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SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY: CULTURAL CITIZEN-MAKING IN OKLAHOMA'S LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

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REGINA B. GORDON
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SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY:
CULTURAL CITIZEN-MAKING IN OKLAHOMA'S
LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

Dr. Betty J. Harris, Chair

Dr. Lesley Rankin-Hill

Dr. Peter Cahn

Dr. Terry Rugeley

Dr. Ron Duncan

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Abstract

This project involves anthropological field research focusing on the interrelationships among Latin American immigrant families, social service programs, and immigrant experiences in Oklahoma as part of the larger process of social and cultural incorporation into the receiving society. A secondary focus is the examination of formal and informal strategies used by families to access social services when formal services are unavailable or perceived to be unavailable. The study will test the hypothesis that "immigrants from poorer countries must daily negotiate the lines" of racial, cultural, and gender "difference established by state agencies as well as groups in civil society" (Ong 1996:737). The family as an economic, social, and political unit will be considered against the dominant ideology that calls for individual self-sufficiency as a prerequisite of ideal citizenship. More specifically, the experiences of women provide a mechanism for examining the socio-economic variables guiding the process of cultural incorporation. The primary research setting is in a large urban area, Oklahoma City, where formal programs targeting Latino groups have long been established through government and community organizations. Using ethnographic research methods, including questionnaires, informal and formal interviews, and participant-observation in the Latino community and with social service providers, research findings should contribute to understandings of the changing dynamics in Latin American immigrant families, the role of social services in the making of cultural citizens, as well as to advance dialogue on the process of globalization, transnational identities, and human rights issues.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Oklahoma's New Cultural Frontier

> *On a warm mid-summer afternoon in an older neighborhood near the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds, I met with two friends, Annalisa and Carmen[1], who come from very different backgrounds. Their common links are their native language, their children who attend the same school, and their newcomer status in Oklahoma. We sat down at a small wooden table in Annalisa's modest-sized kitchen. She had moved with her husband and oldest son to the United States about six years earlier from Mexico City, but they had only lived in Oklahoma for two years. The older son went to school with Carmen's daughter. The children spoke English fluently. Annalisa spoke very little English, and her son stuck around for part of the interview to make sure his Mom did not need more help in the translation process. However, Carmen, a daycare worker, spoke Spanish and English fluently, and her daughter sat next to me, speaking very little but drawing a picture with me and her in it to add to my collection of research notes[2]. Carmen was from Honduras, and she had originally traveled to Florida to stay with relatives, where she met her US-born African American husband. Both Annalisa and Carmen were suspicious of my intentions, although Carmen was more vocal and expressed her general discontent in finding assistance for her daughter and herself as she negotiated a violent relationship.*

Annalisa's story is more typical of the men and women I met during my field research. Most of the participants were from Mexico, spoke little English, and in many cases they were not documented or were in the process of trying to gain legal status. Like many Mexican women, Annalisa is a petite woman with long, dark hair and a naturally bronzed skin-tone that is characteristic of the indigenous genetic influence within the larger Latin American population. Although Annalisa's skin type did not appear to be very dark, when discussing her experiences in Oklahoma, she did believe that the darker a person's skin, the more a person is discriminated against. Carmen, by contrast, was often mistaken as African American because of her phenotypic Afro-mestizo appearance. She had some college education, and she had entered the United States legally after Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Nonetheless, being

newcomers in Oklahoma, the two women formed a bond while navigating language barriers, community spaces, and family relationships. Their stories, whether typical or atypical, both represent what it means to be part of Oklahoma's new, diverse, and increasingly visible minority group, Latin American immigrants.

My position as the researcher and a white woman, who grew up in a suburb of Oklahoma City that now has a substantial Latino population, did set me apart from the experiences of most immigrants. For example, the passage of Oklahoma House Bill 1804 during the research phase of this project created suspicion of white researchers. However, despite most participants' awareness of the local legislation, which specifically addresses social welfare benefits for undocumented immigrants, I could identify with most of the participants because I am Catholic, married, the mother of a toddler, and a pink-collar worker. These facts about my background, which I shared during interviews and general discussions within the immigrant community, assisted me in establishing rapport with participants, many of whom were young mothers.

After visiting with Annalisa and Carmen, as well as a wide range of other newcomers from Latin America living in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, general themes on the migration process began to emerge. I found that people came to Oklahoma more often because they already had family members living in the area. Moving to Oklahoma in search of work opportunities was common, although it tended to be a secondary reason to settle in the state. This supports local level research on family network theories in conjunction with macro-level classic economic push-pull theories on the causes of migration (Espinosa and Massey 1999).

I also found that, once here, the newcomers generally believe Oklahoma is *tranquilo*, it is a *quiet* place to live, with the overwhelming majority (72 percent) saying "yes" when asked if they liked living in Oklahoma City. In addition, regardless of education and socio-economic background, the majority of participants indicated that they thought their life in Oklahoma was better than it was or could be in their country of origin or even in other states (in the United States) where the cost of living is generally higher. Yet, despite the favorable agreement on Oklahoma as a settlement location and whether or not they were in the United States legally, nearly all of the immigrant participants expressed concern, fear, distrust, and confusion or a combination of these sentiments regarding recently passed state legislation targeting undocumented immigrants, most of whom come from Mexico. Thus, the research participants' perceptions of *racismo* (racism), as they expressed their experiences of contact with receiving community members**,** suggest that the process of cultural incorporation into a new community is not necessarily equitable or static.

While the migration process is significant in understanding newcomer experiences, this study focuses on the experiences of newcomers as they are integrated into the receiving community. Once connections were made with local social service organizations and among members of the immigrant community, more specific themes from participant experiences with the receiving community began to emerge. In particular, the intersection of citizenship rights, social welfare benefits, and the immigrant family provided for a base to evaluate the experience of cultural incorporation. For this study, *cultural incorporation* is the integration of other

cultures with the dominant culture, in contrast to *assimilation*, which is to shed one's own cultural tradition to become part of another cultural tradition.

Research Question

Factoring in patterns of globalization and the dynamics of the local history and politics in Oklahoma, are Latin American immigrants systematically whitened or blackened as they are integrated into the receiving community, and if so, what impact does this process have on immigrant kinship structures and power dynamics within the family? By using the terms "whitened" and "blackened," I am expressing the symbolic approach to the more subtle and often ambiguous nature of discrimination in the post-civil rights era in the United States. In consideration of anthropologist John L. Jackson's commentary on national political events and racial paranoia, this approach is best exemplified when he states:

> The civil-rights movement succeeded in outlawing legal discrimination and driving explicit racism to the margins of society. But in many respects, racism has simply gone underground. Today it is usually subtle, making it more difficult to identify. Of course, recent studies demonstrate that black people still have a harder time than white people (even with identical credentials) when it comes to buying new homes or cars or landing lucrative jobs. According to some social scientists, those differences aren't just about white prejudice. They are also related to institutional and structural realities like housing patterns and the reliance on market forces in hiring that perpetuate racial differences as a byproduct of seemingly colorblind social policies (2008:1).

In addition, Jackson suggests that while African-Americans have become more secure in their legal citizenship in the post-1960s era, "they are less confident about determining when they are being victimized by silent and undeclared racism" (2008:1). Similar to the historic struggle of African-Americans to gain legal rights, for many Latin American immigrants in the United States, it is in the very process of

achieving legal citizenship where the blackening process becomes more evident. Therefore, this project serves as a case study to test hypotheses, such as Aihwa Ong's study of Asian immigrant experiences in the United States, which propose that through institutional practices,

> non-white immigrants to the First World are simultaneously, though unevenly, subjected to two processes of normalization: an ideological whitening or blackening that reflects dominant racial oppositions and an assessment of cultural competence based on imputed human capital and consumer power in the minority subject (1996:737).

More recent scholarship on the Latin American immigrant experience in the United States generally supports Ong's findings and suggests that specifically within the healthcare industry and ideologically through the growing prevalence of media communications, Latin American immigrants are subjected to different processes of normalization (Horton 2004; Waterson 2006).

Because social service and social welfare programs are a common ground where immigrants generally come into contact with members of the receiving community, I use this arena of integration as one type of social space for examining the process of cultural incorporation. There are other social spaces where interaction occurs with receiving community members, such as in the workplace, in the marketplace, and at community events, but it is in the area of social services where decisions impacting the well-being of all family members are made and often contested, particularly when legal status is a recurring issue. Many participants did not work regularly outside of the home and many did not always participate in community activities, such as religious groups, but most did need access to a doctor, clinic, or social service agency at some point.

For this study, social services are defined broadly and include any health and social welfare program, such as general and civic education, English language, family planning, child welfare, domestic assistance, and housing programs. Although the scope of services is broad and all types of sites could not be accessed for observation, the research participants often discussed their experiences with one or more of a variety of services. Immigrant perceptions on access to what programs and types of assistance are available became an integral part of discussions because their perceptions serve as a guide to evaluating the process of cultural incorporation. Furthermore, health and social welfare programs are administered through a variety of public and private sources, which are generally not-for-profit organizations. These organizations include government-established clinics, as well as secular and non-secular-based programs and clinics. The bulk of these programs in the United States are disseminated from Congress through Federally ear-marked funds or grant programs. Other sources of funding include private grant programs, private donors, state and local funded programs, and private community service programs.

Hypothesis

As Alisse Waterson (2006) suggests in her recent analysis on Hispanic experiences, I propose that some Latino immigrants in the United States are becoming "white folk" while others are not. Families are differentially incorporated into the larger society based on a variety of socio-economic variables, such as legal status, language skills, education, and country and local region of origin. For example, for those who speak little or no English, come from primarily rural areas, have little education, and are not authorized to enter the United States, the ideological

blackening process is more intense. This study is two-fold. First, it will demonstrate the unevenness of cultural incorporation. For example, the more negative the variables, the more likely family structures are fragmented, traditional roles are contested, access to education and work opportunities continue to be limited, and reliance on social welfare services are crucial. Second, this study will also demonstrate that cultural incorporation is not static, and as part of the "other" and, more often than not the underclass, negative variables may become assets in the process of family formation, maintenance, and survival. When few legitimate and affordable avenues are available or perceived to be available, creative financing, word-of-mouth networks, and formal and informal support groups empower individuals and families to thrive as they become part of the larger community.

Previous models on the cultural incorporation of immigrant groups formulate the larger ideological whitening processes of acculturation and assimilation in the United States (Sacks 1994), the differentiation of whitening and blackening of a group (Ong 1996; Horton 2004; Waterson 2006), and the perceptions of self-deservingness within a group (Chavez 1991; Horton 2004). This case study will add to these theoretical models by focusing on individual immigrant families and by demonstrating that within these families experiences from the whitening and blackening process and the perceptions of self-deservingness are mixed. In other words, depending on their socio-economic variables, individuals within families experience cultural incorporation very differently. Thus, the dynamics of individual experiences within families impact kinship structures, intergenerational relationships, gender role expectations, and general decision-making processes. The differing socio-

economic variables within families also dictate what social services and social arenas some family members have or do not have access to in the receiving community. Therefore, while some members of a family are generally included into the social fabric of the receiving community, other family members are not.

While this study engages previous models on cultural incorporation, these models do not provide a set of criteria that can be used to determine a pattern of dialogue between newcomers and receiving community members on the variables considered most acceptable for citizenship. Therefore, based on data obtained during the research phase of this project, the model of cultural incorporation presented in this study provides a detailed review of criteria deemed most acceptable for citizenship from both the perspective of individual immigrants and individual receiving community members. More precisely, this study will demonstrate the dialectal process between individual immigrants and the receiving community by employing both political economy and postmodern approaches to social analyses. For example, the political economy approach is useful in establishing the global, national, and local frameworks in the push and pull mechanisms of immigration. The postmodern framework is useful in illuminating the voice of the research subjects through their thoughts, actions, and reactions to broader push and pull mechanisms, which impact their opinions and the decisions they make in their daily lives. Ultimately, a collection of ethnographic data then reveals patterns in both immigrant and receiving community members' approaches to each other on individual, community, and broader state policy levels. Although combining both the political economy and the postmodern approaches are not unique in anthropological theory, the original

contribution of this study to the broader anthropological theories on cultural incorporation is to provide a model of criteria to evaluate the concept of citizenship as it relates to current debates on nation-building, human rights issues, and gender positions in a local setting.

One significant theme that interweaves this research is the role immigrant women play in the process of cultural incorporation. Because social services served as the primary arena for observing patterns of integration and because women are the primary care or assistance seekers for their families[3], women became the main participants in the field investigation. Their insight into the everyday experiences of negotiating basic health and social welfare needs for their families illuminate the varying patterns and approaches to the integration of Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma. Specifically, the blackening side of integration is more intense for many women because legal, economic, and, in many cases, linguistic dependence on extended family and friends often render women little socio-economic autonomy. However, despite the difficulties of maneuvering within the receiving community, women are also the primary promoters for encouraging cultural competency in their children, and they are the primary facilitators in maintaining the health and well-being of all family members.

Ultimately, there is a link between the ideological whitening and blackening process of cultural incorporation and class, ethnicity and gender. Studies on rural to urban migration patterns among African American groups demonstrate that the combination of poverty (class), race (ethnicity), and women (gender) are integral to

the formation and maintenance of households, extended kinship networks, and the larger immigrant community (Stack 1970). Everyday strategies used to survive, such as accessing social welfare services, impact the structure and decision-making processes within households. Moreover, low wages and inconsistent incomes for both men and women make childcare and the division of domestic responsibilities challenging, so that a reliance on social services and kinship networks becomes a stabilizing factor in daily life. Such a reliance on these services can also yield a significant impact on personal relationships, whereby formal living arrangements with partners are often fluid and, in many cases, strained because women and children are the primary recipients of the services (Ong 1992:743). Differing from the African American experience for more recent Latin American immigrants, however, is the generational inversion between English-speaking children with citizenship rights and their undocumented, non-English-speaking parents. The children become more significant in decision-making processes because they act as social and linguistic brokers for their parents, which can further increase the parents' feelings of vulnerability within the larger society (Rodriguez 1983).

Research Methods

To test the hypothesis that Latin American immigrant families are ideologically whitened or blackened in Oklahoma, I used traditional anthropological research methods, which primarily included data collection from life histories through in-depth interviews and from long-term participant-observation in community programs and activities. Additionally, I circulated an anonymous questionnaire among immigrant community members to facilitate participation in the study, to help

identify basic demographic and socio-economic patterns, and to assist in identifying the types of social service programs being accessed.

Because there is a difference between the perceptions of the receiving community members regarding the newcomers and the perceptions of the immigrants of the host community, I used several methods to determine the general perceptions of each group about the other. In understanding the receiving community perceptions about immigrants, particularly social service providers, I formally interviewed individuals who either worked with immigrants or were part of the policy-making and administration of social welfare programs. Through general participant-observation, I informally spoke with many more individuals in a similar capacity. To supplement the interviews, I followed the daily local news, read local internet blogs, and informally quizzed friends and acquaintances about their thoughts on immigrants in Oklahoma. In understanding the immigrant community's perceptions about the receiving community, I formally interviewed interested participants and informally spoke with many more individuals while participating in local community activities or observing social service programs.

To determine how each group's perceptions of the other impact the general process of incorporation, I attended a variety of community activities and visited on-going programs that were either sponsored or administered by local social service organizations. These included attending occasional church services in Spanish, program planning meetings at a local social service agency, interagency meetings on women and family health issues, a citizenship class, family planning health clinics, an

indigent health clinic, and occasional community events targeting Hispanic community members.

To gauge the intensity of the whitening or blackening process, I analyzed the data collected from long-term observations, the formal interviews, and the anonymous questionnaire, and organized the general conclusions into a continuum of negative to positive variables. The more positive variables generally adhere to the social and economic ideals of the dominant society, which are rooted in the concept of individual self-sufficiency as a pre-requisite for ideal citizenship. Once patterns began to emerge from the socio-economic variables and the collection of individual histories, the impacts on family structures and personal relationships became increasingly apparent.

The Research Population: Defining Latin American Immigrants

Any person born in a Latin American country, which encompasses Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean Islands (as shown in Figures 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3), and was living in Oklahoma at the time of field research was considered an eligible participant. While the majority of participants were born in Mexico and were women, this study focuses on the overall experience of individuals and their families as they migrated from Latin America and settled in Oklahoma. In this paper, the term *Hispanic* is used as a loose classification for people having similar broad linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds that bind them as a larger group identity. The majority of Hispanics in the United States originated from or had ancestors who originated from Latin America, and the term *Hispanic* is a broadly understood category used in most resources on the general historical and numerical data gathered

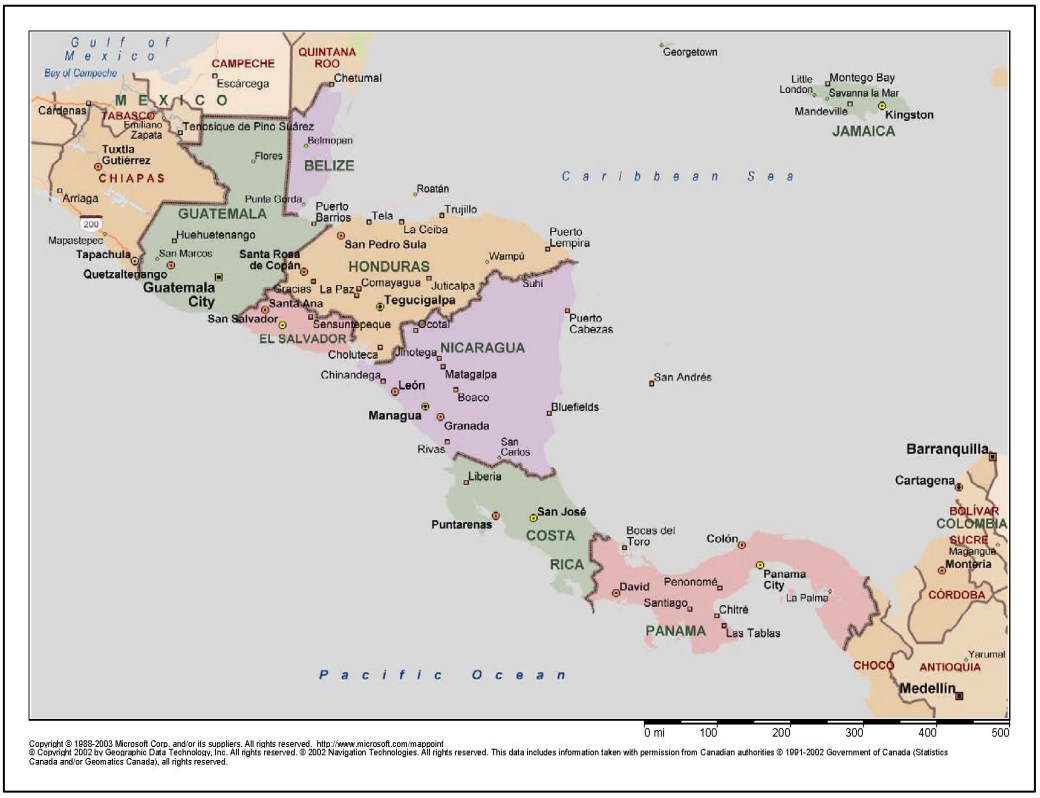
about Latin American immigrants. Although recent Latin American immigrants arrived after the larger social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which raised political awareness for many Hispanics in the United States and many of whom, in turn, began to identify themselves as Latinos or Chicanos, the term *Latinos* is also used interchangeably with the term *Hispanic* in reference to Latin American immigrants and those people with a Latin American heritage in the United States. In contrast, the use of the term *Mexicano* is primarily limited to the historical context of Hispanic immigrants in Oklahoma, which will be further considered in Chapter 5.

Figure 1-1: Map of Latin America



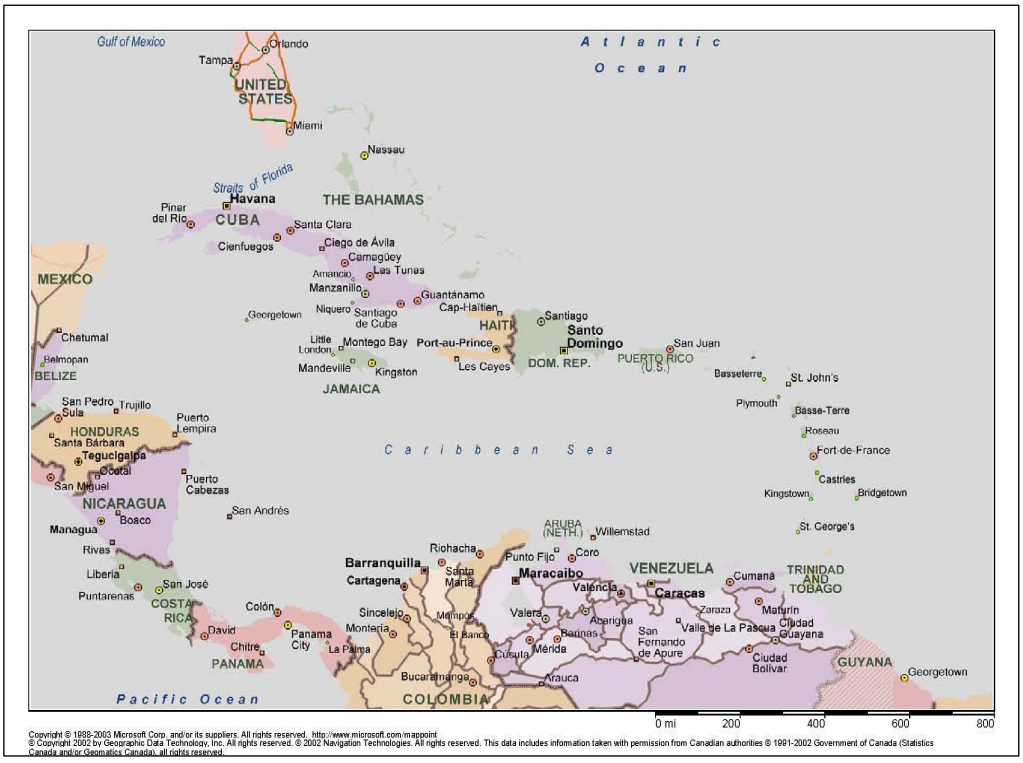
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Figure 1-2: Map of Central America



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Figure 1-3: Map of the Caribbean Islands



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Significance and Feasibility

This study is particularly relevant under the rubric of "women and development" because it illuminates the vulnerability of women in the process of cultural incorporation. For Fernández Kelly (1981), *development* is not defined on economics alone, rather it also encompasses political, social, and ideological features, and it "implies an expansion of choices, more equitable access to resources which make life with dignity possible, and greater participation for all peoples (independently of gender, ethnicity and race) in the decision-making processes that affect them" (1981:414). Women are less likely to work or have access to work opportunities in the formal economy where they would be able to, among other variables, increase their social networks, have a higher chance of access to formal health and social welfare benefits, and improve their English language skills. Men tend to have access to jobs in the formal economy, where they may be able to access some health benefits and, if not documented, potential sponsorship from an employer to gain legal status. For the children of immigrants, many of whom are born in the United States, they have access to social welfare benefits, such as Medicaid, and they are more apt to develop English language skills and social networks through school. Consequently, immigrant women must often rely on the income of their partner or other family members, the assistance of their children in translating, and alternative sources of social services and social welfare programs when private services are not financially feasible or they are not eligible for state-funded programs.

A practical reason for conducting a study within Oklahoma's Latin American immigrant community includes documenting the growth of this group to add to the

relevant research on the most recent wave of the Latin American immigrant experiences in the United States as a whole. This research is significant because there are few studies on Oklahoma's rapidly expanding Latin American immigrant community. It is feasible because it should serve as a means of widening communication and dialog between an underrepresented group and governing/policymaking bodies within the state. Very little published research on the experience of Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma is available, and the majority of studies conducted have been geared towards Hispanics and education. Although state and local social service agencies have conducted limited investigations for their own purposes, as an outsider observing the relationship between formal organizations and the population they serve, I hope to illuminate issues that are currently being overlooked or deemed insignificant by policymakers and program administrators.

Furthermore, the research time-frame coincides with the recent legislation on immigration in Oklahoma that is influencing both the receiving community's approach to the Hispanic community in general and the experiences of Latin American immigrants more specifically. Under the larger national framework on issues related to immigration, other states have passed or are considering legislation similar to Oklahoma's House Bill 1804, which was enacted in 2007. Titled "The Oklahoma Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act of 2007," this law is a state level action in response to the growing impact local officials and the general population perceives that immigrants have on local communities and social service programs. Although immigration issues are considered part of the Federal policy-making domain in the United States, few Federal-level mechanisms have been instituted on a

local-level to enforce past Federal mandates. Therefore, state and local policy-makers are challenging Federal authority by instituting their own set of policies and enforcement goals in their responses to this new and rapidly expanding segment of the local populations. HB 1804 targets those individuals who are not citizens, nationals, or legal permanent residents, and the scope of the law broadly covers areas concerning law enforcement and verification of eligibility for public benefits and employment, including the restriction of official identification cards and financial assistance for higher education pursuits. While much of the law became effective on November 1, 2007, another part on employer-related provisions was not set to become effective until July 1, 2008. However, in June 2008, a Federal judge blocked parts of HB 1804 from temporarily being enacted while a lawsuit, which originated in the business community, including the US Chamber of Commerce as a plaintiff, challenges the constitutionality of the law and is pending in the Federal court system. A previous attempt to challenge the law in the state court system failed. In that case, the plaintiffs were primarily from Oklahoma's faith-based community, who work with the immigrant community by providing social and legal services as an extension of their spiritual and community action missions.

Additional legislation was re-introduced in Oklahoma to make English the State's official language in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate in 2009. Although not specifically opposing the use of other languages in general, opponents of the proposed legislation argue that it mainly targets the growing Spanish-speaking population in the state. Both efforts failed to garner enough support from members of their respective legislative branches. In the past, English-only

measures were defeated largely because of the influence and protests of many Native American groups in the State.

Recent attempts at the Federal level to revise current policies and laws on domestic immigrant issues and immigration to the United States are stalled in Congress. The Presidential Administration under George W. Bush and legislators within the US Senate and the US House of Representatives proposed legislation that would significantly impact the lives of documented and undocumented immigrants, as well as their native born family members. These include comprehensive immigration reform packages, which variously address providing unauthorized residents access to the legalization process, enhanced border enforcement, employer citizenship verification enforcement, and a guest worker program. Such legislation is not a new phenomenon. During the 1980s, the Reagan Administration and legislators recognized the significant influx of undocumented migrants and passed the Immigration and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). Major program areas administered from this act include legalization, prohibition of employment of undocumented citizens, reimbursement to states for the costs of legalization, welfare applicant screening and agricultural provisions. What this meant for immigrants was that many of those who were undocumented were given a chance to become legal without sanctions. It also provided them a legal route to sponsorship of other family members, who were still in the home country and could begin to join them in the late 1980s and 1990s when legalization became final for the original applicants. For employers, it meant greater sanctions if caught employing illegal immigrants. One of the main reasons for enacting IRCA came from national concerns on relaxed border security

and to control what many saw as a growing problem with the large numbers of undocumented workers. At the time that IRCA was enacted, policymakers only predicted 210,000 applicants for the two newly proposed legalization programs, but an overwhelming three million immigrants applied (Calavita 1998:96). The overwhelming number of applicants considerably slowed the legalization process, often causing immigrants and their families to wait ten or more years to become legal residents (1998:96).

In April 2002, the United States Congress voted to "abolish" the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which was in existence for over sixty years and replace it with a new agency, Homeland Security. On the surface, this vote was a reaction to the international terror attacks, which occurred on September 11, 2001, in New York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania. From those events, a vast number of government officials and US citizens looked to the INS for explanations on how so many foreigners were able to use the US immigration system to their benefit and to the detriment of so many American lives. However, the dismantling of the INS comes after years of scrutiny from both within and outside of the agency, and in later years several plans were proposed for reorganization based on rapidly changing international political and economic dynamics influencing the larger process of immigration.

The phenomenon of the larger process of south to north migration, with large numbers of unauthorized individuals crossing international boundaries, is not unique to the United States. In other parts of the world, the processes of decolonization, as

well as economic globalization, have led people from non-industrialized, often resource-rich, "occupied" countries to their occupiers or former occupiers' homelands. Thus, migration paths are generally not random. From a historical perspective, political, economic, and geographic relationships exist between the sending and receiving countries. For example, the result of the Soviet breakup in the late 1980s has been a renewed spirit in ethnic diversities and a collapse in the acceptance of the nation-state. Even before the Soviet collapse, decolonization acted as a catalyst for the rethinking of old and new identities. Stuart Hall points out that to be a black Jamaican in England meant to be an outsider or immigrant, even though Jamaica had been a colony of Great Britain for centuries and movement between the islands was common (1998:59). This unacknowledged fluidity between populations before decolonization was central to racist doctrines reinforcing colonial hegemony (1998). In 2005 the international media chronicled riots in France as the youth and poor migrants from France's primarily Muslim-based colonized regions, such as Algeria, fought back from their socially marginalized positions and living spaces in the greater Paris metropolitan area (Smith and Smith 2005). Post-industrial, first-world, countries in the North, such as Great Britain and France, have responded with a variety of social policies to curb the tide of migration and programs to administer to those immigrants already living within their national boundaries. Similar to the political and economic relationships between European nations and their southern neighbors, the United States has emerged as the economic core of the North and South American continents, even though it was not a historical colonizer of Latin America. Despite increases in border security programs in the United States, the flow

of south to north migration steadily continues to rise, creating challenges to local communities in their approaches to serve the newcomer populations.

In the post-September 11, 2001 era, immigration in the United States has become a hotly contested political issue with considerable media attention on border security. Increased attention on the border region and on immigration in general spotlights the daily lives, including living, working, and family conditions, of individual migrants. Yet, the increased attention on immigration policies and the social incorporation of the immigrants themselves, particularly within the realm of social policymaking on the Federal level, remains stalled due to a variety of factors. These include changes in public opinion as the on-going war in Iraq and Afghanistan becomes increasingly unpopular. As the war has played out over the years, the election process has created a change in the political party controlling Congress, and as the 2008 Presidential election approached, legislation was held-up pending election results and possible shifts within the ideology of the newly elected administration.

The media and political attention on immigration matters has not been lost on the migrants themselves. Similar to the Paris riots in 2005, immigrant groups in the United States banded together and large scale protests were carried out to raise the general awareness of their position within the larger policy-making framework. However, unlike the violent riots in France, the protesters in the United States were mostly peaceful. In April 2006, one article reported that thousands of immigrants marched in cities across the country "urging Federal lawmakers to pass immigration

reform that would legalize an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants" (Garay, Associated Press, April 2006). The article goes on to describe:

> Shouting "Si Se Puede!" — Spanish for "Yes, we can!" — the marchers crammed into the downtown streets. They included families pushing strollers with their children and ice cream vendors who placed American flags on their carts. Many wore white clothing to symbolize peace. Police estimated the crowd at 350,000 to 500,000. There were no reports of violence. It was among several demonstrations that drew thousands of protesters Sunday in New Mexico, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Alabama, Utah, Oregon, Idaho and California. "If we don't protest they'll never hear us," said Oscar Cruz, 23, a construction worker who marched among the estimated 50,000 in San Diego. Cruz, who came illegally to the US in 2003, said he had feared a crackdown but felt emboldened by the large marches across the country in recent weeks (Garay, Associated Press, April 2006).

About the same time in Oklahoma about 10,000 protestors demonstrated at the state Capitol in response to state law HB 1804 (Walker, Oklahoman, November 2007). Conversely, local counter-protesters include groups and organizations hoping to influence local and national policies that effectively restrict the flow of immigration. One such high profile group is the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, who state:

> It is the mission of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps to see the borders and coastal boundaries of the United States secured against the unlawful and unauthorized entry of all individuals, contraband, and foreign military. We will employ all means of civil protest, demonstration, and political lobbying to accomplish this goal (The Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, About Us, February 2008).

In more extreme cases, some of these groups propose evicting all immigrants who are not in the United States legally.

Consequently, the emerging dynamics of the global economy with local policies is shaping the process of cultural incorporation within Oklahoma's largest segment of the newcomer population. Moreover, in the field of Anthropology,

Oklahoma is well known for its rich diversity in North American Native cultures, which makes it an attractive place for specialized field research in those areas. However, as the Hispanic population begins to rival the Native American population, such changes in demographics indicate new realms of changing socio-cultural dynamics that should be further explored.

Additionally, the role of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was officially adopted by the Canadian, Mexican and United States governments in 1994, should be considered in understanding these demographic shifts because it symbolizes a larger economic shift to a growing free market economy across national boundaries, which also means a growth in the movement of people across national borders. Consequently, a push for economic market growth often clashes with the maintenance of and accepted norms about the physical limitations of the nation-state. The purpose of NAFTA is to reduce international policy restrictions on tariffs to facilitate the movement of goods and services and provide opportunities for market expansion through a regional alliance. The evolution of NAFTA is linked to global economic trends towards regional alliances, such as the European Community and the Asian Economic Alliance. While NAFTA and other regional alliances became an integral part of economic and political policymaking for the nations involved in the 1990s, counter-movements around the world have expressed their discontent with the hegemony. Although the Middle East conflict and the more recent War on Terror may not be directly associated with a particular regional economic alliance, they are consequences of the larger process of globalization. The large-scale event of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the

United States facilitated tighter controls on international border movement (in this case along the US/Mexico border) in direct opposition to the proponents of economic free trade and open policies for the movement of goods and laborers. More directly linked to the growth of liberal economics in the Americas are the older socialist counter-movements throughout Latin America, such as the Cuban Revolutionaries and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), and newer movements protesting the loss of land and human rights violations as seen with the Zapatistas in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

As the third largest minority group in Oklahoma, Hispanics face similar challenges in gaining civil liberties and fair political representation as their Native American and African American counterparts have struggled with since the United States formed the Oklahoma Territory. Although the historic positions and characteristics of each group generally differ, their struggles are often interconnected through social policy-making, public opinion, and in many cases, inter-marriage. Often perceived as competing for public services, local tensions between these minority groups and the white majority are demonstrated in the differing policy approaches to each group. More significantly, public opinion illuminates the social and economic struggles between and within the minority groups. During the field research for this project, it was not uncommon to hear stories of mistrust and maltreatment between Latino immigrants and Latinos who were born in the United States, in addition to the mistrust and maltreatment that was occasionally reported between immigrants and the white (gueros) majority or between immigrants and other minority groups. The making and implementation of social welfare policies will be

further explored in Chapter 7 through a comparison of approaches to Oklahoma's largest minority groups.

Field Site: Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area

Historically, Oklahoma was not a permanent settlement location for Latin American immigrants, but the increase of this group in the state reflects the broader trend of Latin American immigrant population growth within the United States since 1990. The general population in Oklahoma rose about ten percent between 1990 and 2000, and the state now absorbs many new Latin American immigrants who come directly from their country of origin and many from primary destination states such as Texas and California. Therefore, the percentage of Hispanics within the State's overall population has increased significantly, and Hispanics are now a visible presence in most communities. These newer settlement trends mirror a larger secondary settlement pattern in communities throughout most of the Great Plains and Southern States. In these areas many industries actively recruit low wage laborers, and the cost of living is lower than in primary settlement areas.

Situated in Oklahoma's largest metropolitan area, Oklahoma City was chosen as a research location because it is the central locus of social service availability for the larger population. Oklahoma City is the state's capital city, and it is where social policy makers, social service programs, and the immigrant population converge. It is also home to the largest concentration of Hispanics in the state. The city maintains five major health complexes, not including ones within the larger metropolitan area in the cities of Edmond to the north, Norman to the south, and Yukon and Mustang to the west. Federal agency offices, state agency headquarters, and local health and

social welfare offices administer programs throughout the city, which typically extend outward into the rural areas with satellite offices. There are also a wide variety of non-profit and religious-based groups that serve the local and regional communities as well. The existence of established social service providers is useful in helping to identify cultural barriers, as well as legal and economic characteristics that shape community resources and programs.

The city is located within Oklahoma County, which is found in the state's central region, and the metropolitan area spills over into Cleveland County to the south, Canadian County to the west, and Logan County to the north. The Hispanic community's traditional residential locus and center of community activity has generally emanated from the southwest quadrant of the greater Oklahoma City metropolitan area, in which the US Highway, Interstate 40, runs east to west and serves as a dividing line between the north and south parts of the city (a geographical reference of the Hispanic community is located in Chapter 5, Figure 5-1). Since desegregation policies were enacted in the 1960s and 1970s, and with the growth of the city's Hispanic population in more recent years, this population has, increasingly, moved to other parts of the city, particularly to suburbs on the west side.

As the economic center of the state, Oklahoma City is located along Interstate 35, which is a major national thoroughfare transecting the United States from Mexico in the south to Canada in the north. The city is a mid-point between the larger Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex to the south in Texas and the Kansas City metroplex to the north in Kansas and Missouri. Because of its location, it is a regional nexus for economic trade and development activities, with international commerce increasing

significantly after the ratification of NAFTA in 1994. Oklahoma City is primarily located in Oklahoma County, which "is the chief market for the state's livestock and agriculture industries, as well as major wholesaling and jobbing center for the area. The major sources of income … are oil, agriculture, manufacturing, and government" (Hamilton 2003:458). More recently, the city has attracted growth in the biotechnology, information technology, and health services industries.

The growth of these larger industries coupled with technological changes in the agriculture industry during the 1980s, which reduced the number of skilled workers needed and depressed regular wages, contributes to the pull factors for new immigrants looking for work opportunities. Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma are predominately employed in unskilled labor positions and low-wage service sector jobs. On average, Hispanic or Latino residents working in full-time positions in Oklahoma earned 28 percent less than White residents, 22 percent less than Asian residents, 13 percent less than Native American residents, and 12 percent less than African American residents according to US 2000 Census data. These numbers do not account for more recent Latino newcomers, who are often undocumented and work in unreported, full-time positions, seasonal work, and may have multiple jobs. Ethnographic data collected during this research suggests that immigrant men, in particular, often work six or more days a week for long hours in jobs with few or no benefits. However, nearly half of the women in the study did not report working at all, although further inquiry found that they often worked within the informal sector as childcare providers for friends and family, as well as participating in direct sales

industries, such as Avon and Mary Kay cosmetic sales, which they did not consider to be regular jobs.

Sixty percent of participants in this study migrated from their country of origin. The remainder of participants reported moving from other places in the United States, which they often indicated had become crowded and expensive. Historically, migrants working in rural agricultural areas tend to relocate to urban areas. These trends are evident after World War II when many American-born Hispanic laborers in the Southwest abandoned labor-intensive farmwork for more skilled jobs in the growing industrial sectors in urban areas (Arreola 2002).

For those participants coming directly from their home countries, many of them noted in this study that they came from small hamlets or villages outside of the larger cities. In Mexico, a liberalizing economy in the 20th century meant significant numbers of subsistence farmers from small villages in rural areas, who are primarily of indigenous origins, lost their lands. These people migrated to the larger cities in search of work opportunities. Often because of their lack of education and industrial skills, as well as urban overcrowding with considerable competition for a limited number of jobs, they were then forced to look elsewhere for work (Collier and Quaratiello 1999). Many subsistence farmers and their families from south and central Mexico migrated to the US/Mexico border, where they were recruited to work in factories on the Mexican side of the international border or as agricultural laborers for large-scale farms and ranches on the US side. Even with the ratification of NAFTA, limited work opportunities and poor working and living conditions have

forced many Mexicans north of the border in search of better jobs, working conditions, living conditions, and educational opportunities.

Significantly, the largest proportion of immigrants in this study (33 percent) indicated that they came from the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, in and around the City of Juarez, where many factories have been established, particularly since NAFTA was ratified. It is very likely then that the migration process for many Mexican families has involved a multi-level and transmigratory pattern where movement begins in primarily subsistence farming regions to larger urban centers, sometimes back to rural areas, then to the border region, and finally across the international border (Collier and Quaratiello 1999). Because work is often seasonal, especially in the agricultural industry, those who moved to the United States during peak seasons, move back to Mexico when the number of jobs available subsides as the growing seasons change. Similarly, other industries employing low wage, temporary workers, such as the construction industry, are cyclical based on the weather and on larger economic trends.

