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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Meghan Elizabeth Conley entitled "The Construction of Social Networks of Support in a New Latino Gateway." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.

Stephanie Bohon, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Suzanne Kurth, Lois Presser

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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The Construction of Social Networks of Support in a New Latino Gateway

A Thesis Presented for
the Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Meghan Elizabeth Conley
May 2009

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Sobre todo, les agradezco a todos los que hablaron conmigo, me permitieron entrevistarles y me contaron las historias de sus vidas. Gracias por haber confiado en mí. Yo he tratado aquí de contar sus historias tal y como ustedes me las han contado. Espero que sus historias, sus experiencias y sus voces sean bien representadas en este trabajo.

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Abstract

Beginning in the early 1990s and continuing through today, emerging Latino destinations such as Knoxville, Tennessee experienced tremendous growth in their population of Latina/o immigrants. Given that our traditional theories of immigrant adjustment address the formation of social networks exclusively in established immigrant gateways, and primarily based on observations of men, there is no reason to assume that Latina/o immigrants in emerging destinations build networks in similar ways as those in established destinations. This thesis first explores why some immigrants choose to migrate to Knoxville, Tennessee. Second, this thesis explores the extent to which the dominant theoretical frameworks of immigrant adjustment – specifically bounded solidarity and enforceable trust – speak to the behaviors of immigrants in one emerging Latino destination as they develop new networks of support. Third, by incorporating the voices of female immigrants alongside those of male immigrants, this thesis presents a gendered perspective on the creation of social networks. This thesis builds on previous research of immigrant support networks by examining how two largely understudied groups of immigrants – women and those in non-traditional gateways – adjust to life in the United States.

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Introduction

This is the story, *a grandes rasgos*,[1] of a small number of Latina/o[2] immigrants and their search for community and support as they establish new lives in an emerging immigrant gateway in the United States. Between August 2008 and March 2009, I met and spoke with twenty women and men about their experiences as immigrants. In their narratives, more often than not, those with whom I spoke described details of support, social networks, and network construction, as well as the lack thereof. What follows in this thesis is my understanding and interpretation of these individuals' understandings and interpretations of the circumstances in which they live. This work is an exploration of how a few Latina/o immigrants living in an area marginally populated by immigrants have constructed support networks through new lives, and new lives through support networks.

This study examines how Latina/o immigrants living in the Knoxville, Tennessee metropolitan area actively construct networks of support after the process of immigration. The purpose of this research is threefold: first, this study explores why some Latina/o immigrants choose Knoxville, Tennessee as a settlement destination. Second, by comparing Latina/o immigrant experiences of support across gender, this study incorporates a component that is still largely understudied in the

[1] "*A grandes rasgos"* is a Spanish phrase that means "in broad outline." This phrase was used by one of the interview participants to summarize his life story.

[2] The terms "*Latino*" and "*Latina*" are originally Spanish words and have been incorporated into the English language. In Spanish, "*Latino*" refers specifically to a man of Latino origin, "*Latina*" refers to a woman of Latino origin, and "*Latinos*" is considered to be sex inclusive and refers to a group of people of Latino origin. In this thesis, I utilize the term "Latina/o" in order to refer, without sex-specificity, to individuals of Latino origin, and I use "Latinos" to refer to a mixed group of men and women of Latin American origin. I use the term "Latino" exclusively to identify an entity that pertains to those of Latin American origin (ex: Latino community, Latino store, Latino origin). Despite this intention to create some degree of gender neutrality, is important to note that both "Latino" and "Latinos" remain gendered: "Latino" refers both to a man and modifies a general noun, while "Latinos" may refer to either a group of men or a group of men and women (as opposed to "Latinas," which refers exclusively to a group of women).

literature on immigrant social support networks. Third, this study assesses the capacity of the dominant theoretical frameworks – particularly the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust – to explain the behavior of immigrants in emerging gateway cities as they develop new networks of support. This thesis builds on previous research of immigrant support networks by examining how two largely understudied groups of immigrants – women and those in non-traditional gateways – adjust to life in the United States.

Latina/o immigrants comprise the largest immigrant group in the United States today. The US Bureau of the Census (2003) estimates that Latina/o immigrants comprise approximately 52 percent of the total foreign-born population, and the Pew Hispanic Center (2006) estimates that there are just under 17 million Latina/o immigrants (of all legal statuses) currently living in the United States. At six percent of the total US population, Latina/o immigrants are also the most frequently studied immigrant group.

Of particular interest to immigration theorists and scholars is the process of adjustment to life in the new country (see Durand and Massey, 1992; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Raijman and Tienda, 2003; Waldinger, 1994; Zhou, 1992). The research suggests that one consequence of immigration is a dramatic loss or reconstitution of the networks of social support established in the country of origin prior to immigration. This thesis examines the construction of social support networks among female and male Latino immigrants who settle in emerging immigrant gateways—destinations where immigrants have not traditionally settled. This research broadens the existing literature by evaluating the extent to which our current theories of immigrant network creation, which were developed solely through observations of immigrants in established gateways, operate (dis)similarly in emerging gateway cities. Additionally, given that the experiences of female immigrants have largely

been marginalized or excluded in the development of theories of immigrant adjustment (Pessar, 1999), this study contributes a gendered conceptualization of support in emerging gateway cities.

I conceptualize immigrant social support networks as relationships between immigrants and other people that provide the immigrant with two principal forms of support: *tangible support*, in the form of instrumental and informational resources; and *affective support*, in the form of companionship, validation, and emotional resources. *Network dislocation*, which refers to the loss of some or all of these support networks, is one real consequence for those who must leave their kinship and friendship networks to immigrate to a new country.

The potentially negative effects of network dislocation may be ameliorated when the immigrant settles in established immigrant and co-ethnic communities (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). This may provide some explanation for the fact that, in the year 2000, over two-thirds of all US immigrants resided in just six states[3] (Singer, 2004), and in the 1990s more than half of all immigrants resided in just five US metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs)[4] (Singer, 2004). For recent immigrants, traditional gateway communities are often an immediate source of social capital because they are typically comprised of well-developed networks of established immigrants and US-born co-ethnics (see Bohon, 2001; Logan, Alba, and Zhang, 2002; Newbold and Spindler, 2001; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Zhou, 1992). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) note that the presence of a "critical mass" of well-established co-ethnics increases the likelihood that a recently arrived immigrant will develop networks with other immigrants and that the immigrant will establish a fairly large network of associates.

These findings notwithstanding, some researchers (see Hagan, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994a; Menjívar, 1999) have suggested gendered differences in the support network, and specifically in terms of the benefits that typically accrue to recently arrived immigrants through the established ethnic

[3] The six states are California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.
[4] The five MSAs are Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and Orange County.

community. In comparison with immigrant men, immigrant women typically encounter and develop networks with fewer resources (Hagan, 1998). Gendered differences in employment opportunities for recent immigrants affect the extent to which immigrant women benefit from the established support network of the ethnic community (Menjívar, 1999), particularly with regard to the ethnic enclave (Zhou and Logan, 1989). Additionally, women do not necessarily benefit from the network support that accrues to male partners, spouses, and family members (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Despite recent attention to the gendered nature of the immigrant experience (Donato et al., 2006; Hagan, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Pessar, 1999), the benefits that accrue to immigrant women through the social support network of the ethnic community remain largely understudied.

Also troublesome for our understanding of the immigrant support network is the changing nature of immigrant settlement patterns. Most of our understanding of immigrant adjustment is based on observations of immigrants who settle in established gateways. Yet, immigrants are increasingly settling in locations where there does not already exist a large, well-established co-ethnic population. Recent data indicate that Latina/o immigrants are increasingly migrating to *emerging gateways*—metropolitan areas that have only recently begun to attract immigrants--or they are dispersing to areas with relatively small co-ethnic populations (Singer, 2004; Suro and Singer, 2002). In comparison with immigrants who settle in established, traditional gateways, those immigrants who settle in emerging gateway cities may not have access to a readily available social support network due to the undersized and potentially poorly adjusted co-ethnic population. Given these changing settlement patterns, we must broaden our focus on established destinations to understand how immigrants in emerging gateways build networks of support when such networks are not readily available due to the lack of an established ethnic community. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to build on previous studies of immigrant social support networks by examining how Latina/o immigrants construct new networks of

support in emerging gateway cities. By incorporating the experiences of both women and men, I hope to call attention to the relative neglect of gender in the immigrant adjustment literature.

Organization of Study

The remainder of this thesis is divided into five chapters. In Chapter One I discuss current theories and research on Latina/o immigrant settlement patterns, ethnic immigrant communities, and support networks. Specifically, I review research on traditional Latino settlement patterns and emerging Latino destinations. I differentiate between the types of social support that are typically provided by the established ethnic community, and I explore the ways that gender influences how immigrants benefit from the support network. Finally, I suggest that our traditional way of conceptualizing the support networks of ethnic communities in established immigrant gateways may inadequately inform how Latina/o immigrants acquire network support in emerging Latino destinations.

Chapter Two reviews my methodological approach – a feminist variation on McCracken's (1988) in-depth interview. In this chapter, I discuss how I gained access to research participants as well as the general demographic characteristics of participants. Further, I discuss the effects of the researcher on research participants and on the research process.

Chapters Three through Five present research findings from the study. In Chapter Three, I look specifically at some of the factors that have pushed or pulled research participants to Knoxville. In Chapter Four, I discuss the formal and informal organizations and networks that have facilitated participants' access to support. Chapter Five discusses differences and similarities between traditional and emerging gateways in terms of support, as conceptualized through the dominant theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust. In the concluding chapter, I summarize the results of this research and suggest areas for future research.

I

Immigrant Settlement Patterns, Ethnic Communities, and Social Support: A Brief Review of the Literature

Settlement patterns of the newly immigrated are not random. Migration streams result from established immigrant networks: recent immigrants tend to group in areas that already have a large and well-defined co-ethnic population (Logan, Alba and Zhang, 2002; Massey, 1987; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Zhou, 1992). More specifically, immigrants tend to settle in ethnic communities where a large proportion of the residents come from the same country or culture and speak the same language. Such communities are exemplified by the Cubans in Little Havana in Miami (Portes and Stepick, 1993) and the Chinese in Chinatowns in New York City and San Francisco (Zhou, 1992).

These network-driven settlement patterns have many practical foundations. For the newly arrived immigrant, the prospect of adjusting to life in the United States may be overwhelming. Immigrants may be accustomed to certain traditions and practices that differ from the new dominant culture; they may not speak the dominant language; they may not have sufficient material resources to establish themselves anew; and they may not understand the normative standards that structure life in the new country. In this context, ethnic immigrant communities accumulate and store *social capital* and *funds of knowledge* for the benefit of other immigrants. Social capital (Coleman, 1988) facilitates goal achievement through the use of existent social and structural networks. Funds of knowledge (Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2003; Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg, 1992) are the accumulated informational resources of any group or community. By settling among an established group of co-ethnics, recently arrived immigrants may benefit from access to the accumulated knowledge and social capital of the preexisting ethnic community, which become manifest through various supportive

functions (Hagan, 1998; Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Zhou, 1992).

These supportive functions are generally categorized as either tangible or affective (Gottlieb, 1978, 1983; House and Kahn, 1985). While tangible support can be defined in terms of resources (Cohen and Syme, 1985), affective support can be defined as the allocation of time and effort to listen, show concern, and provide validation (Cobb, 1976). Within these two dimensions, Wills and Shinar (2000) locate five central functions of social support: instrumental and informational support (forms of tangible support), and emotional, companionship, and validation support (forms of affective support).[5]

The ethnic immigrant community may provide some or all of these forms of tangible and affective support to new immigrants. Tangible support, or the sharing of informational and instrumental resources, is characteristically oriented to practical needs. For recent immigrants, informational support may include information on where and how to obtain employment, housing, and other services (Hagan, 1998). Such support also includes information on how to find cultural or traditional foods, religious or social services, childcare, English language classes, and so on.

Equally practical, instrumental support includes material resources. Instrumental support is exemplified when established immigrants provide financial startup capital to recently arrived immigrants so that they may launch new businesses (Portes and Stepick, 1993), when established immigrants loan money to cover the costs of immigration for other immigrants, or when established immigrants offer to house and feed recently arrived immigrants until they are able to support

[5] That social support is positively correlated with several beneficial outcomes is well documented. Physiologically, there is a well established relationship between perceived social support and positive medical outcomes for surgical patients and breast cancer survivors, and social support has also been correlated to an increase in life expectancy (Egbert et al., 1964; House et al, 1982; Schoenback et al, 1986; Vogt, 1983). Psychologically, perceived social support helps to mitigate the potentially negative effects of stressful life experiences (Cohen et al, 2000). Materially, support manifests in resources that may alleviate stressful situations (Cohen and Syme, 1985).

themselves financially (Hagan, 1998). Such support may be invaluable for the process of immigration, as immigrants often arrive with little in the way of material resources.

Apart from tangible support, there are social and emotional motivations to settle among co-ethnics. According to Wills and Shinar (2000), affective support consists in companionship, validation, and emotional support. In addition, cities with large co-ethnic populations offer recent immigrants a connection to their native language. Immigrants who do not speak the dominant language are thus able to communicate with others in their native language, which, in turn, potentially enables the formation of new friendships and other relationships of support.

The most cohesive ethnic community is the *ethnic enclave*. An enclave is an area of a city that, because of its high concentration of ethnic group residents and business owners, provides virtually all of the immigrant's needs (Bohon 2001). Two well-documented enclaves are Little Havana in Miami and Chinatown in New York City. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) have discussed social capital in the ethnic enclave in terms of *bounded solidarity* and *enforceable trust*; both concepts have implications for the immigrants' ability to obtain social support. They propose that bounded solidarity occurs as a result of a shared experience of economic discrimination and cultural hostility imposed by the larger society. Individuals with a shared ethnicity, or country of origin, cleave together to create resource groups of social capital for the direct benefit of members of the group and to the exclusion of those who are not of the group (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993).

As conceptualized by Portes and Landolt (2000), bounded solidarity facilitates community members' access to resources, rather than the existence of resources themselves. Communities must therefore possess social capital and social resources in order for members to benefit. The concept of enforceable trust compels members of a bounded social network to comply with the norms and expectations of the group; such "trust" is enforceable because it is reinforced by the threat of sanctions

from the social network (Portes and Landolt, 2000: 539; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993: 1325). For the immigrant who does not comply with normative expectations, sanctions may manifest themselves in the form of withdrawal of the community's support and social capital.

Portes and Stepick (1993) document an extreme form of bounded solidarity among Cuban expatriates in Miami. Given their large and increasingly vocal, influential, and political presence in Miami, Cubans became increasingly targeted for hostility by non-Cubans, particularly those in the press whose political allegiances were challenged by Cubans. In response, Cubans strengthened their sense of "we-ness" (Portes, 2005; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes and Stepick, 1993) and solidary identity as Miami Cuban exiles by denying group member benefits to anyone, including other Cuban exiles, who did not strictly advocate the dominant, proudly expatriate and anti-Castro discourse (Portes and Stepick, 1993: 139). The Miami Cuban identity therefore took on a moral character to promote favorable comparison of in-group members in opposition to outsiders. Those who maintained the solidary Cuban identity benefited from the considerable resources of the group, through access to financial capital, preferential hiring practices, and housing resources, among other things (Alberts, 2006). As a theory, bounded solidarity is often invoked to explain why Cubans in Miami tend to have high levels of political strength and cohesiveness (Garcia, 1996).[6]

Bounded solidarity is a precondition of enforceable trust. Enforceable trust refers to the belief (or "trust") that community sanctions ("enforcement") can ensure expected behavior among the members of the solidary group (Portes and Landolt, 2000). The relationship is illustrated by the

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[6] For several decades, Cuban expatriates in Miami have stood in solidarity to express a strong, anti-Castro political discourse, and this solidary identity has influenced their forcefulness and influence in the political sphere. One telling example of such strong political solidarity in the face of widespread opposition from the general public and from the United States government centers on the much popularized case of six-year-old Elián Gonzalez, the Cuban boy who was found floating across the ocean in an inner tube with two other survivors after their boat had capsized. When the United States government announced its intention to return Gonzalez to Cuba, Cuban expatriates in Miami threatened to riot and engaged in actions intended to disrupt daily life in Miami. Ultimately, Miami Cubans put on a very public and united front for keeping Gonzalez in Miami (Portes, 2005), despite the fact that many privately disagreed about what should happen to Gonzalez (Eckstein, 2005).

predictability of "zero losses" as the default rate on loans made to Cuban immigrants. Portes and Stepick (1993) show that early Cuban refugees without collateral assets were able to borrow money from Latino-managed banks in Miami based on their family reputation and belongingness in the community. In order to ensure the continued supply of character loans, the entire Cuban immigrant community exerted pressure on loan recipients to repay the loans. Such character loans were premised on the fact that failure to repay the loan would damage or destroy the integrity and reputation of the borrower; additionally, this failure would reflect poorly on the entire Cuban community. Since the immigrant resided within the ethnic community and needed the continued support provided by the community's accumulated social capital, it was virtually assured that the loan would be repaid (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993).

The empirical evidence to support the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust is well-established for traditional immigrant destinations (see Portes and Stepick, 1993). However, these theories remain largely understudied and unexplored for Latina/o immigrants in new destination gateways. At the same time, a recent study of changing growth patterns of Latinos in metropolitan cities by Suro and Singer (2002) indicates that Latinos are increasingly migrating to new destinations in the United States, which are referred to as "emerging gateways" or "new Latino destinations." In contrast to established immigrant gateways such as Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and Chicago, an emerging gateway is characterized as a metropolitan area having a small foreign-born population until 1970, followed by rapid growth in the foreign-born population after 1980 (Singer, 2004).

I suggest that studies of traditional immigrant destinations may reveal little about the nature of the immigrant social support network in emerging gateway cities. As of yet, very little research has examined immigrant adjustment and the development of co-ethnic communities in emerging gateway cities (Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2000). Given the dearth of studies on immigrant adjustment in new

destinations, we cannot assume that immigrants adapt in emerging gateway cities in similar ways as in traditional gateways. To the contrary, given that the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust rely on a pre-existing community of co-ethnics to ensure group cohesion and the maintenance of expectations and norms of reciprocity, the lack of a large co-ethnic community may compromise the effectiveness of the immigrant support network to provide adequate social capital and funds of knowledge to incoming immigrants.

