 13, 2015). Similarly, ex-farm worker Claudia wished “To see my children graduate. For them to have a profession” (interview, February 5, 2015). Finally, stable-hand Natalia’s wish was “To see my children graduate with a profession. I want them to be somebody, not like me who have to clean horseshit out of stables” (interview, January 25, 2015).

In conclusion, in spite of the restrictions imposed on their daily life by their lack of authorization, and in spite of discriminatory attitudes of some Kentuckians, the respondents approve of Kentucky and of Americans in general. Their American experience has enabled them to achieve some successes and to grow in positive ways. Their aspirations for themselves reflect a general desire to legalize their immigration status to enable them to work and to put an end to the family separation from which they suffer. Finally, they dream of educational achievement for their children.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

The overall objective of this study was to foment a greater understanding of the unique daily circumstances of unauthorized Hispanic mothers who live in Kentucky; to build empathy for them and, possibly, influence public policy. The study addressed two research questions:

1. What barriers exist for undocumented mothers in Kentucky?
2. What resources and strategies do they use to negotiate these barriers?

In addition to the overarching theme of fear omnipresent in the lives of the participants, the study found ten themes related to barriers, seven themes related to resources and strategies, as well as five themes related to positive personal outcomes for the participants. In this chapter I will discuss the significance of the study as well as the implications. The contact points with extant literature will be discussed throughout.

Significance

Participants

This study confirmed previous research that showed the presence in the United States of numerous types of mixed-status immigrant families (Fix, 2001; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Every participant for this study was attached to a family of mixed-status: each had at least one U.S.-born citizen child, and one lived with a sister with her American husband. Despite the presence of numerous authorized Latinos, in the eyes of the American public, all Latinos are assumed to be undocumented unless proven otherwise and are treated as such, as evidenced by the narratives of the participants. The verbal abuse by Americans reported by the participants of this study occurred without any prior knowledge of the participants' immigration status; in essence, it involved gratuitous insults based on the physical appearance of the participant who appeared Hispanic and therefore was assumed to be unauthorized. This finding supported

previous research (Berg, 2009; Espenshade, 1998; *Under Siege*, 2009) that reported hostile attitudes towards all persons of Latino appearance and characteristics, such as accented English.

In addition, this study supported extant literature indicating that immigrants from Guatemala tend to have different characteristics than those from Mexico. First, Mexicans tend to have higher levels of education than Guatemalans (Baumann, 2014; Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011; Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011). As expected, the Guatemalans who participated in this study had received less education and faced greater poverty previous to their arrival in the U.S. than the Mexicans. In addition, their journeys north were much longer, as Guatemalans must travel the whole length of Mexico, between 1,000 and 2,500 miles depending on which route is chosen. On a bus, from the Guatemalan border to the U.S. border it can take five days ([www. Distance.to/tapachula/sandiego/](http://www.Distance.to/tapachula/sandiego/)). Coming as they do from farther areas, Guatemalans must pay a considerably higher amount to their guides and thus start their lives in the U.S. with a larger debt than Mexicans.

The literature on the subject of Latina immigrants gave prominence to their often traumatic journeys, their high fertility rates, their maintenance of Spanish language and their high acculturative stress (Brick, Challinor & Rosenblum, 2011; Flippen, 2014; Galanti, 2003; Landale & Oropesa, 2007; Lutz, 2006; Passel, Livingston & Cohn, 2012; *Under Siege*, 2009). However, none of the participants for this study reported a traumatic border-crossing. No-one experienced or witnessed rape, but every participant did arrive in the United States with a large debt to repay, something that was not predicted by the literature. In a similar vein, the overall fertility rate of the participants in this study was 3.7 children per Latina, much higher than the 2.4 quoted in the literature, and almost three times the fertility rate of 1.8 for White residents in the United States (Passel, Livingston & Cohn, 2012).

Fear

The overarching theme of fear that emerged from this study supported extant literature on undocumented immigrants. Sullivan and Rehm (2005) had noted that the pervasive presence of fear was synonymous with being unauthorized; while Gleeson and Gonzales (2012) stated that a lack of papers “channels [the unauthorized] in limited and limiting directions, and restricts their social mobility and life chances” (p. 3). Undeniably, fear is part of the essence of undocumentedness. However, this study brought to light significant differences in the participants’ fear according to country of origin. Fear was more prominent in the Guatemalans’ discourses about their lives in the U.S. It is possible that for Guatemalans, to return home is simply unthinkable, hence the greater fear of deportation from the U.S. Recent history may provide a clue to why. Beginning in 1962, Guatemala was convulsed for 36 years by a civil war that pitted poor, indigenous inhabitants against an oligarchy supported by the military. Over 200,000 people died, of whom 86% were indigenous (Karl, 1995; Taft-Morales, 2014). All three of the Guatemalan participants belonged to different indigenous groups, as evidenced by their Mayan-origin dialects. All were born in the 1970s at the height of the bloody conflict and came to the United States just a few years after the 1996 signature of the peace accords, before the provisions were implemented. Compared to Guatemala, Mexico has been relatively peaceful during the past few decades; it was ruled by the same political party from 1929 to 2000 and, until the 1991 revolt in Chiapas, had suffered no armed conflicts. However, since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in 1994, the Mexican economy has been in decline (Weisbrot, Lefebvre & Sammut, 2014). As a result of NAFTA, Mexican family farmers were wiped out by US-subsidized corn. Immigrants from Mexico, therefore, primarily emigrate for economic reasons and not to escape conflict. In contrast,