Finally, based on data from this research, the majority of Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma have lived here for 10 years or less, and their experiences do not necessarily reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the older Hispanic community in Oklahoma City. Although many new immigrants currently reside south of Interstate 40 where Hispanic churches and civic organizations have long been established, the Hispanic community in general comes from a wide variety of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, which will be further explored in Chapter 5.

Similarly, Latin American immigrants are replacing lower class Whites and African Americans in unskilled, labor intensive jobs, particularly in the agricultural industry, which might imply a whitening process for many African Americans, who are achieving higher levels of education and inroads into professional, white-collar positions and industries where they have been traditionally underrepresented. Although African-Americans continue to lag behind Whites in earnings and professional opportunities, considerable social and legal foundations for incorporating them as integral members of the community have taken root.

Considering Annalisa's and Carmen's migration stories and their individual backgrounds, the process of migration is multifaceted and experiences in the processes of cultural incorporation are often conflicting. Traditional economic push-pull theories may account for their decisions to move to the United States and, more specifically, to Oklahoma where both women indicated that their spouses were lured to Oklahoma City by promised job opportunities. Additionally, social network theories can account for their initial decisions to relocate in primary destination states (California and Florida, respectively) where friends and relatives already lived. However, these explanatory models do not account for their placement within the receiving society's normative value system, including integration into expected class positions, ethnic groups, and gender roles. Furthermore, these models do not account for the receiving community's social policies and attitudes towards newcomers and how those policies and attitudes impact immigrant family structures and decision-making patterns.

Organization of the Chapters

This paper is organized into eight (8) chapters. Following this introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 provides a literature review and theoretical frameworks primarily within the field of Anthropology on Latin American immigrants and cultural incorporation. The research design, data collection, and the institutional review process are discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the life histories of several participants are recorded, and their stories illuminate the variety of experiences as cultural newcomers in Oklahoma. Their experiences highlight the main themes encountered during field data collection of life histories and from the more widely circulated questionnaire. Chapter 5 is an overview of the history of Latin American immigration in Oklahoma, including their presence in Oklahoma's early history, Spanish and Mexican influences on the American frontier, the formation of a Hispanic community, and a discussion on the new wave of immigrants. Chapter 6 presents a review of the Latin American immigrant identity and family organization, along with a discussion on the impact of migration on the family from the immigrant perspective involving personal relationships, marriage, children, working, communication, and being the newcomer in the receiving community.

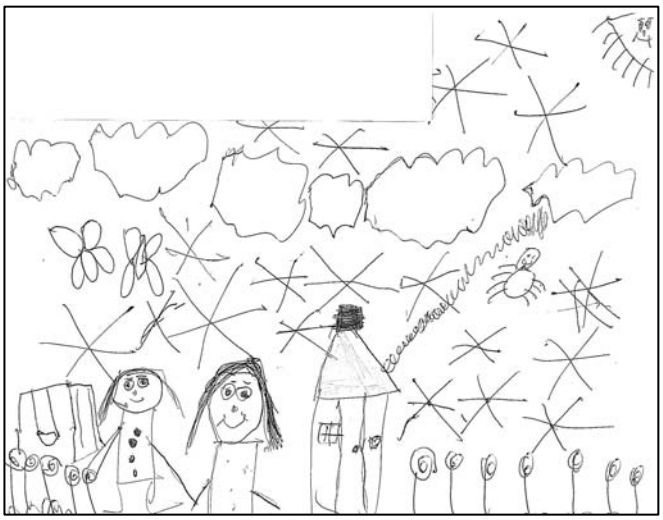
Chapter 7 introduces the role of social service providers in the everyday lives of Latin American immigrants. In this chapter a comparative review of general integration and social welfare policies in the United States serves as a backdrop for discussions on the socio-economic variables that may impact the process of integration into a new community. This review is followed by an outline on the types of services available to immigrants within Oklahoma, a consideration of some general

perceptions of social service providers and the receiving community to the newcomers, as well as immigrant perceptions of the receiving community. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the general findings of the research through a discussion on the variation in cultural incorporation in general and within immigrant families more specifically, the role and the particular vulnerabilities of women within their new setting, and Oklahoma's response to its newest community members.

End Notes

[1]All participant's names have been changed to protect their identity.

[2]



[3]Brettell and deBerjeois suggest that, in general, "Mexican immigrant women tend to under utilize health facilities even for prenatal care. Illegal status and both lack of insurance and fear associated with it provide one explanation" (1992:54). Conversely, working in San Francisco, Lewin notes that seeking medical attention and assistance is one way of alleviating stress and tension because "illness may provide the opportunity for involvement in one of the few truly recreational activities available to women – going to the doctor" (Brettell and deBerjeois 1992:54). In the Midwest where many migrants are drawn either en route to Chicago or as agricultural laborers, Chavira demonstrates how women are responsible for family health and often function as cultural brokers to the medical bureaucratic culture (Brettell and deBerjeois 1992:54). Brettel and deBerjeois also indicate that immigrants seek access to the US health care system through their own social networks.

Chapter 2: Theorizing Immigration and Cultural Incorporation

> *In Oklahoma City's historically Black residential and business district on the east side, I met with Consuela, a 33-year old mother who was expecting her third child. An articulate Latina woman, Consuela made a living as a supervisor at a local fast-food restaurant. On a comfortable, over-stuffed couch in her tiny living room with the popular children's show, "Go, Diego, Go," as our background entertainment, Consuela's three-year-old daughter was a gracious host, offering me chocolate candy hearts while her mother told me about moving to Oklahoma and negotiating language barriers, work, friendships and family relationships. Her primary reason for moving to Oklahoma in her early twenties was not because of family or to find work. It was to get away from her small hometown in Mexico where her boyfriend had committed suicide. She wanted to start over somewhere new where she did not know anyone. During her time in Oklahoma, she has worked in several different jobs and sometimes worked more than one job to make ends meet. She taught herself English and insisted that all immigrants should do the same, although she wants her children to learn both English and Spanish. Never formally marrying and after two bad relationships, when I met Consuela, she said she had finally met someone she was interested in marrying.*

Like many young immigrant women, particularly for those who are undocumented, Consuela does not have access to private health insurance. For the health and well-being of her children, she uses Sooner Care, Oklahoma's Medicaid-funded health insurance program for children. However, she said the public health clinics often asked too many questions that did not seem to have anything to do with the services she was seeking. With the exception of maternity benefits granted to undocumented immigrant women through both Federal and state funded healthcare programs, Consuela herself is not eligible for general health benefits through any other Federal or state funded programs. Nonetheless, Consuela has decided to stay in the United States because she believes that despite the legal and cultural barriers, she is still providing a better life for her children than she could provide for them in

Mexico. Like so many Latin American immigrant families in the United States, Consuela's family is a mix of citizenship statuses. She and her partner are undocumented, but their children, who were born in the United States, are citizens. If Consuela decided to move back to Mexico, either her children would have to stay in the United States because they are not Mexican citizens or they would have to apply for Mexican citizenship. Whether she stays in the United States or goes back to Mexico, the process to become a citizen in either place can be time-consuming and costly, so much so that applying for citizenship is a legal and financial quagmire beyond the modest incomes of most immigrant families.

Considering Consuela's story of deliberate migration, which extends beyond economic push-pull factors, and her experiences as an undocumented, sometimes single, Latina mother, this chapter will provide an overview on immigration theories in order to provide a backdrop for recent global migration patterns. It will also explore previous research on cultural incorporation, primarily within the political economy paradigm, including the role of globalization, citizenship-making, and nation-building. Within this framework, postmodernist perspectives on ethnic identification and boundary maintenance, gender role analyses, and the subaltern are assessed to provide a broader insight into the everyday lives and experiences of Latin American immigrant families in the United States. The second part of this chapter will build on previous theoretical models and critiques using the context of this case study involving Latin American immigrant families as they negotiate community social and welfare services in Oklahoma as part of the process of cultural incorporation.

Literature Review

As the anthropological record demonstrates, homo sapiens and their hominid ancestors have continually moved and explored Earth's diverse environments in search of food and a sustainable livelihood. Taking into account the fossil record, the formation of human social groups and their tendency to migrate are nearly as old as human beings themselves. Small groups have banded to form larger groups and larger groups have formed alliances to create empires. Over time many of these groups have disbanded, returning to smaller groups with weaker alliances. An integral part of human survival is found in these group formations. Thus, social relationships are not static and the social dynamics of groups change over time based on the variations in actors and their immediate environment.

Historically, anthropologists have worked in societies around the world that are not entrenched in Western philosophical and economic thought processes. Nonetheless, illuminating the interconnectedness of diverse cultures and human populations over space and time, Eric Wolf (1980) is credited with contributing to the field of anthropology and social theory in general by contending that Western belief systems have impacted and were impacted by non-Western peoples, particularly with the spread of global colonization in the 16th and 17th centuries.

For anthropologists of the 21st century, evaluating individual and group migratory patterns is a critical factor in social analysis. Traditionally, anthropology has not been an academic field concerned with the movement of people, but rather it has been (particularly for cultural anthropologists) a field geared towards recording

and understanding groups residing and subsisting outside of the primarily modern, industrialized, Western, capitalist world-system. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, anthropological perspectives and theories were challenged based on the phenomenon of technological globalization and in what Wallerstein postulates as culminating in the revolution of 1968. For Wallerstein, "the primary protest of 1968 was against US hegemony in the world-system (and Soviet acquiescence in that hegemony)" (2000:355). Thus, the nature of social theory itself was challenged during the 1960s world revolution due to the creation and perpetuation of the Cold War and the subsequent world alliance system (Western vs. Eastern bloc countries), as well as decolonization of the South or what came to be known as the Third World. A consequence of these world events was passionate protests against 'old left' anti-systemic movements and counter-culture behavior in daily life (sexuality, drugs, dress) (2000:358-360). Wallerstein maintains that the legacies left from these events include a global change in attitude towards revolutionary movements in which those "movements representing 'minority' or underdog strata need no longer, and no longer do, take second place to revolutionary movements representing presumed 'majority' groups" (2000:361). In this respect he says,

> The triumph in terms of the Revolution of 1968 has been the triple triumph in terms of racism, sexism, and analogous evils. One result is that the legal situations (state policies) have changed. A second result is that situations within the antisystemic movements have changed. A third result is that mentalities have changed (2000: 365).

A second legacy of the Revolution of 1968 is the debate on the fundamental strategy of social transformation among antisystemic movements. These movements include the "old left," such as trade unions and labor and social-democratic parties,

the new social movements, such as women, minority and green movements, various strains of anti-systemic communist parties and extra party organizations, traditional national liberation movements, and the rejection of "universalist" anti-systemic movements, which include indigenous protests over land rights (2000:365).

These events and the changes in global collective attitudes presented a challenge to the social sciences and a backlash to structural functionalism became evident in the post 1968 era. Rational-choice theories based on methodological individualism and logical positivism were challenged by the growing awareness of and voices from alternative world-views. This backlash came to be known as postmodernism, which rejected "the modernity of technology on behalf of the modernity of liberation…the post-modernists have been seeking a way to break out of the linguistic hold liberal ideology has had on our discourse" (2000:470). While postmodernism has been criticized for being too ambiguous as a theoretical paradigm in the social sciences, its main contribution to current theoretical trends is that it has effectively challenged the rigidity of the dominant, modernist perspective. It has forced social theorists and subsequently, policy makers to become more accountable for their approaches and activities in the world system.

In a study on changing social identities in southern Mexico, Grimes (1998) introduces migration studies by accounting for critical issues and concerns raised by the postmodern turn in the social sciences. She maintains that while methods and models of social analyses have undergone profound changes in recent scholarship, the critiques did not necessarily influence migration perspectives or descriptions of

immigrant populations (1998). She further argues, "migration scholars still tend to see immigrant populations as bounded social groups, essentializing complex social identities and social processes" (15). By recognizing the "heterogeneity and multiplicity of subjectivities and experiences that produce diverse cultural forms," migration studies must develop perspectives on the interrelationships between social identities, social relations, and global processes (16). Grimes also criticizes the stagnant course of immigrant studies because much of the growing hatred and intolerance in societies today is taken from these studies, which reproduce and reinforce "racist, classist, and sexist ideologies" (16). Finally, drawing on lessons learned during the postmodern turn, Grimes asserts her views on understanding social dynamics and change in the following paragraph:

> Ignoring the "other's" history, flattening social processes and human identities to fixed forms, denying agency, and negating the role of power in cultural production have left studies of migration and social change hollow. Migrants do not simply assimilate foreign cultures' ideas and practices but rather reconstruct new identities in the context of mediating institutions that shape their strategies and choices (16).

Consequently, an underlying assumption of Grimes' argument on immigration theory is that researchers have a responsibility to be accountable for the knowledge they produce about a particular group or social phenomenon, as well as maintain an understanding or awareness of the potential social implications of that knowledge.

The approach to the study of migration in anthropology, then, has taken on new perspectives that range from the consideration of those being "studied" to comparative methods of research practices and analyses from other fields of study, such as sociology, history, economics, geography and political science. For Brettel,

the anthropological approach is unique because it is a discipline "sensitive to place but also comparative in its perspective" (2000:98). Brettel outlines anthropological perspectives on migration by dividing them into several areas of study. The first area is the formulation of typologies "as a way to theorize about similarity and difference" by classifying such social phenomena as different forms of religious beliefs, economic exchange, political organization, and kinship and marriage systems (99). The second area is to consider "theories of articulation between sending and receiving societies" (98). A third area of discussion is on "the social organization of migration and processes of adaptation and change that includes a consideration of the relationship between gender and migration" (98). The final area presents "an analysis of connections between theorizing migration and theorizing identity and ethnicity" (98).

Therefore, as anthropologists continue to work at the local level, as we get to know people and their individual experiences, as we organize our data and make arguments for the particular position of those we observe, whether or not we represent the emic or the etic viewpoint, we are evermore inclined to paint a sophisticated, multi-dimensional backdrop to situate social and cultural groups within their specific local context as it relates to the larger global framework. And significantly, in analyzing the immigrant experience, Brettel points out,

> it is important to emphasize that anthropologists, who perceive the disjunction between the ideal and the actual as the fundamental characteristic of human experience, tend to look at immigration policy from the perspective of the immigrant who acts, adapts, and often circumvents. This emphasis is equally shaped by a theoretical shift in

> the discipline from an emphasis on structure to an emphasis on practice [Bourdieu 1977; Ortner 1984] (2000:100).

In considering the foundations of migration theory in anthropology, the major areas of study (as Brettel outlined) are considered below.

Migration Theories

Previous research in anthropology on the process of migration and migration experiences delineates such types of migrants from the perspectives of migratory wage labor, and economic versus refugee migrants, which fall into a larger model for understanding the motivations to migrate. Other typologies explore migration strategies, including return migration and the "culture" of migration (Brettel 2000:101). Often complementing typologies, considerable research and subsequent theories have flourished around articulation between "the micro and the macro" (102). These theories are generally rooted in modernization, political economy, and transnational frameworks. Modernization theories are grounded in classic liberal economics and are based on progessive, linear, folk-urban and urban to rural assumptions about the movement of people (Redfield 1941). As an equilibrium model of development, the modernization perspective is still useful in framing the "push-pull" strategies for why people migrate (Brettell 2000).

Recognizing the limitations of modernization theory, however, more recent theorists have built largely on Marxist thought and a historical-structuralist approach to explaining complex patterns of migration and migration experiences. Under the modernization perspective, liberal economic theories prevail. From the liberal viewpoint, little or no government intervention in economic processes is the key to a healthy economy (locally and internationally). The "invisible hand" is the means to

keeping economic processes in balance. Based on the assumption that all individuals will act according to the same rational or universal economic laws, politics for liberals is the social aspect of life, and it is meant only to keep communities in a harmonious balance. By contrast, the Marxist viewpoint (historical materialism) does not assume that people are immutable, rational egoists. Human motivations and orientations are largely shaped by the material environment of a particular time. Using the historical backdrop, Marx argued that different modes of production create change, and he focused on the capitalist mode of production and its tendency to create alienated workers (the proletariat) from the owners of production (the bourgeois). Marx projected that the demand for endless accumulation will eventually create revolution and a new mode of production will appear.

From the Marxist perspective, dependency theorists, such as Andre Gunder Frank (1971) and Immanuel Wallerstein (2000), account for the larger global market as a macro-level approach that demonstrates the economic and political relationships between sending and receiving communities. Wallerstein's world systems analysis is his reaction to modernist (development) theories (2000). Wallerstein argues that development theories are fundamentally flawed because they assume a linear evolutionary stance of progress in all social institutions. Negotiating a balance between the old theoretical structures and current social challenges, Wallerstein leans towards a substantive approach in which all systems are embedded – politics are influenced by economics, which are influenced by the humanities and vice versa. The local is influenced by the global and vice versa. The basic element of world systems analysis is the perception of the world in economically interrelated parts: the

core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. Each area feeds off the other in more than a simple economic relationship. All systems operate then through a continuous dialectical process that often reproduces hegemonic ideologies but also produces and incorporates individual agencies.

Consequently, these competing challenges to modernist theories compose the political economy paradigm, which dominate social theories, in general, and migration theories, in particular. As the political economy paradigm has matured, critical new concepts have been added to the understanding of the migration phenomenon. More recent scholarly discussions on the articulation between sending and receiving communities focus on migrants as active agents in the migration process. The concept of *transnationalism* emerged as a result of a broader acknowledgment that most migrants maintain ties to their homeland. Transnationalism can be defined as "a process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders (Brettel 2000:104). This perspective has been more useful as transportation and communication technologies allow people to travel and communicate across international boundaries with increasing ease and accessibility, as well as demonstrating that in addition to economic remittances, social remittances, such as religious ideas and practices, affect the sending community as well (Levitt 1998; Brettel 2000).

Based on Michael Kearney's (1986) anthropology of migration and his work with Latin American immigrants, the transnational approach rejects dependency theory's primary tenet of a unitary global capitalist system, as demonstrated in the

world systems approach. Rather, shaped by relationships with colonial and imperialist forces, peripheral communities are qualitatively different and "reproduce their distinctive forms in accord with their own structural imperatives" (Kearney 1986:342). Thus, the further development of transnationalism in the late 20th century reflected the profound changes in the world economy, politics, and ultimately, social constructions that have come to be recognized as the forces of *globalization*.

With the rapid improvements of technology and the recognition that communication and human travel is quicker and more efficient than ever before, 'globalization' is considered a concept of process, which has been in large part developed by Roland Robertson as "the crystallization of the entire world as a single place, the emergence of the global-human condition and the consciousness of the globe as such" (King 1998:11). The understanding of globalization works hand in hand with capitalization and the notion of the world as one nation-state with an open, free-market economy.

From the backdrop of globalization and the world-system, the concept of transnationalism is a related and dependent phenomenon of both economic and intellectual understandings of migration theory. From the economic perspective, "the word 'transnational' was widely used (in the 1960s) by students of economic processes to refer to the establishment of corporate structures with organizational bases in more than one state," which later were referred to as transnational corporations (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1999:76). From the intellectual perspective, "several generations of scholars had been using the adjective 'transnational' to signal an abatement of national boundaries and the development of

ideas and political institutions that spanned national borders" (1999:76). Therefore, the theory of transnational migration has been defined by Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (1999:75).

The consequences of the development of such concepts as transnational culture and transmigration in anthropology are demonstrated in the theoretical literature of the late 20th century. Appadurai (1998) recognized that migration studies would change the way "time and space is experienced and represented" (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1999:77). In relation to modernization theory and globalization, he suggests,

> the story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new feature of human history. But when it is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities (Appaduri 1998:4).

Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1999) argue that borders and boundaries are being contested and transgressed through migration. The new paradox is that a resurgence in the politics of differentiation intertwined with the "growth and intensification of global interconnection of economic processes, people, and ideas, "anthropologists who work with migrants have much to contribute to our understanding" of these new occurrences (1999:77). This resurgence of differentiation may be a response to the growing hegemonic acceptance of the world as one large global village. Yet, the recognition that global processes influence local social patterns, such as migration, cannot totally be abandoned. However,

understanding how local differences shape global structures is also a significant aspect of contemporary anthropological analyses.

With the local in mind and when considering the articulation between sending and receiving communities, another concept to emerge is the *imagined community*, which is specifically defined as the immigrant's perception of becoming part of the host community. More broadly, the sense of belonging can be viewed from the immigrant and the receiving society's perspective or it can be attributed to the immigrant's "use of memory of place to construct imaginatively their new lived world" (Chavez 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992:11; Brettel 2000:105). Using Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined community[1]," Leo Chavez has contributed to understandings of undocumented Latin American immigrant experiences through his research on cultural incorporation, in general (1991, 1994), and perceptions about health care access, more specifically (1984, 1992). His studies include measuring the relationship between how immigrants perceive themselves within the receiving community and "the relative importance of the imagined community on the intentions of undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States" (1994:52). Chavez argues that imagining oneself to be part of the community is a "powerful influence" on the willingness of immigrants to settle permanently (1994:52).

In acknowledging the articulation between the receiving and sending societies, the macro and the micro, migration theories also benefit from other, more traditional anthropological methods of social network analyses. The social organization of migration includes a consideration of kinship, friendship, and ethnic community ties from both the sending and the receiving regions. In these approaches, the primary

level of analysis often concentrates on family ties and the household as a particular unit of study, which is opposed to the larger structural approaches and cost-benefit analyses based on individual decision-making processes in rational-choice theories. In addition, the infusion of work on gender and the role of women within migration networks have significantly added to migration theories. Often grounded in early work on the domestic-public model and critiques on the public/private dichotomy, the role of gender in migration analyses has proliferated (Brettel 2000; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974).

Finally, theories of migration are inextricably linked to theories of ethnicity and identity. As modernist discourses have been challenged by processes of decolonization, theoretical perspectives on group and individual identity formation have also changed. A significant proponent of this change was Frederick Barth, who defined ethnicity as processual and a phenomenon where personnel and symbolic meaning may change over time, but boundaries are still maintained despite intercultural contact (1969). More recently, Brackette Williams challenged earlier definitions of ethnicity (1989). In a review of these definitions (Barth, Keyes, Cohen, and Cohen), she maintains that as the term "race" has fallen out of fashion, new ways of defining different groups of people increasingly came under the alternate category of "ethnicity" (1989). But, defining the term "ethnicity" has been problematic because of confusing links to nationalism and more recent understandings of the nation-state. Abner Cohen defined ethnicity as a collectivity of people who share some basic patterns of behavior and form part of a larger population (1974). For Ronald Cohen, ethnicity is structural, meaning that it is descent-based and identity is

formed based on the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of a group (1978). Williams argues that these definitions do not account for power relationships and the state (1989). Some of her objections to these definitions include that they do not account for the politics of stratification, interest group development, nationalist ideology, territory and the national context, and economics and the unbalanced share of profits. Further, she says that "ethnicity" is often conflated with minority classes, and that while some argue that groups actively maintain distinct boundaries, this may also be viewed as groups reacting to political and economic forces.

In studying ethnicity and migration, the "instrumentalist" and the "situational" approaches have emerged as useful (Brettel 2000:114). For instrumentalists, ethnicity is viewed more as "a political strategy that is pursued for pragmatic interests," and the situational approach is rooted in the Barth tradition, emphasizing "the fluidity and contingency of ethnic identity which is constructed in specific historical and social contexts" (Brettel 2000:114). These approaches recognize the broader articulation between sending and receiving communities, and they have been useful in demonstrating the negotiation of individual and group identities as migrants move back and forth between sending and receiving communities.

From the broad spectrum of the approaches presented above, migration theory in the field of anthropology has taken many forms. In recognizing the fluidity of movement across borders and national boundaries, within and between sending and receiving communities, and through technological changes, the complex factors situating migrants within the larger global/social sphere and within the particular characteristics of the local sphere are significant in the overall analysis of migration

patterns and migrant experiences. The integration of immigrants to the social system of a receiving community requires the consideration of the contemporary components of the modern world system. More specifically, rooted within the modern global framework are the dynamics between political and economic systems as they are guided by notions of nationalism, power structures, social stratification, and cultural norms.

Immigration and the Modern World System

Until 1960 European immigrants represented the majority of all foreign born residents in the United States. However, by 1980 that trend had shifted significantly, and more than half of the foreign born population came from Asian and Latin American countries (US Census 2000). From a macro-theoretical perspective, Wallerstein (2000) would attribute the shift in migration patterns to the United States and other core countries as a result of a global trend towards neoliberal economic policies, decolonization, and a push for democratization. This trend has fueled political and economic instability within peripheral and semi-peripheral nations, thus serving as a push factor for people in those regions to escape political and civil unrest, as well as search for work in more stable core regions, such as the United States. One of the results of decolonization is the transformation of the nation-state.

In considering patterns and processes of migration, the persistence of group identities across broad geographic boundaries is a disruption to hegemonic notions of nation-building. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc maintain that, "at the heart of the metaphor of 'America, the melting pot'" was a model of immigrant settlement in which immigrants eschewed national identity as well as the customs and language

of their birth" (1999:80). Consequently, over the centuries, the United States has fostered a latent assimilationist conditioning of immigrants, which underlies the more manifest rhetoric and discourse on a multicultural American mosaic. "What has been uniformly defined as unacceptable was a migration in which immigrants settled permanently in their new country while maintaining ties to countries they still saw as homelands" (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1999:80).

For immigrants today, ties to the homeland often remain strong and as the newcomers are incorporated into the receiving society, the integration process reflects the dynamics of the larger world economic system. Levitt (2001) presents a case for transnational nation-building as a frontier in hegemonic notions of the nation-state that tend to be limited to identity based on geographical boundaries and single country citizenship. Levitt argues that as countries experience unstable economic and political times, they recognize the link between out-migration and the northward economic pull of the global system. Consequently, governments (in this case Latin America) responded by offering dual citizenship and new ways of thinking about nation-building outside of geographic borders. More recent migration studies show that many migrants return home at one point or another and, with such movement across borders, family ties are rarely severed. Thus, social and family networks extend geographically across national borders, and the movement of people between the two countries becomes part of the larger transmigrant phenomenon. Such constant movement between communities means social and cultural changes for both places.

Levitt used the term “social remittance” to demonstrate the transnational flavor of newer migration experiences. By social remittance, she means, “the ideas, practices, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending-country communities” (1998:76). In Levitt's study of migrants to Boston from Miraflores, Dominican Republic, many Mirafloreños found that they had to make considerable adjustments. Their work schedules were longer and material goods were more expensive. Away from their larger network of friends and family, they developed an enclave in Boston and a new form of networking was established. As a result of a changed lifestyle, migrants often adapted to the new community. Nevertheless, they also brought many cultural customs and traditions with them and reformatted them to fit into their new lifestyle. In addition, as a result, traditional family structures were altered with children and spouses often left behind in the homeland or children sent back to the homeland where they were thought to be more easily cared for while their parents worked. Levitt maintains that an integral part of migration to Boston has been a reliance of many newcomers on the Catholic Church as well as other formal institutions. While these organizations have been structurally altered by so many Latin American immigrants, the Church and the social fabric of the host community have also altered considerably. Levitt’s discussion on social remittances includes changes made to the local Miraflores church culture, both in a stricter organizational structure and in changes in beliefs and ritual practices. Migrants in Boston relied more on the church in search of community support and in creating the diaspora. When they returned home, they brought with them different ways of behaving and thinking.

Latin American Immigrants as Incorporated Subjects

Using the political economy framework with an interest in how immigrants are incorporated into local labor markets and communities, several case studies demonstrate the Latin American experience as they perceive themselves within the broader society and how they are often perceived by the receiving community through social policies and in practice. One such study involves a macro-level interest in the process of immigrant incorporation, as well as micro-level interests involving health-seeking behaviors through the comparison of immigrants in San Diego County, California, and Dallas, Texas. In this study, Chavez, Flores, and Lopez-Garza maintain that even after the 1986 Immigration and Reform Act, which legalized thousands of undocumented immigrants, "US immigration policies include a complex set of additional political factors that restrict undocumented immigrants' use of social services, including health services such as Medicaid" (1992:8). Furthermore, in reviewing immigrant behavior towards obtaining social services, this study is particularly relevant because it illuminates the relationship between immigrant roles within local labor markets, as well as the world economy, with their ability to gain access to social services. Chavez, Flores, and Lopez-Garza demonstrate that many undocumented laborers work in either the secondary or informal sector of the labor market, where wages are typically very low and benefits, such as health insurance, are rarely offered (1992). The data from this study supported the view that those without insurance were less likely to use any health services when needed, although when they would use services, such as emergency room care, "the portrayal of the undocumented as overutilizers of hospital emergency rooms is not, however, entirely supported by the evidence" (1992:21).

As Chavez, Flores, and Lopez-Garza suggest, the patterns of behavior in using health care services by Latin American immigrants may be linked to macro-level economic processes in the late 20th century that have dramatically changed the face of Latin American immigration patterns. Therefore, in attempting to understand the relationship between immigrants and social services in the beginning of the 21st century, it is critical to understand the changing characteristics of these immigration patterns, particularly in relation to immigrant family structures. Before the 1970s, the number of men migrants to the North heavily outweighed the number of women migrants, which was, in large part, due to highly volatile and labor-intensive seasonal job programs, such as the Bracero Program[2]. The program often only employed men in primarily rural settings. However, more recent national statistics demonstrate that the gender gap in immigrants from Latin America is closing with a 54 to 46 percent male to female ratio by 2000, and more immigrants are settling in urban areas than ever before (US Census 2000). These changes in Latin American immigration patterns reflect larger changes in the formal US economy from an agricultural and industrializing base to a post-industrial economy focused on a growing service-oriented sector.

Another component in understanding these newer migration experiences can be found in Jacqueline Hagan's study (1994) of a Mayan Indian community that settled in Houston, Texas from Guatemala. After years of living as undocumented immigrants, many members of this growing community decided to take measures to become legal citizens of the United States after the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). In documenting this case of legal

incorporation, one major aspect of Hagan's study was to explore the different experiences of men and women in the migration and settlement process. She found that popular assumptions about the migration experience did not account for these differences, often treating men and women as being the same, and such assumptions tend to be embedded in policies, programs, and laws targeting immigrants. She concluded that, overall while women are making up an increasingly larger share of the immigrant population, the experience is often much more difficult for women. From the trip across the border to accessing social networks for work opportunities and social services, Hagan indicates that Mayan women tend to be disadvantaged, and she says, "the financial and social costs of making the trip are much higher for women than men" (1994:156). Women tend to rely on two coyotes to help them across the border due to safety concerns, so they do not often travel alone or exclusively with other women, which makes their trip fare much more expensive than for men. Once in the United States, their primary source of work is in the domestic informal economy, and because of the isolation from other community members in these occupations, social networks develop much more slowly and tend to be weaker than men's networks. Also, women do not have the same earning potential that men have, which further inhibits their ability to transcend their low-income economic status. Hagan notes that single women have an even tougher time at making the connections they need to help establish themselves within the labor market. In general, IRCA was less beneficial for women because employers in the informal sector were less likely to be willing to document an employee's work history so that they might be eligible for legal status. However, one positive aspect of the legal

process for women was that the sanctions against employers (since IRCA was enacted) were less likely to affect employers within the informal sector (1994:159).

In a similar study using an ethnographic approach to describe micro-level experiences of migration from the view of women as they negotiate job security, access to social networks, and ultimately, access to more formal social services, such as health care and education, Maria de la Luz Ibarra (1998) links these experiences to the larger political economy approach. This approach has been used in past studies to show how newcomers, particularly those who are undocumented, are often relegated to secondary and informal economies where formal social services are not so easily accessible (Chavez, Flores, and Lopez-Garza 1992). In her study on Mexicana household workers in Santa Barbara, California, Luz Ibarra traces the migrant path of several women from their roots in Mexico to their eventual roles as participants in the informal US labor market (1998). She demonstrates how these women make choices based on the work they can secure and how the work impacts choices made within the social and family realms of their lives. For example, Luz Ibarra demonstrates how global economic restructuring has created a demand for domestic labor in the United States without many mechanisms for social policies to work effectively with the growing migrant population. Especially for those who enter illegally, there are no large-scale programs designed to ensure that employers are fair and humane in the treatment of their employees. She suggests that the implications for the children of these employees are even bleaker. One undocumented single mother, who worked as a maid and nanny between 45 and 72 hours a week, indicated that such an uncertain and demanding schedule was even tougher on her young son because while trying to

support him, she works the long and exhaustive hours expected by her employers. She rarely sees her son and must trust that he stays out of trouble while alone after school (1998:158).

As shown above, the effects of the unregulated informal economy, where many immigrants begin their role within the larger US economy, can have profound impacts on how immigrant families alter their domestic sphere to survive. Women who work as maids and nannies are at the mercy of their employers on such issues as when and how much time they will have off and when they get paid. Even making the decision to leave children in (or send children back to) a family's country of origin may be, in large part, a consequence of economic stress on the family, which is often related to the work they can secure. A by-product of this is the transnational family where single-family units split time between countries, and child-rearing becomes an extended family task across national borders (Levitt 1998).

The Cultural Construction of Citizenship

Studies targeting the immigrant experience in Western democracies, such as the United States, have led some scholars to suggest that social welfare and service programs are active agents in the differential construction of cultural citizenship among immigrant groups (Horton 2004; Ong 1996; Sacks 1996). In the forefront of this discussion is Karen Sacks, who explores the historical whitening of Jews in US society in the mid-1900s. She maintains, "there are similarities and differences in the ways each of the European immigrant groups become 'whitened,'" and she uses the Jewish immigrant case to show "changing notions of whiteness to be part of America's larger system of institutional racism" (1996:79). Similarly, Aihwa Ong

generally supports Sack's proposition that different immigrant groups are subjected to institutional racism, but she adds another dimension to Sacks' approach when she compares differences in experiences *within* immigrant groups. Ong's work explores the experiences of rich and poor Asian immigrants in the United States, and she suggests that through institutional practices, non-white immigrants are subjected to different processes of normalization, which are based on racial oppositions, cultural competence, and consumer power (1996). For Ong, the governmentality of state agencies in liberal democracies like the United States, "is often discontinuous, even fragmentary, and the work of instilling proper normative behavior and identity in newcomers must also be taken up by institutions in civil society" (1996:738). Defining citizenship as "a cultural process of 'subjectification,' in the Foucaldian sense of *self-making* and *being-made* by power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control and administration [Foucault 1989, 1991]," Ong proposes that such a concept of cultural citizenship can be used in many different global contexts (737).

In a more recent study comparing Cuban and Mexican immigrant experiences in New Mexico, Sarah Horton applies Ong's concept of cultural citizenship to demonstrate the health care system's participation in the differential construction of minority subjects. Horton argues that popular conceptions of immigration, as well as "a climate of economic insecurity and the decline of the welfare state have recently intensified the concern for restricting public goods to those groups identified as 'deserving' citizens" (2004:475). Specifically, Horton describes how the perception of Cubans, welcomed by the state as political refugees, and the perception of Mexican

immigration, discouraged by the state as a drain on American jobs and state resources, have influenced not only the availability of health care services to vulnerable populations through institutional policies, but also reinforced notions of "deservingness" of such services within each group. Horton concludes that in the face of reduced charity care resources due to changes in state social welfare policies, provider institutions must compensate by "the rationing of health care based on a scale of individuals' imputed moral worth" (475).

Horton acknowledges that public discourse does include individuals within the larger healthcare system who question the fairness of policies that provide more and better quality services to Cuban immigrants over Mexican immigrants. But overall, the findings of her research on Cuban and Mexican immigrant experiences support Ong's findings among poorer Asian immigrants, who experience a social "blackening" within America's ethnic and minority hierarchy, which emanates in large part from discriminatory programs that are embedded in the dominant society's social policies and welfare practices. In turn, a self-perceived sense of "undeservingness" of social services develops within groups as their primary contact with the dominant society's attitudes (such as the notion of less desirable Mexican immigrants) is often based on their experiences with social service programs.

Horton's research is significant because it demonstrates how different immigrant groups within the larger Latin American category formulate their own perceptions of "self-deservingness" within the dominant social system. On the one hand, not only were Mexicans viewed as less deserving by hospital administrators, Mexicans viewed themselves as less deserving and thus less willing to pursue needed

services. On the other hand, Cubans were viewed as better educated and more deserving of services, and they often perceived themselves as deserving of services and acted accordingly in their persistent attempts to gain access to health care programs (Horton 2004:480).

Both Ong and Horton rely on considerable ethnographic data to build their cases for demonstrating differential treatment of minority groups, but it is Ong's work that provides one of the more compelling arguments in acknowledging the intersection of social service programs, cultural perceptions of family, and individual agency within a larger socio-economic framework. In describing the common problem of wife abuse among low-income Cambodian immigrants, Ong shows how women negotiate the unequal shift in domestic power that they often achieve once in the United States, because it is women who usually get the welfare check and sometimes resist turning it all over to the husband, who often retaliates through abuse. Nonetheless, Ong says, "Many women try to maintain the male-dominated family system despite the threats and abuse" (1996: 743). She further indicates, "this acknowledgement of a shift in the balance of domestic power, linked to dependency on state agencies, indicated that Khmer women do not think of themselves as passive victims but are aware of their own role in marital conflicts" (1996:743).

In further exploring the differential construction of cultural citizenship among immigrant groups, Waterson (2006) focuses on more recent Latin American immigrant experiences as they become part of the larger Hispanic group in the United States. Framing her analyses within the United States' enduring Black/White racial binary and Sack's review of the Jewish experience, Waterson asks, "Are Latinos

Becoming "White" Folk?" (2006:133). She demonstrates that the whitening process is underway for many Latinos, "including the growing importance of Latinos in the neoliberal marketplace, the mounting significance of Latino elites to the American political scene, extant intra-Latino class differences, [and] results of the 2000 US Census…" (2006:133). Yet, the dynamics between class, ethnicity, and immigrant status within the growing Hispanic population also indicate that for many Latinos, the blackening process is at work, and it is a process that filters through those newcomers who do not fit the economic, social, and cultural expectations of the receiving society.

Waterson's goal is simply to demonstrate how this process appears to be playing out in the larger Hispanic minority group within US society. She is not conclusive but rather reflective on the role of race in America and suggests a recurring pattern familiar to other minority groups within America's social history. As these patterns of Latino incorporation emerge, past studies on differential patterns of ethnic and minority incorporation into American society also provide considerable resources for comparison when studying the dynamics of immigrant experiences. African American and Native American experiences demonstrate how they have historically negotiated and contested their positions within the larger US socio-economic system, and a similar pattern of blackening and whitening is evident. Yet, as the subjects of considerable research on the process of differential cultural, social, and economic incorporation, American Blacks and Native American groups demonstrate different strategies in becoming part of the larger social fabric in the United States.

Comparative Patterns of Incorporation

In acknowledging studies documenting the experiences of American Blacks and Native American groups, especially from the anthropological lens, such a large body of research exists to demonstrate the differential treatment and participation of these groups within the larger US society that the small scope of this review could not possibly do it justice. However, two studies provide examples of the different strategies employed by each group to access social services and how these programs might differentially affect family social structures. First, in examining the experience of the American Black population in the article, "Marriage Promotion and Missing Men: African American Women in a Demographic Double Bind," the authors use "structural violence as a heuristic framework to examine the interconnections among demographic facts, such as population dynamics, the effects of punitive social policies, and unequal access to resources, all of which are shaped by institutional racism" (Lane, Keefe, Rubinstein, Levandowski, Freedman, Rosenthal, Cibula, and Czerwinski 2004:406). After conducting a comprehensive study using a multiple-field approach, the authors review the historical deconstruction of the Black family in the 20th century and suggest that in 1905 only 15 percent of African American households were female-headed, but by 1990, US Census data indicated that 50 percent of African American households were female-headed (412). The 35 percent change in female-headed households is attributed to a large portion of African American men missing from the marriage age population. The authors suggest that a major culprit for the missing men begins after 1965 with the War on Drugs when incarceration rates of African American men over white men increased disproportionately (9.6 times more than white men) (414). More recently, social

policy discourse, specifically marriage-promotion policies such as the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, "has grown more strident in trying to create incentives that will lead these [single African American] women to wed, as if their single status was a personal preference that could be changed by social policy bringing forth the right combination of carrots and sticks" (406).