Indeed, the few researchers that have explored immigrant adjustment in new destinations have suggested important differences for immigrants in emerging gateways as compared to those in traditional locations. Immigrants who migrate first to traditional destinations in the United States and then subsequently relocate to non-traditional gateways may mobilize social capital and funds of knowledge in traditional gateways through access to the pre-established co-ethnic community and then transport this newly acquired capital to their new destination (Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2003). For example, Hernández-León and Zúñiga (2003) have demonstrated that Mexican immigrants migrated to Dalton, Georgia only after amassing social resources and knowledge of the social structures and institutions that govern life in the United States through pre-existing networks in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston.

Additionally, some studies (see Singer, 2004; Smith, 2007; Stamps and Bohon, 2006) have suggested differences in the benefits that accrue to immigrants in emerging gateways compared with those who reside in established gateways. Singer (2004) notes that established gateways are predictably better equipped to offer formal, or institutional, supports to recent immigrants precisely because these areas have a long history of immigrant settlement. The large population of established immigrants has contributed to the need to create an institutional infrastructure oriented at meeting the service needs of the immigrant population, including their educational, health, and safety needs. In

contrast, this infrastructure is often lacking in newly emerging gateways (Atiles and Bohon, 2002; Smith, 2007; Stamps and Bohon, 2006).

Stamps and Bohon (2006) indicate that Latina/o immigrants in emerging gateways may benefit educationally from the relatively smaller population of co-ethnics. They suggest that immigrants in new destinations may have higher levels of education attainment than those in established gateways because they exhibit additional qualities of ambition and "innovativeness," which may encourage self-selection. More ambitious immigrants may thus leave established destinations to pursue new opportunities in areas with relatively fewer co-ethnics. Regardless of the underlying reason, these findings indicate differences between immigrants in emerging gateways and those in established gateways. Overall, these findings indicate the need to examine more closely immigrant adjustment in emerging gateway cities in order to determine to what extent traditional gateways may serve as a model for emerging gateways.

Also conspicuously absent from the literature on immigrant adjustment are the potentially differing experiences of male and female immigrants. Studies of immigrant support networks and ethnic communities typically neglect gender as a key component when conceptualizing theories of adjustment. In fact, the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust were developed primarily through observations of men. Additionally, theoretical models of migration and adaptation often privilege a monolithic household model of resource accumulation, which assumes that male and female members of the same household equally share resources and social capital (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994b; Pessar, 1999; see Massey, 1987; Portes and Bach, 1985). Recently, some research (Hagan, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994a; Mahler and Pessar, 2006; Menjívar, 1999, 2000) has suggested gender differences in the benefits that typically accrue to recently arrived immigrants through the established ethnic community. Yet, most studies that inform our theoretical

understanding of immigrant social support networks have either excluded women due to the "complexity" of including multiple categories of immigrants (see Portes and Bach, 1985: 95) or have tended to assume that both immigrant men and women profit equally from the ethnic community social network and receive equal support (Pessar, 1999).

In fact, male and female immigrants do not necessarily profit equally from the established ethnic social network. In contrast with men, immigrant women are frequently less integrated into the visible public sphere, which has implications for their ability to build well-resourced networks of support. This is consistent with feminist theories of private and public space. Female immigrants are often occupied in solitary tasks, such as domestic work inside their own homes or inside the homes of others (Hagan, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994b, 2001; Menjívar, 1999). Additionally, employed work often takes women away from their own communities and locates them in wealthier neighborhoods, isolating them in private homes and hotels away from the Latino community (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

In contrast, immigrant men are often employed in publicly visible and highly social environments, such as factories, or construction and landscaping businesses. Whereas paid and unpaid domestic labor, such as housekeeping and care-giving, is often solitary and invisible, men's labor contributes to network construction and resource building. Indeed, American employers often rely on (typically male) Latino immigrant *encargados*, or managers, to bring in new employees (Grey, 1999; Johnson-Webb, 2002; Kandel and Parrado, 2005; Massey, 1987). Men use this opportunity to find jobs for others in their networks, and often draw from those that remain in sending communities in the country of origin. This creates a sustainable migration chain between men in sending areas (in Latin American countries) and those in receiving areas (in the United States), and thereby further reinforces existing network ties between men (Massey, 1987).

Thus, women's networks tend to be less resourced than the networks of immigrant men precisely because traditional women's work often isolates women, while traditional men's work frequently integrates men into the community (Hagan, 1998). Additionally, women do not necessarily benefit from the network support that accrues to male partners, spouses, and family members, as network resources are often not shared equally among all members of a household (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994a). Immigrant women often have less access to the immediately available social networks and potential social support of the ethnic community, which then decreases the ability to call on these networks for support in times of need (Hagan, 1998). More specifically, studies of the ethnic enclave suggest that employment opportunities and financial capital typically accrue only to male immigrants, often to the detriment of female workers (Bohon, 2001; Portes and Jensen, 1989; Zhou and Logan, 1989). We see, for example, that self-employed immigrant men enjoy a higher social status than men who work for others, whereas self-employed immigrant women have a lower social status than women who work for others (Bohon, 2005).

In their research on the international migration of women, Brettell and Simon (1986: 3) indicated that women are "essentially… left out of theoretical thinking about migration." More than two decades later, not much has changed in how our dominant theories of immigrant adjustment conceptualize the experience of international migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). What has changed are the demographics of those who immigrate. During the twentieth century, women became as likely as men to immigrate to the United States (Donato, 1993). Still, we have yet to see many studies that conceptualize gender as an essential theoretical component of immigration (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994a; Pessar, 1999). Whereas most studies of immigrant support networks assume gender neutrality in their exclusive focus on male immigrants, the intent of this thesis is to articulate a gendered concept of social support in emerging gateways by examining the experiences of both female and male immigrants.

II

Research Approach

Between August 2008 and March 2009, I conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews with twenty Latina/o immigrants living in the Knoxville, Tennessee metropolitan area. I utilized an ethnographic approach to understand gendered experiences of support among female and male Latino immigrants, and to analyze the extent to which the dominant theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust speak to experiences of support in a newly emerging Latino destination. The intent of ethnography is to understand the actors' own experiences, behaviors, and actions surrounding a given social situation; its method involves the examination of the statements, meanings, and general descriptions of experiences that participants themselves give as well as a contextualized description of participants' situations (Wolcott, 2008).

Social networks and social support have been studied using different methods, including surveys, participant observation, and interviews (see Hagan, 1998; McMichael and Manderson, 2004; Phillips and Fischer, 1984; Schweizer, Schnegg, and Berzborn, 1998). Although the survey is an excellent tool to measure the number and attributes of network members (see Phillips and Fischer, 1984), and participant observation provides a foundation for understanding relationships between individuals in a particular community (see Hagan, 1998), the in-depth interview can access the participant's own proffered perception and interpretation of the social support network (see McMichael and Manderson, 2004). The ethnographic approach to analyzing interviews enables the researcher to understand how individuals constitute and attribute meanings to their lived experiences.

In conceptualizing the interviewing procedure for this study, I adapted McCracken's (1988) long interview according to feminist methodological principles. Although sociologists and philosophers of

feminist theory have argued that there exists no distinct "feminist method" (Cancian, 1992; Fonow and Cook, 1991, Harding, 1987; Rose, 2001), within the literature there are recurring themes, comprising what we may call "standards" of the feminist methodological mode of inquiry (Cancian, 1992).

Two primary themes of feminist methodological inquiry are, first, the aspiration to describe the experience of research participants through their own voices (Cancian, 1992; Harding, 1998), and second, the imperative to avoid the reproduction of oppressive structure and systems of inequality during the research process (Harding, 1998). Both of these themes are generally compatible with the general premise of McCracken's (1988) long interview. As McCracken (1988: 19) advises, the goal of the interviewer is to construct a view of the world through the eyes of the research participant, thus taking the research participant as expert on her or his own situation and experience. The open-ended, or *low-structure* (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006) interview, is an apt method for achieving this objective because it encourages the participant to lead conversation, while the interviewer's responsibility is primarily to listen and remain non-directive and unobtrusive (McCracken, 1988: 22). During a low-structure interview, the researcher maintains a specific research interest (in this case, participants' experiences of support and adaptation in the United States), but it is the research participant, through her or his narrative, who suggests new topics of conversation; thus, the shared experience between researcher and participant is individualized to each interview (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006; Reinharz, 1992).

Feminist methodology *adds* to McCracken's (1988) approach through its emphasis on *reflexivity* or researcher "consciousness raising" (Cook and Fonow, 1986). In this context, reflexivity is defined as the researcher's ability to "reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process" (Fonow and Cook, 1991: 2). Such critical examination enables the researcher to identify existing structural systems of power that may interact to further marginalize research participants through the research process itself.

Harding (1987) and Smith (1974) have discussed the importance of researcher reflexivity in order to locate the role of the researcher's knowledge, values, and biases within the research process. Presser (2004) further considers reflexivity in terms of the role of the researcher's *presence* on the research participant and the research itself. As in all fieldwork, unacknowledged assumptions may have a subconscious, yet drastic, impact on the research process and outcome (Kleinman, 1991). The researcher must therefore identify assumptions about her or his own culture and the culture of research participants that may influence research. This study engages with the experiences of Latina/o immigrants, an often-marginalized population within the United States. However, I am neither Latina nor an immigrant, and my features stand out as *Angla*. Although being from another culture is often beneficial to the researcher's ability to "manufacture distance" (McCracken, 1988), it is important to understand the potential power, culture, and language differences that may operate to influence not only the validity of interviews, but also their ethical implications. For this reason, early on, basic interview questions were constructed with input from key informants (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Rose, 2001) who are themselves Latina immigrants.

One overarching goal of feminist research is to conceptualize gender as a central theoretical component, thereby de-mystifying the supposed gender neutrality that often causes researchers to generalize studies focused exclusively on men to the population at large. Studies of immigrant networks and social support tend to normalize the male immigrant experience, without taking into account the gendered nature of social support and social capital (Hagan, 1998; Menjívar, 1999; Pedraza, 1991). Normalization of men's experiences of immigration is problematic because it denies potential differences in the experiences of immigrant women. Thus, we marginalize the experiences of immigrant women and disregard their contributions in the processes of migration and adaptation. Whereas the privileging of men's experiences of immigration may once have been attributed to the proportionally

high ratio of immigrant men to women, women have long been as likely as men to migrate to the United States (Donato, 1993).

Allowing for the possibility of differing male and female immigrant experiences does not imply that Latina immigrants *will* report a different experience. Indeed, women of minority cultures may identify more with their minority racial or ethnic statuses than their gender. As a result, they may be unwilling to report experiential differences to a perceived "outsider" (Shields and Dervin, 1993). Moreover, "Latinas" and "women" are not two disparate, entirely homogenized groups; our socially and culturally constructed categories (such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity) intersect on multiple levels under different conditions (Hill Collins, 1991a). This suggests that identities are always situation-dependent, which implies that particular identities become more or less salient depending on context. Common themes within and across gender may therefore be experienced differently by the individual according to the present context and the individual's past experiences (Hill Collins, 1991b).

Nonetheless, it is premature to deny the possibility of gendered differences of the immigrant experience during the research process. In studying across gender, my research neither assumes nor denies gendered differences. Thus, I conceptualize gender as a central organizing concept (Pessar, 1999), no less important than race, class, ethnicity, and legal status (Pessar, 2003) in terms of the Latina/o immigrant experience of social support in emerging gateway cities. For the purposes of this thesis, conceptualizing gender as central in immigrant adjustment manifests itself through a commitment to include the voices and experiences of women as well as those of men.

Access

I gained access to research participants through three mechanisms. First, I developed contacts with a majority of participants through my experiences as a volunteer community interpreter. Following

a 2008 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid on a poultry plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, I and several others involved with the Knoxville Latino community traveled to Chattanooga to facilitate meetings between the undocumented former employees of the plant, local community activists, and lawyers filing lawsuits on behalf of the workers. On one such trip I met Judit,[7] a Latina from Mexico who lived in Knoxville and who, like myself, had volunteered to interpret at the meetings. In talking with Judit about my desire to become more active in the Latino community in Knoxville, she told me of a local medical clinic that served low-income Latinos and constantly needed interpreters. Four months later, Judit became my first research participant, and as a result of her connections to the community, she was able to assist me in contacting additional participants.

I began interpreting at the clinic in the summer of 2008. With permission from the on-site director and outreach coordinator, I handed out flyers advertising my study to patients as they waited to be seen by the doctor. Many expressed interest in the study and immediately gave me their phone numbers in order to be interviewed.

Second, I accessed research participants through a process of snowballing from other participants. Many research participants were referred to me by those I had previously interviewed. Several participants were referred by those I met and interviewed through my involvement with the clinic. Whenever I interviewed a participant who was currently in an intimate partnership with someone in the United States, I attempted to also interview the partner in order to compare the experiences of support within the household. However, I was only able to interview three such couples. For the most part, the women I interviewed were partnered with spouses or boyfriends in Knoxville, but male partners reported being too occupied with work or other matters to be interviewed. The majority of the men I interviewed had partners who remained in the country of origin.

[7] I have changed participants' names to ensure confidentiality.

My third mechanism of access was through vendors at a local flea market. I approached Latina/o vendors at the flea market to ask if they or someone they knew might be interested in participating in the study. Although those at the flea market seemed to regard me with less trust than those I met through my volunteer experiences, I was able to interview two vendors. Through these participants I developed friendly relationships with other vendors who allowed me to interview them informally. My interviews with flea market vendors later led me to supplement the interview data with observations onsite at the flea market.

Characteristics of Research Participants

Of the twenty participants I ultimately interviewed, twelve were female and eight were male. Sixteen participants were from Mexico, two were from Honduras, and one was from Guatemala; I withhold the origin of one participant due to the likelihood of identification. Fourteen participants had lived in at least one other city in the United States prior to migrating to Knoxville, usually Houston or another major city in Texas. Of these fourteen, four participants had moved to several different states, including California, Florida, Maryland, Texas, North Carolina, and Vermont, before settling in Knoxville. Only one participant – Rocio – was a circular migrant. She returned to her native country for a time after her first migration experience before returning to the United States.[8] Six participants lived in

[8] Prior to the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, it was common for Latina/o immigrants (particularly Mexicans) to migrate frequently across the US-Mexico border, coming to the United States sans legal documentation to work and live for a short time, then returning to the country of origin once a specific goal had been accomplished (Massey, 1987). However, as a result of increased militarization along the United States border, immigrants have been increasingly migrating to the United States to live for longer periods, even bringing their families to live with them. Due to the increased personal risks and costs associated with unauthorized immigration, it is now less common for immigrants to cross several times over the course of a lifetime (Furuseth and Smith, 2006; Massey et al., 2002). This is well represented by the participants in my study. Of the 17 participants who crossed the US-Mexico border without legal documents, only two have returned to their country of origin: one, Rocio, returned to Mexico to live for a year prior to re-immigrating to the US, and one, Inés, returned to visit family only upon receiving legal permanent residency in the US.

Knoxville since their arrival in the United States. Length of time in the United States ranged from just eighteen months to twenty five years.

At the time of interview, participants worked in a variety of occupations. Six women were engaged exclusively with unpaid domestic work in their own homes, meaning the care of the household and their own children or grandchildren. Only one man was engaged in home work. In his late fifties, Bartolomeo recently migrated to Knoxville from Houston and had been unable to locate formal employment. At the time of the interview, Bartolomeo assisted his wife in caring for their son's children and making and selling *tamales* from home. Two participants worked in factories. Two participants worked as vendors at the flea market (one of these vendors, Marisol, worked only part time at the market, as most of her time was spent caring for her young children). Two participants worked at a local bakery (Fátima owned the bakery and Emelio, her intimate partner, worked as her employee). One woman worked in housekeeping. One man worked in housing construction. Three men worked together at a plant nursery.

Two women, Judit and Paz, worked in professional positions. Due to the possibility of identification, I withhold more specific information regarding their titles and occupations because I wish to maintain their confidentiality. Both women worked in occupations that connect Latina/o immigrants to resources in the Knoxville community. Their work often involves outreach to the Latino community in order to build trusting relationships with new immigrants, so that they may assist with a variety of legal, social, and economic needs. Because they were immigrants themselves, and because their work bridged relationships between Latina/o immigrants and American citizens, I relied on Judit and Paz as key informants for my study (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Rose, 2001). In talking with each of them, and through their interviews, they helped me to make sense of general themes that emerged in other interviews. Table 1 summarizes select demographic characteristics of my research participants.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	Sex	Origin	Age	Occupation	Length of time in US*	Length of time in Knoxville*
Judit	F	Mexico	33	Professional	4 yrs	1 yr
Lupe	F	Mexico	43	Home work	11 yrs	11 yrs
Bartolomeo	M	Guatemala	59	Home work	1.5 yrs	3 months
Rafael	M	Mexico	25	Vendor	2 yrs	2yrs
Patricio	M	Honduras	29	Factory	2 yrs	2yrs
Carmen	F	Honduras	34	Factory	3yrs	3yrs
Santiago	M	Mexico	31	Construction	5 yrs	3yrs
Araceli	F	Mexico	26	Home work	3yrs	3yrs
Rocio	F	Mexico	54	Home work	7 yrs	3yrs
Inés	F	Mexico	55	Home work	15yrs	13yrs
Fátima	F	Mexico	64	Store owner	25yrs	5yrs
Teresa	F	Mexico	28	Home work	6yrs	1.5yrs
Emelio	M	Mexico	42	Fátima's employee	10yrs	5yrs
Lourdes	F	Mexico	37	Cleaning	9yrs	3yrs
Marisol	F	Mexico	35	Vendor / Home work	4 yrs	2 yrs
Paz	F	Withheld	33	Professional	4yrs	4yrs
Renato	M	Mexico	31	Plant Nursery	10yrs	5yrs
Héctor	M	Mexico	34	Plant Nursery	7yrs	2yrs
Guillermo	M	Mexico	29	Plant Nursery	4yrs	2yrs
Eliana	F	Mexico	33	Home work	11yrs	5yrs

* At time of interview

Interviews lasted between one and three hours, with most interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted in a face-to-face format. However, few interview s were entirely private. Although most interviews took place in the homes of the research participants, living spaces were often shared. In these situations, I asked participants to choose a place where they felt comfortable and private. When I sensed that participants felt nervous or uncomfortable with certain topics, I either asked participants if they wanted to continue or redirected to an alternate topic of conversation. Interviews were often momentarily interrupted when children, family members, or other housemates walked through the interview location. In one situation, I arrived for an interview with Renato, and ended up interviewing his entire household at once,[9] upon Renato's request that his wife, brother, and cousin be allowed to participate. Five interviews occurred in a place of business, including the flea market, a coffee shop, a local bakery, and the participant's office. I attempted to maintain interviews as private conversations between myself and the participant; often, this meant that I needed to pause or delay an interview when others approached.