Guatemala has continued to be almost in a state of war due to the drug trade. According to Taft-Morales (2014), “Guatemala continues to be plagued by security issues related to narcotics trafficking, the rise of organized crime, social inequality, and poverty....Currently, Guatemala is considered one of the most insecure countries in the world” (p. 402). Perhaps because the Guatemalan participants simply cannot envisage returning home, fear is more prominent in their narratives.

Barriers/Strategies

The data analysis revealed ten themes about barriers and seven themes about resources and strategies. Inductively, these fell into two groups: the barriers caused specifically by a lack of authorization and the resources/strategies employed to negotiate them, and another group of barriers related to general racism towards Hispanics and the strategies utilized to negotiate these kinds of barriers.

The undocumented. Five barriers face the undocumented immigrant, according to the data for this study: family separation, driving, work, living without health insurance and minor shopping obstacles. These barriers are negotiated with family support, actions to minimize the risk of driving, strategies to be able to work and strategies to obtain healthcare. Extant literature had not predicted that family separation was so painful a consequence of living without papers, but this study’s data did unequivocally indicate that the separation was very damaging both to the participants and to the family members they had left behind. The main point of concordance between these findings and the literature is the value of familism (Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006; Vega, 1995) which appeared as a significant theme in the narratives of the participants for this study. All the participants adhered to familism, which they perceived as both a resource and an obligation. Half of the participants reported providing moral or financial

support to relatives, and six cited family members as a source of support. Even Angustias, whose daughter was molested by an uncle, did not question familism. On the contrary, she lamented not having kin in the United States and yearned to go home to visit her relatives.

In two additional aspects, data from this study coincided with previous research: the barrier to driving and the ability of unauthorized immigrants to obtain work. That driving would be a significant barrier had been foretold by Gleeson and Gonzales (2012) and these findings supported the importance of this barrier, in particular because rural Kentucky lacks public transportation. Despite the various self-limiting strategies employed by the participants in this study, they continue to incur risk. Concerning the unauthorized immigrant's ability to work, the findings of this study coincide with previous research that indicated the presence of undocumented Hispanics in low-wage occupations such as agriculture, construction, the horse industry and service areas (Anderson et al., 2002; Laufer, 2005; Swanberg et al., 2012; Rosencrance, 1985). All of the participants with employment experience had worked in those areas except for one who worked in a factory under an assumed name. Another aspect where this study diverged from the literature is the issue of wages. Although Hall, Greenman and Farkas (2010) had documented the existence of a wage disparity between authorized workers and the unauthorized, the participants of this study did not report any disparity. In Kentucky, at least, if the unauthorized are able to obtain work at all, whether by using another's Social Security number or by other means, their pay is equivalent to that of other authorized employees in the same workplace. Employees using false or assumed Social Security numbers have the same deductions and are awarded the same benefits as all workers, but they are unable to access accrued retirement funds or Social Security benefits upon eligibility as this would entail government scrutiny. Employment mobility, or the opportunity to change jobs at will,

does seem limited for the unauthorized in Kentucky, as anticipated by Hall, Greenman and Farkas (2010). While the authorized are able to move from undesirable and low-paying jobs, the unauthorized do not have the same opportunity. As a result, many unauthorized workers, regardless of their skills and experience, remain in the lowest categories of employment.

Cleaveland (2010), Sullivan and Rehm (2005), as well as the publication *Under Siege* (2009) documented various types of worker abuse suffered by low-income Hispanics in the United States, only some of which were confirmed by this study. Although my participants did not report sexual harassment or assault at work, they did complain of employers' changing formulas for calculating salaries. Research by Espenshade and Belanger (1998) as well as by Gleeson and Gonzales (2012) indicated that, although the unauthorized are restricted to the unskilled and low-paid categories of jobs, they are still able to work. Findings from this study align with the literature and reflect the complexities of how the unauthorized employ various stratagems in order to work.