In assessing the epidemiological, environmental, ethnographic, and demographic data among low-income families in Syracuse, New York, the researchers demonstrate social policies that are "heterosexist and blame African American women for demographic realities over which they have little control," because policymakers do not account for underlying social structural factors (406). Finally, in their attempt to reveal major flaws in contemporary social policies and how they affect African American families, the authors argue, "by assuming single motherhood to be an idiosyncratic behavioral pattern and ignoring the disproportionate premature death and incarceration, contemporary marriage promotion policies obscure the pattern of racism constraining African American women's reproductive choices" (406). This conclusion is corroborated with ethnographic evidence that indicates African American women's individual preferences were "to be in stable, nurturing, intimate relationships" (424).

While there are similarities, the historical relationship of social services to the social incorporation of American Blacks into US society does differ in many ways from the experiences of Native American groups. Significantly, broader social policies targeting the American Black population have roots in historical segregation policies, which reflect the particular dynamics of their relationship with the formation

of the larger US society, including forced migration from another continent, which permanently cut kin ties and social networks, and participation in the slave labor industry that further fragmented family relationships. The power of these historical facts within the nation's memory has made it difficult to reverse practices of ideological "blackening" as demonstrated in the above referenced article on African American families. Although it is often argued that Native American's have been, historically, subjected to institutional discrimination as well, the approach of social policies and programs reflect a different route to social incorporation that previously involved segregation through the reservation system, but later, integration through job placement and training programs in urban areas. Ultimately, the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975 has granted tribes much greater control over their own tribal affairs and community social policy making.

In her long-term study of the American Indian community in Los Angeles, California, Joan Weibel-Orlando (1991) explores social policies and programs targeting Native North America, particularly in a large urban environment where many individuals converged from tribes around the country after the implementation of the BIA Relocation Program in 1952, which "provided temporary rental housing for almost 50 percent of the Indian migrants to Los Angeles" (1991:24). In this study, Weibel-Orlando demonstrates how a minority group, which is culturally heterogeneous and geographically dispersed, manages to organize and maintain a sense of community and ethnic identity within a larger urban environment. Early on, the organization of social services was linked to Federal programs that attempted to facilitate the assimilation of Native American individuals into the dominant social

system. Weibel-Orlando shows how, over time, almost all social service programs were run by Indians and as the Los Angeles Indian community evolved, other social, economic, and religious groups emerged. And often, urban social networks and groups were established along kin/family lines that included maintaining links with existing reservation communities, which are mainly located in rural areas.

This study is particularly significant to the study of more recent Latin American immigrant experiences because it provides a framework from which to compare how minority groups are incorporated into the larger social system while building an identity outside of more traditional notions of community, in which factors such as shared space (i.e. neighborhoods, villages) and cultural homogeneity are keys to understanding group identities. From this perspective, Weibel-Orlando explains, "critical to establishing a sense of core ethnic community among Los Angeles Indians was the existence of the social services-oriented Indian Centers, Inc. (ICI), initiated in 1935, and its various satellite operations throughout the Los Angeles basin" (104).

In the formation and maintenance of an urban Indian community, Weibel-Orlando suggests that traditional understandings of family may have been a key element in developing a sense of community, as well as to challenge anti-nepotism and

> legal rational hiring practices that place greater weight on qualifications such as previous experience, character and skill references, and proven performance, and attempt to discount or militate against such criteria as tribal, regional, and kinship commonalities, [which] are still alienating concepts to many Indians. These kinds of associational rules undercut kinship-dictated systems of

> reciprocal relationships with and responsibility for clan and lineage members (123).

To this end, she further states, "My initial work among the Los Angeles Indians substantiates the persistence and power of kin relations to influence behavior" (124). Finally, it is within the broad spectrum of urban life that diverse backgrounds and group histories converge to form a community identity that is not always unified in its understanding of how it should be incorporated into the dominant social structure.

Similar to the Indians of Los Angeles, Latin American immigrant families and kin networks negotiate community through social organizations and social service providers, while maintaining ties with their sending communities. Yet, as an economically and socially marginal group within the larger receiving community, social policies and programs reflecting dominant social priorities may force immigrant families to adapt unintended strategies, such as the American Black experience with female-headed households, to gain access to more formal social services.

Theoretical Approach

For this case study, which focuses on Latin American immigrants who have relocated to the south central part of the United States where they have not, historically, settled in large numbers, the specific area of interest within anthropological theory is in the realm of adaptation and change. The geographical location and historical position of the receiving community and the newcomers provide a context where the social process of integration can be examined as it is presently occurring. The process of integration on a local level and primarily from the

immigrant's perspective provides a lens for recalculating the overall process of cultural incorporation within the modern world system. In line with past studies on immigrants and social incorporation in the United States, this project adheres to the political economy approach. Additionally, as the postmodern turn in the late 20th century has ushered in many significant challenges to political economy, this study also addresses such challenges by employing more recent theoretical models that add critical new dimensions to social analysis. For example, discussion on what nation-building means in a neo-liberal, globalizing, and post-modern era, particularly in theoretical debates about immigration today, have spurred the development of symbolic/interpretive models. These models focus on individual experiences and thick descriptions of cultural processes as text. Transactional models employ structure and agency as a key combination to understanding individual and collective experiences. The contribution that postmodern scholars have made to social theory has been to add to the "situated knowledges" of individual and group experiences as they are affected by and affect larger social structures (Haraway 1988).

One of the more useful theories guiding this study is practice theory, which attempts to bridge theories of structure with theories of agency. While Pierre Bourdieu (1977) is credited with developing practice theory in great detail, Sherry Ortner (1989) has further expanded it, and for purposes of studying the intersection of Latin American immigration and religion, Hilary Cunningham (1995) adapted Ortner's version to her study on the sanctuary movement along the US/Mexico border. Using the traditional ethnographic approach, Cunningham's study of the sanctuary movement takes into account the nativist voice, the role of gender, and

human agency under the practice theory framework. Based on Ortner's version of practice theory, which "is in itself a theory of translation between an objective world and a subjective one, between a world constituted by logics beyond actors' perceptions, and a world constituted by logics spun by thinking, acting agents," individual experiences are integral to the process of cultural incorporation because each migrant is an active agent in the process of adaptation and change (1995:9).

Going beyond functional analyses, Cunningham suggests that institutions and their discourses are not static but are processes. Therefore, using the social service backdrop as a central space of organized institutions where immigrants and receiving community members converge, social service organizations are similar to Cunningham's perspective on religious institutions because they are continually formed and shaped by outside influences. More specifically, the receiving community's approach to gender issues is an arena of influence that is significant to this study because women are integral to seeking social services and maintaining the well-being of all family members. In her study on rural to urban migration experiences in Mexico, Napolitano (2002) examines the "feminine" side of religion and discusses what it means to become a woman in a Mexican urban community. In her analyses, Napolitano addresses more recent theoretical concerns in the anthropological literature by noting the problematization of self and experience and developing what she calls "prisms of belonging," which was partly developed from gender studies. Here she states,

> While female identity is still predominately based on physical proximity and caring for others, the interpretation of traditional gender

> roles and the boundaries of motherhood and wifehood are shifting in the face of ongoing, open-ended challenges and a "void of knowledge" of available alternatives (5).

For immigrant women negotiating the everyday needs of their families, their subjective approach to becoming part of the larger community hinges on these prisms of belonging and the void of knowledge of actual alternatives.

In contrast to the immigrant position, those members of the receiving community who work with immigrants or who are in positions to influence the social policies of immigrants also play a pivotal role in the process of cultural incorporation. To this end, these members of the community are embedded within the dominant culture and must operate within the hegemonic social structures. Social service workers and the receiving community in general must also negotiate the *habitus*, which Bourdieu proposes is produced by "the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition)" (1997:72). Taken from this approach, the receiving community's reactions and responses to the newcomers is grounded in "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures…" (Bourdieu 1997:72). Generally speaking, what this means is that the particular political-economic structures and socio-cultural norms operating within the local context guide the process of incorporation both from the receiving community's approach to the newcomers and the immigrant experiences as newcomers. The convergences of differing but also overlapping habiti for both groups and individuals within those groups create the present conditions, including reproducing or redefining processes of stratification and categorization.

In addition, other studies have linked the process of integration with existing social networks and the process of building social and human capital within the receiving society. For several women interviewed during field research for this project, they demonstrate the larger regional patterns of migration from one area, the state of Chihuahua in Mexico, to another, the state of Oklahoma in the United States. Although they may not have known each other in Mexico, they discovered each other in their settlement location through their common experiences in their homeland and through their experiences with the migration process and subsequent working and living arrangements. They have then formed a loose alliance of friends and acquaintances who they can call on for valuable resources and information within the local immigrant community, such as gathering to meet for a discussion with a local researcher about immigrant experiences and social services.

Immigrant social networks are then integral to the receiving community's reconfiguration of *social capital* as it adapts to the newcomers. The concept of social capital is rooted in the political decolonization era of the mid-20th century. Bourdieu formulated the concept as a result of field research he conducted in Algeria during their war of independence against French rule (1997:vii). Due to Bourdieu's experiences in the field, his subsequent theoretical publications on culture reflected an identification of the levels of awareness individuals and/or communities have within various socio-political contexts. Although he has been criticized for not explicitly resolving problems of subjectivity and objectivity in the field, he is often credited with raising awareness of the perspective and voice of the "other" (the voice of those marginalized or oppressed under the dominant world system), which, under

postmodern premises, is a key to understanding their positions in the larger socio-economic system.

For Bourdieu, social capital is defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition…which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital" (Baron, Field and Schuller 2000:4-5). Coleman and Putnam further contributed to the conceptual development of social capital by applying the definition to non-elite groups and further defining it as "features of social life – networks, norms, and trusts – that enables participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (2000:9). The element of reciprocity is critical in understanding the idea of networks, norms and trusts because as Putnam indicates, "people may have high trust levels and yet be socially inactive or even antisocial…Trustworthiness… promotes the kinds of interaction which reinforce norms of generalized reciprocity. This generalized reciprocity is the touchstone of social capital" (Baron, Field and Schuller 2000: 11). From this perspective, it might be added that it is, more than likely, no small coincidence that the recognition of reciprocity as a tool for understanding social phenomena is moving into current theoretical paradigms in a time when there is more social diversity in the academic arena. Anthropologists have understood the idea of reciprocity for a long time as a significant component of economic redistribution and social maintenance in many non-Western cultures.

In contrast, the concept of human capital is grounded in the neoliberal tradition of capitalism, and it is understood in terms of the labor pool, particularly as a

reserve of skilled laborers needed to sustain and grow a local economy. Existing immigrant community social networks play an integral role in disseminating the social and cultural skills required of individual newcomers as they are integrated into the local economy. More importantly, local social and cultural expectations of the newcomers are manifested in interactions between receiving community members and the newcomers. Local social service organizations often act as a significant social space where these interactions occur. Therefore, the realm of social welfare provides an intersection where individual and collective identities, including issues of class, ethnicity, and gender expectations, are negotiated based on the variation in and dynamics of often contradictory world views between the newcomers and the receiving community.

Finally, the negotiation of individual and group identities is subject to the embedded processes of stratification and categorization of the receiving community, as well as those embedded in the sending community. Therefore, as Ong and Horton have demonstrated, the determination of "deservingness" of a group in becoming legitimate citizens often becomes apparent at the intersection of state policies and the interaction between the newcomers and receiving society members, such as in social welfare services. The need for and the use of welfare services, in and of itself, represents a non-conformity to dominant Western ideologies, which value individual responsibility, including the skills and resources to pay for one self. For those who attempt to access social welfare services, they are viewed as surrendering to a reduced level of expected cultural competence, imputed human capital, and consumer power, which results in an ideological blackening. The subsequent position of the immigrant

into the receiving society is based on both the assessment of the receiving society and the assessment of the newcomer as they negotiate old identities with new experiences.

Endnotes

[1]Chavez quotes Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" by stating,

> members of modern nations cannot possibly know all of their fellow-members, and yet "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion….[The nation] is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. [Anderson 1983: 15-16]

He further explains,

> the notion of imagined communities raises important questions concerning the incorporation of undocumented immigrants. Does the larger society "imagine" undocumented immigrants to be part of the community? And to what extent do undocumented settlers imagine themselves to be part of the larger community (1991: 259)?

[2]Primarily as a means of compensating for low-wage labor shortages after World II, the Bracero Program (1942-1964) was an agreement between the United States and Mexico to allow Mexican laborers to work legally in US fields and factories (Sandos and Cross 1983: 43-44).

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Design

On a chilly winter Saturday, I met with a group of women in a small one room apartment in the Capitol Hill District on Oklahoma City's south side. The apartment belonged to a previous interviewee who gathered a group of her friends from work and her apartment building to meet with me. The women ranged in age from 19 to 54, and most of them came from Juarez, Mexico. They varied in their employment statuses, with some not working at all to others who worked in factories where they sewed clothing, or packaged potatoes and meat. Because seating was limited, I volunteered to sit on the floor to play with their babies and answer questions from their curious children while the mothers filled out the questionnaires. As our discussion got underway, I began asking general questions to facilitate the conversation, which quickly turned to work opportunities and pay. Several women indicated that they made less than minimum wage, suggesting that because they did not have "papers" they could not demand any more money. I did not directly ask their legal statuses, but ultimately, through conversations about working and finding needed social services, the issue of legality became integral to what opportunities were available or not available to these women and their families. And, even though my research funding allowed $25 to compensate a participant for his or her time during the initial life history interview, the women let me know that while grateful for the extra cash, they came to the meeting because they were curious to see what kinds of questions I would ask and what I was about in general. From my position on the floor and the women seated on chairs and a sofa around me, they grilled me about my views on immigrants and Oklahoma's new laws, who would be a better presidential candidate, and the type of work and money I made. They wanted to make sure I was sincere in my efforts to learn more about their lives.

Under the current political climate in the United States, where anti-immigration sentiment has proliferated among the general citizenship, research among immigrant populations, particularly groups from Latin America, has become challenging in large part because of post-September 11, 2001, fears that porous borders make prime entry routes for potential terrorists. The heightened awareness on border issues has illuminated the flood of undocumented immigrants to the United States, and therefore, for me to gain access to and the trust of those in the immigrant

community, such as with the group of women described above, required special efforts to ensure the rights of all research participants, despite their legal status.

This chapter will outline the basic design of the research project and the methods used to carry out qualitative data collection with a specific interest in demonstrating how immigrant identities were not compromised during the interview phase. Research was conducted using a variety of ethnographic methods in the Latin American immigrant community in Oklahoma City. The methods included the social networking approach with the "snowball effect," participant-observation, random-sample (anonymous) questionnaires, informal interviews, and extended life history interviews. The social networking approach initially worked as a way to meet research participants through an informal contact list, which ultimately grew and branched out into the larger community to include a geographically widespread and more diverse group of participants. The participant-observation approach was chosen in order to study interactions between immigrants and social service workers in every day social settings. It also facilitated informal interviews and the interest of prospective new participants. I circulated anonymous questionnaires throughout the community in order to gather general demographic data and also to facilitate interest in formal interviews. Informal and formal life history interviews provided the bulk of data and helped to clarify discrepancies in data acquired from the anonymous questionnaires. The study participants included: 1) individual members of Latin American immigrant households, and 2) employees of local social service organizations who work with the immigrant population. The research design is based

on the American Anthropological Society's accepted guidelines for the ethical and methodological practices of ethnographic research.

Research Design and Data Collection

Research was divided into two phases. These phases included 1) building a word-of-mouth participant network with both members of the immigrant community and local social service organizations, and 2) the collection of individual life histories. The first phase was initiated through an anonymous questionnaire to a statistically significant number of the immigrant population (86 individuals in Oklahoma City). A brief, open-ended questionnaire was used in formal and informal interviews with social service workers using questions designed specifically for them. This initial data was used to complement data collected in the second phase. Contacts made in the first phase facilitated the recruitment of a smaller number of research subjects willing to participate in the second phase of the project.

Because ethnographic research is primarily qualitative, the second phase and the main method of acquiring data was through the collection of individual histories from a small number, twenty-five (25), from the immigrant community and seven (7) social service workers, all of whom voluntarily consented to participate in the study on a long-term basis. Part of this approach included participant-observation in community program activities and local events. All of the data collected through individual life histories, formal and informal interviews, as well as the initial quantitative data collected through questionnaires, was analyzed and used to learn more about the role of social service programs in the everyday lives of Latin American immigrant families in Oklahoma.

Participants from immigrant households were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire, either by writing it out themselves or they were asked by the interviewer, who wrote the answers out for the participant (depending on the participant's preference). The questionnaire was available in Spanish and English versions for the convenience of the participants (see Appendix A and B for copies of the questionnaires). Based on the willingness and interest of participants in answering the written questions, the interviewer asked follow-up questions and gathered life history information from a small segment of the participant pool. This procedure involved the acquisition of informed consent prior to any interviews, and it allowed for $25 in remuneration for the participant's time, which also served as a strategy for recruiting participants in the extended interview process. Additionally, some participants, who agreed through the informed consent process, were asked to have their interviews recorded using audio equipment.

In a formal or informal interview setting, participants from social service agencies or organizations were asked general questions about their organization and questions about the services their respective organizations provide to immigrants from Latin America. This procedure included the acquisition of informed consent prior to any interviews. Also, some of these participants, who agreed through the informed consent process, were asked to have their interviews recorded using audio equipment as well. The types of organizations represented in the study include a government-funded health clinic, private non-profit health clinics and social service programs, a government policy-making office, inter-agency policy planning groups, and religious organizations.

Keeping in line with commonly practiced ethnographic research methods, the social networking approach to recruitment proved successful as a field research method. It created a "snowball" effect in finding willing and interested participants for the study. Therefore, the main recruitment strategy for individual immigrant participants was based on word of mouth communication through the principal investigator's existing social network as an Oklahoma City native, including friends, family, and general acquaintances who themselves were willing participants or who suggested potentially willing participants. The main recruitment strategy for participants from social service organizations was also through the principal investigator's existing social networks. Social service organizations were occasionally used to recruit immigrant participants. A copy of the flyer used for recruitment activities may be found in Appendix E.

For those individuals who agreed to the longer interviews and the collection of life histories, Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, etc., were not recorded, but names, addresses, and phone numbers were sometimes recorded for those participants who consented to be interviewed in places where they were most comfortable and/or interviewed multiple times. Because the research was qualitative, first names were learned to make individual participants feel comfortable when answering questions. However, no individual identifiers were used, except for those individuals in the social services category who formally consented to the use of their true identity. Because of the often ambiguous nature of legal status, no individual identifiers of the immigrant population are used. All names were changed and locations obscured to protect the identity of all participants. No photographs of

individual immigrant participants were taken in an effort to minimize any potential legal risks to the subjects. In addition, participants were not specifically asked about their legal status, although legal status generally became apparent because it was often directly relevant to one's ability to gain access to social service programs.

Institutional Review

Social and behavioral science studies are generally considered to pose only a minimal risk to the study population, so they are, therefore, qualified for an expedited review process through the academic institutional review board. However, with this particular study, there were several factors that slowed and occasionally stalled the research phase due to the review process. These factors revolved around a concern for protecting any potential undocumented participants. Extra caution was exercised by the review board to ensure that I was not permanently recording easily traceable individual identifiers, such as taking photographs. Likewise, I did not want to put any of the participants in a legally precarious situation by compromising their identities. The review board did approve the use of audio recordings, but during the research, none of the immigrant participants wished to be recorded. I then relied on hand-written notes as much as possible during interviews, and right after the interview sessions, I recorded in my notes additional information I recalled from the interview.

As research progressed and the nature of the project evolved, the review board was consulted and forms, such as the questionnaire and consent forms, were resubmitted for approval. Because I am not a native Spanish speaker, the questionnaires and consent forms underwent several revisions with input from local translators and assistance from native speakers, including a Spanish professor who

graciously assisted me after I received conflicting suggestions from individuals who came from different places in Latin America.

Another concern of the review board was my recruitment strategy. If I was to conduct participant-observation sessions at social service sites with the intent of recruiting immigrant participants to the study, I was expected to have written approval of the sponsoring organization. This proved difficult as I went from organization to organization as they were referred to me (and there were many). Generally, each had its own internal process for approving researchers on its premises. Once written approval was gained at each research site, it then had to be approved by the review board, which was very time-consuming. In one case, I received formal approval from a site and the review board, but by the time I was able to get all of the other sites approved, I could not get anyone to call me back from the first site in order to conduct interviews, either with the social service workers or the immigrant clientele. Nonetheless, each step requested of the review board was completed to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants.

Recruitment Challenges and the Outsider Perspective

As the ethnographic research method evolves, the role of the researcher within the local context is subject to a vast range of considerations and criticisms. Our abilities as researchers to become immersed in the everyday lives of the research participants without losing sight of the larger issues can be challenging, particularly when the context is in a large urban, metroplex where community life is fragmented by long distances between work, home, social and health services, the market place, and religious and entertainment activities, as well as variable work schedules. As a

native resident of the Oklahoma City metroplex, my migratory experiences have been limited to other large urban metroplexes within the United States, such as Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C., to study and work. My experience in crossing international borders is limited to a tourist-student, so I was aware of my position as a US citizen within these areas.

Not *being* Latin American, a native Spanish speaker, or an international immigrant did pose many challenges throughout the recruitment and interview phase of this research. The most significant of these challenges was that many of the participants spoke very little or no English. It became clear to me early in the pre-research stage that my Spanish skills would be inadequate to conduct interviews in Spanish alone, and even though I had taken Spanish from grade-school through my college years, I was rarely in a position to converse with anyone in which I did not have the opportunity to use English as a fall-back means of communication. I began to supplement my formal education by listening to Spanish radio or watching Spanish television whenever I could. I also dug out some old grammar books and began practicing writing and speaking when I had the chance. And, I was able to attend an immersion program in Mexico, where I was forced to converse in a Spanish classroom and with my host family on a daily basis. The benefit of the immersion program in Mexico was that it not only assisted me with my Spanish speaking skills, but I was able to travel and see the countryside where so many of the research participants originated.

During the interview phase, I attempted to turn my limited Spanish speaking skills to the benefit of the participants and the research by using it as a starting point when meeting and beginning to converse with people. I would always tell them that, in addition to the research I was doing, I was also trying to learn to speak Spanish better and they should correct me if I said something wrong. Some participants were so eager to help me with my Spanish and, in exchange, to learn and practice speaking English that I ended up having whole conversations about how to say things in both languages. In the course of learning how to say things, I would find out interesting life histories, such as where people were from, what type of work they did, and how many children they had. One young woman, whom I met early during the research phase at a free health clinic, who was struggling to learn English, asked me if I was afraid to drive to the south side of Oklahoma City because I said I did not go there very often. On some level, she was aware of the general segregation of people in the city, even though she had only lived in Oklahoma City for a few years. She also told me about her two-year-old son who had been hit by a car, sustained a head injury, and was now having many health problems. She was having trouble finding care for him that she and her husband could afford. Each time I went to the clinic after that, I looked for her. Much to my dismay, I did not get a chance to see her again.

Thus, my experience in learning to speak another language was useful in my research because so many of the participants were also struggling with trying to learn English. Most of the participants did know some English, so between my knowledge of Spanish and their knowledge of English, I was able to learn about the general life

histories of the participants, as well as some of the particular experiences they had while living in Oklahoma.

Another challenge was not being ethnically or culturally Latin American. I generally "look" like an average White American, which was a cause for concern to many potential participants because they almost always thought that I might really be working for the government. Even after going over the informed consent form, I had to continually reassure some participants that I was a student and I was not affiliated with the government.

What I did have in common with many participants, however, was religious affiliation. Unsurprisingly, over 70 percent of participants indicated that their religious affiliation is Catholic, which is the predominant religion in Latin America. Having been raised Catholic, I was able to identify with many religious customs, including baptisms, marriages, and the Catholic education system.

Another common link between the majority of participants, who are women with children, and me was choosing to have a baby of my own prior to active field research. The experience of having a baby proved to be helpful in facilitating discussions and interacting with the children, who were often with their parents during the interview. I met many women through their association with clinics that provided prenatal care, and so I was familiar with the process of seeking maternity care, including finding service providers and negotiating payment for services. My experience with the associated issues of having a baby, such as making decisions about work arrangements and schedules, finding appropriate childcare and follow-up

health care options for the baby, as well as feeding, clothing and developmental aspects, paralleled the experiences of many participants and their families.

Unlike most of the participants, however, I have health insurance and was able to choose where I had my baby. I also have a job with benefits that allowed me to take most of my maternity leave with pay, so that I did not have to worry so much about losing my job or how I would afford daycare once I went back to work. Nevertheless, I became increasingly aware of the cost of living in a wage labor economy and how difficult it would be to find affordable childcare if I were making less than minimum wage. During the research process then, I was familiar with the cost-benefit choices of mothers, who had to decide whether to continue working or to stay at home. It was not difficult to understand why so many of the women participants stayed at home to care for their children.

Within the research framework, to situate myself as a white, privileged, middle-class, native-born American did seem somewhat uncomfortable, but it is a status I continually had to acknowledge as I faced those who wanted to know how I could possibly know what it meant to negotiate life with few legitimate resources available. And they were right. Having been the "poor kid" in a private school did not compare to being the poor, undocumented kid struggling to learn and speak the dominant language in a public school. Occasionally going without health insurance while working in a minimum wage job while in school is not the same as living day to day without access to educational opportunities, which would lead to better job opportunities and health and social welfare benefits.

The Benefits of Combining Competing Research Methods

Although the primary research method for this project adhered to accepted ethnographic practices, such as participant-observation, the collection of life histories, and informal interviews, I also chose to supplement the study with a qualitative component in order to gather basic demographic information about the Latin American immigrant population in Oklahoma. Aware of the postmodernist critiques on logical positivism, its over-reliance on numbers, and its ideological bias toward the Western world view, the questionnaire I designed for gathering numerical data became a useful tool in facilitating discussions and ferreting out my ideological biases as the author and interviewer. As I gathered data and asked questions, I began to realize some of the overriding cultural, class, and gender differences between the newcomers and the host community. For example, Part 4 of the questionnaire was designed to learn more about the types of social services accessed and the percentage of the study population that used those services. After several interviews where I used the questionnaire as a guide for discussion, the participants almost always clarified that they had access to Medicaid only for the care of their children, who were citizens. I should have been more specific in asking which family members had access to specific services and how often they used those services. For the majority of questionnaires, which were filled out by participants in social service waiting rooms where the questions could not always be clarified, the data only reflect the fact that families are accessing services but not which family members the services were for. Therefore, the benefit of the ethnographic approach to the study, which most often consisted of one on one conversations and small group discussions, helped to clarify

trends in social service usage, experience with social service providers, and expectations of social service programs.

Another weakness in the questions, and thus the final data, was in response to questions on marriage and family. Some participants checked that they were married and some checked that they were single with a boyfriend or girlfriend. However, after many conversations, it became apparent that people often considered themselves married, even if they did not participate in a legal and/or a religious ceremony. Further discussion about the questions on marriage and family elucidated the participants' perceptions about marriage within their community and the host community. This particular discussion exposes the receiving community's attitudes and expectations about marriage and family, which may not conform to the newcomer's attitudes and practical living arrangements. Because social policies emanate from the host community and affect the newcomers, the policies then impose social norms or restrictions that do not appear to be favorable or beneficial to the newcomers.

The quantitative data collected for this study was useful because they provide a base to assist in defining the newcomer population and their specific needs, especially in lieu of inadequate demographic data available on the Latin American immigrant population in Oklahoma. However, the use of ethnographic methods enabled me to work from the basic information to better understand the complexities of the newcomer's relationship with the receiving community. The quantitative approach also helped in recruiting a broader range of individual participants via a

family and friendship network. Guiding my decision to pursue a larger number of participants for the questionnaire is the approach by some scholars to merge competing research methodologies, which can assist in clarifying emerging social trends and culture patterns (Richardson 1999). Nevertheless, the data from this study cannot stand alone. They have to be assessed in conjunction with the collection of life histories and observation sessions because of pre-existing researcher biases in designing the original questionnaire, the potential confounding from participant interpretations of the questions, as well as the ambiguity in the actual size of the immigrant population because of the difficulty in reporting on those who are undocumented.

Finally, for purposes of reporting on those who are also undocumented, the basic data collected through this research can serve as a building block for future studies within the immigrant community in Oklahoma. The issue of legality is a critical component in how the larger community incorporates newcomers. Official census numbers do not generally reflect the undocumented, even though these people reside and work within prescribed political boundaries, as well as contributing to the local economy as both producers and consumers of goods and services.

Chapter 4: Immigrant Experiences

Educated as an engineer in Mexico, Sylvia was 35 at the time of our initial interview, and she had much to say about her role as an immigrant in the United States. She moved from the city of San Luis Potosi in Mexico to Oklahoma nine years earlier after a family member persuaded her with the lure of potential jobs in engineering. Frustrated at the difficulty in finding work in Mexico, she moved with the idea that women were in a better position to find professional work in the United States. Like Sylvia, many of the women who were interviewed for this study indicated that they thought sexism was more prevalent in Mexico than in the United States, and they said it was very difficult for women to find good jobs in Mexico unless the woman is young, single, and pretty.

During our interview, Sylvia was visibly emotional about the topics that we discussed, particularly when she referred to her efforts to obtain employment and to access needed health and social welfare services. Although she would have preferred a good job in engineering where she would make more money and could gain private health benefits, the only work she could find was in childcare because she said her attempts to become documented were unsuccessful. She also said she was having difficulty mastering the English language, which she knew would help her find other types of work. Sylvia described a recent experience where she had a terrible toothache and needed to see a dentist. She tried to go to several places on her own, but said she was not accepted as a patient because of her legal status or her inability to pay immediately. Her employer eventually helped her find someone to work on her teeth as an emergency favor, but Sylvia perceived her experiences with the doctors offices as somewhat racist because she was a Mexican who did not speak English very well. Nonetheless, when asked if she liked living in Oklahoma, she said that even though racism was a problem at times, it was a nice and quiet place to live otherwise.

Using Sylvia's story as an example the specific "below the surface" socio-economic variables relevant to the process of cultural incorporation, she identifies herself as well-educated, but she is also an undocumented, Mexican woman in the United States, which places her in a particular socio-economic matrix of normative social perceptions on race, class, and gender. For Sylvia, her educational training and

awareness of her own position and motivations within the dominant social system is overshadowed by her ethnic, class, and gender identities. Therefore, this chapter represents a culmination of topics discussed in this dissertation. It demonstrates the ethnographic method at work, which involved the accumulation of data from long-term participant-observation, extended individual interviews and the gathering of life histories, as well as data collected from a general, anonymous questionnaire. From the broader theoretical perspectives that situate immigrants within the dynamics of a larger world system to the individual "situated knowledges" of the participant experiences within the local context, the general themes from the participant's and the researcher's experiences reflect the similarities and the particular uniqueness of the immigrant experience in Oklahoma, which is a state that has recently attracted a rapidly expanding Latin American immigrant population, but which was, historically, a non-traditional immigrant locus for Latin American newcomers within the larger post-industrial setting of the United States.

Each story accounts for a matrix of socio-economic variables that locate individual families within the larger pattern of experiences. The "whitening" or "blackening" of a particular group is not a unilinear phenomenon within the process of cultural incorporation. Rather, personal experiences may reflect attitudes that incorporate often contradictory overarching perspectives of the receiving community with the immigrants' personal experiences. Moreover, the process of "being made" and "self-making" as cultural citizens is demonstrated through individual narratives. As Chavez (1994) points out, a group can be socially and/or economically marginalized by the dominant society, but the marginalized group may, nonetheless,

see themselves as part of the "imagined community." In the individual life history cases presented in this chapter, life experiences generated a pattern of overall experiential themes that then became manifested in personal mantras and conceptual tools used by immigrant families as part of their strategies to survive and, in many cases, thrive within the receiving community. Some of the larger themes generated through data collection include the inability, delay, or resistance of formal marriage between couples, the use of state-funded maternity care programs, the consequences of early family formation, challenges in accessing educational programs, the difficulties of learning a new language, the role of religion in maintaining family and community, and the impact of work opportunities on family planning.

Participant 1: Mirabel and Free Union

I first met Mirabel through Rosa, who worked as a translator for a non-profit clinic specializing in counseling women on their pregnancy options and assisting them in referrals to facilities where they could obtain maternity care. When I arrived at the clinic for our first interview session in southwest Oklahoma City, I found a newly renovated building in the contemporary style of a late model brick house with the interior walls painted in soft color tones and large overstuffed chairs in the waiting area. Mirabel was helping Rosa categorize donated baby items and clothing. These items were part of the assistance program for pregnant women and new mothers in need. Mirabel's familiarity with the storage room and general ease at the clinic made me think, initially, that she was an assistant or volunteer. However, she said she was only helping Rosa while she waited for me to arrive.

When we met, Mirabel was about 7 months pregnant. At age 42, Mirabel's oldest child was 26, and she had two other children: ages 22 and 8. Although she had lived in Oklahoma for 17 years, Mirabel did not speak English very well, which she cited as one of her biggest difficulties in living in the United States. Originally from Juarez, Mexico, where she only went to school through the seventh grade, she said she had a cousin living in Duncan, Oklahoma, but her main reason for moving was for her daughter's education.

Living with her oldest daughter, who was the primary household wage earner, Mirabel did not work. She was the primary caretaker for the household and the children. Significantly, Mirabel only used private doctors for her maternity care, even though like so many, she indicated that she did not have health insurance. She did not presently use any of the common government welfare services, such as food stamps or WIC (Women, Infants, Children - a Federal nutritional program). When asked if she had any help, she said her husband also contributed. He was a mechanic by trade, but in terms of their personal relationship, Mirabel laughed and said it was *un unión libre*, a free union, which she simply said was an easier relationship. After further inquiry and discussion with other participants in the study, I was told that Mexicans often referred to their partners using the Spanish words for a marriage relationship, such as esposo (husband) or esposa (wife), even if they are not legally married or married through a church. The legally and spiritually non-binding arrangement of a couple is rooted in a variety of cultural, historic and current legal and economic factors that often prevent a couple from marrying in the first place. Marriage as a middle-class, Westernized concept may play a role in this decision, but more

practically, for those immigrants who are not legal citizens of the United States, there are not many alternative options when setting up a household. The alternative may be to return to their country of origin, but that is often too costly and difficult under the current political climate on immigration. In Mirabel's case, her desire to remain legally unmarried was not a result of her desire to gain government benefits and services.

I unexpectedly and pleasantly ran into Mirabel at the clinic after she had her baby, a very healthy, plump little boy. She was there for a follow-up visit, and although she was pressed for time, she stopped to chat with me and show off her son.

Participant 2: Abilena and Maternity Care

Not long after a severe winter ice storm struck Oklahoma, I met with Abilena at her home in the heart of northwest Oklahoma City. Also about 7 months pregnant, Abilena was coming from her mother's house where she had to stay for a couple of weeks until the city restored power to their area. She had two little girls with her, ages three and 18 months. At age 25, the new baby would be Abilena's fourth child. She also had a little boy who was 6 years old and was in school during the interview. Similar to Maribel, Abilena and her husband, Miguel, where not legally married. She said they planned to get married, but they were waiting to hear about their applications for citizenship. Abilena's mother moved to the United States to work, and she married a man from Oklahoma. Abilena and her two brothers, originally from Zacatecas, stayed in Mexico for a while longer and later moved to Oklahoma to be closer to their mother. One of her brothers recently joined the US Marine Corps. Because her mother had become a citizen, she could help sponsor Abilena, but the

process was slow and frustrating. Her stepfather, who worked for a local law enforcement agency, often warned her not to drive at all, but Abilena said that just wasn't practical because, “I have to get to work and do things like go to the grocery store and to doctor's visits”.

Before Abilena was pregnant, she worked at a big chain fast-food restaurant when her husband was at home in the evenings to watch the kids. They could not afford regular childcare, so she had to be home during the day. Miguel worked for an installation/construction company, but his work was often irregular. They rented their house from Miguel's father, who has the same name as Abilena's husband, and because of the confusion of names, she said a Department of Human Services (DHS) worker visited and said if they owned their home, she was ineligible for benefits. Although Abilena spoke English fairly well (she said she learned through her family and at work), her account may not have translated well for my notes (i.e., I wasn't sure if homeownership was a criterion for being ineligible for government benefits[1]), but all the same, Abilena was positive about the experience, saying that the DHS worker was only doing her job.

When asked if her experiences with social services were good, Abilena said that, overall, she thought they were, but then she described her last two birthing experiences. Because she participated in the government-funded Medicaid program for her maternity care, Abilena used the local hospitals that accepted Medicaid patients. She said that during the birth of her three-year-old daughter at a large, central public hospital, the doctor did not make sure that she had pushed out the after-

birth. After she was stitched up, Abilena became very ill, and realizing their mistake, the medical staff had to perform surgery to correct the problem. Therefore, with the impending birth of her second daughter, Abilena chose to go to another privately-run hospital that also received Medicaid patients. This hospital was closer to home, but already in labor when she arrived at the hospital, she was still asked to complete all of the required paperwork. She said she tried to explain that she was already in too much pain, but the receptionist only asked her if her water had already broken (despite the movie-style drama surrounding the unmistakable pre-birth experience of water breaking, in reality it is usually a less obvious symptom of labor and often mimics the need to use the bathroom). Abilena told the receptionist she wasn't certain, and the receptionist then told her that if she wasn't certain, she needed to sit down and wait until she was called to be admitted. In terrible pain and unsure on what to do, she went back and sat down, but she knew the baby was coming. The baby did crown and actually came out in her sweatpants. When the attending physicians and nurses were alerted, Abilena said they came quickly, were attentive and very nice. But, she said, it didn't take away from the embarrassment of having her pants taken off of her in the middle of the waiting room.

Even after telling this story, Abilena dismissed the behavior of the receptionist as "probably just having a bad day" and "maybe she didn't understand our English very well," even though Abilena's mother, who was also with her, speaks fluent English. After relating the details of Abilena's birthing experiences to my mostly middle-class (native citizens) co-workers and friends, the general consensus, aside from looks of horror, was that if Abilena had been a citizen, she could have sued the

hospitals, whether or not she was a Medicaid recipient. In a vein similar to this anecdote, I have heard comments about the "illegal Mexicans who couldn't speak any English and came to have their babies but could not afford them" from individuals employed for the hospital where Abilena had her second daughter. This, of course, does not mean that all individuals employed by the hospital are prejudice, but it is evident that in Bourdiean terms, the *habitus* of prejudice among staff members can emanate to and/or from the larger community.

For her part, Abilena maintained a positive attitude about living in Oklahoma and employed a general conceptual approach to explaining not-so-positive experiences as exceptions to the norm. Overall, she was grateful to have access to any health benefits at all because she knew that she and her husband could not afford health insurance on their limited and sometimes inconsistent incomes. By ignoring the sour attitude of the receptionist at the second hospital, Abilena could justify being part of the larger "imagined community." Nonetheless, when asked if she would go back to the second hospital to have her fourth child, she said that she would return to the large public hospital.

Outside of her responsibilities as a wife and mother, Abilena recognizes that she is still young, and she has aspirations of going to school to become a cosmetologist. With a ninth grade education while growing up in Mexico and uncertain legal status, Abilena's wage-earning potential in the United States is comparatively low in relation to other social and ethnic groups. However, once she

can gain the proper documentation to access a cosmetology program, she hopes to finish school and own her own boutique.

Participant 3: Carolina and Young Motherhood

For my very last interview, I met with 20-year-old Carolina. A short girl with strong indigenous features from San Luis Potosi in central Mexico, Carolina spoke almost no English. She lived in a small, extremely modest two-bedroom home in a fairly dilapidated section of the southwest part of Oklahoma City – not too far from Interstate 40. I was warned before I went there that it might be unsafe, which of course meant that I was more intrigued and willing to visit Carolina's home. Despite the outward appearance of her neighborhood, Carolina kept a very tidy home. With a six-month old baby boy at home and a three-year-old little girl placed in the state's DHS foster care program, Carolina's main incentive to keep a tidy home was to prove to the Oklahoma social welfare program that she could be a good mother to her daughter.

Because Carolina was so young, I started by asking her about where she was from, how she came to the United States, and how long she had been here. In Mexico, Carolina said that she was primarily raised by her father. Her mother left the family when she was still very young. Carolina went to school through the eighth grade, but then her father died, and at age 15, she decided to follow her brother to the United States. In detailing her journey across the border, Carolina, Consuela (another study participant), and I had a good laugh over Carolina's description of floating across the river on a tube or swimming like a stereotypical “wetback.” Both women were aware of the dominant culture's stigmatization of Mexicans crossing the border into the

United States, which launched us into a discussion of white American terms for Mexicans (e.g., wetback, beaner, etc.) and Mexican terms for white Americans (e.g. gringos, gueros, etc.).