Since the initial interviews, I have had follow-up contact with ten of the twenty research participants, some of whom I have contacted or since seen, and some of whom have contacted me for various reasons. Several have called to find out dates and times for upcoming clinics, for assistance with interpreting or translating, or for help with insurance papers. A few have called just to talk. For the most part, I do not use the actual follow-up conversations as data. Where I use information gained during these informal follow-up contacts with participants, I have asked and received permission to use their words in this thesis.

[9] Such changes in interview dynamics are not unexpected. The researcher may arrive to interview one person, but winds up interviewing several people at once (see Atiles and Bohon, 2002).

Analytical Strategy

I conducted all interviews in Spanish. Despite the range of time participants had lived in the United States, and despite the interest most participants expressed in learning English, and the amount of time and effort many had already dedicated, only two reported conversational fluency with English, and even these two people preferred to be interviewed in Spanish.

I audio-recorded interviews, with the prior consent of participants, and fully transcribed each interview in Spanish. I replaced potential identifying data, such as names of people or organizations, with fictitious names in the transcripts in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Due to my comfort working in both English and Spanish, and in order to accurately preserve the words of research participants during the process of analysis, I reviewed all data in their original language. In this thesis, I present all quotes from participants in their original language, followed by English translations, in order to emphasize the actual words of participants.[10] All quotes have been back-translated[11] by an independent translator whose first language is Spanish to ensure that English translations are consistent with, and accurately represent, participants' comments.

I analyzed transcripts through a two part strategy of data analysis. First, I analyzed transcripts through a process of repeat scrutiny, reviewing each transcript multiple times to identify themes that

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[10] Some quotes presented in their original Spanish have minor grammatical errors; however, these errors were transcribed directly from recordings and represent participants' original words. I have omitted these errors in the English translations both for the sake of readability and because many errors do not translate coherently into English.

[11] Back-translation is the process of re-translating a document (in this case, a transcript) into its original language, preferably by an independent translator whose native language is the original language of the document. A document whose original language is Spanish would thus be translated into English, and the English version would then be retranslated (or back-translated) into the original Spanish by a native Spanish speaker. Once the document is back-translated, the original document and the back-translated document are compared. The first translation is then modified to more accurately reflect the document's original wording. The purpose of back-translation is to ensure a quality translation of meaning. Since any translation is a process of interpretation, no translation can perfectly convey a document's original voice. The process of back-translation helps to verify the accuracy of a translation, thus preserving to the fullest extent the original document's meaning and voice (Su and Parham, 2002).

commonly and frequently arose within and between transcripts. I developed codes such as "examples of support," "strategies for network building," or "personal challenges." I then distinguished sub-themes within these general codes, because my initial codes were so broad that they provided too much data for comparison. For example, within "examples of support" I distinguished sub-themes such as informational support and instrumental support. Within "strategies for network building" I developed sub-themes related to the different ways that participants sought out or constructed network support, such as through church or non-profit social programs. As I coded each transcript, I generated new themes for questions to ask future participants.

Second, due to the strong emotional component of many of my interviews (as I explain in the following section), and because these emotions did not always come out as strongly in the transcripts, I also listened to recordings several times to identify portions of the interviews where participants expressed extreme emotionality. Most transcripts had sections where participants stated that they could not continue to discuss certain topics due to their emotional reactions to these topics, and in the transcripts themselves I included some non-verbal indicators reconstructed from field notes (such as silent weeping, tearing up, wiping away tears from the eyes, or pushing away with the hands as though to indicate that we should stop talking about a specific topic) as well as emotional indicators (such as voice cracking, or changes in the participant's tone and volume of voice due to emotions). I felt strongly that these emotional reactions spoke tremendously to participants' experiences, and specifically to their experiences of network support, despite the fact that these themes may not have emerged quantitatively as frequently as other themes that emerged via a close scrutiny of transcripts.

Emotionality of Research Participants

Self-defined feminist researchers and others (Presser, 2004; Reinharz, 1992; Scheper-Hughes, 1992) have detailed the various ways in which the presence of the researcher, or the research project itself, impacts research participants. It would be impossible to fully know and articulate the effects that I, as the researcher, have had on the participants during the interview process. My apparent status identities as a white American, a citizen of the United States, someone who is studying for an advanced degree, and with facility in both English and Spanish, automatically placed me at greater advantage in some respects than most, if not all, of the participants I interviewed. Yet, I believe that my apparent status as a native born white American who nevertheless speaks Spanish without a *gringo* accent led some participants to more easily accept me and my interest in the study than I had anticipated. With red hair, freckles, and white skin, I am obviously *Angla*; yet, upon hearing my Spanish, many participants attempted to guess my or my parents' Latin American origins. When I assured participants that I have no Hispanic or Latino heritage, many called in other friends and family members to witness the oddity of a white American speaking Spanish like a native speaker.

I believe that my facility with Spanish and the fact that I do not belong to the Latino community encouraged many participants to feel more comfortable speaking with me about their personal experiences of immigration and settlement in the United States. Participants' comments seemed to suggest that they did not expect an American to take such an interest in their lives. Since I did show interest in their lives, and since I have dedicated much of my life to learning their language, several participants seemed almost overwhelmed – even grateful:

> *Para mí, yo me lleno de alegría cuando escucho a… un americano que habla español…*
>
> For me, I am filled with joy when I hear… an American that speaks Spanish…
>
> Patricio

> *Qué bueno que estás haciendo esto… porque tú eres americana… Tú eres americana y a ti te da igual si nosotros tenemos ayuda o si no tenemos ayuda. Pero es algo que quieres hacer para ayudarnos… y yo te agradezco mucho…de verdad… muchísimas gracias.*
>
> How wonderful that you are doing this… because you are American… You are American and for you it doesn't matter if we have support or if we don't have support. But it is something you want to do to help us… and I thank you a lot… truly… thank you so much.
>
> Judit

Such comments are representative of the words expressed by most of the research participants. My facility with the Spanish language may have served as an initial gesture of reciprocity for some participants, to the extent that participants felt comfortable – or, potentially, obligated – to reciprocate by telling me their stories.

Perhaps it is because of my apparent interest in their lives – as manifested through my commitment to their language – that many participants felt comfortable expressing palpable emotion, including desolation, anxiety, and anger. Most participants cried at some point during the interview; some cried for a large portion of the interview. It was not my intention to cause participants pain during the interview, although I had anticipated that some questions might bring up painful memories, depending on the participants' life experiences. Often, participants cried in response to a basic question, such as "How is it going for you here?" Questions often led participants to talk about children and spouses left behind in their country of origin, and about parents, other family, and friends with whom they had not spoken for months or even years, some of whom they knew not whether they were alive and well. When Carmen came to the United States nearly three years ago, financially insolvent after her husband left her, she left her two children, now five and eight years old, in Honduras in the care of her mother. Now, three years later, her mother is very sick. Carmen is faced with the impossible decision of whether to return to Honduras without having achieved financial stability, or continue working in the United States, with the very real possibility of never seeing her mother again:

Ahorita, pues, estaba yo… hablando con mi mama, porque ha estado bien enferma ella. Y… me sentí triste porque… ella se puso a llorar. Y le dije no, pues, "No llores porque yo… acá estoy lejos de ti," le dije. Imagínate. Y pues, ella está bien enferma, está bien enferma allí. Y… este… yo le dije a ella que… que me diera fuerza… Porque "Yo estoy lejos de ti." Y ¿Cómo le voy a poder, le digo, ayudar? Todavía está bien enferma… Ella estaba brotando pura sangre, y… ya le sale pura sangre. Y yo platique con ella, y se puso a llorar. Y me dijo que no es así, bien. Y pues le dije yo que… que no, que no se preocupara, que ella ya se va a curar...

Just now I was… talking with my mom, because she has been very sick. And… I was upset because… she began to cry. And I told her, "No, don't cry because I… I am here far away from you," I told her. Just imagine. And you know, she is so sick, she's so sick there. And… um… I told her… to give me strength… Because, "I am far away from you." And how am I going to be able, you know, to help her? She is still very sick. She was gushing pure blood, and… just blood coming out of her. And I talked to her, and she began to cry. And she told me that [she's] not okay. And, well, I told her… not to worry, that she is going to get better…

Some questions also led participants to talk about feelings of hopelessness here in the United States and helplessness to return to their homeland. In particular, participants such as Carmen, Patricio, and Rafael, who had left children behind in their native countries, mentioned feeling overwhelmed by hopelessness:

Los primeros dos meses son los peores que puedes pasar en tu vida. Estás bien triste. No tienes ganas de nada, no puedes comer, no puedes ni dormir. Extrañas todo… la comida no te sabe igual... Es bien difícil porque… tienes ganas de llorar, quieres llorar... Y… ya después te sientes peor, ya cuando tienes más tiempo que tú ya te quieres ir, y dices: "Ya me voy a ir." Pero no tienes trabajo, dinero, y no puedes regresarte cuando te sientes peor más. Sí, te sientes más peor cuando tienes más personas que te quieren allá... y te dices, "Mejor que nunca me haya ido." Sí, se arrepiente.

The first two months are the worst you will live in your life. You are so sad. You don't want to do anything, you can't eat, you can't even sleep. You miss everything… food doesn't taste the same to you… It is so difficult because… you try to cry, you want to cry… And later, you feel even worse, once you are here [in the United States] for longer, and you just want to leave, you say to yourself, "I'm leaving," but you don't have a job, no money, and so you can't return even though you feel even worse. Yeah, it's even worse when you have so many people there [in the country of origin] that love you. You say, "I wish I had never come." Yes, you regret [coming to the United States].

Rafael

I believe that I witnessed strong emotional responses by my participants and was able to tap more deeply into their experiences because of the fact that I am a white American, of a different class and social status than the participants, who has made an effort to develop fluency in their language. That is, our apparent status differences, juxtaposed against my evident interest in the lives and culture of participants, created a safe space in which participants felt comfortable sharing their stories and their emotions with me.

Study Delimitations

This study focuses specifically on Latina/o immigrants, rather than the general immigrant population. The population size of Latina/o immigrants within the United States and Knoxville, Tennessee, and the presence of a shared language among those of different national origins, creates potential for the construction of social support networks. Latina/o immigrants comprise roughly 52 percent of the total foreign-born population in the United States (US Bureau of the Census, 2003). Within Knoxville, immigrants from Latin America comprise the largest foreign-born population with a shared language (US Bureau of the Census, 2000). As a result of this concentration of Latinos, these immigrants have greater opportunities to interact and form networks with others who speak the same language. Given that the purpose of this study is to examine how Latina/o immigrants construct support networks in areas where support may not be readily available due to the lack of an extensive ethnic community, it is logical to study those immigrants who have settled in areas with both relatively small immigrant populations and relatively small co-ethnic populations. At the same time, the presence of a critical mass of co-ethnics is necessary in order to understand how new support networks are constructed. The Knoxville, Tennessee metropolitan area meets all of these criteria.

Suro and Singer (2002) have included Knoxville among fifty one metropolitan areas designated as newly emerging Latino destinations.[12] Utilizing data from the US Census, Suro and Singer (2002) found that the percent change of Knoxville's Latino population from 1980 to 2000, at a 147 percent increase, is the smallest change of all new Latino destinations. Between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population in the Knoxville metropolitan area increased 151 percent, to comprise approximately one percent (8,628 persons) of the total Knoxville population (Singer and Suro, 2002). Data from the US Bureau of the Census (2000) estimate that 3,100 of these Knoxville Latinos are immigrants from Latin America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

Knoxville is arguably the "most emerging" of the emerging gateways, given that its Latino immigrant population is smaller relative to other designated emerging gateway cities. Yet, because Knoxville's Latino population is proportionately large enough to designate the city an emerging gateway, I anticipate that Knoxville's Latino population may also be large enough to comprise a critical mass of co-ethnics needed to establish new support networks. Studies of how Latina/o immigrants in Knoxville construct social support networks may therefore speak to how networks have been constructed in gateway cities with well-developed immigrant populations. Overall, given its very small population of Latinos, and particularly of Latina/o immigrants, Knoxville represents a worst-case scenario for the construction of social networks among emerging immigrant gateways. It is work at this extreme that should be most informative.

[12] According to Suro and Singer (2002), emerging Latino destinations are those places that have historically maintained a very small (and lower than average) Latino population until the 1980s, when these places began to experience a rapid (and higher than average) growth in their Latino population. Destinations with "rapid growth" are identified as those areas that have experienced growth in the Latino population between 147 percent (Knoxville) and 1,180 percent (Raleigh-Durham) between 1980 and 2000.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study results, by necessity, from the sample. There is no way to take a representative sample of the Knoxville Latino immigrant population, simply because there is no definitive list of the immigrants that live in Knoxville. This study therefore relies on a convenience sample of available Latina/o immigrants to participate in the interview. It is difficult, if not impossible, to know the extent to which this convenience sample may be generalized to those Knoxville Latinos who do not participate in the interviews. Those who are not accessible may have different characteristics than those who are accessible, in terms of, or related to, network support.

A second concern of this study is whether the results may be generalized to other emerging gateway cities. Since Knoxville has fewer settled Latina/o co-ethnics, the network characteristics of those who settle in Knoxville may differ from the networks of those who settle in areas with a larger population of co-ethnics. Larger emerging gateways, such as Atlanta, may allow for more intra-ethnic network connections.

Despite these limitations, it remains worthwhile to study how Latina/o immigrants construct networks in Knoxville. Other studies of immigrant networks typically concern the social capital and network availability of immigrants who settle in traditional destinations that have a large, well-established co-ethnic community. Due to its status as an emerging gateway, Knoxville may hold some clues as to how Latina/o immigrants have constructed networks in gateways with a more established Latino immigrant population. Additionally, this research is relevant to whether the dominant theories of immigrant adjustment, particularly the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust (Portes and Landolt, 2000; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998), remain informative both across gender and for metropolitan areas with relatively few co-ethnics.

III

Why Latina/o Immigrants Migrate to Knoxville

Much of the research on immigrant adjustment focuses on how established support networks in the ethnic communities of traditional gateway cities facilitate the adjustment of recently arrived immigrants (e.g., Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Zhou, 1992). Such studies indicate that recent immigrants often rely on the solidarity of the established ethnic community to access social capital and funds of knowledge (Hagan, 1998; Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga, 2003). The ethnic community, through its well-established network, assists newcomers with the capital to access both tangible and affective aspects of support. Economically, the ethnic enclave facilitates the adjustment of some long-term immigrants through preferential hiring in occupational attainment (Bohon, 2001).

However, as Singer (2004) and Suro and Singer (2002) have documented, immigrants are increasingly likely to migrate to and settle in locations that lack a large presence of immigrant co-ethnics. Just as it is valuable to understand the reasons why immigrants settle in traditional destinations, so too can we benefit from research that explores why certain immigrants settle in areas with relatively fewer co-ethnics. The reasons that influence an immigrant's decision to settle in a specific location often reveal important information about the immigrant her- or himself, as well as the contemporary socio-political and structural climate of the United States. With this in mind, it is necessary to first explore the reasons immigrants gave for settling in Knoxville.

Like citizens, immigrants migrate to specific locations within the United States for a variety of reasons. Immigrants may move to be near family or friends who are already established; they may have a promise of a job offer; they may have heard that one place is economical and safe; they may prefer, in

terms of climate or aesthetics, one region over another; and, simply, they may move to experience someplace new and different. Network Theory (Bean and Stevens, 2003; Pessar, 1999) suggests that decisions about migration are influenced primarily by pre-existing connections to immigrants or other individuals in receiving locations. Thus, immigrants are more likely to migrate to areas where they have existing social connections.

For many research participants, reasons intersected in various ways to encourage their current settlement in Knoxville. Two primary motivating factors in the decision to move to Knoxville are the fact that family or friends already live in Knoxville and the belief that jobs are available in the Knoxville area. As can be expected, the existence of a pre-established network and beliefs about job availability intersected, as those with friends and family in Knoxville either apprised respondents of job opportunities before they migrated, or found jobs for them before they arrived.

Pre-established networks in Knoxville

Many research participants largely reported migrating to Knoxville for the primary reason that a network already existed for them. Of the twenty research participants, seventeen had prior connections with family and friends that lived in Knoxville. Of the remaining three, Judit and Santiago were drawn to Knoxville through a pre-established employment opportunity; Renato was pulled to Knoxville by a Latino immigrant that lived in Knoxville, whom he met through a church while visiting his cousin, Guillermo, in Morristown, Tennessee. Importantly, and in keeping with the classification of Knoxville as an emerging Latino destination (Suro and Singer, 2002), no participant had an extensive network of direct contacts in Knoxville prior to their migration. At most, participants had prior connections to three other immigrants in Knoxville before their migration. At the same time, however, not one participant migrated to Knoxville without, at the minimum, a tenuous connection to a pre-established network contact, whether

a family member, friend, a professional or job-related contact, or in the case of Renato, a happenstance acquaintance.