According to the government website www.benefits.gov, unauthorized immigrants are excluded from most social welfare programs. The narratives of this study's participants supported this assertion; those who received food stamp or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits reported that the amount they received was only for the American citizens, excluding the unauthorized members of the family. Likewise, only the American citizen children enjoyed the state-provided health coverage for children of low-income families. Unauthorized parents and any unauthorized children had no health coverage. In the absence of any free clinics in rural Kentucky, the participants made use of any health service providers that would consent to treat them. Sometimes this involved driving to another town, other times it involved obtaining reference letters to providers or attending community health fairs. Most of

the time, however, it involved home remedies and self-treatment with medications bought over or under the counter. The lack of health insurance emerged as a major impediment for the unauthorized participants for this study. Other expectations described in the literature concerning the lives of the undocumented Hispanic immigrants, such as the presence of hunger and food insecurity (Hadley et al. (2007); Raffaelli et al., 2012), were not borne out by the findings for this study. No participant appeared to experience a lack of food. Perhaps due to the fact that most participants' American children received food stamp benefits, abundant stocks of food were in evidence on kitchen tables or counters. Although the possibility that some participants might be deliberately concealing a need for food cannot be dismissed, food insecurity did not seem to be a challenge for the participants in this study.

Latinas. In general, the literature describes unauthorized immigrants as mired in acculturative difficulty with no relief from unending stress (Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006; Raffaelli et al. 2012). However, the participants in this study did not manifest acculturative difficulty, although most did live in poverty. Only one participant in this study described herself as stressed: Angustias. Even so, it is possible that what she termed stress originated in isolation because she did not drive or work, in addition to the guilt she expressed for failing to prevent the abuse of her young daughter. On the contrary, the participants appeared to be well informed about their rights and about available welfare programs, to the extent that they were able to subterfuge in order to qualify for SNAP benefits. As expected, Kentucky does lack public transportation in rural areas, affordable housing and bilingual officials, and all Latinas are assumed to be undocumented by the mainstream public. Therefore, just presenting a Hispanic appearance is sometimes sufficient to incur discrimination or racist behavior by Kentuckians. The participants perceived the police to be discriminatory against Latinos, and also narrated

various incidences of racist behavior by members of the public, yet they attested to intercultural friendships. In addition, Flippen (2014) and Villenas (2001) had posited that since Latina women live under patriarchy, they experience significant conflict between a desire to work and family obligations. Again, only Angustias in this study expressed an unfulfilled desire to work. All other participants exhibited the ability to make their own choices; those who were not employed had themselves chosen not to work. In addition, my findings differed significantly from the literature on the subject of Latina mothers' relationships with men. The literature (Galanti, 2003; Vega, 1995; Villenas, 2001) had indicated that most Latina mothers adhere to traditional gender roles and live under patriarchy. My participants, except for Angustias, did not. On the contrary, the participants for this study appeared to have become more independent, self-confident, and strong as a result of their American experience. They were able to access the supports they needed; either within the various religious institutions, within the Hispanic community, or within their own families.

Outcomes

All of the themes related to outcomes for the participants were positive. Though unanticipated by the literature on Latinos, the theme of material success is nevertheless ensconced in the American Dream, a common thread in the life stories of all immigrants to the United States (Hochschild, 1995). Not all participants for this study had achieved material success according to American standards, but all had improved their circumstances as compared to their lives in their home countries. Free public education, as provided to all children in the United States, played an important role in their outcomes, as every participant's children were expected to surpass their parents academically. No participant had owned or driven a car before emigrating. Their homes in Kentucky, while somewhat overcrowded,

represented nevertheless a vast improvement over their childhood homes. Relations with Americans are not uniformly negative. While some natives exhibit racist attitudes and behaviors, other individuals are friendly, interested, and helpful. Even without fluency in English, Latina mothers were able to maintain equal, two-way cross-cultural friendships with Americans who were valuable to them in many ways. As a result, Latina mothers were conscious of the heterogeneity of the American population and did not fall into prejudice or racism themselves. The undocumented Latina mothers who participated in this study, dwelling as they do at the intersection of multiple disadvantage in a country not their own, are resilient and imaginative when faced with barriers in their daily life. They develop skills, utilizing the resources and strategies that are available to them. The indications of personal growth are important because they were not predicted by the literature which casts them, for the most part, as victims. This study showed them as fully choosing their life-journeys, from discarding an unsatisfactory mate to creating a business. Finally, although previous research (Anderson et al., 2002; Baumann, 2014; Bollinger et al., 2014; Swanberg et al., 2012; *Under Siege*, 2009) indicated that the South was not favorable for unauthorized Latinos, this study showed an unforeseen appreciation for Kentucky and its public schools.

Implications

The lofty goal of social justice for all unauthorized Latino immigrant mothers in the United States can be imagined as the pinnacle of a ladder, and this study, limited in scope and depth, is but one rung towards the top. Others will contribute to this endeavor: researchers, politicians, churches, advocates and individuals who already assist them to overcome the barriers they face to conduct their daily lives. The following sections will detail my suggestions for further steps in this direction.