Once in Oklahoma, Carolina said that she became involved with a much older man (in his thirties when she was only 16). Her brother did not approve of the relationship, and so they became estranged. One day, after her daughter was born and while babysitting, her boyfriend decided to take the child on a venture involving robbery and drug selling. The boyfriend was apprehended by local authorities, and the little girl was put into the state foster care program. Unable to get her child out of foster care, unable to speak English, and with few job skills, Carolina tried to move on with her life. She now has a new boyfriend, who is closer to her age and the father of her son. He works as a painter, providing the primary income for the young family.

In the meantime, Carolina stays at home all day while her boyfriend is at work. She does not have access to a car, which makes it difficult to make appointments with doctors or social workers. Dominating most of the conversation with Carolina was her desire to bring her daughter home. The little girl had been in foster care for nearly two years in a small town outside of Oklahoma City, and Carolina was only occasionally allowed visits with her. Carolina said she suspected her daughter was being sexually abused by the foster parents because of markings on the girl's body and the funny way she walked. Unfortunately, she said the first social worker, who was Hispanic, was not helpful at all. She now has a white social worker who seems to be more helpful. When I asked if Carolina thought the background of

the social worker made a difference, she said that sometimes the Hispanics are nice and helpful and sometimes not, and it was the same for the white social workers.

To complicate Carolina's attempt to have her daughter returned, the judge overseeing her case has ordered her to take both parenting and English language classes. Without having reliable transportation, she said she would have difficulty attending classes (offered by the Latino Community Development Agency). The judge maintained that because the little girl had been in an English-speaking home for so long, Carolina and the little girl would not be able to communicate very well. Yet, despite Carolina's problems in having her daughter returned, when asked if she likes living in Oklahoma, she said she did because she thought the access to medical care for her children was much better than if she had to live in Mexico. She said she thought people in the United States took better care of their children and people in general.

With Carolina it is easy to assume that her youth, lack of education, and lack of English language skills make her vulnerable in the larger community. However, when asked what she wanted to do if she could go to school and work, she said that she wanted to work with computers because she liked working with them while in school in Mexico. Yet, much like Mirabel and Abelina, Carolina already has many cards stacked against her by the dominant society's standards. Having children so young (teenage pregnancy) with limited education and English language skills marks her, even at such a young age, as an "undeserving" public charge who may never

have the opportunity to gain legal status and access to critical educational and skill-building services.

Participant 4: Gisela and Education

One of my earlier interviewees, 26-year-old Gisela, was about eight months pregnant when we met at her apartment in a complex not far from where I grew up in a suburb on Oklahoma City's west side. I was very familiar with the area, although I was also aware that this once predominately white, middle-class suburban area had degenerated considerably by middle-class standards to include a significant mobile and poverty-stricken minority population. Linked to this new population was an increase in crime, primarily represented by gang activity and drug trafficking. I asked Gisela if she had any problems at the apartment complex. She replied that most of time it was fairly quiet, although someone had broken into her apartment once. She said they did not really steal anything because she had so little. She said she had been there for a long time, and it was one of the few places she could afford and not worry so much about the safety of her children. She could let her children play in the apartment complex's common area, which she could see from her patio window.

Gisela's apartment was very basic. It was a two bedroom apartment with a small kitchen and dining area and a large living area. It had very little furniture, and an old model television that was turned on for her two children. She said she could not afford cable television and had recently sold her car to help pay her bills. Transportation was difficult, especially if she had to take her kids places or go to doctors appointments, but she managed by using public buses or relying on friends and relatives. In discussing strategies to make ends meet, Gisela said that at one time,

she worked full-time at a hotel cleaning rooms while supporting her son, her mother, and her half-brother. She said while earning minimum wage (or less), she managed to pay rent and buy groceries. Garage sales, thrift stores, and discount department stores were places she frequented to buy essential items, such as clothes and shoes.

Like so many of the women in this study, Gisela was also not legally married, and she said that pregnancy was difficult for her so that she was unable to work. At the time of the interview, only her daughter (age 3) and son (age 7) lived with her. Her mother had long since moved to another apartment. Gisela was separated from her husband, and she attributed the separation to her moods during pregnancy. However, she also alluded to her husband's infidelity and interest in attending parties rather than spending time with his family. Gisela said that her (ex) husband did contribute to her living expenses and is a good father to the children. Nevertheless, she was curious about what amount of money she would be able to collect from him if she appealed to the court system. She thought that even without legal papers, she could still try to collect child-support. However, it would be difficult for the court to make him pay child support because he also did not have a social security number and it would be difficult to track.

With regard to work and educational opportunities, Gisela was frank about the problems caused by her legal status. She spoke English fluently because she came to the United States from Coahuila, Mexico when she was 12 years old. Her mother came to the US to work first and later sent for Gisela. She said she did not get along with her mother very well, and she had preferred living with her father in Mexico.

During our initial interview, her mother called and criticized her for allowing strangers who asked too many questions into her home. I assured her again that I did not work for the government. They originally settled in Ft. Worth, Texas, where Gisela went to high school. Nevertheless, she was not granted a diploma because she said she did not have a social security number. Later on, she decided to get a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, but was told she needed to improve her English language skills. She then took an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. When she went back to complete the GED requirements, she said that she could not get it because she did not have a social security number.

Without her high school diploma or GED, Gisela said she could not go on to college, but even if she could, she said she could not afford it. She said she generally worked in housekeeping to make money, and to help supplement her income. When she was not working, she participated in direct sales for a large cosmetics company. Gisela indicated that it was difficult to save money. Even if she earned enough when working, she could not open a savings account, which made her a target for robbery. People in the Latino immigrant community were aware that cash was often stored in the home, and, therefore, stealing from other immigrants is not uncommon.

Gisela also indicated that without a better education, she had difficulty helping her children with their homework. To help with some problems their son was having in school, she and her (ex) husband took parenting classes. At the time of the interview, it was obvious that Gisela was frustrated by her legal status and the difficulties in accessing education and work-related opportunities. The spillover effect

of her legal status had implications for accessing healthcare and social services in general. She said she was able to get the maternity care she needed for her baby and Medicaid for the children. Yet, like so many of the participants in this study, she felt the educational benefits for her children were worth compensation for some of her personal frustrations. Nonetheless, she said that there were no options for her own healthcare if she became ill or needed assistance outside of the state-funded maternity care programs. At that point, I was compiling a list of social service programs that catered to indigent and uninsured local residents (not requiring the verification of citizenship status). I passed along the information to her about one of those clinics, which provides general healthcare service, medical check-ups, and free medications.

I also asked Gisela if she attended a church because churches often help in referring their members to needed social service programs. She did say that she attended a Baptist church not too far from her apartment, but without a car, she had difficulty attending services regularly and could not afford to contribute much money to the church.

Participant 5: Consuela on Language and Living

Introduced at the beginning of Chapter 2, Consuela was one of my last interviewees and one of the most informative. She was very enthusiastic about learning English and helping others, whether or not they are immigrants like herself or researchers fishing for stories from immigrants like myself. Consuela's enthusiasm in talking in general and her willingness to help me gather information and explain more about life as an immigrant in Oklahoma was helpful in clarifying experiences from other participants in the study and identifying patterns of experiences. For

example, Consuela related to me how difficult it was to come to a new country on her own without a good working knowledge of the language. She said she forced herself to learn English by watching only English speaking television channels at home. Because she was always working, she said sometimes the shower was the only place where she had time alone to repeat phrases and practice saying words in English. Interestingly, Consuela lived in a traditionally African-American neighborhood on the City's east side, and she worked as a supervisor at a local fast food restaurant. When we began the interview, her vernacular and pronunciation took on characteristics of popular Black American phrases and pronunciation, but as the interview progressed, it was easy to see that as she related aspects of her personal history and working experiences, she was able to adapt her phrases and pronunciation to the location being discussed. An example of dropping the black vernacular was when she related a story about working for a chiropractor, who once sent her to a seminar in Dallas, Texas, with mostly doctors and other people with medical backgrounds in attendance. Although the chiropractor is Hispanic, day-to-day business was generally conducted using a standard "whitened" English American jargon.

Consuela said she learned early on what the power of language and understanding English meant to her ability to gain employment and maintain some control in her personal relationships. Arriving in the United States with nothing and often working two jobs, she initially managed to provide herself with the general daily necessities, such and food and clothing. Nevertheless, being involved in two relationships where her partners were dominating and controlling taught her that she needed to do more for herself. Consuela said that at one point she left a boyfriend,

who was a good provider but was also controlling and often lied (she said he was a drug dealer). She finally decided to leave him and in doing so, she was unable to take any of her or her young son's belongings with them. It was the hardest thing that Consuela ever had to do because she had to start all over again. Fortunately, she had built up a small social network of friends, one of whom found her a place to live after leaving the boyfriend.

When I met Consuela, she had a boyfriend who she thought was possibly "the right one," although she said she was not ready for the commitment of marriage. The couple had a modest home, which they were renting, but she said they were in the process of packing to move to another home not far away. With the new immigration laws in Oklahoma, Consuela said she was worried about their current home's rental status, which was a Section 8 approved government house, so they were going to move to avoid any potential problems associated with government housing assistance.

In discussing her job, Consuela said she enjoyed working with people, and despite her legal status, she did have a tax identification number, so she did pay state and Federal income tax. She said she had performed so well at her job that she was promoted to a supervisory position. She had developed a good relationship with her boss. With a baby on the way, she reduced her hours, but because she was such an integral part of the staff at the restaurant, she said her boss was unhappy – not because she was pregnant - but more because of the difficulty in finding good employees who stayed for any extended period. In discussing her role as a supervisor, Consuela indicated that she often worked with immigrants who did not speak English

and who said they had no desire to learn. Then, Consuela said she would lecture them about how important it was to learn English because it could help them obtain better jobs and reduce their vulnerability to people taking advantage of them.

Language is so important to Consuela that she makes it a point to help her children learn to speak English, but she also wants them to be able to speak and understand Spanish as well. One way of immersing her children in the Spanish language and Mexican culture is when her mother comes to visit to help care for the children, especially after a baby is born. Occasionally, Consuela's two brothers also visit, and she said, they remained unmarried in Mexico because they earned very little from their regular salaries as teachers. Nevertheless, the help from her family demonstrates the reciprocity of a family network, as well as the transnational exchange of social customs and goods and services. She said her brothers would buy tires when visiting because they were much cheaper in the United States than in Mexico.

For Consuela, the added emphasis she placed on the education of her children may be the result of her own educational attainment, which involved as much as two years of college in Mexico before migrating. Although her lack of English skills when she arrived limited her to the menial employment she could get initially, such as cleaning hotel rooms or working in a carpet factory, she managed to find non-formal ways of building her cultural competence and job skills within the receiving community. Eventually, Consuela would like to be a social worker and assist immigrants who face similar survival challenges as she did when she arrived.

Participant 6: Isabell on Religion y Estilo de Vida

A bubbly 37-year-old Isabell, moved to Oklahoma from Guatemala because her brother is the pastor of a local evangelical church. He asked if she wanted to come and help with some of the day to day administrative tasks for the church. Isabell agreed to become a volunteer secretary for the church, where she also met her husband (a native of Guatemala as well) while attending church services. Isabell was glowing with happiness during the interview as she held her baby, a bouncy, four month old boy. This was her first marriage and child.

Originally arriving in the United States on a visa to visit her family, Isabell was persuaded to stay in Oklahoma by her family, but she said it was not a difficult decision. In making the decision to stay, however, her visa was nullified. Nonetheless, inspired by her faith and the opportunities that she had encountered so far, she thought the quality of life (estilo de vida) is better in the United States. Isabell said that she did not have a particularly difficult life in Guatemala. She went to college, earning a degree in business administration, and she had a good job as a supervisor with many people working under her, but she said her faith in God led her to her life here.

In discussing her role with her church, Isabell primarily lived within a diaspora community of Guatemalans in Oklahoma, so she felt she had a strong network of family and friends around her. Much of our conversation was about church and belief, and she maintained a positive attitude about life overall. She thought that with a strong faith, all of her needs would be met. She cited the quality of healthcare she found in Oklahoma when she needed maternity care, and how nice and

helpful everyone had been when she sought social welfare services through public programs. Isabell explained that APROFAM (Asociación Pro Bienestar de la familia de Guatemala), one of the main clinics for women in Guatemala, which she said is partly government and partly privately owned, did not provide such quality healthcare as good of care as she has received in the United States.

Interviews with other immigrants participating in small, evangelical or Protestant-related church services also demonstrated a more positive, cheerful outlook on life in general, with more participation in church-related activities, such as cleaning the church, teaching or attending small group prayer or bible sessions, and singing in the choir. Although the majority of participants indicated that they were Catholic, only a very small percentage of Catholics indicated on the questionnaire or during interviews that they were involved in church activities outside of attending church services. Twenty-four percent of participants indicated that they belonged to a Baptist, Church of Christ, Evangelical or Pentecostal religious community, and of this group, a significant number indicated that they participated in a variety of church-related activities. For this group, the church was the nexus of their daily social network. Because Isabell's job with her church was only as a volunteer, her husband was the primary household wage-earner. She said that he worked in construction, and at the time of the initial interview, she seemed more than happy with their situation, emphasizing that when they needed things, such as social welfare services or regular work for her husband to maintain an income, these things would always work out with a strong faith.

As a follow-up to Isabell's situation, I received a call from her a couple of months later asking if I knew of a way to help her husband get a job. He had been laid off, and they were in desperate need of an income. I told Isabell that I really wanted to help, but my list of contacts for the immigrant community only included social service programs, such as health clinics, food assistance programs, etc. I passed along the information I had on these programs, hoping that it would help Isabell's family in some small way.

Participant 7: Mauricio on Work and Family

When I met Mauricio, a likeable, upbeat 26-year-old, I was unsure how successful the interview would be because few men participated in the study, which was, in large part, because they were always working. Even on the weekends when many interviews were conducted, I was always told that the husbands and boyfriends were working "because they needed the extra money" or they "had to take the work when they could get it." Mauricio spoke very little English as well, and we had very little in common compared to most of the other participants. I almost always had common ground to begin a conversation with the women participants, many of whom, like myself, had young children and juggled childcare, work, and household responsibilities. Mauricio was single and without a girlfriend, but I found out right away that he was from Guanajuato, Mexico, where I had spent some time studying Spanish. We found a common link to begin our discussion when he asked if I had seen *las Momias,* the mummies, at the popular tourist museum in Guanajuato. I assured him I had seen the mummies because seeing the mostly unclothed dead bodies in a museum (which had been removed from a hillside in Guanajuato to make

way for construction) was an experience I could not easily forget. We also took a wrong bus afterwards because a "white American woman" standing nearby thought my companion and I looked "lost" and needed proper instructions on which bus to take. We shouldn't have listened to her because we ended up at the top of one of the mountains surrounding the town. Mauricio good-heartedly laughed, although I'm sure his laugh was more due to him being used to seeing the comical sight of "lost" Americans in Mexico rather than from any sympathy for our frustrations with a fellow American.

As a single young man, Mauricio was not too interested in answering questions about family and marriage. For the interview, we met at the apartment of a previous participant, who referred Mauricio to me and was kind enough to let us use her living room. She wandered in and out of the room during the interview, teasing Mauricio about not having a girlfriend. He said that at his age, most of his friends already had families, but he wanted to wait. Most of the money he earned, he sent back home to help his parents and siblings in Guanajuato. When asked what he did during his free time, he laughed and said "sleep." He said he really did not have much free time because he was always working for a lawn-care company. He said he did not see doctors or use any type of social services in general. Mauricio rarely participated in church services or church related activities, although he said he was Catholic and occasionally attended a church with a mostly Hispanic congregation. He has a good boss where he works, although he does not receive any type of regular health or paid leave benefits. Mauricio indicated that he was fortunate to not ever really get sick or injured on the job. In a similar interview with another participant,

who was a single unmarried man like Mauricio and working in the roofing and construction industry, he said that at one time he did injure his hand and could not work for a couple of weeks, which really strained his income because he was not paid when he did not work.

When questioned more about family and domestic relationships, Mauricio did say that he eventually wanted a family. If he started a family in Oklahoma, he thought there were better educational opportunities for them here, even though he was aware of the difficulties in setting up a household without legal citizenship. As a single young man, he did talk about some problems that he knew other immigrants encountered with the police, and said he did not understand some of the racism directed to Hispanic people. However, he said he never had any problems with the police or racism, and he was generally positive in his overall approach to living in Oklahoma, which he liked. When asked more about his work opportunities, Mauricio was aware that with only a third-grade education from Mexico, he was basically unskilled for other jobs, and he seemed genuinely pleased with his current income, which was more than he could earn in Mexico.

As Mauricio demonstrates, work opportunities and obligations to his natal family can delay decisions, particularly for young men, to set-up a household. Mauricio also expressed an interest in eventually being able to move back to his home in Guanajuato, Mexico, but he knew that work opportunities and his earning potential were very limited there. His general approach to life was to work hard to save as much money as possible in order to help his natal family, which he could do best

without the additional expenses of starting his own family and by staying healthy for as long as possible.

General Discussion

Woven throughout these stories are general patterns of newcomer experiences that demonstrate the various themes emerging in the current process of cultural incorporation. Some experiences demonstrate the "whitening" and some demonstrate the "blackening" of the Latino segment of the immigrant population. Furthermore, the process varies based on an individual's socio-economic status prior to migrating, and for individuals within the household. Nonetheless, common patterns are found within Oklahoma's Latin American immigrant community, indicating that the overall trend of marginalization is a significant part of the newcomer experience. Linked to the overall trend in Latino marginalization then are larger socio-economic forces, which serve to situate individuals within the broader race, class and gender matrices. As shown above, the effects of temporary and low wage labor positions in the formal economy and work in the unregulated informal economy, where many immigrants begin their role within the larger US economy, can have a profound impact on how immigrant families alter their domestic sphere to survive. However, despite a general blackening of many members of the Latino immigrant population found in the habitus of the receiving society, informal marriage arrangements, developing social networks through the use of social service agencies, and community involvement, such as regular participation in a church group, provide some successful strategies for maintaining the well-being of the family. Despite their general underclass status, the accumulation of social capital for new immigrant

communities strengthens strategies to survive despite any real or perceived barriers to incorporation.

Endnotes

[1]One of the agencies contacted during the planning phase of this research was the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, but they indicated that they did not support outside researchers and would not consent to making anyone available for interviews, even with the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Chapter 5: Latin American Immigrants in Oklahoma

> *In a middle-class neighborhood in northwest Oklahoma City, I met with Ana, who worked part-time as a nursing assistant. She had moved to the United States ten years earlier from a small hamlet near Aquascalientes, Mexico, to be closer to her family, including her mother, who originally moved here to be closer to Ana's father. Ana's father sometimes worked in the United States in seasonal jobs. When he went back to Mexico, Ana's mother decided to stay behind to be near her children. Ana said most of the people she knew in Oklahoma City from Aguascalientes came to the United States in the 1980s and were now citizens, including her husband's family. Ana's husband was born in Oklahoma City and raised in the City's traditionally Hispanic area on the south side. She described how, even though they were both Hispanic, she and her husband often had differences because he was raised Baptist in the United States and she was raised Catholic in Mexico.*

Until recently very few immigrants of Latin American origin have settled in Oklahoma; however, their presence spans from the time of the earliest known European explorers. The territory itself was part of Spain's vast land claims in the New World for over 250 years. Lying just beyond the Texas/Mexico border region, Oklahoma's relationship with Latin America is often overshadowed by its history as the primary location for resettling Native North American Indian tribes. In chronicling the history of Latin American immigrants to Oklahoma, this chapter is divided into four parts. The first section is an overview of Oklahoma's early history when Spain sent explorers to map out the territories it hoped to claim under the umbrella of an expanding colonial empire. The second section reviews the Spanish colonial and Mexican influences on the Oklahoma frontier and how these influences shape present-day Oklahoma culture and social organization. The third section explores the development and organization of Oklahoma's Hispanic community, and the fourth section presents a discussion on the most recent Latin American

immigrants and how they have been incorporated into the existing Hispanic culture and have established social networks. As Ana's story demonstrates, the Hispanic presence in Oklahoma is complex, and their experiences in the process of cultural incorporation are diverse, often depending on when and where they settled.

Oklahoma's Early History: 1492-1900

Characterized by scrub forests and rolling hills in the east and miles of relatively flat prairie lands in the west, Oklahoma's climate is one of the most extreme in the United States. Temperatures frequently rise above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months and well below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit) in the winter months. Combining the movement of dry western air with the humidity from the southern and eastern parts of the United States, Oklahoma is well-known for the number of tornadoes that typically occur from early spring to late fall. Early explorers found the harsh climate and miles of treeless plains disorienting (Smith 1980:3). Many of these first explorers were men sent by Spain to map out the territory they claimed as the northern most regions of their new world colony, *New Spain*, which eventually became known as Mexico. The area known as present-day Oklahoma was part of the Spanish Empire's northern frontier in the 16th century.

Because of Spanish claims to the southern regions of North America, Hispanics have a long history in Oklahoma. However, because of its location on the edge of Mexico's northern frontier and the harsh climate, it was never populated by Spain like the more geographically accessible regions of North America, such as California, Florida, and Texas. Throughout the first centuries of settlement and occupation, the Spanish Empire placed a priority on populating areas where they

could strategically defend their land claims, which were the coastal areas. They also placed a priority on settling areas where the native populations proved to be the easiest to assimilate, such as the area now known as present-day New Mexico to the west of Oklahoma. Although landlocked, Spanish authorities gained a prominent foothold in New Mexico, where the influences of Spanish colonial architecture, religion, and social organization continue to be prevalent.

The earliest expeditions, also known as *entradas*, into Oklahoma proved disappointing to say the least. In 1541 Spanish soldiers led by Francisco Vásquez de Coronado were lured by tales of Gran Quivira, the homeland of an Indian slave, El Turco, who was living at the site of Cíbola in present-day Arizona. The Spaniards were disappointed to find that Cíbola, a Zuñi village, did not have the riches promised by Fray Marcos in 1539 when he thought he had seen the first of the Seven Cities of Cíbola. After plundering the Zuñi village, the expedition then set out to find Gran Quivira, which meant crossing the Great Plains through the present-day Texas and Oklahoma panhandles.

El Turco led the soldiers to believe that Gran Quivira was a wealthy city with an abundance of gold, silver and natural resources, but again the expedition was disheartened after their long journey across the vast grasslands where they found "only a miserable Wichita Indian village of mud, stick, and thatch huts" near present-day Great Bend, Kansas (Smith 1980:2). They came across few inhabitants altogether, with the exception of large buffalo herds roaming the endless grass prairies. Neither the inhabitants proved worthy converts to Spanish customs and

religion nor did the riches of gold, silver, and natural resources prove to be in enough abundance for the weary travelers.

Other *conquistadors* ventured through parts of Oklahoma after Coronado, including Hernando de Soto in 1542 and Juan de Oñate in 1601, but today there are few, if any, traces of these early Spanish colonial influences in Oklahoma. After the area was awarded to France at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 and then sold to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, it was no longer under Spain's control. Only the Panhandle land remained in contention until the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819 (between the United States and Spain) granted it to the United States (Smith 1980).

Once in control over most of the Great Plains regions, the United States moved quickly to populate its growing territories. However, much like the Spanish sentiments to the open prairies, the United States had little initial interest by the United States in the region that would later become Oklahoma Territory. Rather than open it to settlers, the United States government initially set aside the land north of Texas for the growing indigent Native American Indian populations.

From this perspective, Oklahoma's history is a repository of Native American culture and a crossroads for European immigration with Spanish Mexico's colonial influences. The unique culture to develop from this geographic and historic juncture laid the foundation for Oklahoma's modern social, economic, and political structures. The inclusion of more recent Latin American immigrants into this social and

historical framework adds yet another element to Oklahoma's colorful mosaic of people.

From Indian to Cowboy: Spanish and Mexican Influences on the American Frontier

In documenting the role of Spanish and Mexican influences on early settlements in the North American frontier, Weber (1992) examined the roles and philosophies of Spanish explorers, military leaders, and Christian missionaries with indigenous populations. Through the southern swamps, deserts, plains and temperate mountains of the North American continent, the story of America's Spanish origins is told without vilifying Spaniards as "so often portrayed by hispanophobic writers" (9). At the same time, glossing over the brutal behaviors of early explorers and settlers is not realistic either as Herbert Eugene Bolton did in his classic book, The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest (1921), which set the tone for historians of early Spanish America during much of the 20th century. With the pro-Spanish Bolton tradition in mind more recently, the Spanish presence in America is re-presented outside the false dichotomies of the Black and White Legends. As implied, the Black Legend presents the "Spaniards as uniquely cruel," and the White Legend "ennobles them" (9). Weber broadens the understanding of the historical Spanish borderlands beyond "such important Boltonian concerns as exploration, institutions, and biography, into arenas that earlier generations had slighted – social history, ethnohistory, ecology, historical archaeology, historical geography, demography, and the study of disease" (7). In this expanded version of Spanish American history, the Spanish conquest in the Americas was not simply journeys into uninhabited lands, but rather journeys into a land that increasingly

became a contested frontier by invaders and indigenous people who actively shaped settlement patterns and socio-economic relationships. With this approach in mind, the following discussion considers the geopolitics of settlement patterns and the socio-cultural history of people on the North American frontier.

From the time of early Spanish conquest to the Texas declaration of independence in 1836, Spanish military officials, missionaries and a scant number of settlers occupied the vast area known as Texas. This area encompassed the regions north of the Rio Grande and northwest of the Gulf of Mexico that stretched as far north as present-day Wyoming. While the Spanish population remained relatively insignificant, the Spanish managed to pacify large numbers of the indigenous people, either by military force, religious means or by creating economic dependencies through trade. Nonetheless, many indigenous groups in this area continued to remain at least partially autonomous into the 1800s. Therefore, prior to 1836, Texas was a contested region between the Spanish and the Natives, but to add to the dynamics of regional contestations, first the English and French and later the United States pressured Spain to relinquish control of its North American territory. By the time the United States gained control of the region, the intermixing of the Indian and Spanish peoples in Texas and Mexico had given rise to a substantial mixed-race or *mestizo* population.

Prior to Oklahoma statehood, several examples of relationships between Indian Territory (later Oklahoma Territory) and Mexico, involve disputes between the U.S. and the various tribes moved or pushed into the Territory, such as the Cherokee

who considered Mexico as a possible location for resettlement. Most significantly, however, is the Kickapoo Nation in Oklahoma who continue to maintain kinship ties with members of the tribe in Mexico, where they established a community near Nacimiento, Coahuila. In 1839 when they were expelled from Texas, some fled to Kansas and Oklahoma and many moved south to Mexico. In 1865 the Kansas Kickapoos were resettled in Oklahoma, and by 1900 many of those migrated to Mexico due to shrinking reservation lands and forced land allotment in Oklahoma (Smith 1980: 6-8). Similarly, in 1850 members of the Seminole Nation in Oklahoma resisted the imposition of the Creek Nation's general laws on their new community in Creek Nation territory where they were relocated from Florida, and many fled to Mexico where they established a new community (Wright 1986: 233).

Consequently, to consider the unique culture that developed in Oklahoma Territory after the United States gained control from France and Spain, it is beneficial to look south to Texas and the history of the Texas-Mexico border region. From the establishment of Spanish Rancherias, and later to large cattle ranches along the Texas-Mexico border, trails passing through Oklahoma linked Mexico to American settlements in the United States. In the eighteenth century, several trails, such as the Old Spanish Road (El Río Nutrio), the Santa Fe Trail, and the Texas Road penetrated Oklahoma in several locations. These trails provided routes for travel and the transportation of trade goods. By the time of the Civil War, these routes gave way to large cattle trails, including the East and West Shawnee trails, the Chisolm Trail, and the Great Western Trail (Smith 1980:5).

One significant influence of Spanish-Mexican culture on the American Southwest was the introduction of the Spanish horse to the Southern Plains Indian, which dramatically changed Indian culture as they incorporated the horse into their hunting and traveling activities. Smith (1980) maintains that acquiring the horse made the Indian the most formidable obstacle to Spanish penetration on the Plains (5). Known for raiding, the Plains Indians often took Mexican captives and incorporated them into tribal life. Early on, the Spanish attempted to establish settlements in Texas where they reached out to the Natives for religious conversion and general assimilation, but while some pacification occurred, many Native groups eluded the Spanish settlements in this region of Spain's land claims.

The relationship between Spanish colonizers and the Native populations was multifaceted. Part of Spain's strategy to populate their northern territories meant expanding a tax or tribute paying citizen base and in order to create significant revenues, the Spanish government encouraged the intermarriage of Spanish men with Indian women, thus creating a *mestizo* population. To add to this racial matrix, the Spanish government was sensitive to inter-tribal tensions in the interior of Mexico and used this to their benefit. Of particular importance were the Tlaxcalan allies from central Mexico, who were traditional enemies of the Aztecs. For their efforts in assisting the Spanish conquerors, the Tlaxcalan were often placed in local and regional positions of authority as the Spanish thought indigenous leadership would be less disruptive to the pacification process. The Tlaxcalan were integral to the colonization of the frontier, and they have been linked to settlements in the far

northern regions of the Spanish empire in North America, including the area that is present-day Texas (Menchaca 2001).

Along with the mixing of European and Native peoples, a system of social stratification developed on the Spanish-Mexican frontier whereby ethnic descent determined land holdings and political status. The wealthier "land owners" typically were of European lineage and many of the mestizo and indigenous people became the workers under this system, which resembled a European-style feudal economy. On the Mexican frontier, this system became known as the patrón-peón system. Understanding the initial shaping of the frontier by early Spanish settlers is critical to understanding current perceptual and cultural boundaries. Significantly, the resources of a sub-region, including sources of water, reflected the Spanish organization of land distribution. The larger boundaries of northern Spanish and later Mexican provinces were structured based on the knowledge of the land formation and natural resources of an area. By the colonial era, these boundaries were set around the larger industries and settlements, such as the mining and indigenous slave trade in Nuevo Leon (Arreola 2002:26). As colonization of the Spanish-held frontier slowly made its way to the northern regions, Arreola (2002) maintains that these early patterns of settlement, particularly those that operated as economic, political and social nodes, were the bases for North American encroachment and settlement. Some of these early nodes were the location of missions and presidios, such as those along the Rio Grande and in San Antonio. Another aspect of these early settlements was the Spanish land grant system, which favored rectangular parcels of land with access to rivers for

ranching and irrigation. The parcels were awarded to Spanish settlers, and over time would be subdivided by later generations.

American interests in the Texas region grew when large underground aqueducts were discovered in areas that were previously avoided by explorers and settlers. When the Spanish began to settle the region north of the Rio Grande, they typically skirted around the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande because the Nueces Basin was a barren land that was not useful in agricultural pursuits. Considered a wilderness area when American Anglos began to arrive, the main inhabitants were indigenous groups who had adapted raiding as part of their survival and lifeways. Because of the aqueducts, this region later became integral to North American agricultural pursuits.

Once Americans gained control of Texas, they began to annex the lands held by the wealthier Mexican families. Early on, this relationship was not as simple as treating all former Mexican nationals with the same respect. Montejano (1987) points out that those Texas Mexicans who claimed Castilian ancestry and were the primary landowners, compadres and ruling elite were treated with far more respect than the peóns, whose life changed very little after Texas independence. With the transformation from Mexican to American ranching, the peóns of the Mexican ranches were integrated into the American ranching system as cowboys, a job they generally held prior to the arrival of Anglo-Americans.

After the American authority and influence was well established, the “change from ranching to farming altered the population geography of the region in profound

ways" (Arreola 2002:49). Also, where sheep ranching had been a common industry in the region prior to Anglo-American influences, the rise of cattle ranching had an impact on settlement patterns and environmental characteristics. The relationship of Texas Mexicans to the land was very different than the way the Anglo newcomer's perceived the land and the pursuit of Manifest Destiny. However, with generations of Spanish families tied to the land, the incoming Anglos chose, in general, to operate in a "peace structure," whereby the newcomers cooperated with the Texas Mexicans in arranging a least conflict form of governing (Montejano 1987).

Although the war with Texas left a residual perception of Mexicans as enemies to be hated or despised, the "Mexican" problem was not confined to what to do with the mestizo majority. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between Mexico and the United States in 1848, which generally settled the modern international boundaries between Mexico and the United States, granted full citizenship to Mexican citizens living within the newly annexed regions. However, the United States violated the treaty within a year "with respect to the citizenship articles and refused to extend Mexicans full citizenship rights on the basis that the majority population was not white" (Menchaca 2002:217). Menchaca argues,

> Mexicans who were White were given full citizenship, while mestizos, Christianized Indians, and *afromestizos* came under different racial laws. At the time of the ratification of the treaty, US racial rights conferred full political rights only upon free Whites (i.e., individuals who were not indentured servants or criminals), while Blacks and Indians could be indentured or enslaved in most states (2002: 217).

Thus, the notion of inequality in new political arrangements and old social organizations laid the ideological foundation for future social and political separation between Anglos and Hispanics.

Despite the colorful history ascribed to the Texas frontier with range roving cowboys, raiding Indians, and Mexican banditos, the region's principal architects were the merchants and the land lawyers, who represented "the capital-based and export-oriented element of the frontier folk" (Montejano 1987:15). More than any other groups, the merchants and lawyers ushered in the concepts and practices specific to modern capitalism, which as Montejano argues, facilitated the demise of Spanish colonial hegemony and fueled free market competition, including the commodification of land and labor (1987). Many of the old Spanish guard were land wealthy, but capital poor, which did not settle well with the ever-resourceful Anglos. One example of these ambitious capital-intensive projects involved the development of communities along the Rio Grande to establish a major trade route in the south, rivaled only by the Mississippi River to the east. This endeavor began before Texas independence. Although the ports never quite flourished as entrepreneurs hoped they would, the focus on developing ports in the earliest years of post-Texas independence diverted Anglo settlers from relocating on the vast tracks of land in the interior of Texas. Nevertheless, by securing critical trade routes along the Rio Grande, the foundation for a broader national infrastructure using major waterways to connect established land-based trade routes, which would facilitate commerce, was underway along the emerging U.S./Mexico border region.

Not until the cattle-raising business came to be a profitable enterprise did patterns of land displacement become more evident. Montejano stated, "once authority and a market economy had been re-established in the new territories, land displacement of both legal and a fraudulent character generally expressed a market-related logic. Even conflict and outright dispossession demonstrated sensitivity to market demands" (53). Yet, even as the ranching industry grew, ranches were loosely patterned after the patrón-peón relations characteristic of the region (75). Montejano describes that as the proliferation of ranches became the norm in southern and west Texas, the primarily Anglo owners and operators ran their ranching enterprises like total institutions. They created little towns on their vast properties so that their ranch hands (former peóns) had churches, stores and other town-like necessities within their immediate reach. Such working relationships fostered employer-employee loyalties and worker's families often worked for generations with the employer's family.

What Montejano (1987) discovered through his research on changing economic philosophies in many of the border counties was that after the railroads began to connect rural Texas with the northern states and Mexico, a new wave of Anglo settlers began to flood the region. These settlers were mainly farmers from the Midwest and the South who were often shocked by the integration of Anglos and Texas Mexicans along the border. New farming technologies allowed these newcomers to transform the south Texas land into commodity farming. Along with the new farming techniques came differing attitudes toward labor needs, which clashed with the old ranching approaches. The new wave of farmers was unlike their predecessors in that many of them were not wealthy, but with the commodification of

land, they were able to buy out many of the Mexican ranching properties. These farmers also needed labor, but with the instability of market agriculture, the labor resources had to be flexible, both in time and pay requirements. The peóns of old were effectively turned into seasonal migrant laborers. As a consequence, Anglo farmers developed an indifferent relationship to Texas Mexicans. These new owners of production served to widen the chasm between Texas Mexicans and Anglos.

After the international border was settled with Mexico, the push/pull factors of immigrant labor intensified. The increase in farming areas required significant numbers of laborers, which acted as a pull mechanism for Mexicans seeking work. In the early 1900s, Arreola suggests that while the Texas population increased exponentially, the Mexican American population remained relatively stable. In reviewing South Texas demographics throughout the 1900s, changes in industry reflect changes in population shifts among Tejano groups, especially after 1950 with the attraction of labor in urban areas.

Bordering Texas on the north side and acting as a buffer zone between Texas and the rest of the United States, early Oklahoma Territory was impacted by the cattle ranching industry, particularly because it served as a main thoroughfare for transporting cattle and trade between the incorporated states. The peóns of the Mexican and Texas frontiers also became part of the cowboys on the Oklahoma frontier. Once Oklahoma Territory was opened to American settlers, the land had already been divided and subdivided between Indian tribes that were relocated from all over the continent, including several from the south. With their own governing

structures and social organization and those imposed on them by the United States government, the tribes had already formed communities and participated to varying degrees in the cattle and agriculture industries. By the time of statehood, Oklahoma already had a base economy connected to the agriculture and burgeoning oil industries in Texas. Additionally, prior to its organization as a territory, some Americans were allowed to settle in Indian Territory. These individuals and their families included missionaries and European immigrants, such as the Irish with specific labor skills (e.g. blacksmiths), that were needed to maintain local Bureau of Indian Affairs offices and American military facilities. The interaction and occasional intermarriage of early American immigrant settlers with the Native people further connected each group with the other, with the land, and with the growing Anglo-American communities.

Oklahoma's Hispanic Community: 1900 to 1960

During the early territorial and statehood years, Hispanic families were lured to Oklahoma primarily by work in the mines and on cross country rail line projects. Because the work was often temporary, Hispanic workers moved with the work and few families settled permanently in Oklahoma (Smith 1980). Smith (1980) maintains that in the early part of the 20th century, a significant push factor of immigrants from Mexico to the North culminated in the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which erupted within the poverty-stricken masses through growing political unrest and protests. He states,

> the revolution uprooted thousands of peasant families as leaders abolished peonage, broke up many of the *haciendas*, and destroyed the traditional bonds between *patrón* and *peón*. Thousands joined the

> revolutionary bands, often taking their women and children with them. Thousands more simply fled in fright. The violence caused devastation in fields and villages, loss of employment, food shortages, famines, and epidemics. Although the revolution was not the primary cause of the exodus of thousands of Mexicans to the United States, it was a catalyst for a process already underway (1980: 16).

While General Porfirio Diaz generally portrayed Mexico as peaceful and prosperous throughout his dictatorship between 1876 and 1910, a population boom and rapid land displacement of the peasant majority occurred under his leadership. During the Diaz years, implementation of liberal economic policies in the agriculture industry contributed to land displacement without a significant industrial base in other local and national industries to absorb the displaced people.

Many of those displaced peasants in Mexico joined Pancho Villa's army, which was a primary tenet in the resistance to the Diaz regime. Out of work and in desperate need of food and an income, Villa paid peasants in return for joining the resistance. "Moved by no particular ideology or commitment to Villa or the revolution," these peasants simply needed a means to survive (Smith 1980: 31). Later, as fighting intensified, many of these same peasants abandoned the army and found work elsewhere in Mexico. Eventually, they were lured by recruiters in the United States to work in major infrastructure-building projects, such as on railroad crews. These migrants constituted some of the first Mexican settlers in Oklahoma. Therefore, for those people from Mexico who elected to travel north, they were often drawn by work opportunities. The economic development of the American Southwest coincided with the growing supply of available Mexican labor. Mexicans were also attracted to Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, California, Oklahoma, Kansas,

and Nebraska for work in the cotton fields, citrus groves, mining camps, and in beet fields. “All of these industries required large amounts of unskilled labor” (Smith 1980:18).

Before World War II in the 1940s, US immigration policy was often contradictory and depended on the relationship with the sending country. At the turn of the 20th century, the US government maintained very relaxed policies on immigration, particularly from European countries. Quotas were set as to how many people could enter from different regions each year, but these varied based on the political relationship with the sending region, and the quotas were not always enforced. The exception was strict policies on Asian immigration, which prohibited most Asians and Africans from entering at all. The few Asian immigrants who were allowed in were from the lower social strata of their home country, and these few were filtered into the American West as laborers on major railroad and infrastructure development projects. Until the Great Depression years, southern border policies remained very relaxed, partly because of the continuing international boundary disputes, but also because a pattern of seasonal migration had long been established where Mexican laborers crossed back and forth with ease based on crop harvest patterns. The establishment of railroads on both sides of the border facilitated this process by providing an economical and less time-consuming means of recruiting and transporting laborers.

