

**RACIALIZING THE MIGRATION PROCESS: AN
ETHNOGRAPIC ANALYSIS OF UNDOCUMENTED
IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

A Dissertation

by

HILARIO MOLINA II

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2011

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Rogelio Saenz
Committee Members,	Joe Feagin
	Nadia Flores
	Marco Portales
Head of Department,	Mark Fossett

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ABSTRACT

Racializing the Migration Process: An Ethnographic Analysis of Undocumented
Immigrants in the United States.

(August 2011)

Hilario Molina II, B.S., The University of Texas at Pan-American;

M.S., The University of Texas at Pan-American

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Rogelio Saenz

From the exterior, the United States has extracted natural resources and transformed the social dynamics of those living on the periphery, contributing to the emigration from Mexico and immigration to the United States. This, in turn, creates the racialization of the Mexican immigrant, specifically the undocumented immigrant—the “illegal alien.” I argue that this unilateral interaction operates with a racial formation of the Mexican immigrant created by elite white (non-Hispanic) males. The anti-Mexican immigrant subframe and “prowhite” subframe derive from the white racial frame, which racializes the undocumented immigrant in the United States. In addition, the subframes are evident in the three stages of migration. The three stages consist of threefold factors: First, the exploitation of Mexican resources (natural and human) and racialized immigration policies; second, the social networks and smugglers, called coyotes, who assist the undocumented immigrant to bypass barriers; and third, the discrimination undocumented immigrants encounter in the United States by other people of color. This

dissertation relied on the migration experience of thirty Mexican male day-laborers, living in Texas, to examine the white racial framing of undocumented immigrants. The findings demonstrate how the U.S. immigration policies and members of the host society persistently exhibit the white racial frame and its subframes. This study is essential, because, aside from noting the issues of unauthorized migration, it demonstrates how elite white males shape the dialogue on the discourse and all that surrounds the migration process.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this accomplishment, first and foremost, to my best friend and wife Mirella Roman-Molina. Your encouragements, sacrifices, support, and most importantly, endurance of hardships through the graduate program, has made this ride worthwhile. Secondly, I dedicate this dissertation to the past and future generations of Molinas. If it were not for the stubborn gene that flows in my blood, I do not know where I would be right now. So, with this said, my nieces and nephews the door is ajar, so I challenge you to take our people, our culture, and our family name to the next level.

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Thanks also go to my friends and colleagues and the department faculty and staff (Christi, Mary, and Brenda) for making my time at Texas A&M University a great experience. I also want to extend my gratitude to two of my closest friends, my officemate and friend Rob, whom I have known since the start of the program, and Carlos, who is a good friend and a bright social statistician. With all sincerity, I want to thank the undocumented immigrant, men who risk their lives in crossing the untamed waters of the Rio Grande or the deadly heat of the desert, to provide for loved ones in their country of origin. Without the willingness of these men to share their migration experience with me, this study would not have happened. I would also like to thank my in-laws for their prayers and emotional support. Finally, thanks to my mother for her unconditional love and my father who is now in the presence of the Great Architect. I love you, old man.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

For decades, relationships between core and peripheral countries¹ have contributed substantially to the push-pull dynamic of labor migration. Economic factors of production in core countries' economies have been a major contributing factor in the escalation of migration from peripheral countries (Massey 2008). The movements of skilled and unskilled labor are contained within and flow between national economic formations (Form and Putnam 1985) as core and peripheral countries develop amity through exchange. From the transnational transaction of material-goods and labor power,² a higher probability of migration is inevitable when core and peripheral countries join with one another (through economic-based policies), as in the case of the United States and Mexico.

As a core country, the United States dominates the socio-economic system of its southern neighbor (Mexico) by controlling the movement of resources and implementing immigration policies designed primarily to serve its needs rather than those of developing countries, e.g. Mexico. Through immigration policies reflective of the social hegemony of the U.S. and since the early stages of nation-state development between the United States and Mexico, the United States a greater advantage—than Mexico—over the migration of skilled and unskilled labor. In turn, immigration laws become the end

This dissertation follows the style of *American Sociological Review*.

¹ The classification of a country according to their development and control over their natural resource (Mooney and Evans 2007)

² The define commodity value instilled on a person based on his/her human capital.

product of the white racial frame that dominates American society. More importantly, the committed actors³ within this frame have been white elite males at the top of all major institutions, especially political and economic institutions. Through an affinity with and indirect (and, at times direct) control of media outlets that oversee the operation of Fortune 500 companies and that support political policies in the interest of these companies, this exclusive group has imposed their ideology and ethnocentrism on a global scale.

According to Joe Feagin (2009), the white racial frame is the means by which the perspective of racial superiority dominates social, economic, and political discourse, and is embedded in the social structure. Although ideology is one part of the frame, the frame includes the racialization of emotions, images, and stories of non-Hispanic whites describing, to themselves, why they are superior. As Gómez (2007) notes in a *New York Times* article published in 1879:

...the men lag along lazily behind, with about much care for their appearance as the average tramp. Indeed, the Mexicans, on the average, are the very personification of tramphood, seldom or never turning his hand to the extent of sweating his brow if his daily bread can be secured by any other means (P. 63).

The passage above shows how this racial perception about Mexicans is not only ideological, they are tied to it, but it consists of the actual act of expressing these emotions and ideas. The white racial frame is broader than racial ideas, because it helps to create new structures, such as the anti-Mexican *immigrant* subframe, and to rationalize the ones that already exist, such as the anti-Mexican subframe. Therefore, the

³Individuals who have a stake in a specific outcome.

frame is a conceptualization of the means through which “white people” create and rationalize oppression.

In addition, framing represents the process through which the white racial ideology of the elite white (non-Hispanic white) male is reflected in all agents of the socialization process. It is a frame where the white elite males place themselves at the top of the racial hierarchy while placing all other groups of color and gender below them. Hence, looking closely at the migration process and the white racial framing of Mexican Americans, African Americans, and day-laborers, the latter represent the undocumented immigrant in this study, are all components of the structures that are exhibited through this racial ideology, which contains the following elements: emotion, language, and fear. According to Portales (2000), the racial framing of Latinos comes from a history of prejudice, even as it pertains to higher education; he adds that:

Negative response to Latinos and Hispanic cultures in the United States can be traced as least as far back as Francis Parkman’s 1847 text, *The Oregon Trail*...Parkman is singled out here because this Harvard professor seldom mentions Hispanics in his book, but when he does, he immediately depicts Spanish-speaking people as “swarthy ignoble Mexicans” with “brutish faces”...(P. 49).

Therefore, the racial frame is something that predates the Mexican and American War, and the manifest destiny of the white race. As a result, two important subframes emerge from within the white racial frame, a subframe that sees Mexican and their descendants, Mexican Americans, from an old racial perspective of inferiority and, at the same time, a newer subframe that centers on anti-Mexican immigrant sentiment. At the center of these frames is an emotional desire to protect the white frame of the dominant group’s

prowhite subframe—to think like “whites,” to speak like “whites,” to act like “whites”, and finally, to discriminate like “white” elite men.

In this dissertation, I argue that the immigration policies established in the United States are reflective of the white racial frame, and from within it, two subframes emerge that work to enforce the elite white male’s racial reality as dominant within the social structure. In conjunction with an anti-Mexican immigrant frame, many people of color, specifically Mexican Americans and African Americans, adopt a “prowhite subframe” where they “act white” by discriminating against with the goal of marginalizing the undocumented immigrant. Therefore, from the perspective of this prowhite subframe, I show how Mexican Americans and African Americans, function as agents of the white racial frame to push themselves toward “whiteness.”

Because of structural obstacles, both physical (the wall along the Mexican and United States border) and ideological (recent migrants are bearers of an inferior culture) recreates a scenario where undocumented immigrants rely on social networks, and agents within these networks, such as smugglers, to overcome barriers that have increased in severity over time. The study then turns its attention to alternative means, aside from visas, of entry and the dialogue and discourse associated with their master status of an “illegal alien.” Again, I argue that the situation that plagues undocumented immigrants originates from a history of racialization⁴ which is attributed to Mexicans, and their descents, and so, immigration laws are reflective of the U.S.’s unilateral and

⁴ It is the use of the white racial frame to structure this society including the lives of individuals through images, language, and explanation of interaction processes in daily life.

dominant association with Mexico, exemplified in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1996.

Considering this, these immigration laws originate from an aspect of superior thinking whereby Mexican's symbolically represent a conquered group, which complements the perspective of inferiority: an inferior group with an inferior culture (Ngai 2004). Within this sphere of whiteness and/or in the pursuit to gain access to the material and symbolic "wealth" associated with "whiteness," Mexican Americans and African Americans advocate the white racial frame as a means through which to separate and distance themselves from the immigrant. Most subordinate groups adopt the white racial frame as each member, within these groups, are subjected to the socialization process; as they learn the language, history, norms, and values of the dominant culture. Within the cultural transmission of these factors, the anti-Mexican and the anti-Mexican immigrant sentiments are passed on from one generation to the next. The racialization of the undocumented immigrant originates from the elite white man's racial definition and classification of the Mexican, in conjunction with the structure. As shown in the diagram below, that systemizes the white racial frame in the context of my analysis, the migration process from Mexico to United States and vice-versa persistently exhibits a dynamic of racial superiority as demonstrated in Figure 1:

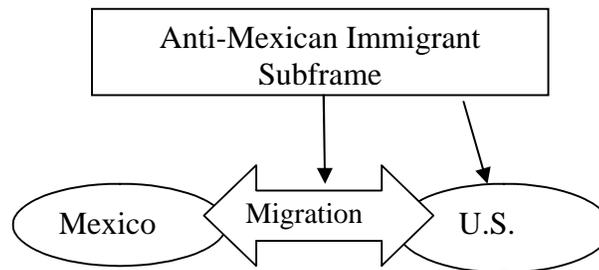


Figure 1. The White Racial Frame on the Migration Process

Due to the conceptual labeling of undocumented immigrants as “others” (see, e.g. Santa-Ana 2002), to create separation from the immigrant, social networks have become very effective in keeping undocumented immigrants informed on social issues (in the U.S. and abroad). Restricting access to non-members (Americans) ensures that the information in the pipeline is only accessible to undocumented immigrants (Massey 2005). Information and assistance gathered from family/group members and/or professional smugglers⁵ flows through the pipelines of these networks, bypassing strict immigration policies and border enforcement. The operation of this system consists of social networks that rely on agents composed of family, friends, community members, and smugglers to help with the migration process. Mexicans and Mexican Americans have a specific name for these smugglers—*polleros/coyotes*.⁶ As Christina Gathmann (2003) pointed out, “Border smugglers [coyotes] have better information about where and when to cross the border” (2), so they are an essential part of the migration pipeline.

⁵ A man or woman, usually a man, who smuggles people, guns, and/or drugs illegally between borders of two sovereign countries for material profit.

⁶ They are called coyotes because like the actual coyote that when it steps on man-made traps it will bite of its own leg to free itself; these individuals will rather have the undocumented immigrant fend for themselves than to risk bodily harm. (Myths found in South Texas).

A coyote's extensive knowledge of the terrain of crossing points makes them an important instrument in aiding with the migration process.

Historically, early forms of trade between the United States and Mexico gave rise to the smugglers to transport goods and services on the black-market (Andreas 2000). For generations, the social structure of the United States has relied on clandestine networks created by the immigrant population as a means for cheap labor. The coyote services keeps labor flowing into the country. In *Coyotes*, Conover (1987) discusses the interlocking dependence between farmers and smugglers through the exchange of undocumented immigrants. Coyotes are salient agents in the pipeline because of their knowledge of and information about border crossings; it is knowledge that has been gained as a result of exporting and importing goods and services between the U.S. and Mexico.

Social scientists who study immigration, such as Griffith and Kissam (1995), emphasize the importance of social networks in the immigrant community in both societies with regard to sending and receiving goods, information, and services. Earlier, I claimed that the heightened enforcement of the border-by-border patrol agents cannot stop the flow of undocumented immigrants into the United States. This is due to the strength of social networks, which operate through spider web-like channels and which provide methods intended to deter capture and deportation. To further add to this point Douglas Massey (2005) notes, "Despite increased security at the U.S.-Mexican border beginning in the 1980's, the number of foreign-born workers entering the United States illegally each year has not diminished" (p. 1). The enforcement of the border reaffirms

that the importance of social networks which work to overwhelm the ineffective and pointless attempts at preventing the free movement of people (Andreas 2000).

False Perceptions: The Enforcement of the Border Land

Some believe, with the emergence of the “nativistic” Minutemen and the greater allocation of federal agents focused on immigration, the number of undocumented immigrants entering the United States would decline in the years to come. Although certain parts of the United States have experienced a decline, especially in the agriculture sector, other areas referred as *new destinations* are experiencing an increase of undocumented immigrants (Saenz and Cready 2004). In agreement with Andreas (2000), the shortage of unskilled labor in certain agricultural sectors has more to do with state and federal immigration policies rather than with border enforcement. Requiring a low-skill labor sector, the inflow of undocumented immigrants will continue, regardless of the level of enforcement placed at the points of crossing.⁷

A false sense of security emerges, in the collective psyche of Americans, from news stories and media images of the border patrol agent at work. This creates a fallacy and a problematic situation contributing to a palpable fabrication of how enforcing the border stops illegal migration (Andreas 2000). These false accounts feed the growth of the network, to the extent that the network provides better information as well as other avenues of entry into the United States.

⁷ Areas that are used by undocumented immigrants to gain entry into the U.S.: check-points, deserts, or rivers.

Significance of Study: Understanding the White Racial Frame on Immigration

Networks

This study is important because it examines the migration process from a racial conflict perspective. As a result, it does two things. First, it incorporates the elite white males' framing and their concept of "social reality" that simultaneously impacts the social and economic structure in the country of origin for the immigrant. Second, at the same time, it shapes the image of the undocumented immigrant in the United States. In turn, this study is additionally significant because I examine the migration process from a slightly different viewpoint than that taken by migration theorists. Most migration theorists explain immigrants and/or emigrant from a *structural and economic* standpoint. Most migration theories analyze the migration process as being motivated by economic endeavors and, in these perspectives; the rationalizations for immigration is based on the pursuit of economic stability, such as, Historical-Structural, World Systems, and Rational Choice Theory. It is important to note that some immigration theorists do address the issue of inequality but the gist of this perspective continues to center upon the issue of economic forces or economic decision-making. For example, Massey et al. (2008), notes the following with regard to Historical-Structural Theory and World System Theory, "...power is unequally distributed across nations, the expansion of global capitalism acted to perpetuate inequalities and reinforce a stratified economic order" (p. 34). However, Massey and others are gradually implementing other factors, specifically social factors, into their theories of migration (see, e.g. Massey 2007; see, e.g. Chavez 2008).

As a result of the racial theory nexus to migration and by incorporating Massey's and other studies of immigration to unauthorized migration, my dissertation shows the importance of social networks in sidestepping a variety of structurally based discriminatory practices against immigrants. Specifically, my findings reveal (as Douglas Massey's and others) the manner in which social networks and coyotes aid immigrants in avoiding areas with high capture and deportation rates. Within this structure, consisting of information and carriers, undocumented immigrants rely on information from reliable sources to overcome border obstacles. My dissertation adds to racial and ethnic issues and immigration in the United States in two important ways: First, aside from pointing out the role of social networks in organizing and informing migrants, the research differs in its theoretical perspective from other work. It explores the interaction between Mexican immigrants and other subordinate groups residing in the United States through a subframe of the white racial frame. My conversations with Mexican day-laborers show how subordinate groups reinforce and become advocates for the prowhite subframe—discriminating and committing crimes against other immigrants (see e.g., NPR's report by Brian Reed 2010). At the structural level, due to marginalization, a significant portion of immigrants are forced to work and live in areas already occupied by other people of color (Menjívar 2002); thus, they find themselves in conflict with residents in areas where other subordinate groups compete for resources (see Claire Kim, 2000, on conflict between Koreans Americans and African Americans). My research focuses on how the subframe pushes immigrants into specific jobs in the United States (Choy 1979) and/or into communities known as "enclaves" (Portes &

Rumbaut 1996) where the immigrant encounters other subordinate groups who represent key actors within the prowhite frame.

A conflict arises as groups absorb the values and norms of the dominant culture (Gómez 2007) and, in an effort to achieve higher status in the racial hierarchy, subordinate groups fight and compete among themselves for both class and group status (see Kim 2000). It is through this subframe, that I focus on how the majority of Americans, including other racial and ethnic groups, enforce this dominant group ideology to differentiate themselves among each other and more specifically away from Mexican immigrants. According to Santa-Anna (2002), this becomes an “us” versus “them” mentality of social interaction toward immigrants by Americans; a situation that takes place in what Erving Goffman (1959) refers to as the public performance of social roles.

Theoretical Orientation: The Undocumented Immigrant and the Anti-Mexican Immigrant Subframe

In the social structure, elite non-Hispanic white Americans have perpetuated the use of terms/metaphors, such as “aliens,” to dehumanize undocumented immigrants. From this perspective, we can trace the origin of American ideology, specifically systemic racism, to the roots of a system that believes in a superior race and perpetuates that ideology through all individuals and institutions which promote its ideology (Feagin 2006). Considering this, once they become advocates of the racial ideology, Mexican Americans, and other people of color, are also hostile toward undocumented immigrants; as noted before, they do this to create a separation between themselves and immigrants,

thus advocating the prowhite subframe. Therefore, the white racial frame engulfs the creation of the *self*—a self which Mead ([1932]/1962) refers to as:

...the organization of the attitudes which are common to the group. A person is a personality because he belongs to a community, because he takes over the institutions of the community into his own conduct. He takes its language as a medium by which he gets his personality, and then through a process of taking the different roles that all the others furnish he comes to get the attitude of structure... (P. 162).

Hence, all cultural agents in the United States have been caught within the predominant ideological dynamic explained by the white racial frame and its subframes: e.g. international immigration policy, the public discourse on the social issues of immigration, the marginalization⁸ and exploitation of day-laborers, and the interaction between the public and the immigrant. Within political and social arenas, undocumented immigrants are pushed to low-skilled occupations where they occupy an *underclass* social status within the dominant society, a status with no political representation. In addition, a correlation exists between occupations deemed as “immigrant jobs” (which citizens attach negative stigma to those jobs) and the racial hierarchy because of the low level of skill associated with the majority of immigrant jobs. Excluding prior relations, and reaffirming a negative perception of undocumented immigrants, the movement of undocumented immigrants has been a focal point of social issues in the current U.S. discussion of an “illegal alien problem.” Within this discourse, terms such as “illegal alien” (which is the commonly used term) become instruments to openly discriminate against and marginalize undocumented immigrants in public forums.

⁸ According to Mooney and Evans (2007), it is a process whereby an actor, in this case an undocumented immigrant, is pushed by a dominant force (or group) into a lesser position of influence and/or power.

For this reason, understanding the use and meaning of the term “illegal alien” helps demonstrate the perceptions deployed by elite white males to keep undocumented immigrant as an underclass and the “other.” From a structural perspective, this study argues that restrictions on undocumented immigrants ascend from within the American institutional practices exhibited through interactions with racial and/or ethnic groups⁹, a process known as institutional discrimination. Given the solidity of the white racial frame and its subframes, this study examines the strength of networks and the different forms of relationships that are associated with a successful entry into the United States. One example is the type of smuggler created by these networks. The micro theoretical term—symbolic interaction¹⁰—shows how undocumented immigrants use, gain, and transmit information at different levels of the social structure to sidestep social obstacles.

Undocumented immigrants depend on social networks for information on “hot areas.”¹¹ Better networks permit international immigrants viable access to a web of information and to a professional coyote, which Burt (1995) refers to as “effective networks.” To bypass structural obstacles and comply with the demand for labor in the core country, undocumented immigrants’ use of coyotes can provide a better understanding of the reliability/strength of an effective network. The strength of a network, and the risk factor of deportation and/physical harm can be reflected through

⁹ It is a group that based on either national-origin qualities and/or cultural characteristics, such as language, religion, customs etc.

¹⁰ Symbolic interaction explains how, at the micro-level, individuals use symbols to interact with each other and society in general.

¹¹ Areas with a high level of anti-immigrant population

three different types of coyotes: border bandit¹², semi-professional¹³, and professional coyote.¹⁴ For example, Dolfin and Genicot (2006) observe that, “An individual’s choice about whether or not to immigrate may depend on the availability of a reliable and affordable coyote” (p.6). Thus, a coyote must instill some form of confidence, to others, in his/her abilities and, as the level of trust (*confianza*)¹⁵ and successful crossing positively increase, so does his/her ability to achieve the top position of professional coyote.

Since access to the type of coyote comes from networks, a successful migration process depends on the reliability and validity of available information. Dolfin and Genicot (2006), for example, have written that, “Migrant networks can facilitate migration in different ways...information on the migration process itself...information on destination and jobs...helping financing the cost of migration...” (p. 5). Channels of information created by undocumented immigrants provide alternatives concerning the type of coyote used. The illegal immigration process has created new business sectors where coyotes assist undocumented immigrants. Thus, reliability and validity of the gathered information facilitates undocumented immigrants with the means to have some chance of success in the host society.

¹² Individual who waits near crossing points to transport the immigrant. He/she requires a network with the least amount of *confianza*.

¹³ The middle type of coyote who requires a better established network.

¹⁴ He/she requires the most advanced form of network. Access to this individual is limited, expensive, and has the highest rate of safe and successful crossings.

¹⁵ *Confianza* reaffirms the strength of the network between the person giving the information and the person receiving it.

Theoretical Orientation: The Function of Social Networks and Coyotes

All in all, in confronting cultural and physical barriers, undocumented immigrants risk deportation and death if exposed to situations based on fraudulent information (see, e.g., Cornelius 2001) when maneuvering within territory of the United States. The social and physical barriers imposed on the Mexican undocumented immigrant makes them an ideal group to examine the harsh obstacles created by the United States to deter in-migration. Undocumented immigrant survival, in the host society, depends on viable and accurate information. Due to structural and cultural obstacles (border enforcement, stereotyping and/or prejudice), an undocumented immigrant's situation demonstrates the strength associate with reliable information. In addition, within this social setting of risk, blocking access to resources can have negative and at times dangerous consequences for these individuals. This vulnerable group occupies substantial attention throughout my dissertation because of the negative impact that false information can have on them.