Further research

There is a general dearth of research on undocumented Hispanic immigrants in the United States, in particular in the regions where their presence is new. Although they are indispensable to our economy (Chomsky, 2007; Cleaveland, 2011; Mandeel, 2014), for the most part, they remain invisible. In addition, while this group is recognizably and culturally diverse, there is little literature to differentiate groups from each other within the American context. As the findings of this study indicated that fear is manifested differently in Guatemalans and Mexicans, more research is needed to investigate this discrepancy. For instance, one area of interest could be whether Guatemalans acculturate in different ways than Mexicans. Another could be the importance of an indigenous identity to acculturation. In addition, recent years have seen increased arrivals from conflict zones such as Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, and these groups are as yet unstudied. One can assume that fear is a major factor in the decision to emigrate, but the extent to which it remains in the American context needs to be studied. In order to not essentialize the Latino acculturation experience, immigrants from Central American countries other than Guatemala should be investigated in order to ascertain if they experience the same barriers as Guatemalans and Mexicans.

Further research is also needed to investigate gender. As this study was limited to unauthorized Latina mothers, one is left wondering: What are the barriers and the resources for the men who share their circumstances? The findings from this study indicate that the mothers have become stronger as a result of their American experience. If this is true, then how do the men perceive the changes that have taken place within their partners? A further area of research could be whether these changes have affected the men's concept of manliness.

Finally, there needs to be more investigation into the unauthorized children who live here; denizens neither of the U.S. nor of the countries of their parents. An area where study is needed is their national identity, including their relationship to their Latino roots. Another area of research could be the barriers that they face, if any, such as hostility by the public.

Social Justice

This study ends with recommendations for action that would encourage social justice for unauthorized Latino mothers. The following sections describe four paths of action

Contact. Some of the current literature on mainstream attitudes towards Latinos discusses prejudice as a product of the perceived economic threat posed by Latinos, particularly immigrant Latinos, to non-Latinos (Berg, 2009; Diaz, Saenz & Kwan, 2011; Esses, Brochu & Dickson, 2011). In other words, prejudicial attitudes result when Latinos as a group are perceived by the public as taking jobs that would otherwise be available and also as beneficiaries of welfare programs. However, I believe that intergroup contact may result in a reduction of hostility towards Latinos. With his Contact Hypothesis, Allport (1954) posited that hostility and prejudice between two groups can be reduced when, under conditions of equality, they come into extended contact with each other with a shared goal. A privileged space for this contact between mainstream Americans and Latinos to take place is the public schools, in particular because of the shared goal of children's education. Assuming that fear disappears when familiarity enters, the more the public knows about unauthorized Latinos, the better the relationships may be between Americans and immigrant Latinos. If mainstream Americans can learn more about Latinos, their origins, their cultures and their special circumstances, it may be easier to view them as Us rather than as Other, as a few individuals, documented in this study,

already do. The findings of this study indicate that unauthorized Latina mothers in Kentucky manifest good will towards Americans. What is left is to create opportunities for equal-status intergroup collaboration towards shared goals, such as within the public schools, working to improve education for all.

Trainings. School personnel would be the first target audience for professional development. What is termed “diversity training” is only marginally applicable to Hispanics; although they are of color, their sheer numbers and cultures merit specialized training. Indeed, forming educators is critical, as Hispanics constitute a separate “gap” population on state assessments where, for the most part, Latino children have lower achievement than Whites. I propose a school-based education program to help teachers, administrators and staff understand the needs of undocumented Latinos. Some of these trainings are already available. In 2014, the President created the White House Task Force on New Americans, which offers a series of webinars on Educational and Linguistic Integration of new immigrants on topics such as how to create a welcoming school for new immigrants and how to promote parental involvement. These are available at www.celeste.rodriguez@ED.gov. What is lacking to date, however, is the political will of school districts to train their personnel in this area. In addition, Goldsmith (2004) has documented that the White-Latino achievement gap can be reduced by hiring Latino teachers. This objective must be pursued by district authorities.

Suggestions for policy. From the practical point of view, policy-makers must recognize that since unauthorized immigrants will drive, it is safer for society to test their abilities and issue driving licenses. Also, despite their expressed wishes to return to their home countries to visit relatives, it appears that the unauthorized Latino families are in the United States to stay. For various economic reasons, their work is needed (Anderson et al., 2002;

Baumann, 2014; Bollinger et al., 2014; Chomsky, 2007). The findings from this study indicate that, when confronted with barriers, they tend to invent and adapt in order to maintain their presence in the United States. Most of them dream of legalizing their status, and they are willing to sacrifice to do so. Consequently, it behooves policy-makers to enable these valuable additions to our society to truly integrate into the communities they have chosen. Since they will remain in the United States, it is preferable to bring them out of the shadows.

Outreach and Advocacy.

In every community, an outreach office aimed at Latinos would facilitate their integration. Stephan (1999) offers suggestions for in-school and community techniques that include the creation of liaison and Latino resource centers. Services such as ESL classes and Spanish-language preparation for GED should be made available. The staff must be bilingual and maintain good contacts with various institutions such as churches, legal offices, city officials and police. While many federal education programs such as the Migrant Education Program are limited to serving minors, advocates at these offices need the flexibility to serve all Latinos in various roles: interpreter, translator, facilitator, counselor, and ombudsman. In addition, staff should be specifically trained to assist the unauthorized. They should be knowledgeable on what avenues are available to overcome barriers.