The presence of a pre-established kinship network in Knoxville was particularly important for those immigrants who did not first migrate to other locations in the United States. Of the twenty participants in this study, only six have lived in Knoxville since their initial arrival in the United States. As network theory (Bean and Stevens, 2003) suggests, each of these six participants had ties to other immigrants in Knoxville; the presence of pre-established contacts directly influenced their decision to settle in Knoxville. This suggests that Knoxville has already become a site of chain migration for some Latina/o immigrants, despite the relatively small population of Latinos and the fact that Knoxville has only recently been designated a newly emerging gateway. Indeed, new networks, once established, can gain momentum quite quickly, as established contacts provide the social and financial capital for others to migrate to the United States (Grey, 1999; Massey, 1987). Thus, Latina/o immigrants migrate to Knoxville for the same reasons that others migrate to traditional destinations such as New York or Los Angeles. At the same time, many research participants chose Knoxville from among a range of destinations where they also had network connections, as evidenced by the number of participants who chose Knoxville as a secondary or tertiary destination.

For those participants who migrated immediately to Knoxville upon their arrival in the United States, established network contacts in Knoxville provided both instrumental and informational forms of support. Participants reported that network contacts provided a place to live, a loan of funds (to pay off the *coyote*[13] and other costs associated with immigration, as well as to pay bills until the first paycheck

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[13] "*Coyote"* (literally: "coyote") is a slang Spanish term that refers to an individual who guides immigrants illegally across the US-Mexico border in exchange for money. Massey et al. (2002) show that immigrants increasingly rely on professional *coyotes* as a result of the increasing personal risk and danger associated with border crossings. Currently, very few immigrants sans proper entry documents cross the border without the assistance of a *coyote.* In the two decades since the passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), the resulting

arrived), and knowledge about job opportunities in the area. Patricio's examples of support, detailed below, resemble those of Carmen, Lupe, and Rafael, all of whom migrated immediately to Knoxville upon their arrival to the United States:

> *Cuando vine acá, no traía dinero, nada. Y ya estuve tres meses sin trabajar, buscando trabajo. Y, pues en este tiempo, en esos tres meses, como también vivía con mi hermano, y él ya estaba acá, pues, de la comida, de la renta, y de esas cosas… pues, se los pagó. Y hasta que encontré mi trabajo y ya. Pues, él siempre pagó mis <<biles>>.*
>
> When I came here, I didn't have any money, nothing. And then I was here for three months without work, looking for work. And so, in this time, in those three months, since I lived with my brother, and since he was already established here, well, for the food, rent, all that stuff, he paid it all. And he paid it all until I found a job. He always paid my bills.

Paz and Araceli, the remaining two participants who migrated directly to Knoxville upon their arrival to the United States, are exceptional in that they migrated to be with husbands who were previously established in Knoxville. Presumably, the debts incurred for the process of immigration were shared between husband and wife in both couples.

The fourteen remaining participants who had established themselves in other states prior to migrating to Knoxville were not as financially dependent on contacts in Knoxville upon their arrival. Participants who had previously settled elsewhere in the United States did not arrive in Knoxville with the heavy debt of loans for *coyotes* and other expenses related to international migration. Additionally, participants who had lived in the United States prior to migrating to Knoxville had accumulated some

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increased militarization and enforcement of the US-Mexico border has caused immigrants to make longer and more dangerous journeys through the deserts of New Mexico and Arizona (Hellman, 2008; Massey, 2008; Massey et al., 2002). Additionally, Massey et al., (2002) show that the price of border crossing with a *coyote* has increased dramatically since the passage of IRCA and the resulting escalation of border militarization. The expenses associated with hiring a *coyote* now total into the thousands of dollars. Of those research participants in my study who crossed the US-Mexico border without proper entry documents within the last five years, the majority paid a *coyote* between $1500 and $2000 US dollars (USD). The exception is Santiago, whose *coyote* was a close family friend, and who did not charge Santiago to guide him across the border.

degree of financial capital from jobs worked elsewhere. However, these participants still relied upon network contacts in Knoxville to help them find jobs (Grey, 1999):

Meghan: *¿Cómo se busca trabajo aquí?*
Bartolomeo: *Mi hijo… ahorita… casi los viernes ahora no sale al trabajo. Entonces ya eso le da <<chance>> para venir, y salimos para aplicar. Y él me lleva a aplicar.*
Meghan: *Entonces, ¿Él sabe dónde se debe buscar?*
Bartolomeo: *Digamos que sí, digamos que sí… Me dice que aplique.*

Meghan: How does one go about finding work here?
Bartolomeo: My son… right now… on Fridays he doesn't go to work. So this gives him a chance to come [for me]… and we leave to apply [for jobs]. And he takes me to apply.
Meghan: So he knows where to look [for work]?
Bartolomeo: Yes, [he knows]. He tells me [where] to apply.

Bartolomeo's story echoes that of several others who relied on family or friends to help them find work. The participants in my study largely lacked specific and concrete knowledge about how and where to apply for jobs; in these instances, as others have documented (Bean and Stevens, 2003), established networks of contacts were instrumental in obtaining employment.

Employment Opportunities

For all but one of the male research participants, the existence of employment opportunities in Knoxville was among the primary motivators for relocation. The fact that employment opportunities exert a strong pull for immigrants is consistent with other research (Atiles and Bohon, 2002; Bohon, 2006; Massey, 1987). Seven respondents had jobs already waiting for them upon their arrival in Knoxville, and an additional nine reported that a network contact had informed them that jobs were available. Each of these sixteen, with the exceptions of Santiago and Renato (who I will discuss in depth later in this chapter), had family, close friends, or significant contacts in Knoxville that had either found jobs for them or promised that jobs were plentiful:

[No vine] con mi suerte… ya sabía del trabajo. Mi hermano trabaja con [el dueño], y me preguntó si quería venir a trabajar.

[I didn't] come [to the US] on my luck… I already knew about the job. My brother works with the [owner of the business], and he asked me if I wanted to come to work [for him].

Rafael

Of the remaining four who did not report moving to Knoxville for job opportunities, three (Paz, Araceli, and Eliana) were women who moved to be with their husbands, and one was Bartolomeo, an older man who moved to Knoxville with his wife to live with their son and daughter-in-law, in order to meet and help care for their grandchildren, and to support their son in his application for residency.

While several of the women reported that the existence of job opportunities was a primary factor in relocation, the majority of women with husbands or partners also reported that they had moved to Knoxville so that their partner could find employment. Among couples, the decision to relocate to Knoxville was based on the fact that the husband had an established connection to someone in Knoxville that could help locate a job. Women, on the other hand, typically left established networks of friends and family behind in their native countries or in their original destinations within the United States when they migrated with partners to Knoxville. For example, Rocio, Teresa, and Eliana reported that they migrated from Houston, Los Angeles, and Clearwater, respectively, leaving close and extensive family networks behind, when sons (Rocio) and husbands (Teresa and Eliana) could not find steady and sufficient employment elsewhere. Upon arriving in Knoxville, men had existing relationships with other immigrants, whereas many of the female research participants lacked independent networks.

According to male research participants, living in Knoxville, with its relatively small population of Latina/o immigrants, meant more opportunities for employment. In contrast, women were more likely to express regret at living in a location with fewer Latinos and close family contacts. Among women, a lack of contact with other Latinas meant that they had little help with unpaid domestic work and child

care. Eliana, Araceli, Rosario, and Lupe all suggested that they would have had more support with domestic tasks and more opportunities for networking if they lived in a community of Latinos. Among the female participants with children, the single exception to this belief was Teresa. Whereas most of these women reported feeling isolated from others because of the fact that no other Latino families lived in their neighborhoods, Teresa lived in a small trailer park with a relatively large Latino population. Indeed, she felt well connected to her neighbors, and felt as though they shared basic domestic tasks, such as caring for each others' small children. Incidentally, I interviewed two other women that lived in the same community, and neither felt that they had received support, including domestic support, from others in the small mobile home community.

The traditional gendered roles engaged in by many participants often influenced the network development. Consistent with previous research (Hagan, 1998), I found that men developed contacts and relationships with others primarily as a result of employment or recreational activities. At the same time, women's unpaid domestic labor, concentrated in neighborhoods that were perceived as being isolated from other Latina/o immigrants, hindered their ability to develop network ties. Latina participants often perceived that caring for small children was a barrier and limited their abilities to participate in ESL classes, the workforce, or general recreational activities.

Establishing Network Chains in Knoxville

Two participants were currently in the process of establishing new migrant network chains in Knoxville. Upon arriving in Knoxville, neither Santiago nor Renato had family or friends in Knoxville, nor did they have strong ties to anyone in the community. After living in Knoxville for three years and five years, respectively, both Santiago and Renato have established themselves as terminal links in a network chain for their families.

When Renato left Mexico to look for work in the United States, an army friend offered to share his apartment in Clearwater, Florida. However, after Renato met and married Eliana in Florida, and she gave birth to their first child, they found that they could no longer afford Florida's high cost of living. Renato left his wife and their daughter with her family in Clearwater, and set off in search of a place where jobs were plentiful and living was cheap. He came to Tennessee, to Morristown, where a cousin was living at the time. Unfortunately, there were no jobs in the factory where his cousin worked. At a church gathering, Renato met another Latino immigrant who lived in Knoxville and was visiting family in Morristown. Upon hearing that Knoxville was a bigger city than Morristown, and that jobs were available, Renato accompanied the man back to Knoxville.

The rest of the story, as Renato told it, was history: he found a job and moved his wife and daughter to Knoxville, whereupon they bought a trailer, had another child, and began to establish a new life. When I asked Renato what had attracted him to Knoxville, in addition to discussing economic, aesthetic, and security benefits, he explained that Knoxville, as a location, had the potential to reunite his family in the United States:

> *Toda la historia… comienza por mí, porque desde que yo llegué, yo he estado intentando que mis hermanos tuvieran un lugar para que… pues, mi plan era que, un día, tendríamos que terminar juntos, en el mismo lugar, toda la familia.*
>
> This whole story… begins with me, because ever since I arrived, I have been trying to make it so that all my brothers would have a place so that... well, my plan was that, one day, we would all end up together, in the same place, my whole family.

For Renato, Knoxville was a place where he could satisfy many needs. First, he and his wife could raise their family in Knoxville economically because jobs were available and the cost of living was relatively inexpensive. Second, the natural beauty and climate of Knoxville was reminiscent of Renato's home state of Oaxaca. Third, Renato perceived that Knoxville was safe, with a relatively low crime and drug

use rate. Because of these first three factors, Renato believed that Knoxville was a place where he could once again unite all of his family that had been separated by their immigration to the United States.

Santiago's story is similar to Renato's, in that it begins with Santiago finding work and a place to live outside Knoxville through friendship networks of established immigrants, and ends with him migrating to Knoxville to launch his own immigrant chain. Having moved from Houston to Charlotte to Vermont, following jobs opportunities that emerged via his own networks and those of his friends, Santiago was in search of a steady job and safe place to live so that he could bring his wife and children to be with him in the United States. When the construction company Santiago worked for in Charlotte sent him to Knoxville on a temporary work assignment, he found Knoxville to be so agreeable that he applied for a permanent job with the same company in the Knoxville area:

> *Yo me quería traer a mi esposa. Estaba en México. Andaba a buscar dónde… estuviera bien para mi familia. Y aquí me gustó. Vine de temporada, y dijeron que podía aplicar para quedarme allí. Y, pues, apliqué. Aquí encontré un trabajo seguro. Y… más, digamos, tranquilo, con la policía y todo eso, para uno que no tiene papeles… Y ya por eso, me gusta aquí.*
>
> I wanted to bring my wife, who was in Mexico. So the whole time I was looking for a place that would be good for my family. And I liked it here. I came here on a temporary job, and they told me that I could apply to stay here. So I applied. I found a steady job here, and [it was]… you know, calm, with the police and all that, for someone without [immigration] papers… And so, because of that, I like it here.

Since Santiago settled in Knoxville, he brought his wife, Araceli, and their young daughter to live with him. He and Araceli had another child since living in Knoxville, and they intended to remain in Knoxville at least until both children have completed high school. The fact that Santiago, Araceli, and their children live in Knoxville brought Santiago's mother, Rocío, from Mexico to live with them. Additionally, several of Santiago's aunts and uncles (Rocío's brothers and sisters), who were formerly living in Houston and Dallas, had since relocated to Knoxville.

A Haven for Unauthorized Latina/o Immigrants?

In looking for a secure location to live in the United States as an immigrant without proper entry documents, Santiago echoed the reasons that many respondents gave for settling in Knoxville. Teresa, Lourdes, Santiago, and Héctor, each of whom had lived in states more populated with Latinos, all independently suggested that they believed Knoxville was less risky for immigrants who lack visas. Although being in the US without legal documentation is not a violation of criminal law, unauthorized immigrants constantly operate under the potential threat of deportation. This threat varies across geographic areas, since Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents operate more actively in states like California than in states where unauthorized immigration is viewed as a minor issue (Durand et al, 2006). After living on the US side of the Texas-Mexico border for almost seven years, Lourdes found that being unauthorized and Latina was becoming increasingly risky due to the large presence of ICE agents:

> Meghan: *¿Por qué vino usted aquí?*
> Lourdes: *Porque vivíamos en un lugar donde era… en la frontera con México. Entonces allá anda mucha gente de migración.*
>
> Meghan: Why did you come here?
> Lourdes: Because we were living in a place that was… on the border with Mexico. And there, there were a lot of immigration agents.

Lourdes and her husband communicated with his brother, who lived at the time in Knoxville, and who told them that Knoxville was much less risky for undocumented Latinos. Héctor, too, suggested that one of the reasons he has decided to remain in Knoxville is because the police here are much less vigilant about apprehending undocumented immigrants than in other places where he has lived:

> *En Norte Carolina la policía… anda detrás de los hispanos. Anda mirando allí, si son hispanos o no… Y yo cuando llegué aquí... lo que me ha pasado es que no tengo licencia, y he visto que la policía hace cosas diferentemente, como si manejas bien, en el límite, la policía no te para. Y allá no, si ven que eres un hispano, andan detrás. Y eso es lo que… se teme más a este estado, un poquito más pesado de aquí, y yo me estoy acostumbrando aquí.*

> In North Carolina the police… follow Hispanics. There, they follow you to check if you are Hispanic or not… And when I came [to Knoxville], what happened is that I don't have a [driver's] license, and I have seen that the police do things differently here. Like, if you drive fine, in the limit, the police don't stop you. Not like [in North Carolina] – if they see that you are Hispanic, they follow behind you. And that's what… you fear the most in that state, [it's] much more oppressive than [Knoxville], and so I am getting used to being [in Knoxville].
>
> Héctor

In fact, research (Atiles and Bohon, 2002; Torres et al., 2006) suggests that immigrants in other emerging Latino destinations, such as Georgia and North Carolina, often feel singled out and targeted for discrimination as a result of their ethnic origin. While it may or may not be true that Latina/o immigrants actually *are* singled out by police and others for discriminatory treatment, the perception is strong enough to motivate some to search for areas where police are perceived to be less hostile.

At the same time, and despite the overwhelming perception of most participants that Knoxville is safer for those without proper entry documents, additional anecdotal evidence from my study suggests that Knoxville is not as removed from unauthorized immigration concerns as many would like to believe. During one volunteer session at a medical clinic, the woman for whom I was interpreting told me that her husband had recently been deported. Her husband, an undocumented immigrant, was caught driving without a license near the Alcoa flea market. The arresting officer, a Puerto Rican, told her husband that he would be deported because *la migra* (ICE) had an agreement to pay the police station for every unauthorized immigrant apprehended and deported. Although I could not corroborate this woman's story with official evidence from the Alcoa police department, other counties in Tennessee maintain laws that enable local officers to enforce immigration policy. In Davidson County (Nashville), program 287(g) deputizes sheriffs as immigration enforcement agents, empowers them to check the authorization status of anyone apprehended for minor violations, and enables them to implement deportation orders for all undocumented immigrants (Fotopulos, 2008).

Lourdes, the same woman who migrated to Knoxville from a border town in an attempt to avoid ICE agents, reports that her lack of legal documents has also affected her living situation in Knoxville. Some months before I interviewed her, she and all the other Latinos with whom she worked lost their jobs cleaning in a local hospital as a result of the fact that they do not have legal work visas:

Lourdes:	*Nos sacaron, nos despidieron.*
Meghan:	*¿Porque no había trabajo?*
Lourdes:	*Sí, había trabajo, pero nos dijeron que nosotros nada más podíamos trabajar allá. Ya no más trabajo para latinos.*
Meghan:	*Sólo despidieron a los latinos. ¿Le explicaron por qué?*
Lourdes:	*Supuestamente, pues, lo que ellos nos comentaron, que ya no nos podían dar los trabajos. Y nos despidieron a todos los latinos. Dejaron puros morenos… y blancos.*

Lourdes:	They fired us.
Meghan:	Because there wasn't any work?
Lourdes:	Yes, there was work, but they told us that we couldn't work there any more. No more jobs for Latinos.
Meghan:	They only fired Latinos. Did they tell you why?
Lourdes:	Supposedly, well, what they told us, was that they couldn't give jobs to us [Latinos] anymore. And so they fired all the Latinos. They left only blacks… and whites.

Lourdes could not say for certain what had spurred on this decision to fire all the Latina/o workers, even though, she says, the Latinos worked harder than both the white and black workers.[14] However, she and her Latina/o co-workers were let go around the first day of January, 2008, at approximately the same moment that a new Tennessee statewide bill – Public Chapter No. 529 – was put into effect. This bill imposes financial penalties on fine employers who knowingly employ undocumented workers (Tennessee Public Chapter No. 529). Although there is no sufficient evidence to directly link the firing of undocumented Latinos at a local hospital with the coinciding implementation of a statewide bill to enforce penalties on employers who hire unauthorized workers, Lourdes' story does provide some

[14] The perception that Latino immigrants "work harder" than American citizens is a common complaint among Latino immigrants (Gordon and Lenhardt, 2007; Smith, forthcoming; Smith, 2006; Torres et al., 2006). In response, American workers "resent being worked like a Mexican" (Smith, forthcoming).

indication that even Knoxville, with its relatively small Latino immigrant population, is not completely removed from immigration enforcement procedures.