When the Great Depression spread in the 1930s, immigration policies tightened considerably, and the US/Mexico border transitioned from a symbolic

boundary between two nations to a more concrete line patrolled by a new government enforcement agency, the US Border Patrol. The dramatic loss of agricultural and industrial jobs during the depression years caused a considerable backlash against migratory workers, who were seen as taking jobs away from legal American citizens. Although negative attitudes toward Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were much longer in the making, particularly along the Texas/Mexico border, the depression fueled these attitudes among a larger American populace, who subjected their southern neighbors to increasingly negative stereotypes. Nonetheless, even with stricter border regulations after World War II, economics demanded that more wage laborers were needed in the Southwest and other agricultural regions than was available from the existing US domestic labor pool. Therefore, US policies legitimated seasonal south to north migration through the Bracero Program, which was an agreement between the United States and Mexico implemented between 1942-1964 to allow Mexican laborers to work legally in US fields and factories (Sandos and Cross 1983:43-44). Even so, immigrants continued to enter the US illegally, which only perpetuated negative stereotypes and xenophobia.

Prior to World War II, United States census records indicated that very few Mexicans resided in Oklahoma, and most of those were listed as working in the mining industry in eastern Oklahoma. The number of Mexican-born residents recorded in Oklahoma in 1910 was 2,645, although early statistics do not account for mobile laborers, who mainly lived in isolated camps, and worked wherever they could find jobs. These jobs were often with companies whose labor needs required temporary workers, such as in railroad construction or seasonal crop-picking (Smith

1980:25). Also during this time, the majority of Latin American immigrants came from Mexico, and of that population, the majority migrated mainly from Central Mexico in the states of Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Michoacán following the general patterns of land displacement in Mexico and north to south migration trends (1980:21).

By the 1920s, more than a decade after statehood, the Mexican population in Oklahoma was increasingly employed in other industries important to the developing state economy, including "packinghouses, oil fields, quarries, and numerous unskilled positions in industry and municipal services" (1980:25). The majority of these immigrants settled in the larger urban areas, such as Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton, with a few rural counties also demonstrating high numbers of migrants. Between 1930 and 1940, during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl era, large numbers of Oklahoma residents left the state in search of work and better living conditions. Drought conditions and economic stagnation left many without a means of self-sustenance or employment opportunities paying a living wage adequate for an entire family. US Census data indicate that at least half of the Mexican-born residents also left the state during the Depression years.

For those who stayed, small Mexican enclaves developed in the larger residential and business districts in primarily urban areas, and this particular wave of immigrants established an enduring Hispanic community, which set the foundation for present-day businesses, organizations, and community groups. Although the Hispanic community in Oklahoma was not considered significant compared to other

southwestern states, their experiences during the earlier part of the 20th Century are integral to the experiences of more recent Latin American newcomers.

In researching the history of Mexicans in Oklahoma during the early 20th century, Smith (1980) found that while some Mexicans did indicate that racism was a common occurrence, many more indicated that Oklahoma was more accepting of Hispanics than other states. The degree of segregation was far more ambiguous, and "no signs warning 'No Niggers, Mexicans, or Dogs Allowed' greeted them as they attempted to patronize business establishments. Perhaps because there were relatively few Mexicans in the state, the Anglo majority did not perceive them as a threat" (1980:54).

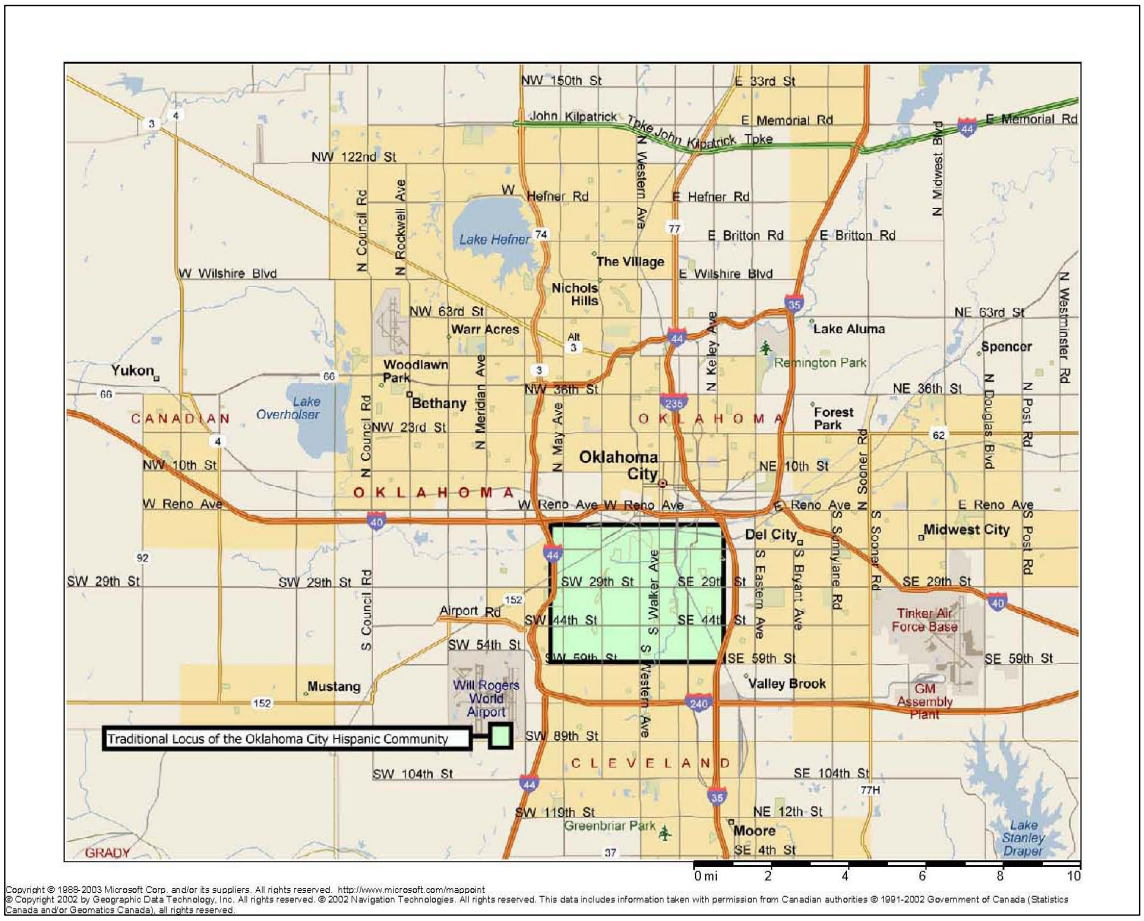
For those who did encounter prejudice, the Spanish *corridos* often expressed sentiments about the Mexican experience in Oklahoma (Smith 1980:55). The power of *corridos*, which are unique, linguistic-patterned ballads common to the Mexican frontier and American Southwest, is that they serve as a vehicle for collective memory over time (Ong 1982; Paredes 2003). If the overall experience in Oklahoma was unfavorable, the spread of *corridos* through social (and thus labor and family) networks throughout the Hispanic and Mexican immigrant communities reflected those sentiments. An example of a *corrido* about Oklahoma in the 1930s was the "Tragedia de Oklahoma," which was recorded by artists Ramos and Ortega after the trial of Deputy Guess in 1931 (Hoffman 1987:65). Deputy Guess and his partner Deputy Crosby of Ardmore, Oklahoma, were charged with the murder of Emilio Cortéz Rubio and Manuel García Gómez, who were both Mexican students attending

college in Missouri and Kansas, respectively. The students were traveling by car through Oklahoma to Mexico City when they made a pit stop in Ardmore where they were confronted by the officers. The officers immediately noticed firearms in the car, which the students had packed to ensure safe travel, particularly when they drove through Mexico where some areas were "still suffering from political ferment and banditry" (1987: 2). The officers, who had spent the day searching for local robbery suspects, prematurely fired on the two students in the car. Their quick assumptions were based on expectations of trouble due to a recent rash of officers shot to death in the area. A third student, Manuel Cortéz Rubio, who was Emilio's cousin, was not harmed.

It was later revealed that all of the students were from prominent Mexican families. At the time of the tragedy, Pascual Ortiz Rubio was President of Mexico and an uncle of Salvador and Emilio. The shooting attracted international attention to Oklahoma and therefore the intervention of Governor William H. (Alfalfa Bill) Murray to oversee the trial as a diplomatic liaison to the State Department, Mexican officials, and the media. Ultimately, both deputies were acquitted to the dismay of Governor Murray and Mexican officials, but the tragedy eventually faded from media speculation on both sides of the border. However, the residual effect of the incident can be traced to the *corrido*, which served as an indicator of the "precarious state of American-Mexican relations, a bitterness towards the many injustices suffered by Mexican immigrants and their American-born descendants in a Southwest dominated by Anglo interpretations of the law and prejudice against minorities" (65).

The wide circulation of the *corrido* about the murders may have served as a deterrent to Latin American immigration to Oklahoma in the 1930s and 1940s. However, the impact of the Great Depression on Oklahoma's economy and industrial development also acted as a significant deterrent on attempts to attract new industries and labor to the state. With a high jobless rate due to the devastating effects of drought on Oklahoma's agriculture industry and significant job cuts from a glut in oil production, Oklahoma industry labor demands were nearly non-existent and communities struggled to survive in the 1930s. After 1932, President Roosevelt's New Deal programs began to provide some relief in putting Oklahoma residents, (who had not already left the state) to work. However, the government programs were not enough, and the state's economy continued to stagnate for years afterwards.

Figure 5-1: Map of Hispanic Community in Oklahoma City



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For the small *colonias* that had formed in the larger urban areas in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Lawton and Bartlesville, they gradually became the business, cultural, and residential locus for the Hispanic community's daily life (see Figure 5-1 for an illustration of the Hispanic community's traditional locus in Oklahoma City). Of those Hispanics remaining in the state, the majority was from Mexico and they belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. In 1927 Carmelite nuns, who had settled in Oklahoma after fleeing the Mexican Revolution in 1910, established Little Flower Church in Oklahoma City near Southwest 10th Street and Walker Avenue to serve the Hispanic population concentrated in that area. The church was originally named The

Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse for the nuns who established it. As the congregation flourished, other Hispanic churches were established in the area. After World War II, the growth of the Hispanic immigrant population in Oklahoma became more diverse, particularly by the 1960s when a larger portion of the Hispanic population migrated from Latin American countries other than Mexico. A few Cuban refugee families established themselves in Oklahoma after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba in 1959. Small groups from other Central American countries, such as Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, also began to rise, but their numbers remained relatively insignificant until the 1980s and 1990s.

By World War II, the Hispanic community in Oklahoma was already affected by the larger national economic, political, and urban developments in community organization. Although the Catholic Church played a central role in the integration of the Hispanic population, national and ethnic organizations provided some assistance in developing fundamental resources to help alleviate some of the barriers to integration, to assist in community organization, and to aid individual families in need. "Mexican immigrant organizations established in Oklahoma included La Comisión Honorífica (The Honorary Commission), La Cruz Azul (The Blue Cross), and the Sociedad Benéfica Nacional (National Benefit Society)" (Smith 1980:55). Because nearly all of Hispanic immigrants were from Mexico prior to the 1980s, these organizations were formed based on common Mexican ancestry and heritage. Prior to the civil rights movement in the United States, most people self-identified as *Mexicanos* if they migrated from Mexico or as Mexican American if they were born in the United States with parents or grandparents from Mexico.

On the national level, Gómez-Quiñones (1990) examined the differences in social and political organizing efforts between 1940 and 1990 among Mexican American groups in the United States. In the early World War II years and after its end, many politically active groups sprung up and a few influential leaders became prominent at the state and national levels. Among the more significant organizations were the Community Service Organization (CSO), the American GI Forum and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). The CSO was founded by Edward Roybal of New Mexico, who had both a lengthy political career within the dominant political structure and in Mexican American advocacy in general. Another prominent member of the CSO was Cesar Chavez who was later integral to organizing the National Farm Workers of America (NFWA).

Yet another advocate of Mexican American rights, Henry B. Gonzales of Texas, worked for the Pan American Progressive Association (PAPA) early in his career and went on to win elections and serve in local, state and national political positions, which helped to add credibility to the growing Chicano movement. Gonzales endorsed the American GI Forum, which was dedicated to assisting Mexican American veterans who continued to suffer discrimination even after completing their enlistment.

Of longstanding importance to the Mexican American movement is the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). In reviewing LULAC and many of the other important organizations, Gómez-Quiñones points out that their goals and objectives have changed over time. For example, LULAC tended to be

conservative in its attitude toward immigrants at least in the earlier years, but has since modified its position (1990:63). Churches were also significant in organizing efforts because they had access to large groups. In the first half of the 20th century, the Catholic Church began greater outreach efforts partly to expand its member base, but Catholics did not tend to be as compassionate to civil rights organizations as many Protestant groups during that time. Nonetheless, Catholic ideology was a significant influence on these groups (1990:64, 173). In addition, another important component to organizing efforts was youth groups. Many of the larger organizations sponsored youth programs, but the older generations did not always take the youth seriously and the programs were often under-funded and under-structured, and, especially after the 1960s, Chicano youth held very different ideological perspectives than their older counterparts (Gómez-Quiñones 1990).

One of the significant characteristics of Chicano politics and the supporting organizations is the differences between liberal, moderate and conservative positioning. Gómez-Quiñones demonstrates how these organizations became more militant with the onset of the 1960s. Nevertheless, as the extreme liberal and often violent protests died out in the 1970s, both nationally and internationally, political activism also took milder and more conservative forms. Thus, functionalist ideologies were adapted and policies were geared towards working within the hegemonic system. In addition, the influence of world politics and decolonization efforts had changed US discriminatory practices and many Chicano organizations had to revamp their goals and objectives. While social discrimination was still obvious in many areas, new equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws allowed Hispanics greater

access into the system. In discussing the heterogeneous nature of Chicano politics, Gómez-Quiñones (1990) maintains that leadership roles have been challenging for passionate individuals because of differing demands from liberal and conservative elements that was compounded by perceived middle class indifference and the lack of resources from working class groups. The historical trends in Hispanic oppression are demonstrated in unequal access to education and professional training, which would have greatly improved the political clout of Hispanic organizations.

Prior to the 1960s in Oklahoma, few of these larger groups established a foothold, which (in comparison to other states) is largely because of the insignificant numbers of Hispanics who lived and worked in the state. The most significant function of the existing organizations was generally to oversee the welfare of immigrants living in the area, to provide mutual aid to families in need, and to plan social events and celebrations, such as "El 16 de Septiembre" (September 16th, celebrated as Mexico's Independence Day from Spanish rule), "El Cinco de Mayo" (May 5th, celebrated in Mexico's defense of a French invasion in 1862), and El día de la Virgen de Guadalupe (September 12th, the Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe celebrating the appearance of the Virgin to Juan Diego in 16th century Mexico) (Smith 1980:55, 56).

The New Wave of Immigrants: 1960 to the Present

Between 1960 and 1980 in the United States, the overall number of foreign born residents migrating from Europe decreased by 45 percent and the foreign born population migrating from Latin America increased by 23.7 percent. By 2000, the majority of immigrants (about 51 percent) in the United States came from Latin

America. Asian immigrants accounted for 25.5 percent of the overall foreign born population, while European immigrants only accounted for 15.4 percent, and Africans represented only about 2.5 percent. This shift in migration patterns to the United States in the second half of the 20th century characterizes a shift in global migration patterns worldwide, and the reasons for the shift are attributed to a variety of political and economic factors.

More recent scholarship generally accepts the broader dependency framework for explaining migration patterns, which include the processes of decolonization and globalization. The reassessment of the world economy following the Great Depression in Western economies and the need to rebuild European communities and infrastructure after two World Wars allowed for a withdrawal of colonial authority in peripheral countries. It also allowed for a focus on assisting those fledgling nations in growing their economies and expanding their roles in the world economy as markets with a multitude of potential new laborers and consumers. Yet, the struggle of many Third World nations to gain political and economic independence from their former colonizers often involved long and bloody wars, such as seen in the Algerian War with France (1954-1962), or they involved divisive and bloody civil wars within national borders, such as those seen in many Latin American countries throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Third World men who fought in World War II were promised the right to self-determination, which would free them from the influence of other countries and allow them to work out their own system of governance. The peasant majority in many of these countries were (or, in some cases, still are) often marginalized in a larger ideological divide between the proponents of social

collectivism as opposed to liberal/neo-liberal economics (both rooted in Western philosophical traditions) on how best to organize their economies.

It would be an understatement to say that the consequences of these ideological differences have been significant in the lives of people living in the formerly colonized regions. Although geopolitical boundaries were generally set prior to decolonization, these regions often constitute a wide variety of smaller ethnic and cultural groups. Thus, internal national disputes involve a complex matrix of class divisions and ethnic clashes that render the formerly colonized regions or new states (primarily found in the southern hemisphere) politically and economically unstable.

The result of worldwide efforts to integrate Western capitalism and democratic ideologies into the formerly colonized regions has meant a significant displacement of local people from their lands and communities of origin. Similar to the wave of Mexican immigrants heading north after the Mexican Revolution in 1910, the majority of more recent immigrants are comprised of refugees fleeing the economic, political, and social instabilities within their homelands. The instabilities are a by-product of modern nation-building in a rapidly liberalizing global economy.

In contrast to the past historical contexts of colonization during which Spain and Great Britain imposed imperial forces to conquer new lands for the extraction of valuable natural resources, the most recent layering in the chronological history of imperialism is manifested in an ideological conquering of vast new pools of cheap labor sources. As the imperial relationship between Europe and Latin America waned in the 1800s, the growing economic superiority, and thus political dominance, of the

United States intensified its relations with Latin America in the neighboring southern hemisphere. As Gunder Frank demonstrates, "contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries (1972: 3). Consequently, the displaced persons created by earlier political relationships in Latin America then provided a viable source of labor for the United States.

The movie, El Norte (1983), is one example of the immigrant experience from war-torn Guatemala to the United States. Two Mayan teenagers, a sister and brother, who lived in a small Guatemalan village were the survivors of a massacre by the Guatemalan army that left their community decimated. The indigenous villagers suspected of organizing a labor union to improve the quality of their life (a collective action contrary to liberal economic reform policies) were then subjected to the army's persecution. These two young villagers escaped to the north and the movie chronicles their travels through Mexico and across the US border as "illegal" immigrants.

As a student at an Oklahoma City Catholic high school in the 1980s, I saw this movie in one of my classes along with the introduction of a young Mayan man from Guatemala, who had also made the journey north to escape the conditions of his homeland. The connection of the Mayan immigrant introduced in class to the local Catholic Church and the integration of these more recent Latin American immigrants into the United States is not a coincidence. At a time when secular organizations were becoming less militant advocates of social change, some members of the Catholic

Church and many Protestant churches began to embrace the tenets of liberation theology in an effort to combat growing numbers of impoverished communities and displaced people, particularly in Latin America. Liberation theology is an approach to the Christian theological tradition using primarily Marxist critiques to identify modern capitalism as the primary culprit of world poverty. This approach to theology is generally rejected by formal religious authorities, especially those in the Catholic hierarchy, because of its ties to far left revolutionaries who use violent methods in their attempts to achieve socio-political legitimacy. Nevertheless, since the 1980s many Christian groups have more readily adapted some tenets of liberation theology in its various forms to missionary practices and approaches.

In her study on the sanctuary movement in the 1980s, Cunningham (1995) elaborated on the relationship between religion and politics in the United States. She maintains that with "the rise and spread of evangelical fundamentalism," the consequences involved a move away from a period of general consolidation among churches (1930s to 1980) to a "polarization of churches into two mutually hostile 'liberal' and 'conservative' camps" (1995:98). The differing approaches between the Christian "left" and the more conservative groups included the "the area of civil rights and 'liberation' struggles," and for many of the liberal-leaning groups, they "supported affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation for blacks, Hispanics, and the poor" (98).

Part of the liberal agenda included a concern for foreign policy issues. By the 1970s, Latin America was rife with civil violence, and many of the Central American

governments "felt threatened by liberation theology," particularly because it challenged and critiqued liberal economics and US interests in the region (Cunningham 1995:21). For the Salvadoran and Guatemalan governments, it was a "communist-inspired insurgency," which led to the targeting of "priests, nuns and church workers with campaigns of terror" (21).

In the 1960s, the Oklahoma Catholic Archdiocese established a mission in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, and since then priests from Oklahoma have been sent to work and administer to the local population. During the Guatemalan Civil War in the 1970s and 80s, Father Stanley F. Rother, originally from Okarche, Oklahoma, served as a local priest in Santiago Atitlan when his name turned up on a death list targeting priests in the area. The list was linked to an extreme right-wing paramilitary group and the Guatemalan army. In July of 1981, Fr. Rother was gunned down in the rectory of the church where he served the villagers in Guatemala. The work of the Archdiocese in Guatemala, including frequent church member mission trips, and the death of Fr. Rother highlight a multi-faceted relationship between Guatemalans and Oklahoma Catholics today. Fr. Rother has not been forgotten by either community. After his death, his body was sent back to Oklahoma, but his heart was allowed to remain interred in his church in Guatemala.

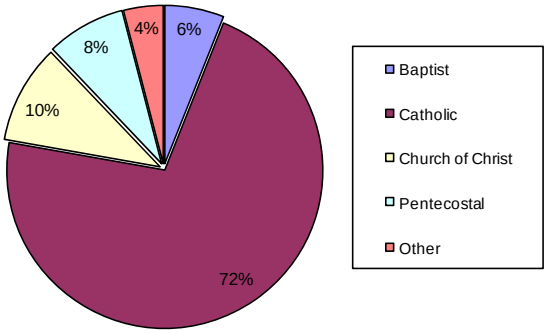
In the 1980s the flow of migrants to the north from the civil wars in Central America made its way through Oklahoma, if only as part of a small, but resilient, effort of those in the religious communities to resist the human rights violations resulting from inadequate immigration policies. As part of the larger sanctuary

movement, which mainly operated out of larger cities, like Chicago, and border regions, such as in Arizona, undocumented refugees were transported through Oklahoma by individuals loosely linked to the broader sanctuary network. The transport business was limited to individuals who asked few questions and trusted the movement organizers to provide the basic to and from details of the requested transport. For those involved, transport usually consisted of picking up a refugee (or refugees), a brief layover (usually lodging was provided in Oklahoma City), and a ride to the Kansas border where the refugee's trip would continue to one of the established sanctuary destinations. This particular flow of migrants did not produce a sizeable settlement community in Oklahoma. Nonetheless, involvements such as Fr. Rother's work in Guatemala and those participating in the sanctuary movement demonstrate an increased awareness in Oklahoma of the human atrocities occurring in the countries south of the US border, as well as a resistance to the push factors sending people to the north (Rother 1984).

Not surprisingly, the Guatemalan component of the foreign-born population from Latin America has been the second largest group of Latin American immigrants after Mexicans in Oklahoma since 1980. While the Catholic Church has been significant in administering to the local Latin American immigrant population, other Christian denominations have gained a foothold in attracting new Latino members and addressing their particular social welfare needs. Catholic Charities, the social service organization within the Catholic Church, remains a significant influence among the immigrant community with programs specifically geared to assist in the resettlement process. However, in line with trends in Latin America, a growing

segment of other Christian denominations have formed community churches in Oklahoma, specifically for Latin American newcomers. These churches function as social, spiritual, and community networking structures, providing critical resources to members in need of jobs, housing, and assistance for a variety of health and social welfare needs. Nearly 24 percent of the participants who completed my survey in Oklahoma City indicated that they belonged to a Christian church other than the Catholic Church. Figure 4-2 provides a distribution of the religious denominations for those participants who indicated belonging to a church in this study.

Figure 5-2: Religious Denominations



In reviewing the composition of Latin American immigrants arriving in the United States since the 1980s and internal patterns of migration settlement within the United States, the majority of Latin Americans still do come from Mexico. Most of the participants in this study also came from Mexico (95 percent), although through study recruitment efforts and participant-observation sessions, I met people from many other places including Guatemala, Columbia, Venezuela, El Salvador and Peru among other countries. They gave a variety of reasons for settling in Oklahoma such as studying at one of the local universities, as spouses of military employees, or as a transfer location for their employer. Interestingly, the dynamics between modern

technology and communication brought one couple together in Oklahoma City through internet chatting, where one moved from South America and the other from an island in the Caribbean.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population rose 52 percent in Oklahoma with an additional increase of 26 percent by 2006 according to US Census data. The increase in the Latino population is influenced by the larger Latin American immigration trends to the United States in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Of the Latino population in Oklahoma in 2006, 58 percent were foreign born. Overall, the Latin American immigrant population in Oklahoma has increased by 42 percent between 2000 and 2006, and the official number in 2006 was 101,929. However, these numbers do not include the undocumented population, which has also grown substantially in the United States. More conservative estimates suggest that at least half of the Latin American immigrant population is undocumented, thus increasing the Latin American immigrant population in states like Oklahoma by as much as 84 percent between 2000 and 2006 (rather than 42 percent as noted above). Informal interviews with and reports from local social service providers indicate that the number of Latin American immigrants may be as much as three times the officially reported US Census data (or 126 percent growth between 2000 and 2006), which would put their numbers closer to 306,000 in Oklahoma (Jackson 2004, The Oklahoman).

As difficult as it is to estimate the overall growth and percentage of the Latin American immigrant population in comparison to the general population in

Oklahoma, the growth of the former community is visible, particularly in larger urban areas. Yet, even with some official US Census data available through 2006, local political actions and national economic patterns may have caused a significant shift in these numbers in 2007 and 2008. In 2007, the passage of Oklahoma's House Bill 1804 targeted undocumented residents, and while interviewing was being conducted for this study, many participants reported that they knew friends and family who had left the state or were planning to leave. In 2008, larger national and international lending institutions began to collapse causing a ripple effect in many larger industries, such as in the mortgage lending and real estate markets, throughout the United States and abroad. With a plunging stock market and weakening international economies, fewer jobs are available and fewer people are crossing borders in search of work. In Oklahoma, the impact of HB 1804 and the subsequent global recession adds to micro-level "push factors," which work against global "pull factors," for migrants to consider other options to find work, including moving to other states or back to their home country.

Demographic data collected during the field research phase of this study do indicate that the local Latin American immigrant population is young. Sixty-five percent of the study participants were under the age of 35, and although this study may be skewed because the majority of participants were women of reproductive age who needed social services, other recent sources on immigration patterns suggest that immigrants in new settlement states like Oklahoma are younger on average (Bump, Lowell, and Petterson 2005:34). Some variation, however, occurs in the documentation on education and linguistic abilities among the general immigrant

population. The average number of years of educational attainment of immigrants in Oklahoma is 11.1 years. The data from this study suggest that, for Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma, the average number of years of educational attainment is only about 5.2 years. Also, of the foreign born population in Oklahoma, 26.9 percent are linguistically isolated, but data from this study indicate that as much as 38 percent of Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma speak Spanish only.

In areas of Oklahoma City where there is a high concentration of Latin American newcomers, local public services and social welfare organizations have made adjustments to accommodate those who only speak Spanish. The public school system is one broad area where Spanish speaking parents, their children, and local community members converge. In areas with a significant number of Hispanic students, forms are often sent home in both English and Spanish, and translators are generally on hand to help parents navigate the system.

One viable presence in Oklahoma City since 1991 has been the Latino Community Development Agency (LCDA) located on Southwest 10th Street in the heart of the traditional Hispanic district. The organization was founded within the Latino community to serve in areas perceived to be critical to the well-being of community members and the growing immigrant population. Brought into existence through a joint Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) and Community Council of Central Oklahoma proposal to the United Way, LCDA has expanded its role in the community through programs in education, economic development, health, mental health and substance abuse prevention, domestic abuse, communications,

development and personnel. About 17 percent of participants in this study indicated accessing one or more of LCDA's programs, particularly those desiring to improve their English language skills. One young mother was ordered by the state court system to learn English in order to raise her chances of getting her daughter back from foster care where the three year old girl was learning English as her primary language. The judge maintained that if the mother was to get full custody of her daughter, she would not be able to communicate with the daughter very well. LCDA offers classes near this young woman's home, which she said she desperately needed to follow the state's requirements.

LCDA, like many social service organizations in Oklahoma, also began to recognize the significant jump in the Latino population in rural areas during the 1990s and 2000s. The smaller communities often lack the social structure and resources to administer to the needs of immigrants in these areas. Without many Spanish-speaking law enforcement officials, health care workers, and general social service providers, many immigrants living in these communities do not get the care or services they need, which is often critical and sometimes fatal. For example, law enforcement officials are often at a loss in domestic violence cases because people (generally women) are afraid to turn in abusive partners because of the threat of deportation, the possibility of their partner retaliating, and their own lack of English language skills.

Aware of the particular problems arising from the growing Latino population in a predominately white, English-speaking state like Oklahoma, national groups such as LULAC have more recently established local councils or chapters to assist in

identifying the needs and administering to those needs among the newcomer population. The Oklahoma City Chapter of LULAC was established in 2001 primarily to promote youth activity and college scholarship awards, but it now also serves as a facilitator for Latino leadership within the larger community. As a liaison between government entities and the Latino community, LULAC is also active in raising the awareness of human rights violations and seeks greater political representation for the Latino community. It has made attempts to combat legislation perceived to be discriminatory against the Latino population, such as HB 1804 and variously proposed English-as-the-official-language bills.

Those social service areas available for access during my field research for this project primarily included local health care facilities in reproductive health initiatives. However, one large local health network also provided facilities and agreements with local government organizations to provide free citizenship, English language, and computer classes. These classes are advertised on a local level, although several free health clinics operated on a word-of-mouth basis. The first-come, first-serve clinics provide general health check-ups and free drugs without citizenship verification. Most of the major health networks in the area operate similar clinics, which provide an alternative option for the health care needs of those who cannot afford health insurance and are not eligible for government-subsidized health programs. The clinic that I attended on a regular basis for nearly a year remained steady with as much as a 75 percent Hispanic clientele, even after HB 1804 became law in July, 2007. Of the Hispanics visiting the clinic on a regular basis, the majority were women who spoke little or no English.

In sum, the Hispanic community in Oklahoma is diverse. Many are the children of migrants who arrived prior to 1980. They have achieved similar levels of education and middle class earnings as their white counterparts. However, the majority of the Hispanic population consists of young Latin American immigrants who settled within the last ten years and who largely work in labor-intensive agricultural and service-oriented industries. As low-wage laborers, and often undocumented, they have limited or no access to formal health and social welfare services. The older Hispanic community, however, is integral to the administration of local health and social service organizations and programs. This group provides cultural and linguistic links to the newcomers, and their presence is significant in the larger process of cultural incorporation.

Chapter 6: Latin American Immigration and Identity

In the heart of Mexico, Consuela (introduced in Chapter 2) grew up with her mother, father and two brothers. Her mother owned and operated a cafeteria in a nearby school, which allowed Consuela to complete her education through high school and some college. Her father worked on and off in the United States, but has moved back to Mexico. Her two brothers are unmarried teachers in Mexico, and Consuela said they earned less a week than she makes in the United States working part-time at a large chain, fast-food restaurant. For the most part, life was not necessarily as difficult for Consuela as it is for many young women in Mexico, but like many, her decision to move to the United States was in response to a variety factors, including the search for better work opportunities. After her boyfriend committed suicide, her desire to move and get away from the troubled memories was much stronger. She decided to make the journey to Oklahoma with an uncle, who had legal papers for a cousin about the same age. Assuming her cousin's identity, Consuela crossed the border in a car with her uncle. Shortly thereafter, she severed ties with her uncle who was a drug dealer. On her own, she managed to get work and make a few contacts. Once she had children, her mom and brothers began to visit occasionally. Her mom stays long enough to help with Consuela's new babies, which helps relieve some child care costs when Consuela returns to work.

For many Latin American immigrants, the process of migration becomes part of their social and cultural identities. As with Consuela's family, a pattern of familial transmigration was already established by her father and uncle. And although it has become more difficult, in recent years, for those who are undocumented to cross the international border regularly, family members from Mexico and other Latin American countries are often able to travel legally with visas to visit and help their kin in the United States. Maintaining family ties over such long distances tends to be part of the overall strategy for rearing children and surviving financially (Levitt 2001). This chapter will focus on Latin American immigrant identity, along with a discussion on being the newcomer in the receiving community and the impact of

migration on the family from the immigrant perspective involving personal relationships, marriage, children, work, and communication.

Latin American Immigrant Identity

Defining Latin American immigrants as a particular ethnic group is often problematic because Latin Americans in general are ethnically heterogeneous. Not only do they vary in terms of generational status and level of social, cultural, and linguistic assimilation, they vary in terms of national and local community of origin. They also vary based on rural or urban origins, as well as social status within their community of origin. Latin American scholars generally accept theories about social and ethnic stratification in Latin America that have less to do with skin color (although still relevant), than with place of origin, manner of dress, and linguistic abilities (Ehlers 1991; Bossen 1984; Nash 1993; and Nelson 1999). For example, Nelson's (1999) study in Guatemala indicated that if an individual dresses in traditional indigenous clothes, speaks a local indigenous dialect, and lives far from an urban area, he or she is considered "Indian," which means backwards or on the bottom of the larger Guatemalan socio-economic scale. However, if the same person puts on Westernized clothes, goes to town, and speaks Spanish, he/she is then considered "ladinoized" (more white and Westernized) and will be treated with more respect.

Other problems in defining Latin American immigrants in the United States are based on such variables as their settlement patterns, work status, and legal status within receiving communities. Experiences for many immigrants vary considerably based on when and where they settle, such as in rural or urban areas, and in lower,

middle, or upper-class neighborhoods. Occupations vary widely and the type of occupation, such as within the blue or white-collar sectors or the informal sector, is significant to income and access to social welfare and health services. The type of industry (e.g. the agriculture industry) where migrants are or may potentially be employed often determines work and residential patterns and whether or not crossing the border legally is an option. In addition, some migrants plan to make their new residence permanent, but as many studies demonstrate, transmigrants see their stay as temporary and often return to their country of origin.

Ethnic, Class and Gender Relations in Latin America

Ethnographic work conducted in Latin America in the past thirty years on ethnic, class, and gender identity is considerable and provides a foundation for understanding the emergence of more recent immigrants in Latino communities in the United States. As the capitalist mode of production infiltrated local communities in Latin America during the twentieth century, much scholarly work has focused on the impact of capitalism on social organization, particularly in the domestic realm, on women and the organization of households and families. Some of the studies conducted in Latin America and in other developing regions around the world illuminate women's loss of benefits and social status (Deere and Leon 1987; Deere 1990, Beneria and Roldan 1987), while others demonstrate a gain for women in status and decision-making processes under global development efforts (Tice 1995; Mies 1986). From either perspective, several critical themes surface from these studies at the intersection of global economic trends, the capitalist mode of production, and ethnic, class, and gender identification. These themes include documenting the

coexistence of multiple modes of production within the household and local communities, the informal economy, and the feminization of labor in these regions. Also related to the introduction of wage labor and economic reform policies in many regions is the feminization of rural to urban migration patterns and the production and reproduction of labor.

The significance of previous studies in Latin America, particularly those illuminating the impact of capitalism on women and the role of women in the larger economies, is to add a new dimension of understanding the overall experiences of people in the modern world. Because past scholarship often ignored the realm of women's lives, these newer studies provide insights into why men often make the decisions that they make. For example, Safa (1996) demonstrates that the influence of liberal economics in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic created jobs for women in the public sphere, but while job opportunities are more abundant for women, they are shrinking for men. The growing difficulties for men to earn adequate wages to support a family and the growing need for women to work as wage laborers has then affected the structure of the nuclear family and gender role expectations in these geographic areas. Heavily influenced by historical Latino patriarchy and machismo, these countries are experiencing similar economic and social structural changes that occurred throughout Latin America in the late 20th century. According to Fernandez-Kelly, transitioning from "a subsistence economy to a market economy based on the employment of wage labor" contributes to increasing differentiation by "class, occupation, ethnic affiliation, race, national background and gender (1981:416).

Similarly, Stephen (1993) elaborates on the affects of a free market economy in Teotitlan del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico, and on Zapotec weaving as it relates to the larger economic forces and the renegotiation of ethnicity, class and gender. In Teotitlan de Valle and in similar craft producing areas, the Federal government's realization that tourism is a significant aspect of the global economy is important because it has major implications on local, regional and national identities. For Stephen, "ethnicity must be understood not as an objective collection of empirical traits, but as contested terrain", and ethnicity is linked to class (27). For the weavers of Teotitlan del Valle, they are sensitive to outside market forces. And, although they may represent a variety of class positions, they actively promote themselves as a unified ethnicity to sell their products in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Stephen concludes that as commodities changed into handicrafts within an industrializing context, "the economic base of the community changed from merchant to commercial capital, the relations of production, gender relations, and local ethnic identity were all affected" (49). Women have been marginalized in the production process, and merchant relations are dictated by larger economic powers. For Stephen, the Indian culture promoted by the state to fuel commodity production shaped Zapotec ethnicity, which has also formed in a reaction to outsiders attempting to control the economic processes of textile production (50).

In addition to the intersection of artisan production and ethnic identity in Latin America, as in many developing areas around the world, the search for cheaper labor sources has infiltrated the domestic realm and is linked to the informal economy. The phenomenon of industrial homework, particularly among Third World women, has

spread rapidly in the past thirty years. According to Beneria and Roldan, industrial homework is work that occurs in the informal sector of the Latin American economy (1987:1). It is work created by industrial manufacturing with the components of the final product broken into small and unskilled steps or tasks. The idea behind industrial homework is to tap into cheap labor resources (in many cases women who reside and work outside of the formal legal economic structure) because it cuts manufacturing costs. For example, assembly of plastic flowers and toys, polishing products, and sheet metal riveting are a few of the jobs performed in this arena. Because the labor process has been broken down into very basic tasks, the skill level needed is minimal. Thus, many larger and medium size production companies have a pool of middlemen (smaller contracting companies and jobbers) who act as liaisons between larger formal organizations and individual domestic workers, who receive minimal monetary returns for their work in the home.

Beneria and Roldan's research took them to the colonias and vecinidades (tenement housing) of Mexico City where dense populations of low-income families and individuals reside (1987). Due to significant urban migration, Mexico City swelled in the second half of the 20th century to accommodate the incoming rural people looking for jobs. These urban migrants relocated from over-crowded rural lands that were once used primarily for subsistence farming. Beneria and Roldan argue that capitalist corporations actively engage in and reinforce accepted social norms regarding gender roles because such norms help to justify the use of the informal sector and the low wage rates.

Through interviews with company officials, jobbers (intermediaries between the formal sector and informal labor sources), and the women themselves, the researchers found that it was common for companies to cite stereotypical assumptions about women as preferred workers for these jobs (51). Also, because women's incomes are generally perceived as supplemental family income and the work was unskilled, they were considered good candidates for these jobs and it was a justification for paying lower wages. In addition, the interviews with women workers demonstrated a general self-perception that their work was only supplemental and that women's primary concern should be her domestic and familial duties. Of course, most of these women would have preferred higher wages and some work stability, but in light of the prevailing domestic stereotype, many saw collective action difficult to achieve. Besides, once unions form and higher wages are demanded, corporations may search for cheaper productive alternatives, which, in a place like Mexico City, is abundant due to the size of the potential low-wage population. Also, an integral issue in the homeworker debate is benefits.

As documented around the world, homework is often invisible work and it means that the workers have little or no recourse in obtaining benefits. There is a serious difficulty in being able to organize, partly because of a large cheap wage labor pool (depending on the area) or if women are isolated in their homes as many immigrant women are, they also face a language barrier (Prugl and Boris 1996).

In the first half of the 20th century, major agrarian reform policies were passed and, to varying degrees, implemented in Latin American country sides. These reforms

included efforts to redistribute the land in a more equitable fashion to promote rural production and slow down urban to rural migration patterns. One model of state intervention into rural areas was rural extensionism, which promoted technical assistance and credit programs that largely ignored women as the programs reproduced social norms found in dominant Western patriarchal ideologies (Deere and Leon 1987:7). By the 1970s, many countries realized the failure in reform efforts, which were often affected by the larger pressures of the global loan program. Production did not keep pace with the balance of payments and as a result, agro-exports stagnated, wages decreased, and internal monetary systems suffered greatly from devaluation. The rural to urban migration continued as fewer and fewer peasants had enough land to sustain their families. Women were overwhelmingly the migrants to urban areas because they were often deprived of the benefits of rural agricultural policies, and thus moved to search for other means of employment, where they generally pursued domestic service positions.