Story-telling

Theorists of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality have asserted that giving voice to people of color and other marginalized groups enables them to recount their lived experiences from their own perspective which may not coincide with what their experiences look like from the “outside” (Fan, 1997; Seiler, 2006; Treviño et al., 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

Narrating their life-stories can be transformative both for the participants and for the audience, as

the participants gain awareness and knowledge which empowers them to effect change (Mann, 2004). According to Bowleg (2012), belonging to multiple subordinate categories can foster resilience and create a certain freedom to grow as a person. This has certainly been the case with the participants of this study for whom the American experience has provided the opportunity to become stronger, more resilient and independent. In addition, story-telling, according to Villenas (2001) can enable participants to counter the metanarratives about them in the media and public discourse by creating their own counter-stories of dignity and value. Participation in this study was presented as a way to share their perceptions, their side of things. During the whole process of interviewing for this study, I expressed deep respect towards the participants' stories and opinions. I addressed each participant formally: using the respectful *usted* rather than the more familiar *tú*. When I returned to discuss my preliminary findings, I expressed my gratitude and also that I valued their opinions on the significance of their statements. Each participant figuratively stood a little taller. Now, six months after the interviews, I have had the opportunity to meet most of the participants again. We are now on more intimate terms, a little more equal. They have made an important contribution not only to my research but also to the public narrative about themselves. One participant asked me when “your book” will be published so she could buy it and have her bilingual daughter read it to her. I therefore conclude that, for the participants at least, this study has been dignifying.

The aim of this study was to foster a greater understanding in the American public of the unique circumstances of undocumented Latina mothers in Kentucky; the barriers they face, and how they navigate the barriers. Findings indicate that there are multiple barriers: some created by a lack of legal papers, some by poverty, and others erected by local hostility towards the Latino population. To overcome obstacles, these women use a variety of resources and strategies that

include faith, familism, and American friends. As a result of their stay in the United States, they have changed in encouraging ways. Despite unfavorable circumstances and experiences, they manifest goodwill towards Americans and demonstrate an unfeigned appreciation of Kentucky.

Appendix A.

Brochure for LHEAP (heating assistance)



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federally-funded program to help eligible low income households meet their home heating and/or cooling needs.

The Kentucky LIHEAP program helps approximately 150,000 Kentucky families pay their heating bills each winter. The U.S. Department for Health and Human Services allocates funding to Kentucky through the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, which contracts with Community Action Agencies across the state to receive LIHEAP applications and provide recipient benefits.

A [brochure](#) providing overview of the program is available and may be viewed online or downloaded. To view the PDF file, you will need to obtain and install the free [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

The federal government began providing home energy assistance in 1974. The U.S. Administration of Children and Families' Division of Energy Assistance in the Office of Community Services administers LIHEAP at the federal level.

The LIHEAP home heating program has two main components: Subsidy and Crisis. When funds are available, a third component to help with summer cooling costs is offered.

The subsidy component operates in November and December to help residents at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level pay home heating costs for which they are responsible either by direct payment or as an undesignated portion of their rent. In

addition to income guidelines, eligible applicants may not have liquid resources in excess of \$2,000 except when a household member has a catastrophic illness, in which case applicants may have as much as \$4,000 in liquid assets if those assets are used for medical and living expenses.

The crisis component of LIHEAP operates from early January until the middle of March, or until all funds are expended. Clients must meet the criteria listed above and be in a crisis situation involving imminent loss of heating energy (applicants must provide a utility disconnect notice); have four or fewer days worth of fuel oil, propane, kerosene, wood or coal available; or, have received an eviction notice citing unpaid rent (applies to applicants whose heating costs are included as an undesignated portion of the rent. **Households at or above 75% of poverty level must pay a portion or co-payment of the minimum amount necessary to alleviate the crisis.**

When applying for LIHEAP assistance, you may need the following:

1. Recent copies of your utility bills.
2. A recent payroll stub or other proof of current gross income.
3. Documentation showing income from Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, pension funds, disability, etc. You may obtain verification of your Social Security and/or SSI benefits by creating an account with the Social Security Administration's, [my Social Security](#) website.
4. Final utility termination notice (if you've received a shut-off notice from your energy company).
5. Proof of current address (e.g., rent receipt, lease or deed, property tax bill).
6. Proof of total members living in your household (e.g., birth certificates, school records, etc.).
7. Social Security cards (or numbers) for all persons living in your household.
8. Proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residence.

For information, contact: [CHFS Policy Development](#)
Division of Family Support
275 E. Main St., 3E-I
Frankfort, KY 40621
Telephone: (502) 564-3440
FAX: (502) 564-9810

Last Updated 5/28/2015

Appendix B.

Semi-structured Interview Protocol (English)

First questions

1. How long have you lived in the U.S.A.?
2. Since when do you live in Kentucky?
3. Can you tell me about your children, your family?
4. Do you work?

Work

Q1 What kind of work do you do?

Probe: Can you tell me what barriers there are for you to work?

fluency in English	Social Security number
e-verify	Health insurance and retirement pay
taxes	salary

How would you describe the environment at your work? Is there any racism or discrimination? How do you get paid? Do you think you receive a fair salary?

Q2. What would you tell a recent arrival about working in your town?
What steps do you have to take to work?

Transportation

Q3 We are aware that where you live, there is no public transportation. So how do you go from one place to another?

Probe: How do you feel about driving? How do you register your car? How do you insure it?
How do you deal with the police?

Q4 Imagine that a new family arrives in Kentucky. What advice would you give about transportation?

Children in the US with you

Q5 Do your children go to school?

Probe: Are your children happy in the schools? What about you? Can you tell me about your relationship with your children's schools? Would you like to volunteer in the schools? Why don't you do it?

How do you help your children with their homework? Have your children even been discriminated against or been the target of racism? Can you tell me how it happened?

Q6 What do you tell your children about responding to discrimination or abuse?

Children in your home country

Q7 Do you have children in your home country?

Probe: Can you tell me about them? What is your relationship with them?
How are they? How do they feel about the separation?

Aid (government or other social welfare programs)

Q8 When you are in need, how do you get help?

Probe: How are you treated when you go ask for aid?

*food stamp benefits	* children's health insurance
*medical problems of yourself or other adults in the family	
*legal cases that require lawyers	

Q9 Do you or any member of your family receive aid from anywhere else?

Probe: What do you do when you are in trouble?

Q10 Imagine that a new family arrives in your town. What would be your advice to them about obtaining financial or other assistance?

Injustice

Q11 In your opinion, have you suffered discrimination or racism in Kentucky?

Probe: Can you tell me about some incidences?

How do you respond? Why?

Q12 What is your relationship like with your American neighbors? What would you say to a new arrival about Americans?

Fears

Q13 What is your greatest fear? What about your family's greatest fear?

Probe: What do you do to avoid these things?

*debts

*being alone and having to support the family

*deportation of a parent

*being abandoned by your partner

*losing your job

Q14 In your experience, what advice would you give a new arrival?

Hopes and dreams

Q15 What would you wish for your children?

Q16 What would you wish for yourself?

Q17 Is there any American who helps you? How does he or she help? Who is it?

Semi-structured Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Primeras preguntas

1. ¿Hace cuánto tiempo que vive en los EEUU?
2. ¿Desde cuándo vive en Kentucky?
3. ¿Puede hablarme de sus hijos, de su familia?
4. ¿Trabaja usted?
5. Háblame de su familia.

El trabajo

Q1. ¿Qué tipo de trabajo hace?

Ahonde ¿Podría describir algunos obstáculos o problemas a su trabajo?

*dominio del inglés

*número de seguro social

*e-verify

*seguro social y pago de jubilación

*tipos de empleos donde puede trabajar

*el sueldo

*los impuestos

¿Cómo describiría el ambiente de trabajo en su empleo?

¿Hay racismo, prejuicio y/o discriminación en el trabajo?

¿Cómo se le paga? ¿Cree que es justo lo que recibe como sueldo?

Q2. ¿Qué le dirías acerca del trabajo a un/a hispano/a recién llegado a tu ciudad?

¿Qué pasos tendría que dar para poder trabajar aquí en los Estados Unidos?

El transporte

Q3. Sabemos que en su ciudad, no hay transporte público. Entonces, ¿cómo se las arregla para llegar de un lugar a otro?

Ahonde ¿Cómo se sentiría si tuviese que manejar? ¿Cómo hace para registrar su vehículo?

¿sacar el seguro (la seguridad)? ¿Entrevistarse con la policía?

Q4. ¿Imagínese una familia recién llegada a Kentucky, ¿qué le aconsejaría en cuanto medios de transporte?

Los niños residiendo aquí (viviendo aquí)

Q5. ¿Sus hijos asisten a la escuela?

Ahonde ¿Sus hijos se sienten a gusto en las escuelas?

¿Y usted? ¿Puede hablarme de su relación con las escuelas de sus hijos?

¿Puede explicarme como participa en las escuelas de sus hijos? ¿Le gustaría ser voluntaria en la escuela de sus hijos? ¿Por qué no lo hace?

¿Cómo ayuda usted a sus hijos con su tarea? ¿Cuándo es necesario ¿cómo pueden sus hijos usar el internet? ¿Han sufrido alguna vez usted o sus hijos discriminación o racismo en la escuela?

¿Puede explicarme Ud. cómo ocurrió? ¿Qué les dice a sus hijos de cómo responder en caso de discriminación o de racismo?

Niños -----en su país de origen

Q7. ¿Tiene usted hijos en su país?

Ahonde ¿Puede hablarme de ellos?

¿Cómo es su relación con sus hijos allá?

¿Y ellos? ¿Cómo se sienten ellos acerca de la separación?

Las ayudas (programas de asistencia social del gobierno)

Q8. Cuando su familia la necesita, ¿cómo hace para conseguir ayuda?