IV

Life as a Bridge: Constructing *Lazos*[15] in the Community

Most of the immigrants interviewed for my study arrived in Knoxville with a small amount of established network support already in place. Additionally, many sought to establish new connections with other Latinos in Knoxville since their arrival. Network-building occurs through a variety of formal and informal strategies. First, formal non-profit organizations make connections to Latinos and enable immigrants to access important instrumental and informational resources. Additionally, formal organizations may facilitate the creation of network contacts between individual immigrants by creating physical spaces where Latina/o immigrants can interact. Second, stores and markets that cater specifically to a largely Latina/o immigrant customer base create a public, highly visible and physical location for network and resource sharing among Latinos. Third, some participants, particularly women, came to rely increasingly on me, the researcher, as a strategy for accessing tangible support and important community resources. In this chapter, I discuss the ways that these pre-existing formal and informal networks have facilitated participants' ability to access support and develop new networks in Knoxville.

Non-Profit Organizations Building Bridges

Despite the relatively recent influx of Latina/o immigrants into the Knoxville metropolitan area, Knoxville already boasts a small but committed network of organizations that are increasingly attempting to build bridges between themselves and the immigrant Latino population. These organizations include *Alianza del Pueblo*, the Lisa Ross Birth and Women's Center, the People's Free Clinic, the Latino Task Force, the Magnolia *Milagros* Group, the public school system, and various

[15] "Ties."

churches, particularly the Methodist and Catholic churches. Though many are decidedly under-resourced, the mission of several of these programs is to provide what resources they can to Latina/o immigrants, and to construct connections between immigrants and the community.

For my research, I was able to speak to Judit and Paz, two women, themselves Latina immigrants, who worked in professional positions in organizations such as those listed above that cater to the needs of the Latino community.[16] The very responsibilities detailed in their respective occupations enabled Paz and Judit to act as "bridges" between Latina/o immigrants and Anglos, between Latinos and community resources, and, to a lesser extent, between Latinos themselves. The work often involved outreach to individual Latinos in order to build trusting relationships with new immigrants, in order to assist with a variety of legal, social, and economic needs. At the same time, both Judit and Paz were immigrants themselves, and because of this fact, they judged themselves to be well acquainted with the needs of the Latino community.

Judit and Paz had little contact or relationship with each other. Although they worked for different organizations, the shared mission of both programs ensured that they knew of each other and had worked loosely with one another on cooperative inter-organizational projects in the past. Despite the fact that they rarely had any communication with one another, both spoke of their work using much the same language. Without prompting from me, both Judit and Paz independently identified themselves as "un puente" (a bridge), and further, they identified their occupational positions as consisting primarily of "bridgework." Judit spontaneously labeled herself using the word "bridge" when I asked her to elaborate on why the organization had created her position and hired her to fill it:

[16] I withhold more specific information regarding Judit and Paz's organizations and titles due to the likelihood that any additional information would identify them. I hope it will suffice the reader to know that both Judit and Paz are employed by large non-profit community oriented organizations to help direct programs oriented to serve the needs of the local Latino community.

> *Pues, más que nada… [la organización] había visto como crecía la población latina y como crece, como crece, y no sabían cómo abrir sus puertas… para esta comunidad… que está aquí a las puertas. Entonces, por eso, me traen a mí, y porque soy latina, conozco como comunicarme con ellos, como hablarles… y… decirles que son bienvenidos a [la organización]. Y es un… soy un puente. Porque es así que yo ayudo a los latinos, ayudo a los anglos a conocernos… a conocer a los latinos.*
>
> Well, more than anything… [the organization] had seen how the Latino population had grown, and how it continues to grow and grow, and [the organization] did not know how to open its doors to this community, who are here at the doors. So, because of that, they brought me here, and because I am Latina, I know how to communicate with them, how to talk to them… and… how to tell them that they are welcome to [the organization]. And it's… I am a bridge. Because this is how I help Latinos, I help Americans to get to know us… to get to know Latinos.

Similarly, when I asked Paz to tell me about her work, she also spontaneously characterized herself as "bridge," using an identical sentence structure. Paz stated, simply, "I am a bridge… between Latinos and other non-profit organizations." When I prompted her to elaborate on her role as a bridge, and what that meant for immigrants, Paz explained that, in her professional capacity, she assists Latinos with a variety of resource needs, including material donations for dependent spouses of deported immigrants, translating and interpreting services for anyone who requests it, and assistance seeking out legal or social service resources in the community. Paz also contributed to a monthly Spanish-language bulletin published by her organization, in which she details information about health, child safety, and other aspects of daily life.

The salience of formal network building of the sort that Paz and Judit engaged in was testified to by several of the immigrants I interviewed or spoke with informally. Of the seven research participants that I met through my interpreting work at the People's Free Clinic, all but one had been informed of the clinic's existence by Paz, Judit, or someone else working in a similar organization. Of the eight participants who reported having recently attended English language classes, all had heard of the existence of these classes through a representative of a formal non-profit organization. In other words,

non-profit organizations play a significant role in the ability of Latina/o immigrants to access important instrumental and informational supports.

Formal organizations that make connections between Latinos and other non-profit organizations at times also facilitate network construction between individual Latinos. I have been told and have personally witnessed that classes teaching English as a second language (ESL) provide opportunities to promote interactions between immigrants. Often, attending an ESL class is a pretext to be able to socialize with others in Spanish. This was particularly true for two Latina participants who worked in unpaid labor inside the home, and who reported having few other opportunities to socialize outside the home with non-family members.

In my own capacity as a volunteer interpreter with the Broadway Clinic (formerly, the People's Free Clinic), I have noticed that people tend to talk and exchange information while waiting to be seen by the doctors. On any given day, the information being shared has included advice on the best schools for Spanish monolingual children and their parents, information about how to handle a traffic citation and which states still give driver's licenses without proof of legal residency, and advice on whom to contact in order to change birth certificate information. Granted, these exchanges are probably not extreme, life-altering conversations; however, they serve to provide immigrants with basic information on how everyday life in Knoxville and the United States is structured.

Whereas Paz serves mainly in the role of bridging connections between her organization and the Latinos who utilize their resources, as well as between Latinos and other non-profit organizations, Judit acknowledges that she also serves as a bridge between different nationalities of Latinos:

Meghan: *Pues, algunas personas… piensan que… los mexicanos sólo andan con mexicanos, los guatemaltecos andan que guatemaltecos… ayudan entre los paisanos, y ya. ¿Cómo responderías tú?*

Judit: *Pues… yo creo que… muchas veces sí, es cierto. Muchas veces sí, es cierto. Pero… pero si no hay alguien que les ayude a hacer lazos… no lo*

van a hacerlo ellos. Por eso, siempre los guatemaltecos con guatemaltecos, y los mexicanos con mexicanos. Y pocas veces que hay personas que ayudan… a hacer lazos. Entonces, soy puente…entre aún… entre los mismos latinos.

Meghan: You know, some people… think that… Mexicans hang out with Mexicans, and Guatemalans hang with Guatemalans, and that they help countrymen, and that's it. How would you respond to that?

Judit: Well… I think… a lot of the time, yes, that's true. A lot of the time, yes, it's true. But... but if there is no one to help [Latinos] build connections… they're not going to do it on their own. That's why Guatemalans are always with Guatemalans, and Mexicans are always with Mexicans. And it's not often that there are people that help [them] to build connections. So I'm a bridge… even between… between [different nationalities of] Latinos.

When I asked Judit about the meaning of serving as a "bridge," she elaborated:

> *Y creo que… la riqueza… de la vida es conocernos y estar unidos... y… y… y vivir en harmonía. Me gusta porque… así como yo conozco a Meghan, y Meghan tiene distintas características que Judit… Entonces, es un complemento. Es un complemento. Todos aprendemos de todos y enriquecemos a los otros… Entonces me gusta ayudar, me gusta ser un puente.*
>
> I believe that… the richness… of life is to get to know each other and to be united… and… and… and to live in harmony. I like [being a bridge] because… well, just like I know Meghan, and Meghan has different characteristics than Judit… So, it's complementary. It's complementary. We all learn from each other and we enrich each other. So I like to help, I like to be a bridge.

For Judit, bridgework was characterized as work that creates and solidifies connections between individual Latinos, as well as between Latinos and non-profit organizations. In Judit's perspective, the work that she does serves to break down the barriers that prevent Latina/o immigrants from connecting to each other in supportive ways.

The "bridge" concept appears frequently in the literature surrounding third-world and post-colonialist feminist theories, particularly in the works of Gloria Anzaldúa. In *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983) and its companion *This Bridge We Call Home* (Anzaldúa and Keating, 2002), feminist writers embrace the idea of the bridge as a symbol of connection, transition, and

viewpoint. Anzaldúa (2002:3) writes that "bridging is the work of opening the gate to the stranger." Paz and Judit thus reflect the feminist literary position of bridge-making by creating physical and emotional spaces in which diverse and multicultural groups of "others" may interact.

At the same time, both *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983) and *This Bridge We Call Home* (Anzaldúa and Keating, 2002) problematize and complicate the idea of the monolithic feminism that centers on the experiences of white upper class women and marginalizes the voices and perspectives of others. *This Bridge Called My Back* (1983), in particular, challenges claims to solidarity made by white feminists who overlooked differences of experiences based on race, class, and national origin, among other things. Similarly, we must be careful to avoid romanticizing the bridgework of Judit and Paz. Although both share experiences as Latinas with other Latina/o immigrants, it is important to note that Paz and Judit differ from the majority of Latinos with whom they work in that both are authorized immigrants working in professional positions.

Informal Bridgework: Stores and Markets

While Judit and Paz primarily constructed bridges through their respective occupations, between Latinos and Americans or between Latinos and other non-profit organizations, Rafael, Miranda, and Fátima used their jobs to build connections between individual Latinos. Fátima owned and operated a *panadería*[17] in Knoxville, and both Rafael and Miranda sold goods at a flea market located just outside the city. The publicly-accessible and highly visible nature of these occupations enables store owners and market vendors to attract and network with other Latina/o immigrants on a regular basis as a condition of the work itself. Latino *tiendas* and market stalls both cater to and rely upon a Latino

[17] "Bakery."

customer base in order to turn a profit. Although some stores and stalls attract non-Latina/o customers as well as Latinos, store owners and market vendors know that their primary market is Latino.

Tiendas

My informal observations have led me to recognize the role of Latino *tiendas*, or stores, in providing a physical space for network-building and resource sharing for the local Latino community. In Knoxville, Latino stores are not just places to buy merchandise, but also resources to find information about ESL programs, church services, and other community resources. For example, the organization Paz works for regularly distributes monthly newsletters to many prominent *tiendas* in the metropolitan area. In my capacity as a volunteer interpreter, I myself have utilized several *tiendas* as an opportunity to network and share information about community resources with Latina/o immigrants.

Given the importance of *tiendas* in the potential for networking and resource sharing, I interviewed Doña Fátima, the owner of a bakery that caters to the local Latino population. She and Emelio, her business partner and long-time intimate partner, prepare traditional Mexican sweet breads and pastries and also bake made-to-order cakes for wedding and *quinceaños*[18] celebrations. Their reputation for delicious pastries, as well as their convenient location, enables the bakery to attract a large Latino and American customer base.

Unlike Judit and Paz, Doña Fátima has never once characterized herself as a bridge; neither does she believe that she is an important node in a Latino community support network. To the contrary, on more than one occasion, Fátima has vehemently emphasized to me that she wants little to do with the majority of Latinos living in Knoxville (a point I will return to in Chapter Five). Yet, despite her repeated

[18] The *quinceaños* refers to a Latina girl's fifteenth birthday, in which the *quinceañera* (the girl turning fifteen) celebrates publicly her transition from girlhood to womanhood. The *quinceaños* is often celebrated in a highly ritualistic and elaborate way, involving intricate dances, a formal dinner party, and, for devout Roman Catholics, a religious ceremony in which the *quinceañera* affirms her commitment to the faith.

and vocal denials, I have witnessed Fátima networking with and providing support to other Latina/o immigrants on several occasions.

Since I first interviewed Fátima and Emelio, I have returned often to the bakery for pastries and conversation. Over the course of nearly five months, Fátima and I have exchanged recipes and life stories. I have spent several combined hours in the front and back of the small bakery, both chatting with Fátima and observing her interactions with customers. Over this time, I noticed that Fátima advertised local ESL programs in her store. Fátima kept a list of phone numbers of Latinos who came in looking for work or child care, for example, so that she could call them in the event that she heard of anything. As I was completing the write-up of this thesis, Fátima started advertising the dates and times of the upcoming local Latino free clinic in her store.

Yet, each time I asked Fátima about her role in a broader Latino network, she insisted that she did not involve herself in the concerns of others. For Fátima, providing other Latinos with information about jobs, health care, and child care was not the same as providing network support. Although I would characterize this information-sharing as a key aspect of instrumental support, Fátima had a much more narrowly defined notion of support. I believe this narrow definition of support is a consequence of Fátima's experience living in a larger, more established Latino community prior to moving to Knoxville.

Before moving to Knoxville to take charge of the bakery, Fátima and Emelio lived in Pasadena, a suburb of Los Angeles. Latinos comprise 45 percent of the total population of Los Angeles, and the city is among sixteen major metropolitan areas considered to be established Latino gateways (Suro and Singer, 2002). In comparison to Knoxville, Fátima felt much more involved with and connected to the Latino communities in Pasadena and Los Angeles. In Pasadena, Fátima was involved with other Latinos through her church and within the apartment complex where she lived, whose residents were mostly Latina/o. In Pasadena, Fátima cared for the children of families who lived in her apartment complex,

and to this day claims that she maintains relationships via phone with several of the families. Additionally, the public transportation system in and around Los Angeles enabled Fátima to visit other Latina/o friends and family who lived outside her immediate area.

In comparison, in Knoxville, Fátima and Emelio did not have access to personal or public transportation and therefore relied on the pay-for-service taxis operated by other Latinos. Additionally, Fátima worked in the *panadería* seven days a week, for ten or more hours each day. In her sixties, Fátima was often exhausted by the work of managing the bakery. She reported having little time, energy, or interest to get to know the people that came to her store to make purchases:

> *Es triste, la rutina, la rutina. Aquí no salgo a ningún lado. Aquí es de domingo a domingo, domingo a domingo. Hay veces que es la una y… hay trabajo. Es la una de la mañana y nos vamos… Ya vengo y es la hora de la venta. Así es que no… ni tiempo tiene uno de platicar. Es la verdad. Porque, mire, ahorita nos ponemos para hacer éste, y yo esto, para allá y para acá. Es todo el tiempo.*
>
> It's sad, the routine, the routine. Here, I don't go out anywhere. Here, it's from Sunday to Sunday, Sunday to Sunday. Sometimes it's one [in the morning] and… there's work. It's one in the morning and we go [home]. We get home and it's time to get back to work. So that's why… there's not even time to talk. It's the truth. Because, look: right now we have to do this, and I [do] that, [running] from there to here. This is all the time.

In fact, nearly every time I visited Fátima in the bakery, she and Emelio were chatting with an acquaintance whom they met via the store. Additionally, Fátima often welcomed me into the back of the store, where we sat and talked for an hour or more at times. Although I would argue that Fátima was reasonably well connected to other Latinos through her place in the community, Fátima herself felt that she lost much of her connection to others when she relocated from Pasadena to Knoxville. For Fátima, having lived in a location with a large, well-established Latino population shaped her idea of what a Latino community in the United States should look like. Granted, her contact with other Latinos certainly decreased exponentially, just given the differences in population demographics between

Pasadena and Knoxville. At the same time, Fátima's bakery maintained a steady flow of Latina/o customers, with whom she exchanged important information and casual acquaintanceship.

I suggest that what differs for Fátima in Knoxville is not necessarily the amount of contact with other Latinos, but the extent to which Fátima felt as though she could trust and rely upon other Latinos who live in Knoxville, as compared with those in Pasadena. I will further discuss the potential importance and meaning of this difference in the next chapter. For now, I turn to another informal source of potential networking between Latina/o immigrants: the vending stalls at the local flea market.

La Pulga

In addition to local *tiendas*, network-building occurs between vendors and customers at the flea market, or *pulga*. If the reader has never visited the Green Acres flea market in Alcoa, it may be difficult to understand how it serves as an important location for network building between Latina/o immigrants. I myself never ventured to the market until I was exhorted, time and again, by multiple interview participants as well as patients at the clinics where I interpreted, that I needed to experience the *pulga* firsthand. Several told me that the market is like "*cualquier mercado de cualquier país latinoamericano.*"[19] After hearing this same sentence seven or eight times, I finally went to the *pulga* to witness for myself.

Located barely five minutes outside Knoxville, the Green Acres *pulga* draws customers and vendors from throughout the Knoxville metropolitan area as well as from surrounding counties. Beginning in the spring and continuing through the warmest days of winter, the *pulga* fills with Latinos nearly every weekend, and particularly on Sundays. The market is separated into two areas – a large indoor building and an even larger outdoor area, paved over by concrete and dotted with freestanding,

[19]"Like any market in any Latin American country."

makeshift wooden stalls. On any given weekend day, an overwhelming majority of Latina/o vendors, shoppers, and browsers are concentrated in the outside areas of the market. Whereas the indoor market is monopolized by Anglos, the concentration of Latina/o vendors outdoors draws most of the Latina/o shoppers and browsers into the outdoor areas.[20] On busy Sundays, the traffic at the stalls of Latina/o vendors is often so thick that it is difficult to move without bumping into someone else. In the open air, loud Spanish-language music, including bachata, reggaetón, and techno, emanates from cruising cars in the parking lot and blasts from the stereos of individual vendors' stalls. The music can be heard throughout the market, and the reverberations are so intense that they travel from the stereo into the ground and up though your feet.

My first contact at the flea market was Rafael. A 25-year-old immigrant from Mexico, Rafael came directly to Knoxville from San Luis Potosí in order to earn money to build a small home in Mexico. In our first discussion, Rafael explained to me that Latinos come en masse to the *pulga* to buy products for a variety of reasons:

> *La mayoría de la gente que anda aquí… por la mayoría son latinos. La mayoría son... gente hispana que andan comprando. Y saben que aquí se venden productos mexicanos. Por ejemplo, la verdura y todo eso… son [vendidos por] personas mexicanos… No vas a ir a un <<Wal-Mart>> porque vas a batallar… y en pedir las cosas, vas a batallar. O a lo mejor ya están allí, pero les gustan más aquí porque vienen más frescas las verduras, me supongo... Y aparte… se venden las cosas más baratas.*
>
> The majority of the people that come around here… the majority are Latinos. The majority of people buying are Latinos. They know that here they sell Mexican products. Like, for example, vegetables and all that… are [sold by] Mexicans too. You're not going to go to Wal-Mart, because [there] you are going to struggle… And to ask for things, you're going to struggle. Or, [the products] might even be [in Wal-Mart], but [Latinos] prefer to come here because the vegetables are fresher, I guess. And things are cheaper here too.