In both urban and rural areas of Latin America, strategies used by households to survive involve multiple modes of production. Deere (1990) documents the changing relationship between peasants and landlords in the transition from a feudal mode of production to a capitalist mode of production in the Province of Cajamarca, Peru. Located in the highlands of Peru, Deere primarily focuses on "class relations" as understood more broadly than the strict Marxist conception of class as the defining boundary between the owners of production and wage laborers. Rather, she differentiates between feudal, capitalist, and communal class relations, which may coexist to form complex social and economic relationships in any given community

(13-14). In the case of Cajamarca, the household is stressed as the site of reproduction of labor power, which intersects with class and gender relations as well. As wage labor was introduced in Peru, particularly with agricultural reform policies, subsistence farming and wage labor coexisted in household efforts to make ends meet. The effects of wage labor, however, add to women's reproductive responsibilities, and the expectation of a gender division of labor does not necessarily change as subsistence farmers merge with the wage economy. While women find their decision-making authority rises with the ability to earn money (often becoming heads of households due to migration and abandonment), the instabilities characteristic of seasonal wage labor significantly impacts the cohesiveness of family productive units.

Based on previous studies in Latin America from development, class and gender perspectives, there are several considerations in the general rural to urban population shifts in Latin America (Deere and Leon 1987). These considerations include the understanding that women do participate in agricultural production, despite earlier development theories that virtually ignored women in development policies and implementation. Latin American peasant farming is based on family farming, although women's participation varies widely depending on the region, class and socio-cultural context. Also of significance is the understanding that a gender division of labor exists and women typically carry the burden of household reproductive tasks. This reproductive responsibility often fosters household inequality, which is supported by a wealth of studies on class as a major factor in understanding peasant women's productive and reproductive roles within the

domestic and public spheres. The level of a woman's participation in decision-making helps determine a household's position along the continuum of egalitarian to patriarchal models of larger family systems (5). In addition, although arguments have been fairly successful in establishing that women earn less and have access to few benefits within the growing agricultural wage labor force, women in Latin America have not necessarily been marginalized or displaced as wage laborers. On the contrary, because they are perceived as a cheaper labor source, they have been increasingly included in the wage labor pool. Finally, the female wage labor force in Latin America has been characterized as women from landless or smallholder households in which the organization of rural women tends to be very low, and the majority of women are young (6).

Similar to the profound impact that colonialism has had on indigenous populations around the world, the main argument in this section has been to expand the concept of identity in Latin America to include the impact of neoliberal economic policies on the social organization of the general population, with a specific emphasis on the position of women. For newer immigrants to the United States, conceptions of ethnic identification are often trumped by engrained national identities and class positions. This is not to say that many immigrants do not identify with their indigenous roots. There are ample studies of indigenous enclaves in the United States, such as Hagan's study on a Mayan community in Houston where the members of the community were from the Guatemalan highlands (1994). However, most participants in this study strongly identified themselves through their country of origin and when asked more about their identity, little was said about their indigenous background. In

some cases, the interviewees were perplexed when asked if they knew what their Indian background was. In the interviews, participants often placed more emphasis on a generalized understanding of Latino culture, including cultural norms related to machismo and the centrality of family.

Indigenous groups were, historically, subordinated within the larger social structures, and the historical process of subordination may be linked to their class positions today. Ultimately, class position is also linked to the ways families organize and the role and authority of women within the household. Strongly linked to class position in the sending country then is the class position of immigrants once they enter and settle in the United States. In terms of their class position, gender expectations, and ethnic identities and as more women migrate to the United States from Latin America, a contiguous pattern is evident between the organization of families in the sending community and immigrant families within the receiving community. Therefore, because the majority of participants in this study were women and they reported coming from conditions similar to those described as the informal, industrial, or rural sectors of their sending countries, I expected to find similarities in the organization of family and the structure of households within the receiving community in my field research among immigrants in Oklahoma City.

Significantly, I did find households affected by the culture of mobility, which is a by-product of low-wage work spanning international borders as well as seasonal cycles and industries sensitive to general market forces. Although the majority of participants in this study did report being in a relationship and having dependents, most households contained a mix of members with varying citizenship statuses and

inconsistent living arrangements, which will be further discussed in the remaining part of this chapter.

The Label "Immigrant" as Part of Latin American Identities

Part of Latin American identity is rooted in when and how people came to be where they settled. With north to south migrations steadily rising in the 21st century, the number of people with a Latin American heritage in several areas of the United States is often larger than the populations in the cities or regions of the sending countries where the migrants originated. Significantly, class position in a sending country dictates how the process of migration will take place, including whether to migrate legally or not. For many people, the decision to migrate illegally far outweighs the cost of waiting to gain legal documentation, which may never be granted due to the cost and a high demand for legal residence requests from Latin America that overwhelmingly exceeds the quotas set in current US immigration policies.

The general growth of populations around the world as well as significant changes in modes of production from primarily subsistence economies to wage labor and free market enterprises demonstrate the push factors of people to look "elsewhere" to make a living. As Safa (1992; 1996) noted from her research in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, work opportunities shrank for men as real wages were depressed and lower-wage opportunities opened up for women. A consequence of this change in the economy was to push men towards places like the United States where low-wage, unskilled work can provide a better living than in the weaker economies of their home countries. As men migrate, they tend to leave behind

households where women often become the primary decision-maker, and the impact on families and women's roles within the household setting is considerable.

For women who migrate from rural areas where lopsided agriculture policies have pushed them to urban areas, they tend to migrate while they are young adults and before they have established families. Establishing a family in a new place may mean a reduced network of family and friends. Especially for migrants from Mexico, migration can be highly mobile and networks extend across the international border. For those women who have families, they must creatively balance the well-being of the family, particularly children, with their need to find work to support themselves and the family. This may mean leaving children behind with other family members or sending them across the international border with family members who have already migrated. One participant in this study, Ysenia, is a mother of two, but during the initial interview when I asked all of the relevant questions about her experiences in Oklahoma, I did not realize that one child was actually still living in Mexico with his grandparents. It was at a second interview with a friend of hers at her apartment when I was scanning some family pictures that Ysenia described having to leave her son, an older child, behind while she and her husband came to the United States to look for work.

More often than not, mainstream discussions on immigration focus on the "problem" of immigrants once they have made it across the international border and are settled in their new location. Or, significant media attention also focuses on the "problem" of the unsecure areas along the physical border between Mexico and the

United States. However, whether they cross legally or illegally, most immigrants have a plan for how they will cross and where they will ultimately settle. For a significant number of Latin American immigrants, the plan is far from ideal because it does involve eluding border authorities on both sides, as well as a long and arduous journey on foot through inhospitable terrain with shady guides, who are known as *coyotes*. Although not all coyotes are insincere and untrustworthy, the process is complicated by illegal trade activities, including drug smuggling and human trafficking. With increased border security since 2001, the physical journey across the border has become far more dangerous than in the past because migrants must seek out more remote areas where the trip takes longer and the conditions may be even more grueling.

Nonetheless, the actual process and experiences of crossing an international border vary considerably. For some, the experience of crossing on foot or swimming/floating across the Rio Grande is not as terrible as others might make it out to be. For others, the experience is very traumatic because of the physical demands and the maltreatment or neglect of the coyotes. One potential participant in this study was interested in being interviewed, but she eventually declined because she had recently made the journey across the border and found it too difficult to discuss. For those more fortunate to travel across the border in a vehicle or for those who legitimately traveled with a visa via a more comfortable means of transportation, such as an airplane, the journey itself is not nearly as traumatic as the decision to stay and negotiate the legal system.

Several participants indicated that they came on a visa to visit friends and family, but when their visas expired, they had to find ways of becoming legitimate. In many cases, they ended up surrendering to the classification of being "undocumented" or "illegal" rather than going back to their natal country. One participant at the time of the interview said that her visa was about to expire. She and her ex-husband, who is a citizen, had reconciled and planned to remarry, which she knew would help her in the legal residence process. Other participants seemed genuinely perplexed at how they might gain legal residency in the United States at all. Several participants said they came as children, but they were destined to live as undocumented residents because they did not think they were qualified in any way to apply for citizenship.

Consequently, for immigrants in the United States from Latin America, their identity as newcomers is further subjected to their status as a "legal" or "illegal" resident. As an "illegal" person living outside of the more obvious limits to formal social structures within the receiving community, legality also shapes identity within the Hispanic community in general. Several participants in this study reported incidents where, as children, they were harassed in school because they were born in Mexico. For those Hispanic children born in the United States, they tend to perceive themselves as occupying a higher social status because they are native born citizens. For those adults who were able to gain legal status, they made sure I understood that they were legal with "papers". They occasionally showed me their "green cards" (which are actually white). For Hispanics who were born in the United States, opinions are often extremely critical of the "illegals" and they tend to reflect the

general sentiments (and occasionally stereotypes) of the dominant society on immigration and the process of obtaining legal residence. When phenotype and class position do not set them apart, legal status is one way of asserting individual identities in the larger dominant society where issues of "illegality" garner significant negative media attention and public opinion.

However, for those immigrants I met who were in the process of applying for citizenship, they were far more sympathetic to their illegal counterparts, many of whom were their family and friends. In a local citizenship class, several of the people indicated that they had lived in the United States nearly all of their lives. One woman in her fifties said she did not even remember anything about Mexico, where she was born. She had lived and worked all over the United States, and she said that even though she was a legal resident most of her life, she had never bothered to apply for citizenship until now. She said she was finally compelled to "be heard" because once she became a citizen, she could vote. When I was attending the citizenship class, Oklahoma House Bill 1804, which addresses illegal immigrants and local social service and law enforcement issues, passed in the Oklahoma legislature. Although the members of the class knew that the law should not impact them, the general consensus was a concern for those immigrants they knew who would be affected.

Migration Stories: Settling in Oklahoma

For the participants in this study, the paths to settling in Oklahoma varied considerably, but for the most part, they reflect the national trends of a majority of immigrants moving directly from their country of origin when they are young, either as children with one or both parents or as young, single adults. Nearly as many

women migrate as men, and most migrants work in low-wage, unskilled labor positions. Similar to networks used to find jobs, these same networks are integral to the migration process itself. Friends and family members who have already established themselves in a location and as workers in a particular industry serve as critical guides to recruiting friends and family members to those locations and within industries. These kin and friend-based recruitment networks add to the mixed status of households, where some members are in the United States legally and others are not.

There were three general categories for the majority of immigrants in this study. The first category is those individuals who moved with a spouse or significant other, sometimes including young children. The second category involves those individuals who moved to the United States as children with their parents or to live with close family members, and the third category is those individuals who moved to the United States as young, single people. The last two categories can overlap because teenagers may actually move on their own before or after they have completed the requisite years in school in their home country, and if younger than eighteen, they would not be considered adults by US standards. One example of this overlap is Carolina who moved to the United States from Mexico at the age of 15 after her father died. Having finished with school up to the 9th grade in Mexico, Carolina could not pursue further education in the United States due to a lack of English language skills and being undocumented. Whether single or not, most participants indicated that they knew someone already living here and it was the combination of knowing someone with the promise of potential jobs that brought

them here. For younger participants, knowing someone already established in the city was a primary reason for moving over the lure of jobs, such as Carolina who followed her brother to Oklahoma.

Most participants in this study did not discuss the physical journey across the border, although they often discussed who they came with or who they knew once they arrived. Several younger women indicated that their mothers moved before they did, and once established, the mothers sent for them. Young women in their twenties and some in their early thirties moved while they were still single because of a family member or boyfriend.

Several women indicated that they moved after completing a university degree or having attended some college in their home countries. Interested in film and journalism, Selena went to college in Mexico. However, after marrying her first husband from the United States, they moved to a large city on the Northwest Coast. Later, they moved to Oklahoma where her husband had family, and they eventually divorced. In Oklahoma, Selena says that she has negotiated the state welfare system because even with her education and being a legal citizen, acquiring work that would support her family is difficult. With three children and working on a degree part-time, she said she worked full-time cleaning commercial buildings and offices at night, but it still never seemed to be enough. Women like Selena with some college training or professional degrees allude to a larger pattern of underemployment among immigrant women in the United States.

In considering individual agency in the process of migration, one of the biggest issues for native-born and naturalized citizens on the topic of immigrants is their personal decision to move across the border illegally. In conversations with native-born Oklahoma community members about the topic of immigration, most would say that children who cross the border with their parents cannot necessarily be blamed for their undocumented status. In some cases, native-citizens and those immigrants, who had obtained legal passage to and legal resident status in the United States, suggested that undocumented immigrants had a responsibility to take the steps to become legal residents or return to their natal country, regardless of age. Although I did not specifically ask most participants why they came to the United States knowing the possible legal consequences, the topic did occasionally come up in the interviews and in informal conversations.

As an outsider to the international migration process, I listened to many stories and, on the surface, it often did seem like most individuals who did not come to the United States as children, could have opted to stay in their home country, especially those who had completed some professional training. However, once all of the complex factors of personal history and current global economic trends are combined, the decision to move for all of the participants is not perplexing. For example, in Mexico a significant portion of the population already survives primarily within an informal sector of the economy, which is often combined with other modes of production, such as subsistence farming. For those who work in the formal economy, even professional wages do not compare to the equivalent sector in the United States. Wages do not adequately cover the basic cost of living in most areas.

While I was on vacation at a popular resort on the Gulf of Mexico, several crew members on a regular catamaran excursion indicated that they only made minimum wage and could not survive without tips from tourists, and when the weather was bad or tourism was down, they had to look for work in other places. They also explained that they had family members who lived and worked in the United States, and they had thought about moving to secure full-time work.

In Mexico, a significant number of jobs are available for women in factories along the border that offer meager pay and benefits. These factories tend to have a high worker turnover rate (Prieto 1997). Several participants in this study said that they simply felt more secure in a city like Oklahoma City because in places such as Juarez, Mexico, with a large number of factories and jobs, crime against women is significant. In a culture where traditional gender role expectations lurk under the surface of a modernizing economy, gender discrimination continues to impact women, making it difficult to find jobs in professional sectors. For many people in Mexico, who already live and work outside of the formal legal and economic structures, the decision to move across a border where they would continue to be outside of the formal legal and economic structures is not difficult, especially if they already have close family and friends in the new location. For those from the professional sectors in their home country, the decision is often more frustrating, but when faced with inadequate work options, the lure of jobs in the United States often seems promising. Finally, as in cases such as Consuela's (from the beginning of the chapter), who chose to move partly because of bad memories, she also had an established family and friendship network that provided a means of passage, which is

indicative of a larger kin-based culture of migration. Additionally, she understood the difficulties for women to earn adequate wages, and she continues to feel that she made a good choice because she sees how her adult brothers struggle to make a living on a teacher's salary in Mexico.

Being Visible and Invisible: Liminality in Everyday Life

Because so many Latin American immigrants in the United States are undocumented, the likelihood was high that many people interviewed for this study either would be undocumented or would have close family members who are not legal. The status of being undocumented or illegal is a way of life for many people, and ultimately, it is a way of life for entire families and large portions of communities. Victor Turner's (1967) elaboration on the concept of *liminality* is appropriate in the context of Latin American immigrants living in the United States because for those who are not legal, they are "betwixt and between" the accepted norms of legal incorporation. Residing outside of their national boundaries for legal residence and also living outside of the legal norms of the host community, many immigrants must daily negotiate ways of surviving in their environment that legal residents take for granted. For those immigrants who are documented, their social status within the dominant society is affected by the large numbers of Latin American immigrants who are undocumented. Documented immigrants are also part of the liminal world because they are part of family, friend, and social networks that include undocumented individuals. However, where Turner's approach to liminality included the expectation that individuals in a liminal phase would eventually be reincorporated

into the larger community, most undocumented immigrants have very few, if any, options to become legitimate within the current US legal system (Vogel 2007:65).

Although the promise of jobs pulls people north, not being legal does pose problems in obtaining and maintaining employment. In more recent years, the media has addressed the economic push/pull factors that bring many immigrants to their current location and jobs, and popular opinions often concede to a general understanding that a large part of the pull involves a significant number of employers across the country that prefer to hire Latin American immigrant workers. Immigrants generally do not demand higher wages and benefits, and particularly for those who are undocumented, employers realize that these individuals are far less likely to demand even minimum wage or join unions to represent them in obtaining better wages and benefits. Although Federal laws, such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, contain provisions to penalize employers for their role in hiring undocumented individuals, more recent local laws address this issue as well. House Bill 1804 in Oklahoma has specifically targeted employers in their role to recruit and hire undocumented immigrants. Supporters of the bill contend that these employers are responsible for contributing to the influx of the Latin American immigrant population, and thus, an increased strain on social welfare services in Oklahoma and on the average citizen who pays taxes into the system.

Ironically, HB 1804 is marketed as a law to protect low-wage jobs for citizens who do not constitute an adequate labor pool to fill these jobs. The law is characterized as providing an enforceable means to punish employers for their

exploitative hiring and employment practices. With the passage of HB 1804, retaining employees has become more difficult, which is less a result of the potential legal implications to employers (the part of the law pertaining to employers remains blocked from taking effect) and more a result of immigrant fears of legal problems and possible deportation. Immigrant fears of deportation, which can be overwhelming if children are involved and may be separated from the parents, has given rise to what Nicholas De Genova labels as the "sense of deportability" (2005:215). For De Genova, "the legal production of 'illegality' provides an apparatus for sustaining migrant's vulnerability and tractability – as workers – whose labor-power, because it is deportable, becomes an eminently disposable commodity" (2005: 215). Despite the laws, however, labor demands continue to require cheaper labor sources, and undocumented immigrants continue to do the work.

Rather than protect immigrants from exploitative and inhumane employers, HB 1804 and similar laws across the United States act as an additional legal tourniquet to immigrants seeking legitimacy for their role in the larger economy and as residents in their adopted communities. Already living outside of the formal legal and economic structures, these laws simply make it more difficult for immigrants to access critical social welfare and health services that their positions as low-wage laborers do not allow them to afford. Such laws then are exclusionary of this portion of the population that does produce and pay into the local tax system, albeit not always through traditional employment means. Whether they work as cash wage contractors or in the informal sector, immigrants must still pay into the local tax

system through purchases made for mundane necessities, such as groceries, clothes, and fuel.

Several undocumented individuals in this study indicated that they were given tax identification numbers when hired for a particular position within the formal economy, and taxes were deducted from their wages. These participants, who were mainly young women eligible for maternity benefits through government programs, have, in fact, paid into the same tax revenue system that provided the funding for the programs they would later need for the health of the baby. These programs, however, are created and marketed as protecting the unborn child (who will be a citizen after birth and eligible for government benefits) and reducing the costs of postnatal care, which is an additional taxpayer burden, rather than a significant concern for the mother's health and well-being. Even when temporarily unemployed from the birth of a baby or to care for young children, these women eventually saw themselves as working in their old positions or finding other work.

As primarily low-wage laborers and participants in the informal economy, many immigrants live in an economic liminality where they must creatively negotiate the formal economic system to survive. Several participants indicated selling popular direct-sales cosmetic products on the side to friends, family members, and acquaintances to help earn extra money. One participant said that it was tough trying to pay bills because she could not use her own name. She would enlist the help of a documented relative to use his or her name on her utility bills. She also said that it would be nice to be able to apply for credit cards and establish a regular credit

history. In his study on immigrants in the informal economy, Vogel recognizes that the US economy traditionally has relied on immigrant labor, but "the current dependence on undocumented labor is unprecedented" (2007:65). For Vogel, the fast-paced growth of the informal economy is a new element to historical patterns of exploitation, but the difference in the current trend from the past is that "Western and European immigrants who immigrated to do America's dirty work were rewarded with citizenship" (65). Today, naturalization does not come with the lure of jobs in the informal sector, and generally those that begin their careers in the informal sector will most likely stay in that sector as long as there is a demand for labor (66).

In this case study in Oklahoma, several other examples of strategies used by immigrants to survive economically include co-oping services, word-of-mouth networking, and frequenting garage-sales. These are strategies familiar to native-born residents, who have often relied on such methods to survive and climb the economic hierarchy in the United States. One young mother, Abilena, said that when she worked, she and her husband would co-op day and night shifts. He worked during the day and would watch the kids in the evening while she would work night shifts at a local fast food restaurant. Co-oping in the form of child-care is common, and mothers often must rely on friends and family who live nearby to watch their children, even newborns because it is often necessary to go back to work as soon as possible. Maternity benefits are rare in the low-wage formal sector and non-existent in the informal sector of the economy.

Word-of-mouth networking is also an integral part of building community and individual survival within the larger society. Through information gathered from friends and relatives, many participants in this study had accessed private, not-for-profit health clinics that are not always formally advertised. These are generally the only places they could obtain much needed services (outside of emergency room care) that they could not afford from for-profit, private health facilities or because they were ineligible for public service benefits.

Finally, the acquisition of clothes and general household goods can be obtained cheaply with small amounts of cash at garage-sales, thrift stores, and discount retail stores. Children's clothing, baby furniture, and household appliances are popular items commonly found at most garage sales. Several participants told me, "we drive north [to Edmond] because they have the nicest stuff." Edmond is a middle to upper-middle class suburb where garage sales are popular in warmer months, and as an occasional garage-saler (especially with a fast-growing child) and a garage sale host in the Edmond area, I can attest to a significant increase in the frequency of Hispanic, non-English speaking patrons in recent years to the northern part of the metro area and the suburbs. I can also sympathize with their desire to find the best products at the cheapest prices.

Strategies for immigrants to survive legally include using the public transportation system because they are generally unable to acquire local driver's licenses. Relying on friends and family for rides is not always feasible, but it is a means of co-oping services, such as rides in exchange for child care services. For

many immigrants, cars are costly, and the threat of getting caught and deported is not worth the trouble. Some participants, who are documented, said they simply could not afford a car because they did not make enough money to buy or maintain one. Without a car, getting around in Oklahoma City is difficult because it is geographically widespread, and as a young city that has grown with the car industry in the 20th century, it has a "car culture." Public transportation provides basic bus services, but the city lacks a metro rail system or a significant, affordable taxi service, which makes transportation prohibitive for any low-income segment of the local population. Many undocumented participants did admit driving without a license, and although they would prefer to have one, they said that in order to work and make money for their family, it was necessary to take the risk. For immigrants in general, they can legally drive in the United States if they have a valid driver's license from their home country, regardless of their legal status. Another strategy to survive legally is to use cash only for needed goods and services and to work for cash wages in the formal and informal economies. A major vulnerability to living on a cash-only budget, however, is that saving money is difficult and many immigrants are at a higher risk of being robbed or extorted. For most immigrants, economic and legal liminality is an ubiquitous part of life that provides little opportunity to move beyond the liminal phase and little hope of becoming fully incorporated into the receiving society.

Relationships, Marriage, and Children

The economic and legal labyrinth that immigrants must negotiate has profound effects on personal relationships. More than half (53 percent) of the

participants in this study reported being married, and 18 percent indicated having a boyfriend or girlfriend. Another 18 percent reported being divorced or separated, and only 11 percent indicated they were not in a relationship at all. During the personal interviews, however, I discovered that marriage did not always mean a legally and/or spiritually sanctioned union. Legality only plays a supporting role in the formation of marriage, and for those who were not documented or those involved with someone who was not documented, they often considered themselves married even though they could not access formal, legal avenues. Without a marriage certificate from the state, many people are not able to hold a religious ceremony, depending on the denomination. One participant explained that in the Latino community, they sometimes interchange terms for boyfriend (novio) and husband (esposo or marido), and they do not place much emphasis on the formal marriage arrangement. Significantly, for those participants who said they were married, 31 percent said they were not married in either a civil or church ceremony.

For those participants who reported being married, 39 percent indicated that they met their partner in Oklahoma and 47 percent reported meeting their partner in their natal country. Of those couples who met in Oklahoma, they reported meeting at their church, at a social club, or when they were still in school. Often children are born into a relationship long before a formal ceremony, and although many women said they were not legally married when their children were born, they said they still eventually planned to do so when and if they could gain legal resident status. The general feeling from most participants was that relationships are very difficult, particularly for younger women in their late teens and twenties with children.

Establishing and maintaining a relationship involves negotiating domestic responsibilities with the need to earn a living. For younger couples, who often lack significant education and on-the-job skills and training, earning a basic cost-of-living income is an additional burden to the relationship. Indirectly, access to legalization, which would open more opportunities to obtaining educational and technical skills required for higher-wage positions, may increase formal marriage arrangement and family stability.

Although one participant, Gisela, and her husband were not documented and not legally married, they had two children together and a third baby on the way, but they were separated at the time of the interviews. Gisela explained that she thought she could pursue child support in the court system despite their legal status because their children were citizens. However, she said that it would be costly and time-consuming, and there would be no guarantee that the outcome would produce regular child-support payments. Gisela said because her husband was not documented, it would be difficult for the courts to track him and enforce timely payments without a social security number. In the last trimester of pregnancy, Gisela was unable to work due to her health during pregnancy, and she demonstrated her frustrations with trying to make ends meet while taking care of her children and maintaining a relationship. Her story was not unusual, particularly among those couples who were in their late teens or early twenties. Young mothers often spoke of relationship frustrations, particularly regarding infidelity and a lack of commitment from their partners. However, they also just as often qualified their frustrations by stating that their partners were good fathers and generally willing to provide money and resources

needed for the well-being of their children. Gisela said she had an arrangement with her husband, who paid her rent and most of her expenses while she was pregnant and unable to work.

Noted by a school administrator and corroborated by many of the young girls interviewed, teenage pregnancy and early marriage is common in the Latino immigrant community. However, the stigma of early marriage and the establishment of a family are less problematic for the young women than the school administrator. The administrator grew up in the United States and indicated how "backwards" she thought it was for these young girls to take on the responsibilities of children at such a young age.

Significantly, most of the men I met and those who were interviewed indicated that they were single, but eventually planned to marry and have a family. Many, however, expressed concern about the mobility and lack of financial stability from seasonal and temporary work. They knew it would be difficult to care for a family on their modest and irregular wages. Particularly, for those men who eventually saw themselves moving back to their home country, establishing long-term relationships is tricky because they are focused on saving and sending money home. They must also consider the potential legal ties that would bind them to the host community if they have a family with children born in the United States. Nevertheless, men are integral to the formation of family, and when they do enter a relationship, they often work long hours to provide the necessary income, and most women said they do assist with domestic responsibilities.

Family Organization

The majority of households (60 percent) in this study reported only two adults in the home. It is a common perception among host community members that Latinos reside in multi-generational family residences with several adults and children in the household. The survey questions did not cover whether or not the adults are primarily heterosexual couples (a traditional norm in US society) or other combinations of relatives and friends, such as mothers and daughters or siblings residing together. But, individual interviews demonstrated that the majority of households were headed by heterosexual couples or single mothers with children (either divorced or separated). Additionally, the survey questions did not address how many nuclear families resided in one residence, but at least nine of the extended interviews took place in single family dwellings, such as a small one or two bedroom apartment or house, where there was not any indication or evidence suggesting that multiple families shared the residence. One strategy for survival and incorporation for new immigrants is to reside with family and friends until financial goals are reached and individuals or families can afford a place of their own. Yet, for most of the participants in this survey, they indicated in the longer interviews that they preferred to live on their own as a nuclear family unit, particularly if children are involved. While they may live in close proximity to relatives and friends, most participants in the study embraced the sense of privacy and freedom they gained while living in their own place, no matter how small and modestly furnished the residence may be.

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that between one and three children resided with them, and within that group, the majority (28 percent) indicated

that only two children resided in the home. The next largest group (22 percent) indicated that three children resided in the home. Although the majority of the participants in the study were young women and the number of children per household could potentially rise as they move through their childbearing years, the data indicate that despite the general influx in immigrants in the state of Oklahoma, Latin American immigrant women are not bearing more children than native-born women where the average household has 3.2 children (US Census 2000).

Older women do help their daughters out with babysitting and the general care of their grandchildren. Older couples tend to describe their families as having more stable relationships. One young mother, Eliana, in her early twenties and documented, discussed her parent's relationship when she was a child as difficult and occasionally abusive, but as her parents grew older, they became involved with a church where the consumption of alcohol is not acceptable. Eliana said her father stopped drinking and now her parents seem to have few, if any, problems. Her father has also maintained the same job for many years, which has allowed her parents to buy a house. However, Eliana explained that the problems in her family pushed her to leave the family home while she was still a teenager. She married and had two children (and one on the way at the time of the interview). A petite, pretty young woman, Eliana said she had trouble in her marriage as well, but it did not stop her from working and making arrangements to go to school to become a dental assistant.

To make ends meet, Eliana worked part-time as an apartment manager, and she said she enjoyed helping people find housing. In the Oklahoma City metropolitan

area, housing is easier to find and considerably cheaper than in other large cities, so it was not surprising to find that so many of the participants did not live in multi-generational and multi-family, single residence settings. Nevertheless, the centrality of family within Latino culture was always integral to discussions on living arrangements and family organization. Not only did participants discuss either living near relatives or relatives that would come for long visits from their home country, they also often mentioned how isolated people seemed to be in the United States and how a lack of warmth and familiarity with each other made Americans sometimes appear cold and disingenuous.

Trabajando y Comunicación (Working and Communication)

The language barrier can be crippling when one is trying to obtain work or simply to survive in the larger community, especially for those immigrants who arrive as older children or adults. In the comments section of the field survey, and one of the most cited difficulties during the interviews about living in Oklahoma City, was the language. The second most cited difficulty was trying to find work. Nevertheless, 59 percent of the respondents indicated that they spoke some English. As the Spanish-speaking segment of the immigrant community grows in Oklahoma City, it may become easier to integrate into primarily Spanish speaking only areas. In discussing her job as a supervisor at a fast food restaurant, Consuela explained that there are many immigrants who do find jobs without learning English. They occupy positions that only require manual labor and have no contact with the general public. Consuela said that many of her Spanish-speaking co-workers did not see a reason to learn

English because they had already found work without it. They would make comments such as, “We can work with our hands, so why do we need to learn English?”

Nevertheless, the ability to seek and find employment, particularly better paying jobs requires some proficiency in English. One participant working in a professional social service position described trying to find a job in a health-related area after moving to Oklahoma, and once she did, she said she was afraid to answer the phone for a very long time because no amount of English lessons had prepared her for the nuances of everyday conversation. She said learning another language can be very challenging, even if you have a formal education to support it, and for those who do not, it can be a tremendous task.

In jobs where there is not an incentive to learn English, such as in manual, low-wage labor positions, immigrants are less likely to become proficient in the dominant language. Additionally, for those who stay at home and work in the informal sector, they are less likely to learn English as well. Because low-wage labor positions and informal home work require less formal education, there is a correlation between level of education and the participants who indicated speaking some English or speaking English fluently as indicated in the data from this research. For those who reported speaking Spanish only, the average years spent in school is 7.5 years, and for those who reported speaking some English or English fluently, the average years spent in school is 10 years.

Conclusion

Latin American immigrant identities begin with their roots in their country of origin. The combination of the larger historical backdrop and the current economic and social composition of Latin America provides a basic foundation for understanding the phenomenon of migration to the north, as well as (and significantly) the characteristics of Latin American immigrant collective and individual identities once they are established in the United States. The majority of Latin American immigrants "pushed" north are those who have been economically and socially marginalized within their country. Thus, the marginalization process was long underway prior to their arrival in the United States. Once established in the United States, the majority of Latin American immigrants are occupying the traditionally marginalized roles of other minority groups in low-wage labor positions and the informal sector. Additionally, informal family arrangements reflect the economic and social positions of immigrants, who often live in a legal liminality and the low-wage economic sector, where jobs are highly mobile and few benefits are offered.

Nonetheless, while a significant proportion of Latin American immigrants are pushed due to social and economic marginality, many others with educational opportunities and more economically stable class positions prior to migrating, are pulled to the United States for better job opportunities as well. The wide array of pull factors to the north also includes continuing educational opportunities, family ties, and as in Consuela's case, a desire to explore life beyond her hometown.

Chapter 7: Social Services and Cultural Incorporation

Working for a large health network in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, Mercedes became a key contact to a broader network of social service program workers and an essential link to recruiting immigrant participants for this study. Her job was part of a larger health initiative, which involved overseeing programs that indirectly or directly impacted a growing Hispanic clientele. Moving from Mexico to Oklahoma City with her first husband and a resident for over twenty years, Mercedes and I had several frank conversations about the difficulties in learning a new language, acquiring jobs, and simply staying healthy. Mercedes is a cancer survivor. Full of spirit and energy despite the obstacles she has overcome in her life, she is always cheerful and willing to help others. A mother of three grown children, Mercedes is originally from Puerto Rico, which she reminded me is a territory of the United States. Nonetheless, with a medical degree from a Mexican university, she is not certified to practice medicine in the United States because of differing medical requirements and regulations between the countries. Not to be a deterrent, Mercedes found a niche that overlaps the Oklahoma City medical and the Hispanic community. Asked whether she thought Oklahoma's new law, HB 1804, which targets undocumented immigrants, would impact the services provided to immigrants, she steered clear of controversy and said she tried not to be political.

Throughout the research phase of this project, I met with a variety of individual social service workers in organizations with a significant Hispanic clientèle in Oklahoma City, as well as a few social service providers with ties to the metropolitan area while working in outlying rural areas and towns. Working as translators, counselors, health specialists, educators, program administrators, and spiritual advisors, people who make up the staffs of local social service organizations, agencies, and programs are often immigrants themselves. Most have learned the dominant language within their adopted community to garner better work opportunities and assist with the daily operations of programs requiring bilingual skills. One of the fundamental differences between the smaller number of immigrants

working for a social service organization and their mostly monolingual (in this case, Spanish-speaking only) clientèle, who are a majority of the Latin American immigrant population, was their access to education prior to moving to the United States. Not only did they have the opportunity to learn rudimentary English in their earlier school years, they tended to have professional degrees as well.

In addition, the social service workers who were not immigrants generally had a working knowledge of the Spanish language and Latin American cultural traditions. In a typical interview with social service workers, I would ask them what brought them to their current position. Because a majority of the social service agencies were health-related, many had come to be in their current position because of a background in medicine. Others cited their translation skills, and for those who were not immigrants, they often had backgrounds in social work. Aside from their skills, one general thread weaving social service workers from all backgrounds was that the overwhelming majority were women.

This chapter focuses on the role of social services and programs in the everyday lives of Latin American immigrants and their families. The first part of the chapter is a general review of the relationship between human rights and immigration, as well as an overview on differing approaches to integration and immigration policies. The second part aims to establish the general socio-economic variables contributing to the negative or positive experiences of cultural incorporation within the receiving community. These variables are sorted based on an evaluation of characteristics deemed most acceptable by the dominant culture. The third part of the

chapter is a review of the various types of services available to immigrants within the receiving community. Finally, based on the generally accepted socio-economic variables, discussions on the relationship between individual social service workers and members of the immigrant community, local perceptions of immigrants, and immigrant perceptions of the receiving society are presented.

Human Rights, Immigration and Processes of Integration

The process of immigration often draws attention to human rights issues. In the post World War II era when Nazi brutalities caused the mass displacement of the European Jewish population, the United Nations drafted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was enacted in 1948. The task of defining human rights issues, however, was subject(ed) to the differing perspectives of Western capitalist and socialist nations. The first 20 articles of the document adhere to the liberal philosophical tradition on individual rights, or more specifically, they are considered political rights, such as the right of all people to "life, liberty, and property, to equality before the law, and to a public trial if accused of any crime" (Martinez 1996:18). On the one hand, the acts of torture, random detention, and enslavement are against the declaration in the first 20 articles. On the other hand, the last 10 articles address economic rights reflecting the former Soviet Union's position on "rights to work, education, and a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, housing, medical care and social security" (18).

Despite the enactment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, decolonization efforts and civil strife have continued to fuel the negligence, abuse, and exploitation of large segments of human populations around the world. The

resulting displacement of people from politically, economically, and socially unstable regions to more stable core regions then provides an additional consideration for how best to integrate new migrants into the core areas. These processes of integration involve social policies guided by hegemonic notions of acceptance. By focusing on how immigrants are made into subjects of a particular nation-state, Ong challenges the universal criteria of democratic citizenship, which she argues, "variously regulate(s) different categories of subjects" and conditions the construction of citizenship through "these subjects' location within the nation-state and within the global economy" (1996:737).

Prior to the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States emphasized acculturation, and both indigenous populations and new immigrants were integrated through a variety of social reforms involving forced changes in economic modes of practice, such as individual land allotments rather than collective property rights, to religious affiliation through the encouragement of mission efforts. Between the 16th and the 18th centuries, many governments encouraged religious missions to assist in educating and pacifying large numbers of Native populations, which facilitated full or partial economic integration. Consequently, religious groups settled and established schools in remote areas where Native children were expected (or often forced) to go to school. In Oklahoma, several boarding schools, such as the Chilocco Indian School in northern Oklahoma, were founded for children from the many Native American tribes relocated or confined to the area. These schools were integral to assimilation efforts and the process of making productive citizens. General Richard H. Pratt organized one of the largest and most

well-known Indian boarding schools, Carlisle Industrial Indian School, in Pennsylvania, and he insisted "the best way to civilize the Indian was to immerse him in civilization until well soaked" (Lomawaima 1995:4). Although General Pratt's approach involved strict military discipline in locations far from a child's home (thus removed from traditional lifeways) and forbidden to use their native languages, he also believed that the best way to educate all minorities, including Blacks, was not through segregation from the larger society. Nonetheless, unlike their Native American counterparts who were integrated into the larger society in a widespread effort to "whiten" them, Blacks continued to remain segregated in all aspects of social relationships, including schools, residential neighborhoods, and the marketplace until the 1960s.

Although American Blacks did gain citizenship rights much earlier through the Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1870 than Native Americans, who did not gain full citizenship status until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, American Blacks were subjected to formal social exclusion through Jim Crow laws. When attempting to exercise the use of full citizenship benefits, including voting rights, or assert their legal rights as citizens, they were also subjected to informal intimidation through white supremacist movements, such as the Ku Klux Klan, or other opponents of emancipation.

Historically for new immigrants, however, the first step to integration is acceptance of their entry prior to or upon arrival, which generally takes place through a process of categorization based on country of origin (race), socio-economic status

(class), and gender. Founded on a diversity of people migrating from all over the world, the US has gone through cycles of expansion (or openness) and cycles of limitations on immigrant acceptance policies. For the first century of its history, the US Federal government did not enact any legislation on immigration, and immigration inspections were handled at the state level. A Commissioner of Immigration was established in 1864 in the Department of State in order to protect new immigrants from fraud and to oversee transportation to the final destination (Papademetriou, Aleinikoff, Meyers 1998:9). Limitations on immigrant entries began in 1875 when Congress enacted legislation to bar convicts and prostitutes. By 1882, Congress enacted Chinese exclusion laws. It was not until 1891 that complete control over immigration issues and enforcement was transferred from the states to Federal agencies. By the 1900s, many newly-arrived, hope-filled immigrants were turned away and sent back to their home country due to a variety of factors, including an array of medical conditions. The Immigration Act of 1924 implemented a formal quota system for immigrants from all countries. After 1924 new priorities to maintaining family unity added another dimension to US immigration policies, and "all wives and dependent children of US citizens were allowed to enter as nonquota[1] immigrants, as were aliens belonging to any recognized profession, learned profession, or employed as domestic servants" (Bernard 1998:64). By 1940 the Bureau of Immigration had become the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and was transferred to the Department of Justice. The INS developed several functions over the years, which included inspections, visa issuance, border control, administrative review, naturalization, adjudications, foreign workers and asylums. In

2002 the US Congress abolished the INS, and the major responsibilities were transferred to the newly created US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security.