Ahonde ¿Cómo la tratan cuando va a pedir ayuda?

- la tarjeta de comida
- el seguro médico de los niños o seguridad para los niños
- problemas médicos de usted o de los adultos en la familia
- casos legales que requiere abogados

Q9. ¿Usted o algún miembro de su familia recibe ayuda financiera o apoyo de otro lado?

Ahonde ¿Qué hace usted cuando está en aprietos?

Q10. Imagínese que una familia nueva llega a esta ciudad. ¿Qué le recomienda que haga para tener ayuda financiera o social?

La injusticia

Q11. En su opinión, ¿Ha sufrido discriminación o racismo en Kentucky?

Ahonde: ¿Puede contarme alguna de las veces que sufrió esta situación?

¿Cómo respondió usted? ¿Por qué reaccionó de esa manera?

Q12. ¿Cómo es su relación con los americanos (estadounidenses) que viven en su barrio o vecindario? ¿Qué le dirías a una persona recién llegada acerca de tu barrio o vecindario?

Los riesgos y los temores

Q13. ¿Cuál es el temor o peligro más grande que tiene usted y su familia?

Ahonde: ¿Cómo hace para evitar que ocurran estas cosas?

- las deudas
- estar sola y responsable para mantener la familia
- la deportación de un padre
- infidelidad o abandono por el padre
- la pérdida de su trabajo

Q14. En su experiencia, ¿qué consejos le daría a un inmigrante recién llegado al respecto?

Los sueños y las esperanzas

Q15. ¿Qué cosas deseas para sus hijos?

Q16. Si tus deseos pudieran hacerse realidad, ¿qué deseos harías o qué pedirías para tí?

Q17 ¿Hay una persona americana o estadounidense que le ayuda mucho? ¿En qué le ayuda?
¿Quién es?

Appendix C.

Tentative Themes

1. My childhood
2. Poverty in home country
3. Reason for coming to the US
4. Living conditions
5. Family support (or lack thereof)
6. Barriers in Kentucky
7. Strategies to be able to work
8. Working in tobacco
9. Working on farm
10. Working in cleaning
11. Working in a factory
12. Working with horses
13. Workplace abuse
14. Workplace dangers
15. Lack of choices about work
16. Wealth of *patrones*
17. *Patrones* who help
18. Fear of losing job
19. Material success
20. Costs of material success
21. Middle-class milestones
22. Traditional gender roles
23. Aspirations for children
24. Wishes for myself
25. Shabby housing
26. Toxic neighborhood
27. Life without health insurance
28. Strategies to get healthcare
29. Debts from healthcare
30. Fear of getting ill/accidents
31. American friends
32. Verbal abuse by Kentuckians
33. Fear of Americans
34. Americans who help
35. Not all Americans are the same
36. Entrepreneurship
37. Abuse by Hispanics
38. Health Department
39. Alcohol
40. Desire to return to home country
41. Can't get loans
42. Willingness to help others
43. Separation from children hurts
44. Taxes
45. Unfair police
46. Fear of driving
47. Monetary risk to driving
48. Risking jail time
49. Fear of police
50. Bullying of children by peers
51. Satisfaction with schools
52. Responding to abuse
53. I feel strong/capable
54. Passive/ they cut my wings
55. Food aid: problems getting it
56. Food aid: strategies to get it
57. Food aid: difficulties at agencies
58. Dignity
59. Christianity
60. Resentment towards men
61. Fear of deportation
62. Isolation on farm
63. Overcrowding
64. Consequences of deportation
65. Conditions on farms
66. Strategies to drive
67. Isolation
68. SES in home country
69. Food stamp office: strategies

Appendix D.
Themes in categories

INTRODUCTION

- Life before Kentucky
- My childhood
- Reasons for going to the US
- The border

BARRIERS

- Living conditions
- Consequences of leaving children behind
- Problems with men
- School: Bullying of children by peers &
- Driving

- Monetary risk
- Risking jail time
- Unfair police

- Problems getting food aid
- Food stamp office
- Other agencies

Enduring verbal abuse

Living without health insurance

Working

- Lack of choice about jobs
- In a factory
- In tobacco
- In cleaning
- On farm
- With horses
- Workplace abuse (& salary theft)
- Dependency on patrón
- Patrones who do not help

RESOURCES & STRATEGIES

Family support

Strategies to get food aid

Responding to verbal abuse

Trusting God

American friends

Strategies to get healthcare

Strategies to be able to work

Strategies involving taxes

Patrones who help

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Inner strength
- Material success
- Middle-class milestones
- Solidarity with others
- Entrepreneurships
- Wishes for myself and my children
- Why Kentucky is a good place

Appendix E.

Instructions on how to apply for a Social Security card.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Application for a Social Security Card

Applying for a Social Security Card is free!