By examining the type of coyote used in the migration process, I attempt to categorize networks more through viable characteristics than weak or strong ties¹⁶ (Granovetter 1985; Portes 1995), because of the danger and consequences that false information can have undocumented immigrants. Thus, I approach the issue of migration differently from social scientists who have examined the relationship between the type of residence (rural and urban) and characteristics of the social networks (Flores 2005); furthermore, I posit that using the category of “weak” and “strong” ties does not

¹⁶ According to Alejandro Portes, a weak tie is information used between individuals not directly related to each other, while a strong tie is information used between kin.

sufficiently provide an accurate measurement of a network's reliability. For example, the traditional focus on strong and weak ties does not account for the reliability of the information flowing within the network. Indeed, Portes and Rumbaut's (1996) interest in kinship is for the purposes of making an assessment about information. This provides the basis for the range of measurement regarding who is a reliable source of information and who might exclude other important factors. From this perspective, I argue that their claim becomes questionable when other factors seem to have a more direct influence on information reliability (as I show in the section titled *Stage Two of the Migration Process: Social Networks and Coyotes* in Chapter IV).

To have a comprehensive understanding of how undocumented immigrants access information, the primary concern and focus needs to be on the reliability of the information conveyed through the network pipeline. For example, two undocumented immigrants (A and B) could be relying on kinship ties for emigration, but the success of the journey depends on which of the two has a strong network. If immigrant B has access to a coyote with a well-developed network created by a better coyotes, routes, or methods, and immigrant A is relying solely on kinship networks, then immigrant B has a stronger network than immigrant A. Strong social capital in the context of network relations determines within the migration process (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002) the ability to evade capture (see Massey 2005). Kinship, in and of itself, has little to do with the successes of migration when the emphasis is on the information source's reliability and trustworthiness—*confianza*.

Having trust in the flow of information relates to the legitimacy of information and not to weak ties or strong kinship ties, as Portes and Landolt (1996) suggest. For them, the strength of the network is based on availability to social resources, in conjunction with the relationships between the persons giving and receiving information. As a result, the concept of weak and strong ties only provides information on the relationship; it does not, however, provide an explanation of the actual strength of a network.

In relation to the issue of information legitimacy, my dissertation research focuses on a vulnerable group that lacks the migratory structure of Cubans, the focus group of Portes and Rumbaut (1996), where the value of the informant outweighs the value of the information. Unlike Cubans who, upon touching American soil, are known as “dry feet,” (a reference which must be placed in context with “wetbacks” and which refers to the way that Cubans enter the country) and are granted refugee status, Mexican undocumented immigrants must rely on viable information because of the risk of deportation. Consequently, Mexican migrant’s unauthorized status requires them to weigh an informant’s successful track record, when taking advice about crossing. As a result and with regard to the social networks¹⁷ that Portes and others seemed to be interested in, migration, in these cases, tends to center on kinship especially on issues of either strong or weak ties. Again, I posit that migration process is broader and more complex than that consist facets of racial formations in the three stages of the migration process.

¹⁷ Social networks where people gain access through interpersonal network and/or social institution and afterward convert into other forms of capital (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002).

Theoretical Orientation: Three Stages of Immigration

This dissertation incorporates racial conflict theory to explain the exploitation and racialization in the migration process; therefore, from this theoretical approach, I use racial conflict theory in partnership with that of migration theory to examine the issue of migration and discrimination from multiple perspectives. As noted before, this works to provide an insight into social issues which each theoretical approach might overlook. For example, immigration theory might explain the migration process as an economic factor while not fully exploring the racial component in the discussion immigration/emigration. In comparison, race theory might explain social issues in relation to conflict and issue of power, while it might not adequately explain the contribution of networks in the migration process.

To this end, the theoretical and structural composition of this study relies on *three stages of migration* to explain the racialization of undocumented immigrants in the long migration process. The reason for this approach is because it provides a step-by-step explanation of how the anti-Mexican immigrant subframe affects each stage of the migration process.

- Stage One: issues at the point of origin (including push-pull factors & core-periphery discussion)
- Stage Two: cross-border migration (including networks issues & coyotes)
- Stage Three: societal settings at points of destination (including relations with white, Chicano, and black employers and workers)

Stage one addresses the external factors that push and pull undocumented immigrants. Push factors explain why people leave their homes; pull factors describe the external factors of globalization and economic structure where the movement of immigrants—“legally” or “illegally”—is caused by the value of commodities and labor power in the globalization process (Wallerstein 2007; Harvey 2010). Due to the disruption of their way of life, stage two examines the movement patterns from the peripheral to core country. Stage two is essential because it shows how undocumented immigrants rely on information and other social agents, such as the coyote, to bypass the social and physical barriers imposed on them by U.S. policing and policies. And finally, stage three addresses the interaction between members of the host country and the undocumented immigrant. Stage three brings to the forefront the anti-Mexican immigrant sentiment as Americans and undocumented immigrants make contact with each other. In these public encounters, most Americans have used terms/metaphors, such as “aliens,” and “*mojados*” (wetback) to dehumanize undocumented immigrants, placing immigrants at the bottom of the racial frame.

In the study, I incorporate the elite white male racial ideology into the three stages of migration, and I rely on the literature review to be able to: 1) provide an insight of the external factors that have forced Mexicans to leave their country and come to the United States, 2) explain the function of social networks and coyotes in the migration process, and 3) gain insight into how and why Mexican Americans and African Americans promote the prowhite subframe. Because I am examining the migration process from two theoretical perspectives, the literature review chapter includes both

critical race theory and immigration theory to explain events, interaction, and barriers in the migration process. Therefore, the anti-Mexican immigrant subframe, is one of the main premises within the theoretical approach, because through the theories and interviews the three stages of migration become transparent. But understanding the anti-Mexican subframe, which is the historical racial formation of Mexicans by elite white (non-Hispanic) males, both contextualizes and transcends the anti-Mexican immigrant subframe. As a result, the chapter begins with Pancho Villas' relationship, and later became a conflict, with the United States.

When considering the whole discussion and debate on unauthorized immigration, all the racial subframes must be taken into account. Policies to erect a wall along the border and that push undocumented immigrants into dangerous areas are not achieving their intended goals. More humane and effective measures may emerge from understanding the dynamics operating within the world of undocumented immigrants. Also, this project is significant to other social scientists that are seeking a comprehensive explanation of racial and ethnic inequality, as perpetuated by a dominant group, through my analysis of the migration process.

The Empirical Analysis: An Ethnographic Approach

My methodological approach to the social inequality of subordinate groups is conducted through an ethnographic analysis of the racialization of undocumented immigrants at various stages in their migration process. An ethnographic approach permits an analysis of aspects of the white framing of the migration process and the undocumented immigrant's reliability on coyotes to bypass social and physical

obstacles. In addition, the findings provide a robust sociological assessment about the interactions of Latinos and of other subordinate groups. These encounters are a nexus that contributes to a collective understanding of specific social roles; therefore, the utilization of multiple theoretical approaches and in-depth interviews provide a sustainable picture of the migration process.

Instead of purely relying on one component of the migration process, i.e. centering the dissertation on a specific level of analysis, I use field interviews to examine the relationship between the non-Hispanic white racial ideology and its influence on the migration process. I rely on interviews with day-laborers because they represent a small segment of the undocumented immigrants in the United States. Their contribution to the study, as members of the underclass with limited/no formal political representation, is a major focal point. From a qualitative approach, the study consists of 30 face-to-face interviews I conducted with Mexican day-laborers currently living in Texas. Through this approach, I can examine and compare how anti-Mexican immigrant and anti-Mexican subframes comprise an important segment of the nexus within the migration process. This method fills gaps at different levels of analysis specifically, between the undocumented immigrant, the social network, and the white racial frame. I feel that the best examples and explanations of social networks are located within an approach which seeks to integrate both structural and personal accounts to capture the complexities of migration at the theoretical level, which is abstract, and at the micro interaction level, which is concrete.

Chapter Organization of the Dissertation

This first chapter has provided an overview of the research at hand. The remaining chapters are devoted to a discussion of the three stages of the migration process. Chapter II reviews the literature and theories related to the following: the white racial frame and its correlation to core-periphery interaction, the function of social networks in the migration process, and other subordinates groups prowhite subframe encounters with undocumented immigrants. Chapter III, the methodology chapter, offers a discussion of the in-depth interviews. In addition, it describes in greater detail the data used in the study, specifically descriptive characteristics of the participants, along with a description of the first field visits. Chapter IV, the analysis and interpretation chapter, uses the ethnographic data to explain events that are unfolding with undocumented immigrants in the host society. Aside from examining the general public and immigrant interactions, this chapter explores how day-laborers use coyotes within the pipeline of international migration. Finally, Chapter V presents an overview of the relationship between American racial ideology and its overt and covert implications for the migration process for undocumented immigrants, while exploring other issues of racial and undocumented immigrant labeling.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: Some Early History of Marginalization

In 1914, Pancho Villa, a revolutionary general, and Venustiano Carranza de la Garza, the commander of the revolutionary army against Huerta (the self-appointed President of Mexico), broke alliances. Prior to this, Villa had benefited from U.S. military equipment support as well as general approval by Americans. However, as the revolutionary forces were gaining momentum and seemed likely to govern Mexico, the United States sided and accepted Carranza as the interim-president of Mexico because of continued pressure by American oil and railroads companies operating in Mexico which demanded President Wilson to commit to the Mexican Revolution (Britton 1995). These companies were fearful Mexico would turn to Europe for its infrastructure (Britton 1995).

Prior to his attack on Columbus, New Mexico, Pancho Villa was portrayed, to some extent, positively in the media; however, after the attack, he quickly became the embodiment of the Mexican, especially the mestizo. For example, Britton (1995) quotes novelist Jack London, on his view and portrayal of the mestizos, “They are what a mixed breed always is—neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. They are neither white men nor Indians...they possess all of the vices of their various comingled bloods and none of their virtues” (p. 28). In addition, the consensus about the Mexican revolution was that the United States at some point would have to intervene because Mexicans “lacked the capacity for self-government because its population was predominantly Indian or

mixture of Indian and European” (Britton 1995: 27). Just like its predecessor, Porfirio Díaz, which journalists such as James Creelman praised, “his remarkable achievement of governing a nearly ungovernable people” (Britton 1995: 29), the United States would have to serve as an arbiter intervene in the internal conflict of Mexico, because “the common people of Mexico could not form the basis for any responsible government” (Britton 1995: 30).

Analyzing the social and physical characteristics, Villa represented the stereotypical prejudice about Mexicans. For example, Francis Parkman, in ([1847] 1978), published *The Oregon Trail* and in it he describes the characteristics of Spanish speakers as “...gazing stupidly out from beneath their broad hats” (p. 14), where such description of Mexicans resurfaced in the Mexican Revolution. Thus, from a racial formation perspective, Mexicans might pose the ability to wage war but lacked the cognitive ability and indifference to govern a state, because of their savage blood (Indian blood) and character flaws. This perception of inferiority transcended into other events during Mexico’s internal conflict.

The enforcement of the U.S.-Mexican border is a prime example of the racial definition of the Mexican. For example, Marco Portales (2010), in his book *Why Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata Wore Cananas*, provides an image of a U.S. cavalryman body-searching a Mexican (one of many forefathers of chain migration¹⁸) entering the United States in what seems to be the “informal checkpoint/border.” This image

¹⁸ It is the usage of migrating routes, information, and destinations by immigrants from a specific geographical location which have been created by others who emigrated from the same geographical location.

demonstrates, even prior to the official border patrol, there has been a fear of the Mexican in the United States. To this date, the Mexican and the United States border continues to be an area where “they must be checked,” because the border, “...is where the ‘battle’ takes place in a ‘war on illegal immigration’” (Chavez 2008: 132). In comparison, the United States and Canadian border, of greater border landmass than Mexico, continues to be the least enforced of the two border fronts, even after September 11, 2001, when the general public learned that the terrorists had enter the United States from Canada, and not Mexico.

When examining this historical event, the stages of migration resurface. First, it is the involvement of the United States in what was clearly an internal conflict, in Mexico. Second, there is racial prejudice toward the Mexican, more especially the mestizo; therefore, the racial framing of Mexicans became apparent in the already established white racial frame, quite clearly that Mexicans are not “white” in everyday practice. From this standpoint, the introductory section nexus the white racial frame and racial framing of the undocumented Mexican immigrant within the migration process.

From this historical perspective, the capital rich United States has relied on cheap labor from its peripheral underdeveloped neighbor, Mexico. For example, when President Wilson committed the military to the Mexican Revolution, it was because of the continuous pressure by the oil and railroad companies operating in the region. In contemporary trans-globalization, this unilateral relationship continues to function in how it conducts business with Mexico. The United States has disrupted the social and economic structure of Mexico, thus international policies and immigration laws has

forced Mexicans to: 1) leave their communities because of the disruption of their way of life, and 2) rely on social networks and smugglers to by-pass the anti-immigrant laws. These laws have been, and continue to be, instruments of the anti-Mexican immigrant sentiment. Once the immigrant arrives at the host society, this sentiment becomes evident in the public where some Americans convey their fears, concerns, emotions, and racial language against the undocumented immigrant. Therefore, the literature chapter is structured to coincide with the three stages of migration as pointed out in the introductory chapter.

This chapter follows a similar pattern of explaining the migration process. This in turn is important because it examines the historical and current literature on racial theory, immigration theory, and the creation of a self-identity that plays into the prowhite subframe. As a result, through the review of the literature, it functions as the foundation for analyzing and interpreting the findings in Chapter IV. Therefore, I have constructed this chapter as follows: ii) the historical relationship between the United States and Mexico, iii) the contribution social networks make in combating the white racial frame in the migration process, and iv) the manner in which immigrants and other subordinate groups create a self-identity from being the nexus of the racial frame. Finally, I point out the shortcomings of the current literature, to introduce the thesis for this dissertation, where I claim that the white racial frame shapes the manner in which the anti-Mexican immigrant subframe takes form in the three stages of the migration process.

Stage One in the Migration Process: Core-periphery Relations and a Brief History of the U.S. and Mexico

United States: Changing the Economic and Social Culture in Mexico

The settlement of Mexicans in the United States, past and present, is linked to either political or economic events occurring within the in-demand country for raw resources (Robinson 2004; Shultz 2008). In seeking cheap labor, companies in the United States have turned to recruitment efforts in underdeveloped countries, including Mexico, for its reserve pool and labor power (Kandel and Parrado 2005). According to Mae Ngai (2004), this has perpetuated a cycle of exploitation and marginalization, where, she adds, "...migratory farm workers had virtually no political standing in the face of powerful agriculture interests" (p. 158). But at the same time, since the economic structure of the United States needs cheap labor (Salazar-Parreñas 2001; Kandel and Parrado 2005), U.S. policies have always allowed gaps in the laws and enforcement of the border to ensure the inflow of cheap labor into its agriculture, construction, and service sectors (Gonzalez 2000; Suárez-Orozco and Pérez 2002; Martin 2002).

Turning to Mexico for labor is not a recent phenomenon, but a practice that predates the United States' Civil War (Andreas 2000). During the preindustrial trade era, the most commonly known trade and recruitment effort of Mexican labor in the United States was the *Bracero* Program in 1942 (Acuña 1988). This program with lax immigration policies (Andreas 2000; Reyes 2004) allowed waves of Mexican immigrants to work in the agriculture and industrialized sectors from 1942 to 1964. In the first week of the policy's implementation, according to Ngai, "...the United States imported some

215,000 Mexican nationals to work as agriculture laborers and 75, 000 to work for the Southern Pacific...” (p. 139). Not specially designated immigration laws allowed immigrants to find employment in the United States. However, immigration laws have also functioned as instruments of discrimination and exploitation by recruiting U.S. companies (Paulsen 1983; Robinson 2004); such exploitation is perceived as conducting “good business” (Putman 2000).

The Racial Frame and Immigration Policy

Examining U.S. immigration law since 1900, there is very little counterargument that the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 discriminated against non-European immigrants, specifically immigrants from China and Japan (Ngai 2004); U.S. immigration policies have operated within a certain ethnocentric and times racist approach. As noted by Ngai, “...the Immigration Act of 1924 constructed a vision of the American nation that embodied certain hierarchies of race and nationality” (p. 23). Historically, subordinate groups have immediately been targeted by immigration enforcement during periods of economic hardship in the United States; for example, in 1954 Operation Wetback, an anti-immigrant policy, sought to deport Mexicans and Mexican Americans to eliminate competition against non-Hispanic white Americans returning from the war (Acuña 1988; Gonzalez 2000). In addition, over time, the *Bracero* Program, which aided in the immigration of Mexicans from 1942 to the 1960’s, became a policy blamed for attracting too “many of them” during job shortages (see Acuña 1988), and the undocumented migration peaked with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 which

hampered the transmigration between the United States and Mexico due to social and economic hardships in the host society (Calavita 2004).

Illegal migration originated from U.S. and Mexican partnerships that historically benefitted the core rather than the periphery—such as the example of the *Maquiladoras*, which began in the 1960's with the Border Industrialization Program and peaked with NAFTA. For example, due to the imbalance of profit, easier migration began to emerge with the transformation of gender roles in Mexican society. Through NAFTA, megafarms and American owned and operated factories known as *maquiladoras*, which exploit Mexico's young female population, have transformed the economic and social setting of Mexico. The transnational and megafarm factories have forced local farms from the rural communities of Mexico out of business and transformed the sex of Mexico's reserve labor pool. The transformation of the gender of the laborer has bestowed more authority on the employer. As noted by Gonzalez (2000), "U.S. managers consider Mexican men more difficult to control and hired as few as possible" (p. 234). The good business model for these employers has consisted of exploiting the population of submissive females (Salazar-Parreñas 2001).

As a consequence of Mexican males' inability to find work and the high unemployment rate in Mexico, they have been forced to immigrate into the United States, as the only viable solution to social and economic hardships (Andreas 2000; Massey 2005). In conjunction, the immigration of these males, through networks, has centered on occupying unskilled/lowskilled jobs unwanted by the general population. Through external exploitation which disrupts the economic and social structure of those

living in the periphery, the men are left with no other alternative but to immigrate to the United States (Pérez 1991). According to Hart (1999), the movement into this country is not permanent but a transnational event of sovereignty crossing where immigrants go back and forth between the United States and Mexico. As a result, low skilled work/jobs in the agricultural sector are perceived by American residents as degrading to their social status of being an American. Therefore, the United States needs unskilled labor to fill positions that have been socially deemed as “immigrant jobs” (Massey 2008 et al.: 48).

For generations, the United States has implemented immigration policies that have seen both the deportation of U.S. born citizens through “Operation Wetback” and the enforcement of the border (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002) to control the brown population and other groups who lack the characteristics of the dominant group social and/or physical characteristics. In the past, as well as in the present, immigration laws were used to discriminate against Mexicans and Mexican Americans in hopes of eliminating the competition for resources and to maintain cultural dominance over people of color (Bowser 2007). According to Gonzalez (2000):

...the federal government unleashed one of the darkest periods in immigration history...migrants were summarily thrown into jails, herded into trucks or trains then shipped back to Mexico. Many of those abducted were American citizens of Mexican descent (P. 203).

U.S. immigration policies are reflective of the dominant group’s ideology to the extent that after WW II, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were “elbowed out of the way” (elegantly stated by Professor Marco Portales) to return non-Hispanic white Americans to their prior occupations.

In this unilateral relationship, the core country directly benefits more from the association than does the periphery country. The United States, for example, has imposed, and will continue to impose, immigration policies that ensure profit gain and to the better interest of the racial and ethnic dominant group. As a result, immigration policies are reflective of a racial ideology of ethnocentricity and racial superiority, revealed in the one-way relationship with Mexico. Within the racial structure of inequality, policies and governing laws became tools to assist individuals who shared the characteristics and ideology of the dominant group, such as the covert motivation behind Operation Wetback (Acuña 1988). Due to this intertwining of policy and racial structure, immersed in the foundation of capitalism, U.S. foreign policies are persistently exhibited with a racial ideology of inequality.

Ironically, after the recession ended, the *Bracero* Program was reinstated (Suarez-Orozco and Paez 2002) and Operation Wetback was viewed as anti-economic policy that was undermining cheap labor demands. Again, in 1996, Americans feared the growing rate of the Mexican population and implemented the 1996 U.S. Immigration Reform for immigrants with a felony record (Suarez-Orozco & Paez 2002). Through this reform, law enforcement in Texas conducted crackdowns on drunk driving, through a process called “Operation Last Call.” Operation Last Call had a huge effect on the Mexican immigrant population (Purcell & Nevins 2005). For example, Suarez-Orozco and Paez (2000) note:

The INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] conducted a Texas crackdown on legal immigrants with three or more convictions for drunk driving, which is considered an aggravated felony...placed 533 with three drunk-driving convictions in deportation proceedings during the first month (P. 194).

The crackdown destroyed families as men were deported back to Mexico, leaving their wives and children in the United States. In contemporary America, Operation Wetback of the 1950s and the 1996 U.S. Immigration Reform serve as a constant reminder of the covert discriminative processes of U.S. immigration policies that operate within the parameters of the white racial frame.

Currently, immigration policies/laws sustain gaps in the migratory system to allow for the dominant group, American employers in this case, to modify its needs (Skirus 2003). For example, little consequence is ever passed to the employer, due to rarely being able to prove a violation of *good faith* by the employer (see Calavita 2004). However, within this frame of never hiring an “illegal alien,” the employer exploits the undocumented immigrant due to the gaps in the immigration law. For example, immigrants have encountered broken contracts and empty promises by employers; as Ngai notes, “...many braceros were assigned to employers who paid them wages and subsistence less than the amount stipulated in the contract” (p. 142). According to Acuña (1988), this exploitation has led to an increase in illegal stays and the alternation of the Latino landscape as white employers break work contracts. In conjunction with this, the United States’ immigration laws covertly impose this racial ideology of superiority as it instills immigration laws that benefit the institutions (corporations) in league with the dominant culture, a racialized system that exploits and marginalizes Mexican immigrants. Broken contracts and discriminative factors have forced most immigrants to prolong their stay in the United States, thus breaking immigration law and becoming

illegal immigrants (Acuña 1988), and have forced them to rely on coyotes and social networks for entry into the United States (Andreas 2000).

Stage Two in the Migration Process: Social Networks and Immigrants Dealing with Barriers

Undocumented Immigrants' Need for Networks

The exploitation and marginalization of people of color, due to racial thinking, has compounded a cycle of poverty and inequality where both immigrants and non-immigrants depend on social networks for upward movement (Shapiro 2004). In the case of Mexicans, social networks allow immigrants to bypass traditional destinations known as “gateway states” such as New Mexico, California, and Texas (Foner 2006; Hempstead 2007; Fairchild and Simpson 2008) to new areas, stretching the elasticity of chain migration. Through networks, immigrants rely on and relay information on job opportunities to family members in the native country (Mutersbaugh 2002). Bypassing gateway states—states with a large Latino populations—for new areas where Americans have had little contact with immigrants (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor 2008), Mexicans encounter marginalization practices by the host society (Massey 2007). Once they reach the new destinations, immigrants move forward into geographical areas inhabited by other immigrants (Massey 2007), and as a consequence of unfamiliarity with the dominant culture, they rely on social networks for protection and access to economic and social resources (Portes and Rumbaut 1991).

In the United States, day-laborers are restricted to geographical areas inhabited by other subordinate groups, thus limiting and confining immigrants within specific

social networks that have little access to general resources (Portes and Rumbaut 1991). Because undocumented immigrants fall within the category of foreigners who have encountered marginalization and discrimination by Americans, the majority of them represent the underclass in this dominant group. Lacking the desire for confrontation (Gonzalez 2000; Massey 2008) with residents, undocumented immigrants isolate themselves from the general community and rely on group information for their survival (Menjívar 2002).

Suggestions have been made that racism may be the main reason undocumented immigrants depend on information from other immigrants prior to emigrating (Trujeque-Diaz 2007). The desire for immigrant labor, *vis-à-vis* the economic demand for immigration by global capitalism, created the black market of moving undocumented immigrants into the United States (Andreas 2000). Inequality practice is evident in the United States, through the mistreatment and abuse of Latinos (Richardson 1999) by either verbal discrimination or by hindering any form of access to social resources that may insure their survival and success in the host society (Marlowe and Atilas 2005).

Perceiving undocumented immigrants as inferior because of their indigenous roots (watch, e.g., American Experience documentary titled *The Hunt for Pancho Villa*) has led to inadequate border control techniques and has fueled the expansion of information within the undocumented immigrant community (Andreas 2000). Negative perceptions toward undocumented immigrants have prompted Congress to enact a “closed front door” legal entry immigration policy. At the same time, since the economy of the United States needs cheap labor (Andreas 2000), the law allows for gaps and

enforcement of the border to ensure the inflow of cheap labor into the agriculture, construction, and service sectors (Suarez-Orozco and Paez 2002). As Massey (2005) notes, "...the number of foreign-born workers entering the United States illegally each year has not diminished" (p. 1). Because of the large unskilled labor population, undocumented immigrants have come to rely on social networks¹⁹ to help them with the migration process and to find areas with a concentrated immigrant population that already exist in the host society (Massey 2007; Portes and Rumbaut 1996). The pipeline used by Mexican immigrants, past and present, can be traced to political and/or to economic events that have influenced or changed social structures within the in-need country (Shultz 2008) in a core and periphery relationship (Massey 2007).

Social networks are instrumental for undocumented immigrants, for they aid in evading law enforcement while simultaneously presenting work opportunities through stable information channels (Borjas 1985). Undocumented immigrants use social networks to expand their chances of finding work (Pajares 2007); in the process, they keep a low profile to avoid authorities (Orrenius 2001) and life threatening situations that might hinder their chances of meeting set family goal(s) (Massey et. al. 2008). According to Roth (2006), immigrants' racial identities and beliefs, along with their skin-color, influence the accessibility of information in the receiving country. Therefore, the marginalization of undocumented immigrants is due to their physical characteristics measured against a racial hierarchy. In the United States, networks are divided within

¹⁹ According to Portes, they are sets of recurrent associations between groups of people linked by occupational, familial, cultural, or affective ties.

ethnic groups, where some are better than others (Portes 1995; Roth 2006); some adapt to the changing environment at a better rate than others.

This inferior ideology creates inadequate techniques to control the flow of illegal migration, a situation that undocumented immigrants use to their advantage. For example, inadequate techniques allow undocumented immigrants to relay and rely on information that points out crossing and non-crossing areas, and importantly, that helps them navigate other essential activities in the migration process. This process of cumulative causation, which immigrants use to expand their social networks (Massey et al. 1998; Fussell and Massey 2004), serves two noticeable advantages for the immigrant: 1) the creation of enclaves that cater to specific ethnic needs, and 2) the usage of information to avoid capture by authorities and life threatening situations, such as death. Due to the organic composition of society, networks evolve in a similar way to meet social needs. Since having a level of trust aids with the migration process, a system of information needs to employ accuracy, consistency, and reliability. These items help in deterring capture and deportation by a xenophobic dominant culture that does not allow access to resources and/or information; although time and money (a lot of money) goes to protecting the border, people and information continue to flow with limited difficulty (Hart 1999), because of the pipeline that has been created by individuals who have made the journey “north.”

Reality of Chain Migration

As a result, restrictions on illegal immigration by the United States has strengthened the social network of the undocumented individual (Reyes 2004; Massey 2005; Doflin and Genicot 2006) where the agents of a network include smugglers²⁰ who, for a fee, help undocumented immigrants with the migration process (Conover 1987). The Latino community has a name for those “smugglers”—coyotes.²¹ Christina Gathmann (2003) points out that, “Border smugglers have better information about where and when to cross the border,” (p. 2). For generations, the social structure of the United States, as a means for cheap labor, has relied on a clandestine network created by the immigrant population in the U.S. and the services of the coyotes to keep the demand of labor flowing into the country (Conover 1987; Andreas 2000; Gathmann 2008).

Stretching the elasticity of chain migration and strengthening the pipeline, immigrants have encountered discrimination and exclusion by members of the host society and other immigrant groups who have been established in the area (Massey et al. 1987). As a result, the flow of information through the pipeline has been the only object through which undocumented immigrants could seek financial gain. Relying on specific information found within the pipeline allows undocumented immigrants to immigrate to new destinations unbeknownst to them. However, undocumented immigrants also depend on migration routes created and expanded by prior travelers. As noted by Pérez (1991):

²⁰ A man or woman, usually a man, transports people, guns, drugs between borders of sovereign countries.

²¹ They are called coyotes because like the actual animal when it steps on man-made traps a coyote will bite off its own leg to be free. In the same way these individuals would rather have the person they are crossing fend for themselves if the life or safety of the coyote is ever at risk (myths found in South Texas).

One could even say that we're a village of wetbacks. A lot of people nearly the majority, have gone, come back, and returned to the country to the north...For several decades, Macuiltianguis--that's the name of my village—has been an emigrating village, and our people have spread out like the roots of a tree underneath the earth... (P. 12).

Immigrating to the United States, undocumented immigrants must rely on previous information and then relay new information of job opportunities to family members in their native country (Menjívar 2002; Ngai 2004). Through the creation of ethnic communities in the host society (Portes and Rumbaut 1996), these communities have sprouted to cater to specific immigrant needs (Mora 2006). In bypassing spatial assimilation previously created by gateway states (Pandit and Holloway 2006), undocumented immigrants establish enriched foreign communities in the new destinations (Zarrugh 2008). These communities serve as the foundation for social networks.

Due to an immigrant's ability to change and adapt to new social environments (Tsai 2006), networks, being organic, permit undocumented immigrants to expand to other avenues of entry into the United States. For example, Cattell (2004) notes, in her article "Having a Laugh and Mucking in Together," that, "Social theory has explained relationships between structure/agency in terms of their dynamics...social practices produce and are produced by structures" (p. 947). Elaborating on the author's claim, social structures operate within the context of social trends. Over time, those social structures change again, producing new patterns, which will eventually become obsolete because there is continuous flux in the social organism. In order to evolve fully into a self-sustaining organism, networks require a certain level of trust in the system by the

participants, “trust” in a system where the individual interacts with others who share similar social and economic circumstances (Khodyakov 2006).

Trust and Coyotes in the Network

For networks to function in promoting work opportunities (Aguilera and Massey 2003; Shapiro 2004; Pajares 2007; Bowser 2007) and/or migration opportunities (Portes 1995; Tsai 2006; Kissam 2001, Massey et al. 2002), a respectable level of trust between participants about the information rendered through the pipeline is required. For example, Burt (1995) notes the value of trust, stating, “We use whatever cues can be found for continuing evaluation of the trust in a relation, but we never know a debt is recognized until the trusted person helps us when we need it,” (p. 15). Menjívar (2002), author of *Fragmented Ties*, adds to the issue of trust in the section of her book titled “Hoy por Tí, Mañana por Mí” (Today for You, Tomorrow for Me). Menjívar (2002) states, “Reciprocity ensures that, among parties involved in the exchange, the one who receives will eventually repay, thus providing realistic grounds for trust” (p. 117). Both authors illustrate how undocumented immigrants repay individuals who help them by providing information on social and economic opportunities when the opportunities present themselves. The ability to trust and the ability to be trusted (which I call by its Spanish term, “*confianza*”) allows networks to become dependable and their information reliable, such that dependability and reliability exist between individuals in a trustworthy relationship similar to that of kinship (Portes and Landolt 1996).

For the maintenance of the social network, it is imperative to limit inconsistencies and fallacies about areas with job opportunities, because often the

exhibition of misinformation hinders a network. With misinformation over a period of time, such as job opportunities, the network will eventually perish. The failure of the network, with no alternative external resources, leaves the immigrant to fend for himself (Menjívar 2002; Cattell 2004; Khodyakov 2007). Undocumented immigrants learn about trust through interacting with total institutions (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000), more directly with I.C.E. officials, where trust is priceless in an area of high risk scenarios. Baier (1986) notes the importance of reliable information over kinship, when she states, "...we often trust total strangers" (p. 234). She shows that other factors contribute to information reliability, which offers an alternative to strong or weak ties for movement. In addition, because undocumented immigrants are part of a network of trust (Solomon and Flores 2001) where information is reliable, due to the high risk factor weak and strong ties lack the capacity to encompass the whole picture of an undocumented immigrant's migration process.

The reliance on trustworthy networks help undocumented immigrants successfully enter the United States; it does this by letting them know which coyotes are reliable, and it decreases the risk of being deported and of encountering situations that could cause the immigrant bodily harm/abuse (Kissam 2001). Through the usage of coyotes, the operation of networks—along with their reliance on social capital, human capital, and financial capital (Burt 1995)—provides an insight to the structural implications of the migration process. Coyotes, furthermore, are used to fill in gaps of

the social structure. These are filling-in structural gaps that Burt (1995) views as “effective networks” (p. 20). Kissam²² (2001) adds to the topic of coyote usage:

Ezequiel came north with ten men, most of whom were friends or acquaintances from his village....Their group’s leader already knew a coyote who would cross them into the United States for only \$500 and then charge them only \$400 [which is very cheap] to come the rest of the way to Immokalee. (P. 2).

As a result, a correlation between networks and coyote usage can be drawn to the white racial culture. Hence, valuable information about situations or events, such as a place for crossing and the coyote with the highest successful crossings requires one to have some form of human capital—wealth.

Wealth and inequality are interconnected with networks because social networks reflect the wealth of a person, whereby a person’s wealth determines the amount of resources available (Sanders and Nee 1996). As a reaction to resource accessibility, wealth produces a system of inequality for minorities, as noted by Shapiro (2004): “...the racial wealth gap principally results from income inequality” (p. 42). Therefore, the inequality mirrors the minimal accessibility a minority has in relationship to the crude flow of unobtainable information. This blockade from accessing general informational resources confines an immigrant to only tap bounded solidarity²³ networks. When examining the implication of social limitations on social networks, Shapiro (2004) compares outcomes for a white woman and black woman in relation to their individual wealth. For him, Kathryn MacDonald (a white woman) has viable access

²² Due to expansion of social networks, Kissam points out that reliance on the coyote relies on a web of family networks and helps undocumented immigrants reach their destination.

²³ Bounded solidarity is having a social network with individuals in the same economic, cultural, and social capital status (Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993).

to information, whereas Vivian (a black woman) lacks the information to seek upward social mobility. In conclusion, lack of access to information, unfortunately, places minorities on an endless cycle of inequality and unfair wealth distribution. Not immune to the subordinate group's cycle, undocumented immigrants are forced to depend on the reliability of information from others in a similar social, cultural, and/or economic situation (Menjívar 2002) to have a successful crossing. In turn, most of them must possess some form of human commodity that has exchange value, meaning that their function in the network, and in the migration process for that matter, is attributed to certain attributes of value to gain access to the network upon entry in the host society. However, in the United States, the majority of the time undocumented immigrants face additional challenges when living alongside other subordinate groups.

Stage Three in the Migration Process: The Anti-Mexican Immigrant Subframe

The Racial Frame's Influence on Undocumented Immigrants

Incapable of coping with cultural challenges due to ethnocentric perceptions about other cultures, when threatened, white and other Americans react negatively and violently toward alien cultures (Feagin 2009). Likewise, prejudicial views serve as ammunition to discriminate, exploit, and marginalize Mexicans (Burns and Gimpel 2000). Due to structural, racial, and/or prejudicial practices toward Latinos in the United States (Cobas, Duany, and Feagin 2009), the direct contact between immigrants and American ideology has led to hostility and anti-immigrant sentiment by the dominant group, non-Hispanic white Americans. Therefore, according to Millard and Chapa (2006), the dehumanizing ideology has marginalized immigrants to an extent that they

are seen as having backward cultures, a form of “subtle racism” (p. 113). For example, Moser (2006), a reporter for the *Nation*, provides a case that points this out when interviewing a local woman on her thoughts of new immigrants in the area; she states, “They brought their chicken-in-the-yard culture over here with them” (p. 11).

A white racial structure, in which discrimination and racism becomes part of the non-material culture, is already well established in the United States, in a cultural society where all its members (black and white) hide behind a veil (Du Bois [1903] 2007). The person who advocates discrimination and racism is essential in a fully developed racial structure. The once overly physical identifier of oppression and superiority in contemporary America has become obsolete, because the racial ideology is assumed by the cultural groups within society and such practices are embraced by all groups (Feagin 2001), including people of color. Unfortunately, what continues to elude the general public is the covertness of racism in modern society (Feagin 2009). A stealthy racial ideology is embedded in the culture where the majority of the people who interact and assimilate with the American culture become agents of the ideology, where people of color (including Latinos) are exploited, marginalized, and/or completely “removed from the public conscious” (Portales 2000). In the United States, the racial frame creates norms and values, unfortunately, that become part of interaction rituals for all members of society (Durkheim [1887] 1993; Collins 2004); this allows the racial ideology to flourish from one generation to the next in the creation of the *self*.

The white racial frame is an ideology containing several core values: hatred, ethnocentrism, superiority, self-interest (group identity), and indifference, fear, and

emotion (Feagin 2001; Feagin 2009). The ideology has become part of Americans' non-material culture—discourse about other cultures and ethnocentric perceptions about morality. Considering this racial ideology, a fully developed racialized system becomes self-sustaining as the majority of the subordinate members embrace and assimilate to the dominant culture as the United States' "way of doing things." As a result, it teaches all groups to be fearful and suspicious of other minority groups, including immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000). Through the usage of imagery and language, elite white males reinforce the anti-Mexican immigrant dialogue in the United States by pointing out physical, cultural, and social differences between Americans and immigrants.

Dialogue Creating a New Underclass in the United States: The Alien and Other

The system relies on in-group versus out-group negative attributes to remain operational, where it pits a subordinate group against another subordinate group (Kim 2000) and deters any challenges to the structure (Feagin 2001). Consequently, when the needs of another racial group are not considered as important as those of the dominant group, the system of racial inequality is instilled through tradition and becomes part of all racial and ethnic groups under its umbrella. It is a structure where all subordinate groups are both victims and members of the fully developed system (Feagin 2007). The racial structure has the capacity to divert social and economic problems away from itself, whereby the problems associated with social and economic hardships shift to specific minority groups. Inside a limited space, they then compete for limited resources amongst themselves (see Kim 2000, for a demonstration of Korean Americans versus African Americans). The shifting of responsibility for racial inequality tends to occur in several

ways but the most universal form is through the media where, according to Feagin (2010) the "...conventional white racial frame is so institutionalized that all mainstream media outlets routinely and unquestioningly operate out of the version of it" (p. 143). Therefore, it is through the media that the white racial frame communicates its ideology to the masses, most evidentially by referring to another human as an "illegal alien" to relegate a specific group to the social position of "other."

In its origin, the term "illegal alien" was instilled when countries were concerned with the movement of immigrants into their sovereign nations (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 2004), and/or when powerful empires conquered and colonized less powerful countries (Said 1979). Not until recently have several countries and human rights activists begun to argue that immigrants should be protected by an "immigrant bill of rights" as they emigrate (Cornelius et. al. 2004). At odds with this movement has been the United States, which holds that an international bill of rights for immigrants would be a violation of the country's sovereignty (Goodwin-Gill 1989). For example, according to Goodwin-Gill, the Supreme Court has concluded that:

It is an accepted maxim of international law, that every sovereign nation has the power, as inherent in sovereignty, and essential to its self-preservation, to forbid the entrance of foreigners within its dominions, or to admit them only in such cases and upon such conditions as it may see fit to prescribe (P. 530).

For the United States, the refusal to protect a person required a rational explanation so the term alien provided a *de facto* justification for this decision. It became the foundation for events that would eventually unfold, in terms of immigration, for all subsequent generations (Santa Ana, 2002). Goodwin-Gill (1989) also notes the usage of the term

“alien” in *Cabell v. Chabaz-Salido*, the name of the plaintiff before the Court, in which it was stated:

The exclusion of aliens from basic governmental processes is not a deficiency in the democratic system but a necessary consequence of the community’s process of self-definition... begins by defining the scope of the community of the governed and thus of the governors as well. Aliens are by definition those outside of the community (P. 531).

By calling a person alien, the courts, maybe unintentionally, have relegated the undocumented immigrant to being set off from the normative community, a fundamental “other.” Consequently, the implication of the term “illegal alien” in policy-making does not take into account the symbolic significance of the word “alien” and the association the community has with the word. Saussure (translated by Komatsu and Wolf 1997) claimed that words and language have the power to create an image associated with a specific word. Hence, viewing undocumented immigrants as sub-human became legitimized when images and words became identifiers for the culture in the labeling process of the abnormal (Foucault 1966). As noted by Santa Ana (2002) in his book *Brown Tide Rising*, there is an attempt to dehumanize undocumented immigrants with language. He cites speeches made against “illegal aliens:”

They create problems for jobs...If **they** can go to school and get health care **we’re** allowing **them** to be here...**We** can’t even take care of **our own** and **we’re** letting more in [emphasis in the original] (P. 95).

Clearly, there has been an inherent tendency to view undocumented immigrants as sub-humans in the United States. Social scientists for generations have stated how words convey social meaning (Garfinkel 1972) because it presents an image in which the individual is able to connect symbolic meaning, through linguistics, to the world around

them (Blumer 1969; Lakoff and Mark 2003; Lakoff 2006). This structural tendency to label undocumented immigrants as others falls at the feet of the dominant group through conquest. As Feagin (2010) notes, "...conquerors defined and viewed the indigenous people as inferior..." (p. 42). Therefore, the white racial frame judges groups based on how well they (the racial and/or ethnic group in question) adapt the physiology, linguistics, and ideological characteristics of the dominant group.

These main components have also fueled the hatred, marginalization, and exploitation of undocumented immigrants, all because, occurring to the dominant group, "they are refusing to assimilate." As a result, many Americans believe that this group will never be accepted as "real" Americans because of their "refusal" to assimilate completely into the culture of the host society, because as noted by Kim (2000), this ideology is rooted in "...American notions of racial hierarchy and a powerful belief in the American Dream" (p. 168).

The Anti-Mexican Subframe: Assimilation Perspectives

There is a constant fear in the United States that racial-ethnic groups who do not dissociate themselves from their native culture tend to diminish "what it means to be an American." Use of the Spanish language is used to justify racial hostility toward Latinos and Mexican day-laborers. Millard and Chapa, authors of *Apple Pie and Enchiladas*, argue that Latinos are encouraged to forget their native tongue to gain access to the American Dream or face the alternative of being treated as racially inferior—aliens. Within the Anglo American community, there is panic that these immigrants will, in the near future, become the representatives of the majority population in the United States

(see e.g., Skop, Gratton, and Gutmann 2009). Due to this massive cultural expansion, Americans dread the diminishing, and eventually the devastation, of white American culture; in a sense, their projection is that the “apple pie” culture (white American culture) will be replaced by a culture of “enchiladas” (Mexican culture). In addition, according to Ngai (2004) Americans “...complained that the high volume of immigration congested the melting pot, creating ‘alien’ indigestion” (p. 23).

Through assimilation, the dominant culture retains control of society as it acculturates the dominated by instilling the dominant group’s norms and values. According to Park (1950[1964]), conflicts among different ethnic or racial identities arise following the first contact with opposing group(s). Confronting the opponent, residents struggle to dominate the culture of the foreign group in hopes of “force assimilating” the immigrant to adopt the values as his/her own. Because of a fear of Mexican culture’s reproductive capacity (Saenz 2004; Rodriguez, Saenz, and Menjívar 2009) which has the potential, according to Americans, of outnumbering their own due to the wave of migration (Santa-Ana 2002), Mexican undocumented immigrants are hostilely treated. According to this view, Americans would claim this is an issue of assimilation and not of discrimination.

In general and according to assimilation theory, this conflict is a natural occurrence when different groups come in contact with one another. By the second generation, groups once considered tainted gain access to the social structure and then advocate for the dominant culture’s ideology (see Gordon 1964). However, the issue, in

regards to the white racial frame, is first and foremost in the assimilation process itself, where according to Chomsky (2007):

Italian, Polish, and Jewish immigrants may not have identified with, or been accepted into, white society when they first arrived in the United States. But they, or more often their children, assimilated by becoming “white”....And part of the assimilation into whiteness meant adoption of the white racial attitude (p. 103).

Although assimilation theory addresses traditional group contact (migration of western Europeans in the Americas), it lacks an accurate explanation of dominant group ideology when it encounters other people of color. Historically, non-Hispanic white Americans’ racial ideology played an essential role in designating non-white Europeans as an inferior group—anticipating a one-way assimilation favoring the dominant racial group, where they believed in, according to Chomsky, the “... ‘white man’s burden’—the idea that white Europeans are culturally superior” (p. 123). When Americans claim “lack of assimilation by immigrants,” they are basing it on their association and understanding of a superior culture, or as Feagin (2010) notes:

Central to the dominant racial frame in the United States are several “big picture” narratives that connect frame elements into historically oriented stories with morals that are especially important to white Americans...scenarios include stories about white conquest... (P. 13).

Race scholars take a similar approach with the ethnocentrism of assimilation but credit the social structure as the source of the theory. For example, Knowles and Prewitt (1969) refer to it as *institutional racism*, where the language, ideology, norms, and values of the dominant racial group form the nexus of society where all people of color must comply with its folkways. Or as noted by Feagin (2006), when cultural institutions become instruments of racial ideology, even as a social system pushes for assimilation,

“...each institutional dimension of the systemic racism is linked, directly or indirectly, to other major institutional dimensions” (p. 46). Therefore, assimilation does not insinuate social and cultural acceptance by the dominant group but functions more as a trial basis for entry, based on the extent that one subordinate group discriminates against another. In the case of the undocumented immigrant, the lack of motivation to treat immigrants fairly has further permitted the implementation of draconian immigration policies (Massey 2007) and has been fed by the discursive and metaphoric definition of one who speaks Spanish as the outsider or the *other*.

Santa-Ana (2002), in explaining immigrants as “others,” reaffirms how the treatment of immigrants as subhuman is based on phenotype, on language, and/or on his/her creed. The development of the identity of “us” and “them” practically works as subordinated identity (Keefe and Padilla 1987) of the self and emerges as one creates a reference categorizing the other groups in the assimilation process into the dominant culture (Gordon 1964). The adoption of the values of the dominant culture becomes evident in the process of assimilation (Portes and Rumbault 1996). For Suarez and Paez, authors of *Latinos: Remaking America*, assimilation is, “...selectively developing the instrumental competencies of the new culture while maintaining many of the instrumental and expressive elements of the old” (p. 304). Because words and terms carry emotion, in creating a self-identity, language holds considerable influence (Peirce [1893–1913] 1998).

Inside the structural dimensions of a racialized system, where the system values one group more than another, the constrictions imposed by social inequality diminish

any possibility of upward social mobility for both immigrants and residential minorities in an impoverished area (Shapiro 2004). Within this system of social inequality, the competition for resources pits residential minorities against other subordinate groups (Kim 2000; Feagin 2006) in “territorial-confrontation” (see Chapter 3, *Black-Brown: Relations and Stereotypes*) for economic and social resources. Because societies are organic, each racial and/or ethnic group is able to find an area where they are pulled-in with other groups with similar characteristics into a cramped geographic area (Shapiro 2004). In the United States, communities have sprouted in response to specific immigrant needs (Burt 1995; Mora 2006). This new immigration population is pushed by local residents from their communities (Menjívar 2002) to ethnic areas known as “Mexicanized” communities (see Chapter 3, *Apple Pie and Enchiladas*). The motif of these communities is mostly contributed by pressure of the dominant group to corral subordinate groups within a specific geographic location and place them in one racial/ethnic umbrella (see Portes and Rumbaut 1996, on Haitians in Miami).

The Prowhite Subframe: Creating a Self-Identity for People of Color and Immigrants

The majority of Mexican Americans, in the process of creating a self-identity (Elliott 2001), attempt to dissociate themselves from any lineage connecting them to groups categorized at the bottom of racial stratification—the undocumented immigrants (Gómez 2007). As noted by Ngai (2004), “...Mexican Americans believe that ‘wetbacks’ and braceros were the direct cause of their own social and economic problems” (p. 158). They (Mexican Americans) felt that embellishing their differences

would gain them access to exclusive “white American” resources (Rodriguez 1982). As a result, any racial/ethnic group that has assimilated to the “American way of doing things” become advocates for the white racial frame. Immersion into the dominant culture transcends any ideological thinking of a subordinate group, as they move into compliance with that of the dominant white-male American culture.

Interacting roles are based in how a person determines the essentials about images, words, etc., in what Mead ([1932] 1962) refers to as *significant symbols*, in association with the *self*—the operation of the individual in everyday life. Creating a self-identity, undocumented immigrants internalize these linguistic symbols and interpret the views of the general community of themselves and vice-versa for people of color about undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants learn from their peers to accept their subordinate role as unwanted (Merton 1979), while acknowledging the term illegal alien as a signifier of identification to the host society and its members (Cooley 1998). According to Mead ([1932]1962), the internalization of symbolic meaning occurs in the development of the *self*, an area where an individual begins to develop a socialized identity. He states the following:

What goes to make up the organized self is the organization of the attitudes which are common to the group. A person is a personality because he belongs to a community, because he takes over the institutions of that community into his own conduct. (P. 162).

Hence, an individual adapts this new self-identity through the traditional means of play and game stages (Meads [1932] 1962). Taking Mead’s definition of the *self*, for undocumented immigrants and Mexican Americans it emerges as the groups begin to interact with the world around them. The interaction creates a realistic world that,

through common language, would not have existed if there were no interaction of symbolic definition that explained the encounter (Thomas [1923] 2010).

In addition, the interactions, and at times hostile encounters, are displayed as both immigrants and Americans perform their expected social and cultural roles in society. For example, Goffman (1959) states the following in regard to a person's performance before the collective society, "They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it..." (p. 17). As a consequence, the undocumented immigrant learns from both his/her peers and the host society the role and activities of being a "*mojado*" (Pérez 1991). White Americans and other subordinate groups learn that by exploiting and discriminating against undocumented immigrants, their group has the potential to gain status in the racial hierarchy and praise from the system.

Exploitation and mistreatment of undocumented immigrants originates from the image and perception in which the racial frame labels and defines groups (Bonilla-Silva 2006), including racial attitudes that are passed from one generation (that has been exposed to the racial culture) to the next. For example, as noted by Mindiola et al. (2002) in their book titled *Black-Brown: Relations and Stereotypes*, when discussing Latinos' fear of African-Americans, "The fear may be grounded in Hispanics' stereotypes of African-American as criminally inclined," (p. 81). As an instrument of the white racial frame, fear creates a system where minorities exploit and discriminate against each other. This is something that is learned in the early years, during the *play stage* (the

imitation of a significant other) and *game stage* (the knowing of everybody's function in the social setting), of the development of *self* in minority children. For example, as noted by Mindiola, Niemann, and Rodriguez (2003) about the function of symbolic interaction for children creating a *self*:

Children learn to evaluate groups the way their parents do either by direct training or by observing and imitating their parent's verbal and nonverbal behavior...if parents believe that members of these groups are prejudiced against them or express prejudice against or fear of a particular group, they pass on those attitudes. (P. 69).

Categorizations of symbolic meanings, such as the word alien, perpetuate a negative interaction between undocumented immigrants and Americans. Inequality toward undocumented immigrants ensues through categorizing them as the outside group—the “other.” From the perspective of an American ideology of superiority, a subordinate group's inferiority stems from their inferior culture, so their placement in the structure is warranted (Bonilla-Silva 2006). The racial structure where all groups assimilate to the dominant culture (Gordon 1967) transmutes racialized thinking, especially language. For example, Fanon ([1952] 1967) reflects on how he would alter his vocabulary and form of speech based on the racial group, and he adds, “...to prove the existence of a black [Latino] civilization to the white world at all cost” (p. 34). Because language conveys symbolic meanings and emotion for both the in-group (Americans) and the out-group (people of color including undocumented immigrants), an undocumented immigrant internalizes his/her self-identity and respective interacting roles with others (Pérez 1991).

Because of the xenophobic reaction to different languages and cultures, non-Hispanic white elite males limit the amount of information available within the host society to the immigrant population (Tsai 2006) and other people of color. As Saenz and Morales (2005) have noted, "...the extent [whiteness] whites gains privileges because of structural arrangements benefiting them" (p. 173), but this access to resources is permitted for those deemed acculturated and/or who are seen as model minorities (Okimoto 2000). They further add, "whites are less likely than minority group members [immigrants] to be denied access to the opportunity structure, to be singled out for suspicious behavior due to the color of their skin, or to bear psychological wounds..." (p. 172). As a result, the biased culture hinders undocumented immigrants and other subordinate groups from gaining access to information that presents them with the means to gain upward social mobility. The treatment of inequality that perpetuates through means of marginalization, discrimination, and exploitation of undocumented immigrants forces them to rely on social networks to immigrate to the core country.

Shortcomings of the Current Literature

This research attempts to expand on the current literature on how social networks assist undocumented immigrants by examining the type of coyote used in the migration process. Equally or more important is that it seeks to explain how the white racial frame affects/influences unauthorized migration. By employing a micro level analysis of data collected from field interviews, I will examine the effects of the white racial frame on undocumented immigrants and immigrants' agents in the three major stages of the migration process (including networks and coyotes). Reaching this goal of explanation

requires going beyond simply a quantitative approach; it demands a more complex and elaborate approach to the situation, whereby interviewing undocumented immigrants provides insight to the migration experience.

Social scientists have categorized networks through the characteristics of weak or strong ties²⁴ (Granovetter 1985; Portes 1995), while others look at rural and urban interactions (Flores 2005). However, I argue that using the categories of “weak” and “strong” ties does not sufficiently provide an accurate measurement of the strength of a network. This is a major problem because the primary concern and focus needs to be the reliability of a network as it relates to illegal entry more so than the source of support. For example, two undocumented immigrants could rely on strong ties to immigrate but the success of the journey depends on the strength of the network, which has little to do with kinship (strong ties) and more to do with the value of the reliability of the source—*de confianza*. Having trust in the network is related to resource accessibility—not if the information was given by weak ties or strong ties, as Portes and Landolt (1996) suggest. For them, the strength of the network is based on resources available and access in the social structure for the undocumented immigrant, whereby the concept of weak and strong ties only provides information on the relationship between the person giving and receiving the information and not about the strength of the actual information, which is taken at face value because it comes from a kinsman.

²⁴ According to Alejandro Portes, a weak tie is information used between individuals not directly related to each other, while a strong tie is information used between kinship.

This study focuses on a vulnerable group (undocumented immigrants) that lacks contemporary social networks²⁵ in the host society that would permit them access to conventional resources. This area is understudied and will be the site of my contribution to the field of sociology. For example, as expressed by Saenz and Morales (2005), “...the route that immigrants take depends on their access to resources within their families and communities,” (p. 182), and for these immigrants the information must carry merit, although the majority of the time the information comes from kinfolk. The information is weighed on its own merits by the process of logical determinants, such as, “My uncle likes to tell made-up stories, but the man down the street, he always speaks the truth,” as stated by an interviewee. Therefore, the information is measured on its own reliability merits and not kinship.

Very few studies address the relationship between the United States’ white racial framing of Mexican undocumented immigrants and their social networks and the stages of migration; I believe that current attitudes are inevitable when there is no true understanding of the driving force behind the discourse on immigration. In addition, there needs to be an exploration of the strength of social networks concerning social and environmental factors,²⁶ especially the white racial frame, particularly when looking at frontstage and backstage performances of the racial ideology between whites and blacks (Picca and Feagin 2007). Considering these factors, the prejudicial attitude does not need to manifest itself “backstage,” but instead becomes a public performance without

²⁵ Social networks are mainstream and accessible to members of the host society.

²⁶ What I mean by social and environmental factors are the things that surround the individual where the individual is able to pull on any of these resources in time of need.

Americans fearing negative collective sanctions for racist comments, “front-stage” display as well, as noted by Picca and Feagin (2007).

In this spectacle of public display, according to Picca and Feagin, “whites admit to acting and performing differently around people of color [African Americans] than elsewhere,” (p. 43), but in relation to undocumented immigrants there is no need to reserve the emotions behind closed doors. This is something that is overlooked in issues of racial inequality. In addition, Massey and colleagues present a macro-level introduction to the migration process (Massey et. al. 2008), but I feel that a deeper understanding of unauthorized migration and social networks is needed to effectively understand the issues of emigration and immigration. My research seeks to make a contribution to this deeper understanding of the immigration process in conjunction with the marginalization of the undocumented Mexican immigrant.

Previous research has either looked at or explained undocumented immigrants’ issues through either the limited lens of structural (macro) or micro association, never simultaneously. This, in turn, has led to an underestimation and an incomplete picture of the migration experience for undocumented immigrants. In the unexplained association of structural and personal interaction, my research fits within this new lens. By combining information from field interviews and linking it to the racial discourse surrounding “illegal migration,” the complexity of the migration experience will be explored.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The significant contribution of this study, as pointed out in the concluding section of the previous chapter, is to note how social networks, undocumented immigrants, and coyotes, are related to the anti-Mexican and anti-Immigrant subframes. I claim that the relationship between the theoretical interpretation and the individual analysis demands a methodological approach that ensures a respectable balance of data gathered from these polarized frames in a structural setting where support for the overall claim can be rendered from either frame. In this chapter, I explain how ethnographic data, relying on in-depth interviews from an undocumented immigrant population, can be beneficial when examining and linking the theoretical frame.

In order to comprehend the magnitude of how external factors alter specific research expectations, it is essential to understand the challenges associated when conducting studies on a certain group, especially those with negative social images. As Emerson et al (1995) note, there needs to be some level of flexibility in gathering field data from certain groups. Acknowledging these factors of anomie, taking a Durkheimian perspective, it is important to note how the subframes create conceptions of isolation and autonomy for these men. Within this social structure of anomie, the day-laborer²⁷ is excluded from the general community. Because of the negative imagery associated with day-laborers—undocumented immigrants—linked to their underclass status in this

²⁷ Most of the time, day-laborers are undocumented immigrants who perform temporary odd jobs and are paid by commission.

country, it became a challenge to get access to them. However, by chance, I met a man who knew the area and he, Pancho,²⁸ directed me to the site(s). If it was not for Pancho, then this study might have been more challenging. Because of his contribution, I added Pancho's insight of the area. Thus, to get a comprehensive perspective on the anti-immigrant sentiment, I explain the structural components surrounding the interviewees and the site(s) in Texas²⁹ for the interviews.

This chapter examines the social phenomena describing a situation where the respondents depend on reliable information from individuals who are deemed as trustworthy; undocumented immigrants depend on these individuals and information for their survival in the United States. The probing³⁰ for additional information was instrumental in gathering "rich information" about the daily survival of undocumented immigrants, but to explain a comprehensive phenomenon I also include events that occur at the three stages of the migration process.

Collecting the Data: In-depth Interviews

Ethnographic research presents an opportunity to have a qualitative understanding of undocumented immigrants, coyotes, and the strength of social networks. Through a participant observation approach (qualitative) of a selected group of undocumented immigrants, I interviewed day-laborers to gather detailed information concerning their migration experience in the United States. Data were collected that helped explain why, how, when, and where they entered into the United States. Such

²⁸ The names of the participants are fictional in order to protect their identity.

²⁹ In order to protect the participants and their location, I will not provide information about their real names or physical locations.

³⁰ Asking participants to elaborate on a question they have already answered to obtain greater details.

findings shed light on the issue of unauthorized entry through the examination of the strength of their network and in the determination of contracting a coyote. As a result, the purpose of this qualitative study is to provide a first-hand account of how networks and the racialization of undocumented immigrants operate in the migration process.

This illustrates the cultural and economic conditions confronted by undocumented immigrants in the United States. In addition, the qualitative analysis focuses on the day-to-day interactions between the members of the host society, agents of the racialized structure, and the undocumented immigrant. Through the utilization of qualitative (ethnographic method) data, one can establish what Coast (2003) refers to as the “validity of the evidence” in different empirical models within the three stages of the migration process

Qualitative Method: The Questionnaire & Interviews

For the ethnographic collection of data, day-laborers were selected as participants of the undocumented immigrant population. Upon identifying the target group, I informed the day-laborers of my status as a researcher and the intended purpose of the study. After several visits to create rapport, the Spanish-language questionnaire was memorized to keep the research project in perspective (see Appendix A-4 for the English-language version). The memorization of the questionnaire functioned as an outline and served to limit the intrusion on their valuable time. Because of the inconsistencies associated with field interviewing, where the conversation might change between the researcher and participants, the questionnaire needed to be as flexible as the situation permitted (see Duneier 1999).

Aside from seeking a basic understanding about which questions to probe, two major obstacles in the gathering of information occurred while seeking the nonrandom sample of 30 day-laborers. First, it took time to identify the target location. Second, the exposure to the natural elements made the interview process unpredictable. Nonetheless, I felt that incorporating day-laborers, reflecting those who occupy the bottom of social status in both the undocumented immigrant population (because of the lack of economic stability) and in the general population in the United States, was a wise choice. This new American underclass provided insightful information on the overt discrimination, racism, marginalization, and exploitation encounters with people in the United States, both non-Hispanic whites and other people of color.

It is day-laborers' social status, at the bottom of the racial and social hierarchy with no political representation (Ngai 2004), that makes this group, unfortunately, the ideal candidates for the study. The participants for the qualitative component of the study consisted of 30 single³¹ male day-laborers from Mexico. Having day-laborers, a population noted by other researchers as being undocumented (see. e.g., Campo-Flores and Gegax 2005), I was able to bypass the uncomfortable question of asking them if they had the proper documents to be in the United States. I do not think that it was presumptuous to assume their lack of legal status, when three out of every five interviewees made statements, mostly sarcastic, similar to, "If I had papers (documents), I would not be doing this." It was precisely their social and legal status that made them

³¹ I used the term more to identify the men as not accompanied by their wives in the United States although they could be married with their wives living in Mexico.

the best-suited participants, because it proves the malice and the indifference typical in most Americans when dealing with an inferior “other.”

Qualitative Method: Making Contact with the Participants

In the identification process, there was limited sophistication due to the researcher’s commonalities with the participants, such as language (Spanish), and the ability to distinguish Mexican immigrants from Hispanics and other Latino groups (see Balderama and Molina 2009). In comparison, the interview process did require extensive preparation and adaptation to insure the quality of the information gathered. At this juncture, the gatekeeper, Don Tito (in the later section I elaborate on the gatekeeper’s role), was instrumental in his contribution to this nonrandom sample collection of data. The gatekeeper’s role, however, was extremely important, because without his assistance the information from the 30 respondents residing in Texas could have not been gathered. The gatekeeper, in the first interview, created the foundation for future participants and the identification of new locations to recruit; the snowball method was also instrumental in finding additional respondents to participate in the interview and locations otherwise unknown to the researcher. Being present during the interview process, the gatekeeper aided in preventing uncomfortable situations for the participants and me. Primarily, the undocumented immigrants were more concerned with my legitimate claim as a researcher, as opposed to someone who wanted to do them harm.

During the initial interviews, not wanting to look conspicuous holding a white paper in plain sight that might draw attention, I memorized the Spanish-language written questionnaire and asked the questions as the participants stood on street corners waiting

to be picked up by contractors. Memorizing the questionnaire presented several advantages: 1) It allowed for probing of the participants for additional answers and provided the flexibility to rearrange questions based on the situation; 2) it permitted both parties to keep a low profile in the neighborhood; and 3) it prevented a mechanical structure of reading questions from a paper. As noted above, the conversation took place in Spanish even though the immigrants demonstrated some minimal ability to communicate in English. The persistence of a Spanish-language interview process was to create a comfortable situation.

Qualitative Method: The Field Interview

Pursuing the objective of qualitative analysis noted above, a Spanish-language questionnaire and information sheet (see Appendix A-3) was submitted to and approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University. It was used to gather information on the interaction between immigrants and local residents. Usage of a questionnaire allowed an in-depth understanding of immigrants' social networks and their encounters with local residents. Therefore, to protect the confidentiality of the participants, the IRB approved the information sheet instead of written consent.

The information sheet apprised the participants of the objectives of the study and the extent of the questions. To protect the identity of the participants, I took the additional step of referring to them by fictional names, such as *Xavier*, *Jose*, *Monterrey*, *etc.*, and not by their birth name. Thus, the protection of the participants' identities was my first priority. In sum, the information that I collected describes the journey of my 30 respondents, who share their personal experiences as they crossed the hot desert or swam

the untamed rivers when they came into the United States and the challenges they have encountered with Americans (white, black, and Latino).

The participants' insight into the interactions between themselves and the local communities highlighted the negative perceptions that Americans have about them. Having a questionnaire allowed for a coherent understanding of why Mexicans wanted to return, as one of them put it, to "*mi querida tierra*" (my beloved land), while looking at the inequality that has forced them to extend their stay in the United States. Through the utilization of the snowball method,³² which targeted undocumented immigrants in three Texas areas (a border town in South Texas, a central Texas town, and a city/area³³), the 30 participants in the study provided salient information about their experiences.

The First Three Interviews

Steps Taken to Build Rapport

In the previous section, I mention the significance of using a qualitative approach where a gatekeeper was important in identifying the population of participants for this study. In this section, I elaborate the gatekeeper's role in the interview process of undocumented immigrants, as well as the first field visits. The gatekeeper, for example, was very instrumental in providing viable information; he provided information on where to go and who to look for when visiting the field-site. He suggested identifying and befriending the person who was always the center of attention in the gagging men.

³² "The basic strategy of snowballing involves first identifying several people with relevant characteristics...these subjects are then asked for the names (referrals) of other people who possess the same attributes..." (Berg 2007: 44).

³³ Because of the risk of deportation for these men and complying with the IRB's clauses for the study, the exact location will not be disclosed.

As a result, I present the first three visits to the area of study and the steps taken to note and gather information on the migration experience; the lives of these men. Insight on migration required developing rapport with the participants where they felt comfortable sharing their experience. Beforehand, I knew it would take several visits to the area before they would “open-up” and take an interest in my presence there; Mitchell Dunerier, noted a similar situation in his book *Sidewalk*, when wanting to interview sidewalk used-book vendors. Before being willing to share their migration experience, the participant would most likely need to develop a sense of comfort with an outsider, as noted by Dunerier (1998).

First Visit: Making Contact

The November month was cold. Living for two semesters in mid-Texas, one still finds it difficult to adjust to the winter weather, especially when one originates in an area where the fall and winter seasons are different from mid-Texas. For example, in the fall and winter months of south Texas, a person wears a sweater in the morning and by the afternoon the attire is made-up of summer clothes: t-shirt and shorts. The xeric temperatures cause residents in south Texas to assimilate to dry conditions. In mid-Texas, a cold miasma, at the field interview sights dawn begins to give to scattered sunrays breaking through the clouds. Hesitation in leaving the warmth of the car arises, and exposure to the cold wet morning becomes a self-conflict, of going or staying.

It was 6:00 am. Two middle build men, both wearing blue jeans and long sleeve thick-fabric shirts and baseball caps, walked down a narrow residential street pushing each other in a playful manner. Encouraged by their ebullient demeanor, the courage was

mustered to leave the warmth of the family vehicle. Pancho's suggestion about the location was correct; he provided a rough description of the area. A description that relied heavily on physical objects as indicators, rather than street names, seemed unorthodox but proved to be valuable. Meandering from one side of the road to the other, maintaining a distance (based on Pancho's suggestion), the two men were leading me to a gaggle of hazy figures in an intersection.

Walking behind these men, I observed the narrow residential street, separated by a thin yellow strip which showed wear, and a dried up drainage ditch running parallel to the street. Separating the private properties from public domains, the ditch and exterior of fence belonging to one of the residences was used by the day-laborers. Bicycle tire marks ran across the depressed section of the ditch, and on the opposite side a myriad of bicycles rested against a wire fence. A misshaped hurricane-fence, sections elevated from the ground, was used as a bike rack. Securing their means of transportation against the fence, two other men walked alongside me to the street corner. To this point Pancho's information had been insightful; therefore, I feel that it is essential to include Pancho's explanation of the bicycle as means of transportation. According to him, operating a car without insurance and/or a driving license becomes a risky business that can result in deportation. From Pancho's perspective, the men preferred the use of a bicycle because laws are less restrictive on this form of transportation.

As I arrived at a stop sign, breaking through the morning mist, the figure of another man began to take shape. Standing underneath an intersection stop sign, the man was wearing a red long sleeve shirt with black dress pants. Due to his attire, the other

men, as they got to the stop sign, teased him. In an acerbic tone, they asked, “*Vienes del baile*” (are you coming from a dance club)? The attire, for the other men, exceeded the proper clothing for manual labor. In addition, the men felt the foppishness of the individual’s clothing, its ostentation, would draw unwanted attention, thus scaring off potential employers. He replied, “*No importa que traigo, parece que va a llover* (it doesn’t matter what I am wearing; it looks like it is going to rain).”

In a previous conversation with Pancho, in an effort to learn about the area before conducting the interviews, he had stated the salient role that the weather plays in the lives of day-laborers. According to him, having/finding employment is based on “if it rains or not;” therefore, the probability of working decreases with the later time of day or with rain. Time of day is another important factor. Price negotiations and employment occur early in the morning or after lunch hour. Hiring after lunch occurs when a worker leaves the job, so a day-laborer is used as a temporary employee. As the day wanes on, the possibility of employment diminishes. Continued standing in the area increases day-laborers’ visibility in the community and these situations of men standing outside of households is not often tolerated by the residents.

As a result, the additional arrival of two men triggered a mixed response, some were welcoming and others expressed frustration. For example, a man murmured, “That is great, more people,” as more figures began to gather around the corner. The man who murmured the comment was wearing a sleeveless black t-shirt and a cap turned the other way (the front end of the cap facing the back of the head). He was of medium build and seemed to be in his early 20s. His presence was overshadowed by a lissome figure

walking from one corner of the street to another. Don Tito, which was how the men referred to him, drew crowds of men with his spectacular method of telling stories. Don Tito acted out his conversation with punch lines and he froze his movements until the laughs stopped, like a director stopping in the middle of a story and then being able to continue without inconsistency. Don Tito was conducting this performance wearing a red H-E-B polo-shirt with light brown pants. For being a man of mature age, he was in good physical shape. The other men across the street did not mind the loud tone and his bright demeanor brought humor to the gloomy and unproductive day. After a while, feeling that he had lost his audience, he moved to the other side of the street where men had begun to gather as well and repeated his performance.

As the cloudy day went on, several men began to leave. As they vanished around the corner of the street, a white Dodge pickup came from the other end of the street. At a slow pace, it passed by the group of men seated in the other street. Keeping with the pace of the truck, the men from that corner walked behind the truck as it approached the corner of the group of men whom I was standing with. Their approach was clearly an informal violation of space and site, because it triggered a verbal reaction from these men. Standing loftily in the corner, they yelled at the other men to go back to the corner they were at and mockery was used in the verbal assault. One man said, “You should have selected this corner,” as the white pickup came to a complete stop in front of them.

Seeing the transaction that unfold reminded me of Pancho’s comment of “*parecen putas*” (they act like prostitutes) When he said this the first time, I was confused on what he meant by it; however, seeing how they negotiated their labor, I had

an idea of what he meant. They rush the automobile in an attempt to sell their “labor power,” while at the same time under betting the person next to them. From my angle of vision, I saw the man in the pickup smile and his face showed greater excitement as the men continued to underbid each other. Defeated in the negotiations, one after another removed themselves from the pickup. From the facial expression, it was obvious that each person had reached the least amount of money he was willing to work. Finally, out of the 12 men who approached the vehicle there were only two left, and with confused looks on their faces they jumped into the bed of the pickup to do whatever labor awaited them.

Looking at the two men in the back of the pickup, the man in the red long sleeve shirt said out loud, “ The reason why I did not approach that guy is because I’ve worked with him before, and he does not give you water or a break and at the end of the day he gives you shit!” Then looking directly at me, he said, “You know that the worst people to work for are Chicanos. They see you down on your luck and they still want to take advantage of you. I told a *campesino*³⁴ one day, I came into this country to work for whites not for fucking Chicanos or for other Mexicans. That is the reason why I left my country in the first place.” Seeing that he had my undivided attention, he continued, “Be careful with these people here [pointing at the men in the corner] for they will tell you to go with someone even if they know that person does not pay that well. But be more careful with Chicanos; they are worse than *los negros* (the blacks).³⁵” Looking at his cell

³⁴ The men used to this term to insinuate the same geographies, such as, rural, state, and/or country, in relation to another individual.

³⁵ This perception of the Chicano is restated by Ernesto, in the next chapter.

phone, he continued,” Well, it’s going to be noon and nothing good has turned out, I’m going home,” he said in a disappointed tone. I too got to my feet and headed toward the car.

In the car, I had a moment to reflect on how the day had unfolded. I had told the men that I was a student from the university but no one asked me what I was doing there. On this day, I did not want to ask any questions. I just wanted to meet the people I was going to select for my interviews. Looking back, I thought the day had gone well: the running shoes with holes, old black Levis jeans, black Superman cap (turned back) and long sleeve shirt that I was wearing was the right attire for the observation. In the next visit, I would ask questions in the hope that they would also ask question about me; in other words, I hoped that they would take an interest in me.

Second Visit: Developing Rapport

It was 6:30 in the morning, the moon was giving way to the sun and the rays of light broke through the waning darkness. How I wished I had my wife’s car but in light of the situation I had to rely on my mountain bike to conduct the field observations. The morning was cold, but I figured that as long as my body kept everything would be fine. It was not long, however, before the reality of the situation hit me in the face—literally. While pedaling along the side of the road of moving traffic, certain parts of my body began to develop a burning sensation, beginning with the hands. The sensation gradually moved to the tip of my ears and nose, but eventually my lips and exposed cheeks became victims of the cold.

The signal light hanging over the intersection turned green and I began to pedal again. It was not long before the burning sensation returned; this time it was the hands gripping the handlebars. However, the concern for warmth was overpowered by the primitive desire to keep alive, as a pearl white four-door car attempted to run me off the side of the road. Through the automobile's back window, I saw hair as white as snow protruding slightly over the headrest of the automobile. Without a mere glimpse in the view-mirror or a form of acknowledgement that he/she almost ran a person off the road, the driver continued toward his/her destination and I toward mine.

Locking the bicycle against the hurricane wire fence (how I saw them do it during my first visit), I heard Don Tito's voice echoing off the wooden and brick homes. Flower beds and trim grass gave the homes a welcoming feeling. Walking toward the group of men standing in the corner, I saw that Don Tito was the center of attention and he was waving his arms back and forth. Waiting to have the men's undivided attention, I listened for Tito to finish with his punch line before turning the focus of the men to me. After a few minutes of silence and removing my hands from the warmth of my A&M sweater I said (*in Spanish*), "Hello, some of you already know me and know that this is my second time here. I am a student of the university at College Station." Reaching into my back pocket of the black jeans, I took out my student I.D. and passed it around. As my ID was going around the group, I continued with my speech. "I'm here so you could get to know me and for you to see for yourself if I'm a person that you would like to talk to about your migrating experience, in the near future." Don Tito was pacing back and forth, in and out of sight, as I continued. "I am neither immigration nor border patrol; I

am someone who would like to inform others about your experiences. People only know what they hear on the television but I would like to give them a deeper understanding of who you are and why you are here,” I concluded and stood there, motionless.

The area was quiet and their silences gave the situation an eerie feeling. They looked at each other and then they looked at me, as Don Tito was the last person to examine the ID. After a thorough examination, he placed it in his pocket as he began to talk. “I think that it’s a good thing what you are doing,” he said as he looked at the other men in the group. “Thanks Tito, but I am going to need my ID back.” When I said this, the other men began to laugh. The environment felt relaxed and everybody was conversing again. I told them about my research in North Carolina and the cucumber harvest there. Before long, we were talking about Mexican Soccer League and the improvements the team needs to make to win a world cup and social events unfolding in their native land, such as the results of the presidential election and the turmoil it was causing. Then all of the sudden, I was asked a question.

“You know yesterday a guy in a van came here. He parked his van over there [pointing to a convenience store on the corner] and brought us some forms to sign so he could interview us and said that he was a student. Do you know him?” a man in his late forties named *Juan* asked me in an interrogative tone of voice. “No, but have you seen him here before?” I replied. He shook his head and continued stating, “He wanted to know why we select this place. But since none of us knew him, we did not talk to him. What’s funny is that he wanted us to sign a form [a chuckle] as though we are stupid and sign anything.” Smiling at him, I said, “Well, you don’t have to worry about signing

anything, but I will give a sheet explaining what I'm doing here." Another person joined the conversation and made additional reference to the topic:

We thought it was also funny that he asked us why we were here, in this neighborhood. You see, people here already got used to seeing us stand in front of their property. If we were to move to another area, then the residents in that new area will call the cops on us because they don't know us, but most important, do not want us there. Granted there might be people here who do not want us but they know that we are not loud nor make a mess on their front yards.

After several more hours of conversing on soccer and politics in Mexico, it was time to leave. Cycling to the area, and the sweat, began to make me shiver and feel uncomfortable. Shaking their hands when departing, I told them of my return in the near future and the three men said, "If we see you again, we'll give you an interview." I replied, "That's cool and I'll bring breakfast tacos next time." *Ya estamos*,³⁶ was the last thing that was said between us.

Third Visit: First Interviews

Arriving at about 7 am, I walked toward the men on the corner while at the same time imagining how the interviews will unfold. The morning was cool so I was wearing my A&M sweater again. The constant bike riding to the research site had been exhausting to my body. Today was the day that I would get my interviews, and I was determined to get three of them. Recollecting last week and the three men who were willing to be interviewed, I felt confident in running into them again.

I arrived at the corner that for the past month I had been visiting. I greeted the men and they replied verbally or with a head gesture. I made myself comfortable next to the men and to be honest, I felt a little cocky. The whole idea that I was about to get my

³⁶ It is used as a slang to insinuate confirmation and/or agreement about an issue.

interviews made me feel slightly over confident. I felt that I knew these men and they had come to see me as a trustworthy person. Why else would they allow me to interview them? My smiles and interaction with them this day were more visible than on the prior occasions. An approaching vehicle interrupted my self-glorification.

A light brown minivan pulled to the side of the road near the stop sign. The men on the corner approached the van. The backdoor of the minivan opened as the driver of the vehicle pressed a button within the automobile. I asked Tito if he knew the person and he replied, “She is *la hermana* (the sister). She comes sometimes to see how we are doing. She belongs to some religious organization.”

“Catholic?” I asked him and he replied no. “A while back, she tried to teach several of us to read and to speak English but not many of us showed up to the class. Don’t think that we do not want to learn but we have other stuff to do, and classes were in the evening,” he said in a penitent tone. I walked toward the van with Tito by my side. “Hello sister, he is a student from the university wanting to know about our experiences,” said Tito, yelling and pointing at me as he told the woman in the van. “Really, a student,” she said in tone similar to that when a child brings a new individual into the household.

A white middle-aged woman handed me a hot chocolate in a disposable cup. She stood next to the men as they each took turns filling their cups. Even though she was of short stature, her akimbo posture made her stand out. She communicated with the men in their native language although her accent revealed that she was not native to the Spanish language. As the men tilted the orange water cooler against the edge of bed frame of the

minivan, she smiled and handed them each a banana. “*La Hermana*” asked how the day had been unfolding. Before departing, she handed them two murky see-through plastic bags for the empty cups and for the banana skin. Somehow, she knew how important it was for these men to keep the area clean. She gave them her blessing and moved to the other cluster of men on the next corner.

After consuming the banana and the hot chocolate, Tito and I returned to our previous spot. Like a meerkat, I stood in an erect posture overlooking the area in hope of seeing at least one of the three men from last week. Again, my thoughts and self-activities were interrupted. A grey car was approaching the corner when one of the men said in a tone that everybody standing there could hear, “It’s the police.” As the patrol car got closer, I waited impatiently for the reaction of the other men. The men waved at the operator of the automobile and to the other officer who was in the passenger seat. The officers waved back and continued to the other corner. I asked a man, who was wearing a cowboy hat, who I refer to as *Xavier* throughout the study, “The cops don’t tell you anything.” Keeping his focus on the gray car that read “Sheriff” on the side of the door, he said, “Not right now but if they come later and see us here they will say something.”

After the patrol car vanished into the distance, he turned to me and asked, “So you are the college student doing research on us?” Selecting my words carefully, I replied, “I’m the college student who would like others to know about your migrating experience. Let us be honest, the only thing that the public knows about all of you is the negative things they see in the news. Why do not you take the interview and see for

yourself the questions that I am asking and if you do not like it, then we can stop the interview. What do you say?" I asked and *Xavier* agreed.

We parted from the other men but were still within view. We rested our feet by sitting on carpet grass near the edge of the street. Automatically I asked him if it was okay with him if I recorded the conversation, expecting a yes reply; however, as I was going through my black backpack, he stated his uncertainty in partaking in the interview. He stated, "I tell you what, why don't you ask someone else to do the interview first and if they do it, then I'll do it. Please, ask someone from the group first." Somehow, I had assumed that it was okay to record the conversation since I had told them that I was doing an interview. I guess we both made a mistaken assumption. I went back to the group in hope of finding someone willing to be recorded.

Tito was standing next to two young men, who, based upon their appearance, did not look older than twenty, as he entertained them with his stories. I told Tito what had happened. In his theatrical performance, addressing the other men in the group, he said, "I do not know why they do not want to share their stories with you. If there was a way that I could help out I would." I was delighted to hear this from him so I asked him to partake in the interview. He replied in a knightly tone, "I cannot, because I have been in the States for over ten years and my accounts will do you no good. I only come here to keep these fine men company and not to take their work. I work a stable job. By the way, I must be getting on my way. Good day gentlemen." With those words, Tito proudly walked through the group and proceeded to a wooden house, which, on previous occasions, had been described as his home.

Placing my recorder back into my black backpack, I approached three men that were sitting across the street. I had seen them before and had introduced myself as a student doing research. I stood next to them and told them that I was doing interviews and would like to know if they would like to be interviewed. Before hearing replies, I said, "Look, I know that everybody has a problem with the audio recorder, so I'll tell you what, you will not be recorded. We could sit here (point at the stop sign near us) and just talk. I will ask you questions and you reply without the worry of being recorded. What do you say?" They looked at each other for nonverbal consensus; they then looked at me and agreed to the interview.

Before leaving, I showed them my auto recorder. I wanted them to see for themselves that I did not record the conversation. I waved at the other men on the corner. Tito had come back to the group; he was on a discolored blue mountain bike. When I got to my bicycle, I sat at its base and recollected major points in the conversation that I had with the three individuals. Underneath a tree and just few minutes after the interviews, I felt it was important to record the information for two reasons. It was fresh on my mind and I did not want to forget certain details that might have occurred if I had prolonged the activity. After recording a summary and the major points of the conversation, I mounted my mountain bike and was on my way. The interviews had finally begun.

Relevance of the Methodological Approach to My Scientific Claim

The in-depth interviews provide a first-hand account of the migration process, by incorporating the experiences of the laborers into three stages of their migration process. First, there is the disruption caused by unilateral international trade like NAFTA on the social and economic situation in Mexico, as pointed out in the literature review chapter. Thus, the displacement of job opportunities and deflation of the peso has left no alternative but emigration for these men. Therefore, day-laborers perform similar tasks in the United States as they would have in Mexico. For example, *Aldo* alludes to this issue of similarity between prior occupation and his current job in the United States when he states, “I do about the same thing here, putting up fences and/or moving heavy things around. The only difference is that I get paid more here.” Therefore, the industrialization of farming that became megafarms was a contributing factor for most of these interviewees to immigrate to the United States.

Second, the men talked about the journey into the United States, whereby everyone stated that they used a coyote in the migration process. *Felipe* adds the following about gaining information on coyotes: “You trust the ability of the individual, that the information is accurate and that he (coyote) is going to get you safely where you need to be, so when we say *que el vato es de confianza* (the guy is trustworthy), we are referring to his abilities nothing else.” In this instance, the interviewees are pointing out stage two of the migration process, which is the means they used to gain entry into the United States. Then, the men talked about their experience in the United States and in the community.

The three stages of the migration process resurface in the next chapter. The motivation for selecting day-laborers as my sample and representatives of the undocumented immigrant in the United States is because they are center topic on debates and issues of illegal migration in this country. In addition, their master status as “alien,” because there is very little care if they are fathers, sons, or brothers, pushes them to cultural position of underclass—with no political representation—in this country. This a main reason, why the first three field-interviews where included in this chapter, to show how even as a researcher one faces climate and other challenges in being able to tell these men stories. Therefore, the methodological approach by asking and probing these men to provide information about their migration experience, of why they left Mexico, the journey into the United States, and the encounters with Americans, is the foundation of this dissertation and of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Structural barriers attempt to prevent the free movement of people while core-periphery relations allow, and even drive, the free movement of material goods. But as noted from a Marxist perspective by Kamenka (1983), people move along with commodities in capitalistic societies; therefore, the attempt to control the movement of individuals is futile. The United States' capitalistic society has encouraged the condition in which social networks become tools to help unskilled immigrants follow the flow of commodities into the core country from Mexico. For example, immigrants migrate to areas where they are hired based upon their labor skills.

Undocumented immigrants' inflow into the United States occurs because of the need for their labor power, and as both Acuña (1988) and Andreas (2000) note, the migration of an undocumented immigrant does not drain the social and economic resources of the United States. Rather, immigrants migrate in order to partake in the economic pipeline created by both nation-states. Unfortunately, many Americans tend to overlook this economic relationship (and its benefit) with Mexico; instead, they tend to see undocumented immigrations as a foreign cultural invasion and not as capital prosperity. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore the racialization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants in the United States. In particular, Chapter IV examines: (1) the causes for migration; (2) the utilization of social agents in the migration process; (3) and interaction between immigrants and people of color.

As noted in the literature review chapter, the anti-Mexican and anti-Mexican immigrant subframes play a central role in the migration process for undocumented immigrants. For example, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 was intended to deter the hiring of undocumented immigrants by holding employers accountable, however, it was difficult to punish employers because of the “knowing” and “good faith” clauses in the law (I discuss this in greater detail later). However, the law did have the effect of implementing severe punishment on undocumented immigrants and it increased the number of border patrol agents. In another instance, according to Ngai (2004), because of Mexican immigrant’s continuous association to low skill labor, he/she was excluded from benefiting of the Immigration Act of 1990, when competing with countries that the United States has traditionally relied for skilled labor. In conjunction, the anti-Mexican sentiment consists of the continuous fear of the Latino culture; they breed like cockroaches, they do not want to learn the languages, or as noted by the interviewee about Mexican culture conducted by the Nation reporter Moser “...chicken-in-the-yard culture...” (p. 11); this perception about Mexicans derives from the idea and belief of an inferior culture, whereby elite non-Hispanic white males relegate Mexican and their descents into an anti-Mexican subframe that reinforces this category.

Examining the overall perspective, the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican subframes derive from the white racial frame by which elite and other non-Hispanic white males shape the status of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and undocumented immigrants in this country. Therefore, the structure of this chapter consists of analyzing

these subframes to explain the migration process, and as a result, it is divided into three main sections and final remarks section. Each section consists of a specific stage in the migration process, for example, stage one has to do with the unilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico. In this relationship, the United States has disrupted the social and economic structure in Mexico by externally exploiting Mexican resources, while implementing immigration policies to protect its white elite constituents. I then address the social agents that the undocumented immigrant uses to gain entry into the United States. Therefore, stage two examines the social networks and utilization of coyotes to counter the anti-immigrant laws and anti-Mexican sentiments. Examination revealed that social networks and coyotes are means that assist in the migration process, and as pointed out in the introductory chapter, both function to counter the white racial frame. Stage three provides an insight of the interaction between the local residents and the undocumented immigrant, in the United States. In stage three, I elaborate of the challenges confronting undocumented immigrants when they encounter other subordinate groups, especially Mexican Americans and African Americans. I end this chapter with a final remarks section that recaps the factors associated with the migration process.

Stage One of the Migration Process: Structural Factor for Emigration and Immigration

External Exploitation and Anti-Immigrant Laws

Ethnocentrism, in the form of marginalizing immigrants' actions and cultures, permeates the legal sphere surrounding immigration. Within this legal sphere, immigration laws benefit employers, through what Martin (2002) calls the "revolving door" of immigration laws. Favorable immigration laws are not a prerequisite; even the lack of immigration policies favors employer access to cheap immigrant labor. The need and desire for cheap labor creates a system where certain immigration enforcement is overlooked, or not strictly enforced, due to the fear that enforcement might negatively affect the flow of unskilled labor in certain work sectors. For example, advocates of immigration reform and human rights point out that large corporations such as the poultry industry (see video *Food Inc.*), benefit from immigration laws that ensure a stable pool of unskilled cheap labor for the factories.

Federal immigration laws serve as agents of the white racial framing where an undocumented immigrant becomes a pawn within the marginalizing capitalistic society. This is evident in the fact that in many immigration laws, the punishment is aimed at the victim, in this case the immigrant, and not the employer. Legal terms such as "good faith" or "knowingly" allow employers to avoid legal punishment. According to Calavita (2004), the legal idea of good faith or knowingly (the belief that an employer will never consciously hire an undocumented immigrant) handicaps government enforcement agencies, because it becomes nearly impossible to prove an employer's direct

involvement in the criminal act. For example, in April 17, 2008 Federal immigration agents conducted raids on Pilgrim's Pride Poultry. The raids fanned across five states: Texas, Tennessee, Florida, West Virginia, and Arkansas. Hundreds of undocumented immigrants were arrested. In addition and according to a company spokesman, "No civil or criminal charges, including charges that Pilgrim's knowingly hired these employees or conspired to hire them, have been filed against the company in any of these cases" (CNN 2008).

Yet, the hiring practice of undocumented immigrants continues in the pursuit of cheap foreign labor whereby the employer does not ask about legal status, to comply with "good faith" or "knowingly" clause. Employers hire the individual anyway, as stated by one of my interviewees, *Ernesto*, "He never asked me if I had paper, the only thing that he said was do you want to work," and I said yes, "then he told me to jump in the back of the truck. So, I been working with him ever since." This passage shows how in the United States' racialized structure, the breaking of laws and their heavy enforcement falls on the immigrant and not on the employer, whom this structure automatically excludes from any responsibility and blame.

Hence, capitalism becomes an arm of the white racial frame, because it advocates the dominant group's ideology. Negotiating labor wages becomes an impossible task for day-laborers because of the lack of political representation or any legal means to sue when exploited, as challenging abusers could result in deportation. Hence, employers of "illegal labor" apply this capitalistic idea of hiring the cheapest labor with the highest rate of profit, and it is portrayed as conducting good business.

The White Racial Frame and the Pull for Cheap Undocumented Labor

The racial frame fits into this dynamic of “good business,” because the labor is cheap, socially accessible, and requires minimum legal interference. An immigrant’s lack of power and his/her inability to legally challenge the exploiter provides certain benefits to the employer, where he/she can gain social and economic goods from unskilled labor without being labeled negatively by society (which I elaborate later in this chapter). In hiring a group that has been culturally marginalized, the exploiter relieves emotional guilt about the treatment of his/her “commodity” because of the position the person occupies in the racial hierarchy. For example, another key respondent, *Xavier* explains the situation with his wife’s employer and the injustice with which the employer treats his wife:

My wife was working for this woman, and at the end of the week, when she was supposed to pay her, she accused her of stealing and was going to deduct the thing that she apparently stole from her pay. When my wife protested, she threatens to call *la migra* (border patrol) and told my wife to leave and that she was not going to pay her a dime.

Hence, the white racial frame aids in creating a subcategory for immigrants, where statements such as, “they are not Americans so they should not benefit from American rights and laws,” always benefit the person paying for the commodity labor power, or as Sassen (2007) calls it, a global commodity. In the passage above, the employer felt free to make accusations and terminate her employee without any legal repercussions. Worse, retaining her pay is “conducting good business” and not a modern form of slavery, where the laborer is completely powerless. *Xavier* goes on to add, “*la vieja era de Mexico*” (the hag was from Mexico) to describe the woman. From his

emphasis, the fact that the employer was a former immigrant herself made the situation vital to the issue of undocumented immigrant exploitation.

The Anti-Immigrant Subframe: Creating the Underclass in the United States

The typical reply that I hear from constituents when I tell them about similar events, as noted in the case of *Xavier's* wife, is, “why do they come, if things are that bad for them?” It is a valid question, and I think it is question many Americans ask. Thus, it is important to note that immigrants are not ignorant about the social and political situation that awaits them in the core country. As one of them put it, “I know that Americans do not want us, what am I to do, my family needs to eat too.” Therefore, their migration into the United States is due to the disruption of their way of life through the external exploitation process of seeking to create a global commodity by global powers. In a conversation with a soft-spoken respondent named *Armando*, he provides an insight to the displacement situation in his community, where small farmers lose their lands and livelihood to transnational corporations:

We [referring to his family farm] could not compete with the large farm industry. As a result, I had to leave my community to find work elsewhere. For the amount that my parents were producing and the return to the expenses, some of us had to leave.

The extraction of resources and/or the mechanization of the rural areas into mega-farms has disrupted the way of life for these families; therefore, young men and women are left with very little alternative but to emigrate from their land.

By placing immigrants, specially the undocumented ones, at the bottom of the racial hierarchy it provides a justification for such extraction of resources and displacement within the periphery. To the extent that the white racial framing and

ethnocentrism keeps the faces of Americans behind a veil, where they are unable to see clearly the destabilization in an immigrant's country of origin. This veil, taking Du Bois's ([1903] 2007) usage of the term, blurs U.S. involvement and destabilization of Latin American countries, but it also presents, at times, contradictory views of undocumented immigrants in the public place.

In the United States, there is a radically inhumane collective thinking that the same rights warranted to Americans should only be accessed by Americans, excluding undocumented immigrants within the public sphere. Within this perspective, however, one finds contradictory clauses: one claims to want immigrants deported and done away with completely, while another wants their labor power to, as Massey (2007) argues, keep wages stable. This continual push and pull dilemma has segregated the day-laborers to ethnic or racially specific enclaves, as one of them put it, "We live among Blacks and poor Mexicans and Chicanos." As noted by Kim (2000), immigrants are pushed by the dominant group into specific geographical location, and these have been traditionally residential areas of people of color. Therefore, their presence, as newcomers, in the local communities is permitted as long as they comply with the social expectations of the locality. Within these communities, laborers are in the public sphere where they interact, at times, harmoniously with locals; however, this does not insinuate that tension between day-laborers and residents does not exist. On the contrary, undocumented immigrants are continuously reminded that they are not welcome through different forms of public outlets, such as the media (see Flores-Yeffal, Vidales and Plemons 2011); they find

themselves trying to cast as little public light on themselves as possible (I explain in greater detail in Stage Three).

With the enforcement of the border region, undocumented immigrants have relied on innovative techniques in entering the United States. The racialization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants, treating them as criminals, has been one of many contributing factors forcing them to expand their dependence on coyotes for crossing into the United States. Racialization and marginalization originate from adopting an ethnocentric perception about other people of color and ethnic groups, who differ from the dominant group. Therefore, undocumented immigrants risk emotional and physical endangerment when illegally immigrating to the United States. Even with the structural limitations imposed on them by the dominant culture, they are typically able to reach their destination.

This in-turn permits most Americans to take an ethnocentric approach to why undocumented immigrants come into the United States. For most Americans, the perception is that immigrants want and look forward to leaving their country and take advantage of this “countries’ welfare system,” as noted by continues discourse associated with “illegal immigration.” But day-laborers have a different perception about the migration process, as noted by *Armando*, “People think that I want to leave *mi querida tierra* (my beloved land).” Clearly, when looking at the overall picture, there is a misconception in how most Americans view the discussion to come to the United States that differs from what the undocumented immigrant experiences. Continuing with *Armando* about why he would come to a country that is not welcoming to him, he adds:

People think that the majority of us [undocumented immigrant] do not try to find work in our country, but those in the city does not want us there. They call us *pinche indio* (fuck-ing Indian). Also, there is the issue of *acomodando* [the word is being used as slang to mean gaining employment]. That is why we are here [the United States], because we needed to survive.

Immigrants learn about job opportunities in the United States and make arrangements for employment opportunities found within the host society. The majority of the labor pool comes from rural communities that have been disrupted by NAFTA; however, the transition between labor-intensive jobs in the host society mirrors that of their previous employment. According to the day-laborers, once they become familiar with the area, they relay job opportunities to relatives with the work experience or ability to learn the job requirements. As noted by *Aldo*, a short stocky man:

My friend told me that his employer was impress with my performance and was interested to know if he or I knew someone that was looking for a job. Basically, the employer was looking for someone like us, who worked hard and gave no trouble.

In the passage, one sees that the continuation of their social network relies on employer satisfaction with job performance, and thus, labor is sought, due to specific demands. Beneficial to the employer, selecting individuals with similar characteristics from these groups keeps them isolated from external influences that could challenge the exploitative agent of the structure—the employer.

Stage Two of the Migration Process: Social Networks and Coyotes

Networks: Combating the Anti-Immigrant Subframe and Militarization of the Border

The U.S. racial structure attempts to control the movement of undocumented immigrants by limiting access to social resources, but immigrants find alternative means of entry, such as the *coyote*. In addition, they are also expected to seek legal means of entry but current immigration policy adds to the unauthorized in-migration of the undocumented immigrant. *Luis*, who seemed to be the oldest of all the interviewees, adds to the issue of the legal challenges when stating, “They charge you hundreds of dollars for the visa paper work. Then, you have to wait months for an interview. After several years of investing time, money, and energy, you can still be rejected. BUT, they keep the money.” Hence, undocumented immigrants are prohibited from having access to social resources, but an immigrant’s marginalization is also reflected in how the racial frame operates to keep the movement of undocumented immigrants at bay. This pushes undocumented immigrants to rely on social networks to immigrate into the United States. Thus, undocumented immigrants base their migration patterns on stable pipelines of information. This information consists of two elements: 1) the destination for the immigrant, and 2) the hiring of a coyote to assist with the migratory process. Through pipelining, immigrants gain information of “hot zones” and reliable coyotes, where having access to a reliable coyote is solely based on social networks. These processes serve as tools to combat the racial structure.

The militarization of the border and the selective immigration process are barriers in the migration process, but they cannot prevent completely unauthorized immigration. The interviewees in the study revealed how they had some basic knowledge about situations along the border prior to arriving in the border region. They used this information to create migration routes bypassing border patrol agents. This pre-knowledge about the area might not be true for those emigrating from other Latin American countries, but for Mexicans, the majority of them had a basic understanding of hot spots in the American side of the Rio Grande River, Arizona desert, California, New Mexico, and border towns on the Mexican side. In regards to the border area, the day-laborers had generally understood where to find coyotes to assist them. For these immigrants, where to go and who to look for, it all originates from information provided by those who had already taken the journey “north.” *Manuel*, one of my first interviewees, for example, told me about his experience when arriving at the bus station in one of the border towns, where the majority of day-laborers had insights about the areas patrolled by the border patrol, as one of them said, “*la migra esta picando* (the border patrol is biting) in so and so place.” For these men, social networks countermanded the situation along the border, where U.S. authorities attempt to deter unauthorized entry.

For these undocumented men, social networks provide an important function in combating the white racial frame, by giving them access to information about where to find coyotes. According to *Manuel*, in his first journey into the United States, he used community information to find a coyote inside a bus terminal. He states, “I sat in the

lobby, extra clothes inside a plastic bag, when a man asked me if I was looking for a coyote. I said yes and here I am.” This is a simple representation of how a reliable social network (which I talk about later in this chapter) is very effective against cultural and physical obstacles. With the increase of social capital, knowing the right people with the valuable information, undocumented immigrants can strengthen and expand the web of networks.

Creating a Pipeline from Mexico to the United States

From this chain migration, individuals from developing countries immigrate to core countries, such as the United States. Movement into these pre-selected communities into the core countries originates from hearsay of those who made the migration.

Accounting for these pre-selected communities, in the majority of times, the immigrant is unfamiliar with the border area. Along with crossing information, stories of the wealth of the United States trickles back to these communities, while according to the interviewees racism and discrimination is one of the prices for working in the land of economic opportunity. As an interviewee, *Armando* put it:

I have no idea about this place but people in my community [referring to the country of origin] would talk about it. I have relatives who frequently visited my hometown, so they introduced the idea of migration to this area to me. They kept telling me how tough it was here [referring to the US]. I did not know people hated us this much.

This illustrates the emigration based on hearsay information, and without complete or prior collection of data about the area marketed as the destination, which has been created through the historical relationship between core and periphery countries. Unfortunately, it has been the exploitation of periphery resources that diminishes any

possibility of economic development and has forced individuals like Armando to emigrate. Therefore, the immigrant finds himself/herself crossing the border of the country that exploits and disrupts their political, economic, and/or social structure by externally extracting their natural resources—a process known as external exploitation.

The patrolling and enforcement along the Mexican and United States border at times might seem chaotic, but it is really a synchronized movement among people and resources, when looking at it from a sociological perspective. Take for example, the border cities in the region of the Rio Grande Valley: an undocumented immigrant from Mexico relies on, and has a basic understanding of, these border towns. One understands that information about crossing opportunities would be at their disposal, along with coyotes eager to cross them for a sum of money in towns such as Reynosa, Matamoros, or Ciudad Juarez. As pointed out by *Jose*, an undocumented immigrant reflecting on his migration experience, of how a friend told him about Reynosa's bus terminal:

I arrived at the bus station; I got off, and did what I was told, to walk around the terminal, where someone would eventually approach me. As I made my way to the main entrance, a man approached and asked if I need a coyote, because he knew one. Then, I asked how he knew that I was looking for one, he just shrugs his shoulders and said that I looked the part. Now looking back, I can see what he meant, because I was dressed like someone from *el campo, un indio* [the rural area, an Indian]. [he laughs]

In this situation and social structure, migration is based on accessing information from social networks. Information of where to cross, how to find individuals, and/or the means of crossing are alternative tools an undocumented immigrant can access to counter border enforcement. Jose's story shows the function of how locality and finding a coyote, depend on social networking. Therefore, the racializing and marginalizing of

immigrants have expanded the web of accessing information, as noted by Burt (1995), because of the common and inescapable threat of deportation, if captured, or death while making the journey. The reduction to subhuman categories forces them to rely on social networks and thus create robust web of information. In turn, the social network expands to new areas, known as new destinations, where, as described again by Burt (1995), it creates new webs of networks in the chain migration. Although, the movement of objects and people between the two nation-states (the United States and Mexico) dates to their early development, smugglers have played a central role in the movement of these goals. It was not until the actual creation of the border-patrol, as noted by Andreas (2000), that smuggler emerged as a criminal organization.

Confianza (Trust) in the Information and Coyotes

The information deemed reliable is mostly provided by someone who is or has immigrated. Hence, past immigration experience is a key criteria for *confianza* or trustworthiness. Although it is a reasonable conclusion that primary groups, in this case the family, are likely to give most accurate information, but for these men personal characteristics outweigh kinship ties. For example, according to *Ramon*, a close friend of Tito, “It was hard to believe my brother about the journey north, being that he has never emigrated.” Indeed, reliable information can only be provided by those who have experienced the challenges of the migration process, so personal experience and characteristics (known by others to be honest and vice versa) become essential factors. The majority of the times, nuclear family members are viewed as being dependable because they fundamentally have the best interest of the person in mind. However,

according to the men I interviewed, they based their trust on individual qualities instead of a collective understanding of group membership, as pointed out by one of the interviewees, “I trust more in my friends than my cousins or some of my blood brothers.” The information provided to him by friends was treated as more viable because of the level of *confianza* in them. When determining whose information to value and level of trust in the individual, the issue of *de confianza* becomes a salient factor for the interview participants.

What is the function of *confianza*? The practical function of the level of *confianza* is visible in the manner in which it countermands the hostile and racialized environment of the United States by giving reliable information to bypass structural obstacles. Reliable information is vital in the immigration process; poor information can result in deportation or death for an undocumented immigrant. One important factor that aids in the migratory process is the social network. The concept of *de confianza* plays a role in the social network of immigrants. In particular, reliable social network relay information that will assist the undocumented immigrant in utilizing and jumping into pipelines of the migration network. The web-like pipelines intersect and disperse into different migration processes—entry into the United States—in conjunction with the different forms of coyotes. According to the complexity and social robustness, the border bandit occupies the bottom sphere of the hierarchy of reliable and *de confianza*, the quasi-professional coyote the middle and at the top is the professional coyote.

The Three Different Forms of Coyotes

Based on my conversations with the interviewees, I have concluded that there are three types of coyote in the migration process: quasi-professional, border-bandit, and professional coyote. A quasi-professional coyote is a person who immigrants specifically seek because of his/her crossing record and treatment of the people he/she brings over. *Cruz*, a respondent in his late forties, tells of looking for a quasi-professional coyote, “I heard about this coyote that has been deeply recommended by friends and family. I was still concerned for my safety but at least I knew who he was. Although he charged me a little more, I had some *confianza* [trust] in him.” Through this interview with *Cruz* the term *confianza* kept surfacing in the conversation about social networks and the migration process. Other interviewees would also use this term in our conversation, they would say, “*esta persona no es de confianza* (this person is not trustworthy).” Determining the price to pay for a coyote depends on their level of trustworthiness. This raises other issues, specifically, from which individuals are these men likely to receive reliable information on coyotes? From the perspective of the day-laborers, reliable information is based on individual characteristics more than family ties.

The border bandit is opportunistic with the “objects” he/she smuggles, for a border-bandit, people fall within the frame of an object. Through criminal organization such as the ZETAs, border bandits’ activities extend from drug-trafficking, smuggling automobiles, fire-arms, and exotic animals, to human trafficking. Undocumented immigrants with weak social networks only have access to this form of smuggler, where there is a high risk factor of physical and/or emotional harm, because of their limited

access to an established social pipeline. Immigrants from the interior of Latin America lack familiarity and reliable information in the majority of cases; they may fall victim to border bandits. A defining characteristic of a border bandit is that he/she becomes the bull-shark of the border crossing; a border bandit engulfs any commodity that needs to be transferred into sovereign territory. When opportunities arise for capital gain, the border bandit will partake in the migration process.

In the migration process, the dialogue between the immigrant and the border bandit is reflective of social attitudes of responsibility for the immigrant. According to *Armando*, who used a border bandit in his first crossing, an interaction between a man and an animal is a close approximation of the interface. To clarify the relationship, he felt that it was unlike a relationship between a man and a pet, because that relationship requires some level of concern for the animal, but similar to that of farmer and livestock. *Armando* states, “They [referring to border-bandits] called us *cavezas* (heads) or *pollo* (chickens).” The Spanish terms, *cavezas* and *pollo*, are symbolic representations of how a coyote views and associates with immigrants, because such terms are usually intended for animals that are led to the slaughterhouse. For example, the term *cavezas*, in farming, means the herding of heads of livestock—cattle—from point A to point B. Hence, the dialogue between smuggler and undocumented immigrant mirrors the efforts taken to disavow any responsibility (emotional or physical) for the undocumented immigrant, creating emotional distance. This distance contrasts with upward movement in the social network—hiring a better coyote.

An improvement to the border-bandit is the quasi-professional coyote. The quasi-professional operations center on servicing undocumented immigrants. Their operations tend to be more sophisticated and complex than that of the border bandit, and are task specific—only crossing undocumented immigrants. *Felipe* talks about his experience in using a quasi-professional coyote:

I was taken to a house, in this side (referring to the United States). I was occupying the same small house with other people: men, women, and children. I waited three days in that place for the van that was coming into Houston from California to stop there. In the house, I met people who were going to California, Michigan, Washington, and Texas; they too were waiting for their vans. I was in the last group because the van that was coming got stopped by *la migra*, so they (the coyotes) had to get someone else to drive a different van at least that was what we were told.

A quasi-professional coyote's structure consists of an intricate movement of resources. Thus, the people in the house were part of a web of migration, operating as efficiently as that of a transit bus line. According to Burt (1995), this is a natural course of filling in the gaps in the structure for those who need cheap labor but do not want Mexicans. This is needed for the stability of society, and so, the web of networks are agents of this mechanism.

In addition, Massey (2008: 45) calls this *cumulative causation*, that is, the operation and function of the coyote is due to its vital contribution to the social structure, whereby information maintains international migration stable allowing continues movement into the core country, in this case the United States, over an extended period of time. Society needs specific individuals to fill the gaps in the structure, and in the process, they expand the web-network. Hence, dependence on these web networks combat the limited structural resources imposed by the racialized culture, ensuring that

migration patterns are not hindered and immigrant labor moves to areas where it is needed. A coyote's existence is directly linked to servicing these segments of society. However, like all components of any society, a hierarchy determines the circumstances and conditions under which one gains access to the social network, as well as at what level. For example, in the migration process in the immigrant community, the professional coyote occupies the apex social position in this hierarchy.

According to the day-laborers, they feel comfortable hiring a professional coyote, because he/she is able to instill *confianza* on his/her ability to get them safely across and to their destination. In addition, a professional coyote has a stable clientele and a selective pipeline accessible to only a few. Having and gaining access to a professional coyote requires extensive and accumulated knowledge about the authorized migration process, as well as constant exposure to an undocumented immigrant population. Within this population, information flows among group members about the professional coyote, because someone in the group always seems to, or claims to, know a professional coyote. As noted by an interviewee, who asked not to be mentioned by any form of name:

After several years in the United States, I learned about coyote X, through a friend, who used him to bring his family, whom he learned through another friend. When we met, we spent several hours talking about my job, soccer, my hometown, and my family. We finalized the deal and once I paid at least half of the total price, which was a lot when compared to other coyotes, he drove down to and picked up my wife and children at our house.

Another interviewee shared a similar experience with a professional coyote, "When he was on the phone with someone, I do not know who, he kept to referring to us as *clientes* (clients) or at times by our names. This made my brother and I feel more

comfortable.” From the passages, one notes similar patterns emerging of how the professional coyote takes a personal interest in those in the migration process, from the person who is sponsoring the trip to the individual coming across. Gathering information could result in testing the person to make sure that they are who they claim to be, and another could be that the coyote has enough information to track the person down if he/she does not pay the remaining balance. These would seem the most logical and practical conclusions, but *Gustavo*, after several hours into the trip, mustered the courage to ask the coyote this question. He replied to the question about referring to them by their birth name or client, “I was in your shoes once, undocumented, so I know why you are coming to the United States—I been there. Besides, I have a reputation to uphold.”

Examining the coyote’s comment, “I been there,” he is expressing his own experience as an “other.” It is an anomie, disconnection, imposed on the coyote by the same racial structure that has criminalized the undocumented immigrant; therefore, a common factor between *Gustavo* and the coyotes, aside from being labeled by the structure as criminals, is the common Mexican background. Because of their mestizo background, the white racial frame has pushed them both into the “other” category. As a result, it places the coyote under an umbrella that stereotypes him/her. The probability of a non-Hispanic white coyote is very slim, as noted by Conover (1987), or the labeling of such a person as a coyote. What is often quite essential about the coyote is the language and his/her birth place that permits a mutual understanding of how both are perceived by the majority of Americans. Having a cultural background, aside from being an important

factor in regards to *confianza*, it also functions to push coyotes within the white racial frame.

For this reason, a professional coyote relates, to some extent, their personal experiences to that of the undocumented immigrant by taking a personal interest in their safety. In turn, their clientele increases by ensuring successful journeys and client satisfaction. The positive reputation expands his/her network, whereby the coyote becomes selective about the persons with whom he/she travels. Hence, the undocumented immigrant feels that he/she is in good hands and trusts the judgment of the coyote. By meeting these criteria, rapport is established between the immigrant and the coyote, where information about the coyote is passed to a select few. In addition, partial responsibility is passed to both the person paying for the trip and to the one who gave that person information about the smuggler's whereabouts. *Marco* a young man in his late-teens and his migration experience encompasses all these scenarios:

Before going into the river, he told me, 'if you panic you will drown, so just lay facing up, like if you were dead, and I will pull you.' I told him 'sure you will, I know you just let me die. He just looked at me with a small grin; I think he could not believe I have *los huevos* (the balls) to talk to him like that.' We were crossing when the water began to drag me down. I heard a scream telling me *acuestate en la puta madre agua* (lay in the motherfucker water). As soon as I did, I felt a hand pulling the back of my neck. Once on land, I told him 'thanks for not leaving me.' He replied, 'Your friend paid good money for you and I have a reputation to uphold.' I gave him no trouble after that. In the past year, I have sent three family members and two close friends to him.

At this structural level, one sees three forms of coyotes, in relation to the association between the social network pipelining and trusting the information. This relationship is essential in the situation of the oppressed group (Mexican immigrants): there is much at stake for them, and they must insure a successful crossing. In addition,

the white racial framing provides no other alternative for undocumented immigrants, that is, using every means and resource at their reach. The coyote is one of these resources for undocumented immigrants; however, access to them requires social capital. In the majority of first trips, day-laborers need assistance/sponsor-ship in the migration process. They need an individual(s) to aid financially with the costs of emigrating. In turn, the undocumented immigrant needs to possess some form of human commodity that has value in the core country, to gain assistance with the process.

Theorists, such as Douglas Massey, assert that those who seek the services of coyotes are nexus to the issue of legality; for this reason, I use the face-to-face interviews to enrich the day-laborers' information to a larger racialization of Mexican immigrants by the white racial frame. As noted by Acuña (1988), the boom of the undocumented immigrant, in the United States, was triggered from the breaking of the Bracero Program contracts, Operation Wetback in the 1950's, and other instances where immigration policy and/or loopholes in the policies allowed for the exploitation of Mexican immigrants. According to Acuña (1988) and Gonzalez (2000), these ethnocentric policies benefitted non-Hispanic whites over Mexicans and their descendent—Mexican Americans. In this sense, the white racial frame and coyote usage are linked to the undocumented immigrants and are essential in understanding their direct and indirect contribution to the migration process, especially when examining their interaction with other people of color in the United States.

Stage Three of the Migration Process: The Undocumented Immigrant in the U.S.

The Anti-Mexican Frame: The Annexation of a New Group

Once in the United States, the undocumented immigrant faces an array of cultural and economic challenges that mirror those imposed on other subordinate groups, most prominently African Americans. Historically, similarities have existed between African Americans and Mexicans, although there have been continuous debates over the issues of racism, discrimination, and the classification of Latinos into a separate racial category (which I address in detail in the next chapter), regarding their encounter with the dominant white culture. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo permitted Mexicans within the newly annexed land to keep their “white status” of European ancestry; but as noted by Cobas, Duany, and Feagin (2009), while Latinos were labeled as legally “white,” socially they were pushed to subordinate positions in the United States. Parallels between Mexican Americans and African Americans are woven into the fabric of the United States white racial framing of people of color. For example, African Americans became ingrained into American society through slavery and Mexican Americans through the conquest of their native land. Thus, a similar parallel exists between blacks and Mexicans where both racial groups were, and continue to be, marginalized through the expansion and conquest by white civilization.

Manifest destiny and the era of Enlightenment forced Mexican Americans and African Americans along similar structural paths of subordination and low SES, as they encountered the “civilized world.” Therefore, in conflict, African Americans were forced to dissociate themselves from their African ancestry and Mexican Americans, to this

day, are negatively sanctioned for retaining their Mexican heritage. Although there might be continuous dialogue about issues of involuntary migration versus voluntary migration (I also discuss the semiotics of such terms in the final chapter), a blurred line distinguishes the two because in either case an external force has swallowed these two racial groups into the blob of the white racial frame. For example, African Americans were removed from their native land, and, as stated before, Mexican Americans were conquered into this society. Therefore, an undocumented immigrant is subjugated to this external force, so his/her migration is involuntary, in a cause and effect relationship. Although there might be debate over the issue of voluntary versus involuntary, from listening to the reasons for immigration, at least from these men, they had very little other alternative but to emigrate because of the displacement caused by NAFTA.

In the movement of individuals from one sovereign nation to another, an apparatus to determine cause is the concept of “choice,” of involuntary vs. voluntary migration. This instrument of measurement is based on an undocumented immigrant’s conscious decision to immigrate, and open the way for family and friends, as noted by noted by *Ramon*:

My younger brother went to *la preparatoria* (the high school) with the money I was sending home. I, on the other hand, kept telling my parents it would be better if he came to work here [the U.S.], but my parents did not want that. He, however, has not been able to find work in Mexico after he graduated. I told him, recently, if by the time I visit, you have not found work, then you are coming back with me. All the money I send for his schooling for nothing. He is going to the same job that I am doing [He began to curse].

When resources are exploited, there is very little difference between being forced to leave or staying and starving the death, so the issue of choice is irrelevant. One male

respondent, *Diego* adds to this topic by stating, “I did not want to leave (referring to his hometown), but the large American farm companies put me out of business; it was either leave or starve. I have to feed my family.” Hence, the United States’ direct and indirect involvement has created social and economic instability in the country of origin for these immigrants, which alters the migration pattern, so according to *Diego* “wanting” to immigrate becomes second to “having” to immigrate to feed his family.

Both Mexicans and blacks became components of the American structure through force, by way of slavery or conquest. They are subservient to the dominant culture. From a historical perspective, more than a century has passed since the Emancipation Proclamation; however, the marginalization by law enforcement and the white community have transcended the iron fist of the law on a group with the least amount of social power and status—undocumented immigrants. Like African Americans before the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, undocumented immigrants are fearful of the police and any other legal agencies that represent the power-that-be. As noted by a respondent, “if I get robbed or beaten-up, I am not calling the police, for they might do the same [laughter].” Symbolically, it seems that undocumented immigrants perceive police officers as the enforcers of the dominant group’s ideology. From a sociological perspective, this is true. In a collective society, norms and values transform themselves to laws, so laws are written norms that are punishable when violated. Therefore, the marginalization and abuse that was notorious within the African America community now ostentatiously attacks undocumented immigrants. Therefore, a parallel of abuse toward people of color exists between what

occurred in the civil and/or pre-civil right movements in this country, and an undocumented immigrant's current situation.

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Public Forum

In modern society, treating someone as inferior because of the color of their skin, infuriates a conscientious society; however, often this is not the case with undocumented immigrants. Why? Although non-Hispanic white Americans show prejudiced attitudes and share racist conversations behind closed doors as noted by Picca and Feagin in *Two-Faced-Racism*, it is covert, meaning kept away from the public stage. With undocumented immigrants, in comparison, the attitudes and racism may be overt, with no social repercussions, and presented on the main stage of performance. The undocumented immigrant today resembles blacks in the Jim Crow era, where he/she occupies the bottom of the racial hierarchy. For example, Massey (2007) notes, "Given the historical depth and institutionalized longevity of racism in the United States, it is only logical to assume that new mechanisms of racial subordination will emerge as others are eliminated (55)." Therefore, Americans can discriminate without a sense of remorse or guilt, but most importantly without being labeled as a racist. Hence, undocumented immigrants become the "other" and "alien," the threatening group to the stabilization of a civilized society, where the immigrant occupies a position as subhuman and/or inferior human and becomes a victim of the racial structure; *Jose* and I partook in a dialogue about this issue; he said:

They take advantage of us. Yet, he (the employer) is impressed with our ability to work hard and learn quickly. You never see an American doing the jobs that we are doing. However, majority of the times he would go back on his word

about paying us a certain amount. He starts deducting money for ice and water, and so on. What can we do? Nothing!

The mechanism of discrimination is found in different components in the social structure, and it engulfs other people of color—who attempt to move to higher positions themselves and their racial and ethnic groups, in the racial hierarchy. For example, according to *Francisco*, “They call us *mojados* (wetbacks), but it is not only whites who do this, but other Mexicans, Chicanos, and Blacks. They do not want us here, and they tell us that we diminish the culture by not speaking the language and that we make them look bad.” In response to probing more about what he meant by “making them look bad,” he adds, “Some Chicanos told us that we ruin their opportunities to be Americans and just go back you *pinche mojado*.” From this passage, we note how the white racial frame has ingrained its racial ideology into Chicanos, where they, people of color, become the enforcers of the white dominant culture.

The Power of Labeling and Language: Racializing the Undocumented Immigrants

The racialization of people of color, specifically undocumented immigrants, occurs through racial dialogue, which transforms the manner in which subordinate groups interact with each other as well as with mainstream Americans. Through the symbolic meaning of discourse and dialogue in the interactions, discriminatory practices can be aimed at undocumented immigrants and overlook certain dangers in conjunction with the migration process. Through this public display of anti-immigrant sentiment, undocumented immigrant females are diminished into a subcategory of human with such terms as *anchorbaby*. Thus, an undocumented woman is publically portrayed as a fertile machine, one who comes to give birth in the U.S. and uses the children to claim legal

status. As a result, language and labeling disregard the dangers that plague the migration process for most of these females. For example, *Camilo* and *Enrique* share an incident that occurred to a young girl who made the trip with them; *Enrique* recollects:

The coyote gave us a gallon of water, and after a full day of walking, all of us were very tired. We were laying for a night's sleep when the coyote told the only girl on the trip, to go with him. We said nothing. The next day, the girl kept her distance from the thirteen of us. In probing for additional information about the incident, *Camilo* interrupted and said, "The parents of the girl are to blame; they should have sent more money for a better coyote." [*Enrique* did not say anything but kept pulling on the grass by his feet.]

The racial frame shapes the dialogue; the story of the young female does not take "center stage" in the discourse of immigration because it countermands the general labeling of the immigrant. By accepting this label as "truth," the dangers associated with the migration process are excluded from the general discussion because it contradicts the master label of "alien" and/or "anchorbaby." Whereby, acknowledging the victimization of the young woman becomes an inconsistent label, hence, forcing the system to reevaluate the label. As a result, through the exclusion of certain events in the migration process and embellishment of other, the general public creates and reinforces a certain image of an undocumented immigrant, and in turn, this image functions as a symbolic frame to base public display of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Providing symbolic reference in a dialogue permits the individual to retain his/her front-stage performance in accordance with culturally acceptable scripts—behavior. The *self* is continuously present in the social interaction with all members of society, using Goffman's explanation of *dramaturgy*—front stage and back stage. Within this dialogue, words are used as instruments of war, to destroy and disembody

the opponent, and to make a convincing and powerful point; likewise, in racialized conversations, terms such as “menace,” “law breakers,” “anchorbabies,” and “alien,” to name a few, justify the criminalization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants. For example, the usage of order derogatory terms are offensive and unacceptable dialogue in public form, but the word “illegal alien” (which is the legal usage according to the U.S. government) is acceptable in everyday conversation and in political forums. There is no mistake that words are leading agents of the white racial frame. They present images in the mind and thus manifest themselves in the physical world through prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and/or racism implications. Words aid in defining and categorizing people into specific social positions.

Racial dialogue originates from early childhood development. It is here that we learn to take language and its segmented parts (words) as tool to interact with others. In the process, we also learn to take language’s ability to create group membership as fundamentally important of the socializational process, an event one does not question. According to Mead ([1932]1962), the interaction, understanding who we are and/or where we fit in the social structure, originates within the imitation, play, and game stage of cognitive development as members of a specific society. The racial thinking is already embedded in all agents of the socialization process. Thus, through a systemic approach, the American dominant group marginalizes and discriminates against people of color because it is inherently embedded in the creation of self. In the case of undocumented immigrants, domination is transmitted from racial ideology by not only whites but also by other subordinate groups, placing the immigrant at the bottom.

The concept of self—in being an “American”—is reflected in the discourse by the majority of Americans (regardless of ethnicity or race) about undocumented immigrants. This means that individuals, having been exposed at all stages of self-development to the racial ideology, use it against each other to position their group higher in the racial hierarchy. For example, Kim, in *Bitter Fruit*, notes how a Korean storeowner shot and killed an African American youth because the storeowner thought the young man was going to steal. Therefore, the storeowner’s assumption about the young man stealing is attributed to his understanding of the racial other and racially profiling the young man, thus participating in the white racial ideology that all black youths steal.

Nonmaterial culture, specifically language, plays an essential function in the ability to convey cultural meaning. Language has the power to define objects in the social structure as well as guide individuals to appropriate behavior. Hence, in society and in general, language is an important means of communicating, for transmits verbal and nonverbal cultural meanings, significant meanings, to all members of a society. From this activity of coding, decoding and recoding sentences and words, terms such as “illegal alien” tell the receiver how he/she is to behave in accordance with the words’ structural and symbolic meaning. For example, in my classroom, a project was conducted with a group of university students, in which they were to draw an alien. The image that most of the students drew was of an extraterrestrial (E.T.). This shows an association of the term alien with an object that is subhuman—something completely disconnected to him/her. The phrase “alien” resembles a symbolic image of an object

that is physically different with some human deformities. Thus, the feeling of compassion is difficult for Americans toward an undocumented immigrant, because they see him/her less than human. Again, the evidence is visible in the manner in which the dialogue about “wetbacks” and “aliens” unfolds in conversations referring to undocumented immigrants.

Knowing Their Place in the U.S. Communities and Hierarchy

Why immigrants stay in inhospitable communities, was something that only the day-laborers can answer; so I asked them. *Ricardo* replied, to my question of seeking an area:

The people [residents] might not like us, but they tolerate our presence, as long as we keep the area clean and be quiet. It would be hard for us to find a new place and go through creating tolerances and a clientele.

For undocumented immigrants like *Ricardo*, the relationship is based on pleasing the locals. Their situation depends on how well they “perform” to the expectations of the community—show submissiveness, a stage performance, where the local residents, the majority of whom are Americans, perceive them as a non-physical threatening group. As noted by an immigrant during the first three field interviews, “I pick up the trash on people’s yards, that way they can’t say that we make or that we leave a mess on their property.” Their presence in the community consists of very important yet distinct situations: one, an issue of tolerance and patience on the part of the residents, a resident’s perception of the group, and two, an undocumented immigrant’s performance in public, an immigrant’s perception of what the dominant group wants from them, what again, Goffman refers to as the front-stage performance. As a result, day-laborers are

knowledgeable about their social position in the host society; their discussion about remaining in these communities is particular to the area: this is an area in which everybody is familiar and relocating will only disrupt the social agreement. Furthermore, the interaction between immigrants and local residents is based on an understanding of a dominant and a subordinate group, where the dominant group is symbolic of the superior culture. For example, on one occasion, a black dog approached *Alonzo*, a respondent from a coastal area of Mexico. *Alonzo* grinned, while the dog rolled onto its back so he could tickle its belly, and said:

You know that the lady in the corner got this puppy in order for it to bark at us to keep us away from her house. A while back the lady was complaining that someone was leaving trash on her property, so she got this dog to make us move from there, and look at it; he is one of us now. What is more funny is that the dog likes to go to different houses and get things from their yards then it takes them back to the lady's house. If you pass by her house, you see a lot of shit on the front yard.

In these enclaves, a socially accepted and clear underlining of undocumented immigrants' obedience to the dominant group resonates from an ideological perception of an inferior culture. According to this thinking of inferiority, culture and racial, the premise is rationalized through territorial conquest. Hence, because the majority of Americans see Mexicans and Mexican Americans as symbolic objects of a conquered nation, then Latinos(as) become representatives of a conquered people—second class to the rights and privileges of non-Hispanic white Americans, who interact according to the dominant culture. For example, Gómez (2007) argues, in her explanation of the function and intention of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, when Mexico relinquished claims to its northern territories, the intersection between Americans [non-Hispanics white] and

Mexicans became based on the principles of conquest, relegating those of Mexican heritage to a social category of inferior “other.”

Within this premise, the justification rests on belief that a group that contains inferior flaws becomes conquered; henceforth, subordination is warranted to the superior group/culture. Therefore, according to this thinking of existence worthiness, the stronger group would flourish and dominate others, representing the moving force behind manifest destiny of the “white culture.” For example, according to Chomsky (2007) when examining at the marginalization of conquered people, such as Mexicans, she states that conquered people: 1) have been historically more marginalized than any other group, and 2) are reluctant to give up their culture than other immigrants. Furthermore, when looking at immigrants, one notes a similar outcome between the relationship of the United States and Mexico in communities where immigrants take a physical place. Because Mexico lost a large amount of its territory to the United States—in the Mexican-American War—within these subordinate group communities, at a subconscious level, Mexicans are a symbolic representation of conquest, which in turn is used to legitimize their racialization and marginalization.

Anti-Immigrant Subframe: Subordinate Groups Usage of the Racial Frame

Racial dialogue functions as an agent of racialization to transfer blame for social and economic instability to undocumented immigrants—they serve as scapegoats for the host society. Through racial dialogue, the white racial frame is removed as the primary contributor of social inequality—pushing people of color to low social status—thus excluding personal responsibility. As a result, subordinate groups in America often blame undocumented immigrants for their shortcomings, thus advocating the racial ideology and overlooking the structural contributions to their situation. For example, “Chicanos” and other people of color blame immigrants for their social, political, and economic challenges/limitations in American society. A conversation with a colleague proves this perception about immigrants, “I get so disappointed when I hear on the news about a criminal act committed by a *mojado!* (wetbacks) They fuck it up for the rest of us.” His general understanding of group association acknowledges two things: the first being that non-Hispanic white Americans generalize and categorize all brown-skinned people under one umbrella. The second is the direct blame of an undocumented immigrant as the source and cause of an American’s unhappiness. In this racial dialogue of blame and responsibility, the structure is excluded from the discourse. This represents the manner in which the white racial frame alters significant meanings of language and direction of conversations.

In this discourse, most Americans associate drug cartels, criminal organizations/gangs (ZETAs), robbers, drug-addicts, and/or murderers as the group of individuals who wish to disrupt the American way of life. However, in the migration

process, women and children are excluded from the conversation and from the general categorization of the undocumented immigrant. The enforcement of the border and immigration laws are representatives of the racial ideology, as happens in Arizona, because the public looks for the reference group they already have in mind—the criminal—thus, they are unable to address women and children in the debate about border enforcement. Although the nonprofit organization No More Deaths publically announces that there is sufficient evidence showing women and children being victims of death and other life threatening situations when crossing the desert, women and children are marginally exclude from the conversations taking place in Arizona or any other platform associated to the issues of and debates on immigration; but when they are mentioned, the discussion centers on the issue of “anchor-babies,” insinuating that undocumented immigrant women use their offspring to gain legal status in this country.

Aside from racial dialogue being an agent of the white racial framing of undocumented immigrants, ideology plays an important role in the interactions between immigrants and members of other subordinate groups. The ideology relegates individuals to certain social positions in the structure of the racial hierarchy, so it informs individuals or groups where they fit in American culture. African Americans and Latinos, specifically Mexican Americans, adopt this racialized thinking to place themselves, their group, within the racial hierarchy. However, the unique quality of the hierarchy is that advancement is predetermined by repressing other subordinate groups—undocumented immigrants in this case. From a historical development of racial and ethnic categorization, for example, Irish Americans in the 1920’s, with the

expansion of the industrial revolution, were viewed by white Protestant Americans as the missing link between a “human” and an ape. In this social location, Irish Americans were placed at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. It was not until African Americans began to demand better treatment that the racialization of Irish Americans changed, whereby they aligned themselves with white Protestant Americans. Thus, they gained social status as they discriminated against and marginalized African Americans, the newer group, blacks, were reaffirmed as the xenophobe and placed at the bottom of the racial ladder. With undocumented immigrants, Mexican Americans and African Americans discriminate in the hopes of gaining social, political, and economic status in white American culture.

In turn, the white dominant culture might acknowledge the differences of one group compared to another, with statements such as “we are not them” in the hopes of creating a separate umbrella for Mexicans. Movement within a racialized society for these subordinate groups is based on a collective oppression of the new underclass, the undocumented immigrant. *Ernesto*, a young man with a mustache hanging over his upper lip, conveys the general consensus of how other people of color treats the undocumented immigrant, he said, “The worst people to work for are Chicanos and African Americans, because they take you to the worksite and they will pay you shit! AND they do not give you water breaks.” He adds, “Do not go with that Chicano, the fucker at the end does not want to pay, and he calls you as *mojados* all day long; *mojado* come over here, *mojado* do this, and so on.” Being integrated into the American culture, people of color learn that exploiting and discriminating against those at the bottom of the

racial hierarchy shows association with the characteristics of the dominant culture. To claim in-group membership ideologically affirms one as an American by the white racial structure. In this process, structural obstacles in the ideology, become instruments that push undocumented immigrants to illegal migration.

Final Remarks

In the sections above, I have explained and shown the three stages of the migration process and how the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican subframes fit with this process. Thus, stage one examined the anti-immigrant laws and disruption of Mexico's social and economic structure, which operates by externally exploiting its natural and human resources. In turn, the anti-immigrant laws function to sustain a stable pool of cheap unskilled labor. Through these laws, employers exploit and marginalize undocumented immigrants, whereby exploitation creates underclass workers in the global community of capitalism.

Although, there is continuous need for cheap labor, the militarization of the border has operated as a barrier for undocumented immigrants. Thus, stage two examined the method deployed by undocumented immigrants to overcome this challenge. Through the utilization of information and coyotes, undocumented immigrants continue to reach their destination in the host society. Within this stage of the migration process, reliable information (*de confianza*) is essential for survival when crossing the desert or untamed river.

Upon completing the journey, additional challenges await the immigrant in the host society. Thus, stage three elaborates on the hostile interaction by members of the

community toward undocumented immigrants. Within the interaction, language and symbolic imagery have an essential function in creating the “other,” and/or the “alien” whereby anti-immigrant sentiment takes public forum on the issues of unauthorized migration. Through this process of dehumanization, other subordinate groups advocate the elite white male “understanding of reality” of a racial hierarchy to advance their social and racial/ethnic status in the hierarchy.

Underlining this anti-immigrant sentiment is a history of anti-Mexican discrimination, as noted in the literature review chapter, and from a historical perspective, the foundation of the United States’ policy and view of Mexican continues to be the same conceptualization of inferiority. For example, when President of Mexico Porfirio Díaz, in September of 1880, opened the doors and land to the United States, the engineers overseeing the operation of the railroads and oil production were mainly non-Hispanic white males (the skilled labor) from the United States while *mestizos* made up all of the physical and repetitive task (the unskilled labor). As noted by Skirus (2003), this led to conflict between the supervisors and administrators against the *mestizo* workers, who felt they had the same skills to do the jobs as the foreigners. I mention this because this passage shows how the white racial frame had created a racial hierarchy for Mexicans below that of “whites.” In modern society, one is still able to note a similar pattern with the Mexican labor in this country, whereby they continue to perform these low skilled occupations and thus find themselves excluded from benefiting from immigration laws that promote skilled labor, such as the Immigration Act of 1990.

From a historical and theoretical perspective, white males immigrated into Mexico and their interaction with the native population was reflective of their racial framing of Mexicans. Thus, the framing along with the migration process shaped the interaction between the white male engineers and the Mexicans who worked underneath them. Therefore, as noted in the introductory chapter, racial theory has been mainly excluded in studies and discussion of immigration. As a result, the three stages of migration, noted above, incorporate the racial theory in each point of the migration process.

In the following chapter, I begin by revisiting the purpose and overview of the results. The discussion and conclusion chapter will reiterate my research claim, the limitations of the study as well as structures concerning issues of immigration, and at the end, I state the benefits of bringing the white racial frame to the forefront when studying unauthorized migration into the United States.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

My findings revealed how the white racial frame and its subframes, prowhite, the anti-Mexican and anti-Mexican immigrant, crash into the migration process. It reveals how these preconceived racial notions of the Mexican date to the early relations of the United States and Mexico and have been culturally transmitted by various means such as, as pointed out by Portales (2000), through texts that embellish the accomplishments of white men and manifest destiny through the conquering of new territory. This perception of the Mexican, specifically of the mestizo, has been the bedrock in which the United States has approached the issue of illegal immigration and how it has shaped the interaction between people of color and the undocumented Mexican immigrant. The study showed how the racialization of undocumented immigrants was manifested in the three stages of migration:

- Stage One: The United States created instability in the country of origin as it exploited resources.
- Stage Two: U.S. instilled discriminatory policies which forced undocumented immigrants to rely on networks and coyotes.
- Stage Three: the repetitive reminder of the “other” in the United States by other people of color and public dialogue.

In accordance with Feagin (2007), the United States’ social, economic, and political institutions come from a system of exploitation and racial superiority ideology;

these institutions have become exhibited with the racial frame of exploitation. Immigration policies, being institutionalized, are reflective of this racial mindset, whereby the undocumented immigrant is seen here as a pseudonym for “the plantation slaves.” For example, the racial frame is a contributing factor in the complicated U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement process, and undocumented immigrants come to rely on other alternatives, such as social networks, to enter into the United States. This racial ideology has always surfaced when the dominant group has been confronted by a group of people, physically and/or culturally different than their own; the group senses a need to attack the subordinate group.

Therefore, my dissertation’s contribution to the field of immigration and race theory is that it examines an important factor that has been to some extent excluded from the discussion on illegal immigration, the elite white male, and his social reality of race. Within this bigger picture of migration, the elite white male relies on the undocumented Mexican immigrant as an economic and social scapegoat in the United States. For this reason, I have examined the migration process from two theoretical approaches: immigration theories and critical race theories. As a result, the dissertation encompassed the push-pull factor of migration, social networks, and smugglers, and it has taken into account the racial formation of people of color in the United States.

Level of Analysis: Critical Race Theory, Immigration Theory, and Ethnography

Aside from the gist of the white racial framing and undocumented immigrants, a cornerstone of this paper was to show how networks aid undocumented immigrants during and after the migration process. By asking the undocumented immigrants to

provide a detailed description of their migration experience, we have gained insights into the world of international migration. In this way, a person's migration experience illuminates the transformation of the network as it helps with the migration process. Looking back at Chapter IV, we have explored their experiences and interactions with Americans. Indirectly, because I leave the reader to come to his/her own conclusions, it informally clarifies why undocumented immigrants are forced to enter illegally into the United States and the malicious treatment that they receive when they are here.

In addition to, and taking a distinctive approach from, previous network theorists, this study views networks as self-functioning and self-sustaining organic objects, regardless of who accesses the information, thus differencing from others' works. For example, Granovetter (1985) claims that networks become obsolete when they are not maintained and used; however, this is only partially true of the undocumented immigrants I interviewed. His explanation of network function (reliability and validity of the information) is accurate; however, the inconsistency rests in who or what becomes obsolete, because in the case of these immigrants, it was the individual who became obsolete and not the network, meaning the coyote and the route were always there, but it was a matter of finding it.

Within the pipeline is the coyote, which as Massey (2008) noted, has "access to knowledge, assistance, and other resources that facilitated movement" (p. 43). The pipeline continues to operate, although a particular individual has been excluded from it. For example, a non-experienced immigrant is able to join a pipeline within a well-structured in-operation network. Having a fundamental understanding of migrant

networks³⁷ offers a detailed account of how undocumented immigrants move with limited fear of deportation when there is a low risk of being caught. Although the pipeline might cease offering valuable information to one person, it provides service to another individual with no kinship to that person. Again, this would have been something overlooked if I were solely relying on a specific theoretical approach or an ethnographic approach.

Shortcomings: The In-depth Interviews

Qualitatively, interviewees providing false information or embellishing the migration experience could also limit this research. A situation of embellishment could have escalated if it were not for the probing. However, it would be ignorant of me to assume that everything stated was true without any cross-examination. In addition, my unfamiliarity with the participants could result in this negative consequence, because of a need to over-present their experiences to the researcher. With this interaction of participant and researcher, I could have affected how an interviewee answered a question could have negatively influenced the formation of this dissertation. As a result, the possibility of biasness in the interview process present potential limitations affecting the quality of this study.

The Undocumented Immigrant and Racial Issues in Contemporary America

The racialization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants is a relic of discrimination of other groups of color and ethnic differences in this country. In the

³⁷ According to Massey (2005), migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas.

United States, and from a historical perspective, the most recent foreign group is always placed at the bottom of the social and racial hierarchy. For example, in the early 1900's, the immigration of non-Protestants threatened the social fabric of American society and the cultural control of the dominant group. This, in turn, triggered a xenophobic movement against Catholic Irish Americans because of their "ape like" characteristics that were perceived as contradicting the hard-working Protestant ethos (see Curtis 1971). Within this period, Catholic-Irish Americans were seen as the alien and a threat to the American way of life. Considering this, racial scholars, such as Feagin, Shapiro, Bonilla-Silva, and others assert that the racialization of groups is not a recent event, but predates to the development of whereby it is fundamentally embedded in early American culture.

From this racial ideology, the marginalization of the Mexican undocumented immigrant arises from a tradition of racism and discrimination. Historically, a racial culture has been more evident in the interaction between non-Hispanics whites and African Americans, where Jim Crow laws, grandfather clauses (for voting), and the one-drop rules were structural agents that kept African Americans in "their place." When examining modern events, one notes the similarities that once confronted African Americans and the current situation facing Mexican undocumented immigrant in this country. For example, as noted by Collins (2000), in *Black Feminist Thought*, "...a good deal of work...is now done by undocumented immigrants...their exploitation resembles that long visited upon African American..." (p. 40). Thus, the marginalization of the undocumented immigrant is not an issue limited to contemporary America, but an ideology that has sunk its talons into the shoulder flesh of this society.

Within this racial structure, there is competition among subordinate groups to place their group at an apex position in the structural and cultural hierarchy. For example, the Protestant Irish Americans were placed above the Catholic-Irish, Irish and Italian Americans were placed above the African American, and so on. Hence, these groups succeeded by distancing themselves (meaning their group) from the most recent threat to the dominant culture; therefore Mexican Americans and other groups of color are placed above the Mexican undocumented immigrant, and in return they must embody the prowhite subframe and the anti-Mexican immigrant subframe. Santa-Ana's concept of "other" becomes the instrument through which subordinate groups interact with the undocumented immigrant; they secure their access to American culture by distancing themselves from the underclass immigrant.

The white racial frame creates a dialogue where Mexican-Americans, including Mexican undocumented immigrants, are excluded from the discussion of racism or as Portales (2000) suggests "outside of the public conscious." As a process of exclusion, the structure labels Mexican Americans as an ethnic group³⁸; therefore, Mexican Americans and other Latinos can be discriminated against, but not be victims of actual racism. I foresee two major problems with such labeling; although there may be others. The first is that this ethnic category does not fit into the collective thinking of American society; and the second, not acknowledging Latinos as a racial group benefits the white racial frame, because it limits the number of racial groups who have legitimate claim of racism in the structure of racial inequality. It becomes difficult to prove racial

³⁸ See link for copy of the 2010 US Census form: http://www.census.gov/schools/pdf/2010form_info.pdf

discrimination from the structure, when there is only one group that can culturally claim such a label as “a race.”

What is evident of the relic and cavalcade of racial ideology is the discourse that surrounds these racial or ethnic groups. Immune to time, the language of fear and malice plays a leading role in the perceptions and treatment of groups that come in contact with the dominant group’s culture. For example, in the modern context of society, we are appalled by the historical experiences, specifically, of African Americans; their social challenges are seen as components of this country’s dark history. Hence, in contemporary society, anyone who uses any racial and derogatory term in a public setting is negatively sanctioned. Why? Our modern consciousness of socially acceptable behavior has been delegated to us through the socialization process, for distinguishing between right and wrong. Yet, the racialization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants is reflective of how the white racial frame defines and determines the discourse in “civil society.” Further, a parallel comparison can be drawn with Said’s (1978) explanation on European hegemony and the unauthorized Mexican immigrant in the United States. According to him, the discourse on racial identity shaped the manner in which the British parliament enacted policies in accordance to their ideology, a white civil culture, when dealing with the “oriental.” In the United States, a similar white civilized culture created the framing for the immigrant.

Through dialogue, the white racial frame determines interaction between members of society. As a result, the structure determines and sets the guidelines of which groups fit where. In accordance to these guidelines, race and theoretical scholars

operate within the limited scope created by the social structure, covertly created by the white racial frame. Even racial scholars have been trapped by this racial frame, because it has been embedded into all of us from the inchoate life of the socialization process. Within these social agents, we have invested hours of what Hochschild (1979) refers to as *emotional work*. In our interactions with others, we have played the part and acted according to expected roles. As demonstrated in the analysis chapter, Mexican Americans and African Americans do not marginalize undocumented immigrants out of enjoyment, but because they have acculturated to the ideology of the dominant group, as has everybody else who has gone through the socialization process of language and image in the United States.

In turn, when the system encounters inconsistency, the general label does not coincide with reality, as in the case with the young women in Enrique's migration experience, elite white males reply on groups to interact in accordance to set guidelines. For example, in explaining government operated social programs to a classroom of 100 students, I used the terms white Hispanics and non-Hispanics white, and when I explained the difference, the students began to laugh. A student made the following comment on behalf of the class, "Sr., and I think I speak for the majority of us here (no one objected), and with all due respect Sir, but, would you fall within this category of white?" I said, "yes." I heard some laughter. The student continued, "It is just that you do not look white." My student's comment reflects what has been deemed by society as my master status—not white. As a result, I do not fit within his and his classmates' understanding of being white, or into a historical label, as noted by Gómez (2007) were

“Euro-Americans in Texas were adamant that whiteness meant not only not black but also not Mexican (p. 59).” Therefore, their invisible label of me does not coincide with the one created by the structure—the white racial frame.

The emotion and fear associated with the white racial frame is evident in the public discourse of the undocumented immigrant: they have a backward culture, they breed like cockroaches, they take away American jobs, and they do not speak the language (see Chomsky 2007). Again, similarities exist between past groups and undocumented immigrants, yet the scholars would immediately point out group differences, along with discrimination and exploitation differences. The racial frame created and it continuous to create the platform of discussion and the language in which this takes place.

I believe that is the reason it is nearly impossible to mobilize the intellectuals to a common understanding of inequality. From a layperson’s perspective, the frame determines the dialogue, and therefore, a scholar, upon evaluating the issue, concludes that racial issue not being in his/her area of expertise and/or interest. In taking this component on how hegemony is formed within the body of literature and discourse on racialization and exploitation, the level of analysis of this study provided important insights by joining the racialization and marginalization of undocumented immigrants, the creation of alternative social networks—the coyote—because of racial and political biases.

Projects for Future Research: A Coyote's Role and Role of Social Status

In gathering and analyzing the data from the field interviews, I noticed several important patterns about the coyotes. However, upon noticing these patterns, the approved IRB questionnaire prohibited returning to the area for additional questions. Additionally, the creation of a new questionnaire would become subject to their duration of time for approval; also, I ran the risk of them completely rejecting the idea to interview smugglers. Therefore, the issues are worth pointing out in the hopes that someone might undertake a similar study on coyotes. Specifically, is a coyote's background and status associated with using a certain type of coyote:

- 1) Do coyotes have a similar background to those they help immigrate; and because of having been exposed to the migration process, does it thrust them into a unique path for themselves? There might be something in the learning of the process that moved these individuals to their current profession: the border bandit, quasi-professional, and professional coyote. Are there events that have to do with the development of Mead's concept of the Self—specifically the *Me* and *I*?
- 2) By hiring a professional coyote, can the undocumented immigrant claim higher status in the community? In having access to such an individual, what determining factors become important to a community in selecting who immigrates? What social statuses are important for the tough journey? If they survive the migration process, do they become ingrained in the structure of a professional coyote?

- 3) And finally, I feel that additional data is needed to explore the coyote, because there might even be sub-categories that I overlooked.

Contribution to the Social Sciences

It is salient to understand how the organic networks of undocumented immigrants triumph over the “iron fist” methods used by the United States as a means of keeping “illegal aliens” at bay, along with heavy-white-hand of the racial frame. I agree with Santa-Ana (2002) that exploitative foundational practice has fueled and expanded the racial inequality and excluded undocumented immigrants. In America, viewing and treating immigrants as representing no direct benefit to the dominant culture has hindered scholarly discussion of the Mexican immigrant as a victim of racial discrimination (Barrera 2008), or as noted by Gómez (2007):

Identifying Mexicans trajectory as off-white allows us to see with more clarity the movement of other off-white groups into the white category...Americans have tended to avoid identifying these patterns by classifying them under the ‘ethnic’ or ‘immigrant’ rubric, rather than by seeing them as about race...This tendency is misplaced and has prevented us from fully understanding American racial dynamics...And by continuing to uncritically reproduce the standard account of race in the United States, we may inadvertently reinforce white supremacy (P. 143).

I believe that racial inequality creates a “veil,” as described by Du Bois ([1903] 2007), that pits minority groups against similar ethnic groups or other subordinate groups, such as conflicts between Mexicans and Chicanos.³⁹ As a consequence, the organic make-up (racial frame) has prompted a conflict perspective among similar

³⁹ From a Mexican immigrant perspective, Chicano is a negative term that refers to a Mexican American who’s been Anglo-ized.

cultural groups by creating opposite identities whereby these groups compete and conflict among themselves.

Signifying the complexity of the social world of undocumented immigrants, a multi-theoretical approach and in-depth interviews demonstrates that only by explaining and merging all the factors (of race and of immigration) away from their respective isolation, do we provide light to the value of networks and the racialization of undocumented immigrants. By utilizing such methodical approach, the complexity of social forces in flux concerning undocumented immigrants is brought to light. As a result, more humane and effective measures may emerge from understanding the dynamics operating within the world of undocumented immigrants, because the methods currently implemented are ineffective. For example, the majority of these men would respond to the question on border enforcement by saying, “We Mexicans are stubborn, they send us back to our county and two days later we are back here, because we have become part of the society [the United States] even if they call us ‘illegal aliens.’”

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APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION SHEET

You have been asked to participate in the project titled On the Other side: Ethnography on the Migration Experience conducted by Graduate Student Hilario Molina II from the Department of Sociology at Texas A&M University. The objective of this study is to understand the development of social networks as it relates to immigration patterns. The success of this research depends on your cooperation in allowing yourself and 29 other individuals, like yourself, to be interviewed and asked about your experiences as an immigrant.

The interview will take about an hour. The researchers will use different methods to protect your identity, such as drawing names (consisting of different common Latino names) from a hat. This technique is to protect your true identity while allowing for identification in the research. Your contribution would be valuable in giving an in-depth understanding of social networks and immigration.

The researcher is planning to use the information gathered from the interviews for an article published in a professional journal and presented at a professional conference, and after the completion of these activities the information you provide will be destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary and you should share only what you are comfortable sharing. You may decline to participate, or you may choose not to answer any particular question that you care not to answer. Your identity will be kept confidential and only Hilario Molina II, and his advisor, Dr. Rogelio Saenz, will have access to the transcripts. If you change your mind about participating during the interview, you may stop the interview at any time with no impact on your relationship with Texas A&M University. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or comments about the project.

Investigator: Hilario Molina II (979) 845-5133
hmolina_2@tamu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Rogelio Saenz (979) 845-5133
rsaenz@tamu.edu

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Office of Research Compliance (979) 458-4067, IRB@tamu.edu.

Please be sure you have read and understood the above information and have kept a copy of this Information Sheet for your records.

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 2

**INFORMATION PROVIDED BEFORE
ASKING THE QUESTIONS**

Please do not provide any names of specific locations in relation to US territories or the specific names of individuals in the United States when answering these questions.

Where are you originally from?

Are you from rural or urban area?

Can you recall the duration of time it took to reach your destination in the United States?

How long have you lived in the United States?

When was the first time you came to the United States?

What reason brought you here?

Did you know anything about this community before you moved here?

If so, how did you learn about this?

Did you receive any assistance in moving here?

From who? Did it cost you anything?

Do you still keep in touch with the individual who assisted you?

Why or why not?

Do you have your family or other relatives living here?

How comfortable are you in this community?

Would you recommend friends or relatives to move to this community?

Have you recommended this community to anyone?

Do you send money to family members in native country?

How often?

When was the last time you had information about your hometown?

From who?

If you get deported will you come back? why/why not?

Are there any reasons why one might choose to enter the United States illegally?

Do you have any suggestions in addressing the issue?

In relation to September 11, 2001 have you heard or seen any difference in migration patterns?

What are they?

Would you share with me your migration experience, *while excluding specific names of places or names of other individuals?*

VITA

Hilario Molina II

Campus

Department of Sociology
Academic Building #311
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77840
(979) 845-5133

Education

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas	2011
Ph.D., Sociology	
<i>Major area of Concentration: Racial and Ethnic Relations</i>	
<i>Minor area of Concentration: Demography</i>	
The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas	
M. S., Sociology	2004
B.S., Criminal Justice	2001

Publication

Accepted

Carley, Robert, and Molina II, Hilario. 2011. "How Women Work: The Symbolic and Material Reproduction of Migrant Labor Camps in United States Agribusiness." *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 5(1); 37-62.

Balderrama, Rafael and Molina II, Hilario. 2009. "How Good are Networks for Migrant Job Seekers? Ethnographic Evidence from North Carolina Farm Labor Camps." *Sociological Inquiry*, 79(2); 190-218.

Under-Review

Harden, G., and Molina II, H. "Discursive" Constructions of 'Aliens': Undocumented Works and Xenophobia in America" (Under peer-review; *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs*)