Prior to 1917, a facility in El Paso was built to bathe and disinfect new immigrants from Mexico. The facility represented the manifest policies developing in the United States at that time to combat large-scale disease outbreaks, such as several cases of typhus fever that were reported along the US-Mexico border. By 1917, the El Paso facility was renovated to include additional equipment and procedures for a more intensive sanitation process (Stern 1999). For those newcomers arriving in El Paso, the process was dehumanizing as all entrants were stripped, bathed, deloused, closely inspected and vaccinated. Clothes were "chemically scoured" (Stern 1999:45). Stern maintains that general passage "entailed a general medical examination, cursory psychological profiling, and an interrogation about self and citizenship" (46). The humiliating process did not go without protest among many local residents who maintained family ties across the border and traveled frequently back and forth. These residents rioted against the process, which Stern argues was far more intense and numerically wide-sweeping along the US-Mexico border than Ellis Island, where the majority of immigrants were from Europe (48). Therefore, the process of categorization early on in US immigration policies is evident in the latent function of border inspections to separate, humiliate, and reject entrants of Hispanic origin.

Similar to the early assimilation efforts with Native American groups, Mexican immigrants in the post-1900 era were also subjected to "Americanization" campaigns that sought to make compliant working class citizens of the growing Mexican population, particularly in large urban areas, such as Los Angeles. These campaigns were often carried out through door-to-door visits from women's and religious organizations to educate newcomers on a wide range of socially and culturally acceptable behaviors (Sanchez 1993).

In the post-Universal Declaration of Human Rights era, the incorporation of minority groups and newcomers reflects a different approach to social integration and cultural incorporation in the United States. Overt methods of discrimination based on such practices as physical intimidation and medical evaluations have given way to more covert practices of social categorization and acceptance. For American Indians who could not be rejected at border entrance facilities, a renewed push to mainstream them was provided in the Indian Relocation Act of 1964, which "provided for thousands of reservation Indians to resettle in large cities" (Slaughter 1997:82). Along with resettlement efforts, Federally-funded social services administered through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) provided programs in the training and placement for various types of employment in large urban areas. By the 1970s, Indian activism facilitated additional Federal legislation in the form of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which promoted Indian-operated social service facilities. Indian Centers, Inc. in Los Angeles, California is one such example of Indian-operated social service facilities (Weibel-Orlando 1999:104). At the height of its existence in the 1980s, the social service programs administered through the

Indian Centers organization provided a wide range of services, including job training programs, Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) training programs, and pre-school and daycare programs (104). Nonetheless, despite successes in mainstreaming American Indians, Indian rights activists and Indian militant political groups persist in exposing health and human rights violations, which range from exposure to radioactive uranium ore located on or near reservations, forced sterilizations in Indian Health Services hospitals, and unnecessary diabetes-related amputations (103).

For African Americans, the legacy of slavery and segregation in a 20th century globalizing economy meant negotiating a social space based on an evolving neoliberal definition of citizenship "as the civic duty of individuals to reduce their burden on society and build up their own human capital" (Ong 1996:739). Emerging from the American Civil War as an economically and socially disadvantaged underclass, social policy measures to incorporate American Blacks into the larger socio-economic system lagged as more subtle forms of discrimination arose.

Sacks (1994) maintains that institutional discrimination, such as the widespread practice of banking and lending institutions denying improvement loans to individual families in predominately Black neighborhoods, was prevalent in the 20th Century. The consequence of such diffuse discriminatory practices in the marketplace led to a deterioration (or lack of development) within Black neighborhoods, as well as high unemployment rates, and disproportionate rates of violence and incarceration within these communities (Sacks 1994; Lane, et al. 2004). In addition, an indirect result has been a change in family composition in the Black

community over the course of the 20th century from a minority of female-headed households early on to a majority of female- headed households at the end of the century (Lane et al. 2004). And, while social welfare programs were instituted to combat the dire poverty of Black communities, they often reflected the same underlying white racial assumptions and human capital assessments guiding the marketplace. In her study on survival strategies in a Black community in the late 1960s, Stack makes the following observations:

> Two necessary requirements for the ascent from poverty into the middle class are the ability to form a nuclear family pattern, and the ability to obtain an equity. Close examination of the welfare laws and policies relating to public assistance show that these programs systematically tend to reduce the possibility of social mobility. Attempts by those on welfare to form nuclear families are efficiently discouraged by welfare policy. In fact, welfare policy encourages the maintenance of non-coresidential cooperative domestic networks. It is impossible for potentially mobile persons to draw all of their kin into the middle class. Likewise, welfare law conspires against the ability of the poor to build up an equity. Welfare policy effectively prevents the poor from inheriting even a pitifully small amount of cash, or from acquiring capital investments typical for the middle class, such as home ownership (1974:127).

The crippling effects of institutional racism and presumptive welfare policies for Black communities in the mid-20th century is similar to the effects of immigration policies within Hispanic communities, particularly among more recent Latin American immigrants who make up the largest segment of the Hispanic American community.

Because the history of the expansion of the United States is intimately linked to the geographical reduction of the Spanish empire and the Mexican nation, the treatment of Hispanic communities and Mexican migration to the United States by

policymakers has been fraught with issues of land disputes, movement across borders, shared Native American groups, and a range of other social, economic, and political aspects. Portes suggests that "ethnic groups come into being in one of three ways: conquest, immigration, or political settlements" (1998:115). Thus, Spanish-origin groups are well represented in the United States through a mix of conquest and immigration. The treatment of migration across the Mexico/US border was, at least until the 1950s, relaxed because of existing economic, family and social networks long established before the implementation of restrictive immigration laws. After passing the National Origins Immigration Act in 1924, a border patrol was set up, but crossings were not closely monitored until Operation Wetback in the 1950s effectively deported a large number of undocumented workers back to Mexico. "It was only in the post-Depression era and especially after World War II that crossing the border became a formally regulated event leading to the criminalization of the traditional inflow" (Portes 1998:116). This regulation was the result of a need to rebuild the economy in the United States, and with high unemployment during the Depression, labor recruitment could be done within US borders. Nonetheless, until the 1950s, most Mexican migration to the United States was limited to the Southwest, and it was primarily a longstanding phenomenon of rural farming areas.

For Latin American immigrants, the nature of crossing the US-Mexico border has changed considerably since the early 1900s, particularly with the addition of border enforcement technologies and personnel. The manifest functions of immigration policies have shifted away from overt medical, gender, or social categorization to reject those individuals who may not meet ideal citizenship

requirements. Kearney (1998) suggests that immigration policies have entered a post-national phase. In his concern with transnationalism and its correspondence to the political-economic and sociocultural ordering of late capitalism, he describes US-Mexico border scenes as involving the relationship between migrants and agents of the state. In doing so, the Foucauldian sense of "self-making and being-made by power relations that produce consent through surveillance, discipline, control and administration" is implicit in his dialogue, and in one scene, he uses the phrase "staging area" as a description for the fenceless border area between California and Tijuana, which is certainly under surveillance (Foucault 1989, 1991; Kearney 1998:122).

Nevertheless, the border is porous and even though there is a high tech surveillance system in place, a certain number of immigrants are always allowed to pass. Thus, while the border may be physically porous from a surveillance perspective, it is with the understanding that the state negotiates the relationship between the US as a nation and the US as a capitalist, labor-needy market. Because of a significant demand for low-wage laborers, immigration policy continues to perpetuate the image of immigrants as subaltern groups. For Kearney, immigration policy heightens the capitalist alienation of labor by geographically separating the site of the purchase and expenditure of that labor from the sites of its reproduction, such that the loci of production and reproduction lie in two different countries (1998). Therefore, recent approaches to immigration policy reflect more subtle means of perpetuating collective notions among the immigrants themselves of low social worth. Being illegal keeps immigrants from thinking of themselves as "deserving"

residents who are worthy of the benefits that come with a legal resident status or the possibility of applying for citizenship.

Immigrants and Access to Social Services

Most often, because newly arrived immigrants must "start over" or "begin anew" in the settlement process, including securing work and finding a place to live, discussion on immigrants is framed around social services and access to government welfare benefits. The Federal, state, and local governments establish programs to assist those residents requiring social, health, and general welfare services, either on a temporary or a long term basis. By far, the government is the largest source of social welfare programs. Yet, while the general population in the United States has grown since the 1980s, a trend towards shrinking the welfare state continues through the phasing out of long established programs, reducing funding for existing programs, and establishing tighter eligibility requirements for individuals accessing public programs (Horton 2004).

As a consequence, non-government groups, such as religious organizations, private institutions, and local non-secular, civic organizations, attempt to administer programs to residents where public services do not exist or are not accessible to large segments of the local populations. The trend to decentralize social welfare services by enlisting non-profit, non-government groups to assist in the administration of those services reflects the post-Cold War era acceleration of neoliberal economic policies. Global concerns with failed socialist regimes fueled the acceleration of these policies, such as the ratification of NAFTA. In turn, the rapid down-sizing of state social welfare programs has then fueled local and global protests to increase private sector

wages, which would provide greater access to private health and social welfare benefits. Yet, rising wages have not kept pace with the decrease in public welfare benefits.

While some immigrants are eligible for certain public benefits upon arrival to the United States, many are not. Federal immigration laws outline eligibility requirements based on certain variables, such as type of entry status (legal with a temporary or permanent visa or undocumented) and length of time as a resident in relationship to the enactment of certain laws. One of the more comprehensive US Federal mandates on welfare reform affecting both documented and undocumented immigrants in the United States is the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. PRWORA changed non-citizen eligibility requirements for major Federal public assistance programs, which includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), and Medicaid (Gozdiak and Martin 2005:70). The new eligibility requirements outlined in PRWORA applied to those non-citizens entering the Unites States after August 22, 1996.

In order to receive any type of public assistance, even if undocumented, an assessment has to be made of an individual's potential eligibility. For undocumented individuals who are not eligible for public assistance or who do not attempt to access public assistance (often for fear of being deported), other, limited avenues may be available for pursuing needed resources or care. These resources are accessed through personal, family, and social networks, and they include non-government programs

administered through community and non-secular organizations, such as local civic groups and churches.

In her study of public assistance and general views of social welfare in the United States, Schneider cautions us to consider that "the social construction of race relies heavily on connecting race to poverty. The liberal/conservative debate on both race and poverty hinges on whether the causes of poverty are individual (racial) values of people or the (racist) socio-economic structures of the United States" (1999:767). Moreover, she suggests, "while patterns of poverty and talk about welfare are suffused with racial issues, we need to look below the surface of racism in order to really understand what is going on" (767). Public policies tend to be lopsided and do not necessarily account for social-structural inequities built into historic ideologies. For example, in his analysis of welfare reform policies enacted in the 1990s and the reduction of immigrant participation in welfare programs, Borjas (1999), an economist, recognizes that a large portion of newcomers in the United States are from poorer countries with much lower per-capita incomes. He contends that from an economic perspective, the choice to migrate, naturalize, and gain benefits in the United States is worth the effort for many prospective migrants because of an attractive social safety net. Rather than overhaul the state welfare systems, Borjas argues for reforming immigration policies to reflect the United States' historical approach to granting entrance and naturalization by assessing an individual migrant's ability to pay his or her own way and contribute to the system. "Put bluntly," he says, "the immigration of potential public charges can easily fracture the legitimacy of the social contract that created and sustains the welfare state. No group

of native citizens can reasonably be expected to pick up the tab for subsidizing tens of millions of the 'huddled masses'" (1120).

While informative as to the actual impact of such Federal and state welfare reform policies (PRWORA and California's 1994 passage of Proposition 187) on the decrease in public welfare usage, such public policy analyses do not consider the larger processes of globalization and the relationship between wealthier nations and the more unstable regions that push large groups of indigent, particularly unauthorized, individuals to wealthier countries. Nor do these analyses take into account familial social networks across international boundaries. Rather, they treat individual migrants in the neoclassical tradition of individual, rational-choice theory and they reinforce Ong's assertion of an ideological process of whitening and blackening, which "reflects dominant racial oppositions and an assessment of cultural competence based on imputed human capital and consumer power in the minority subject" (1996:737). If, as Borjas suggests, individual immigrants are assessed on their ability to pay their own way in the United States, a process of categorization is necessary, and the "below the surface" aspects of race within that process of categorization should also include a consideration of class and gender positions as well. Because social services are often connected to poverty, as Schneider suggests, and because women are overwhelmingly the recipients of those services, class and gender positions then are relevant to an assessment of the processes of cultural incorporation (Ong 1996).

Socio-Economic Variables and the Process of Cultural Incorporation

In framing the main discussion of this paper around the "whitening and blackening" of a particular group within a larger society, there is a risk of over-simplifying the premise. The terms themselves can be uncomfortable, particularly when explaining the arguments to white, middle-class friends and acquaintances who do not think they are racist because they believe that "immigrants should learn English" or "come here legally." For many members of the receiving community, race and legality are not necessarily linked. As members of the dominant culture, we are forming opinions based on engrained Western philosophical traditions, which are predominately influenced by (although not necessarily limited to) large-scale historical occurrences or events, such as the spread of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, the Protestant Reformation, the French Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. Out of these traditions came modern liberal economics and legal-rational approaches to social organization, as well as (and sometimes in contradictory fashion and to varying degrees) notions of the nation-state, community, trust, individual rights, and human rights, including a belief in the separation of church and state. The influence of these philosophical, religious, and political-economic movements have shaped, in Bourdieu's terms, the general *habitus,* or rather "history turned into nature," of the current patterns of acceptance in the United States (Bourdieu 1977:78). The particulars of the *habitus* may shift by region, and in the United States, it is often reflected in the larger political sentiments of that region. Also, Western philosophical traditions are not limited to the receiving society. To varying degrees, the philosophical, religious, and political-economic structures found in the Western world-view have infiltrated the sending communities as well through earlier

colonization efforts and the spread of global capitalism with rapid technological changes in the 20th century.

Nonetheless, in the Western world, particularly in the United States, the terms "whitening" and "blackening," as presently understood, are derived from a general misapplication of developing theories in the biological sciences on the concept of race. In particular, eugenics gained ground prior to World War II as "the idea that the reproductive capacities of the biologically 'unfit' individuals (for example, the insane), and more generally, the 'inferior races' should be restricted, just as the breeding of livestock might try to eliminate unwanted traits" (Wade 1997:12). This movement lost ground after World War II, but it is often found in the more subtle form of social evolutionism, which adapts Darwin's biological theory of evolution to justify the domination of weaker, less 'fit' races, to those 'fitter,' more superior ones (Wade 1997: 12). While most natural and social scientists agree that, within the parameters of biology, races do not exist and that the term "race" is socially constructed, Wade contends that the notion of races continues to be important because "clearly, people may behave *as if* races did exist" (14). He further states,

> races do exist as racial categories of great tenacity and power. If people discriminate based on their ideas of race, this is a social reality of paramount importance. Equally, people may lay claim to a racial identity that represents for them central aspects of their person – indeed in the US, racial identity is so politicized that no one is really complete without one (14).

Therefore, categorizing based on phenotype continues to be a powerful social norm lurking within the general habitus of the dominant society.

Consequently, the term "blackening[1]" refers to the negative social characteristics applied to people in US society, and it is a term used to cover the negative aspects of race, class, and gender. Conversely, the term "whitening" refers to the positive social characteristics applied to people in US society, which also implies categorization based on race, class, and gender. These processes pervade all aspects of Western cultural traditions, including literary and popular culture symbolisms, such as those described in Joseph Conrad's classic novel The Heart of Darkness (1989) and adapted by Francis Ford Coppola's cinematic production of Apocalypse Now (1979), where a civilized White man descends into the depths of the "dark" chaos of the jungle, which is inhabited by uncivilized "darkies." These symbolisms can also be found in the more mundane aspects of everyday life in modern American cities. Related to this study on Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma is the urban example of driving from Oklahoma City's historically "White," middle and upper-class northwest quadrant to the "east side" or the Black part of town, and thus, into the lower-class and more dangerous part of the city. Similar to the Black part of town is the Hispanic part of town on the south side of the city, which is also known for low-income neighborhoods, high crime-rates, and gang activities.

Many of the overarching characteristics deemed most acceptable within the national framework of the United States include ideal qualities prescribed by economic liberalism, which is advocated in individual competition through an open, free-market economy with little or no government intervention. Thus, social welfare services, if needed, are administered through the benevolence of society's members and funded through public charities and private donations.

A basic assumption of economic liberalism is that all individuals will act according to the same rational or universal economic laws. With the rise of the nation-state, educating the masses to act accordingly is a key goal to making the system work. However, without a strong sense of community and skills requisite for ideal participation in a neoliberal economy, large-scale, successful participation is limited, and the theory as applied does not always work. For example, the impact of capitalism on the northern Mexican frontier profoundly impacted the social organization of the Mexican peasant from first-class citizens to cheap wage laborers who are often treated as second-class citizens (Alonso 1997).

By imposing a free market economy on the Mexican majority, one of the main effects was to break down local communities and the social welfare system of the Mexican state. A move to privatize traditionally public services such as healthcare has further limited the individual's access to basic services because sporadic wage labor does not meet the costs of such private services (Prieto 1997; Cravey 1998). Also, in the case of immigrants, they often pose additional threats to a successful liberal economy because, upon arrival, most do not, at least initially, possess the skills and social education demanded of most native-born citizens.

Within a democratic, liberal economy, the worker's ability to "get ahead" and be successful relies on individual labor power, which is typically acquired through a combination of access to educational opportunities and strong social networking resources. As many feminist scholars have advocated, labor power is tied to traditional patriarchal social orderings that do not account for the role of women and

their domestic responsibilities, outside of reproducing an adequate labor pool. Domestic responsibilities, such as on-going or intermittent child and elder care and the maintenance of the household, generally do not allow for (or rather keep women from) long-term educational programs and experience-building positions that make it difficult to build individual labor power and thus increased earning power. Particularly for those women who fall on the "blackening" side of the spectrum, they often find themselves in a triple bind of being a woman, being a minority, and being economically, and thus, educationally disadvantaged.

Therefore, the socio-economic variables contributing to the negative or positive experiences of cultural incorporation within the receiving community can be sorted based on a review of characteristics deemed most acceptable by the dominant culture. Using the qualitative and quantitative data collected from this study, the normative expectations of immigrants within the receiving community emerged from the following socio-economic variables (Table 7-1):

Table 7-1: General Socio-Economic Variables

Major Categories:	**General Subcategories:**	**Specific Subcategories:**	**Additional Considerations:**
Race	Ethnicity	*White* *Mestizo* *Indian* *Black*	
Class	Education	*Language Skills* *Technical Skills* *Professional Skills*	
	Employment Status	*Income* *Employed*	*Temporary* *Permanent* *Part-time* *Full-time*

		Unemployed *Health and Retirement Benefits* *Public Assistance*	*Informal Sector*
Gender	Woman		
	Man		
		Marital Status *Dependents*	
Social Characteristics	Age		
	Religion		
	Region of Origin		
	Settlement Location	*Rural* *Urban*	
	Legal Status	*Documented* *Undocumented*	
	Length of Residence	*More than 10 years* *Less than 10 years* *Child Migrant* *Adult Migrant*	

Based on the data from the questionnaires (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix D for a summary of results) within the Latin American immigrant community in Oklahoma City, the average (quantitative majority of) participants in this study were women between the ages of 26 and 35 years old, who were primarily from the city of Juarez in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. With 9 years of education in Mexico, they migrated directly from Mexico to Oklahoma with a spouse, who they reported meeting and marrying prior to moving. Marriage was not necessarily recognized through either a religious or civil ceremony. They moved to Oklahoma because they had family already living in the area, and they had lived in Oklahoma for about 6 years. The majority of women reported living in a rented house with at least one other adult and two children between the ages of one and four,

although the average number of children per woman was three. They also reported having at least one part-time job in food services, and in most cases, they indicated being the primary source of income. The majority said they belonged to a Catholic Church, although they were not necessarily active in church activities outside of regular services. In terms of social service access, they did not have private health insurance and had reported visiting public health clinics and using the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Federal aid program. Most women spoke Spanish fluently, and they spoke some English outside of the home that they acquired through school or work rather than through a formal ESL (English as a Second Language) program. They generally spoke only Spanish in the home. Finally, the average participant liked living in Oklahoma because they said it was a quiet place to live. Nonetheless, they indicated that the most difficult aspect about living in Oklahoma was learning English.

Of course, there was a wide array of responses from actual individual participants that are not reflective of the "fictive" average participant found in the overall quantitative data. Additionally, the questionnaire was not designed to elucidate variables such as racial or ethnic background and legal status. Based on the qualitative interviews, however, nearly all of the participants were of a mestizo or Indian phenotypic appearance and at least half or more were not documented. The longer interviews also revealed that many people came from rural hamlets or villages near the larger cities, and although they may have already had family or friends living in Oklahoma who provided the initial push to move, they also moved based on the prospect of more work opportunities.

In the continuum of positive to negative variables of new immigrants, what are the criteria for ideal US citizenship? More specifically, how do the immigrants of this study actually stack up to the ideal US citizen? By rearranging the socio-economic variables listed in Table 7-1 and dropping ones that were rarely mentioned or not part of any discussion on immigrants, the following table (Table 7-2) demonstrates the positive variables attributed to immigrants as prescribed by data acquired through interviews with native-born US citizens.

Table 7-2: Ideal Socio-Economic Variables for US Citizenship

Major Categories:	**General Subcategories:**	**Specific Subcategories:**	**Additional Considerations:**
Social Characteristics	Legal Status	*Documented*	
Class	Education	*Language Skills*	
	Employment Status	*Income* *Employed* *Health and Retirement Benefits*	*Permanent* *Full-time*

When asked, most native-born residents would say that race, and thus color of skin, does not have anything to do with immigrants becoming ideal citizens of the United States. Rather, legality and language abilities top the list of expectations. This sentiment is reflected in the following blogs commenting on a local newspaper article about immigrants in Oklahoma:

> Let's hope the new laws decrease the number of ILLEGAL Hispanics in Oklahoma. I think we can all agree the ones here LEGALLY are welcome - Respondent 1- May 1, 2008.

> I agree with you, Respondent 1...As long as they attempt to learn the English language, and not segregate themselves. Just being legal is only part of the equasion [equation]. Assimilating to the American culture needs to be done, also - Respondent 2 - May 1, 2008 (Oklahoman 2008: online access).

For immigrants, however, they are more reluctant to attribute criteria that they struggle with on a daily basis as ideal qualities required to gain citizenship and cultural acceptance of the receiving society. Using the variables listed in Table 7-2, the average participant in this study does not fare very well. Many of the participants were not in the United States legally, and they only have part-time jobs without private health benefits. Therefore, their responses are reactive to the requirements for acceptance, sometimes agreeing with the receiving community members and sometimes not really understanding why so many barriers to integration exist.

By sorting through the socio-economic variables and analyzing the data from immigrant responses in Oklahoma, correlations between race, class, gender, including a variety of other social characteristics demonstrate ideological biases in favor of some immigrants, while generally against others. Table 7-3 illustrates how the participants fare overall in each category, which account for both the overall socio-economic variables listed in Table 7-1 and the most favorable socio-economic variables cited by receiving community members listed in Table 7-2:

Table 7-3: Socio-Economic Variables and Participant Responses

Major Categories:	**General Subcategories:**	**Specific Subcategories:**	**Percent of Participants**
Race	Ethnicity[1]	*White* *Mestizo* *Indian* *Black*	0 99 0 1
Class	Education	*Language Skills* No English Some English Fluent English *Technical Skills* 12-15 years of school *Professional Skills* 16 years or more of school	 38 44 15 18 7
	Employment Status	*Income* *Employed* *Temporary* *Permanent* *Part-time* *Full-time* *Informal Sector* *Unemployed* *Health and Retirement Benefits*[3] Yes No *Public Assistance*[4] Yes No	No data available[2] 52 No data available[2] No data available[2] 34 19 18 or more 48 10 88 100 0
Gender	Woman		84
	Man		16
		Marital Status[5] Married Single *Dependents*	 61 36 90
Social Characteristics			
	Age	*18-25* *26-35* *36-45* *46-55* *56 and older*	27 36 27 7 1

	Religion	Baptist Catholic Church of Christ Pentecostal Other	6 64 9 7 3
	Region of Origin	*Rural*[6] *Urban*	29 67
	Settlement Location	*Rural* *Urban*	1 99
	Legal Status	*Documented* *Undocumented*	50 or more 50 or less
	Length of Residence	*More than 10 years* *Less than 10 years* *Child Migrant* *Adult Migrant*	31 69 50 or more 50 or less

[1]Data for identifying ethnicity was based on the researcher's observations and the self-identification of individual participants.

[2]Neither income level nor temporary versus permanent work status could be drawn from either the quantitative or qualitative data, although part-time and informal sector work was often noted as temporary or seasonal-occasional work.

[3]Health and Retirement benefits refer to private sector benefits, which are generally only available with full-time, permanent employment.

[4]While 100 percent of participants indicated using some type of public assistance program, the data does not differentiate those who accessed services as benefits available for dependents only.

[5]Married status includes those participants who indicated being married or separated, while single participants included those who are single with or without a boyfriend or girlfriend, those who are divorced, and those who are widowed.

[6]Rural origin was taken from participant responses indicating that they came from a town, village, or hamlet with a population of 100,000 or less. Qualitative interviews suggest that many more may have come from more rural locations, although on the written survey they would identify the closest large city or town for easier reference.

Because all immigrant participants either self-identified as or generally "looked" like they had an indigenous, mixed Indian-White (mestizo), or mixed Indian-Black (Afro-mestizo) heritage, race is then a factor in considering the ideal requirements for cultural incorporation. Although actual color of skin and overall physical appearance

may not be the main factor in barriers to cultural incorporation in a post-modern world with "color-blind" social policies, the historical context of discriminatory social integration policies towards people of color demands that physical characteristics cannot be so easily dismissed when analyzing patterns of integration. In addition, because the majority of participants were women, the correlation between race and gender is more transparent.

According to the data, 93 percent of the men who participated in the study reported having jobs, while only 44 percent of the women participants said they had a job. Furthermore, women were less likely to have a full-time job in the formal sector. Most participants do not possess a proficiency in English and do not have the requisite technical and professional skills to obtain jobs or earn incomes allowing them to afford private health and retirement benefits that would reduce their participation in the social welfare system. Education prior to migration is a factor contributing to a lack of skills, and it plays a role in whether people decide to migrate legally or not. Consequently, Latin American immigrants in general do not meet the qualifications for ideal citizenship as demonstrated in Table 7-2, and women are particularly vulnerable because of their often intermittent participation in the formal economy where their skill-sets only allow for low-wage labor positions.

Social Service Programs in Oklahoma

With the growing Hispanic population in Oklahoma, informal and formal community networks are continuing to form and evolve to meet the particular needs of so many newcomers. Local television and radio stations broadcast both news and entertainment media in Spanish for the nearly forty percent of those newcomers who

speak very little or no English. Local, regional, and national newspapers are available to the Spanish-speaking population, and these particular forms of communication are useful in advertising health and social welfare services to Latinos in the state.

However, with a significant portion of the Latin American immigrant population considered undocumented and in lower income brackets, services available to indigent populations are not always well advertised. And, if services are accessible, there is frustration with uncertain eligibility, long waits, and payment requirements. Some of the services available to the general population include government-sponsored programs, local non-government and civic organizations, non-profit health-care organizations, and religious organizations, which are discussed in more detail below.

Government-Sponsored Progams

One of the primary sites for research during this project was the Oklahoma City-County Health Department Clinic, a Federally subsidized clinic, which specializes in family planning and maternity care services. It is representative of one of the locations in the greater metropolitan area that administers services to immigrants, whether they are in the United States legally or not. With a growing Hispanic clientele, the clinic has added bilingual services to better assist the Spanish-speaking population. Located just west of downtown, the clinic is friendly and bright. It operates on a first-come, first-serve basis, and I was often told by many young women that it was difficult to get an appointment. The clinic targets uninsured or underinsured community members and payment for services is on a sliding-scale fee schedule based on Federal poverty guidelines.

Most Federally-funded and state-sponsored programs accessed by immigrants are generally centered on health and social welfare initiatives for their children. For example, Medicaid is available to all children born in the United States, despite the legal status of the parents. For those children brought to the United States with their parents, they are ineligible for Federal or state funded health services. Maternity care is provided through some Federally-funded programs for women who are undocumented. In Oklahoma, Governor Brad Henry supported state-sponsored funding for maternity care of undocumented women in 2008.

Outside of maternity care programs and emergency medical needs, undocumented immigrants are ineligible for government benefits. Many young families did rely on WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), the Federal food assistance program to ensure the health and well-being of the nation's youngest citizens up to the age of five. Therefore, undocumented women could access this program if their children were born in the United States, and 41 percent of participants in this study indicated that they had used WIC at some point. However, income eligibility for WIC is set at a higher family income level than most general Federal welfare programs, so that even families with lower middle class incomes often access this widely inclusive program. WIC, then, encompasses a larger proportion of the general population, blurring lower- and middle-class boundaries. Consequently, it tends to be viewed as an acceptable and necessary public benefit because it targets one of the nation's largest and most vulnerable groups, i.e. children.

While PRWORA was significant in further limiting non-citizen eligibility requirements for Federal programs, it excluded emergency medical care. In accordance with general Federal immigration laws, emergency medical services must be provided to anyone seeking them throughout the country, including undocumented immigrants. Most participants in this study indicated that emergency room visits are a last resort strategy, particularly if they are undocumented. They only went if they had exhausted social networks and all monetary means to obtain critically needed care. Most study participants reported that they ended up in an emergency room because they waited too long or could not find affordable care for a non-critical health issue that eventually escalated into a critical problem. One young mother even explained how she had to go to an emergency room for family members a couple of times. She said she thought the staff continued to pass over them in the waiting room because they were Hispanic. Within that group interview, however, the participants were quick to point out that they were also often treated very well, depending on the service and the location.

Local Civic Groups

Non-government and non-religious community and civic organizations provide another realm of services established to assist those in the Latino community. Addressing the particular needs of those local residents with a Hispanic background, these types of organizations often develop from grassroots efforts to contribute to the growth and well-being of Latino segment of the larger population by those within the Latino community. The Latino Community Development Agency (LCDA) is one such organization. Specializing in a variety of services, LCDA administers programs

in youth prevention and empowerment, family support and parenting, housing development, health and education, computer and literacy, and bilingual child development. As a development and community advocacy organization, LCDA is a powerful influence within the Oklahoma City Hispanic community. It also works alongside state and local service providers to create a larger administrative community of understanding and compassion within the Latino segment of the local population.

When I was first introduced to LCDA, one of the issues deemed critical within the immigrant community was the high rate of domestic violence. LCDA and other local social service organizations, including local law enforcement agencies, who are generally the first respondents to such incidents of alleged abuse situations, were working together to form a network of community agencies across the state to better provide services to victims and their families. Immigrants are particularly vulnerable in domestic violence and sexual assault situations for a variety of reasons, which primarily involve language, cultural and legal barriers. Many women are afraid to report abuse because they fear deportation and retaliation from the abuser. They may also believe that they cannot communicate with local law enforcement responders because of their lack of English proficiency. Conversely, local law enforcement agencies are not always equipped with translators, especially those in rural areas where the fast pace of in-migration has out-numbered changes within local social service and law enforcement agencies to accommodate the cultural and linguistic differences in the newcomer population.

Non-Profit Healthcare

As private healthcare organizations expand geographically, they also seek to expand their client base to meet the needs of all segments of the general population. One of the largest health-care systems in Oklahoma is the Integris Health system, based in Oklahoma City. Integris Health contains a network of hospitals across the state of Oklahoma, and they provide a variety of health-related services, including traditional health and medical care services as well as programs aimed to educate and prevent potential health problems.

Operating in the traditionally Hispanic part of Oklahoma City, one of the main Integris health locations is Integris Southwest Medical Center that serves as a base location to sponsor community enhancement programs, which include English as a Second Language (ESL), Citizenship preparation, and computer development skills programs. All of these programs are free to the general public. I had the opportunity to attend the Citizenship class that is offered through the Oklahoma City Public Schools, which is held on Saturday mornings for 15 weekly sessions. The classes were generally relaxed with students coming and going according to their work schedules and family responsibilities. All of the participants in the class I attended were Latin American immigrants. There was a variety of countries represented including Venezuela, Mexico and Colombia.

The basic prerequisites for attending the class include being a legal permanent resident and having proficient reading, writing, and speaking skills in English. In order to be granted citizenship, an individual must be granted legal residence prior to applying for citizenship, or in other words, he or she must have a green card. The

course assists potential citizenship applicants in preparing for the general citizenship exam as well the steps in initiating the application process. Applying to take the test often meant a waiting period of several weeks or longer. The test itself includes a 100 question written exam and an oral exam. Applicants must also take a medical exam and submit an application filing. Many of the students in the class were concerned because the fee increased from 400 to 625 dollars in 2007, and they were hoping to complete the application process prior to the fee increase (Taxin 2007: Associated Press).

While attending the class, occasionally a potential new student would visit, but were discouraged from participation due to the lack of the necessary English skills and/or legal resident status. And although the regular members of the class were in the United States legally, they were concerned about the new Oklahoma law, HB1804, which passed during the time I attended the class. These students said they knew many family members and friends who would be affected by the new laws.

In addition to the community-sponsored classes, part of the Integris Health initiative is to operate a community clinic, which targets any uninsured community members. I was told that all of the major health centers operated these types of clinics locally, but they were only advertised via word of mouth networks or medical staff referrals to patients who had exhausted all of their financial resources but were ineligible for government-funded programs. The clinic I attended was located in a church in the Oklahoma City downtown area, and because of its location, it generally had a Hispanic clientele of 75 percent or more. The clinic is open three evenings a

month, with two evenings designated for initial and follow-up doctor visits. One evening a month is reserved for handing out medications prescribed to the patients. Patient care and any prescribed drugs are free through the program. The staff mainly consists of volunteer doctors, nurses, and community members. Because the clinic is often busy with long waiting periods, volunteers also provide informational and educational seminars on such common health concerns as diabetes care and awareness of heart attack and stroke symptoms.

I visited the clinic at least once or twice a month for nearly a year. The majority of my time was spent in the waiting rooms where I became acquainted with some of the recurring patients. We would exchange information about our children and families. By a general count each time I visited, I found that nearly all of the Hispanic clients were older women, suffering from diabetes. This was the only place they found were they could get (or afford) their required medications. The clinic generally opened about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and new patients were enrolled on a first come, first serve basis. As I got to know some of the regular patients, I discovered that many did have jobs, but they did not have health benefits. If they needed medical attention, this was one of the few places they could afford. Because the hours of operation are very limited, however, most patients prepared themselves to spend the entire afternoon and evening waiting in one of the two large church classrooms turned clinic waiting rooms. They would have to take the day off from work and bring food and drinks in anticipation of the long wait. They were often accompanied by young children, for whom they cared while their parents were at work. When asked about the long wait, the general response was that they were

grateful to have a place to come, and they didn't seem to mind waiting for so long. Some women would sit together, crochet and talk. While waiting, one younger mother sat with her children and helped them with their reading and homework.

Depending on the weather, the classrooms would be hot and stuffy when temperatures soared over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or musty and muggy when thunderstorms and rain relentlessly poured from dark skies. Nonetheless, patients and volunteers alike were generally cordial, respectful, and helpful. Volunteer translators are difficult to recruit. However, those who did volunteer were usually young, bilingual high school or college students who were not always sure of their ability to translate medical jargon into easy Spanish phrases.

Religious Organizations

Local religious organizations have traditionally been instrumental in providing services to newcomers in general. One of the largest and long-established programs administering services to the Latin American immigrant population in Oklahoma City is Catholic Charities. Traditionally, Catholic Charities is a social service agency that administers programs to individuals and families in the general community who have a wide range of needs from financial and housing assistance to psychological counseling. However, with the growth of the Latino immigrant community, they have expanded their services for this segment of the population to include legal and resettlement assistance.

One of my first connections with a social service agency was Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City. As the immigrant population continued to grow and the new state law, HB 1804, took effect, I was beginning to conduct field research, and

my efforts to interview members of the organization never succeeded. The agency experienced a drastic increase in its legal caseload because immigrant families were worried about the new law, and social service workers found themselves over-extended.

Nonetheless, religious organizations provide one of the few avenues where undocumented immigrants might find assistance. Many religious denominations in Oklahoma felt so strongly about their mission to assist those in need that they responded to the enactment of HB 1804, by legally challenging the proponents of the law. Although their efforts were unsuccessful, the Oklahoma Conference of Churches, which represents 16 Christian denominations[3], issued a statement after the law passed declaring:

> The Oklahoma Conference of Churches, in joining the opposition to the implementation of HB 1804, relies on the principles of social justice inherent in our various traditions, including a recognition that human rights derive not from membership in a state or from immigration status, but rather from the inherent worth and dignity of every person made in the image of God (Oklahoman 2007: online access).

Because these churches are at the very local and individual level of everyday interaction with immigrants who need assistance, their approach generates positive experiences for many newcomers. Fr. Anthony Taylor, who at the time of the interview served as Pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in the traditionally Hispanic district of Oklahoma City, said that when he worked as an associate Pastor at the church in the early 1980s, it was only about 10 percent Hispanic. Now it is nearly 100 percent Hispanic with seven out of nine masses (church services) held on the weekends conducted in Spanish only. The Sacred Heart Parish provides a variety

of service and assistance programs to help those in need, but Fr. Taylor indicated that many people who need medical treatment will often travel back to Mexico because they find it is too expensive in the United States. In responding to growing numbers of immigrants driven from severe poverty in Latin America, he said "people have a right to immigrate if they cannot provide for their family."

Social Service Providers

Social service workers are often advocates for immigrants because they become acquainted with individual clients and their particular circumstances. For many social service workers who are considered government employees, they are cautioned not to take part in political activities that could present a conflict of interest with state-sponsored programs. Veering away from politics in general, as shown in Mercedes case at the beginning of the chapter, many individual social service workers from all types of organizations are committed to providing services to anyone in need. Yet, they are often constrained in their efforts because of limited resources and complex Federal, state, and local policies on eligibility requirements. They were also aware of public opinion on immigration issues.

Many of the young immigrant women I interviewed were referred to me by social service workers who thought these particular young women might be interested in taking part in my research. Once I met with these willing participants, it was common for them to say they only agreed to participate because they had built up trust relationships with the referring social service worker. Because of that relationship, they did not think I posed any threat to them or potential harm to their families. The trust networks built between social service workers and members of the

immigrant community contribute to their positive experiences in the process of cultural incorporation.

Yet, while the overall sentiment among immigrant participants was favorable of those in the social service and health sectors, there were some cases involving experiences with the overall system that generated feelings of frustration. One single mother said that she felt like the system compelled her to "stretch the truth" about the hours she worked because she said in order to receive much needed food stamps for her children, she was only allowed to work so many hours. But, she said she often had to work more than the allowable hours (cleaning offices at night) to make just enough money to pay her basic bills. Overall, she said she "feels embarrassed by using social services," but she said she felt that she did not have any other choice. At this particular interview, I met with this mother at a local public library, and she kept apologizing for being late because her car would not start and she had to find a family friend to help with the repair.

Boldly Patriotic, Timidly Critical, and the Grateful Paradox

One of the characteristics observed by some of the social service providers and other members of the receiving community in general is that more recently arrived Latin American immigrants boldly display the flag of their home countries, which, in most cases, is the Mexican flag. Often native community members are perplexed at how a group of people, who consist of so many that are undocumented, can be so audacious as to express their national pride while residing within the boundaries of another country. The implication is that if a person has migrated for a better life and certainly, if they are accessing public services, they should be grateful

for the opportunities that they have. Part of being grateful is being humble and not outwardly expressing pride in the less sustainable life left behind.

Based on the data I collected for this study, most immigrants did express gratitude, and they were reluctant to be critical of any public or social welfare services available to them. However, in order to get participants to discuss the negative aspects of social incorporation, such as racism, it took more than a questionnaire. In most cases, the longer I was able to talk to a participant, the more she or he was forthcoming and I learned about the paradoxical relationship between expressing hope for a better life while openly exhibiting national pride for their country of origin. Part of the answer to the more "visible" displays of national pride is rooted in the global economy and the various stages of nation-building within the historical context. Nation-building efforts for Mexico are a more recent development, particularly in the rural areas, and it coincides with efforts to liberalize the economy. When border crossings between the United States and Mexico were less rigid for migrants at the turn of the 20th century, the significance of the national identity was much less pervasive. Today, national identities are integral to most educational programs in the majority of countries around the world.

To be fair, when participants in this study reflected on where they came from and the living conditions in their countries, they were critical of those countries as well. For example, one woman from Central America suggested that the state-sponsored women's health program in her home country was considered good by the

standards of programs in surrounding countries, but it was still not as good as the care she received at the Oklahoma public clinic she visited for maternity care.