USE THIS APPLICATION TO:

- Apply for an original Social Security card
- Apply for a replacement Social Security card
- Change or correct information on your Social Security number record

IMPORTANT: You **MUST** provide a properly completed application and the required evidence before we can process your application. We can only accept original documents or documents certified by the custodian of the original record. Notarized copies or photocopies which have not been certified by the custodian of the record are not acceptable. We will return any documents submitted with your application. For assistance call us at 1-800-772-1213 or visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Original Social Security Card

To apply for an original card, you must provide at least two documents to prove age, identity, and U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized immigration status. If you are not a U.S. citizen and do not have DHS work authorization, you must prove that you have a valid non-work reason for requesting a card. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

NOTE: If you are age 12 or older and have never received a Social Security number, you must apply in person.

Replacement Social Security Card

To apply for a replacement card, you must provide one document to prove your identity. If you were born outside the U.S., you must also provide documents to prove your U.S. citizenship or current, lawful, work-authorized status. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

Changing Information on Your Social Security Record

To change the information on your Social Security number record (i.e., a name or citizenship change, or corrected date of birth) you must provide documents to prove your identity, support the requested change, and establish the reason for the change. For example, you may provide a birth certificate to show your correct date of birth. A document supporting a name change must be recent and identify you by both your old and new names. If the name change event occurred over two years ago or if the name change document does not have enough information to prove your identity, you must also provide documents to prove your identity in your prior name and/or in some cases your new legal name. If you were born outside the U.S. you must provide a document to prove your U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized status. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

LIMITS ON REPLACEMENT SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

Public Law 108-458 limits the number of replacement Social Security cards you may receive to 3 per calendar year and 10 in a lifetime. Cards issued to reflect changes to your legal name or changes to a work authorization legend do not count toward these limits. We may also grant exceptions to these limits if you provide evidence from an official source to establish that a Social Security card is required.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about this form or about the evidence documents you must provide, please visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov for additional information as well as locations of our offices and Social Security Card Centers. You may also call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. You can also find your nearest office or Card Center in your local phone book.

EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

The following lists are examples of the types of documents you must provide with your application and are not all inclusive. Call us at 1-800-772-1213 if you cannot provide these documents.

IMPORTANT : If you are completing this application on behalf of someone else, you must provide evidence that shows your authority to sign the application as well as documents to prove your identity and the identity of the person for whom you are filing the application. We can only accept original documents or documents certified by the custodian of the original record. Notarized copies or photocopies which have not been certified by the custodian of the record are not acceptable.

Evidence of Age

In general, you must provide your birth certificate. In some situations, we may accept another document that shows your age. Some of the other documents we may accept are:

- U.S. hospital record of your birth (created at the time of birth)
- Religious record established before age five showing your age or date of birth
- Passport
- Final Adoption Decree (the adoption decree must show that the birth information was taken from the original birth certificate)

Evidence of Identity

You must provide current, unexpired evidence of identity in your legal name. Your legal name will be shown on the Social Security card. Generally, we prefer to see documents issued in the U.S. Documents you submit to establish identity must show your legal name AND provide biographical information (your date of birth, age, or parents' names) and/or physical information (photograph, or physical description - height, eye and hair color, etc.). If you send a photo identity document but do not appear in person, the document must show your biographical information (e.g., your date of birth, age, or parents' names). Generally, documents without an expiration date should have been issued within the past two years for adults and within the past four years for children.

As proof of your identity, you must provide a:

- U.S. driver's license; or
- U.S. State-issued non-driver identity card; or
- U.S. passport

If you do not have one of the documents above or cannot get a replacement within 10 work days, we may accept other documents that show your legal name and biographical information, such as a U.S. military identity card, Certificate of Naturalization, employee identity card, certified copy of medical record (clinic, doctor or hospital), health insurance card, Medicaid card, or school identity card/record. For young children, we may accept medical records (clinic, doctor, or hospital) maintained by the medical provider. We may also accept a final adoption decree, or a school identity card, or other school record maintained by the school.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, we must see your current U.S. Immigration document(s) and your foreign passport with biographical information or photograph.

WE CANNOT ACCEPT A BIRTH CERTIFICATE, HOSPITAL SOUVENIR BIRTH CERTIFICATE, SOCIAL SECURITY CARD STUB OR A SOCIAL SECURITY RECORD as evidence of identity.

Evidence of U.S. Citizenship

In general, you must provide your U.S. birth certificate or U.S. Passport. Other documents you may provide are a Consular Report of Birth, Certificate of Citizenship, or Certificate of Naturalization.

Evidence of Immigration Status

You must provide a current unexpired document issued to you by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing your immigration status, such as Form I-551, I-94, or I-766. If you are an international student or exchange visitor, you may need to provide additional documents, such as Form I-20, DS-2019, or a letter authorizing employment from your school and employer (F-1) or sponsor (J-1). We CANNOT accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. If you are not authorized to work in the U.S., we can issue you a Social Security card only if you need the number for a valid non-work reason. Your card will be marked to show you cannot work and if you do work, we will notify DHS. See page 3, item 5 for more information.

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