[20]There were various opinions about why this segregation occurred. Whereas Miranda suggested that the segregation of Latino and American vendors and shoppers was mainly a result of expense (vendors are charged twice as much to maintain an indoor versus an outdoor stall), Rafael believed that the majority of Americans sold and shopped inside because "*no les gustan sufrir... les gustan más las comodidades*" ("[Americans] don't like to suffer… they prefer to be comfortable").

Stalls operated by Latinos vend products that are not widely available in American stores, particularly food items, such as *epazote*,[21] fresh home-made *tortillas* and *tostadas*, and Central American *dulces*[22] and *refrescos*.[23] Much of the merchandise sold in Latina/o-operated stalls is shipped from distributors in Atlanta or Texas, or directly from Latin-American countries.

According to Rafael, Latinos frequently use the *pulga* to network with other Latinos, in order to gain information and knowledge about community resources. Recently, many of the newcomers in the flea market had migrated to Knoxville from Atlanta due to the perceived increasing risk of deportation in Atlanta:

> *Hace… desde que pusieron la ley en Atlanta… la policía… ya tienen permiso para deportar a los mexicanos… Desde entonces toda la gente empezó a moverse de Atlanta, empezaron moverse todos. Y como que de aquí es el más cerquita que hay, muchos de Atlanta se han movido desde Atlanta para acá. Y… aquí… como… yo trabajo aquí, me han dicho, "No, es que no conocemos, porque acabamos de llegar." Y andan aquí buscando trabajo.*
>
> Ever since they implemented that law in Atlanta[24]… the police… now have permission to deport Mexicans… Ever since then, all those people have begun to move from Atlanta, they all began to relocate. And since here [Knoxville] is the closest place, many from Atlanta have moved from Atlanta to here. And… here… since I work here [in the flea market], they have told me, "We don't know the place, because we just got here." And they come [to the market] looking for work.

Several recent arrivals told Rafael that they came to the flea market to access the pre-existing networks in the market, in order to find work or housing. Apparently, the flea market is well-known as a place to network with other Latinos. Yet, Rafael himself has not used his position as a vendor in the market to

[21] *Epazote* is an herb widely used in some Central American dishes, particularly *frijoles negros*.
[22] *Dulces* are candies and other desserts. Some typical Central American *dulces* that can be observed in the market include *tamarindo* and *choco* candies.
[23] *Refrescos* are Central-American soft drinks and sugary juice drinks, such as those made from papaya, mango, and pineapple.
[24] Presumably, "that law" refers to the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act (SB529), the most comprehensive anti-immigrant bill passed on a state level. Under this law, state and local police have been empowered to question immigrants about their legal status; additionally, local law enforcement officers can be deputized to act as agents of immigration enforcement. This law also penalizes employers for knowingly hiring immigrants that are unauthorized to work in the United States (Bohon, 2006).

network with others. Rafael told me that he did not know any of the other vendors, other than by face and name, despite the fact that he had worked at the same stall for the last two years. Rafael explained that he actively did not want to meet people, or get involved, because he felt it was more important to use his time working and saving money in order to return more quickly to his family in Mexico.

Through Rafael I met Marisol, the co-owner (with her husband) of the stall where Rafael vends on Saturdays and Sundays. Unlike Rafael, Marisol is not often at the market; however, she knows many of the Latina/o vendors on, as she described to me, a personal basis. During my first contact with Marisol, once she learned that I am currently a graduate student at the local university, she had more questions for me than answers. With three boys under the age of eight, Marisol wanted to know about the schools in the area, about the differences between the local colleges and universities, and about how to financially prepare for college.

Marisol introduced me to Miranda,[25] who operated the stall directly opposite, and who was at the market nearly every Saturday and Sunday during the vending season. Miranda and her husband, Gilberto, managed a thriving stall that sold anything from Spanish-language CDs and DVDs, to candy, to playeras[26] that advertise favorite soccer teams. Above all, the products that attract most customers to the stall, according to Miranda and Gilberto, are the phone cards used to call countries in Central America. Indeed, as I chatted with Miranda one Sunday morning, more than 22 Latina/o immigrants, only one of whom was female, came to the stall explicitly to purchase a phone card within a half hour period. Although I cannot establish this empirically, the anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some Latinos in the Knoxville area keep contact with friends and family abroad as a means of social support.

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[25] Although I never officially interviewed Miranda, I spent several weekends at her stall talking with her and observing the interactions between her and other Latinos. Conversations between myself and Miranda are reconstructed from field notes, as I did not use a tape recorder during observations.

[26] *Playeras* are soccer jerseys.

Miranda used her position as a vendor in the flea market to get to know the people that frequent the market. Having immigrated to the United States from Mexico nearly seventeen years ago, Miranda and her husband Gilberto relocated three years ago from Chicago, following Miranda's sister's family to Knoxville. Since Miranda and Gilberto began operating the stall together, Miranda, in particular, has become well acquainted with most of the Latina/o vendors at the market, as well as with several customers.

Sundays at Miranda's stall were characterized by heavy periods of customer traffic punctuated by momentary periods of calm, during which Miranda was often engaged in conversation with a friend or acquaintance that came by the stall to visit. From observation, it was clear that Miranda was the center of the stall. She easily provoked conversation, and every few minutes an acquaintance approached explicitly to talk to her, rather than to shop or browse at the stall. On several occasions, I overheard Miranda counseling other immigrants about various health concerns, everything from the care of newborn children to the care of diabetes. Those with whom she spoke seemed to hang onto her every word. Miranda also distributed flyers for ESL classes at her stall, even though she personally did not attend the classes. At one point, I commented to Miranda, jokingly, that she seemed to know everyone. She responded, seriously, that she knew almost everyone that came to her stall, and most by name. Many Latina/o immigrants came to Miranda's stall to talk, seek her advice, or just to "hang out."

Amanda employed two regular assistants – Leonora and Chucho –whom they met as customers at the stall. After getting to know Leonora through her weekly visits to the market to purchase phone cards, Miranda offered Leonora a job assisting on Sundays. While Leonora assisted Miranda on Sundays – the busiest market day – Chucho assisted by packing merchandise in the late afternoons, at the end of the market day. Despite the fact that Chucho only officially worked in the late afternoons, I often found him at the stall earlier on Sundays helping with customers. Although Miranda did not pay Chucho for

this work, she often gave him free merchandise or discounts on the CDs and DVDs sold at the stall, in exchange for his assistance. One day, during my observations, Tavo, a friend of Chucho's, stopped by to talk. I overheard Miranda telling Tavo that she would hire him to assist with packing merchandise on the days that Chucho could not help. Thus, Tavo, too, became a fixture at the stall.

For Miranda and the acquaintances made while vending, including Leonora, Chucho, and Tavo, the flea market is a prime location for networking. The market heavily attracts Latina/o immigrant customers as a result of the merchandise offered by the majority (in the outside areas, at least) Latina/o vendors. In fact, according to most of the research participants in my study, the market has become known as the place to go in Knoxville where a Latina/o can expect to meet and interact with other Latinos. As a result of the high density of immigrants concentrated in the market, and because of its high visibility to the public, the flea market has become a location for Latina/o immigrants to seek out forms of informational support and instrumental support.

The Researcher as Resource Network

Research participants often ask for some form of reciprocity from their researchers, above and beyond the simple act of listening (Adams, 1998; Reinharz, 1992; Scheper-Hughes, 1992). Additionally, the idea of giving back or contributing to social justice is compatible with both the feminist methodological framework (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Harding, 1998; Reinharz, 1992) and the philosophical notions of public sociology (Burawoy, 2004). While an interpretation of the ethics of sociological research, in general, and feminist methodology, in particular, tell us that we must "do no harm," in terms of reproducing systems of inequality through the research process, this basic recognition of social inequalities and power relations provides only a foundation for social action. Although reciprocity may unintentionally undermine the dignity of participants or underscore their

powerlessness, researchers may avoid reproductions of structural inequalities by relying on participants to demonstrate how and to what extent they will be reciprocated (Adams, 1998).

In the course of research, I found that some participants began to perceive me as knowledgeable about the Knoxville community, particularly with regard to resources for Latinos. Because I introduced myself as someone who was interested in the lives and experiences of Latina/o immigrants, and because I offered as evidence of this the fact that I continue to work as a volunteer community interpreter, some participants seemed to view me as an expert on how to "help" the Latino community. Two participants told me that I should run for governor, then president, in order to "save" Latina/o immigrants from discrimination, exploitative employers and ICE agents. In these situations, I usually deflected attention by pointing to the organizations operated by Latinos in the community that already work to combat such discriminatory or unlawful practices.

Participants often expected me to serve as a bridge between themselves and community resources that were otherwise inaccessible due to language barriers. Several participants asked me about community resources and services offered to Latina/o immigrants. For example, participants asked if I would help them find information about religious services, food pantries, medical services, ESL classes, and so on. As someone who has worked professionally in various capacities as an advocate for Latina/o immigrants, I have personally struggled with the ways that social services and social workers can unintentionally undermine individuals' capacities. While I did not want to create a relationship in which participants were dependent on me for information, I also felt strongly an obligation as a feminist researcher to help participants obtain the tools and services they felt they needed (Reinharz, 1992).

Simple acts of reciprocity on my part – for example, assistance with interpreting, translating documents, and transportation to medical appointments – often led to requests for additional or more complex assistance. Participants followed up with questions about legal services and immigration

lawyers, or about civil and legal rights for unauthorized immigrants. For example, one woman's husband had five outstanding traffic citations, including citations for driving without a license; she wanted to know my opinion on whether her husband would be arrested and deported if he went to his assigned court date. In that particular situation, I claimed ignorance and referred the participant to the coordinators of Hispanic/Latino ministries for the local Catholic and Methodist churches, both of whom I know personally. The participant has not contacted me since the interview, and I, being unsure of my role, have been hesitant to contact her to find out whether the situation was resolved. I have since worried about the participant and her family, and have felt constant guilt for not more closely involving myself. To this day I struggle with whether my decision to limit my helping role in this and other situations was ethical, or whether I should have done more to help.

The only participants who requested assistance or support from me were all women. While half of the twelve female participants have contacted me after the interview, no male participant has done so. Although I have no strong evidence to support this, I suspect that this difference may be indicative of how traditional gendered roles often prevent Latinas from developing extensive networks (Hagan, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), which in turn prevent women from being able to independently access support. During interviews, many of the women indicated that their primary access to resources was through their intimate partners' networks, and this was particularly true for women who did unpaid work in their own homes caring for their own children. One woman, Araceli, stated that she rarely had opportunities to be in contact with others because she cared for her children at home, and because she lacked transportation while her husband worked. Additionally, Araceli reported that the Latinas she met through her husband all work, and therefore have no time to talk on the phone. Thus, even when Araceli was able to build network contacts through her husband, she was often unable to develop her relationships with others through follow-up contact.

In contrast to women, male participants were less inclined to utilize me as a resource for networking because they already had sufficient access to support in the Knoxville community. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, male participants typically worked outside of the home and had developed networks with co-workers since settling in Knoxville. Additionally, male participants were likely to have an established network of at least one to two people in Knoxville prior to migrating. In contrast to female participants, who may have networked with me due to insufficient network resources, male participants' relatively stronger networks may have precluded the need to utilize me as a resource. Additionally, because of the fact that I am female, male participants may have been reluctant to show weakness in the form of asking for help, or they may not have felt that I, as a woman, would serve as a useful resource.

V

Bounded Solidarity and Enforceable Trust in New Gateway Destinations

Latina/o immigrants are not a cohesive community; they are divided by their origins, gender, social and economic class, and life experiences, among other things. Yet, the theory of bounded solidarity (Portes and Landolt, 2000; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993) suggests that immigrant co-ethnics, or *paisanos,*[27] are united by the shared experiences and consequences of immigration, specifically when the dominant social group of the new country demonstrates hostility through economic or cultural discrimination. When cast as "other" by the dominant social group, immigrant co-ethnics tend to cleave together in solidarity, despite the fact that each may already be "other" when amongst themselves.

The sense of a collective well-being and shared fate among immigrant co-ethnics enables the formation of social networks and resource sharing amongst *paisanos*. Thus, the theory of bounded solidarity suggests that immigrants are inclined to express solidarity and reciprocity with those of the same national origin (Portes and Landolt, 2000). The theory of enforceable trust (Portes, 1998) also suggests that members of a strongly bounded social group can "trust" that other members will behave according to the community's normative expectations. The perceived need for solidarity in the face of an unknown or potentially hostile surrounding, combined with the threat of loss of social resources, acts as sufficient control on members' behavior to ensure reciprocity.

In my own research I found great variation in the degree to which participants expressed solidarity, a commitment to generalized (and sometimes indirect) reciprocity, and trust among and between co-ethnics and those from different Latin American countries. Some participants suggested

[27] *Paisanos* is a Spanish word meaning "fellow countrymen/women."

that they felt united – and that others *should* feel united – with *paisanos* or all Latina/o immigrants as a result of their collective experiences in a country that often does not welcome their presence. For some, this belief in unity was expressed in strongly utilitarian terms. Thus, as the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust suggest, network solidarity creates the potential for a strong and normative commitment to social reciprocity, with the collective belief that "if today I do for you, then tomorrow you will do for me."

In contrast, other participants claimed to feel that they share little in common, in terms of goals, values, and experiences, with both *paisanos* and Latina/o immigrants as a whole. Still others recounted stories to demonstrate how their initial trust and solidarity with *paisanos* have been diminished as a result of experiences of maltreatment and exploitation at the hands of other Latinos. For several participants, interactions with other Latinos, including *paisanos*, were not often positive experiences.

Most research participants expressed more than one of the above beliefs about solidarity and trust, a point which underscores that such beliefs are not monolithic or mutually exclusive cultural predispositions.[28] For the most part, the immigrants in my study were neither entirely united nor disunited with co-ethnics or other Latina/o immigrants. Their beliefs about solidarity and trust are embedded in cultural values, grounded in their experiences as immigrants, and challenged or reinforced through everyday interactions with other immigrants in the United States. In the following sections I further discuss the meanings that research participants gave to their interactions with co-ethnics and other Latina/o immigrants.

[28] It is important to remember that the theories of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust arose from studies of Cubans in Miami (see Portes and Stepick, 1993), who may or may not reflect immigrants in general.

Latino Solidarity: "Si nosotros, los Latinos, no somos unidos…"[29]

All of my research participants expressed a commitment to helping other Latina/o immigrants. For many, the articulation of solidarity with other immigrants, as expressed through a commitment to help others in times of need, was couched in talk of personal experiences of loss and need. When Rafael was approached by a Latino of roughly the same age, with wife and infant child in tow, and asking for support, Rafael was reminded of his own toddler, whom he had left behind in Mexico:

> *La otra vez, llegó un señor… bueno, estaba chavo, como unos 28… 29 años, y me pidió… bueno, me dijo que si sabía de un trabajo, porque acaba de llegar de Norte Carolina, y traía a su esposa y a un bebe. Y me dices, "¿Tienes trabajo?" Y le dije, "Bueno, es que no hay trabajo, no hay trabajo." Y me dice, "¿Tienes donde quedarme?" Y "No puedo," digo yo, "Con todos allí, no sé." Y me dice, "Ah, pues." Y me hizo mal. Y yo saque veinte, treinta dólares. Y se me hizo triste cuando vi a su bebe. Me imaginé que era el mío, y yo no quisiera que fuera el mío así. Por eso no me quiero traer a mi bebe también, porque no lo quiero traer a sufrir. Sí, se me hizo mal.*
>
> One time there was a guy… well, he was young, like maybe 28 or 29 years old, and he asked me… well, he asked if I knew about some work, because he had just arrived from North Carolina, and he brought his wife and baby. And he says, "Do you have any work?" And I tell him, "Well, it's just that there is no work, there's no work." And he says, "Do you have a place I can stay?" And I say, "I can't, with all the people there [at my house], I don't know." And he says to me, "Oh, ok." And it made me feel terrible. And I took out twenty, thirty dollars [to give him]. And it made me sad when I saw his baby. I imagined that it was mine, and I didn't want my baby to be like that. That's why I don't want to bring my baby here, because I don't want to bring him here to suffer. Yeah, it made me feel terrible.

As I have witnessed during my own observations at the *pulga*, and as I mentioned in previous chapters, immigrants will often approach Latina/o vendors, such as Rafael, in order to request employment or to ask for information about where to apply for employment. However, in this case, Rafael could not offer assistance in the form of work. In fact, Rafael himself had difficulty locating full and stable employment. At the time of my study, he worked only on weekends at the *pulga.* Rafael's construction job, which before occupied his time Mondays through Fridays, no longer produced sufficient work to employ all of

[29] "If we Latinos are not united…" (Patricio)

the former immigrant workers. Additionally, Rafael had to delay his plans to return home twice, after having left his wife and newborn son (now a toddler) in Mexico more than two years ago, because he was unable to save a sufficient amount of money in order to survive economically with a job in Mexico. Yet, despite this, Rafael gave a complete stranger thirty dollars to help sustain him until he could find work. In identifying with the difficulties that another man has had with finding work and supporting his family, Rafael expressed solidarity with a Latino immigrant in a particular context.

Patricio suggests that Latina/o immigrants as a whole *must* help one another as a result of the shared experiences of need and discrimination that Latina/o immigrants are subject to in the United States. Unlike Rafael, Patricio did not identify one particular event or experience that resonated strongly with him and that caused him to feel solidarity with other Latinos. For Patricio, Latinos should help one another primarily because they share the experience of being strangers in a foreign country, and secondly, because others will not help them. At the same time, Patricio points out that mutual aid among Latinos is often not seen:

> *El primero es que estamos en un país que no es de nosotros. Y… si nosotros, los latinos, no nos apoyamos, de unos a los otros, pues, ¿quién nos va a apoyar? Si no somos unidos, ¿quién nos puede ayudar? No van a venir los… africanos… ¿Cómo es? Afroamericanos… ¿verdad? Ellos… nos ven a nosotros como si fuéramos así, más raro. Son muy racistas… Entonces… somos muy desunidos. Y pues, te digo que ayuda entre nosotros, aunque sean paisanos, no hay. Y pasa eso, lastimosamente, que uno no gustaría ayudar a los demás.*
>
> First of all, we are in a country that is not ours. And… if we, we Latinos, don't help each other, from one to another, well, who is going to help us? If we are not united, who is going to help us? It won't be the… Africans… what is it? African Americans, right? They… look at us like we're something, you know, weird. They're very racist… And… we [Latinos] are very disunited. And, well, I'm telling you that between ourselves, even though they are fellow countrymen, there is no help… And, shamefully, it happens that one doesn't want to help others.

Patricio recounted a common experience of discrimination that other participants reported from both African-Americans and Anglo-Americans in the United States. Of the eight participants who worked in a

job that employed both Latinos and non-Latinos, five reported experiences of discrimination at work from employers or non-Latina/o co-workers. Among the three that did not report discrimination, two – Judit and Paz – worked in organizations whose mission is outreach to the Latina/o community. Thus, it is not coincidental that their co-workers were less hostile to Latina/o immigrants.

Comments about discrimination were often embedded in observations that Latina/o workers work harder and faster than American workers. Other participants, even those who had not themselves experienced discrimination, noted a similar animosity, particularly between Latina/o workers and African-American workers. In fact, Patricio's comments reflect a long-standing and well-documented tension between undocumented Latina/o workers and low-wage African-American workers, who must often compete for a limited number of low-wage jobs (Gordon and Lenhardt, 2007; Schulman, 2004; Smith, 2006).

Reciprocal Support: "Tú lo haces para que el día mañana…"[30]

Many immigrants share the common experience of being unable to survive economically in their own countries. Indeed, Massey (2005) suggests that individuals are often pushed to emigrate from their native countries by unbearable conditions of poverty, which must ultimately outweigh the immigrant's desire to remain in the country of origin. For those immigrants who come to the United States without proper entry documents, suffering is often compounded by the very real risks and dangers incurred during border crossings (Hellman, 2008), as well as by the anguish of not being able to return at will to see family left behind. On the subject of suffering, Judit elaborates,

> *Ellos no vienen aquí por gusto. No vienen aquí porque quieren conocer el mundo, o quieren conocer los estados unidos. Ellos vienen aquí a trabajar, para sobrevivir… y para sacar a sus familias en adelante… Hay los que están aquí por años y años y años… sin*

[30] "You do it so that tomorrow…" (Rafael)

ver a sus hijos… sin ver a sus esposos… sin saber… si van a verlos… O sea, es… desesperante… Es diferente a venir… a su suerte, y no saber si vas a llegar a su destino. Tengo amigos… y me decían, "Yo dejé de aquí, yo aquí me muero, ya no puedo, pues." Y son… como hermanos… Y soñábamos… sonábamos con tener una vida…normal… en nuestro país… en nuestras casas… con nuestra gente… Y ahora… están en Nueva York, o en Canadá… o… Ontario… o en todas partes de los estados unidos… Porque no pudimos. No pudimos sobrevivir… O sea, son cosas que dices, "¿Cómo es posible que no podamos hacer nada?" Y… y… y… Pero yo quisiera… que la economía en México mejorara… porque no estamos aquí por gusto, estamos por desesperación. Si nosotros pudiéramos mantener una vida… normal, que no perdimos tanto… si pudiéramos mantener una vida y una familia allá… no vendríamos para sufrir.

They [Latinos] don't come here because they want to. They don't come here because they want to know the world, or because they want to know the United States. They come here to work, to survive… and to benefit their families… There are those that are here for years and years and years…without seeing their children… without seeing their spouses… without knowing… if they're going to see them… It's… maddening… It's different to come… on your luck, and without knowing if you're going to arrive at your destination. I have friends… and they told me, "I left here [Mexico], here I am dying, and I can't anymore." And these [friends]… are like [my] siblings… And we dreamed… we dreamed of being able to have a… normal… life… in our own country… in our own homes… with our own people… And now… some are in… New York, or in Canada… or… Ontario… or everywhere across the United States… Because we just couldn't. We couldn't survive. I mean, these are things that you say, "How is it possible that we can't do anything?" And… and… and… But I would love… for the economy in Mexico to improve… because we aren't here because we want [to be here], we're here out of desperation. If we could maintain a normal life, we wouldn't lose so much… If we could maintain a life and a family there, we wouldn't come here to suffer.

All research participants suggested that experiences of suffering were shared with *paisanos* and other Latina/o immigrants. Moreover, all but a few told me that these shared experiences were often utilized as strategies for reciprocal support. Participants highlighted the importance of reciprocity between *paisanos* with the idea that immigrants who do well economically should contribute to the tangible well-being of others, in the event that one may need help again in the future:

Ellos… como yo... vienen, digamos, a… a buscar el bienestar a su familia. Entonces, si ellos no tienen… un trabajo, o no están bien económicamente, y uno, sí, este… si no nos afecta… en ayudarle un poco, pues, si el día de mañana uno esta de igual, y si ellos están bien… no más por eso… Pues… digamos… el día de mañana si uno necesita y ellos pueden echarme la mano… me la echen.

> Just like me… they come, you know, to… to look for the well-being of their family. So, if they don't have… a job, or if they aren't well-off economically, and I am, umm… if it doesn't affect us… to help them a little, then, tomorrow if you are in the same position, and if they are well-off… if tomorrow I am in need and they can give me hand, they'll give me a hand.
>
> Santiago

In the process of immigration, undocumented immigrants are often confronted with experiences of personal risk and danger. Rafael elaborates on how these shared experiences cement the relationships between *paisanos* and reinforce reciprocal trust:

> *Cuando un mexicano te pide a ti… ayuda… tú no lo piensas las dos veces, le ayudas. Porque cuando tu vienes de allá para acá, uno sufre mucho… sufre mucho y tú quisieras pedir de alguien un favor, "Oye, regálame algo," o "Dame algo de comer." Y tú… tú lo haces… tu cuando alguien, un mexicano, te pide un favor, tú, sí, lo haces. Porque tú no quieres que cuando tú lo pidas, te a lo niegan. O sea, tú haces para que después, el día mañana, te lo vuelvan a hacer un favor a ti mismo. No va a ser la misma persona, pero a lo mejor la otra va a pensar lo igual. Por eso siempre le ayudan uno a otro, porque cuando uno se viene ya sufre mucho. Y a veces tiene hambre o tiene sed, y no tiene que comer, y ya otras personas te ayudan. Por eso.*
>
> When a Mexican asks you for… help… you don't think twice, you help [him/her]. Because when you come from there to here, you suffer a lot… you suffer a lot, and you would like to ask someone for a favor, "Hey, give me something" or "Give me something to eat." And you… you just do it… when someone, a Mexican, asks for help, yes, you just do it. Because you don't want that when you ask [for something], they deny it to you. In other words, you do it so that later, tomorrow, they are going to return the favor. It's not going to be the same person, but hopefully the other [person] is going to think the same way. That's why Latinos always help each other, because when you come here, you suffer a lot. And sometimes you are hungry or thirsty, and you don't have anything to eat, and then other people help you. That's why.

Both Rafael and Santiago detail how a shared experience of suffering translates into a norm of generalized exchange; the collective suffering endured by undocumented immigrants creates a situation in which other immigrants feel compelled to help one another, because they remember the experience of needing support. In helping others, they hope that other immigrants will assist them in their own time of need. Reciprocity is thus solidified and reinforced through the shared experience of suffering.

Importantly, the commitment to reciprocity is founded upon the belief in a Latino solidarity, which is created by shared experiences of suffering, discrimination, and need.

(Un)Enforced Trust: "Te extiendes la mano, y te muerden."[31]

For many, support has not always been reciprocated. Most of my research participants reported instances when they felt as though they did not receive in equitable proportion to what they had given. At the same time, many remained committed to continue offering support. Santiago stated:

> *Hay muchas personas, también… que no más se aprovechan de uno. O sea, no siempre ha pasado como uno quiero… Sin embargo… pues, yo lo sigo haciendo a ti.*
>
> There are a lot of people, too… that take advantage of you. In other words, it [reciprocal support] doesn't always happen the way you want. However… well, I'll keep doing it [offering help] to you.

However, two research participants – Fátima and Lupe – reported that they had such negative experiences that they no longer offer support in the same ways as they did formerly. Fátima, as I explained in the previous chapter, was the owner and manager of a local *panadería* that caters to a large Latino immigrant population. In our first interview, Fátima told me that she did not interact much with the Latino community, neither for support nor for friendship, because her experiences with Latina/o immigrants in Knoxville had taught her to not trust or confide in other immigrants.

> *Ayuda, no, no tengo. ¿Aquí? No tengo. Mm-mm. Mejor. Así estoy bien yo aquí. Sola. No me gusta tener amistades aquí, porque me han llevado muchas decepciones y… no me gusta. Mejor, mire: así sola. Yo solita hago y deshago y, muy bien o muy mal, pero, así estoy mejor, sola. Mejor solita.*
>
> Friendships, I have none. Here? No. Mm-mm. It's better. I am fine here like this. Alone. I don't like having friendships here, because they have brought me a lot of deception and… I don't like it. Look, it's better: alone like this. I alone do and undo, and [it may turn out] very good or very bad, but I'm better like this, alone. Better alone.

[31] "You stick out your hand, and they bite you."

It was not until much later, after I had spent more time with Fátima and Emelio in their store, that I began to examine more critically Fátima's insistence that she was entirely disconnected from the community. Not only did Fátima have a large group of close friendships in Pasadena, where she had lived for nearly 20 years before migrating to Knoxville, but she had also made a few friendships as well as several casual acquaintanceships with Latina/o immigrants in Knoxville, most of whom she had met through her store.

Fátima explained that her distrust in the Latino immigrant community in Knoxville stems from two central issues. First, through gossip she began hearing that those she had helped in the past had begun to say negative things about her and her store. Second, the Latina/o customers to whom she extended store credit largely began to stop paying her back. The latter happened so often that Fátima stopped offering store credit, because without recompense for her goods she could barely continue to pay the cost of materials for the *panadería*. The problem with offering support to other Latinos in Knoxville, according to Fátima, is that it either goes unappreciated, or it makes the giver vulnerable. As Fátima said to me one day, "*Te extiendes la mano, y te muerden*."[32]

Portes and Landolt (2000) suggest that, in well-established immigrant gateways, interactions within the ethnic immigrant community are embedded in structural relations between co-ethnics. As immigrant communities develop strong resource groups of social capital to benefit members of the group, norms of behavior are created in order to enforce a cooperative existence between group members. If a member were to take advantage of another member of the bounded social group, this would imply a consequential loss of access to a potential social resource. In a closely-knit ethnic immigrant community, taking advantage of someone might result in sanctions from the entire community. At the least, this normative relationship must also be considered before one takes

[32] "You stick out your hand, and they bite you."

advantage of another. Trust in reciprocity, therefore, is enforced by the individual's belongingness to the community (Portes, 1998).

As a result of her highly visible and accessible position in the community as the owner of a local *tienda* that attracts both Latina/o as well as non-Latina/o American customers, combined with her experience of more than 25 years living in the United States as an immigrant, Doña Fátima had amassed a tremendous amount of social capital. Because her store advertised information pertinent to Latinos (such as ESL classes and the free clinic for Latina/o immigrants), and because she had accumulated contacts with Latinos who are searching for employees as well as those searching for employers, Fátima had also made herself an important social resource to the Latino community. And yet, other immigrants took advantage of her resources and social capital without reciprocating. Given that this happened again and again, it may be that there are no community sanctions imposed for such (in)action. Fátima's experiences call into question whether or not the notion of enforceable trust can yet be applied to this community.

Fátima was not the only participant who told a story of mistreatment and exploitation by *paisanos* and other immigrant Latinos in Knoxville. Her experience is similar to that of Lupe, a 43-year-old, immensely talkative and straightforward woman from Veracruz, Mexico who lived in Knoxville with her husband, Gabino,[33] and their two daughters. Lupe and her husband had been living in the Knoxville area for 11 years, and in that time they accumulated a vast store of resources useful for Latina/o immigrants. Additionally, Lupe's husband Gabino was the *encargado*[34] for a local construction firm that employed other Latinos. When Lupe talked about the importance of helping others, particularly

[33] Although I attempted to interview Gabino, Lupe's husband, Lupe always told me that he was too busy or too tired from work to be interviewed. The story of Lupe and Gabino is thus told entirely from the perspective of Lupe.
[34] *Encargado* is a Spanish word meaning "manager" or "supervisor."

paisanos, I asked her to explain what she meant by "help." In her response, Lupe conveyed the limits she had placed on helping as a direct result of others taking advantage of her proffered support.

Meghan: *¿En qué consiste la ayuda?*
Lupe: *Mmm… en que si necesitan un <<ride,>> en que si necesitan, por decir, que no saben a dónde ir, que no tienen de comer. No acepto gente en mi casa porque me han tratado muy mal.* ***De mi propio país.***

Meghan: What do you mean by "help"?
Lupe: Well, like if they need a ride, if they need, you know, if they don't know where to go, if they don't have something to eat. I don't accept people in my house, because I have been treated very badly [by people] **from my own country.** [emphasis added]

Until relatively recently, Lupe and her husband *did* help sponsor *paisanos* by lending money for the transnational journey, as well as by boarding recent arrivals in their own home. In exchange, Lupe and Gabino expected that those they helped would repay the loan, would pay rent for their rooms in the house, and would pay a portion of the water and electric bills, once able to find work. Lupe and Gabino are not well off economically. Nevertheless, they wanted to lend what they could to others in their migration to the United States, with the understanding that everything would be repaid without interest. Gabino, who makes most of the final financial decisions in the family, did not charge a deposit or down payment or ask for any collateral before *paisanos* were allowed to board.

Lupe and Gabino have boarded only *paisanos* in their homes, most of whom were connected to their family via Gabino's ongoing connections with friends and family from his childhood neighborhood in Guanajuato, Mexico. During the time of the interview, Lupe explained to me that she and her husband no longer board Latina/o immigrants in their home because they feel as though they have been exploited by *paisanos* in the past. In the following excerpt, note Lupe's repeated reference to the fact that those to whom she and her Gabino offered support were *paisanos*:

> *¿Aceptarles a que se queden conmigo? No. ¿A vivir? No. Porque… hemos tenido… no de mi tierra… pero,* ***paisanos de allá de México****… que han venido aquí a vivir. Y cuando se van se llevan las llaves, y ni las gracias nos dan. Se van como braceros en la noche y*

> *cuando amaneces ya no hay nadie. Y eso es feo. Yo he tenido un… como tres o cuatro personas…* ***de México, le digo****. La primera persona que se fue vivió con nosotros como para cinco, seis años. Y yo bien preocupada porque… eran como las diez de la noche y no le había visto llegar. Y les pregunté a unos que estaban aquí viviendo, "¿No han visto al señor?" Y dijeron que iba a venir, tal vez, tarde del trabajo. Pues, el muchacho ya tenía tres días en México, y sabíamos eso porque hablamos a México, a la tierra de mi esposo. Y [nos] dice, "No, tiene como dos días que llegó el señor este aquí."… Y [otra persona] nos pidió prestado como quinientos dólares para venir la hija para acá. Y mi esposo no le quería prestar. Digo yo, "Ay, pobrecita." Viene su hija, y no vayan a dejar poder. Pues ya le prestó y nunca nos pagó. ¡****Y son de México!****... Nada, nada. Y ya no, ya no quiero.*
>
> Inviting them to stay with me? No. To live? No. Because… we have had… not from my own neighborhood… but **fellow countrymen from Mexico**… that have come here to live. And when they go they take the keys, and they don't even say thank you. They leave like *braceros*[35] in the night, and when you wake up there is no one. And that is terrible. And I have had… like three or four people… **from Mexico, I'm telling you**. The first person that left lived with us for like five, six years. And I was really worried because… it was like 10 o'clock at night and I hadn't seen him get home. And I asked the other guys that were living here [with him], "Haven't you seen him?" And they said that maybe he was going to arrive late from work. Well, the guy had already been in Mexico for three days, and we found out because we called Mexico, to my husband's neighborhood. And they said, "That guy has been here for like two days." And then, some other people asked to borrow, like, 1500 dollars so that their daughter could come here. And my husband didn't want to lend them the money. I said, "The poor girl." Her daughter wants to come, and she won't be able to. Well, he lent her the money and she never paid us back. **And they're from Mexico!**... Nothing, nothing. And so that's it, I'm done with it. [emphasis added]

Lupe's frustration seems to be compounded by the fact that the Latina/o immigrants whom she and Gabino helped were co-nationals; some were even from her husband's childhood neighborhood. Immigrant co-ethnics may thus express more outrage when *paisanos* do not respect the unwritten rules of trust and reciprocity, because this violates the common perception of solidarity that permeates the lives of many Latina/o immigrants living in the United States. In fact, Lupe felt so strongly about assisting other Latina/o immigrants that, despite the many *paisanos* that had already left unpaid debts, she convinced her husband to lend money to another to help defray the costs of a *coyote* and transportation to the United States. Now, Lupe continues to assist with small instrumental resources –

[35] *Braceros* are seasonal farmworkers.

offering food and transportation to those without, for example – but she no longer boards *paisanos* or other Latinos in her home, nor does Gabino lend them money.

Normative Morality: "Mira, yo no quiero hablar mal de mi gente, pero…"[36]

Although most research participants expressed some affinity or solidarity with other Latina/o immigrants, a few commented that they wanted little association with other immigrants. Very often, participants' desires to avoid other Latinos were rooted in claims to moral superiority. Participants reported that it was problematic for the entire Latino community when some Latinos did not comport themselves according to what they perceived to be normative standards of behavior.

For Renato, one motivation for moving to Knoxville was the small number of Latinos already living here. As I mentioned briefly in chapter two, my interview with Renato, conducted in his trailer, quickly turned into a group interview with everyone present, including Renato's wife, Eliana, his brother Héctor, and his cousin Guillermo. In the course of the interview, Renato and the family enumerated the reasons that living in Knoxville had been advantageous for their family, particularly due to the availability of work in Knoxville compared with other areas. I asked the group whether there were any disadvantages to living in a place with so few Latinos. Guillermo and Héctor discussed concerns of personal risk and legal rights, and Eliana focused on the absence of her family. Yet, in a response that vilified Latinos in general, Renato flatly denied any disadvantages:

> *A mí me gustó la pregunta, porque… ¿Qué dices? La pregunta fue que si hay desventajas, dice, ¿no? Yo creo que no hay desventajas, o muy poquito, poco por ciento. Yo creo que hay más ventajas. Nuestra gente, nosotros, somos muy malagradecidos. Y somos… un poco salvajes… Somos salvajes; no somos una buena presencia para este país. Entonces… es mejor… Hay más ventajas, yo creo, porque… menos problemas. Y menos vergüenza con la comunidad hispana. ¿Por qué? Porque somos gente muy malagradecida. Y nos aprovechamos mucho, de que hagan demasiados hijos… pero no*

[36] "Look, I don't want to talk badly about my people, but…" (Inés)

les damos educación. No les enseñamos. Y nuestra gente tiene costumbre – y es la diferencia que yo he notado -- en este país tiene… este… la cantidad de hijos que tiene. Y la gente hispana, nuestra gente, no es así, sino que se dedican a tener muchos niños, como animalito, como perrito. Pero no son capaces de educarlos. Al contrario, a los cinco, seis, siete años [a los niños] les obligan a trabajar, lavar trastes. Y se van dañando su mente. Y son muy desastrosos, muchas problemas, y muchos escándalos. Muchos escándalos y mucho abuso. Y… hay cosas que se aportan mucho entre de la comunidad hispana que es, para mí, realmente… no… Yo amo mucha a mi gente pero no puedo por lo que hacen. Este es la ventaja.

I really liked your question, because… What did you say? The question was if there are any disadvantages, right? I think that there are no disadvantages, or very few, a very small percentage. I think there are more advantages. Our people, all of us, are very ungrateful. And we are… a little savage. We are savages; we're not a good presence for this country. So… it's better. There are more advantages, I think, because… [there are] fewer problems. And less shame with the Hispanic community. Why? Because we are very ungrateful people. And we take advantage a lot, like having too many children… but we don't educate them. We don't teach them. And our people have this custom – and this is the difference that I have noticed – in this country you have… umm… the amount of children that you have. And Hispanic people, our people, it's not like that. They dedicate themselves to having a lot of children, like a little animal, like a little dog. But they are not able to educate them. To the contrary, when [the children] are five, six, seven years old, they are made to work, washing dishes. And so their minds are getting damaged. And they [Latinos] are very destructive, lots of problems and a lot of indecency. A lot of indecency and a lot of abuse. And there are things that the Hispanic community contributes to that I really can't… I love my people a lot, but I can't [love them] because of what they do. This is the advantage.

I was not completely unprepared for Renato's commentary, because he had been building up to this response during the previous 45 minutes of the interview. However, I was surprised at times by Renato's vehemently negative depictions of other Latinos during the course of the interview. I thought I masked my feelings. Yet, perhaps because I looked disconcerted, or perhaps simply because Eliana did not want me to think badly of her husband, she interrupted Renato, as if to soften his comments:

Aunque no todos somos iguales, pero por unos somos afectados todos, que nos definan de la misma manera, aunque nosotros no somos así.

Even though we are not all the same, but because of one [person] we are all affected, they [Americans] define us in the same way, even though we are not like that.

Eliana's comments contextualize Renato's disapproval of the behavior of other Latina/o immigrants. She suggests that the problem is not necessarily with Latina/o immigrants themselves, but rather the belief that the behavior of some will reflect negatively on all. This is a common perception among the participants with whom I spoke. When I asked participants what they thought Americans think of them, the common response was similar to Patricio's comment that "creo que nos ven igual."[37] Inés, an immigrant who has lived in the United States for fifteen years, and in Knoxville for thirteen years, stated that Americans will think badly of all Latina/o immigrants if some Latinos "take advantage" of the American welfare system:

> *Ok, no quiero hablar mal de las mujeres, pero… Hay mujeres que vienen aquí a tener hijos. Y luego quieren la ayuda del gobierno. Yo no digo nada pero, es que, mira: nosotros yo vine a este país, y nunca he pedido nada al gobierno, nada. Nosotros pagamos todo para los hijos, no pedimos estampillas de comida, no pedimos nada. Porque se supone que viene a este país a trabajar, no a pedir. Porque mira: si tu estas trabajando, y te quitan dinerito este dinerito que te quitan es para ayudar a los demás. Pero los americanos no les gusta. Y los americanos, por eso, no nos quieren. Muchos americanos no nos quieren porque ellos dicen, "Ellos vienen nada mas a pedir." Y pues, en realidad, no todos vienen a pedir. Mira, hay gente que viene a trabajar, no a pedir. Nosotros venimos a trabajar. Los americanos ven que… los hispanos que viven aquí hacen cosas malas, y por una persona, piensan que todos somos iguales, y no. Hay personas que vienen a trabajar honradamente, y… ayudarse. Como nosotros. No somos así.*
>
> Ok, I don't want to talk badly about women, but… there are women that come [to the United States] to have babies. And then they want the help of the government. I'm not saying anything, but, it's just that… look: we came to this country, and I have never asked for help from the government, nothing. We paid everything for the kids, we didn't ask for food stamps, we didn't ask for anything. Because supposedly you come to this country to work, not to beg. Because look: if you are working, and they take money out [of your paycheck] – this money that they take from you is to help others. But Americans don't like this, and because of this the Americans don't like us [Latinos]. Many Americans don't like us, because they say, "They come only to beg." And, well, in reality, not everyone comes just to beg. Look, there are people here that come to work, not to beg. We came to work. The Americans see that… Hispanics that live here do bad things, and because of one person, [Americans] think that everyone is the same, and it's not like that. There are people that come here to work honestly, and to help… themselves. Like us. We're not like that.

[37] "I think they see us as all the same."

The comments of Renato, Eliana, and Inés, as well as several of the other research participants in my study, suggest that immigrants are highly conscious of how they are perceived by the non-Latina/o majority of United States residents. Inés, as well as several of the mothers that I interviewed, suggest that Latinas should not solicit Medicaid assistance for children born in the United States. That some solicit welfare reflects poorly on all Latinos and creates the perception that all Latina/o immigrants come to the United States to take advantage of welfare entitlements, rather than to work.

At the same time, such negative comments also support the idea that Latina/o immigrants living in the United States identify strongly with other Latinos. Even as Renato, Inés, Lupe, and others denigrate other Latinos for their actions, they continue to refer to Latina/o immigrants as "*mi gente*"[38] and align themselves with Latinos by utilizing the pronoun "*nosotros.*"[39] If anything, these comments suggest that participants expect other Latinos to conduct themselves in accordance with normative standards of moral behavior. Even though some stories clearly indicate that not all Latina/o immigrants behave according to these standards, participants continue to expect that Latinos will behave in these normative ways.

Consistent with the research on immigrant adjustment in established gateways (Portes and Stepick, 1993), the participants in my study clearly demonstrated a commitment to solidarity with *paisanos* and other Latina/o immigrants. Their professed commitment to other immigrants is expressed through their identification with the suffering of other Latinos, as well as through their dedication to assisting Latina/o immigrants even at their own expense, and even when they have previously had bad experiences helping other Latinos. Even comments that disparage other Latina/o immigrants, such as those of Renato, Inés, and Eliana, demonstrate that my participants strongly identified with other

[38] "My people."
[39] "We."

Latina/o immigrants and experienced themselves through how they are perceived, as members of a minority group, by the dominant Caucasian majority in the United States.

At the same time, among the participants that I interviewed, there is little evidence of enforceable trust. Fátima and Lupe identified no strong normative community sanctions that structure interactions between Latinos in order to ensure that solidarity is maintained, resources are shared, and support is reciprocated among Latina/o immigrants. Although bounded solidarity and enforceable trust have always been discussed in conjunction with one another, these findings suggest that bounded solidarity can exist without enforceable trust.

VI

Discussion and Conclusions

As a writer and researcher, conclusions have always baffled me. How does one write an appropriate ending for a story that has barely begun? Any ending would tacitly imply that a complete story has been told, from beginning to end, with nothing left out.

In actuality, this thesis tells only partial stories, and it contains no endings. The stories broadly outlined here belong to the twenty Latina/o immigrants that confided to me intimate details of their lives and struggles. Though it would be difficult to generalize my findings to a wider population, I suspect that these same stories, or similar narratives, belong as well to a great number of immigrants living in the Knoxville, Tennessee metropolitan area.

The stories of immigrants who live in newly emerging gateways are only beginning to be told. Although there exists considerable research on the Latino immigrant support network, our understanding of immigrant adaptation and support networks is limited by our focus on those immigrants who settle in traditional gateways among large co-ethnic populations. Yet, Latina/o immigrants are increasingly migrating to emerging gateways and settling in areas with relatively small co-ethnic populations (Suro and Singer, 2002).

We cannot assume that social networks operate similarly in emerging gateways as in traditional gateways, and neither can we assume that social support is acquired in emerging gateways in the same ways it is acquired in traditional gateways. In fact, as I summarize later in this chapter, my research demonstrates that the theory of enforceable trust operates dissimilarly in Knoxville as compared to traditional destinations, despite the presence of a bounded solidarity among Latina/o immigrants.

Additionally, the vast majority of studies of immigrant social networks privileges the experiences and stories of immigrant men, and generalizes men's experiences across gender. In normalizing the experiences of men, we marginalize immigrant women and disregard their voices, experiences, and contributions in the process of immigrant readjustment. As I summarize later in this chapter, my research indicates that there are some important differences in the experiences of support of women and men in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Thus, much of the contemporary literature on immigrant adjustment disregards the voices and experiences of both immigrant women and those immigrants who settle in newly emerging destinations. We often do not hear their words. In this thesis, I have attempted to address such marginalization by documenting the experiences of both male and female Latino immigrants living in an emerging Latino destination. My research has centered on three primary questions: first, what attracts some immigrants to migrate to places with a relatively small Latina/o immigrant population? Second, how are support networks constructed among Latina/o immigrants who live in emerging gateways? Third, how do the dominant theoretical frameworks of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust clarify the networks of immigrants in these newly emerging Latino destinations?

Most literature on immigrant adjustment suggests that immigrants migrate to established immigrant destinations in order to take advantage of the ethnic community's accrued social capital (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Zhou, 1992). If immigrants are likely to benefit from an established resource network, why then do some immigrants choose to migrate to places where there does not exist a large, well-established ethnic community? The immigrants in my study migrated to Knoxville for practical reasons. The majority of participants had an established network of at least one or two contacts that already resided in Knoxville, including friends, acquaintances, or family

members. Thus, despite the fact that Knoxville is considered an emerging gateway destination for Latinos, there already exists some extent of chain migration.

The primary reason cited by participants for moving to Knoxville was the perceived existence of greater job opportunities for Latinos in Knoxville than in other cities, including larger gateways in the Southeast. This finding underscores Massey's (2008) observations that Latino immigrants, in particular, are motivated to settle in new destinations as they perceive that traditional destinations are becoming overly saturated with immigrants. Whereas a few participants were pulled to Knoxville by the existence of a specific employment opportunity, most came to Knoxville with the idea that they would work in any available job. For the most part, male immigrants migrated to Knoxville with pre-established job opportunities solidified through their network contacts. In contrast, female immigrants either looked for work upon their arrival in Knoxville or remained at home doing unpaid domestic work.

Additionally, most immigrants voiced the perception that Knoxville was less risky for immigrants who lack proper entry documents. Not only did participants perceive Knoxville as less risky than established Latino destinations, such as Houston, they also believed that Knoxville was less risky than other emerging gateways with much larger Latino populations, such as Atlanta and Charlotte. These views are consistent with the findings of other research that suggests that ICE agents are more active in established Latino destinations, (Durand et al, 2006), and reports by immigrants in other emerging destinations that they are being targeted by the police (Atiles and Bohon, 2002; Torres et al., 2006). At the same time, the negative experiences that a few participants reported having with law enforcement indicate that Knoxville is not entirely friendly to immigrants. The implementation of anti-immigrant legislation suggests that Knoxville may become increasingly inhospitable to unauthorized immigrants over time.

Overall, men had more network contacts in Knoxville than did women. In fact, women often left family members and important contacts behind in other states, such as Texas, Florida, and California, in order to migrate with husbands or grown sons to Knoxville. The fact that Knoxville has a relatively small population of Latina/o immigrants was cited as a benefit by most male participants. Men believed that there were more job opportunities overall since there was less competition among Latinos.

What male participants perceived as an advantage may actually be disadvantageous for the networking potential of female immigrants. Among the many female participants in my study who did not work outside of the home, only one felt as though she had sufficient contact with others outside her immediate nuclear family. Whereas this woman lived in a trailer park where a majority of residents were Latina/o immigrants and many other women in the neighborhood remained at home caring for young children, most women lived in neighborhoods isolated from other Latina/o immigrants. For the most part, women who did unpaid domestic work in their own homes felt isolated because of the immediate lack of others with whom they could communicate during the day. Further research is needed to tease out more specifically the gendered experiences of support in emerging gateways. In particular, it would be useful to examine the ways that traditional gendered roles seem to work in combination with the smaller, less dense concentration of Latina/o immigrants in emerging destinations to preclude women from developing networks independent of their intimate partners.

None of the participants in my study were able to identify a neighborhood or area in Knoxville with a large population of Latinos. In the absence of a specific neighborhood in Knoxville that spatially concentrates Latina/o immigrants, I found that formal non-profit organizations, such as churches and the Latino clinic, as well as highly visible public locations, such as the *pulga* and Latino *tiendas,* played a significant role in facilitating opportunities for interactions between Latinos. During interviews and through observations at some of these places, I found that some Latina/o immigrants utilize such spaces

as opportunities to interact with other Latina/o immigrants in order to network and acquire support. Formal non-profit organizations build connections to Latinos and enable immigrants to access important instrumental and informational resources. Stores and markets that cater specifically to a largely Latino immigrant customer base create a public, highly visible and physical location for network and resource sharing among Latinos.

Additionally, non-profit organizations and highly visible informal Latino spaces, such as *tiendas* and the *pulga,* appeared to democratize access to support, to some extent, and depending on whether participants had access to transportation to these places. Both men and women utilized the supportive programs offered by non-profit organizations, and both men and women networked through *tiendas* and in the *pulga*. At the same time, female participants were more likely to utilize me, the researcher, as a resource. Several have relied on my knowledge of community resources and my ability to interpret from English to Spanish. Whereas a number of female participants have initiated follow-up contact in order to ask for assistance or advice in regard to various personal or family matters, no male participant has initiated follow-up contact with me in order to ask for assistance. It may be that male participants receive the assistance they need from other contacts, whereas most female contacts lack networks, and thus lack important access to information and other tangible supports. On the other hand, gender dynamics may have played a large role: it may be that female participants felt more comfortable asking for help because they identified with me as a woman, while male participants may have been reluctant to show weakness by asking for help from a woman.

Despite the often "invisible" presence of Latinos in the community, I found that most of the participants in my study expressed a very vocal commitment to solidarity with *paisanos* or other Latinos. Participants articulated several reasons for why it was necessary or important to maintain solidarity with other immigrants. Most participants expressed the belief that the shared experience of suffering

connected them to other immigrants. Participants stated that the shared experience of economic hardship, which causes many immigrants to leave loved ones behind and undertake an often dangerous and covert passage to the United States, encourages Latinos to support one another. Additionally, participants voiced the perception that American citizens are often hostile to Latinos and discriminate against them in a variety of ways; because of this, and because of the shared perception that Americans will not take care of Latinos, participants voiced the belief that Latina/o immigrants must take care of each other.

This commitment to solidarity and the belief that other Latinos should reciprocate with support remained true even for participants who had been repeatedly exploited or maltreated by other Latinos. Even participants who had been taken advantage of by other Latinos continue to offer some types of support to other immigrants. Portes' work on Cuban immigrants implies that bounded solidarity and enforceable trust go hand in hand; yet, given the examples of participants in my study who have been exploited by other immigrants, it is apparent that trust is not always enforced by the Latino immigrant community in Knoxville, despite the presence of bounded solidarity. The different experiences of Cuban immigrants may contribute to the differences of solidarity highlighted in my study. On the other hand, given the relatively small population of Latinos living in Knoxville, it may be that Knoxville has yet to reach the critical mass of co-ethnics necessary to ensure that normative community expectations of support and reciprocity are enforced, or that the conditions under which Latinos have migrated to Knoxville have precluded such enforcement.

Further examination of the Latino immigrant community in Knoxville is necessary to know whether such maltreatment happens on a consistent basis among Latina/o immigrants, or whether this lack of enforceable trust is concentrated among certain groups of Latinos. For example, Latinos in the *pulga* community may exert more strongly the obligation to regard normative regulations. Because the

pulga attracts a large presence of Latina/o immigrants, both as customers and vendors, and because it is also highly visible to the dominant non-Latina/o population in Knoxville, there may be a strong commitment by Latina/o immigrants to comport in ways that support and speak well of other Latinos.

Future studies of the Knoxville Latino immigrant population are necessary to indicate whether normative community enforcement of immigrant behavior will develop as the Latino population continues to grow. On the other hand, the current absence of community enforcement among certain Latina/o immigrants may prove to negatively affect the future of the group's solidarity.

Knoxville, Tennessee represents one of the most emerging of Suro and Singer's (2002) designated new Latino destinations. Yet, other areas of the United States that are even less populated by Latinos are beginning to attract their share of immigrants, and particularly Latina/o immigrants. Given that the results of this thesis suggest important experiential differences for immigrants in emerging gateways with regard to the dominant theory of enforceable trust, it will be useful for our understanding of immigrant adjustment to study other emerging and pre-emerging gateways, in order to assess the conditions under which Latino immigrant communities develop bounded solidarity and enforceable trust.

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