While most immigrants are proud of their native country, the majority of participants were reluctant to criticize the United States in general or the people of Oklahoma. Even if they expressed any criticism related to the negative socio-economic barriers to entry, such as general prejudice and racism, they would qualify it by saying "not everyone is racist here. Most people are very nice." On the whole, most participants said they were grateful for their life here.

Endnotes

[1] "Nonquota" was a new class or category introduced in the Quota Act of 1921, which included aliens returning from trips abroad, professional actors, artists, lecturers, singers, nurses, ministers and professors (Bernard 1998: 54).

[2] In this context, the "process of blackening" is not meant to be confused with the civil rights movement in the United States up to which point, historically, the word "colored" was considered demeaning. Black activists promoted the use of the word "Black" as a newer classification meant to empower African American minorities, and it was promoted as a means to embrace and take pride in an African heritage.

[3] The Churches represented in the conference include: Roman Catholic, United Methodist, Progressive Oklahoma Baptist State Convention, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Cooperating Baptist Fellowship of Oklahoma, Cumberland Presbyterian, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Mennonites, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America and Society of Friends.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

> *The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. - Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (1983: 31-32)*
>
> *The people had been free to go traveling north and south for a thousand years, traveling as they pleased, then suddenly white priests had announced smuggling as a mortal sin because smuggling was stealing from the government…*
>
> *There was not, and there never had been, a legal government by Europeans anywhere in the Americas. Not by any definition, not even by the Europeans' own definitions and laws. Because no legal government could be established on stolen land. Because stolen land never had a clear title. Zeta could recite Yoeme's arguments and crazed legal theories better and better as time went by. All the laws of the illicit governments had to be blasted away. Every waking hour Zeta spent scheming and planning to break as many of their laws as she could. - Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead (1991: 133)*

General Discussion

Over time, the various venues of cultural expression, such as in literature, art and music, express the dialectical process between the multifaceted forms of global expansion and indigenous and marginalized populations around the world. In his brief novel about a trip deep in the heart of an African jungle, Joseph Conrad emphasizes the Black/White dichotomies evolving in an ever-expanding Western world view. In a more elaborate deference of those living within the US/Mexico borderlands, Leslie Marmon Silko expands the Black/White dichotomy to include a larger Black/White continuum and a dialectical process between the older, darker and the newer, lighter residents. Interwoven into the larger social-structural process of "being made" into cultural citizens then is individual agency and the process of resistance to large-scale cultural incorporation. Although fictional, the characters in both novels illuminate the

struggles I found in this study on Latin American immigrants living in the state of Oklahoma, which is just beyond the US/Mexico border regions but outside of the traditional immigrant destinations in the United States. For many individual social service workers, they are aware of their positions within the dominant society, yet they strive within their respective work environments to alleviate the biases and contradictions in social policies that they encounter when working with newcomers. For most immigrants, they are powerless within the dominant legal structure to create resistance, but they resist nonetheless. Their approach is often to resist through general submission by conforming to some of the dominant expectations on ideal citizenship, such as working hard and staying out of trouble. As one older, non-English speaking mother, who lived in Oklahoma most of her adult life while raising her children, said in reflecting on the new law, HB 1804, "they can pass laws, but we are not leaving. We have not done anything wrong." Yet, while conforming to some of the dominant expectations on ideal citizenship, resistance is expressed in the determination to stay. In doing so, a broader Latino cultural heritage becomes incorporated into the local receiving community.

With the 2008 historic election of Barack Obama, an individual of a mixed Black and White heritage, as President of the United States, I seriously reconsidered the premise of this paper. If, in the more than 200 years of historically white Presidents, racial barriers have finally started to disintegrate racial tensions in the United States, then how can I argue that some segments of the population continue to be "blackened?" After all, as I followed the election and classic arguments emanating from the major political parties with Obama representing the Democratic Party

(which is, in more recent times, the party advocating minority rights), I realized that such an election could not take place without the general support of the white voting population. Complicating my reflections on the process of cultural incorporation as I write this section, an international news story featured the Brazilian President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silvamade, who commented on the current global credit crisis by blaming "white people with blue eyes" (Sky News 2009). On a personal level and as an individual with "blue eyes," of course I could understand how many people from predominately "white" regions would hear the Brazilian President's comments and be offended. However, in reflecting on the ethnohistorical backdrop of Brazil, I also realized that the Brazilian President was collectively "counter-blackening" the people of wealthier nations in an effort to lay blame on them for Brazil's financial problems faced by his mostly darker-skinned constituency (Wade 1997).

As uncomfortable and perplexing as the Brazilian President's comments may be to predominately white, Western nations, these comments do reflect ideological agency within the expanding global social order that has developed alongside the global economy. Both the election of Barack Obama and the comments of President Silvamade demonstrate the dialectics of the broader "whitening" and "blackening" processes that have occurred and are continuing to occur around the world. Depending on the particular history and context of the location, on the local level, such as in the state of Oklahoma, this process is manifested in various forms. Within the US, local communities continue to struggle with the more overt Black/White binaries symbolic of past dominant and minority group relationships, such as segregated communities. Today, however, these struggles are, ideologically, more in

line with the Black and White continuum found in Latin American countries where racial stratification is far more visible in the wider range of people with darker and fairer appearances.

The overarching theoretical approaches in this study provided a base to analyze these changes in hegemonic conceptions of social categorization and ultimately to changes in the dynamics of cultural incorporation. The evolution of political economy theories from Marxist critiques on class relationships to dependency theories and transnational identities served as a guide to paint a complex backdrop for why and how immigrants come to be in a new location, as well as their class status within that location. Postmodern approaches, such as those found in Bourdieu's practice theory, assist in illuminating how individual experiences fit within the larger social, economic, and political frameworks. With the proliferation of gender, ethnic, and cultural studies in the postmodern era, a newer dimension to the politics of economic relationships demonstrates links between minority groups and class positioning. Primary to discussions on economic globalization then are discussions on the dialectics of global whitening and blackening processes. The incorporation of people around the world in a global economy demonstrates that "whitening" is multiracial, as is the formation and maintenance of an underclass. The amalgamation of groups within the underclass then challenges past Black and White conceptual binaries.

As this study can attest, theoretical models outlined in Chapter 3 on cultural incorporation are applicable to Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma. Chavez

(1991), Sacks (1994), Ong (1996), Horton (2004), and Waterson (2006) do provide a viable framework for analyzing the incorporation of immigrants to First World countries based on their perceived capital worth within the receiving community and among the immigrants themselves. However, this study has contributed to those theoretical models by providing a mechanism for analyzing the local dialectical process between immigrants and receiving community members. By breaking down the socioeconomic variables deemed most acceptable to ideal citizenship on the local level, this model may be applicable to other immigrant groups in other receiving communities.

As a case study of a local-level approach in the dialectics of cultural acceptance, social integration, and legal incorporation, Oklahoma represents a newer frontier within the interior of the nation because it is beginning to absorb a significant number of Latino newcomers within an expanding network of more recent immigrant destinations. It is also unique because it was a final destination for many of the North American indigenous groups, and its history of incorporation of Native Americans, as well as its history with Blacks, has been fraught with exclusionary and subordinating policies. Oklahoma's geographical location on the margins of the US/Mexico borderlands and its generally low cost of living and stagnating population growth make it a prime location for new settlers. Nevertheless, after interviewing a range of state and local public policy makers, social service workers, and immigrants in Oklahoma for this study, the dialects of incorporation is evident in a chasm between state-level policy-making and community-level implementation of social service programs.

For the most part, individual social service workers tend to work hard for their clients and express a serious interest in providing the best social services possible to newcomers, regardless of race, class, or gender. Most of the stories from immigrants themselves corroborated the efforts of the social service workers to make them feel welcome. Yet, between policy-makers and policy-administering agencies, a discrepancy exists in how social welfare benefits are distributed and how they should be designated along the "deservingness" continuum. For example, in a local news article chronicling the history of the state law, HB 1804, the following excerpt demonstrates a clash in formal policy and the implementation of those policies:

> After years of trying to get the state legislature to allow them to provide pre-natal care to pregnant illegal immigrants, on Oct. 11, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority's board elected to provide those services by itself. Members of the authority voted 6-1 to approve a rule change, qualifying undocumented women with Medicaid prenatal assistance.
>
> "It clearly runs contrary to state legislative intent," [House Representative and Bill sponsor Randy] Terrill said about the rule change (Walker 2007: The Oklahoman, online access).

Thus, legislation continues to support exclusive measures to limit the criteria of legal incorporation, while those working in the realm of policy implementation actively resist. Other proposed legislation, which would mandate English as the official language of the state, further exacerbates the process of cultural acceptance and social integration for many social service providers and immigrants because the proposed laws do not recognize the more complex factors that are associated with those trying to learn a new language.

While the legislative intent in Oklahoma politics is similar to other states, it differs from other places, such as in New Haven, Connecticut, where local policymakers proposed to provide illegal immigrants with identification cards. A news story on the plan is elaborated upon in the following excerpt:

> Cities – and critics – across the country are watching closely as New Haven prepares to hand out its first batch of cards July 24. The idea: integrate illegal immigrants into the community, protect them from crime that can happen because of a lack of documentation, and encourage them to be more willing to report crimes to police. Reaction to the first-of-a-kind program has been swift and sharp, illustrating the wide divide in US public opinion over the issue (Carpenter 2007).

As in most other places, public opinion in Oklahoma is divided as well, although it is not necessarily an even split. The reaction of the public to new state legislation, such as HB 1804 and proposed English only laws, has generally been favorable. Consequently, cultural acceptance by the general public does not necessarily reflect the views of those in the social services industries who are in daily contact with the immigrant community.

Variations in Cultural Incorporation within Families

Based on the research from this study in Oklahoma, the process of cultural incorporation within the context of health and social welfare programs varies within families based on a range of socio-economic factors. Experiences within families to become part of the receiving community are mixed. For some, the experience is more negative and for others, it is more positive. Because of individual family member experiences, interpersonal relationships and immigrant family structures are often strained. Relationship stresses are due to various factors, but age, education, legal status, household income, and time in the US are commonly cited by participants or

were observed by the researcher as relationship stresses. Women also cite emotional stress due to pregnancy and childcare and differing religious, as well as cultural, backgrounds if one partner was primarily raised in the United States and the other was raised outside. Therefore, for many Latino households, they are a mix of legal, socio-economic, and cultural statuses that contribute to their positions in the dominant society.

A large group of undocumented immigrants, who arrived as children, are becoming adults and forming families with little or no perceived hope of attaining legal status, which would afford them the opportunity to complete educational goals (including English language programs), earn higher wages, obtain credit, and access private health or social welfare services. Although social networks exist within the Hispanic community in Oklahoma City and services do exist for indigent populations, these avenues are not well-advertised.

Nonetheless, the local infrastructure is accommodating the new Latin American residents in such areas as more outward use of the Spanish language on public signs, increased availability of regional Latin American commodities, and offering religious services in Spanish. However, most participants have expressed frustration with inter- and intra-ethnic tensions, as well as a fear of losing benefits or not being able to find crucial health and social welfare services because of recent state legislation.

Latin American Immigrant Women in a Quadruple Bind

With the proliferation of scholarly research focusing on women's lives around the world, these studies have highlighted the double bind of women's integration into public wage labor pools with domestic responsibilities, including reproductive roles, which have generally served to increase their workload and diminish their overall quality of life. Further studies have reflected on the triple bind of minority women, who are more likely to live in poverty than their white counterparts. This study magnifies an additional component to the lives of Latin American immigrant women, which is that many of them are not in the United States legally. As presented in Chapter 5, the process of coming to live in a place illegally is reflective of a complex matrix of historical marginalization within their country of origin in addition to global economic trends. Therefore, for many of the women in this study, they must not only negotiate the need to work with family obligations, and thus reproductive responsibilities, they must also negotiate their minority status with few resources outside of the legal system. Because these women find themselves powerless to gain legitimate resources to assist in their education and training as "ideal citizens," the "quadruple bind" of being a provider, being a woman, being a minority, and being illegal often contributes to the general "blackening" process of cultural incorporation. The "blackening" process then serves to reinforce the reproduction of an underclass, which provides a large and readily available low-wage labor pool in the larger economy (Allegro 2009).

To be fair, the current course of legislative action in the US on immigration policies and immigrant social welfare benefits, particularly on the Federal level, can

change rapidly with on-going shifts in policy-making personnel and, thus, in the political bargaining process. For many immigrants, especially women who work and live outside of formal economic and legal structures and express little or no hope of becoming legal, new legislation granting amnesty or simply granting more avenues to becoming legal can have profound impacts on their lives. When the Immigration Reform and Control Act passed in 1986, many illegal immigrants found that a plethora of new opportunities had opened up for them. Most significantly, the Act provided the opportunity to become a citizen, which legitimated their roles in the formal economy and provided access to private health and social welfare benefits. The implication of such potential legislation, even for those immigrants who are in the US legally, is a possible shift from a general "blackening" process to a "whitening" process.

For my part as a native-born, white researcher, I increasingly found the participant's stories compelling, and quite often, my empathy for so many who were not legal did turn into sympathy for a variety of other reasons. So many of the immigrant participants struggled daily with finding a balance between earning a living, maintaining a family, and negotiating basic health and social welfare needs. Their daily struggles transcended socioeconomic and legal statuses to represent some of the same frustrations that many white, middle class women and men must also negotiate. The recognition of these frustrations, as well as some of the same general experiences from living in Oklahoma, assisted in facilitating dialogue with the participants. The rapport I established with so many of the participants and the large data set of stories and socio-demographic information obtained through this research

has provided a foundation for future research with the Latino segment of Oklahoma's general population. Future avenues for research include re-interviewing original participants on the effects of proposed Federal and state legislation once new laws become effective. In addition, because so many of the participants were young mothers expecting a child or with a new baby, reproductive expectations and maternal characteristics within this group are areas of future research consideration.

City of Tranquilo

Most native Oklahomans and newcomers agree that Oklahoma is a quiet, *tranquilo*, place to live. Ironically, despite very negative public opinions on illegal immigrants, immigrants themselves generally indicated that overall their interactions with native residents are hospitable and friendly. Much like native Oklahomans and those newcomers who migrate from other parts of the country, Oklahoma is often cited as favorable because there is much less traffic congestion, more available and affordable housing, and a slower pace to life in general. Beyond those concerns for many Latino immigrants, however, is a sense of public and individual security. In fact, despite the broader social and legal processes contributing to a general "blackening" process of Latino immigrants, many participants in the study found the feeling of security, the ability to move about the city without significant traffic concerns, and the availability of affordable housing to be empowering. A few participants cited the lack of security in border cities, such as Juarez where drug trafficking and black-market smuggling are prevalent, as part of their comparison to express feelings of security and insecurity. For many of the participants in the study who came from the Juarez area, particularly for those who are women, the sense of

security is further heightened because of an extremely high violence and crime rate against women in that area of Mexico.

Other aspects of living in Oklahoma include a variety of concerns and agreeable factors. The final comments section of the questionnaire distributed for this study was voluntary, so the responses were often intermittent. Nonetheless, the results of the comments suggest a wide range of difficulties and positive factors about living in Oklahoma, which are illustrated in Table 8-1 below:

Table 8-1: Final Immigrant Comments

What do you find most difficult about living in Oklahoma City?

Most Cited Responses	Percentage of Responses
Language	24%
Finding Work	19%
Racism	15%
The laws (1804)	13%
Transportation	9%
Being undocumented	7%
Gangs/drugs	3%
Lack of Public Services	3%
Weather	2%
High cost of living	1%
Crime/violence	1%
Nothing to do	1%
Finding housing	1%

What do you like best about living in Oklahoma City?

Most Cited Responses	Percentage of Responses
It is quiet	23%
City is pretty	14%
Help for Latinos	10%
The people in general	9%
Cost of living	6%
Lack of crime/violence	5%
Feel secure	5%

The entertainment	5%
To be with Family	5%
Work	4%
Public service help	4%
Less racism than Texas	3%
Schools	3%
Church	2%
Neighborhoods	1%
Less fear of police	1%
Less traffic	1%
Opportunities	1%

The wide range of responses demonstrates the variation in immigrant experiences as they are integrated into the receiving community. Although many feel more secure, they also cited some of the same problems in Oklahoma that were problems before they moved to the United States, such as difficulties in finding work, gangs, and drug trafficking. Finally, while some members of the immigrant community may have more positive socio-economic variables in their favor, they were more likely to feel less a part of the receiving community than many of those who had fewer positive variables in their favor. For some participants who fell into the more ideologically "whitened" categories, based on the in-depth interviews, I found a correlation between higher level of education and negative feelings about acceptance. For many women who have some college education or a professional degree, especially if they were undocumented, they demonstrated more frustration during the interviews because they had greater expectations for assistance from the legal system. They expressed a general hope of becoming documented faster and ultimately being able to find work with an income level commensurate with their educational background. When the system did not work as they expected, they were then forced into low-paying jobs, such as childcare and housecleaning, to make ends meet.

In a final word, when I set out to gather ethnographic data on the experiences of Latin American immigrants in Oklahoma, the amount of data gathered for this research was considerable. I was not exactly sure what I was planning to find. Much of my pre-field research was exploratory, partly an attempt to learn as much as possible about Latin America and the processes of immigration in the United States. Over the course of my research, I found little information from primary resources available on earlier Hispanics in Oklahoma and more recent Latin American immigrants, so one of my main goals is to provide a foundation for future research in Oklahoma on this segment of the population. In gathering data, I found many avenues to pursue and attempted to incorporate the most important of those in the final analysis without veering too far off from the original topic, which generally focused on immigrant experiences and social services.

In addressing the history of Hispanics in the region, the making of identities in Latin America, and exploring the socio-economic variables of cultural incorporation, I hoped to present as much of the complex historical layering and social diversities that brought individuals to their present location and the factors shaping their experiences in that location. Most importantly, in doing so, I often found that any critique of capitalism as a significant factor in the negative aspects of cultural incorporation was never well- received, especially in middle-class social circles in an interior city of the United States. Such a cold reception to critiques of capitalism and notions of the nation-state has compelled me to make the final assertion that this is not an assault on liberal economics, individualism, and self-reliance, but rather it is a critique of our general habitus on how we incorporate "others" within the broader

dominant socio-economic system. Neoliberal economics plays a significant role in our collective actions, and we must look more closely at the experiences of all to make it a better, more sustainable and more secure society for everyone.

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Appendix A: Immigrant Questionnaire in English

OKC_____
WW_____

University of Oklahoma
Anthropology Department
Regina Gordon

Questionnaire:

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Age: _____ **2.** Gender: Male _____ Female_____

3. How many years of school have you completed? _____

4. What country are you from? México _____ Guatemala _____Other _____
(Write in name of country)

a. In your country, what city are you from? _____
b. What region are you from? _____

5. Where did you live before you moved to Oklahoma? _____

6. How many years have you lived in Oklahoma? _____

7. Why did you move to Oklahoma? *(Check all that apply)*
For work/a job _____
You have family here _____
Other (please explain) _____ _____
_____

8. Do you live in a(n) house? _____ Apartment? _____ Other? _____

9. If you live in a house, do you rent or own it? Rent _____ Own _____

10. How many adults live in your home? _____ How many children? _____

PART 2: JOBS AND WORK

11. Do you have a job? Yes _____ No _____

12. If you do have a job, do you have more than one job?Yes _____ No _____

a. If yes, how many jobs do you have? _____
b. Is your main job part-time or full-time?_____Part-time _____Full-time
c. What type of industry do you work in?

_____ Agriculture	_____ Food Service	_____ Entertainment
_____ Automotive	_____ Housekeeping	_____ Other
_____ Childcare	_____ Landscaping	_____
_____ Construction	_____ Medical	(write in type of industry)
_____ Education	_____ Retail	

13. If you do have a job, are you the primary source of income for your home?___Yes___No

14. If you are NOT the primary source of income for your home, who is? _____

a. Do you contribute your income to household expenses? _____Some
_____All
_____None

PART 3: RELIGION

15. Do you (and your family) belong to a church? Yes _____ No _____

a. If yes, which denomination? _____ Baptist _____ Lutheran
_____ Catholic _____ Methodist
_____ Church of Christ _____ Pentecostal
_____ Episcopal _____ Other
_____
(write in your religion)

16. Besides church services, do you and your family participate in other church activities or programs at your church? Yes _____ No _____

a. What type of church activities or programs? _____
_____

PART 4: HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND LANGUAGE

17. Do you have health insurance? Yes _____ No _____

a. If yes, do you get your health insurance through your employer? Yes ___ No ____

18. Have you used any of the following health services since you moved to Oklahoma?

_____ Chiropractor
_____ Curandero
_____ Dentist
_____ Eye Doctor
_____ Hospital Emergency Room
_____ Midwife
_____ Private Doctor/Clinic
_____ Public Health Clinic
_____ Domestic Violence Services
_____ Other _____
_____

19. Are you currently or have you been part of any of the following government programs?

_____ Food Stamps (Access OK)
_____ Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
_____ Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 Housing)
_____ Federal Refugee Resettlement
_____ Medicaid (prenatal care, etc.)

20. If you live in Oklahoma City (OKC), do you participate in any programs through the Latino Community Development Agency? Yes _____ No _____ I do not live in OKC_____

a. If yes, which program(s)? _____

21. Do you speak: _____ Spanish only
_____ Spanish and some English
_____ Spanish and English fluently
_____ English only
_____ Other _____

22. What language do you speak at home? _____ English only
_____ Spanish only
_____ Some English and some Spanish

23. Do you participate in any English language programs or classes, such as ESL (English as a Second Language)? Yes _____ No _____

PART 5: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

24. Are you: _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Separated
_____ Single (without boyfriend/girlfriend) _____ Single (with boyfriend/girlfriend)

25. If you are single, are you planning to get married? _____Yes _____No _____Not sure yet

26. If you are married, where did you meet your wife/husband? _____Oklahoma
_____ In my home country
_____ Another country
_____ Another U.S. state – which one?_____

a. Where were you married? _____Oklahoma
_____ In my home country
_____ Another country
_____ Another U.S. state – which one?_____

b. Were you married in a: _____ Church _____ Both
_____ Civil Ceremony _____ Neither

27. If you are divorced or separated, how long have you lived apart? _____ 0-6 mos.
_____ 6 mos.–2 yrs
_____ 2-5 years
_____ 5 yrs or more

28. How many children do you have? _____
a. What are their ages? _____

PART 6: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

29. Since you have moved to Oklahoma, do you feel welcome in the city or town where you live? Yes _____ No _____ Not sure yet _____

30. What do you find most difficult about the city or town where you live? _____

_____

31. What do like the best about the city or town where you live? _____

32. Do you have any other comments about Oklahoma in general? _____

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix B: Immigrant Questionnaire in Spanish

OKC_____
WW_____

Universidad de Oklahoma
Departmento de Antropología
Regina Gordon

Cuestionario:

PARTE 1: INFORMACIÓN DE GENERAL

1. Edad: _____ **2.** Género: Hombre _____ Mujer_____

3. ¿Cuántos años completó en la escuela? _____

4. ¿De qué país es usted? México _____ Guatemala _____ Otro _____
(Escriba el nombre del país)

a. En su país, ¿de qué ciudad es usted?_____
b. ¿De qué región o provincia es usted?_____

5. ¿A dónde vivia usted antes de que se trasladara a Oklahoma?_____

6. ¿Cuántos años ha vivido en Oklahoma?_____

7. ¿Por qué usted se trasladó a Oklahoma? *(Marcar todas las aplicables)*
Por el trabajo _____
Tiene familia aquí _____
Otro (explique por favor)_____

8. ¿Vive usted en una casa? _____ ¿Apartamento? _____ ¿Otro? _____

9. ¿Si usted vive en una casa, la alquila o es propia? Alquilada _____ Propia _____

10. ¿Cuántos adultos viven en su hogar? _____ ¿Cuántos niños viven con usted? _____

PARTE 2: TRABAJOS Y TRABAJO

11. ¿Usted tiene un trabajo? Sí _____ No _____

12. ¿ Usted tiene más de un trabajo? Sí _____ No _____

a. Si sí, ¿cuántos trabajos tiene usted? _____
b. ¿Es su trabajo principal tiempo y medio o de tiempo completo?
____ tiempo y medio ____ tiempo completo

d. ¿En qué tipo de industria trabaja usted?

_____ Agricultura	_____ Housekeeping
_____ Automotor	_____ Ama de Llaves
_____ Cuidado de niño	_____ Yardas
_____ Construcción	_____ Médico
_____ Educación	_____ Ventas
_____ Entretenimiento	_____ Otro _____

(Escriba en el tipo de industria)

13. Si usted trabaja, ¿es usted la fuente de la renta primaria para su hogar? ____ Sí _____ No

14. ¿Si usted no es la fuente de la renta primaria en su hogar, quién es? _____

a. ¿Usted contribuye con su salario con los gastos de la casa? _____Algunos
_____Todos
_____Ninguno

PARTE 3: RELIGIÓN

15. ¿Pertenecen usted (y su familia) a una iglesia? Sí _____ No _____

a. Si sí, ¿de que denominación?

_____ Bautista	_____ Luterana
_____ Católico	_____ Metodista
_____ Iglesia de Cristo	_____ Pentecostal
_____ Episcopal	_____ Otro

_____
(escriba su religión)

16. Además de los servicios regulares de iglesia, ¿ participan usted y su familia en otros programas o actividades de su iglesia? Sí _____ No _____

b. ¿Qué tipo de actividades o de programas de la iglesia?
_____

PARTE 4: SALUD, SERVICIOS SOCIALES, E IDIOMA

17. ¿Usted tiene seguro médico? Sí _____ No _____

a. ¿Si sí, usted consigue su seguro médico a través de su patrón? Sí _____ No _____

18. ¿ Ha utilizado algunos de los siguiente servicios Médicos desde que usted se trasladó a Oklahoma?

_____ Quiropráctico	_____ Partera	_____ Sitio de emergencia del hospital
_____ Curandero	_____ Doctor o clínica privado	
_____ Dentista	_____ Clínica de la salud pública	_____ Servicios para la violencia doméstica
_____ Oculista	_____ Otro _____	

19. ¿Es usted de le tiene actualmente sido parte de algunos de los servicios de gobierno siguientes?

_____ Cupones para alimentos/Food Stamps (Access OK)
_____ Mujeres, Bebés y Niños/Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

_____ Vales de Elección de Viviendas/Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 Housing)
_____ Restablecimiento del Refugiado/Federal Refugee Resettlement
_____ Medicaid (por ejemplo, cuidado prenatal)

20. ¿Si usted vive en la Ciudad de Oklahoma (OKC), usted participa en algunos de los programas de la Agencia Latina para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad (LCDA)?
Sí _____ No _____ No vivo en OKC_____

b. ¿Si sí, que programas? _____

21. Usted habla:_____ Español solamente
_____ Español y un cierto inglés
_____ Español e inglés fluido
_____ Inglés solamente
_____ Otro _____

22. ¿Qué idioma a usted habla en el hogar? _____ Inglés solamente
_____ Español solamente
_____ Un cierto inglés y un cierto español

23. ¿Usted participa en programas de la lengua inglesa, por ejemplo ESL (Ingles como segundo idioma/English as a Second Language)? Sí _____ No _____

PARTE 5: UNIÓN Y FAMILIA

24. Es usted: _____ Casado _____ Divorciado _____ Separado
_____ Soltero (sin el novio/la novia) _____ Soltero (con el novio/la novia)

25. ¿Si usted es soltero, planea casarse? _____ Sí _____No _____ No seguro todavía

26. ¿Si está casado, adonde conocio a su esposa/esposo? _____Oklahoma
_____ En mi país de orígen
_____ Otro país
_____ Otro estado de Los Estados Unidos – ¿Cuál?_____

a. ¿Adónde se casaron? _____Oklahoma
_____ En mi país de orígen
_____ Otro país
_____ Otro estado de Los Estados Unidos – ¿Cuál uno?____

b. ¿Se casaron en un(a): _____ Iglesia _____ Ambos
_____ Ceremonia Civil _____ Ni unos ni otros

27. ¿Si usted está divociado o separado, cuanto tiempo han vivido aparte?___ 0-6 meses
___ 6 meses–2 años
___ 2-5 años
___ 5 años o más

28. ¿Cuántos niños tienen? _____

c. ¿Cuáles son sus edades? _____

PARTE 6: ¿QUÉ USTED PIENSA?

29. ¿Desde que usted se trasladado a Oklahoma, se siente bien venido en la ciudad en donde usted vive? Sí _____ No _____ No seguro todavía _____

30. ¿Qué encuentra más difícil en la ciudad en donde usted vive?

_____
_____
_____
_____

31. ¿Qué le gusta más de la ciudad o pueblo en donde usted vive?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

32. ¿Usted tiene otros comentarios sobre Oklahoma en general?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

¡Muchas gracias por su tiempo!

Appendix C: Social Service Provider Questionnaire

Name of Org._____
Office/Dept._____
OKC_____
WW_____

University of Oklahoma
Anthropology Department
Regina Gordon

Social Service Provider Survey (interview):

1. What is your main job function in this office/department?

2. Does your office/department work directly or indirectly with members of the Latin American immigrant population?

3. If you do work with them, please explain what your office/department's relationship is with this population.

4. In thinking about the growing Latin American immigrant population in Oklahoma, how do you see your office/department changing to meet the needs of this population?

5. From the perspective of your area of specialization, what do you perceive to be the "needs" of this population?

6. What do you see as some of the major challenges currently facing your organization and/or your office/department in meeting the needs of this population?

7. From your perspective, what do you see as some of the differences between the newer Latino population and other social and ethnic groups in Oklahoma? (i.e. social, cultural, etc.)

8. How do you see the general public's view of this population shaping the goals, policies, and programs within your organization?

9. Do you have any other comments about this topic in general?

10. How do you see House Bill 1804 impacting immigrants in the OKC community?

Appendix D: Quantitative Data Results Summary

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 1			
NR	2	2%	2%
18-25	23	27%	27%
26-35	31	36%	36%
36-45	23	27%	27%
46-55	6	7%	7%
56 & older	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 2			
Women	72	84%	84%
Men	14	16%	16%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 3			
0	0	0%	0%
1	0	0%	0%
2	1	1%	1%
3	2	2%	2%
4	1	1%	1%
5	3	3%	3%
6	12	14%	14%
7	6	7%	7%
8	2	2%	2%
9	23	27%	27%
10	2	2%	2%
11	4	5%	5%
12	12	14%	14%
13	1	1%	1%
14	2	2%	2%
15	1	1%	1%
16 or more	6	7%	7%
NR	8	9%	9%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 4			
Mexico	82	95%	95%
Guatemala	3	3%	3%
Other	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest.4a			
Aguascalientes	3	3%	3%
Bermejillo	1	1%	1%
Chihuahua	12	14%	14%
Ciudad Guatemala	1	1%	1%
Coahuila	2	2%	2%
Culiacan	2	2%	2%
Dolores	1	1%	1%
Dolores Idago	1	1%	1%
Durango	3	3%	3%
Ensenada	1	1%	1%
Fresnillo	2	2%	2%
Gonzales Ortega	1	1%	1%
Guanajuato	1	1%	1%
Guerrero	1	1%	1%
Hjuares	1	1%	1%
Huetamo	1	1%	1%
Jalisco	1	1%	1%
Juan Aldama	1	1%	1%
Juarez	13	15%	15%
La Ceiba	1	1%	1%
La Perla Nazas	1	1%	1%
Logos d' Moreno	1	1%	1%
Matamoros	1	1%	1%
Mazatlan	2	2%	2%
Meoqui	1	1%	1%
Mexico City	4	5%	5%
Monclova	1	1%	1%
Monterrey	1	1%	1%
Pachuca	1	1%	1%
Quetzaltenango	1	1%	1%
Rio Grande	2	2%	2%
San Luis Potosi	3	3%	3%
Small village	1	1%	1%
Tamasopo	2	2%	2%
Tepic	1	1%	1%
Toluca	1	1%	1%
Topia	1	1%	1%
Torreon	2	2%	2%
Totohicapan	1	1%	1%
Zacatecas	4	5%	5%
NR	4	5%	5%
Total	86	100%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 4b			
Aguascalientes	3	3%	3%
Atlantida, Honduras	1	1%	1%
Chihuahua	27	31%	31%
Coahuila	5	6%	6%
Durango	6	7%	7%
Federal District	4	5%	5%
Guadalupe	1	1%	1%
Guanajuato	3	3%	3%
Guatemala	1	1%	1%
Guerrero	1	1%	1%
Hidalgo	1	1%	1%
Jalisco	2	2%	2%
Mexico	1	1%	1%
Michoacan	2	2%	2%
Monterrey	1	1%	1%
Nayarit	1	1%	1%
San Luis Potosi	5	6%	6%
Sibilia	1	1%	1%
Sinoloa	4	5%	5%
Tamaulipas	1	1%	1%
Totonicapan	1	1%	1%
Zacatecas	9	10%	10%
NR	5	6%	6%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 5			
USA	28	33%	33%
Mex	50	58%	58%
Guat	2	2%	2%
NR	6	7%	7%
Total	86	100%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 6			
Under 1	2	2%	2%
1	2	2%	2%
2	9	10%	10%
3	9	10%	10%
4	6	7%	7%
5	8	9%	9%
6	10	12%	12%
7	5	6%	6%
8	5	6%	6%
9	3	3%	3%
10	5	6%	6%
11	4	5%	5%
12	3	3%	3%
13	3	3%	3%
14	3	3%	3%
15	2	2%	2%
16	1	1%	1%
17	3	3%	3%
18 or more	3	3%	3%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 7			
Work	33	38%	38%
Family	35	41%	41%
W&F	11	13%	13%
F&O	1	1%	1%
W,F,O	1	1%	1%
O	1	1%	1%
NR	4	5%	5%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 8			
A	28	33%	33%
H	57	66%	66%
O	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 9			
R	46	53%	53%
O	23	27%	27%
NR	17	20%	20%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 10a			
1	9	10%	10%
2	52	60%	60%
3	11	13%	13%
4	7	8%	8%
5	3	3%	3%
6	3	3%	3%
7	0	0%	0%
8	0	0%	0%
9	0	0%	0%
10	0	0%	0%
NR	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest.10b			
0	9	10%	10%
1	13	15%	15%
2	24	28%	28%
3	19	22%	22%
4	7	8%	8%
5	2	2%	2%
6	1	1%	1%
7	0	0%	0%
8	0	0%	0%
9	0	0%	0%
10	0	0%	0%
NR	11	13%	13%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 11			
Y	45	52%	52%
N	41	48%	48%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 12			
Y	6	7%	13%
N	39	45%	87%
Total	45	52%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 12a			
2	5	6%	100%
3	0	0%	0%
Total	5	6%	100%
Quest. 12b			
PT	29	34%	64%
FT	16	19%	36%
Total	45	52%	100%
Quest. 12c			
A	3	3%	6%
Aut	1	1%	2%
C	8	9%	17%
FS	12	14%	26%
HK	8	9%	17%
L	1	1%	2%
Con	4	5%	9%
Ed	1	1%	2%
Ent	0	0%	0%
Med	0	0%	0%
R	2	2%	4%
O	5	6%	11%
NR	2	2%	4%
Total	47	55%	100%
Quest. 13			
Y	27	31%	50%
N	25	29%	46%
NR	2	2%	4%
Total	54	63%	100%
Quest. 14			
Boyfriend	1	1%	3%
Brother	1	1%	3%
Daughter	1	1%	3%
Everyone	1	1%	3%
Ex-husband	3	3%	8%
Husband	26	30%	72%
Sister	2	2%	6%
Son	1	1%	3%
Total	36	42%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 14a			
S	11	13%	33%
All	22	26%	67%
N	0	0%	0%
NR	0	0%	0%
Total	33	38%	100%
Quest. 15			
Y	75	87%	87%
N	9	10%	10%
NR	2	2%	2%
Y&N	0	0%	0%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 15a			
Baptist	5	6%	6%
Catholic	55	64%	71%
Church of Christ	8	9%	10%
Episcopal	0	0%	0%
Lutheran	0	0%	0%
Methodist	0	0%	0%
Pentecostal	6	7%	8%
Other	3	3%	4%
Total	77	90%	100%
Quest. 16			
Y	15	17%	17%
N	60	70%	70%
NR	11	13%	13%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 17			
Y	9	10%	10%
N	76	88%	88%
NR	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 17a			
Y	8	9%	100%
N	0	0%	0%
Total	8	9%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 18			
Chiropractor	4	5%	3%
Curandero	1	1%	1%
Dentist	24	28%	17%
Eye Doctor	10	12%	7%
Midwife	6	7%	4%
Private Dr/Clinic	18	21%	13%
Public Health Clinic	40	47%	28%
Hospital ER	34	40%	24%
Domestic Violence Serv.	5	6%	4%
Other	0	0%	0%
Total	142	165%	100%
Quest. 19			
Food Stamps	16	19%	19%
WIC	35	41%	41%
Housing Vouchers/Sec. 8	4	5%	5%
Federal Refugee Resettle	1	1%	1%
Medicaid	30	35%	35%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 20			
Y	15	17%	19%
N	66	77%	81%
Total	81	94%	100%
Quest. 21			
So	33	38%	38%
SsE	38	44%	44%
SEf	13	15%	15%
Eo	0	0%	0%
O	0	0%	0%
NR	2	2%	2%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 22			
Eo	3	3%	3%
So	50	58%	58%
sEsS	32	37%	37%
NR	1	1%	1%
Total	86	100%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 23			
Y	27	31%	36%
N	49	57%	64%
Total	76	88%	100%
Quest. 24			
D	8	9%	9%
M	45	52%	53%
Sep	8	9%	9%
SwBF	15	17%	18%
SwoBF	9	10%	11%
Total	85	99%	100%
Quest. 25			
Y	10	12%	31%
N	6	7%	19%
Not Sure	16	19%	50%
Total	32	37%	100%
Quest. 26			
OK	23	27%	39%
HC	28	33%	47%
Other State	7	8%	12%
Another Country	1	1%	2%
Total	59	69%	100%
Quest. 26a			
OK	17	20%	32%
HC	26	30%	49%
Other State	7	8%	13%
Another Country	2	2%	4%
OK&US	1	1%	2%
Total	53	62%	100%
Quest. 26b			
Church	15	17%	27%
Civil Ceremony	11	13%	20%
Both	12	14%	22%
Neither	17	20%	31%
Total	55	64%	100%

	No.	Percent of Total	Percent of Quest.
Quest. 27			
0-6 mos.	2	2%	14%
6m-2yrs	6	7%	43%
2-5 years	3	3%	21%
5 or more yrs	3	3%	21%
Total	14	16%	100%
Quest. 28			
0	12	14%	14%
1	13	15%	15%
2	18	21%	21%
3	22	26%	26%
4	5	6%	6%
5	5	6%	6%
6	1	1%	1%
7	1	1%	1%
8	0	0%	0%
9	0	0%	0%
10	0	0%	0%
NR	9	10%	10%
Total	86	100%	100%
Quest. 28a			
Under 1	20	23%	12%
1-4	44	51%	26%
5-9	35	41%	21%
10-14	26	30%	16%
14 or older	42	49%	25%
	167	194%	100%
Quest. 29			
Y	62	72%	72%
N	1	1%	1%
Not Sure	10	12%	12%
NR	13	15%	15%
Total	86	100%	100%

Appendix E: Participant Recruitment Flyer

¡Deseamos saber!



Díganos sobre sus experiencias como recién llegado a Oklahoma.

Tiene usted o cualquier persona en su familia usada (o han considerado el usar) servicios para encontrar la ayuda para:

Cuidado de niños,
Tenga acceso a la educación,
Necesidades del bienestar de la familia,
Necesidades financieras,
Cuidado medico,
Colocación de la cubierta,
Trabajos,
Clases de la lengua,
o Necesidades legales?

Si usted tiene o no ha utilizado cualesquiera de estos tipos de servicios, a le invitan que participe en un examen confidencial sobre sus experiencias mientras que vive en Oklahoma. Si usted está interesado, éntreme en contacto con por favor en el número de teléfono o la dirección del E-mail abajo.



Este examen es parte de un estudio conducido cerca:
Gina Gordon, Candidato de PhD
Departmento de Antropologia
Dale Hall Tower, Rm 521
University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK