

“From Criminalization to Symbolic Resiliency:
Undocumented Immigrants “Re-imagining Success”

In the United States

by

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this exploratory study is to learn how undocumented immigrants remain resilient by adopting new strategies to survive and thrive despite confronting challenges as they legally justify their presence in the United States.

This study will focus on three research questions: first, what are the demographic factors that describe undocumented immigrant family resiliency in the United States? Second, how are social service providers' perceptions of the challenges faced by their clients modified by the services they provide? Third, how do resiliency factors identified by their social service providers allow undocumented immigrants to overcome the challenges of criminalization in the United States?

The theoretical framework for this study was based on two approaches: first, a symbolic interaction approach which was specifically inspired by Benedict Anderson's classic *Imagined Communities* (1983, 2006). The second approach is Ecological Risk and Resiliency.

This study used mixed methods of research: interviews and descriptive analysis. The qualitative data was drawn from ten social service providers from a faith-based agency, and from a narrative analysis of participants enrolled in an ESL program (English as a Second Language). The subjects for the quantitative design were drawn from a group of undocumented first-generation Hispanic immigrants who received social services during the year 2009 from the same faith-based agency.

In summary, this exploration discovered that immigrants show great ability for imaginatively developing strategies in order to survive and thrive under their difficult circumstances. Furthermore, undocumented immigrant survival does not completely depend upon food and shelter and even money, but also on a sense of well being. Noted was that women undocumented immigrants show greater resiliency than their male counterparts. Also discovered was that social services do make a difference in the lives of undocumented immigrants but not all social service providers are fully trained and prepared to assist them beyond normal standards. In conclusion, the Hispanic undocumented immigrant displays remarkable resiliency despite tremendous obstacles and personal difficulties and this resiliency could only improve by social service providers' improved understanding of their needs and personal resources.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, my children, and my brother and sister. Also, I dedicate this work to all the families that have contributed to this study. Many of them clearly exemplify what resiliency means. In hopes of contributing to a safer, healthier, fearless, optimistic way of life by which these families will find their path to citizenship and to live a life that will reflect their dreams of success in the United States, I once more dedicate this work.

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Being myself an immigrant from Mexico, and having come to the United States with certain dreams of achieving success, and with the hope that someday I would return to my homeland to mentor new generations of professionals, twenty years has now passed since I first arrived with these plans. As a documented immigrant, I have come to see the pain, fear, confusion and nostalgia suffered by undocumented Mexican immigrants who as I did dreamed, imagined, and sought a successful life in the United States. Obviously, their challenges and my challenges were considerably different; therefore, I became an active participant in their lives, their fights, their challenges, and their dreams. I have worn many hats during my advocacy for these people in this country: I have worked for the court system, for secular agencies, and for a faith-based agency. I am a board member for non-profit agencies dealing with undocumented immigrants and their challenges. All these experiences eventually led me to graduate work in justice and social enquiry, with emphasis in criminology, which has culminated in this dissertation about and dedicated to undocumented immigrants struggling to find their path of citizenship.

I would like to thank especially Dr. John Johnson who rescued me when I was ready to give up my dreams because of unexpected changes in my personal circumstances and in my academic circumstances. His wisdom and personal touch mentored me into completing this work in which I take pride. Also, I wish to thank Dr. Marjorie Zatz for her support through many years; her wisdom has

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CHAPTER 1

Undocumented Immigrants: Victims and Survivors

Introduction

Almost everyone agrees that immigration has slowed during America's current recession, but research into current database regarding human rights indicates that thousands of undocumented immigrants keep crossing everyday into Arizona from Mexico. According to Terry Greene (2010), "The Grand Canyon State is now the prime portal of illegal immigration into the United States. Today, immigrants braving Arizona borderlands must navigate ever more treacherous trails slicing through cacti, slicing through Malpais rock, slicing through searing creosote flats, slicing through mountains littered with human bones, smugglers, kidnapers, Minutemen, and Border Patrol agents."

Greene describes the danger of the physical passage of the undocumented immigrant into the state of Arizona. However, even after this difficult trip has been accomplished successfully, new confrontations await, that are not only physical, but social and emotional. The undocumented immigrant must now deal with the challenges arising from threats to their resiliency and well-being, and find strategies and resources to survive their undocumented status (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, Sills, 2002).

This dissertation attempts to elucidate the problems facing the undocumented immigrant in the United States. Employing descriptive statistical analysis and examining in-depth interviews this project will draw a picture of the victims of increasingly complex problems of immigration and their challenging

experiences and concerns. This dissertation will also explain how undocumented immigrant families survive in a very hostile environment which every day exposes them to sociopolitical and personal factors that could put them at risk of detention, incarceration, deportation, health issues and emotional stress and traumas (Petersilia, 2003). In short this dissertation will explore the following research questions

1. What are the socioeconomic demographics that promote undocumented immigrant family resiliency?
2. How do social service providers perceive the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants?
3. How do resiliency factors identified by social providers allow the undocumented immigrant family to overcome challenges of criminalization in the United States?

The hostile environment undocumented immigrants negotiate and endure has many different dimensions: segregation, exclusion, exploitation, physical, social and sexual abuse, and stigmatization, to name only a few (Coutin, 2005). For example, a battered wife, separated from her husband, tries to make a new life for herself, a situation which is difficult enough without adding the fact that she and her children are undocumented immigrants in the United States. Calling the police, seeking justice through the courts, or seeking governmental resources are not options. What resources, with her illegal identity, does she dare seek? Her sufferings and worries are exacerbated by knowing she is regarded as criminal by

some people in the United States. In the face of political, mental, and emotional challenges, which contrasted with her original conceptions of life in the United States, how does she stay resilient?

Many undocumented immigrants from Mexico who come to the United States without legal status may imagine, like the woman described above, a “reality” of themselves being successful in this country (Anderson, 2006). This “imagined community” proves far from accurate as domestic, familial, socioeconomic and political issues confront them. Moreover, the undocumented immigrants removal from his/her sense of an imagined community in Mexico to the “imagined community” of success in the United States poses additional threats to their sense of well being, as their original hopes and plans fade.

A good example of how success is imagined, and then must be re-imagined, is a client of a faith-based agency. While growing up in Mexico, the client, a wife and a mother, experienced her father’s successful entry and return from the United States. The money he and others earned was an annual success story and created for her an imagined community of successful immigrants. After marrying, the young woman convinced her husband that they and their son should enter the United States to work, and then, after becoming prosperous, return to Mexico. Two years before coming to the United States, both the client and her husband began planning their trip. They had enough money to allow them to settle in the United States for at least a year. After research, they decided to come to Phoenix, Arizona, since some friends had immigrated to Phoenix and were successful. The client stated that their intention was a ten year plan. The idea was

for both to work, and save as much money as possible so that when they returned, her husband would open a mechanic shop, and she could open a beauty salon. Also, it would be a good time to return because their son would be a teenager and he would be able to grow up in Mexico. For awhile her imagined community of successful immigration in the United States proved fairly accurate. They were working and even had enough money to hire daycare for their son. But after immigration laws became tougher and their visas expired, they had to seek assistance and find new ways of survival. One way was by means of imagining new bonds with their community of undocumented immigrants. This new “re-imagined community” has helped them remain united as a family as they deal with new challenges to their undocumented status.

This study explores two resources that undocumented immigrants seek out to help them endure in an increasingly hostile environment: one, the physical resource of the social service providers who can assist with food and shelter. The second resource is emotional; it is the crucial act of re-imagining their success in the United States (Anderson, 2006). This re-imagining can be promoted by establishing emotional connections with other undocumented immigrants in the United States. In other words, by realizing that there are thousands of other undocumented immigrants in the United States, they know they are not alone. The members of this large community in the United States deal with the same fears and seek similar goals of survival. This imagined community becomes less abstract and more concrete as undocumented immigrants find each other, provide tips on jobs, send alerts about dangers, and take care of each other’s children.

They can find a degree of solace in speaking Spanish, eating familiar foods and listening to the music of home. At times, however, they dream of others in the same situations as themselves, who will come to their aid. Here the social service providers can assist beyond helping the undocumented immigrant obtain shelter, food and other material resources (Deaux, 2010). The provider can also help them by encouraging them to learn English and gain skills with computers. In this way and other ways the providers can also help them by encouraging them to re-imagine success in the United States. By helping them recast dreams along more realistic lines and provide them with needed tools and resources for success, the social provider helps the client better deal with frustrations while having a stronger sense of what he or she must do to attain a sense of well-being.

Current Status of the Undocumented Immigrant

Since commencing work on this research, the issues facing the undocumented immigrant, specifically in Arizona, have grown more complicated. According to the Pew Research on Mexican immigrants in the United States, a “record 12.7 million Mexican immigrants lived in the United States, a 17-fold increase since 1970; Mexicans now account for 32% of all immigrants living in this country.” Immigration experiences are always difficult, and beginning in 2008, with the onset of hard economic times, the situation facing undocumented immigrants has grown more difficult, with Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s raids and the passage of SB 1070. In the light of this new wave of challenges, new attention must be paid to how undocumented immigrants must develop new strategies of survival and resiliency. Hard times usually increase suspicion and hatred of

“outsiders.” Many of the subjects in this analysis had earlier crossed into the United States and found work easily. They were able to buy houses and afford certain luxuries. Their undocumented status was not a great concern. Now, these families, who were once self-supporting, are seeking help at agencies and shelters, and are increasingly fearful of police and being separated from family members by deportation.

These families are both passing through and confronting transforming events. Although their lives changed in their passage from Mexico to the United States, the critical change that this study is considering is the passage of SB 1070 which created or increased their feelings of stigmatization. Prior to this they have been undocumented, but their undocumented status suddenly became more profound and perilous. They did not anticipate this status when they entered the United States; and it became a turning point or an epiphany; “moments of crisis or revelation that disrupt and alter a person’s self image” (Sandstrom 2003, p. 85).

Hispanic families have long suffered social exclusion, not only through detention and incarceration but also through policies and practices that deny immigrants employment, the right to vote, welfare benefits, educational and vocational training, and access to federally funded housing (Petersilia, 2003; Kubrin, Zatz & Martinez, forthcoming). This social exclusion is reinforced by the host society also defining them with profiles of criminalization. This criminalization is analogous to how sufferer of HIV AIDS were regarded and treated in the 1980s. Their illness defined them, both to others and within

themselves: “As a result, gay men diagnosed with HIV in the early 1980s reacted with profound shock, dismay, and despair. . . . In many contexts, gay men with HIV were encouraged to view themselves as tainted, threatened and blameworthy. They had difficulty disregarding or countering these messages because they lacked access to resources that would allow them to define themselves more positively”, (Sandstrom, 2003, p. 87). Undocumented immigrants, because of longstanding prejudice and recent laws and crackdowns can also see themselves as tainted even to blame for their troubles. One critical resource for undocumented immigrants to access is to understand the power of resiliency.

Resiliency is not a static phenomenon (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, Sills, 2002). It is a dynamic strategy and changes according to the situation. Resiliency will be further explored through the dynamic of “symbolic interaction,” an implicit strategy people use to adjust to the context or situation. Such interactions help to maintain resiliency and correct perceptions of criminality both for themselves and for their host society (Adler and Adler, 1980). Correcting undocumented immigrants’ own perceptions of being criminal can assist in re-imagining success in the United States. Moreover, the social service provider can assist them in this process of re-imagining and encourage them to understand their own active, creative ways to adjust to situations, to adapt their behavior to their contexts (Martin and Fine, 2003).

A Case Study

The following case exemplifies the challenges both old and new faced by an undocumented immigrant family, including feelings of criminalization. The

case also identifies the perceptions and the abilities of the social service provider to see the challenges faced by such a family as they strove to maintain a sense of their well-being, and how resiliency promoted this maintenance. This case pre-dates the SB1070, but it exemplifies how an undocumented immigrant family struggles with more than just issues and needs of food and shelter.

On 30 April 2004 I arranged to interview one female probationer (herein called “Leticia”) for the purposes of including her responses in a final paper for a graduate class. Leticia was sixteen years of age and she lived with her mother and her mother’s boyfriend, almost twenty years younger than the mother. In the same household resided her two older sisters, each with two babies, and her younger sibling.

They came from Zacatecas, Mexico, about four years ago. Originally Leticia and her family came with her biological father, who passed away in a U.S. jail; he was serving time for drug trafficking. Leticia and her little brother spoke some English; the rest of the family spoke only Spanish. The family routine was simple: all of them waked up at 5:30 am, and all adult members go to work cleaning houses. They finished their work around 5:00 pm, come home, have dinner, and go to bed. Leticia and her little brother wakened themselves up, fix breakfast, and go to the school. The same situation occurred when they returned from school; most of the time they were unsupervised. The lack of supervision was one reason Leticia was on probation. She was absent from school and deemed a truant, and she also acted out with school staff. Her mother did not understand

why her daughter was placed on probation, and why her daughter was detained three times in the past.

From the interim report of this interview, I concluded as a social service provider that not only do the mother and daughter faced issues with work and school; they faced the related issues of identity. They want to know why they and others like them are called “ilegales”—in English, illegal. Despite having jobs and producing income, and trying to stay within the laws, they still dealt with other challenges such as social exclusion which arose from the mother and daughter having problems with social and legal institutions.

According to my analysis, this family has so far maintained a degree of resiliency that allows them to survive in the United States. However, their vulnerability, particularly challenged by the issues related above, calls upon their resiliency efforts to counter the threat to their well-being (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, Sills, 2002).

This family’s experiences, issues, vulnerabilities, questions, and sources of resiliency bring into perspective the following questions: How have they adapted to the host society? Which skills do they use in order to interact with the host society? Are these skills and abilities sufficient to maintain their resiliency? What kind of resiliency exists within them, their families, and their associates that help them overcome these risks and challenges? Moreover, how can a social service provider better assist them?

Changing Status for the Undocumented Immigrant

The population being analyzed in this study represents a community that has imagined itself as “legal citizens” in order to justify their lives here. Working hard, paying taxes, taking care of children including sending them to school can be re-imagined as symbolic gestures to counter threats and attacks against their willingness to become successful in the United States and to be assimilated into the host society (Coutin, 2005). The family previously identified exhibits these qualities. The mother displays unique symbolic gestures by working hard and keeping her family together. However, her hard work also threatens the resiliency of her children by diverting her attention away from their needs.

How can a social service provider help the mother recognize her actions, and help her to capitalize on her strengths in order to overcome these threats? The unique challenges and strengths of this population differ by considering that each family is different, not only in terms of age, income, gender, education, marital status, but in their strengths and weaknesses. Such differences create different scenarios that the social provider must recognize in order to provide an effective service and encourage resiliency.

Important questions arise about the effectiveness of such interventions. For instance, is the intervention enough to promote his/her client’s resiliency efforts? Has the social service provider understood the complexity of the challenges his/her client is going through due to his/her undocumented status?

Based on these examples, case histories, and the questions arising from them, the objectives of this research are:

- Understanding how undocumented immigrants imagine a successful path in the United States
- Identify the effects of criminalization on undocumented immigrants
- Identify strategies and resources of resiliency in undocumented families as they seek a path for legalization
- Comprehend the dialogue created between providers/suppliers/advocates of social services and the recipients to understand how the social service provider can better help identify unique needs, risks and challenges of this population
- Understand whether the services offered to the undocumented immigrant families are helpful tools that promote family resiliency

The research questions that derive from these objectives are the following:

1. What are the socioeconomic demographics that promote undocumented immigrant family resiliency?
2. How do social service providers perceive the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants?
3. How do resiliency factors identified by social service providers allow the undocumented immigrant family to overcome challenges of criminalization in the United States?

Target Population

There are two populations for this qualitative design: social service providers and undocumented immigrant families. The first population is located

in Maricopa County, Arizona. The social service providers are drawn from a secular faith-based agency. These providers are characterized by location (agency within Maricopa County), race/ethnicity, sex (males/females), age (29-70 years of age), and job status (staff/volunteer) (Flay, Biglan, Boruch, Castro, Gottfredson, Kellam, Mosciki, Schinke, Valentine & Ji, 2005). These participants were chosen by convenience sampling techniques; convenience sampling is used by qualitative researchers; individuals or groups are selected based on their availability, and are willing to participate at that particular time (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The second population for this study is drawn from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Esperanza/Hope Immigration ESL program, and consists of nine families. For this study all the families enrolled in this program were selected in 2010.

The participants for my quantitative design were located in Maricopa County, Arizona. They were drawn from those who have received social services from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul during the year 2009. This group, undocumented families, was drawn from the Esperanza/Hope program, located in Phoenix, Arizona.

The research design took into account socioeconomic characteristics relevant to the study, including income status (family income), level of education, and composition of the household (family size, single, or both parents in household). Also considered were any relevant risk characteristics such as criminal records (e.g., parole or probation), and family welfare system records (e.g., Department of Economic Security, or federal assistance) accessed through

the archival data from the agencies' files (Flay et al., 2005). This population was chosen due to the convenience of the researcher having access to the files.

Relevance of the Study

This study contributes new and critical knowledge in the following four ways: First, Marsiglia and his team (2002), in their study of Latino undocumented youth in the South, do not provide specific information regarding undocumented families and their relation to their social providers, specifically about the impact social providers have on the family's resiliency.

Second, this study also contributes new knowledge by seeking to understand so-called "criminal behavior" from the perspective of undocumented immigrants and their social service providers. For instance, often undocumented immigrants do not know they were committing illegal acts, nor do they understand that illegal acts, even committed innocently, will produce painful consequences of detention and incarceration, and must have implications for their immigration status and any future immigration, promote policies and practices that deny employment, the right to vote, welfare benefits, educational and vocational opportunities, and access to federally funded housing (Petersilia, 2003). Moreover, there is also a lack of information related to the social consequences for the individuals being labeled and treated as "deviants" (Filstead, 1973). There is also a lack of information on how social service providers help undocumented immigrants understand and cope with potential profiles of deviance and illegality. Third, there is also a lack of information on how resiliency and understanding resiliency as a resource to draw from helps

undocumented immigrants overcome the effects of the undocumented status and the criminal profile that derives from it. Fourth, this research will contribute to the scholarly literature that explains the process that undocumented immigrants undergo when planning their crossing into the United States. There has been almost no research on this subject. Finally, this research will explore the imaginative process the undocumented immigrant probably engages in before crossing the border, as well as the difficult if not devastating consequences that face the undocumented immigrant and how the act of re-imagining life here can help them maintain a degree of resiliency.

Research Questions

1. Research Question #1: Quantitative and Qualitative Study

This study will focus on three research questions: first, what are the socioeconomic demographic factors that promote undocumented immigrant family resiliency?

This first research question was researched by both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data, taken from the Esperanza/Hope Program identify and describe a large range of socioeconomic demographics affecting this population's resiliency which allow the immigrants to successfully confront problems and issues. The qualitative data, drawn from over twenty interviews with immigrants and social service providers provide individual perception of these problems and issues.

The methods and resources used are the following:

- a. Personal experience gained by employment at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- b. Formal interviews with ten social service providers and ten adult undocumented immigrants
- c. Data base: Esperanza/Hope Program
- d. St. Vincent de Paul records and reports

2. Research Question #2: Qualitative Study

The second research question, “How do social service providers perceive the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants?” was approached by using qualitative methods. These interviews investigate an overlooked perspective of the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants and the perspective of the social service providers. The analysis of these cases produces new data on the various challenges, the degree of difficulty of these challenges, and their effect on resiliency. For example, most of the undocumented immigrants who were interviewed for this study first imagined a community in which they were successfully established in the United States, but reality did not match these visions. Second, once in the United States, and after realizing their imagined community had vanished, in their desperation they created another imagined community, one that is more accurate in reflecting their difficulties, but more useful in providing them with a sense of community support. The perspective of the social service providers have of the reality of the host society can help the undocumented immigrant craft this new community, one that will be based in reality.

- a. Formal one-hour interviews of ten social service providers who responded to eighteen questions. The information gained was described and analyzed by following a humanistic perspective.
- b. This information was supported and extended by the researcher's personal experiences gained by working as a social service provider.
- c. Agency records or providers

3. Research Question #3: Qualitative Study

The third research question, "How do resiliency factors identified by their social service providers allow the undocumented immigrants to overcome the challenges of criminalization in the United States?" was answered by qualitative methods. These data were gathered by interviews which identify and describe the overlooked challenges faced by undocumented immigrants.

- a. Formal one-hour interviews with ten adult immigrants enrolled in the Esperanza/Hope Program at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This interview asked a series of open-ended questions about their experiences in the United States as they seek legal status, the resiliency provided by family, friends, the church and social service agencies, and how their resiliency allows them to cope with a variety of social, economic, and political obstacles.
- b. These interviews were supported and extended by the researcher's personal experiences gained working as a social service provider.

As will be elaborated below, qualitative data show that the following three factors are most critical in increasing the resiliency of undocumented immigrants: (1) family support; (2) cultural factors such as values, traditions, beliefs and religion; and (3) network support such as friends, social providers, and peers.

Conclusion

This dissertation seeks to promote greater understanding of the undocumented immigrant in four areas: their “criminalized” identity, their gestures towards a legal identity by means of symbolic interaction, the importance of resiliency in maintaining a sense of well-being in a difficult sociopolitical climate, and how the social service provider can assist them in understanding these issues and finding solutions. The key to the undocumented immigrant’s successful establishment in the United States, whether by attaining legal status, or remaining in illegal status, seems to be partly created by their ability to maintain balance and stability through friends, family, resources, as well as by a greater self-understanding. The social service provider can do more than supply food and shelter to this struggling population; he or she can and should help them identify their means of resiliency and encourage them to cultivate these means to re-imagine success in the United States.

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 defines the subject being addressed: the efforts made by first-generation immigrant families to redefine themselves as legal residents of the United States; and how, by maintaining resiliency, they deal with obstacles. The

three research questions are described. The dialogue created between providers of social services and the recipients of such social services may be a critical component to promote family resiliency that will in turn strengthen its path toward legalization. The chapter concludes with recommendations to help social service providers to make better decisions on how to help undocumented immigrant families.

Chapter 2: Immigrant success and resiliency

In order to address the research questions and hypotheses, literature critical to the understanding of resiliency and the act of imagining a community is reviewed. By considering risks and preventive factors of undocumented families, and how personal attributes and cultural factors simplify risk and promote resiliency in their environment, how members of the undocumented immigrant community successfully overcome unique challenges is better understood and problems that continue to thwart such success. Concluding this chapter is the identification of notable lapses in the previous research into these phenomena.

Chapter 3: Research design

This chapter describes the mixed-method approach for this research. This method linked quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to triangulate substantive data (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez & Orozco, 2006). The mixed-methods design implemented for this study follows Castro and Coe's (2006) approach: the integrative process conceptualized as research evidence; this evidence can take the form of verbal text narrative evidence (qualitative), or numeric evidence (quantitative). A mixed methods approach takes advantage of the

representativeness and generalizability of quantitative findings and the in-depth, contextual nature of qualitative findings (Hanson et al., 2005). Thus, both methodologies complement each other. The integration of the methodologies maximizes the diversity and richness of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, thus reinforcing the strengths of each approach and minimizing remaining weaknesses.

Chapter 4: Immigration in Phoenix Arizona

The intent of the quantitative analysis was to descriptively summarize the participant characteristics in order to understand the population being analyzed and gain insight into key variables that could help provide a more effective interpretation of the qualitative results. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were used to summarize continuous data. Measures of frequency were used to summarize categorical data. The population in this quantitative design was located in Maricopa County, Arizona, and the participants were drawn from a group of undocumented first-generation Hispanic immigrants who received social services from a faith based agency, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, during the year 2009. This group was part of the “Special Works Ministries Esperanza/Hope Program.” This program was previously described as a program to assist families with housing and other financial assistance as well with financial literacy classes, English classes, computer classes and immigration legal assistance. The Special Works Ministries’ “Esperanza/Hope Program” database was used as the instrument from which the participant characteristics were drawn. All participants

were Hispanic, undocumented (i.e., not eligible to work in the US), first generation immigrants, and lived in Maricopa County.

Chapter 5: Undocumented immigrants' narratives

This chapter analyzes the nine interviews of undocumented immigrant families, seeking common experiences and practices of resiliency, and seeking evidence of the “imagined communities” and symbolic interactions.

Chapter 6: Social service providers' narratives

This chapter analyzes the ten interviews of social service providers, seeking unique and common experiences they have had when counseling undocumented immigrants, seeking out both negative and positive experiences, and seeking evidence of how they encourage undocumented immigrants to think of their community and re-imagine success in the United States.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter concludes the study by identifying crucial implications for the immigrants' future, evaluates policies bearing on undocumented immigrants, and finally makes recommendations for the practices of social service providers.

CHAPTER TWO

The Resilient Immigrant

Socialization, Imagined Communities and Symbolic Interaction

Two general areas of literature pertinent to this study are reviewed: risk and resiliency and the “imagined community.” To understand the critical aspect of resiliency the Ecological Risk and Resiliency Approach (1997) will be reviewed. Such an approach creates a perspective on the relationship between the individual and her/his social context by addressing how risks and protective factors influence behavioral outcomes (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002). Research based on this approach argues that greater attention should be paid to basic social conditions and the need to contextualize individually based risk factors. This contextualization is created by examining risk factors peculiar to the undocumented immigrants to better understand how they successfully overcome challenges of criminalization (Marsiglia et al., 2002). To better understand the critical role of the imagined community plays in the creation and maintenance and resiliency, Benedict Anderson’s classic *Imagined Communities* will be reviewed as well as literature which examines how the immigrant adjusts and adapts to their new environment by symbolic gestures.

Risk and Resiliency Approach

Resiliency is defined and measured by the degree to which people are productive and healthy despite hardships, traumas and obstacles in their

environment. Individual and family resiliency, which is critical to the undocumented immigrant's survival in the environment of risk in which they are being studied, is created and built by personal attributes and influenced by cultural factors (Marsiglia et al., 2002). Such cultural factors relate to aspects of culture described as "cultural constructs" or "cultural variables" which include specific beliefs, values, norms and behaviors that capture the core life experiences of racial/ethnic minority people (Castro & Alarcon, 2002).

The family is an important source for resiliency. The family provides cultural transmission of values, beliefs, traditions and practices that are passed from elders to children. The generally healthy, supportive family may proffer protection from risk. Kingon and O'Sullivan (2001) stated that open family communication can be an asset by offering expressions of concern for all the members of the family. Moreover, families with better communication are more likely to resist depression than those families with poor communication. Also, the higher the level of family cohesion, the less likely the adolescent was to exhibit distress or deviance (Kumper, Karo, Olds, Alexander, Zucker & Gary, 1998).

Marsiglia et al. (2002) describe the family context as a protective factor: perhaps the most important protective factor arising from Mexican American culture is familism: a cultural criteria in which the family of origin is of primary importance even after marriage. Mexican and Mexican American families tend to have strong family pride, family closeness, and respect for parents, mutual obligation, trust and cohesion. Traditional Mexican norms such as parental

monitoring and involvement with children, and the tendency of married couples to settle close to the parents and other family members thus provide children with a greater number of caring adults and a more cohesive community. Despite the challenges associated with immigration and acculturation, family context remains a vital factor in resiliency.

Immigrant families, both with and without legal documentation frequently exert greater protective characteristic of their family members as they seek to maintain a sense of cultural identity while seeking success. Ceballo (2004) establishes that despite general trends in the under achievement of racial minority youths, some children from impoverished immigrant families do in fact succeed against the odds. Adolescents are motivated to do well in school by a sense of obligation to repay their immigrant parents for the sacrifices the parents made to come to the United States (Bacallo and Smokowski, 2007). In another example, a family's Mexico cultural traditions and practices give family members their cultural identity and sense of belonging based on a sense of *nosotros* (we-ness) that comes from having common values, beliefs and traditions (Castro, Boyer & Balcazar, 1998). In many undocumented immigrant families, religious beliefs and their own unique practices contribute to the strong sense of family unity which involves family identification, attachments, obligations and loyalty (Castro et al., 1998).

The family is clearly a dominant socializing context for its members especially their youth. Families are the locus for decisions concerning whether to

migrate, the primary source of support for navigating transitions, and the site for transmission of culturally based beliefs and practices for all its members (Yoshikawa & Way, 2008). Understanding family factors such as levels of potential education, language use, parenting practice, family structure, and parent involvement in school, helps explain why and how undocumented immigrant families succeed in the United States (Barrera et al., 2002).

It is important to identify the strengths that the undocumented immigrant community has to promote resiliency; it is equally important to identify unique risks that derail resiliency efforts. Strengths and risks can come from the same source. Researchers studying family structure have discovered contradictory and inconsistent findings on the effects of family function (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004). Much of their work is based on the recognition that a structured family cannot be a proxy for effectiveness and that a more traditional or normative family structure is no guarantee of an emotionally healthy, well supervised family environment (Amey, 1998; Castro et al., 1998).

If there is no guarantee of how an emotionally-healthy family develops then it is important to look at specific patterns of risk that reduce resiliency. For instance, undocumented immigrant parents who have received very little formal schooling affect their children's academic performance by their lack of understanding of the importance of education, and their lack of reading and writing skills, consequently putting them at risk of failure in a variety of ways (Punklet & Bancama 2003). Another potential risk that challenges this community

is that children from poor undocumented families tend to display lower levels of cognitive functioning, social development, psychological well-being and self-esteem. The educational performance of poor immigrant children is marked by a consistent pattern of underachievement (Ceballo 2004). Also, children from immigrant backgrounds are more prone to common childhood illnesses. They are also exposed to environmental risks such as lead and pesticides at higher rates than non-immigrant children and contract communicable diseases infections more often (Clark 2002).

The Ecodevelopmental approach holds that there are risk factors at all levels of the social environment; moreover those levels have a profound effect on the other levels (Pantin, Schwartz, Sullivan & Coatsworth, 2003). A good example of this is the case of Leticia, exemplified in Chapter 1, and more fully related in Chapter 5. According to the Ecodevelopmental theory, there are four systems: macro, exo, meso and micro. The macrosystem refers to the social and philosophical ideas that define a particular culture or society. For example, American culture places great emphasis on individualism, self-directedness, self-sufficiency and independence. Immigrants coming from different cultural context are likely to have trouble adjusting to the American environment and may be marginalized by it (Mushi, 2002). In the case presented it was my perception that Leticia and her family were having trouble adjusting to the host society. For instance the adults in the family were missing vital connections with the American culture such as the language and awareness of the legal system. It is

obvious that the mother does not understand her daughter's detention or why she was on probation; moreover, her lack of English skills cause her to struggle when trying to communicate with the probation officer, the teacher and any other authority dealing with the family. Recent immigrants--documented or undocumented--who lack knowledge of the host culture may develop frustration dealing with the individualism and self-directedness expected (Barrera et al., 2002). Furthermore undocumented immigrant parents who have received very little formal schooling affect their children's academic performance, consequently putting them at risk of failure in a variety of ways (Punklet & Bancama 2003); once again, this is well exemplified by Leticia and her mother. Resiliency is measured by the degree to which people are productive and healthy despite hardships, traumas and obstacles in their environment. Another potential risk that challenges this community is the fact that children from poor undocumented families tend to display lower levels of cognitive functioning, social development, psychological well-being and self-esteem. The educational performance of poor immigrant children is marked by a consistent pattern of underachievement (Ceballo 2004). Leticia's younger brother seems to be suffering from this.

The second level is the Exosystem which refers to the condition and settings in the parents' lives. Some examples of these settings are the parents' work places and parents' support networks. In the case presented above, the mother presents the general trend of undocumented immigration; meaning, many immigrants come to the United States to work in low paying jobs that demand extensive

working hours to produce a minimum living wage (Castro, et al., 1998). This creates two potential risks: first, their health is at risk due to working long hours and perilous conditions such as working under the sun, or working in unsanitary conditions. Second, they are subject to exploitation such as lacking benefits and any kind of job security. Support networks such as friends or faith-based agencies can help the undocumented immigrants survive in the United States. By this support they are able to find knowledge, help and solutions for many of their problems. For instance, many of the undocumented immigrants seeking help in St. Vincent de Paul came to this agency through “word of mouth,” from either friends or acquaintances.

The third level is the Mesosystem. This refers to the relationship between the adolescent and his/her world, including parental involvement in school activities and supervision of the adolescent peers. A main principle of mesosystemic functioning is that the stronger and more complementary the connection between the parts within the system, the more positive is the influence of Mesosystem on the child’s development and wellbeing. In the case related above it was clear that the mother’s poor knowledge of her daughter’s situation in school was the main reason why the mother wasn’t successful when trying to help the girl. Researchers have stated that the educational performance of poor immigrant children is marked by a consistent pattern of underachievement (Ceballo 2004). This is due mainly to the poor interaction between the immigrant parents and their children’s school institution. The parents’ lack of ability to speak and understand English

and also the poor knowledge of the American culture and educational system cripples them when relating to their children's needs and problems.

The last level is the Microsystem, which refers to the social context in which the adolescent is directly involved, such as their family, school and peers. Through these sets of relationships, each microsystem shapes the adolescent's development either toward function or dysfunction (Pantin, Schwartz, Sullivan, & Coatsworth, 2003). Here it is important to recognize that the better emotionally and socially equipped that the youth is the better he/she will function in the host society and be better able to confront every day challenges (Adams, 1997). In the case mentioned above because Leticia lacks adult supervision she was constantly absent from school and therefore deemed a truant, and also she acted out with the school staff. Here the girl misses parental involvement which is crucial at this stage of her life.

To further understand this Ecodevelopmental theory it is important to discuss how the proximal and distal contexts that surround undocumented immigrants' families affect them by either preventing or promoting success at the different levels of their social environment. The first context is proximal which is defined as any resource/tool close to the individual such as the family and friends. Recent immigrants are greatly shaped in their social, emotional and economical development by the influence of their extended family contexts (Bukowski & Mesa, 2007). An extended family situation, in both the host and home countries, often serve as a critical support for recent immigrants in the United States and

likely influence the levels of adjustment of such immigrants in the host society. Specific ways that the family's extended network provides help to recent immigrants are: information, assistance, protection, advice and support.

Distal context, defined as a tool or a source over which the individual doesn't have control, such as legal, institutional and policy contexts for immigrants can either promote success or hardship. Undocumented immigrants are also excluded from governmental services that prevent them in certain cases from living within the law. For example, the fact that they are not able to access financial services and/or state issued drivers' licenses may produce serious consequences for the individual or the family unit. Moreover, families without a legal status report higher food insecurity, suggesting that the children living in those families may be at nutritional risk, especially given the fact that those families are not eligible for the Federal Food Stamp Program (Massey, 2003).

A basic review of the literature reveals that the undocumented immigrant's resiliency arises from a number of factors, most notably family as a site for strength and support. However, the family and school, or the microsystem, does not provide solutions for all problems; indeed, the family itself can be a problem to resiliency as marriages break up, children assume burdens for their unassimilated parents, or parents are unable to help their children adjust to the host society. The literature review also reveals that while the family is a vital source for strength, the undocumented immigrant cannot rely on it solely and must extend their search for support beyond friends and family, into external

systems such as social service provision. Social service providers, being well assimilated to the host society, can promote adjustment to the host society in other ways than just food and shelter. The social service provider can promote greater success in the social environment by equipping undocumented immigrants with social skills and emotional skills for navigating a challenging and the frequently hostile environment.

The Imagined Community and the Undocumented Immigrant

A resource for resiliency of the undocumented immigrant is more abstract than aspects described above but also important: the “imagined community” and gestures toward “symbolic interaction” with the host or dominant society. Benedict Anderson’s classic work *Imagined Communities* (1983; revised 2006) examines the creation and global spread of “imagined communities of nationality.” Although Anderson did not specifically address the case of the undocumented immigrant, his reflections on how a communal sense of people allegiant to a nation, itself an abstract entity, binds people in a deep horizontal comradeship that transcends the truly imaginary borders that separate nation from nation, and create distinct national identities. The community that Anderson defines is *imagined* “because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” In this way, a nation, which is truly a concept, with borders defined by lines on a map, becomes a community because the people dwelling within know they belong to this community—a

belief which, as Anderson writes, “makes many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly die for such limited imaginings” (7).

The origins of this sense of nationalism, which challenged pre-Enlightenment visions of European communities (fiefs, seigneuries) interestingly enough originated in the Spanish colonies. This sense of nationalism was instrumental in the colonies of the “new world” disengaging themselves from European roots and declaring themselves as nations, which was unprecedented in world history. This sense of having a clearly defined and dated birth of a new nation seems to have created a strong sense of citizenship which, in the case of the undocumented immigrant, can work against him or her—or possibly become a source of strength.

To consider his ideas in terms of the undocumented immigrant, particularly the first decade of the twenty-first century (and a recession-wracked economy), the native-born American citizen assumes a richer identity than perhaps granted by those who assume the typical citizen is naturally prejudiced against immigrants. Those who are concerned or angry about undocumented immigrants are perhaps not just a disgruntled, angry, and prejudiced person, but perhaps a citizen reimagining his/her community as one in trouble, and thinking they don’t need any more trouble from outside sources—particularly undocumented immigrants who seem to be taking jobs, getting public welfare, and otherwise being in a place they don’t legally belong. The undocumented immigrant also assumes a richer identity: he or she has willingly disengaged from

their own imagined community to try to live in another imagined community—and learning that crossing a border is not a simple physical act, but a conceptual one, with both physical and abstract consequences. Moreover, their imagined community of success in the United States is frequently challenged, if not shattered. However, this idea of an imagined community, which seems to be a negative concept, can prove positive to the undocumented immigrant. He or she can be encouraged to imaginatively reach out to other members of their community—the community of undocumented immigrants in the United States—and see themselves as a nation of sorts, bound together by language (in this case Spanish), general background, customs, beliefs, experiences (such as illegally crossing a border), religion, and even the familial, domestic, and political challenges that test their resiliency. To a degree, this community exists in physical reality as undocumented immigrants contact each other through social service agencies, email, work, and neighborhoods: this is the foundation of the full extent of an imagined community that give people a sense of identity, a set of objectives, and the emotional resources to keep going.

The importance of community, indeed, an imagined community, to strengthen the resiliency of the undocumented immigrant is discussed briefly, but pointedly, by Kay Deaux in “An Immigrant Frame for American Identity” (2010). She finds that beyond the immigrant debate, “a highly volatile aspect of current social and political discourse,” the debate also involves criteria for a “national American identity” (71). Pointing out that the immigrant, both documented and

undocumented, experiences the United States in a “different way” than the native born citizen, Deaux understands that social identity, based on classic American ideals of identity, threatens immigrant resiliency, which is illustrated by American education beliefs which “target ethnic studies classes that . . . advocate ethnic solidarity instead of treatment of pupils as individuals” (72). Simply, immigrants are either to be educated, or expected to demonstrate “rugged individualism” which is supposedly the American ideal. Civic engagement, Deaux argues, is critical for the immigrant to come together in collective action to “make connections between the ethnic group and the community at large. Ethnic identities and loyalties are not, as some have assumed, incompatible with the development of a strong national identity as an American” (p. 72). Although Deaux does not address the concept of the imagined community and resiliency directly, her thoughts nevertheless relate to them. The undocumented immigrant, particularly in this case the Hispanic immigrant, can seek their ethnicity as a way to connecting with an imagined community in the United States. To adjust Deaux’s concluding passage, “immigrants need not forsake their ethnicity and culture in order to be a part of a larger civic enterprise, rather, they can use their culture and the bonds that are built through a sense of [imagined community] to contribute to the nation—a nation that has always been a nation of immigrants”(p.72).

Leo R. Chavez in “The Power of the Imagined Community: The Settlement of Undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans in the United

States” (1994) also does not directly address resiliency by means of the imagined community; his focus is on learning how much a sense of community contributes to the immigrant’s decision to pass from “sojourning” to “settling” in the United States: “how undocumented [immigrants] perceive their relationships to the communities in which they live; and . . . the relative importance of the imagined community on the intentions of the undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States” (52). However, the theme of resiliency emerges in the work. Chavez proceeds on a belief that a sense of fixed community has receded in the twentieth century as travel and media have dissolved certain barriers. Rather, he believes that migrants have the ability to “develop feelings of belonging to multiple communities;” feelings that don’t depend on physical locations. Immigrants can belong to two communities at once, such as the Aguililla community living in Redwood City, California. Chavez argues that “undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans can, and often do, develop social linkages, cultural sentiments, and economic ties that result in imagining themselves to be part of their communities in the United States” (p. 56).

In his study of undocumented Hispanic immigrants in and around the Los Angeles area, Chavez’s findings, those which are particularly relevant to this work, indicated immigrants felt themselves to belong to some kind of community. This feeling arose from adaptation or at least from becoming accustomed to life to a sense of concern about the immediate community, and of the country. Whatever the source of this feeling, Chavez does not call it resiliency but rather a feeling of

belonging: “Feeling like you are part of the community appears to be related to overcoming feelings of isolation, developing a network of family and friends in the local community, acquiring local cultural knowledge, and reconciling yourself to the possible threat of deportation” (p. 62). Other immigrants feel a sense of belonging to a community by having “paid their dues” in one way or another. Paying dues ranges from paying taxes, eating in local restaurants, to suffering from abuse. Other links come from a shared heritage, either recent (immigration from Mexico and Central America for either political or social reasons) or at a distance, such as the rich history of Latinos in the American southwest. Another sense of community comes from dealing with the outsider’s perception of the immigrant as uneducated, lazy, and of course, illegal. Chavez concludes that “Although some segments of the larger society may like to imagine undocumented immigrants to be rootless, unattached, and temporary residents in U.S. society, the evidence here suggests. . . . many undocumented immigrants perceive themselves as part of the community and intend to become . . . permanent settlers” (p. 68). Notably, and in strong relation to the immigrant families considered in this work, legal immigration status “is but one of many factors contributing to a migrant’s sense of belonging to a community” (Chavez, 68).

Symbolic Interaction

This mental conceptualization of an imagined community (and seeking accommodation with another imagined community) can be strengthened and

made practical by means of “symbolic interaction.” Symbolic interaction—as employed in this dissertation--adopts the theories of Herbert Blumer, who headed up the branch of the “Chicago School” of symbolic interaction. Blumer’s ideas rest on six basic premises about human nature and social life that guide the discovery of everyday life. Adler and Adler (1980) describe that within Blumer’s premises, interaction is not guided by abstract forces; rather “interaction occurs between real people,” and “Social interaction is the foundation out of which human beings and their conduct originate” (p.40). People interact with objects, both tangible and abstract and these objects have meaning—the meanings, however, are directed by human perceptions. Human beings then act toward these objects on the basis of the meaning that those things have for them, and these meanings arise from social interactions with others. These meanings are then subject to individual interpretation by the human being dealing with these objects. In other words, “Meanings are social products that can be changed when the interactional setting so suggests” (Adler & Adler, 1980, p. 40).

Blumer’s theories about social interaction are key to understanding symbolic interaction and resiliency because they emphasize how the human being is an “actor” and, as an actor, is a “perceptive creature” both with the world, and within him or herself. The human being is capable of reflecting on his or her actions, reassessing their actions, and constantly adjusting behavior: “Human beings, as highly complex organisms, continually re-assess their situation and behave as best they can in a world that cannot be depended upon to remain simple

and constant . . . instead of reacting, the individual puts forward lines of action that amount to instant innovations” (Adler & Adler, 1980, p. 40). These ideas are key to understanding the resiliency of the undocumented immigrant.

Interpretation of objects and action requires further consideration because it is no simple reflex action and certainly subject to the environment. “When we find ourselves in a situation,” writes Sandstrom, Martin and Fine (2003), “we must decide which of the main things present in that situation are relevant. We have to determine which objects or actions we need to give meaning and which we can neglect. Moreover, we must figure out which of the many meanings that can be attributed to a thing are the appropriate ones in the context” (10). In their example, a stranger smiling at another person across the room at a party, might be interpreted by the person in many different ways, depending on the person’s understanding, which is cultivated by age, gender, socialization, familiarity with the culture, and so on. This situation is encountered constantly, and we decide how to respond. However, what happens when individuals find themselves in a new and ambiguous situation, where “established meanings” do not apply, and new meanings must be devised? This is the general situation facing any newcomer into a community, whether the community is welcoming to the outsider, or not particularly welcoming.

Sandstrom, Martin, and Fine’s *Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality* (2003), is particularly insightful about how the outsider, or the sidelined person in a community, can make symbolic gestures toward the dominant society in order to

deal with it, survive, and make some kind of sense of objects, groups, events, and structures. The authors write about symbolic interaction in terms of three premises laid out by Herbert Blumer, which state that human beings act toward things “on the basis of the meanings those things have for them, and that meaning is derived from social interaction” (p. 10). Meaning of things is not inherent; it is a social construct, and depends on the environment or the situation, and of course, by the individual’s interpretation. Thus, social definitions guide people’s actions, but the individual do not make or reflect actions—rather, “When we find ourselves in a situation, we must decide which of the many things present in that situation are relevant. . . . Moreover we must figure which of the many meanings that can be attributed to a thing which are the appropriate ones in this context.” This is not always easy: “when we find ourselves in some situations, particularly new and ambiguous, we discover that no established meanings apply. “As a result, we must be flexible enough to learn or devise new meanings” (p. 10). However, can the undocumented immigrant, entering into a different society, have the flexibility to find or create new meanings? If they can’t, what is the result? What gestures toward symbolic interaction can prove the most powerful?

This leads into a discussion of socialization, which gives most people the grounds and the information they need to interpret and bring meaning to events and processes in their lives. Socialization, as defined by Sandstrom et al. (2004) is an ongoing, interactive process through which individuals develop identities and learn the ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that characterize their society.

Ways of acting in one society that shock or amuse another society is the result of socialization that brings sense and meaning to events and traits that make no sense to others. Socialization, the authors go on to say, is not a predictable process; rather, it is dynamic, reciprocal, and somewhat unpredictable. People are not robots to their traditions; rather, people influence “the contents and outcomes of their own socialization” (6). They make decisions about their behaviors based on the situation. Indeed, symbolic interactionists emphasize that it is not a one-dimensional process through which some people impose their attitudes of values; rather, socialization has multiple purposes and outcomes: “Its most important outcome is the production of individuals who can adjust themselves and their behavior to the situations they face. The successfully socialized person is someone who can skillfully meet the challenges of different situations, coordinating personal actions with others to solve problems, achieve desired goals, and create meaningful identities”(p. 66).

However, a great deal of this socialization process occurs during the childhood stage. During this process, the “self” is developed. Yet this does not mean that all socialization is over. Adults frequently have to undergo new socialization processes as they pass through phases or, as Sandstrom et al.(2003) define it, “status passages” or “movements in and out of social statuses”(p. 85). Some of these passages, such as graduation, marriage, and divorce have rules, expectations, and even generally realizable outcomes. Other passages, explain the authors, “are far less structured and standardized.” The crossing of borders, either

legally or illegally, must be considered among the unstructured and unstandardized passages that depend on or are affected by “whether it is voluntary or involuntary, desirable or undesirable, important or insignificant, reversible or irreversible, and individual or collective” (p. 85). Sandstrom et al.(2003) do not offer the case of the undocumented immigrant, but their examples, such as a gay person undergoing a status change—by becoming afflicted with HIV/AIDS--has salient parallels with the undocumented immigrant.

The authors continue: Although, a number of status passages are relatively routine, some become powerfully transforming events in a person’s life. Symbolic interactionists refer to these events as ‘turning point moments’ or epiphanies—moments of crisis or revelation that disrupt or alter a person’s fundamental understandings, outlooks, and self-images. These moments typically arise when a person is rapidly propelled from one status to another, either willingly or unwillingly and they arise when a person suddenly enters an unanticipated status (p. 87)

The undocumented immigrant is “rapidly propelled” when they leave their friends, family, and society behind to cross the border.

The diagnosis of AIDS (or any life-threatening disease or injury) redefines the person socially, with their health becoming a marker of their status. This new status, entered into unwillingly “disrupts and even shatters their previously cherished beliefs, routines, and self-images. This produces a crisis and initiates a process of self identity transformation and resocialization” (p. 86). This person

must make sense of the meaning of their new status and to feel its implications for their image and interactions with others. Notably, they “gauge how others define and respond to their HIV status and tend to define and respond to themselves similarly.” In the early stages of the AIDS epidemic, those diagnosed with HIV faced a fearful and hostile environment, goaded on by conservative political and religious leaders who described their conditions as immoral, unnatural, and a sign of God’s punishment. Thus stigmatized, gay men with or without HIV/AIDS encountered “rejection in many social relationships, including relationships with co-workers, friends, family members, and lovers”, (86).

Defined by their illness, defined by rejection, gay men with or without HIV/AIDS viewed themselves as lepers, and were encouraged to view themselves thus, even if not deliberately, by others, particularly the press. At first, they were unable to counter such thinking and branding by lacking access to sources that provided a more positive outlook—sources such as effective medical treatment, “non-stigmatizing definitions of HIV/AIDS” and networks of other afflicted men and those who supported them in their struggles. As a result, gay men developed greater access to medical help, understanding and assistance from friends, families and support groups, and most important of all, new definitions of themselves—for example, the afflicted gay man can see himself as one who has a chronic but treatable disease, and one who “lives with” the disease. Again, parallels with the undocumented immigrant’s status are notable. Many such immigrants may not think of themselves as being criminal by the act of crossing

the border, but the stigma of the word, and the media continually referring to them as illegal aliens has its impact on them, and members of their family. Though circumstances may improve, disruptions and challenges still confront the gay man. Though he may have a more positive self-image, he is still dealing with a disabling disease. “In making sense of their illness and its implications, these men are guided by the responses of their intimate others.” If their “intimate others” treat them normally, they still find value in themselves. The meaning they attach to their health status “arise from their ongoing interactions with intimate others.” Gay men with or without HIV/AIDS can reach out to others, teaching that HIV disease need not significantly change the relationships and interactions they have with each other. Networks can share information, provide emotional support, and acquire resources and strategies to deal with the disease and “redefine the negative meanings of their health status” (88).

Undocumented immigrants reflect this situation. The immigrant may be living in generally good circumstances; they are employed and working hard; their children are attending school, and sometimes they can afford certain luxuries. However, this does not remove the fear and self-definitions of criminality. Networking among themselves, and networking with social support agencies and churches can provide resources and strategies; job tips can be found; families look after other families; language and culture can be shared. In some ways, the negative circumstances and definitions can be ameliorated or dealt with, and the undocumented immigrant remains resilient.

Another source of resiliency is the constant interacting with the social environment to construct and project positive identities to seek accommodation and combat stereotypes. In Marko Valenta's "Immigrant's Identity Negotiation and Coping with Stigma in Different Relational Frames" (2009) the author considers the case of the Bosnian and Iraqi immigrants in Norway, whose circumstances and responses to circumstances parallel the Hispanic immigrant in the United States. Valenta does not directly address the aspect of these immigrants' resiliency; his focus is rather on how they seek integration into the prevailing society. However, resiliency is implicitly addressed in his accounts of their struggle to create a "feeling of belonging and self-worth in their new environment" (p. 351). Bosnian and Iraqi immigrants may be legal immigrants in Norway but are living within a "frame of a prejudiced social reception. . . . [and] navigate within various circumstances, ties, and networks while negotiating their identities" (p. 351).

Valenta's work is based on the identity being an object that is actively constructed and performed through daily interactions with others and by this perspective he studies how such immigrants deal with stigma by impression management, passing and covering, and "disidentifiers." He writes that he was "inspired by a symbolic interactionists position the primary focus of this study is on the meanings immigrants themselves attach to different interactions and relationships," which seeks out not only the steps they take, but why such steps are taken to interact more successfully. Immigrants project "dynamic integration

strategies to manage and construct new identities that can help them deal with chronic and acute discrimination” (p. 354). The strategies Valenta examines included the ones mentioned above, but certain strategies are of particular relevance to the Hispanic immigrant: “passing,” and showing by behavior that the host citizens’ stereotyped conceptions are wrong.

His study details how Bosnian and Iraqi immigrants practice “passing” as natives largely by means of exploiting their generally European appearance, but also by being silent or avoiding situations. These immigrants are “invisible” in terms of race and physical characteristics, but become visible when communicating as their accent or difficulty with Norwegian identifies them. Even those immigrants fluent in Norwegian often chose to remain silent. If they speak, the interaction between them and Norwegians change. A way that “visible” immigrants, such as Iraqis, whose physical characteristics identify them, interacted was by disidentifying by behaving in Westernized fashion, and also by means of sophisticated clothing (p. 362). In terms of the Hispanic immigrants in this study, the subjects often practiced similar strategies, such as passing for legal among the area’s growing Hispanic population, driving (even without a license), and having their children, whose command of English is more fluent than theirs, handle certain situations. The strategy for passing is demonstrated by the women who were taking English classes, and, in very contemporary fashion, learning to use the computer.

Another particularly relevant observation that Valenta makes is the immigrant creating and maintaining a hybrid identity, and to “juggle” minority and majority behavior. Valenta quotes a study by Brekke (2001) which observes that migrants may also fight stigma by separating their ethnic identity from other immigrants. In Valenta’s study he observed how a Bosnian woman was embarrassed when in the company of other Bosnians whose inept actions could “then be ascribed to a shared cultural background” (p. 367). In other words, she was tarred by the same brush by her collective identity with all other Bosnians. Such immigrants “are anxious that the team’s performance may disturb and undermine each individual’s self-presentation” and seek ways of compensating. In the cases described in this study we find undocumented immigrants sturdily seeking to mimic the values of the majority: they work hard, send their children to school, and try to avoid all contact with police. This is not merely self-identifying behavior, because such symbolic interaction maintains households, ensures the children’s future and reduces trouble. The immigrant family being studied might also wish to separate themselves from the negative stereotypes of Hispanic immigrants as promoted by news media and stereotyping. Though not a public display of separation, and probably engaged in without realizing their actions, they fight stereotypes and thus confirm their self-identities.

This literature review has identified and described three lenses by which to more sensitively consider the problems and the strengths of the undocumented immigrant seeking accommodation with an unfriendly host society: the

ecodevelopmental approach, the concept of the “imagined community,” and symbolic interaction as an intensely human process by which the individual thrust into different circumstances continually alters while maintaining an identity. The undocumented immigrant is thus perceived not as a political being, but as an individual firmly placed in and dealing with a network of circumstances that both supports as well as demands response. The behavioral outcomes of such a response can assist the social service provider in better understanding the peculiar pressures on the immigrant, both documented and undocumented, and in turn can promote their counseling abilities. The undocumented immigrant may better understand and thus reject identities of criminalization. He or she may also look more strongly into him or herself as a source of strength, and look to their communities, imagined and otherwise, as a more accurate mirror of the behavior, adaptation, and dreams of success.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology Approach and Research Design

Introduction

This dissertation will answer the following questions: What happens after undocumented immigrants cross the border illegally? How do they adapt to the host society? Which skills do they use in order to establish themselves successfully in the United States? What are the risks that these undocumented immigrants face once in the United States? How do they overcome these risks/challenges? How do they overcome images of criminality? And finally how does the social service provider help them in all of these challenges, particularly the challenge of overcoming criminalization? Moreover, what are the undetected challenges to, and overlooked efforts to maintain resiliency? These are the questions answered through this ethnographic study.

This study intends to answer these questions by identifying patterns of criminalization and exclusion that influence the perceptions of both undocumented immigrants and their social service providers of challenges and obstacles they confront as well the successes they win (Coutin, 2005, Petersilia, 2003). In order to answer these questions, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in gathering data.

Through quantitative data I described relevant characteristics of the undocumented immigrants that were part of this study such as gender, number of

family members, work status and so forth. Such data will help me to create a profile of the population which I am studying. Creating a profile is important because it ensures my sampling process to select my participants is done objectively and specifically. But it is critical for this study to go beyond descriptive information and into a more discourse-oriented analysis, and these data were supplied by interviews. My aim was to gather valuable information from the indigenous view of the participant. Moreover by utilizing qualitative means I accomplished research in the following aspects: (1) how undocumented immigrants demonstrate resiliency when overcoming the challenges of criminalization; and (2) how the social service providers who work with those undocumented immigrants help them when their resiliency is challenged. In short, the information required for this study could not be solely gathered or revealed through numerical findings; therefore the information contributes to a detailed ecological framework that is essential to a cross-cultural research that I am pursuing (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2006).

By quantitative means I developed a matrix of relevant variables that allows me to more objectively recognize relationships among the variables. The combination of both methods balances the representativeness and objectivity of the quantitative numerical aspect with the more detailed and deeper understanding provided by the human centered approach of the qualitative field research (Castro and Coe, 2006).

Mixed-Method Framework:

A mixed-method approach was used to carry out the intention of the ethnographic research because this study deals with human beings facing difficult problems. Quantitative methodology is characterized by being objective and assertive but at the same time cold. On the other hand, qualitative means alone may be too subjective. Therefore, a mixed-method is best suited to this study because this method takes advantage of the representativeness and generalizability of quantitative findings and the in-depth, contextual nature of qualitative findings (Hanson et al., 2005). Simply stated, a mixed-methods approach allows both methodologies to complement each other.

My plan for integrating a mixed-method approach will follow Hanson, Plano, Petska, Creswell & Creswell's study (2005) which indicates

mixed methods investigations maybe used to (a) better understand a research problem by converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data; (b) identify variables/constructs that may be measured subsequently through the use of existing instruments or the development of new ones; (c) obtain statistical, quantitative data and results from a sample of a population and use them to identify individuals who may expand on the results through qualitative data and results; and (d) convey the needs of individuals or groups of individuals who are marginalized or underrepresented. (p. 226).

Castro and Coe (2006) discussed this concept further, stating that a mixed method is an integrative process that requires “Conceptualizing information as research evidence that takes the form of verbal text narrative evidence (qualitative) or numeric evidence (quantitative) and has taken a form susceptible of measurement” (p. 792). Thus, data that do not seem to be measurable can be transformed into a construct that can be measured. For instance, in my case design, resiliency is the central concept to be examined by means of the different methodologies used in this study, thus facilitating data conversion. For example, many of the undocumented immigrants’ narratives indicated a desire to work and thus provide for their families. This desire was confirmed by my descriptive analysis, which came out of the quantitative data. These data indicated numerically that almost all the participants worked and almost no one depended on social welfare. Thus, both data sets indicated that the desire to work indicates a high level of resiliency among my sample.

This example clarifies that mixed-method is best suited for this study, which is further clarified by three reasons: First, the researcher determined the purpose/motive for this study, as well as the research questions and the type of data collected. Following Hanson and his colleagues (2006), the researcher also took other factors into account including the philosophical basis for this study. This study is

exploratory in nature, with the main goal being to learn from the indigenous perspective of the participants. Thus the specific method of interview was used. This study began with open-ended interviews which were then complemented by a descriptive analysis of the population (Sherrod, 2006).

Second, mixed methods are best suited for this project because the design focused primarily on the qualitative research but the data would be strengthened and confirmed by findings of the quantitative side. In this case, the mixed method allowed a sequential exploratory design which is usually used when not much is known about a particular problem, and finding common themes can be done through qualitative and quantitative analysis. In this type of design priority is given to qualitative data using a sequential exploratory design with the following procedural notation: QUAL -> quan.

The researcher detected relationships among the participants; furthermore the meaning of these relationships was enriched by the use of both methodologies. For example, the descriptive analysis indicated that it is important for the undocumented immigrants to have social networks to find jobs and social assistance; and the qualitative analysis established a similar connection. .

Description of Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

The participants in both the quantitative and qualitative study were drawn from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. According to its mission statement, this international organization is committed to serving the needs of the poor and to

providing an opportunity for others to serve. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing the causes of such needs, and makes no distinction in those served. Services are provided without regard to race, religion, gender, opinion or national origin.

Special Works Ministries offers a range of one-on-one services through direct client contact. Services are provided to various groups living on the margins of society, such as the homeless, recently incarcerated, and the working poor. These programs have two goals: to meet the needs of the homeless and to prevent homelessness from occurring. The homeless and those newly released from jail and prison find assistance, hope and encouragement as they work to get back on their feet and make positive changes in their lives. Working poor families who struggle to make ends meet, or are facing a financial crisis, are given support and assistance to overcome the barriers and improve their economic position. Dozens of volunteers keep Special Ministries going, serving as interviewers, mentors, instructors, and many other roles to provide assistance, in the spirit of respect, love and dignity. The Ministries features several programs to help families and individuals, with the most notable being the following:

- Ministry to the Homeless: Each day more than 150 homeless people come to the main campus at St. Vincent de Paul, where volunteer mentors assess their needs and provide the services and referrals to help them get off the streets and back on their feet. Identification, transportation, assistance, showers, haircuts, clothing and toiletries are provided

- **Opportunity Program:** This program helps many clients get ahead in the job market. The job training and the mentoring program offer tools to compete in the job market, including assistance with resume writing, job search, interviewing skills; a voice mailbox is provided. During the program, clients volunteer in various areas on our main campus to gain job experience and a letter of recommendation. Each year, more than 50 participants graduate from the program, and find jobs and stable housing in the community.
- **Family Assistance Program:** The goal of the Family Assistance Program is to prevent homelessness for families who are otherwise sustainable, but are facing a financial crisis. The program provides one-time assistance with rent or utility costs to families with children to help them stay in their homes.
- **Helping the Working Poor:** Those who find it hard to make ends meet become more financially independent through the Helping the Working Poor Program. Approximately 100 families per year work with a case manager and a mentor to create a family budget and set spending priorities. Job training and job readiness assistance is also provided; and participants can get assistance with childcare, transportation and costs related to seeking better employment. In addition to families, about 50 individuals are also helped by the program each year

- Esperanza/Hope Program: This program is designated to effectively promote first generation undocumented immigrant women and their families by strengthening their resiliency and helping them overcome challenges due to their legal status in the United States.

a. Vision of the Esperanza/Hope Program's Benefits:

1. A qualitative means for the Society to extend the services it offers
2. A potent resource for bringing about behavioral change in clients
3. Building a constituency group: Volunteers and staff will develop identification with specific group of clients
4. A means for people to engage in meaningful human relationships
5. A supportive vehicle to help victims of abuse and disparity

b. The Esperanza/Hope Program aims to achieve the following goals/

objectives:

1. Help undocumented immigrant families solve adverse legal and social consequences.
2. Developing family resiliency by promoting engagement/commitment as they (the family) work as a unit to help their members to maintain and improve their socio-legal situation.

3. Identify barriers that immigrant families and immigrant youth encounter when trying to access social services, and develop culturally responsive procedures.
4. To understand from the perspective of undocumented immigrant families and immigrant youth whether the services they receive from St. Vincent de Paul are helpful tools that helped them avoid adverse socio-legal consequences and deconstruct media-images and stereotypes.

c. Services:

- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Computer classes
- Legal Advice (Immigration legal clinic)
- Mentoring
- Women's services and referrals
- Medical and dental care

Qualitative design

Qualitative Sampling Process and process for selecting participants:

My qualitative sample, drawn from a relevant program at The Society of St Vincent de Paul, was not so small that it became difficult to achieve saturation. At the same time the sample was not too large so that it became difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). For this study the qualitative sample was of two different groups: first, a sample of ten social service providers. The selection process was based on a purposive

sampling: I invited both staff and volunteer service providers at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Ministries department to participate in this study; out of 55 people available, 25 responded to my invitation. From those 25, I selected 10 due to the convenience of timing for both the interviewer and the interviewee; in other words, our schedules allowed us to meet. Furthermore, these social service providers counseled every client who asked for their services; in other words, they did not counsel the select participants exclusively. The goal was to learn how the providers of social services perceive how the undocumented immigrants overcome challenges of criminalization.

The second group was composed of eight undocumented immigrant families in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Esperanza/Hope immigration/ESL program. This program, developed with the intention of promoting resiliency among undocumented immigrant families in the United States, was composed of only these eight participant families; therefore there was no need for sampling. Only nine families participated in this program at the time of this study. It is important to understand how those families become enrolled in this program. Once the family is interested in participating in this program there is an intake process done by a case worker from St. Vincent de Paul. The case worker explains the program. An important question on the in-take form asks if the applicant or anyone in the family has documents in the United States.

Within the nine families, I interviewed only the adult members. Adult is defined as anyone who has passed his or her 18th birthday. Since all participants

are members of the Esperanza/Hope program there was no need for a screening process. Only nine adults were interviewed.

Qualitative Instruments:

Interview Protocol (Social SERVICE Providers)

A. Identifying yourself and your clients

- 1) How long have you been a social provider?
- 2) How long have you worked with undocumented immigrants?
- 3) Do you have special training and/or skills for working with undocumented immigrants? (e.g. bi-lingual, cultural sensitivity, working with special populations). Please describe.
- 4) What is your highest educational degree? What did you study?
- 5) According to your perception, what do you think is the undocumented immigrant's greatest need? (e.g. legal, social, economic, family and personal)
- 6) According to your perception how stressful is the experience of living in the United States for undocumented immigrants? Please describe.

B. Their expectations/dreams of living in the United States

- 7) Did any of your clients comment about them imagining/dreamed life in the United States, before they departure their country of origin?

- 8) According to your client and once in the United States did their original dream of coming to the United States change due to the circumstances he/she lives in?

C. Perceiving the Problem

- 9) According to your experiences of working with undocumented immigrant families how do their needs and stresses affect the youth in the family?

- 10) Did you and your client agree/disagree on those perceptions of needs and stresses? Please describe a notable experience.

- 11) Did the client's beliefs, needs and stresses change the way you understood the immigration dilemma? If yes how did your understanding change?

D. Identifying social exclusion, labeling and resiliency

- 12) According to your perception as a social provider what is your understanding of how the undocumented immigrant family reacts when their well being has been threatened by the impact of labeling and social exclusion? (Family supportiveness, discussion, violence, compromises, adversarial, change).

- 13) According to your experiences, how do you believe social exclusion impacts the
undocumented immigrant's resiliency?

- 14) According to your experience, how do you believe labeling/stigma impacts the
undocumented immigrant's resiliency?

E. Attempting to solve the problem from the social provider standpoint

- 15) What social programs and/or social services do you currently use and/or recommend when helping undocumented immigrants? Why?
- 16) How helpful do you think you are when working with undocumented immigrants in areas such as establishing social support, connecting with resources in the community, and helping them cope with fear of unknown?
- F. How can you as a social provider assist with family resiliency in order to promote a positive immigration experience?
- G. Promoting new expectations/dreams
- 17) Are you able to help these clients imagine/dream life in the United States based in the reality they live in?

Interview Protocol (Undocumented Immigrants)

Icebreakers:

1. Where were you born?
2. How old are you?
3. How many family members including extended family live in your house?
4. How many people below 18 years of age live in your house?
5. Are you the primary care giver?

Theme (Key) questions:

1. From the following list select the three main concerns regarding your sense of well-being:
 - Police/Sheriff
 - Travel
 - Non-legal status
 - Neighborhood crime
 - Teen-issues
 - Job security

Medical issues

Loss of privileges

2. Explain why these choices are your main concerns
3. To the best of your knowledge, explain how these concerns affect you in your daily life. Provide an example to illustrate
4. Explain the ways in which you attempt to solve such concerns.
5. How and/or when do you feel excluded in the United States and how and/or when do you feel included?
6. What are the skills and/or strengths you need in order to be successful in the United States? Please provide an example to illustrate

Wrap up question:

7. Would you like to share a particular story regarding your success in the United States?

Qualitative Analysis Plan

The qualitative analysis was conducted via a humanistic methodology by which I assumed “naturalistic perspective” (Sandstrom, et al., 2003). This choice of methodology and developing of a naturalistic perspective was critical to this study because I sought to understand human conduct. Through naturalistic inquiry I developed two levels of analysis: exploration and inspection (Sandstrom, et al., 2003). In the first phase I became familiar with the social world I studied. In this stage I immersed myself in the social world of undocumented immigrants by observing and interacting with them daily for the past three years as part of my professional work. This immersion helped me to understand how members of this world experience and negotiate life and relationships with each other (Sandstrom et al., 2003). Becoming more sensitive was crucial in order to understand those whom I studied. At this stage of the qualitative analysis, my own personal

experience as an immigrant from Mexico and as a social service provider became important because it allowed me to identify crucial values and norms that otherwise would be difficult to notice. Also I became more empathetic in understanding conflicts and challenges these participants go through as well as their successes (Kusow, 2003, Zatz, 2000).

Four factors helped me to sensitize myself at this stage of the analysis. First I immigrated to the United States in 1991 and I was eventually “converted” from an insider to an invisible outsider. My conversion seems qualified because I have a fairly noticeable accent and although I don’t look like the typical Mexican man I am one, living with a legal status in the United States. For instance, when I was interviewing service providers, some of them asked me where I was from. On the other hand, being able to interview undocumented immigrants in their own language without an American accent created a sense of familiarity. Second the fact that I share the same religion that many of the people I’ve studied, including both undocumented immigrants and social service providers, has positioned me as an insider, but also as an invisible outsider. I rarely disclose my religious preference, but I do work for a Catholic faith-based agency from which I draw my participants and most of them share the same religion. Third, as do many undocumented immigrants, I also imagined coming to the United States and being successful; with that dream in mind I carefully developed a plan that would make my dream come true. Also as many undocumented Mexicans have experienced, my dream changed once in the United States and I had to create another one. For

instance, my then-wife got sick once in the United States; this preceded a dramatic divorce, which not only put me in a difficult economic position, but emotionally drained me and also challenged my desire to remain in the United States. Thanks to the support of my family, close friends and mentors, I was able to re-imagine a new dream. Finally, as do many recent immigrants from Mexico, I have become immersed and acculturated into the American culture; I've learned how to speak English, to behave and look more American, and my two younger children were born here in the United States, and they identify themselves more American than Mexican. At the same time I have worked in places that Mexicans work, eaten in places that Mexicans eat, dated Mexican women, lived in neighborhoods where Mexicans live, and speak Spanish among Mexican friends; I do this just to have a sense of familiarity and cultural acceptance and identity. I could keep talking about this dichotomy of being an insider and at the same time an "invisible outsider" but the fact is that it is hard to define which role I took when I was conducting interviews. It is hard because I feel I am both, although I feel closer to my identity as an invisible outsider.

In the second stage of my qualitative analysis, I engaged in a systematic inspection of the substantive data that I gathered through the exploratory stage. These data involved the following: interview notes and field notes. Here I structured my exploration and analysis in three sections: first, I interviewed my participants in a one hour session and used an in-depth qualitative interview protocol for both groups: undocumented immigrants and their service providers.

This technique produced valuable information in the following areas: (1) ways social service providers identify how immigrant families contest the effects of criminalization; (2) understanding how social service providers perceive resiliency; and (3) understanding from the indigenous perspective of the undocumented immigrants their perceptions of fear, anger and resiliency. (Wengraf, 2001, Charmaz, 2001, Emerson et al, 1995). For these results I did not use a computer program; rather, I highlighted important themes that consistently emerged through the narratives.

The second section involved a similar analysis of narratives drawn from both groups (undocumented immigrants and social providers). These narratives were also created by in-depth interviews. The raw data were similarly studied for themes and consistent occurrences and/or reactions from both undocumented immigrants and social providers. The basic narrative pattern was constructed: for the undocumented immigrants, the narrative commences with a description of the family; the reasons and motivations for the family to cross the border into the United States; a description of a typical day in their lives; and specific issues and obstacles that they confront. The narrative concludes with their thoughts about the recent enforcement of immigration laws.

The final section of my qualitative analysis was to develop ethnographic insight into the salient behavior, conduct, beliefs and strategies of both populations of undocumented immigrants and social providers. This ethnographic process involved the selection of themes or salient aspects of resiliency. Even

though I am not using a strict grounded theory, my analysis generally reflects the following strategy: “selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.116). For instance I chose the themes that most reflected/described the essence of what emerged from the data; in this case the strongest, most meaningful response from the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The emerging pattern then was generated by analyzing the core themes and by articulating how all other key themes are related to the core category. The conceptualization of the theory was built by validating events from each original transcript. For instance, when the participant continually describes fear of the police in the original transcript the researcher thus deduced that information as highly repetitive and therefore emerging as a theme, which, by further “coding” will be validated as true. After integration of this conceptualization, a theoretical framework consisting of ten to twenty key themes, and then judged to be inclusive of all participants’ experiences, was chosen as the basis for the emerging theory. Because the core themes, constructs, key categories, categories and concepts will originate directly in the data, this emergent model created a “grounded theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Procedures:

Once I selected the participants, I made contact with potential participants through letters which I followed by two telephone calls. The interviewer was

myself, a bilingual Latino with some experience in conducting interviews.

Fluency in both English and Spanish provided a cultural bridge that enhanced communication between the interview subjects and me and contributed to the trustworthiness of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, I encouraged my participants to talk in either English or Spanish, whichever was easier for them, so that I could get more real meaning of their answers.

Gomez et al. (2001) established that having rapport with the participants is critical in qualitative studies. Thus, cultural norms were consciously incorporated into the methodology of my study. Marin & Marin (1999) described six important cultural norms for Latino populations:

- (a) the cultural script of *simpatia* (friendliness), in which one conducts oneself in an amicable, interested, caring way;
- (b) importance of trust and *Respeto* (respect);
- (c) familism, or the centrality of family;
- (d) the need for *la platica* (small talk) before initiating formal transaction;
- (e) preference for close physical contact; and
- (f) the use of Spanish.

I considered these relevant culture variables when seeking participants of Mexican origin. Upon reflection on my own experiences I would like to be interviewed by someone that cares about me and my family and is able to speak my own language. The understanding of these cultural norms was conveyed by the following:

- (a) self-disclosing personal information in the initial contact letter as well as the explanation of the consent document, and finally promoting ongoing communication between the researcher and the participants throughout the research process; (b) engaging in la platica with participants and their family members; and (c) communicating in English and Spanish (Gomez et. al, 2001).

Quantitative Design:

The intent of the quantitative analysis was to descriptively summarize the participant characteristics in order to understand the population being analyzed and gain insight into key variables that could help provide a more effective interpretation of the qualitative results. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were used to summarize continuous data. Measures of frequency were used to summarize categorical data.

Sampling design

The population in this quantitative design was located in Maricopa County, Arizona, and the participants were drawn from a group of undocumented first-generation Hispanic immigrants who received social services from a faith based agency, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, during the year 2009. This group was part of the “Special Works Ministries Esperanza/Hope Program.” This program was previously described as a program to assist families with housing and other financial assistance as well with financial literacy classes, English classes, computer classes and immigration legal assistance.

Instruments and Variables

The Special Works Ministries' "Esperanza/Hope Program" database was used as the instrument from which the participant characteristics were drawn. All participants were Hispanic, undocumented (i.e., not eligible to work in the US), first generation immigrants, and lived in Maricopa County. The following variables were used in the quantitative analysis:

- (1) Demographic characteristics: age and sex
- (2) Socioeconomic characteristics: level of education, employment status, monthly income, and source of income.
- (3) Risk characteristics: does the participant have a felony offense; is the participant willing to take a drug test; does the participant need help with drug and/or alcohol addictions; and does the participant need help with domestic abuse.
- (4) Assistance characteristics: does the participant need help with medical issues; does the participant need financial assistance; does the participant need help with getting an identification; does the participant need immigration legal assistance; does the participant need help with creating identity in the US; does the participant need help with mortgage or rent; does the participant need help with clothing; does the participant need help with school issues; does the participant need help with finding a safe place to sleep; and does the participant need help with bus pass or gas money.

- (5) Skill-building characteristics: does the participant need help with parenting skills; does the participant need help with computer classes; and does the participant need help with English classes.
- (6) Acculturation characteristics: self-reported level of English and years living in the US.
- (7) Household and Transportation characteristics: number of individuals in household and mode of transportation.

Limitations:

According to Zinn (2001): “Field research conducted by minority scholars has some empirical and some methodological advantages. The most important one is that the ‘lenses’ through which they see social reality may allow minority scholars to ask questions and gather information that others could not.”

The fact that I am a first generation Mexican and also that I have more than 10 years of experience working with undocumented immigrants and youth with criminal backgrounds allowed me to better understand the field of immigration. As an “insider” I was also careful that my background did not bias my data collection or analysis. Zinn (2001) also establishes that “People in minority communities have developed so many self-protective behaviors for dealing with outsiders that it is quite reasonable to question whether many behaviors and meaning are accessible to outsider from another color.” Clearly I had certain advantages to interact, participate and learn from the community I researched; however, this created a responsibility. My minority identity could

have created some ethical concerns such as misjudging the community I am researching.

Other potential issues: my sample could have a bias problem--meaning that some of the participants that I selected were not typical or representative of the larger population. In this case, my sample might not have fully reflected the population of undocumented immigrant families living in the U.S. I also considered my personal biases: I am from Mexico, now a first generation United States citizen and I had more than 10 years of experience working with the Latino population with criminal backgrounds. All of these personal characteristics might have affected the sampling process and analysis (Ungar, 2006).

Ethical Concerns:

This researcher completed "Human Research Curriculum Completion Report: Ref. #5216265, 13 November 2010.

Three tenets guided my research. First, research with human subject's participation should be based on their informed, voluntary decision (Hicks, 2006). Second, the risk must be reasonable in relationship to anticipated benefits (Hicks, 2006, Henderson, 2005). Third, the 45 CFR 46 (1991) standards for confidentiality stipulate that the only record linking the participant and the research should be the consent document. Furthermore the format of qualitative research brings additional confidentiality concerns. IRB guidelines state that there

should be no link between the data and the identity of the individual (Waldrop, 2004).

My ethical concerns demanded two strategies: first, the researcher's paramount responsibility is for the well-being of the participant(s) he/she studies (Bostock, 2002). Second, I fully complied with the informed assent and consent requirements of my university's IRB Board (I'd include your IRB approval number here). Those requirements included a brief description of the study protocol, full identification of the researcher and sponsoring organization, assurance that the participation is voluntary and could be terminated at any point, and information about risks or benefits associated with the study (CFR, 2001).

CHAPTER FOUR

Statistical Analysis and Description of Participants

1. Statistical Analysis

The intent of the quantitative analysis was to create a descriptive overview of the participant characteristics in order to understand the population and recognize key variables that could help provide a more effective interpretation of the qualitative results. Any missing values encountered in the data were excluded by deleting cases from the analysis of the variable on which they had missing values.

The participant characteristics in our sample included the following categorical variables: sex, employment status, source of income, felony offense, drug/alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, assistance variables, skill-building variables, level of English, and mode of transportation. Frequency measures (n and percent) were used to summarize the distribution of the data across the various categories.

The participant characteristics in our sample also included the following continuous variables: age, level of education, monthly income, years living in the US, and number of individuals in the household. The mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the central tendency and dispersion of these data. To perform cross-tabulations, these continuous variables were transformed into categorical variables.

Table 1 shows a summary of the participant characteristics. Continuous variables that were transformed into categorical variables are shown in italics.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.	
Demographic	N=100
Age – mean (SD)	35.2 (9.1)
<i>Age-group - no. (%)</i>	range:18-78
<i>-Young adult (<40 years)</i>	
<i>-Older adult (≥40 years)</i>	73 (73%)
	27 (27%)
Sex – no. (%)	
-Male	32 (32%)
-Female	68 (68%)
Socioeconomic	N=100
Level of education – mean (SD)	6.0 (2.9) range: 2-12
<i>Education-group – no. (%)</i>	
<i>-Elementary (≤6th grade)</i>	
<i>-Middle/high (>6th grade)</i>	65 (65%)
	35 (35%)
Employment status – no. (%)	
-Full/Part-time	31 (31%)
-No/Seasonal	69 (69%)
Monthly income – mean (SD)	1220.3 (556.7) range:0-3000
<i>Income-group – no. (%)</i>	
<i>-Low (<\$1000)</i>	
<i>-Medium/high (≥\$1000)</i>	42 (42%)
	58 (58%)

Source of income – no. (%)	
-Work	86 (86%)
-Welfare/aid	14 (14%)

Table 1. Participant characteristics (continued).	
Risk	N=100
Felony offense (Yes) – no. (%)	18 (18%)
Drug test (Yes) – no. (%)	95 (95%)
Drug/alcohol addiction (Yes) – no. (%)	14 (14%)
Domestic abuse (Yes) – no. (%)	33 (33%)
Assistance	N=100 (exceptions noted)
Help with medical issues (Yes) – no. (%)	95 (95%)
Financial assistance (Yes) – no. (%)	99 (99%)
Help with getting identification (Yes) – no. (%)	75 (75%)
Immigration legal assistance (Yes) – no. (%)	98 (99%) N=99
Help with creating identity in US (Yes) – no. (%)	99 (99%)
Help with mortgage or rent (Yes) – no. (%)	15 (15%)
Help with clothing (Yes) – no. (%)	12 (12%)
Help with school issues (Yes) – no. (%)	25 (26%) N=98

Help finding safe place to sleep (Yes) – no. (%)	11 (11%)
Help with bus pass or gas money (Yes) – no. (%)	98 (98%)
Skill-building	N=100
Help with parenting skills (Yes) – no. (%)	99 (99%)
Help with computer classes (Yes) – no. (%)	100 (100%)
Help with English classes (Yes) – no. (%)	99 (99%)

Table 1. Participant characteristics (continued).	
Acculturation	N=100
Level of English – no. (%)	
-None	40 (40%)
-Some	23 (23%)
-Regular/Fluent	37 (37%)
Years living in the US – mean (SD)	5.8 (3.1) range: 1-15
<i>Duration-group – no. (%)</i>	25 (25%)
-Short (≤ 3 years)	75 (75%)
-Long (> 3 years)	
Household and Transportation	N=100 (exceptions noted)
No. individuals in household – mean (SD)	4.2 (1.4) range: 2-8
<i>Household-size-group – no. (%)</i>	N=99

-Small (≤ 4 people)	62 (63%)
-Large (> 4 people)	37 (37%)
Mode of transportation – no. (%)	97 (97%)
-Car	3 (3%)
-Bus	

To perform cross-tabulations with a reduced number of variables, some individual characteristics were combined into scales.¹ For example, a **Socio Economic scale** with a range of 0-6 was created from the individual socioeconomic characteristics by adding 2 points if the participant reached middle or high school; 2 points if the participant held a full or part-time job; and 2 points if the participant had medium or high income ($\geq \$1000/\text{month}$). Similarly, an **Acculturation scale** with a range of 0-4 was created from the individual acculturation characteristics by adding 2 points if the participant's level of English was regular/fluent; 1 point if the participant knew some (but rather limited) English; and 2 points if the participant had been in the US for a relatively long time (> 3 years).

¹ Scale validation was considered out of scope for this research; however, similar published scales have used comparable individual variables as the ones used herein. For a similar socioeconomic scale example, please refer to: *Ashing-Giwa K.T. and Lim J.W., Examining the impact of socioeconomic status and socioecologic stress on physical and mental health quality of life among breast cancer survivors for a socioeconomic scale. Oncol Nurs Forum 2009;36(1):79-88.* For a similar acculturation scale example, please refer to: *Cruz TH, Marshall SW, Bowling JM, and Villaveces A. The Validity of a Proxy Acculturation Scale Among U.S. Hispanics. Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences 2008;30(4):425-46.*

Likewise, an **Assistance scale** with a range of 0-10 was created from the individual assistance characteristics by adding 1 point for every Yes acknowledged by the participant in terms of needing: help with medical issues, financial assistance, help with getting identification, immigration legal assistance, help with creating an identity in the US, help with mortgage/rent, help with clothing, help with school, help with finding a place to sleep, or help with a bus pass or gas money.

To perform cross-tabulations, these scales were transformed into categorical variables.

Table 2 shows a summary of the created scales. The transformation of these scales into categorical variables is shown in italics.

Table 2. Created scales.	
Socioeconomic scale	N=100
Continuous scale – mean (SD)	2.5 (1.6) range: 0-6
<i>Categorical – n (%)</i>	
<i>-Low (0-2)</i>	60 (60%)
<i>-High (3-6)</i>	40 (40%)
Acculturation scale	N=100
Continuous scale – mean (SD)	2.5 (1.3) range: 0-4
<i>Categorical – no. (%)</i>	
<i>-Low (0-2)</i>	54 (54%)
<i>-High (3-4)</i>	46 (46%)
Assistance scale	N=97

Continuous scale – mean (SD)	6.2 (1.1) range: 0-10
<i>Categorical – no. (%)</i>	
-Low (0-5)	20 (21%)
-High (6-10)	77 (79%)

Cross tabulations were run using the SPSS© software for the following categorical variables in order to assess potential pair wise associations: age, sex, source of income, household size, felony offense, drug/alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, socioeconomic (SES) scale, acculturation scale, and assistance scale. Tables 3 to 10 show the results in terms of statistical significant associations between pairs of variables.

Table 3 shows the cross-tabulation of Source of Income (work, welfare/aid) and Sex (male, female).

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of Source of Income and Sex

Income_source * Sex Crosstabulation

			Sex		Total
			Female	Male	
Income_source	Aid	Count	13	1	14
		% within Income_source	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%
		% within Sex	19.1%	3.1%	14.0%
	Work	Count	55	31	86
		% within Income_source	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
		% within Sex	80.9%	96.9%	86.0%
Total	Count	68	32	100	
	% within Income_source	68.0%	32.0%	100.0%	
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.622 ^a	1	.032		
Continuity Correction ^b	3.390	1	.066		
Likelihood Ratio	5.735	1	.017		
Fisher's Exact Test				.033	.026
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.48.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 4 shows the cross-tabulation of Socioeconomic Scale (low, high) and Sex (male, female).

Table 4. Cross-tabulations of Socioeconomic Scale and Sex

SES * Sex Crosstabulation

			Sex		Total
			Female	Male	
SES	High	Count	22	18	40
		% within SES	55.0%	45.0%	100.0%
		% within Sex	32.4%	56.3%	40.0%
Low	Count	Count	46	14	60
		% within SES	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Sex	67.6%	43.8%	60.0%
Total	Count	Count	68	32	100
		% within SES	68.0%	32.0%	100.0%
		% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.178 ^a	1	.023		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.230	1	.040		
Likelihood Ratio	5.130	1	.024		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.020
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.80.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 5 shows the cross-tabulation of Sex (male, female) and Domestic Abuse (yes, no).

Table 5. Cross-Tabulation of Sex and Domestic Abuse

Sex * Domestic_abuse Crosstabulation

			Domestic_abuse		Total
			No	Yes	
Sex	Female	Count	40	28	68
		% within Sex	58.8%	41.2%	100.0%
		% within Domestic_abuse	59.7%	84.8%	68.0%
	Male	Count	27	5	32
		% within Sex	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
		% within Domestic_abuse	40.3%	15.2%	32.0%
Total	Count	67	33	100	
	% within Sex	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%	
	% within Domestic_abuse	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.425 ^a	1	.011		
Continuity Correction ^b	5.322	1	.021		
Likelihood Ratio	6.959	1	.008		
Fisher's Exact Test				.013	.009
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.56.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 6 shows the cross-tabulation of Socioeconomic Scale (low, high) and Domestic Abuse (yes, no).

Table 6. Cross-tabulations of Socioeconomic Scale and Domestic Abuse

SES * Domestic_abuse Crosstabulation

			Domestic_abuse		Total
			No	Yes	
SES	High	Count	32	8	40
		% within SES	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Domestic_abuse	47.8%	24.2%	40.0%
Low	Count	Count	35	25	60
		% within SES	58.3%	41.7%	100.0%
		% within Domestic_abuse	52.2%	75.8%	60.0%
Total	Count	Count	67	33	100
		% within SES	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
		% within Domestic_abuse	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.096 ^a	1	.024		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.163	1	.041		
Likelihood Ratio	5.300	1	.021		
Fisher's Exact Test				.030	.019
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.20.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 7 shows the cross-tabulation of Source of Income (work, welfare/aid) and Felony Offense (yes, no).

Table 7. Cross Tabulation of Source of Income and Felony Offense

Income_source * Felony Crosstabulation

			Felony		Total
			No	Yes	
Income_source	Aid	Count	8	6	14
		% within Income_source	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within Felony	9.8%	33.3%	14.0%
Work	Work	Count	74	12	86
		% within Income_source	86.0%	14.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	90.2%	66.7%	86.0%
Total	Total	Count	82	18	100
		% within Income_source	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.815 ^a	1	.009		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.997	1	.025		
Likelihood Ratio	5.649	1	.017		
Fisher's Exact Test				.018	.018
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.52.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 8 shows the cross-tabulation of Size of household (small≤4, large>4) and Felony Offense (yes, no).

Table 8. Cross-tabulations of Size of Household and Felony Offense

Household_size * Felony Crosstabulation

			Felony		Total
			No	Yes	
Household_size	Large	Count	35	2	37
		% within Household_size	94.6%	5.4%	100.0%
		% within Felony	42.7%	11.1%	37.0%
	Small	Count	47	16	63
		% within Household_size	74.6%	25.4%	100.0%
		% within Felony	57.3%	88.9%	63.0%
Total	Count	82	18	100	
	% within Household_size	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%	
	% within Felony	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.312 ^a	1	.012		
Continuity Correction ^b	5.030	1	.025		
Likelihood Ratio	7.319	1	.007		
Fisher's Exact Test				.014	.009
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.66.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 9 shows the cross-tabulation of Socioeconomic Scale (low, high) and Felony Offense (yes, no).

Table 9. Cross-tabulations of Socioeconomic Scale and Felony Offense

SES * Felony Crosstabulation

			Felony		Total
			No	Yes	
SES	High	Count	37	3	40
		% within SES	92.5%	7.5%	100.0%
		% within Felony	45.1%	16.7%	40.0%
	Low	Count	45	15	60
		% within SES	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	54.9%	83.3%	60.0%
Total		Count	82	18	100
		% within SES	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.980 ^a	1	.026		
Continuity Correction ^b	3.865	1	.049		
Likelihood Ratio	5.488	1	.019		
Fisher's Exact Test				.033	.021
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.20.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 10 shows the cross-tabulation of Assistance Scale (low, high) and Felony Offense (yes, no).

Table 10. Cross-tabulation of Assistance Scale and Felony Offense

Assistance_requested * Felony Crosstabulation

			Felony		Total
			No	Yes	
Assistance_requested	High	Count	67	10	77
		% within Assistance_requested	87.0%	13.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	84.8%	55.6%	79.4%
	Low	Count	12	8	20
		% within Assistance_requested	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within Felony	15.2%	44.4%	20.6%
Total	Count	79	18	97	
	% within Assistance_requested	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%	
	% within Felony	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.665 ^a	1	.006		
Continuity Correction ^b	5.982	1	.014		
Likelihood Ratio	6.682	1	.010		
Fisher's Exact Test				.010	.010
N of Valid Cases	97				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.71.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Discussion of Results

The population of participants in this research (see Table 1) were on average approximately 35 years old; had an average level of education of 6th grade; had an average monthly income of approximately \$1220 for an average household size of 4; the majority were females (68%); a small proportion were employed full or part time (31%); and only 14% received welfare aid as a source of their income. These findings suggest that a typical profile for a first-generation Hispanic undocumented worker who seeks social services in Maricopa County is a young adult with no more than elementary school education; has a family of 4, and struggles to find a job but earns less than the federal poverty line of \$22,350 (source: *Federal Register*, Vol. 76, No. 13, January 20, 2011, pp. 3637-3638; also in <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11poverty.shtml>). Not surprisingly, our Socioeconomic Scale in Table 2 found that, in relative terms, the majority of participants (60%) had a low SES. The fact that most of the participants in this research were female could reflect that women are more available to seek help since they tend to stay at home more than their Hispanic male counterparts, and

also that women in general tend to be more open to seeking help without their personal pride hindering their and their family's needs.

From the population of participants (see Table 1), only a small proportion acknowledged having a felony offense (18%); or suffered from drug/substance addictions (14%); or domestic abuse (33%). Since this is self-reported data, it is possible that these findings under-represent reality. Interestingly, the majority of the participants requested assistance with securing identification (75%) as well as help with medical (95%), financial (99%), immigration (99%), identity (99%), and cost of transportation (98%). In addition, the vast majority of participants also requested assistance with skill-building classes like computers (100%), English as a second language (99%), and parenting (99%). These findings seem to indicate that first-generation Hispanic undocumented workers who seek social services in Maricopa County have a resolute desire to improve. They probably see this improvement as a means to upgrade the sometimes mistaken perceptions from others and to help them ultimately succeed in this country. Now, the fact that only a small proportion of the participants requested assistance for mortgage/rent (15%), clothing (12%), school (26%), and finding a safe place to sleep (11%), seems to indicate that these needs are, for the most part, satisfied. This perhaps reflects the more collective (versus individualistic) idiosyncrasy of Hispanics, among which groups of individuals help each other with the basic needs for housing.

The majority of the participants (see Table 1) also had no or very limited knowledge of English (63%) despite an average duration in the US of almost 6 years. Not surprisingly, our Acculturation Scale in Table 2 found that the majority of the study population had a low acculturation level (54%). This may be a function of the profile of individuals who come to faith-based social service agencies seeking help. It can also reflect that over time individuals get exposed to norms and customs of the new culture but continue to struggle with the English language. This lack of command of the English language likely accentuates incorrect perceptions from others and contributes to exclusion and criminalization patterns that form a vicious cycle that perhaps only immigrant resiliency and citizen education efforts can break.

Cross-tabulation analysis (see Table 3) found that there is a statistically significant association between Sex and Source of Income ($p=.033$, Fisher's Exact Test). Whereas nearly 20% of female participants listed welfare/aid as their source of income, a much lower proportion of males (3%) count on this type of source to make ends meet. This difference can be explained by gender-specific aid such as WIC (Women-Infants-Children) but it can also be rooted in Hispanic male pride that pressures them to find a more tangible supply of income without dependence on the government or other institutions. However, the fact that both proportions are low seem to indicate the high degree of desire of both genders to try to integrate into the ordinary way of life (i.e., having a job) while aspiring to live the American dream.

Another finding from the cross-tabulation analysis (see Table 4) was that there is a statistically significant association between Sex and Socioeconomic level ($p=.029$, Fisher's Exact Test). Whereas a majority of males (56%) have a relatively high level of socioeconomic status, only a minority of females (32%) enjoy such benefit. This difference can probably be explained in part by the fact that a higher proportion of males work in jobs outside the home. In addition, male jobs for Hispanic undocumented immigrants tend to be physically intensive (e.g., mowing the lawns) and therefore may (unjustly perhaps) demand a higher pay.

The cross-tabulation analysis (see Tables 5 and 6) also found that there is a statistically significant association between Sex and Domestic Abuse ($p=.013$, Fisher's Exact Test) as well as between Socioeconomic scale and Domestic Abuse ($p=.030$, Fisher's Exact Test). Whereas nearly half (41%) of the females reported some type of domestic abuse in this research, only about one-sixth of the males (16%) reported the same. These results are not surprising since typically more females tend to be victims of domestic abuse than males. Also, whereas only one-fifth of the high-SES individuals (20%) reported domestic abuse, nearly half of the low-SES individuals (42%) reported the same. These results suggest that lower SES may be associated with more prevalence of domestic abuse perhaps because lower education and/or weaker economic means lead to higher stress at home with the resultant abuse.

Yet another set of findings from the cross-tabulation analysis (see Tables 7-10) indicates that there is a statistically significant association between a number of variables (Source of income, Size of household, Socioeconomic scale, and Assistance scale) and Felony Offense ($p=.018$, $p=.014$, $p=.033$, and $p=.010$ respectively using Fisher's Exact Test). Whereas less than one-sixth (14%) of participants with part or full-time work reported a felony offense, nearly half (43%) of participants without a paying job reported the same. This result suggests that perhaps keeping one-self busy with work or getting personal fulfillment through work mitigates the chances for criminal risk. Also, whereas only 8% of participants with high SES reported a felony offense, about a quarter (25%) of participants with low SES reported the same. This result suggests that access to higher education or income could be potential deterrents of criminal behavior for first-generation Hispanic undocumented workers who seek social services in Maricopa County. In addition, whereas 40% of participants who requested a low level of assistance reported a felony offense, only about one-eighth (13%) of participants who requested a high level of assistance reported the same. This result suggests that first-generation Hispanic undocumented workers who request a higher level of assistance from social service providers are associated with lower risk of criminal behavior. Furthermore, whereas a minimal proportion of participants who lived in large households (>4 inhabitants) (5%) reported a felony offense, a much higher proportion of participants who lived in small households (≤ 4 inhabitants) (over 25%) reported the same. This difference can probably be explained by small households perhaps being representative of groups of

individual adults whereas large households could represent actual families with parents and children. Now, familism² is a central notion of the collective idiosyncrasy of Hispanics -- when a family is the nuclear basis of a Hispanic household, there likely are more collective norms and accountability to avoid trouble and risks. On the contrary, when individual adults are the foundation of a Hispanic household, they may be more prone to be derailed with temptations that can land them in trouble. As a result, the family concept is an important aspect of the resiliency that is needed by Hispanic immigrants to succeed in a new culture. The collective support and norms that the Hispanic family offers likely helps partially offset the incorrect perceptions from others in terms of exclusion and criminalization patterns that, as mentioned earlier, only immigrant resiliency and citizen education efforts can break. It is not surprising then that communities with large numbers of first generation immigrants have in general lower crime rates. In fact, contrary to popular perception, immigration in general is a protective factor against crime perhaps in large part due to these strong cultural values of familism, hard work, and other characteristics that typify immigrants.

The eight undocumented immigrant families studied in the qualitative interviews provide real-life examples for these quantitative results, with both bodies of evidence mutually confirming each other. With the qualitative data, the distance and “coldness” of statistics are given a human face, and reminds the researcher that the numbers represent people, not abstract entities.

² A social pattern in which the family assumes a position of ascendance over individual interests (source: Merriam-Webster dictionary).

For example, in Table 1, 68% of participants were identified as female and 32% as male. Correspondingly, all eight families that underwent the qualitative interviews had a woman as head of the household= (due to widowhood, separation, and in at least one case, the woman never married the fathers of her children). Thus the woman assuming the role of head of household, in addition to other difficult aspects of her life, suggests how resilient the undocumented immigrant can be, and how resiliency grows out of concern for the broken or incomplete family. However, it is interesting to note that even when a husband/partner is present, the woman is still in some ways a head of household. In Case #6 the wife, even though happily married to her husband, seems to have assumed certain qualities of being the head of the household. In this family, the wife encouraged her husband to migrate to the United States with their son, which he arranged for, even though he seemed satisfied with his work in Mexico. Also, she is the one who sought assistance for the family at St. Vincent de Paul, when their steady sources of work eroded. The implications that grow out of this qualitative-quantitative mix is those women's thoughts and actions are more directed towards their families than the men, hence their steadier resiliency.

As for socioeconomic characteristics in Table 1, statistical analysis revealed that 69% had no work or only seasonal work. Although seasonal is not particularly well defined, there is a seasonal quality to the work conducted by the women and the men in these households in that work is neither constant nor ongoing. For example, in Case #7, the mother works in construction which is

dictated by the needs of the market. Other men and women in the other cases are engaged in cleaning houses and offices, which has certain qualities of steady work, but may be dictated by the seasons, such as schools which for part of the year do not require heavy cleaning. The men in the families may also be engaged in outdoor work, which is certainly dictated by seasons, such as tree cutting and lawn-mowing. The young mother in Case #6 creates artistic items, which might also be governed by the needs of the market; moreover, working at home, unless the person is connected with a company, would not be officially considered full-time, no matter how many hours are contributed. No family in any of the cases reported that adults were engaged with full-time jobs in the “professional class” such as nursing, teaching, managing, and supervising.

Notably, for Monthly Income in Table 1, the qualitative results reinforce the quantitative results, and create implications for the importance of work as a resource of resiliency. Over half, 58%, report medium/high income, which is then exemplified by how hard and long members of the interviewed families work. For example, the young single mother in Case #6, makes a fairly moderate income for her two sons by working most of the night on her artistic items. The woman in Case #8 works at construction sites, tackling jobs that are usually done by men. The woman in Case #3 holds down two jobs. Prior to their work eroding, the couple in Case #6 worked enough to afford certain luxuries, such as hiring day care, which of course, permitted them to work longer. In all cases, the impetus to work was created by the needs of the family; however, Case #6 reveals that there

is also a history of hard work. As a daughter, the young woman saw her father going to the United States to work, coming home with money, and from that, helping his hometown in Mexico build industry and begin to thrive. These examples also strongly illustrate the Source of Income in Table 1 which indicates 86% of undocumented immigrant families rely on work, rather than welfare/aid (14%).

Qualitative evidence reveals a negative side to the hard work. The mother in Case #1 is even endangering her two youngest children's future by working so hard that they are under-supervised. The daughter was already engaging in risky behavior, and her younger brother was not receiving the therapy he needed to overcome learning problems. In this case, the mother's hard work may be a sign of her resiliency, but may negatively impact her children.

The statistics for Risk behaviors in Table 1 are likewise exemplified by the qualitative results. For "Felony offense," only 18% participants reported a "Yes". Even though the percentage is low, the case histories make more clear the "felony offense" undocumented immigrants face. Many of the families' narratives indicate that adult males, usually husbands, have some kind of crime patterns, especially domestic abuse, drug use, drug trafficking, and DUIs. Also, the interview cases indicate that rather than being drug offenses, which is stereotyped behavior for Latino immigrants, the felonies range from driving offenses to domestic violence. Indeed, many of the interview cases indicate that parents fight against their children becoming involved with drinking and drugs. In three cases,

the participants reported that they have been cited for driving without a license, which they are unable to obtain by their illegal status. In other cases, driving-age children are also driving without a license, a risk they must take in order to pick up their siblings from school, because the parent can't. Case #9 relates how a wife was framed for assault by her husband in a bizarre episode—the purpose of which seemed to be revenge. By having her arrested, she would become incapable of obtaining legal citizenship. The risk of domestic abuse in Table 1, with the exception of drug testing, is the highest statistic, at 33%. The interview cases reveal a sad history of sexual and verbal abuse, which threatens but has not destroyed resiliency. More strongly revealed is that once more the women seem more resilient than then men; despite abuse, or being abandoned, or on their own, the women seek to keep their families intact, and indeed, learn lessons about relationships that they attempt to pass on to their own children. Also revealed is how sad and depressed abused women are; these states of mind although expected, threaten their resiliency and their children's resiliency. This situation also makes a case of how important counseling is to survival: food and shelter help the individual and the family, but if the head of house hold is heartsick and depressed, resiliency is lost, not only for her, but for the family. This is well revealed in Case #7, in which the woman was obviously in distress, and directed to counseling. Her distress may have severely affected one of her daughters who was becoming involved in risky sex, and seemed to be seeking to escape by joining the military for the purpose of going overseas. As for her mother, initial

resentment over the idea of counseling soon gave way to relief as she spoke with counselors at a woman's center.

In the Assistance scale in Table 2, the statistics reveal that undocumented immigrants seek a great deal of help with medical issues, financial assistance, getting identification, legal assistance, and creating an identity; the numbers range from nearly 100 % to 75 %. The percentage takes a sharp drop in receiving help with rent, clothing, and shelter. The undocumented families interviewed revealed that their hard work keeps them supplied in the basic necessities, although there was constant moving, and living arrangements could be unconventional, such as Case #5, which features a young mother living in an office flat that does not have a full bathroom. Also, these figures do not clearly reveal that in some cases public shelters were resorted to, such as Case #7, in which the family had to seek a public shelter for a time, and when they did move into a rental unit, it was only bedrooms with a bath.

Correspondingly, the high figures for medical issues suggest how undocumented immigrants lack resources for both mental and physical well-being; this seeking of assistance is important to avoid problems in the future. In Case #3, the husband in the family was injured and although the injury was cared for, his illegal status prevents him from seeking additional help such as physical therapy. The figures for financial assistance are particularly "cold" or lack a human face; without seeking out the qualitative results the reasons for financial assistance are unknown and could be misunderstood. For example, the

undocumented families need financial assistance as their lives shift and change due to SB 1070 or sheriff department raids. Families have lapses in employment, either seasonal, or from raids by the sheriff's office. Lapses cause problems with paying rent, and moving to another property takes money. Financial assistance also has more positive faces, such as certain immigrants seeking to start their own businesses. High figures for getting identification and help with creating an identity in the United States are particularly well illustrated by the undocumented families' experiences. To the person studying the cold figures, such statistics might suggest that they are seeking U.S. identity for the purposes of sending their children to school for free, gaining social security, and access to medical assistance. Even if these things are desired by the undocumented families, their stories reveal different hopes and desires.

The Skill-Building variables in Table 1 provide notably high statistics. All of the undocumented families seek self-improvement, either for themselves or for their children. Some immigrants, such as the mother in Case #1, may not have a strong sense of self-improvement, preferring to seek money over her family's well being, though it could be argued that she was seeking such by making money—however the children's well being seemed to be suffering. The mother in Case #3, actively seeks improvement in appearance and self-confidence, and seeks to pass these values and belief to her children. Her children are doing well in school, and perhaps can seek legal status. All undocumented families that were interviewed have at least a mother who is seeking computer skills and English-language skills,

knowing that it will improve their status and give them abilities to live more effectively in the United States.

The mixed-method approach enhanced the ethnographic dimensions as this study deals with human beings facing difficult problems. Quantitative methodology produced objective data that become more understandable and more applicable to complex human relationships when enhanced by the in-depth, contextual nature of qualitative findings (Hanson et al., 2005). The two methods complement each other and identify trends and variables that not only numerically exist, but are confirmed through the interview data from these families who are marginalized or underrepresented. (Castro and Alarcon, 2002).

The stronger, more exemplary data illustrate resiliency is not only central to the immigrants' survival, but how resiliency assists them in their survival. The mixed method design benefited the information and insight gained as the researcher used the hard statistical data to uncover and then more thoroughly understand how personal and family resources of resiliency allow the undocumented immigrant to survive and thrive.

In summary, the major findings of this mixed approach are the following: data reveals that undocumented immigrants do not fit a general media-created profile of a criminal population seeking welfare. Most are were working and seek to learn English, computer skills, and attend parenting classes, revealing a desire to improve in skills both

inside and outside the home. A lesser percentage request helps with rent, clothing, and food; a higher percentage requests assistance with identification and transportation. Notably, the fact that most of the participants in the study are female suggest that they are most likely to stay at home and seek help for their families than their male counterparts; however, it also suggests that women tend to seek help more readily than men, without personal pride getting in the way of their family's needs. Another relevant finding is that a small percentage (18%) has committed a felony or suffers substance addictions.

The statistics overall reveal a population that is more interested in seeking assistance for personal and family safety; wish to improve itself, and for the most part avoid criminal activities. This profile, created by statistics, will be more thoroughly examined and understood by means of the analysis of case histories of nine undocumented immigrant families, presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Undocumented Immigrant Families Narrative Analysis

Introduction to the Qualitative Study

Resiliency is defined as “springing back,” “rebounding” and “possessing power of quick recovery.” How can this “power,” here possessed by human beings, be measured? In this study I consider a family to be resilient if it has survived in the United States for more than three years. Resiliency is further found and defined in these qualities: family members have been able to find jobs, make contact with agencies, network with other friends and peers, and despite multiple problems from being in the United States illegally, have still the desire to stay, become successful, and still have hope to seek citizenship (Castro and Coe, 2006, Coutin, 2002).

The resiliency that I found and analyzed within these cases is further measured in terms of the following nine factors: (1) a consistent record of employment; (2) being active and involved with community agencies (like St. Vincent de Paul); (3) making efforts to learn English; (4) networking with others with the same or similar employment; (5) networking with others from the same or similar regions in Mexico; (6) making and having a friendship network; (7) being pro-active in learning self-improvement skills or seeking help with problems; (8) developing a supportive atmosphere with the immediate nuclear or extended family; and (9) being pro-active about health. I found and will be

describing these five threats to resiliency: (1) domestic violence and domestic turmoil; (2) alcohol and drug abuse; (3) economic problems with paying bills; (4) health problems; and (5) problems with authorities (Castro and Coe, 2006, Coutin, 2002). Incidents of these kinds were found throughout the nine cases. In the discussions of sources of resiliency, and threats to resiliency, the three major sources and threats are identified and further developed.

The undocumented immigrants' experiences, issues, and the need for knowledge about their legal status bring into focus the following questions: What happens after undocumented immigrants cross the border illegally? How do they adapt to the host society? Which skills do they use in order to establish themselves successfully in the United States? What are the risks that these undocumented immigrants face once in the United States? How do they overcome these risks/challenges? How do they overcome images of criminality? Also, a more specific question is how did they first imagine the community in the United States, and how, after difficult experiences, are they re-imagining this community? Moreover, how they can use this re-imagining of the community to their benefit? As the following narratives reveal, the undocumented immigrant families are not always completely successful in the United States; hard work and "symbolic communication" with the host society helps, but problems such as broken families, labeling, and stress, plus conventional problems of finding work and having access to health care are not solved by these means alone. As will be discussed, relying on friends and family for support helps, as well as having self-

confidence. But these families' complex problems and special needs suggest that extra-familial resources such as church provide support that friends and family are unable to (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002). Also, social service providers are critical in helping the undocumented immigrant to maintain their resilience. Social service providers can provide more than food and shelter; they can provide access to services of counseling, training, educational assistance, as well as providing "windows" through which the undocumented immigrant can re-imagine success in the United States (Lingxin, 2003, Guanipa, Nolte, Guanipa, 2002)..

For this design I used a qualitative sample, drawn from a relevant program at The Society of St Vincent de Paul. The qualitative sample was composed of nine undocumented immigrant families in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Esperanza/Hope immigration/ESL program. This program, developed with the intention of promoting resiliency among undocumented immigrant families in the United States, was composed of these nine participant families; therefore there was no need for sampling. I interviewed only the adult members. Adult is defined as anyone who has passed his or her 18th birthday. Since all participants are members of the Esperanza/Hope program there was no need for a screening process. The qualitative instruments are identified in Chapter Three which describes the methodology.

The qualitative analysis was conducted via a humanistic methodology by which I assumed "naturalistic perspective" (Sandstrom, et al., 2003). By means of

my background, religion, native Spanish and similar experiences of transition and imagined and re-imagined success, I was able, as an invisible outsider, to gain greater access to the thoughts and feelings of my interviewed families (Kusow, 2003, Zatz, 2000). Through my work at St. Vincent de Paul's, I was also able to observe these families over a period of several years. I not only observed them, I spoke with them informally and we became friends. I was invited several times to their homes to celebrate quinceneras, birthdays, and carne asada; sometimes I simply came by for coffee and conversation. Through these highly informal observations I was able to realize and later reflect upon some of the strategies that these families have to survive here in the United States. For example, I had breakfast with two of the women I interviewed. They invited me and during breakfast we talked about a variety of issues beyond their illegal status. Both women were concerned about their weight, complaining that they did not feel attractive; plus, they were concerned about their age, feeling as if they were getting "old." They complained about how their husbands had abused them, and how they wanted to make better choices and see their children make better choices. Finally, they talked about their work cleaning houses and they were going to cook tamales for the holidays. I was privy, not as a researcher, but as a friend, to their fears, their unhappiness, and how their successes, particularly as maintaining their families through their work. In another case, I drove another client to a nearby AHCCCS office, where I helped her with an interview with a social service provider. I noticed how difficult it was for her to make herself understood; also, it was clear to me that she would not leave that office until her

questions were answered. Overall, by these personal experiences with the interviewed people, I did not simply listen to them, but I interacted with their fears and frustrations, but also observed how for the sake of their families how strong they remained in difficult circumstances.

In the second stage of my qualitative analysis, I engaged in a systematic inspection of the substantive data that I gathered through the exploration stage (Wengraf, 2001, Charmaz, 2001, Emerson et al, 1995). This data involved the following: interview notes, field notes and personal experiences. Here I structured my exploration and analysis in three sections: first, I interviewed my participants in sessions that were usually completed in an hour's time. These narratives were created by these in-depth interviews. The data was analyzed for themes and consistent occurrences. The basic narrative pattern was constructed: the narrative commences with a description of the family; the reasons and motivations for the family to cross the border into the United States; a description of a typical day in their lives; and specific issues and obstacles that they confront. The narrative concludes with their thoughts about the recent enforcement of immigration laws. The conclusions of my qualitative analysis seek to develop generalizations about the undocumented immigrant's practice of resiliency and to identify problematic situations which include personal and political issues. This chapter is being developed in a case by case analysis of the families, which then leads to discussion and observations of common threats to resiliency and common responses to resiliency.

Analysis of Case #1 (Carina Alvarez)

This family possesses the following demographics: the participant, Carina Alvarez (a pseudonym) is forty years of age and she lives with her boyfriend who is almost twenty years younger than her. In the same household reside her two daughters, both of them with two babies each, also residing in the house is her youngest daughter who is 13 years of age and her youngest child, a son five years of age. The participant and her family are here in the United States without legal status. They came from Zacatecas, Mexico, about seven years ago. Originally she came with her husband who passed away in a U.S. jail. The participant is the primary care-giver of the household.

In my exploration of this case I believe that this family maintained a degree of resiliency particularly through familism, which allows them to survive in the United States. For Carina it is very important to have all the members of the family together. The fact that Carina is always working and has a discipline for hard work reveals that the client wants to make sure that there will be food on her table, a roof over the family, and that all their basic needs get covered. The family maintains its resiliency by staying close together, exemplified by the client's two oldest daughters; after separating from their husbands, they both returned home with their children (two babies each). These children are citizens of the United States and are thus able to get insurance and, according to the client, food stamps that help the family in their survival. These two older daughters help financially and emotionally at home; they help clean and buy needed items, thus

demonstrating their concern for each other. The client and her family also promote their resiliency by socializing with other families which share the same social and economic characteristics. Many of Carina's friends work cleaning houses, and they are all here without legal status. Many of these families have children born in the United States, so that it is common that family members communicate in both English and Spanish. On the weekends, Carina and such families get together for *carne asada* and beer. They listen to Spanish music and converse in Spanish. According to Carina, this is the only time that her memories of Mexico come alive.

Carina also promotes her resiliency by coming to St. Vincent de Paul, whose resources help her with skills building and meeting others who live and work in similar situations. She has been going to the facility for a long time to use the dining room, and medical clinic for herself and her daughters. She had become an active participant in its Ministries, by taking English and computer classes. Though she has to miss classes at times, she calls and says she does not have time to come. When she attends, she shows a good demeanor; she interacts well with the other participants, and often engages in long conversations about them and their families.

However strong the Alvarezes' resiliency seems to be, it seems under attack by many forces, including some of the sources wherein the client demonstrates her resiliency. Carina is a hard worker: She is constantly declaring that "I don't have time to lose" and/or "money is good to make people happy."

Even though Carina apparently displays a high level of resiliency in reality she overworks herself, and seems to ignore her family which undermines their resiliency. She attempts to be a good mother to her children, but due to her heavy work as a housecleaner she does not have adequate time to dedicate to her two youngest children, a thirteen-year daughter and a five year old son. This younger daughter has problems adjusting to her mother's way of living and to American culture. The daughter feels stigmatized when called "illegal," and she shows her frustration by acting out in school and distancing herself from her mother by demeaning her mother's English and inability to speak with her teachers and probation officers. She refers to her as stupid, or someone incapable of doing anything. The daughter is already on probation and if she fails in detention for the fourth time she will go on intensive probation. She has run away from home several times, is constantly truant at school, and is relating to friends who belong to a gang in the neighborhood. Carina's youngest child, a son, is unable to speak well in either Spanish or English. He has been evaluated and diagnosed as having motor dysfunction disability. Since the child is a U.S. citizen, he was prescribed a series of early intervention sessions in order to promote his speech. His mother's difficult schedule makes it hard for to take him to the speech therapist and the child has not progressed to the level he should be at.

Carina's extended family is a source of support but there are problems. The client has a boyfriend, whom she met through her friends. Also undocumented, he recently came from Chiapas to the United States. He started

working as a housecleaner, and now both he and the client work for the same company. He is a hard worker but he likes to drink. He drinks heavily over the weekend, becomes drunk and passes out. According to Carina she does not like her children to be around him at this time; though not becoming violent he does lose control of himself and makes sexual comments about women. The daughters have their own rooms into which they can withdraw. The boyfriend has a problem with his finances, and Carina helps him control his spending.

Carina's low acculturation into the host society makes her vulnerable to many fears that a person with more acculturation would not have (Barrera & Chassin, 1993). Research has also demonstrated that youth belonging to more acculturated families do better in school, also, the more acculturation a person has the better his/her relationship with school officials will be (Kington and O'Sullivan 2001). Her teenage daughter is placing her mother in danger as well, because she might get reported to Children Protection Services, the police, juvenile probation department and the Court system, making the client vulnerable to being detected as an undocumented immigrant here in the US.

Carina contests stigma by working as hard as anyone here in the US, by having her youngest kids enroll in school and by trying to adjust the best that she can to the host society. However, they must deal with stigma and criminalization, despite having job, working hard and adhering to the law the best they can

(Coutin, 2005). The client wants to understand why they are known as “ilegales”—in English, illegals. She is concerned about the labels the media places on them, and the consequences of such labeling, such as the social exclusion they must deal with (Coutin, 2000). She displays vivid frustration about sheriff department raids and problems that all undocumented immigrants have to endure, especially in Arizona. When the Spanish media described SB 1070, and the consequences the law will produce for the undocumented immigrants, she became sad and the same time angry at “the people in government.” She says that she feels emptiness in her soul and is worried about the damage this law will do to her family and others.

My exploration suggests family as a unit displays resiliency, such resiliency efforts might not be enough to overcome present and future challenges that this family might confront. Perhaps, the social worker working with this family could identify the risks faced by Carina and her daughter and advise them in ways in promoting resiliency such as communication, social skills and health related information that will help them overcome social and personal obstacles.

Analysis Case #2: (Maria Barrintos)

This exploration of the client Maria Barrintos (a pseudonym) suggests her remarkable resiliency in the face of domestic problems, which includes an abusive husband (they are separated), an ex-boyfriend who sexually abused her daughter, and legal difficulties that both threaten her with deportation and make it impossible for her to prosecute. Nonetheless, she continues working in and out of

the household, seeking self-improvement, and depending on a social network which includes the church.

Maria's source of resiliency, family and a social network is also being by the same obstacles. Her domestic life included beatings from her husband, who threatened their daughter with violence when she tried to intervene. Seeking another relationship, she unknowingly exposed her daughter to sexual abuse. The daughter brought new pressure on the family by acting out her distress and exposing herself to new risk by gangs and drugs. Maria claims a good relationship with her daughter, and perhaps they both find strength in each other's pain; they both have common grounds of abuse and fear. The daughter, despite her acting out and worrisome behavior still contributes to family life by picking up her siblings from school, although she is engaging in the risky behavior of driving underage and without a license. However, her mother depends on her driving.

Maria's friends also contribute to her resiliency by giving her emotional support. They help to supply her needs such as medicines from Mexico, and provide care for her children. A particularly "useful" friend has legal status in the United States and expedites certain issues for her. Maria's experiences with men fortunately make her wary of her friends' attempts to find boyfriends and their encouragement for her to do the same. In this she reveals how friends support resiliency, and how they may also endanger it. Maria's attendance of self-improvement classes at St. Vincent de Paul suggests how being pro-active in gaining skills can contribute to the confidence to deal with overwhelming

problems and remain strong for the sake of her children or for perhaps attaining legal status.

Analysis of Case #3 (Alyssa Chavez)

In this exploration of the case of Alyssa Chavez (pseudonym), she demonstrates a profound resiliency by seeking to secure a more stable life for her and her children despite many hard challenges. She demonstrates this resiliency by seeking self-improvement in skills and appearance, by prioritizing her values, and being pro-active in learning.

Alyssa seeks self improvement through resources available to her by progressing from not talking English at all, to beginning to speak the language. She has progressed from not knowing how to use a computer she has now set up her own email account and is emailing back and forth with her family in Mexico and other relatives in the United States. She was able with the help of a mentor in St. Vincent de Paul to print business fliers with her name and phone number advertising "Cleaning Houses and Offices." These steps have increased her self-confidence, and promoted links with her extended family in both her native country and the United States which gives her a degree of comfort. Actually advertising her cleaning services is also a step in self-confidence and taking charge of her life which has been at times has not been in her control. Alyssa is also interested in losing weight, so she began jogging in a nearby park; also she is careful about the food she and her family eat. She has spoken about getting her real estate license and owning her own cleaning business which seems to

demonstrate her rising levels of self-confidence that self-improvement can provide.

Alyssa seems to have great need of self-confidence to help with her efforts at resiliency because although her life has improved somewhat since separating from her jealous, abusive husband, many problems still remain, which grow out of economic and legal issues facing the undocumented immigrant. One of the chief problems is her husband, which can reveal how family members at times may damage resiliency rather than increasing. In her situation she does not have enough resources to refuse his demands for sex in exchange for him paying bills, and she still has to suffer a degree of emotional and physical abuse. Unfortunately, her undocumented status seems to force her to remain in this situation; she cannot request police protection, and she is not financially well-off enough to pack up and move to another city. Her admission that this situation makes her feel like a prostitute suggests her low self-esteem. She was dealt another blow. Emotionally and financially, when sheriff raids came to a building she used to clean. Fearing that confiscated records might identify her, and unable to move, she had several sleepless days, and dreaded sheriff deputies appearing at her front door. Fortunately, she has received counseling over the abuse she endured and still to a degree endures. She has made good use of resources available to her through her church, a women's clinic in her neighborhood, and St. Vincent de Paul. Above all, she is proud that she is the sole source of income for her family.

Alyssa's values are well-prioritized: her children come first. She makes sure the children go to school, and are supervised when she is not at home. She seeks self-improvement for her children believing if she takes care of herself emotionally and physically, she will be a better mother and a better person. When she considers returning to Mexico, she wonders if it would be better for her children's emotional health, though she would not be earning so much there as here. Her commitment to her children is well seen in that she actually turned down a part-time job because it would keep her away from her children (Duran, Duran, Romero & Sanchez, 2001).

This family as a unit shows remarkable resiliency. They all care about each other and work together to overcome obstacles, financial and personal. Taking the familism approach we can see that the mother is occupied and devoted in taking care of the well being of her children. In return the children are developing healthy and resilient habits and attitudes. The relationship that she has with her oldest son is good but she demands a lot from him, especially good grades from school. She also demands he has a job to help the family financially. The client constantly states to her son that they have no time to lose, and he has to avoid problems with the law. Alyssa's son does not have a girlfriend although he thinks perhaps it is good idea to have an American girlfriend that could help him to get his US residency, he is also aware of all his mother does in order to have the family secure financially and socially. The remaining children are doing well at school and home. However, they sense their mother's stress and fear of the

police of her husband, the police, and the sheriff deputies. At the moment they are not increasing her stress with any extreme behavior which indicates drug use or gangs.

Along with her supportive family, Alyssa has supportive friends; as she describes them, they are exceptional. Perhaps now that she is no longer living with an abusive husband she may develop more friendships, particularly with women who are also without a man in their lives. Her friends, as noted in the narrative are single, divorced or separated, which perhaps make her less conscious about being separated and having “failed” at her marriage. Perhaps, as she stated, people care less about marital status in the United States than they do in Mexico and this attitude is one way she perseveres. Her church connections are another source of support (Zatz, 2000). Not only does she try to attend church every Sunday, she participates in events, and attended a leadership workshop there as well.

On that note, Alyssa has become a leader among the undocumented clients that come to St. Vincent de Paul. Also, her leadership qualities may have given her the courage and resilience to march in disagreement with unjust policies. However, client is still fearful; the recent SB1070 increases feelings of being a criminal in the United States and of feeling trapped by avoiding travel, driving, and having public health care, which is not only important but critical to her well being and family’s well being. SB 1070 is helping to disrupt this family’s fragile stability and many others as well. Indeed, Alyssa is worried about the future of

children who will be uprooted as the family moves, or left behind in the United States while the undocumented members of their family return to Mexico. They will be confused and angry, emotions she is able to prevent to a point in her own children by being both a hard worker and a responsible mother.

Alyssa frequently expresses hope that someday she and many like her and her family will be able to live legally in the United States. She believes that if they stand together, they can't get hurt or sent away.

Analysis of Case #4 (Carla Enriquez)

The client, Carla Enriquez (a pseudonym) is a young woman and she is very optimistic about her future; her positive attitude acts as a resilient mechanism against adverse challenges in her life. This researcher noted through his explorations that although this family as a unit displays great resiliency in the face of an unfaithful partner and living in an unconventional situation, Carla's resiliency might not be enough to overcome present and future challenges.

Carla reveals her positive attitude and resiliency in many different ways. Although the housing situation is challenging in its unconventional location and lack of full bathroom, she declares that it is good enough. She seems to compensate for this situation by being independent and supporting her family by her own efforts. Being able to care for two children, volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul, and work past midnight on her handicrafts reveal great personal resources

and resiliency. Fortunately, as will be discussed below, she is able to work at home and therefore provide better supervision for her children.

Her own family and extended family and friends are clearly a source of resilience. She helps her family and they in turn help her (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002). Caring for her two children keeps her on schedule and focused; her concern for them and their schooling is shown well by the fact that she enrolled her older son in a neighborhood Head Start Program, which may give him advantage when he attends elementary school, and provides a different environment than the office-space-turned-living-space. Carla's niece being able to take care of her younger son allows her to volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul's, which is another source of optimism and resilience. Carla not only takes English and computer classes, she volunteers as well. Her volunteering also led to her a friendship with Sister at St. Vincent de Paul. Sister is almost seventy years of age, almost six feet tall and is suffering with back pain. Sister has a tough attitude which helps her to deal with her stressful work. However the client gets along with Sister very well. She and the Sister have an easy going and playful relationship; they enjoy talking in both Spanish and English. They seem to have developed their own secret language in which they express thoughts and emotions; their relationship could be described as *simpatico* (Castro & Alarcon, 2002). This relationship indicates how important friendship is to remaining resilient; being able to trust another person and speak in native language promotes comfort and optimism. Their topics of conversation—her home place of

Chiapas—allow her to reminisce about her home freely and recall some happy memories. Carla can also speak in native language with her friends from Chiapas, who reflect her not only physically, but like the same foods and the same kind of music. These friends provide more than just emotional support; they take care of each other's children, and share food and medicine.

Carla seems to be particularly fortunate in her living and working arrangements. By being able to work at home, she not only keeps her family better supervised, she can do without an automobile. Perhaps she is unable to drive, but she simply avoids problems of driving without a license. Taking public transportation may take longer, but it is safer.

Carla is fortunate in having a brother and a sister-in-law living nearby. Both provide positive role models; even though the brother suffers from alcoholism Kingon and O'Sullivan (2001). Her sister-in-law is strong and capable when dealing with her mother living at home, her children, and her husband. The entire family is involved with the husband's struggle, by going to related programs at Alcoholics Anonymous; which promotes the importance of family and its support when difficult situations arise. Perhaps the client takes hope from the fact that even though problems arise, problems can be solved by friends, family members, and by outside organizations providing help. Currently, Carla does not have a boyfriend; the lack of having somebody else to share her life with is perhaps compensated by friends and family; her children, and her brother and his family.

One future challenge Carla may confront is the difficulties of relating with teenagers. Other cases suggest that a lack of supervision of teenagers leads to rebellious behavior; the two cases of interest to Carla had mothers who worked outside of the home. If the mother continues to work at home, and thus be more available to her children, perhaps Carla will avoid this. However, as the children grow the unconventional living arrangements may become a problem particularly as adolescent children start demanding privacy; Carla may have to find outside work in order to pay rent on different living arrangements.

Currently Carla's children are young; but the time approaching in which the children will be out of their adolescence. The client, however, shows a positive attitude about this future, and tries to protect her future resiliency of herself and her children by making some preparations for this event. She has learned that help is available if you seek it, so she intends to take classes and learn skills that will help her when her children grow to be teenagers.

This researcher believes just like in the previous cases the social worker working with this family could identify the future risks faced by the client and her sons and advise them in ways in promoting resiliency such as communication, social skills and health related information that will help them overcome social and personal obstacles (Lingxin, 2003, Guanipa, Nolte, Guanipa, 2002).

Analysis of Case #5: (Marcy Flores)

The client, Marcy Flores (a pseudonym) and her family seem singular to me. When all the cases were explored and analyzed, this family seemed the most successful when confronting challenges to their well being, Marsiglia et al. (2002). Marcy and her family have maintained close family connections, which in this case is supported by the fact that they have remained intact. The mother and father are still together in contrast with many clients who have had to separate from their husbands, and their son, a straight-A student, and natural leader, has surely benefited from this.

In review of this case, the concept of familism as a source of resiliency is strongly revealed, Marsiglia et al. (2002). Marcy and her husband both come from supportive families, and their son is supported by parents being together and keeping their marriage intact despite tremendous pressures. Marcy's family is particularly supportive in that her father provided a model for success—by immigrating to the United States to work, and then returning home. His absence from Marcy when she was a child is even seen as a positive event, because when he returned with money and gifts, there was great celebration with parties and important people being invited. According to Marcy, this was “better than Christmas,” and it might be said that the United States was akin to the home which opens to La Posada. The client was impressed with her father's American dream, which helped to build up her village into a progressive city. Indeed, the client grew up with the idea that immigrating to the north, working, making money, and then returning home was part of normal experience.

The concept of familism (Marsiglia et al. 2002) as a sustaining factor is exemplified by their marriage remaining intact despite the problems brought to bear on their relationship by being undocumented immigrants. How their marriage has survived might be traced to a variety of reasons; her husband had and has a profession (mechanic), Marcy herself seems to display great deal of self-confidence. Also, Marcy has a supportive husband, without any overt displays of machismo. Even though he was happy in his work as a mechanic in Mexico, he agreed to his wife's plan to come to the United States and even in troubled times their marriage has endured. Although their formal education is not known, both show great intelligence in planning their entry into the United States, including a legal entry, even though they have lost their status. Avoiding the costly Los Angeles, for the more affordable Phoenix area, they also had a "ten year plan."

When their ten year plan failed due to restrictions tightening up and their status becoming a detriment, their marriage still continued, sustained perhaps by their reliance on each other, and their one child, a son. As in many other cases, the presence of children seems to impel the client to become resilient, so it has with this couple. Their son seems to have benefited hugely from his parents' stable marriage, because he is an A+ student, helps his mother with cleaning, who is interacts well with others, volunteers his time, and is remarkably ambivalent about being deemed an "illegal," in contrast with single-parent clients whose children act out and engage in worrisome activities including gangs and possible

drug use. He is staying in high school, rather than dropping out and hopefully this will help him go on to college. Rather than allowing it to bother him, he admits to his status, and sees nothing wrong about being in the United States. His emotional stability and maturity, which breeds strong resiliency is surely a gift from his parents, as his resiliency is a gift to them in these challenging times.

The parents and the boy have the resiliency to deal with loss of income, loss of privileges, and loss of stability, physical injury, and emotional stress (Ceballo, 2004). Besides having each other, they also have friends who find them jobs, such as cleaning houses and repairing cars. It is not known if they attend church, but they access help, such as the immigration law firm; this law firm referred them to St. Vincent de Paul. Marcy seems to be the one in the marriage who takes the initiative; she requested help from St. Vincent de Paul for rent and utilities. However, both husband and wife enrolled in opportunity programs, such as English and computer classes. Through email they are able to talk with their families back in Mexico, as well as check on job opportunities. At the Society they are also able to socialize with other participants who give them emotional support. Their son has demonstrated his leadership abilities by helping with the children's program, and mentoring children. In sum, this family is an excellent example of resiliency under stress, and resiliency that comes from family both immediate and extended, friends, and support agencies (Ceballo, 2004).

Analysis of Case #6: (Monica Gomez)

Monica Gomez (a pseudonym) and her family are experiencing multiple threats to their resiliency but also display resiliency mechanisms. However, these mechanisms might not be enough to help overcome long lasting, current, and future problems. In this particular case, the researcher believes that one of the keys to keeping this family resilient is to promote better emotional health of the two oldest members of the family, the mother, Monica Gomez, and her older daughter, who is 21 years old and has a child. Monica gives every sign of being physically resilient, and determined to keep her family together, but a presumed past history of abuse and risky behavior has created depression and bitterness (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004).

I may have gained some insight into this family's issues when Monica's 17 year old daughter spoke about joining the army. I thought her plans seemed odd and did not seem to match her drug-taking behavior and risky behavior with her boyfriend. I wondered if this girl, by drug-taking and possibly engaging in a sexual relationship, and wishing to join the army "and go overseas" is desperately trying to escape a difficult reality that she endures with her mother, her oldest sister and the rest of the kids. She may be seeking money, and possibly naturalization to help her family. In this she may be revealing stronger symbolic interaction with the host society (even though as US citizen she is a member of the host society) but her ideas and behavior seem to betray more desperation than a desire to interact.

Monica is running a single-parent household. This can be difficult under better circumstances, and Monica's circumstances complicate an already complicated situation. Not only are she and her daughter undocumented, they are survivors of abuse, although the kind and the degree of abuse is not clearly understood by the researcher. This family openly displays economic needs; but it also displays extensive social and emotional needs. Even though both mother and daughter are not telling their whole story, there are some flags that signal more in-depth problems than just the physical needs they and their children have. For instance, Monica shows signs of repressive anger; she was constantly pressing her hands together and her face was rigid. She did not smile at all, and I could sense in her eyes a scream of "help me." Monica gave me the impression that she had suffered domestic abuse or infidelity. I asked her about this in different sessions, but I always received the same response that all men were "bastards." Whether this was her absolute opinion, or she was unable to articulate her emotions beyond this single label is unknown. In any case, she provided no more details. I was also able to detect depression in the daughter, who was more communicative about her relationships. She told me she had been in a relationship with a Mexican man one year older than she. When she told him she was pregnant, he became abusive towards her. According to her he was alcoholic and probably using drugs. She then decided to throw him out and since then she has never heard from him and assumes he is back in Mexico. The researcher believes that his abandonment of her might actually be more beneficial to the mother and the child, but the older daughter might be repeating her mother's history with men.

Like the “typical American,” both women work hard and long hours, whether working in a factory or cleaning houses. While it is true that they are working hard to earn money and to avoid living in shelters, this is an alternative to hard work (Coutin 2005). The mother shows signs of entrepreneurship in plans to work for themselves, though the daughter is reluctant to risk money on unsure ventures. Monica however is keen on starting her own business, which shows her resiliency has been strengthened by taking classes and learning about opportunities (Coutin, 2005).

This family demonstrates resiliency in the fact of personal, economic and political hardship. This case identifies interesting risks that many undocumented immigrants confront, but also displays the preventive mechanisms of resilient families. For instance, the fact that both the mother and her daughter participated in St. Vincent de Paul, and Monica agreeing to seek additional help at a woman’s shelter, reflect a positive attitude towards seeking help. Second, both were concerned regarding their own children’s health and their education. Third, the whole family’s concern about each other shows a resilient attitude. Perhaps, as in the other cases this attitude is what keeps them persevering against very difficult situations.

The fact that they contacted and keep coming to St. Vincent de Paul reveals that that the mother and her daughter wanted to be connected to a more stable environment, perhaps the need of a place in which they can be secure. When they first came to the center they were well dressed, and extremely focused

in their request for medical and financial help which indicate personal pride. Also, Monica displays strong resiliency in keeping her family together through income loss and even having to resort to shelter. Monica has kept her family together and they are now living under less than ideal circumstances, but they have living areas and a bathroom. Monica's buying the younger daughter contraceptives reveals that she is knowledgeable about her children's lives, and takes practical steps to protect her younger daughter from unwanted pregnancies. Also, by seeking out assistance for a possible problem reveals concern for family health.

Nevertheless, Monica and her family require more than physical assistance. This is indicated by her statement that only her spiritual strength kept her and her family going through bad periods. Despite her strength, the client's depression and anger over bad times and failed relationships were surely affecting her family and perhaps driving away her 17-year old daughter, who was already making unwise choices in an effort to find some happiness in life. When I referred both of them to a women's center Monica wasn't pleased about taking such a step, perhaps thinking that it suggested some kind of weakness, but she made the wise decision to go. After a couple of sessions at this center, her rigid face changed dramatically. She told me that she was able to talk to a female counselor and that in this center she is able to take some classes that she enjoys. Perhaps she will be able to establish better relationships with her 17 year old daughter, and her other children as well. This might help the younger troubled daughter get away from drugs, finish school, and not copy her mother and older sister's unwise or

unprotected relationships with men. It is unknown if Monica is encouraging this daughter's artistic skills with hand stitching and handcrafted ornaments. Perhaps if she could secure loans and open a business, two problems would be solved: steadier income and the younger daughter's abilities could be appreciated, and she in turn might take pleasure in helping her family. Her resiliency might grow.

This family contests stigma as in the previous cases by its two older members symbolically interacting with US cultural and manners by working hard whether in a factory or cleaning houses, by having their children enroll in school, by trying to adjust the best that they can to the host society and finally by networking at different social levels such as through friends, St. Vincent de Paul, school, and church. This researcher noted also as in previous cases that even though this family as a unit displays resiliency efforts, such resiliency efforts might not be enough to overcome present and future challenges that this family might confront. Perhaps, the social worker working with this family could identify the risks faced by the clients and advise them in ways in promoting resiliency such as communication, social skills and health related information that will help them overcome social and personal obstacles.

Analysis of Case #7 (Estrella Hernandez)

Estrella Hernandez (a pseudonym) and her family are experiencing multiple threats to their resiliency, but also display resiliency mechanisms, which, as in many other cases, may not be enough to help them overcome present and future problems (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002). However, in my

exploration of its circumstances, the family currently seems strong and persevering, and particularly supportive of each other both in Mexico, and after they crossed the border.

The strength of familism is particularly well seen in their cohesiveness in the decision to cross the border. It may have been quite hard on Estrella Hernandez's mother to leave her current living situation in Mexico to cross the border, even though legally, and start a life on the US. Though she has citizenship, her lack of English must have created some severe problems, and probably keeps her isolated. Though she does not necessarily fear the police, and has a Spanish speaking children and grandchildren, she must feel constrained at being unable to converse with the general population. But she is clearly supportive of her daughter's decision to enter the United States, even to entering the country by herself some time before her daughter and her children followed.

The mother's strong commitment to her daughter, Estrella, and helping them seek success in the United States is reflected in the daughter's actions. Though married and taking care of her own children, Estrella started taking care of her mother in Mexico, and she has her own bedroom in their current living situation, which must be considered quite a luxury in a two-bedroom house serving five people. It would be interesting to know if the daughter gained her "imagined community" of success in the United States from her mother, who lived and worked in the bracero program (Marsiglia & Holleran, 1999).

Estrella seems in many ways to be very sure of her; crossing into the United States via sometimes vicious or unscrupulous coyotes was surely a frightening undertaking, particularly since she had no husband to cross the border with, for emotional support or help. The fact that she divorced her husband, and then, unable to find work in Mexico, came to the United States and paid her own way for herself and her children suggests strong resolve which was either fed by her imagined community, or helped to create an imagined community of success. Rather than seeking jobs seemingly suitable for women, Estrella works on construction sites, and in warehouses. She acknowledges that “she knows how to handle men” which has surely helped her find jobs and do well. Her hard work has understandably led her to be surprised at how some people in the United States regard people such as herself as criminals.

Considering the difficulties that this family as undocumented immigrants confronts and will confront, the family seems remarkably cohesive. Estrella’s mother helps take care of the children when she is working, and takes care of the house which she frees her from additional work after getting home from her heavy work on construction sites. The children tease their mother about her lack of learning, the origins of which are not clearly identified. Estrella declares that “school was not her thing,” but perhaps she was unsuccessful in school because of learning difficulties. However, her own problems with school do not interfere with seeing that her children get an education, and even tries to help them. Though it probably worries her, she lets her son drive without a driver’s license in

order to pick up the kids from school. However, Estrella maintains a strong and determined demeanor. While her mother is worried about her grandson's questionable behavior, such as being sexually active with his girlfriend, and drinking and smoking, Estrella sees him as acting like a typical teenager, and, somewhat curiously, sees him as more mature than she is. Her only concern is that that her son will get his girlfriend pregnant, but more than that she is actually proud of her son. Perhaps she feels this way because he is fluent in English and seems to handle himself well in the United States culture, which probably helps the family's sense of resiliency (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002).

Though this situation seems stable at the moment, and the boy works at a nearby convenience store, and helps with the family, the situation might deteriorate as the boy grows older. However, perhaps he too has strong family convictions and will keep his behavior within reasonable bounds in order to help his grandmother, mother, and siblings. My perception is that the kid learned that his mother's mistakes: her criminal charges of DUI and drug abuse, which may ruin her chance of becoming a lawful resident of the United States.

Estrella seems in a way, to symbolically interact with her host society by disregarding conventional female roles as well as her mother's concerns about her stepping outside her gender responsibilities. Indeed, after taking a financial workshop she is thinking about starting her own business, as a painting contractor, which is not a common profession for women in the United States. Estrella's determination here is plain; she knows what she needs and how to start a business.

Her strength and determination seems to radiate from her and this might be the chief reason why this family, despite problems, seems to persevere (Coutin, 2005).

This family lives on a very precarious financial budget, but has so far been successful in the United States. The inner relationship of this family is cordial and communicative. This family contests stigma as in the previous cases by Estrella working as hard as anyone here in the US, by having her sons enroll in school, by trying to adjust the best that they can to the host society and finally by networking at different social levels such as through friends, St. Vincent de Paul, school, and church. Other non-conventional ways that this family contests stigma is by going about everyday life as if they were lawful residents of the United States. Estrella pays her taxes like a legal resident in the country and she respects the laws, despite her problems with DUI and drug-related charges (Coutin, 2005).

This researcher noted also as in the first case that even though this family as a unit displays resiliency efforts, such resiliency efforts might not be enough to overcome present and future challenges such as her DUI charges. Though her plans for opening a business are laudable, efforts in these directions might prove to a burden of money and responsibility. Fortunately, because her mother is at home, the children have a strong adult presence, but as the children are living cross-cultural lives, perhaps they will reject their grandmother's ways, and start getting into real trouble. The son, although he has stayed within limits so far, may cross those limits and bring trouble to the home and family. Perhaps, the social

worker working with this family could better identify the risks faced by the client, the risks beyond money and sustenance, her mother and her son and advise them in ways in promoting resiliency such as helping her son to apply for college and advising her on how to create her own business (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Analysis of Case #8 (Angela Ibarra)

The client, Angela Ibarra (a pseudonym) and her family are facing serious threats to their resiliency, but display certain resiliency mechanisms such as supporting the children in school and sports activities and seeking self-improvement. These mechanisms might not be enough to family members overcome severe current and future problems. With this particular client and family, the researcher, in his explorations, thinks that family cohesiveness, and the client's hard work and willingness to accept help in financial and emotional matters, helps them to confront obstacles and to plan and hope for a better future.

Angela's main problems are financial and family-related. She and her daughter are close and supportive of each other, but she has had two bad relationships with men. Her husband abused her, and, in a bizarre episode after she announced she wanted out of the marriage, he left her with a criminal record that has barred her from successfully applying for legal residency. A boyfriend then defrauded her after they bought a home under her name, and when the market slumped, their mortgage skyrocketed. Although perhaps an unintentional defrauding on his part, his abandonment left Angela economically wrecked and emotionally saddened. As the result of both these episodes she suffers from low

self-esteem and has gained weight. Dealing with the fact that she might not ever be legal in this country, despite being here over twenty years must surely add to certain feelings of helplessness. It would be interesting to know how she imagined herself living in the United States when she first came with her father and mother to the US over twenty years ago. Other family members returned to the Mexico after their visa expired, but she and her mother decided to stay (Valenta, 2009). She married after crossing into the United States, and had children, but the disastrous consequences of her marriage must have re-oriented her imagined community in the US. As seen below, Angela has been able to re-imagine a new sort of success and possibly future success in the United States, perhaps largely to assure that her children will not suffer as she has.

No longer relying on a man to support her, Angela has remained resilient enough to work two jobs, start to exercise, think about seeking more education, and be the best mother she can be to her three children, two daughters and a son. Her older daughter, who is a citizen of the United States, upholds her mother's love and pride in her by being a good student, and is involved in varsity basketball and softball. She works in the summer, wants to buy a car, and aspires to become a medical doctor. She does not yet have a boyfriend, which probably alleviates a lot of her mother's worries about her daughter becoming involved in a destructive relationship (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002).

However, Angela is proactive in assuring her daughter does not repeat her mistakes; she counsels her about sex and pregnancy, and has recently talked with

her about abusive relationships. Angela's younger daughter thus has a good model in her older sister; she needs good models and reassurance because she still becomes scared at night and sleeps with her mother. Angela is concerned about her son; going as far to smell his clothing for drugs and alcohol and so far has found no evidence that the boy is straying into trouble. Her concern for him, and her efforts for her family, shown by her attendance at family sporting events, might keep him from trouble (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002).

An admirable trait about Angela is her perseverance in the face of personal troubles, which includes her sense of being undereducated. She is still unable to fully speak English, and only has her GED. She has joined a gym for exercise. Her ability to be the breadwinner for her family, and have some money left over must be very satisfying for her, and perhaps makes her realize that she is interacting with US culture and society. She is interested in self-improvement, and has sought assistance at St. Vincent de Paul; she is taking English classes and computer classes, and spoke about improving herself further by reading and writing. The client, rather than looking backwards, seems to be looking forward. She regards herself as still young and that school is still a possibility, which reveals that she is still reorienting herself and reimagining a successful community (Coutin, 2005).

Her perseverance is particularly strongly seen in her wish to attend higher education, become a nurse, and help other women who like herself suffered domestic abuse. This attitude will help her children persevere in school, and gain

education necessary to doing well in an industrialized society. This attitude will help her daughters make better decisions about their lives, and seek careers, rather than just marriage only. Her efforts at self-improvement probably please her children; as for herself, they have opened her eyes to the homeless, and made her wonder if such a fate might happen to her. She does not merely commiserate; she volunteers her time by washing and mending clothes for the homeless.

Though not a legal citizen, Angela contributes to society by working hard, seeking to improve herself, educating her children for worthwhile lives and careers, and keeping them out of trouble, and surely contests any thoughts or opinions that she is criminal or illegal. Although this family is exhibiting great resiliency, these efforts may not be enough to conquer all problems, particularly the future possibility of her being sent back to Mexico, and leaving the children behind. Angela surely still needs to overcome low self esteem and post-traumatic emotions due to the domestic abuse that she endured.

A social provider working with family could identify the less visible risks faced the client and her family, and advise them to identify and work on sources of resiliency such as communication, social skills, and health-related information that will help them further overcome social and personal obstacles (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Analysis of Case #9 (Delia Jimenez)

The client, Delia Jimenez (a pseudonym) and her family are experiencing multiple and severe threats to their resiliency, but displays certain resiliency mechanisms which help the client overcome current and possibly future problems. In this particular case, Delia's family is severely broken and under severe stress: not only has her ex-husband disappeared, she does not know where two of her four children are. Being under a certain degree of protection by United States authorities promotes her resiliency in some ways, but Delia suffers from fear and depression over two of her children (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002).

According to Delia's story, she originally came to the country legally, and her husband was a hard worker as a mechanic in Chicago and respectful towards her. They had four children in all; she was able to stay home and take care of them. This must have been close to her imagined community of success in the United States, but then all changed. Her husband became involved in illegal activities, began drinking and taking drugs and became violent towards her and the children. During this time their visa ran out and she found herself not only illegal but married to a violent criminal who abused her when drunk, and exposed their children to danger by leaving loaded guns on the dining room table. Returning to Mexico to avoid a warrant for the husband's arrest, Delia's life did not improve. After he threatened to kill her if she left him, she made up her mind to escape to the United States. She had to leave two children behind, because she knew crossing illegally into the United States would be dangerous for them.

The client, though abused and frightened, demonstrates great resiliency in leaving her husband, and two children, for her and two younger children's safety, and crossing illegally into the United States. She was also able to find help for herself and her children, through the FBI, and by St. Vincent de Paul. She is currently living in a shelter with her children, which demands a great deal of resiliency in itself. Her main concern is her children left behind. As for the children with her, she has enrolled them in school, and she has been taking classes that help her deal with domestic abuse and self-esteem. She has learned methods and strategies to empower her to take care of herself and her children and possibly pass on her lessons to them.

Delia's concern regarding all her children is a source for strength but it is also a threat to her resiliency (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002). She feels tremendous guilt about leaving them behind, and is constantly worrying about their health and well-being; she fears that her ex-husband has hurt them or will hurt them in revenging himself. Though protected by the FBI who seeks her husband, she is fearful she will not attain legal status and she will have to return to Mexico. She requires psychological help to deal with the torment, but she is dealing with it and seems to be goal-oriented about getting her children back and seeking legal status. She is re-imagining her successful community in the United States; she is also goal-oriented about becoming self-sufficient and financially stable—she does not want to depend upon the government, nor does she wish to stay in the shelter. She wants to work and has identified skills of working with

children and seniors. She worked before she married, and knows she has skills of administration and leadership. Her skills and abilities in these areas need to be further encouraged, not only to help her be self-sufficient, but in feeling better about herself and her children's future.

Currently Delia volunteers at St. Vincent de Paul and although she does not have many friends yet, can feel sympathy for the women there. This surely helps her to get her mind off her problems, and take some comfort in thinking about other people. Delia is extremely fortunate in having a friend from her teenage days available to her by phone. They talk a great deal, and the client must take comfort from being able to talk openly with a friend about her problems, as well as their past lives in Mexico (Coutin, 2005). The friend's widowed and legal status makes her a possible roommate for the client and her children. Delia must no longer feel so alone in the United States with a supportive friend, who can share her Mexican heritage with her.

Even though this family lives on a very precarious financial budget and with unsolved issues, I believe so far they are on the right path to become successful in the United States. The inner relationship of this family is cordial and communicative, and having a legal friend to talk with and turn to helps Delia immensely. This family openly contests stigma as in the previous cases by Delia cooperating with the police in her ex-husband's investigation. By applying for a special visa which, if granted, will help them get legal status; by having her two children enroll in school; by trying to adjust the best that they can to the host

society; and finally by networking at different social levels such as through friends, St. Vincent de Paul, school, and church may help them to overcome their challenges.

This researcher noted that this family as a unit displays resiliency efforts, and that such resiliency efforts might not be enough to overcome present and future challenges that this family might confront in the United States. Perhaps, the social worker working with this family could identify the risks faced by the client and her children, specifically the issue of the client needing to overcome low self esteem and post-traumatic emotions due to the domestic abuse that she endured. In this way she will be able to re-imagine a successful community in the United States after bitter previous experiences, and gain a sense of resiliency that will help her and her kids to survive and thrive, despite great difficulties in their lives (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Discussion:

All nine families have highly similar experiences, concerns, and show a resiliency that allows them to survive in the United States; also, they encounter and deal with threats of resiliency that created problems or undermine their efforts to survive. These families clearly demonstrate that there is no such thing as a “typical” undocumented immigrant currently residing in the United States, as their background, reasons for coming to the United States, personal and social experiences, family composition and unity, and degrees of resiliency at times range widely (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002). Also, there is no such

thing as a typical strategy for developing and maintaining resiliency—of the nine factors of resiliency identified above, there are three particularly strong factors tracked across all nine families: closeness of the family; seeking outside assistance, such as help and relief agencies; and the act of “symbolic interaction” with the host society. Of the five factors that threaten resiliency, also identified above, three in particular are tracked across the nine families: domestic problems and family turmoil, alcohol and drug use, and health problems, both emotional and physical. Also, a lack of acculturation cripples resiliency as well (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Sources of Resiliency

The term family is key here for two reasons: first, these families were drawn from the Family Assistance plan at St. Vincent de Paul. Second, familism is one of the sources and strategies for resilience, and a family remaining together and supportive is one of the most frequently recurring themes in these narratives and their accompanying analyses. There is another reason why family is key to this concluding discussion of these narratives: familism, while a key source of strength, may prove stronger if joined by outside assistance. In other words, family and friends are not always enough to ensure resiliency. These families have sought outside assistance which does not replace family support but outside assistance can empower the individual by ensuring food and shelter as well as providing skills, and psychological and emotional support not always obtained

from family members (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002, Castro & Alarcon, 2002).

The first example, drawn from Case #5, indicates how undocumented immigrants remaining resilient by means of family. This case is unique in that the conventional nuclear family (husband, wife, and child) is still together, rather than the family unit being broken by death, divorce, or desertion, which is common feature in all the other families. Perhaps their resiliency arises from their background circumstances, which reveal strong family foundation. Marcy Gomez's family in Mexico was close; there is a history of the woman's father successfully entering and re-entering the United States, and always returning home. The money her father brought back from the United States then assisted other families in the pueblo to transform it into a small prosperous city. Marcy and her husband then decided that together, with their son, they would go to the United States. They made a ten year plan, chose Phoenix over Los Angeles, and for awhile were successful in their plans. Difficult times changed their status and sense of security, but the family has remained together. Their son, who is getting straight As in high school, stays out of trouble and supports his parents as he can. One of the reasons why this family still remains together is that Marcy wisely sought out assistance when the good times became bad and so far they have endured. Their son shows his parents' influence by becoming a mentor to kids his age at St. Vincent de Paul and philosophically accepting the term "illegal" (Castro, & Alarcon, 2002).

Another fairly similar example is Case #7, which concerns a family whose crossing the border was expedited by the grandmother being a United States citizen. Her daughter, Estrella, who brought three children with her, was already divorced and apparently extremely capable worker. Though living in somewhat difficult circumstances, the family helps and support each other; the grandmother looks after the kids and the house, and the older son has a job, and the family relations seem cordial despite stresses. The mother, though have troubles with the law about drug possession, is confident enough to think about starting her own business. It is interesting to note there that both families may have had a stronger sense of “belonging” in the United States, despite most members’ illegal status, because of Estrella’s mother’s previous experiences of being in the United States in the “bracero program” and having her citizenship. In either case, it would be interesting to further explore what might have happened if they had not sought out outside resources for help, and if the good strength of family ties would have kept them resilient.

There are three particularly strong examples of how seeking outside assistance assists and strengthens the family. First, in this last example, we can sense the power of familism that is abetted by outside resources, such as counseling. Alyssa has more than just her family to help with a more positive self-reflection; seeing herself as a successful professional helps destroy some of the bad self-perception as still being a “tool” for her husband’s needs. This confidence helps promote her mothering skills, to plan for the future, to keep her

remaining family safe and in good spirits (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000). Case #8 concerns a woman whose abusive twenty year marriage ended on a bizarre note, and an attempted new alliance went sour when the boyfriend deserted her, leaving her with an enormous mortgage. Angela Ibarra is close to her children, and commits herself to them by being the breadwinner, but seeking of outside sources to assist her in this time helps her greatly, particularly in counseling which helps her with self-doubts and fears. She is improving her English, learning computer skills, and is improving in her reading and writing, which gives her more skills and the confidence to be resilient.

Case #4 is a striking example of how a husband leaving the wife actually impelled Carla Enriquez to use and find outside resources that have developed her resiliency. A niece relieves her from her house-bound work so that she can seek self-improvement at St. Vincent de Paul. Carla also takes advantage of outside assistance, such as sending her son to a neighborhood Head Start (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000). She is planning to learn about adolescent and teenage issues before her children enter these difficult years; this desire is perhaps inspired by her brother-in-law, who finds help at Alcoholics Anonymous, rather than dealing with his alcoholism on his own. Case #9 is surely the most exemplary of how seeking outside assistance seems to create and resiliency. Her outside sources of assistance include no less that the FBI, and the courts which help her with her legal issues. However, her emotional needs require counseling by psychologists to help her deal with issues of fear and guilt over the children she was forced to

leave behind, and to find strength within to deal with the future. By counseling Delia became increasingly self-reliant and goal-oriented and determined to move out of the shelter and be on her own.

Symbolic interaction seems another key strategy for resiliency (Blumer, 1969). Many of the families seek to pass in the United States by hard work and sending their children to school. Even when this is not successful, such as Carina and her daughter in Case #1, at least the attempt was made as it was understood that in the United States literacy is essential for advancement. The married couple in Case #5 is particularly striking in their symbolic interaction, particularly with their son's education. It could be theorized that in the case of Marcy she was knowledgeable about the United States due to her father's lengthy exposure to the culture during his days of working across the border. Her acculturation, which commenced early on, seemed to give her the knowledge and abilities that led her and her husband (and son) to interact easily with the host society, and develop a certain immunity to its stresses—in any case, their marriage was the only that survived in the crossing (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002). Their son too has early on shown his own sense of symbolic interaction by being a straight A student. His interaction with this society and high sense of acculturation is so strong that he seems equable about accepting the legal definition of "illegals," in contrast with Carina Alvarez and her daughter who can't quite understand why they are illegals—particularly since Delia seems to equate legality with earning money. Carla in Case #4 even sent her son to a Head Start. The parents of these

children also wish to “pass” by being educated, or at least having skills required in the United States that promote symbolic interaction: fluency in English and computer skills are needed and they are taking classes at St Vincent de Paul (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). In some cases the clients are actively seeking self-improvement such as going to gyms, seeking to lose weight, and attending women’s counseling centers. In this way they are re-imagining success in the United States (Anderson, 2006, Coutin, 2005). This kind of success does not guarantee big houses and other consumer goods, but it helps them to deal with disappointments they have suffered as marriages break up, jobs disappear, laws are passed and the environment becomes suffused with danger.

Threats to Resiliency

Familism may also prove a threat to resiliency, and even a source of destruction in families. The most obvious example is found in families in which the husband had dominated the wife and the family, and frequently resorted to threats and violence. The wife, in an effort to protect their children, and maintain some kind of family while dealing with illegal status, loses self-esteem, is fearful, and suffers even more stress. This stress causes her children stress which may lead into problems at school, and possibly lead them to crime (Baer, 1999, Barrera, Prelow Dumka, Gonzalez, Knight, Michaels, Roosa, Tein, 2002).). Even when a husband is not in the picture, the feelings of abandonment, or residual anger, destroys or damages a woman’s confidence and thus resiliency. In Case #1, Carina Alvarez, the mother, is a widow, and did not suffer from any

known abuse from her husband, save for the stress of his being put in prison for drug trafficking. She promotes familism by bringing her two now-divorced daughters and their children back into her home, and by taking care of her boyfriend by helping to save money and find work. Carina by all accounts is hardworking and capable, but may depend too much on money to keep herself and her family resilient, and not find the time to tend to her two youngest children who are in need of her attention. Narrative #3 displays the negative side of familism. Alyssa Chavez is separated from her abusive husband but still continues to put up with his demands for sex, in exchange for bills being paid. She knows that her children are being affected by this, both positively and negatively, as his money keeps a roof over their head and services paid, but negatively in that this is a source of distress to their mother. Alyssa places the children first, even to thinking of returning to Mexico where they would not be in such fear all the time of the sheriff's department (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002, Coutin, 2005). The children are currently doing well, and seemed to be avoiding any behavior that would attract law enforcement. However, though Alyssa is taking care of her family, it's at the expense of her good self-opinion; and though her family is serving her in return, this support is not enough to heal her and maintain her emotional and mental well-being. Outside assistance has come to her aid, and helps her seek and find self-improvement to become a "better person" (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Cases #1 and #6 exemplify how the lack of acculturation cripples the undocumented immigrant's resilience. In the previously discussed Case #1 the mother and leader of this family is very family-oriented, insisting that her two older daughters rejoin her with their children. Since losing her husband, she had enlarged her family and gained a boyfriend whom she is helping to deal with finances. However, Carina's vision of success seem too tied to family and money, and, while certainly important, this vision is crippling her youngest son and youngest daughter. Perhaps in her haste to work hard, she has not learned much English, which has crippled her acculturation (Barrera et al., 2002). This causes her youngest daughter to be contemptuous of her mother and acting out in school, and running with a gang and possibly doing drugs. The girl's singular problems are exacerbated by her mother being unable to effectively communicate with teachers, and perhaps being unable to really explain to the girl the realities of being illegal, and what they can do to better the situation (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004). Lacking her own sense of acculturation, the girl can't help her mother very much, and the mother avoids acculturation by working and spending perhaps too much time with family and friends speaking Spanish and listening to Spanish-language music (Ceballo 2004). The girl is close to getting into trouble with the law, which would probably bring authorities down on the family. Her little brother requires "intervention" in order to overcome motor dysfunction, but his mother is too busy working to see to his needs or perhaps unacculturated enough to understand how not correcting his problems will lead to greater problems later on; an industrialized, money-based economy wants citizens who can read and

write well. While the mother does seek outside resources, she seems less committed to seeking support than other families (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002).

As indicated above, drugs (and alcohol) are another threat to resiliency. Children engaging in drugs and alcohol are endangering their families by the threat of arrest. Carina Alvarez's boyfriend's drinking threatens her daughters and their children. Delia Jimenez's husband was a hardworking man and respectful husband until he became involved with drug trafficking. It is unknown if a lack of personal resiliency on his part caused him to take up criminal activities. He ended up exposing his children to weapons, alcohol and drugs. When fleeing the law, he took her and the children back to Mexico. She finally fled from his threats, but with only two of the four children (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004, Belknap, 2007).

What emerges from these cases and the exploration of these cases is that women show more resiliency than the men; the one couple that has remained together and resiliency seems to "led" by the wife's actions (Pantin, Schwartz, Sullivan & Coatsworth, 2003, Belknap, 2007).

These women seem to more positively interact with United States society, and, in their interactions, which take a variety of forms; they show the skill, the ability, and the need to re-imagine success. Indeed, their possible re-imagining of success has connected them with a degree of feminism. United States society has, to a degree, alleviated traditional roles of women and "traditional" marriage practices. These women, who come from a more openly patriarchal society are

seeking or sensing their own self-worth outside of marriage and relationships, and understand that they are important for their children's well being and sense of security. Carla Enriquez in Case #4 seems to have taken the great personal steps toward this new sense of identity and worth by consciously avoiding relationships despite having girlfriends seeking boyfriends for themselves and for her. Alyssa Chavez in Case #3 is also making steps in being "her own woman" by speaking openly about "feeling like a prostitute" when her husband demands sex in exchange of paying bills, goes to a women's clinic in her neighborhood and counsels her own daughters against abusive relationships. The abused and frightened wife in Case #9 is recalling her pre-marital life in which she worked, and is considering ways to return to work and support her family.

Summing up these findings is not easy, and suggests that there are no easy answers for the undocumented immigrant seeking resiliency while seeking to remain in the United States and assume legal status. However, resources of resiliency and recurring problems that obstruct or destroy resiliency can be determined, better understood, and focused on by the social service provider and the undocumented immigrant him or herself (Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman & Sills, 2002, Coutin, 2005, Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000).

Indeed, some of these "answers" are somewhat destructive to the family and create somewhat artificial identities, which add to media-created identities of criminalization. Not all undocumented immigrants are the same in their resiliency and lack thereof. However, all benefit some way in seeking close family ties and

seeking outside assistance, such as social providers. Social service providers can provide or suggest services beyond food, shelter and medicine, and guide clients towards counseling, skills classes, and way to gain self-improvement.

Undocumented immigrants are in particular need of all these things and it could be that their emotional and social health is overlooked in favor of food and shelter. Counseling helps a distraught mother think through her complex problems and seek solutions; skills classes teach ability and promote self-confidence, and workshops suggest ways of becoming entrepreneurial. Counseling, acquiring skills, gaining self-confidence are all weapons to be used against media-stereotyping, and anxiety over SB1070 and Arpaio's-led raids (Petersilia, 2003).

With these ideas in mind, the social service provider should realize that he and she have another, and rather abstract task beyond offering access to food, shelter, and financial assistance: to help the undocumented immigrant to re-imagine success in the United States. Many undocumented immigrants arrive with unrealistic notions about the United States, and become depressed or confused, and liable to make bad choices, such as drugs, drink, crime, abandonment, abuse, and overextension of resources (Coutin, 2005). This seems to usually happen to the men in the undocumented immigrant family. They may be beyond help because of either absence or "machismo," but their families suffer as they made such decisions. The women and the children need assistance in re-imagining success—which may be a variety of suggestions: seeking help, receiving counseling, seeking self-improvement, and perhaps looking to the children to

assume more successful roles in the United States. If the social provider could work to re-invent their thinking about the United States, and their ideas of being successful in the United States, their resiliency, in increasing peril with the coming of SB1070, and a hardening of attitudes in general, could be improved (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000). This resiliency, and the confidence it engenders, could also combat the stereotype of criminalization (Coutin, 2005, Petersilia, 2003). While not impossible for family members to supply these needs, or adjust attitudes, the social service provider, as a culturally-wise mediator between the undocumented immigrant and society, can help with the immigrant's emotional and social health.

CHAPTER 6

Social Services Providers' Perceptions of Clients

The undocumented immigrants' experiences, issues, and the need for knowledge about their status should also be the concern of social service providers. Beyond supplying the basic services of food, shelter, medicine, and other kinds of immediate assistance, the provider can also help with the critical and overwhelming issues of adaptation, the obtaining of skills to live and "pass" in the United States to deal with the labels of criminality, and to re-imagine a more realistic community in the United States. As the following narratives reveal, social service providers are deeply aware of the difficulties facing their clients, the impact that stress has on their clients and their clients' children, and how critical maintaining resiliency is. They are largely aware of how they can emotionally and socially support their clients, but may not be aware of the concepts of "symbolic interaction" and "re-imagining" a new dream, a new community, and new definitions of success. However, these people understand their abilities to counsel, train, and assist. If this were part of training prescribed or expected of social services providers, the providers may better deal with their emotional needs. A consistent response to a question in the formal interview was that they help the best they can, but know that the undocumented immigrant needs more than they are capable of. This incapability is at times a matter of resources, or a lack of knowledge of referrals. However, at times it seems as if the social

service provider may not realize that they are helping their clients by a simple of show of sympathy and support.

For this study the qualitative sample was based on a purposive sampling: I invited both staff and volunteer social providers at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Ministries department to participate in this study; out of 55 people available, 25 responded to my invitation. From those 25 I selected 10, largely due to the convenience of timing for both the interviewer and the interviewee; in other words, our schedules allowed us to meet. The ten selected represented both genders; they were volunteers and professionals; they also brought in a variety of experiences and professional backgrounds (from computer science to police work); some had been trained or prepared by college majors or degrees to conduct social work; some had been given a degree of training by agencies. The goal was to learn how the providers of social services perceive how the undocumented immigrants overcome challenges of criminalization. The qualitative instruments have been described in Chapter Three, which describes the methodology. I interviewed these participants in sessions lasting approximately one hour.

For the qualitative analysis, I engaged myself in a systematic inspection of the substantive data that I gathered through the interviews. Here I structured my exploration and analysis in three sections: first, I interviewed my participants in a one hour session. These narratives were created by these in-depth interviews. The raw data were analyzed for themes and consistent occurrences. The basic narrative pattern was constructed: the narrative commences with a description of

the social providers' experience and their background, then reports as well as analyzes their responses to the questions regarding their relations with their clients. These narratives are followed by generalizations of their beliefs about undocumented immigrants' problems and concerns and how they try to promote their resiliency in counseling and emotional support.

Case #1: Clare

Clare has a Masters in Social Work and has been counseling undocumented immigrants for three years. In her experiences of helping and advising, she has observed that undocumented immigrant families feel a high degree of stress due to their illegal situation. Part of this stress arises from their original exciting dreams of coming to the United States and being successful, and having better lives than the ones they were living in Mexico. However, they live in constant fear and frustration over their inability to get on the path of citizenship. Clare believes that parents in these families have risked everything to secure a better life for their children, and there is no guarantee that the price they are paying will be worth it in the end. Reality hits many of them very hard, but those who survive become more resilient and wiser about what to do, such as avoiding any situations that provoke interest from the police. She believes that youth in these families are severely affected by this stress, to the point of being traumatized. Some of the kids will prove more resilient, but some will not. In other words, it is not a healthy environment in which to raise children. Yet, she finds that no matter how stressful the lives of these families are, many seem to deal with the stress fairly

well. When she visits with them, either at work or in their homes, they are smiling and welcoming.

Nevertheless, their sense of exclusion from the host society still depresses them and angers them because they see themselves as unfairly criminalized. Clare said that as she became more and more aware of the injustice of their situation, it was impossible not to adjust her thinking about undocumented immigrants. She feels that she does a good job helping these families, but she knows there is more to do, and helping with their political and legal needs is beyond her scope. However, know it is important for them keep them imagining and re-imagining success in the United States.

Case #2 Judol

Judol has been volunteering as a social service provider for thirteen years and has been counseling undocumented immigrants for five years. He claims no special training for his work; his educational degree was a Bachelor of Science, Computer Information Systems and Accounting.

Judol sees the greatest need of the undocumented immigrants as attaining legal status—for legal status itself, and as well as becoming eligible for desperately needed services such as medical help and welfare, which would assist the children and infants in the families. Their greatest stress comes from “living in fear 24/7.” This stress creates bad consequences; the women have panic attacks and many of the men turn to addictions such as smoking and drinking. Their

health suffers and they are unable to visit doctors as needed. He finds that a particular source of stress is the failure of the dreams they had about coming to coming to the United States. These dreams, which can be unrealistic, were, in some ways based on real circumstances. Many of these immigrants had relatives who, during less stressful economic and political times, were experiencing success and encouraging friends and relatives to come, and they did, even hiring coyotes to make the trip with some kind of safety. Their dreams of welcome did not come true, and worse, they feel they cannot return to Mexico. They invested everything in the dream of coming and being successful in the United States, and there is nothing left for them back home.

The children were part of their decisions to cross into the United States in order to secure a better education for them. The hopes for a better education are affected by the stress the parents suffer. A lack of money and work creates a dismal future and he foresees the children turning to delinquency and gangs.

Judol says it would be false for him to say that he fully understands their stresses, but his interaction has given him insight into what they go through, and created his frustration with the legal system that is unfair to struggling families—though he concurs that deportation for the “bad apples” is just. In the meantime, he believes they keep going due to their basic resiliency, which is supported by friends, families and other networks such as church and social providers. Nevertheless, their social exclusion, which forces them to rely on their personal resiliency, seems to only lower their resiliency. Judol, as a social service provider,

knows he is offering help, but wishes he could do more, such as increasing their sense of support from sympathetic parties and connecting them with resources. He knows that continuing to work with these families, finding educational resources for them, and letting “them know I am on their side” helps promote a more positive immigration experience which may help balance out the negative qualities. Seeing himself as a “booster of morale” he believes that he can help them understand that the old dream may have vanished, but they can build and achieve a new dream in the United States.

Case #3 Petra

Petra has been a social service provider for thirteen years, during which time she has worked with undocumented immigrants. In contrast with other social providers who have had shorter or limited contact with immigrants, Petra’s work with them has lasted over a decade, and her bi-lingualism has been a great help.. Though she has only a GED, her abilities with language, aided by some training with diverse and fragile populations, gives her special abilities to relate to and help the undocumented family. Her interview reveals a special interest in the problems of women and children.

Petra believes that these families greatest need is to be able to provide for their families, by means of employment. This critical need is denied by current circumstances, and they suffer from fears of deportation and criminalization. She finds that the women are incredibly brave as they left behind their families and children to seek better work and a better life, and now they find themselves in

many ways a worse situation here than the ones they left in Mexico. The stress they suffer becomes fear and panic as they face deportation and criminalization. This contrasts with their original dreams of coming to and working in the United States; their dreams of being welcomed, and being able to live in peace. Petra describes one woman in particular whose husband has been detained, and they live their lives in a constant state of fear. Petra reports that if the women she tries to help decide to stay in the United States despite everything, then her job becomes to help them face their reality as well as to help them to a better living situation.

Petra assumes that dwelling in constant fear will negatively affect the children. The parents can't help but be traumatized by being labeled as criminals—and perhaps they will “give up” and accept the label. She observes that children tend to blame themselves for things they cannot understand, and their parent's trauma will likely affect them. They may start suffering from depression and nightmares. They may take wrong turns, becoming gang members, and then eventually criminals. Overall, labeling, and social exclusion from socioeconomic and legal resources affect their resiliency, though she sees the effects ranging from moderate to strong.

Petra admits that as a social provider she does the best she can to help the immigrants but when she started she had no idea how difficult life is for them. As she gained more experience she increasingly realized the extent of their problems, and these marginalized populations need the church, the community, and the

government to help solve their greatest problems. “I try to do my best” she states, but knows they need help in areas that she feels she has little experience and expertise. However, she tries to help the families have a positive immigration experience by not only directing them to helpful programs and services, but by giving them respect and compassion, and treating them with dignity. Through counseling and mentoring and by her bi-lingual abilities she is able to talk with them and bring them to a new reality and an acceptance of their problems so “they can start moving on.”

Case #4 Roland

Roland has been a social services provider for twenty years, and has worked with undocumented immigrants close to five years. A civil engineer, and a possessor of an MBA, Roland claims no special training or skills for his work, though he did take training at St. Vincent de Paul.

In his perception, the most important need of undocumented immigrants is to have their legal status completed—they need to work, and drive, and they also need to access medical services. This last service being available is particularly important because he perceives that the stress of living without documents in the United States makes the immigrant sick and depressed. These immigrants, despite their troubles, still seem to have high expectations of the United States, though their original dreams have changed. They understand, according to Roland, that realities are different from their dreams, but their desire to leave Mexico and its economic problems perhaps compensate.

According to his experiences, the youth in these families are affected by their parents' decisions, as well as their limitations. These children tend to be withdrawn, partly because of their responsibilities for translating their parents, who "tend to be ill informed of where to go and what to do to survive." These realizations and experiences, Roland says, have changed his views on undocumented immigrants; he did not fully realize the additional problems their legal situations create for them.

He also realizes that labeling and social exclusion has an impact as well. Believing that some people just feel lost, and are waiting for something to happen, he realizes that people just get worn down. Children suffer from poor self-esteem. Roland helps as he can, providing referral sheets of other agencies to the undocumented immigrants, while admitting he's not as effective as he wishes. However, he knows he needs to "follow through" with these immigrants, and in that way create as positive an experience as he can. By providing services, listening to them, and counseling them, his hope is for them to achieve a better life—though it may not be the American dream, "it won't be an illegal dream." At least, he wants them to imagine a life without fears that arise from or create precautions and adaptations: "A life in which they can walk, drive, and even have fun without the fear of prosecution."

Case #5 Mary

Mary has been a service provider for five years, during which time she has worked with undocumented immigrants. Her work is assisted by her Bachelors in

Psychology, and by speaking moderately good Spanish. Her other degrees include a Masters in Business Administration and a Masters in Creative Writing.

According to Mary, the undocumented immigrants' greatest needs are legal and legislative—a comprehensive immigration reform. Without legal and legislative change, the other issues can't be solved or even effectively addressed. An immediate solution is that of the “Dream Act” which will help youth “who are just left waiting for a positive outcome in order to continue with their lives.” These kids, she adds, are good kids, without any history of legal problems, and maintain good grades. According to her perception of their stress, she says they are under extreme stress that is created by laws affecting them—including obtaining a driver's license. They are excluded from services that are not only important; they are basic, such as medical care. She can't imagine how a family lives without access to these services.

Mary perceives that the children of undocumented immigrants are deeply affected by their parents' stress. She believes that the children feel their parents' anxieties and depression and unless they get some kind of support when dealing with their own fears they will start to rebel and commit delinquent acts. Another problem for them is their parents' poor assimilation into the United States and its culture; they turn into the parents in a way to help their parents understand the culture and help them deal with the language. Mary understands their sense of stress and alienation, saying we have “used and abused” these populations so much that in their eyes they must be cautious of Americans. Every time she works

with them she feels their fears and frustrations with the system. They are suspended in a black hole, and must feel that they are in different dimensions legally, economically, and socially. Mary said that the last two years have been an “eye-opener” for her as she has realized the hate and anger this community must deal with. She believes that the population must feel “profiled” but this is due to her own experience. She lives in a wealthy neighborhood, and she has observed deputy sheriffs stopping landscaping and construction trucks; she felt that they must have been seeking Hispanics.

Mary perceives that a sense of exclusion always impacts a sense of resiliency, and this impact has grown harsher as families have felt an increasing sense of criminalization. This labeling “affects their dignity” and prevents them from being more successful in the United States.

Mary helps undocumented immigrants to deal with their problems by using services provided by St. Vincent de Paul, and also directs them to services provided by Episcopalian churches, who feed workers as they waited to be picked up for day jobs. She feels she does everything she can to help them but her assistance is not enough for their needs. She also tries to educate the American public about them. She tries to form or reform opinions by pointing out they come to work, not commit crimes. Obviously, these immigrants are not here legally, but they don’t have to be perceived as being illegal in their acts and existence. Mary also tries to reform immigrants’ imagination about life in the United States—and

help them “construct a new dream based on a new reality; one that is painful but one that most of them are trying to achieve.”

Case #6 Peto

Peto has been a social service provider for approximately five years, and has a particularly interesting background. He has worked with people of other cultures than “mainstream America” for nearly 30 years; he was principal for a school on the Navajo reservation, and taught in a school in Nogales, which was only two blocks from the border. He has had training in Spanish, and bi-cultural education as well as special education. He has a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. While living in Nogales he learned a great deal about immigrants, both documented and undocumented. They care about their families, their youth and their children. They are hard working, and want to keep away from the “bad people” and are scared of drug dealers, smugglers, coyotes, and gang members.

Peto’s perception of the immigrants’ greatest need is for survival, and survival by means of symbolic interaction; that is, adapting to their new social situation. They need to become acculturated, to learn how to “behave” in their new environment. Yet, they also need to maintain their beliefs and their culture and to celebrate it—he believes that the United States is stronger and richer for having so many cultures “colliding.” Their next greatest need is to have full legal status so they can receive badly needed services. They need such simple things as a driver’s license, so they can work and get their children to school without fear. Their third greatest need is to feel acceptance in this country, and to not feel like

criminals. Being thought of as a criminal is akin to be thought of as a murderer, a thief, or a rapist. Nobody should be criminalized in such a fashion just because they are looking for a better future.

His perception of the stress such people suffer: it is intense. The feeling, particularly in Arizona, is that undocumented immigrants, who used to pass back forth over the border very easily, are no longer welcomed. He has had personal experience with seeing or knowing that families will pick up and flee in the night, or move to another state. Whatever they do, Peto says, their stress, which includes the children, will become trauma, and this can only lead to anger and hate. These people, he points out, is here to work and is doing hard work like landscaping and janitorial work; they respect the law and pay taxes.

Peto remarks that some of the people he has worked with did comment on expectations about coming to the United States, and that there were good feelings about getting away from bad economic conditions in Mexico—but in some cases they really had no other choice, rather than following a dream. Whatever the case for coming here, they did not expect so many laws, and so much “attitude” against them. However, he finds them to be resilient and quick to dream new dreams, which indicates their strength.

Peto perceives that the children, despite their parents trying to protect them from undue stress, still feel it, and they may decide, like children do, that they are the cause of the stress, or the cause of the problems that arise with stress. The effect of stress on children is like a chain. It causes them to have trouble in

school, and emotional problems which lead to truancy and other violations. They may think these problems are their fault, not due to the stress they are suffering, and develop anger, anxiety and depression; some may actually commit suicide. Peto senses that children born here are aware of their parents' "stigma" and must think of them as criminals. They are aware of their parents hiding, and know they must not speak about their parents. Then there is the problem of the parents getting deported, and leaving the kids behind. They will develop anger and hatred toward Americans. Peto found that the parents he counseled are aware of these problems, and that he seeks to help them and their children cope with it. "My job," he says, "is to make ware to them the hostile environment they live in." Also, he tries to comfort them in their in a difficult journey. Accordingly, he has become aware and sympathetic of their peculiar situations, and has made friends with them in their stress. One man he has befriended has actually made him godfather to his daughter, and entrusted him with gifts to take to his family in Mexico. Peto has listened to this man's dreams, which includes getting his driver's license, not being scared of the police, and becoming an American, and being free to travel back home. "I actually live in a golden jail named Arizona" remarks this undocumented immigrant.

Such social exclusion hammers the immigrant's resiliency. They feel completely alone, they cannot access services, and they cannot even call the police. "How scary is this?" Peto asks, pointing out that if you called authority for your own safety, the police may end up arresting you. Women in particular are

victimized by this; they are abused by their husbands or boyfriends, and then cannot get help. In all, social exclusion, and the subsequent labeling weakens resiliency; the labeling indicate they are not a good part of society, and this reputation undermines their morality, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Peto has worked for other services and programs and thus recommends them for undocumented immigrant families; he identifies Catholic Social Service and Friendly House in particular; neither discriminates because of race, religion, or documentation. He feels that he is able to provide some help, but wishes he had access to more services. His own contributions to a family's resiliency is to provide them with tools for survival—which includes learning the language so to communicate needs, knowing about programs and services, and identifying and knowing your support group so ensure that your family can find ways to deal with daily problems, continue to adapt, and seek a way to legalization. Peto desires “to help families stay together and resilient against challenges.”

Case #7 Laro:

Laro has worked as a social service provider at Special Ministries Department at St. Vincent de Paul for nearly nine years. He has worked primarily at the Families Assistance Ministry. His work has led him to provide services for undocumented immigrants for several years. Also, through a ministry in his church he has delivered food boxes. His educational background includes a Master of Arts in Economics, and a Bachelor in Science in Foreign Services; both degrees are from famous, high ranking universities. He claims no special training

for his work, but is bilingual. His preparation for working with undocumented persons, arises, as he describes, from his faith; “each person is made in the image and likeness of God.” He strives to treat each person with respect, no matter their background or legal status. He sees the undocumented as no different from other US citizens, in their desire to provide for their families and raise their children where there are opportunities to grow and to contribute to building a better world.

Laro’s perception of the undocumented immigrants’ greatest need is economic, as the current economy and barriers making it hard for them to find work. Their second need is to find path toward legalization, for, without this status, they will never find peace. He believes it is unjust to criminalize them for “something they have not committed”—they are here to find work and take care of their families. He believes that their lives are made extremely stressful by these needs and their lack of fulfillment; “even if one is working the uncertainty of job security” is hard, and then there is the constant threat of deportation. The families live in fear as the consequences of deportation are separation, criminalization, punishment and “economic hazard.”

Laro speaks of how some of his clients had imagined a different community in the United States than the one they found. The vast majority are living in inhuman conditions of fear and the feeling of hatred. They thought that the United States would be a welcoming place, and place of abundance, and place where they could live in peace. Their reality, which is very unstable, affects the adults, which in turns affects the children and creates fear and depression. To deal

with their psychological impact, they might become youthful offenders; turn to gangs, and finally becoming truly criminal.

Laro finds that he and his clients agree with each other on their perceptions of needs and stresses. However, his understanding of their peculiar needs and stresses has grown. At first, he had no idea, beyond their physical needs, what they were dealing with, and he realizes that agencies such as St. Vincent de Paul cannot help them as much they need to be helped. The government needs to take a hand to help these people. Their social exclusion, which prevents them from legal and economic resources, can only hurt, and their lack may actually make people start believing they are criminals. Their resiliency, already embattled, can only sink under such labeling by society and by themselves.

Laro provides resources from St. Vincent de Paul, which includes food, hot meals, and utility assistance. He thinks that other Christian organizations surely help immigrants but he could not readily identify other programs and services. He feels that he does his own best to help undocumented immigrants deal with fears and the unknown, but feels he does not have that much experience or expertise. However, he feels that he can help with their resiliency by offering his respect and compassion, and his encouragement—and to help them keep on with their dreams though dealing with a difficult reality.

Case #8 Louis

Louis has been a social worker since the summer of 2004 and commenced working with undocumented immigrants in June 2007. He claims to have no special training for working with this population, and defers to Anna, his bilingual partner who translates and helps him decide how to help the client. His highest degree is a Bachelor in Computer Science and at the time of this interview was working to complete his masters in the same subject.

He believes that the undocumented immigrants' greatest need is "all of the above"—legal, social, economic, family and personal needs have equal impact on such individuals and families. They have a circular effect: having illegal status means they are economically and socially taken advantage of, which affects their personal and family lives. These needs make life very stressful for the immigrant, who is also stressed by fears of deportation and separation.

Louis says that all of his clients imagined another kind of life in the United States, and now are finding themselves living in an "inhuman" situation." They live in fear and worry about the hatred they sense. Some have commented, as in other interviews, that they felt the United States was a welcoming place, with abundance and peace. However, they are dwelling in a constant state of panic and fear. Louis knows that in order for them to survive this particularly stressful period they need to adapt and assimilate.

The children perceive the problems their parents are experiencing, and these problems are complicated by the children having to take on certain parental roles, such as translating for their parents and advising them about where to go

and what to do. Louis, due to his work with immigrants has become increasingly aware of how an illegal immigrant's life contrasts with a legal immigrant's life. Neither have particularly easy lives, but the undocumented has to deal with many more stresses and fears. The social exclusion they suffer is particularly hard because many times they don't know what to do—they feel lost and seem to be waiting for something to happen. This feeling of suspension “wears them down,” and creates poor self-esteem, particularly in the children.

Louis, when asked about how he helps undocumented immigrants, notes that he relies on a “normal information referral sheet for other agencies.” However, he does not feel as effective as he wishes he could be, and the agency could be. When asked about how he could assist with promoting resiliency in the families in question, he desires to “follow through” with them, and in that way assure them of his support. Though counseling and mentoring, he tries to bring a “new reality” into their dream and encourage them to keep going forward.

Case #9: Andrea

Andrea has been a social service provider for nine years, and has worked with the undocumented population since 2007. She has a high school diploma.

In her perception, the greatest need of this population is for the reform of immigration, which would grant them security. She finds these families to be victims of an unjust system, and far from the criminals that the media frequently portrays them. She perceives that the undocumented live very stressful lives, and

compares them with her own—she is worried about her retirements; the undocumented immigrants work the unwanted jobs, and still have no benefits. This is particularly hard on the children.

Andrea contrasts with the other social workers in that she has never heard the immigrants recollect their imagined lives in the United States. However, she is sure that whatever expectations her clients have, they were changed when they found the country was not what dreaming about. Worse, they sold everything to pursue this dream, and they can't return to Mexico.

She knows that the stress and fear of the immigrants has a big impact on children's lives and she wonders how they cope with all their stressors—and wouldn't blame them for developing emotional problems. She cites a sad case of severe stress that she completely understood—a client's daughter was raped by a gang, and they could not call the police. The woman suffered terrible guilt for not being to help her daughter in this. Such experiences has allowed her even greater insight into the dilemmas of this population; although she always thought the undocumented had the same rights she does, her sympathy has grown. Her sympathy allows her to realize that the undocumented immigrants reacts to labeling with panic and frustration—and points out that hard core criminals in this country have more rights than this population, and this social exclusion, in a country that was built on immigration can only increased their frustration. This sense of stigma does not only impact adults, the children can't help but feel this as well.

Andrea directs her clients to any program that will treat them with dignity and respect, and to promote their well being. When asked about helpful she thinks she is, she responds “I try to do my best from the bottom of my heart.” She is trying to learn Spanish to better communicate with her clients, which is how she treats them with respect and dignity. When asked if she helps or promotes a new dream for this population, her answer indicates that she had never thought of such a thing, and said, “I will try.” Her goal is to make them feel happy when they meet, and find strength in sharing experiences with her.

Case #10: Roy

Roy has been a social provider for six years, and has worked with undocumented immigrants for the past two years. He has an interesting background and experiences with training: a former police officer, he was trained on how to deal with undocumented immigrants.

When asked about his perceptions on the greatest need of the undocumented immigrant, he was blunt—they need to go home, or, if they stay, they need to be legalized. However, their legal status will give them the right to get driver’s licenses, a job, and other rights that citizens receive. He also perceives their experiences as “stressful”—he can’t imagine what it must be like being “harassed all the time by the police,” and other citizens who resent them. He would like immigration reform to help them to become citizens; yet he stresses that the bad apples need to go back. There are criminals among undocumented immigrants.

It seems to him that undocumented immigrants dream about success in the United States long before they cross the border. They seem to believe that the US would welcome them, but they encounter harsh and increasingly harsh laws and growing resentment. He understands that their dreams were unrealistic—“such ideality never existed”—but if they are to stay they must adapt their dreams to reality. If they failed to do this, they probably returned.

Roy understands firsthand about how stress affects the youth in the family. As a police officer, many of his juvenile offenders’ incidents involved youth from undocumented families. He believes that the stress these families dealt with affected their kids in a negative way. He believes that as a police officer he could see that these families were good people; furthermore, as a social provider, his point of view is extremely different than a police officer, but it deepened his understanding of their painful situation.

The painful situation includes “labeling.” He understands how vulnerable the undocumented immigrant; just going outside leaves them exposed to be stopped, questioned, detained, and deported. The lack of services for you and your family, the inability to really support your family, even the lack of basic identification—combined with being constantly targeted as a criminal can “make you believe you a criminal.” This situation is even worse for youth. Roy refers his clients to “any Christian agency.” However, he feels that he is not very effective, due to the difficult situation these people live in. However, he tries to make their immigration experience positive by thinking of them as human beings, and not

just as “illegals”—the word illegal bothers him, because to him it means “hard core criminals,” which most undocumented immigrants are not. He truly hopes he can help these clients imagine another dream in the United States.

Discussion

The social service providers interviewed for this study indicate that their work does not necessarily require certain degrees and background. Degrees range from GEDs to Masters (notably in Social Work and psychology); some have special training and extensive experience; some are bilingual and many are not. Their experiences also range widely; from teachers, computer science engineers, to a former police officer. What is required, and what is felt among these people is a caring heart and a desire to assist a troubled population to persist, and their deepened understanding of the emotional and social problems the undocumented face both arises from and strengthens their desires. Bilingualism is a welcomed skill, and certainly assists in the difficult task of communicating, but ultimately it is the attitude of the provider which transforms a volunteer/employee into a true provider who helps with more than just food and shelter, but promotes resiliency and well being in the face of difficult obstacles.

Social service providers interviewed displayed no profoundly different attitudes or emotions toward their job and their clients; they all expressed concern, worry, and a degree of frustration that their efforts were never going to be enough. They all sense their clients' stress, and wish to see their clients stay resilient, to seek legalization, and to maintain through difficult times, though some are more aware

of these aspects some others. Finally, all are concerned about the children of undocumented immigrants, and what their future will be, no matter of their parents are deported, or if they stay together.

Notably, many of the social service providers made links between children's depression and their turning to gang, or crimes. At times, it should be questioned in social service providers are assuming links that either do not exist, or have not been proven; but their observation deserves further attention. All social workers interviewed agree that stress affects children as well, even when their parents try to protect them from it. Mary noted that children can't help but be aware of their parents' anxieties and depression, and that what they suffer now may lead into acts of delinquency. Peto and Petra both note that children may decide, as children do, that they are the cause of the stress, blame themselves, and these poor opinions of themselves will lead to truancy and other violations; even further down the road may lie anxiety and perhaps even suicide. For those children who may become separated from their families, there develop rage and hatred against Americans.

All social providers know that more than just food and shelter are needed by undocumented immigrants. They help obtain physical needs, but know that so much is required for people to not only remain alive, but to remain resilient in the face of political obstacles, social hatred, and economic difficulties. They all agree that stress is common among immigrants, and that it is never-ending. Stress rises from a number of sources, including social exclusion and labeling, or stigma.

Social exclusion and labeling are particular sources of stress that many undocumented immigrants did not expect to face. In their “imagined communities” of being successful in the United States, some documents spoke about expecting to find welcome, abundance, and a sense of peace. Instead, they find a border increasingly hard if not illegal to cross, an “aroused populace” and law enforcement actively seeking them. Being thought of as criminals impacts anybody’s frame of mind. Children in particular, sense that their parents are in hiding, and know they must not speak about their parents, which increases their feelings of criminalization. Women who suffer domestic abuse cannot even call the police for fear of being arrested as well. Peto speaks of one of his clients as a man who actually describes his life in Arizona as a “golden jail.” Though it sounds as if this client has developed a sense of humor about his situation, he still perceives his life as one of imprisonment. All the social workers were concerned about this stigma, noting that being thought of as a criminal is akin to being thought of as a murderer or a thief; no one should be criminalized for seeking a better future. Peto notes that in his experience the immigrants care about their families; they are hard working, and try to keep away from the drug dealers and gang members. Yet, for all that, they are still considered illegal.

Judol in particular noted that this stress is 24/7, and is accompanied by panic attacks and may lead into addictions. The stress caused by SB 1070, according to Peto, caused people to flee in the night and make bad decisions. Some feel as though they are in black hole, and are just waiting “for something to happen.” On

the subject of children, two social service providers noted a particular source of stress: those children have to become figurative parents to their parents. Younger, more adaptable, and able to pick up language more quickly, the children at times become interpreters for their parents; not only do they interpret English; they also translate American culture and expectations for their parents. They are probably glad to do so, but the children with these responsibilities become withdrawn, and are dealing with burdens they are not really mature enough to assume.

The social service provider, perhaps through these interviews, should realize that they are instrumental in two important strategies for resiliency: increasing their understanding of the importance of symbolic resiliency, and helping them to re-imagine their dreams of success in the United States. Mary, for example, tries to “educate” her clients on how the “American public” feels about them, and in that way, further educates them on the importance of fitting in, avoiding behaviors that might identify them as undocumented immigrants, and to better their English. In turn, she also tries to educate the American public about undocumented immigrants and how they come here to work and to thrive, not commit crimes. Peto, perhaps due to his bi-cultural education, sees that the immigrants’ greatest need is “simple survival” and this survival is accomplished by means of symbolic interaction. They need to become acculturated and learn how to “behave;” however, he also encourages them to maintain their culture, while “passing” for an American. This may give them feelings of acceptance in this country, understand but not believe their “criminal profile,” and thus gain

resiliency. They also help their clients emotionally by getting them through the break-up of original dreams, and the creation of new dreams that at least are more realistic. Clare declares that is her “goal” to “keep them imagining and re-imagining success”; Judol seeks to make them realize their old dream has vanished; they can build a new one, even within their confinements. Petra sympathizes with her clients whose dreams are broken with brutal reality, but she tries to counsel them about their new reality and to keep them moving on, rather than despairing. Roland feels that by listening to and counseling his clients, he hopes they can achieve a new dream, that may not be the classic American dream, but at least it won’t be illegal—their dreams will include the right to get drivers licenses, and have fun without the fear of prosecution. Mary says she tries to help them “create a new dream based on a new reality”—it is painful, but they have a new dream to achieve. Laro speaks of how his clients’ dreams did not come true and they are living in even worse conditions. He feels he can help them build new dreams by offering his respect and compassion, and to help them find new dreams even while dealing with a difficult reality. Louis also feels that by “following through” with his clients, and by counseling and mentoring, he tries to bring a new reality to old dreams, and in that way keep them going.

Finally, all social service providers interviewed realize that their original perceptions of the needs of undocumented immigrants have deepened. They are in need of food and shelter, and referral to other services, but they also require emotional support in their fears, and in this way the social worker’s compassion

becomes an important tool in their survival. Clare became more and more aware of the injustice facing undocumented immigrants; even though they were illegal, they should not be considered as criminals. Petra admits that when she started she had no idea how hard life was for them, and the “extent” of their problems beyond food and shelter and services. Roland admits that he is not as effective as he wishes he could be in face of their problems, but “helps as he can.” Mary feels the same way; but her assistance is not enough for their diverse and difficult needs. Peto’s work and his friendship with an undocumented immigrant have widened his knowledge of the peculiar and wide-ranging problems of the undocumented immigrant, including their deep fears of deportation and the frustrations of not being able to live a legal lifestyle. Peto’s desire to “help families stay together and keep resilient” indicates how far his understanding of their needs has gone beyond simple referrals for services. Laro also feels that his compassion is as important as the services he provides; his compassion, respect and encouragements help them with their ability to keep going on. Louis also refers to his counseling and mentoring as being as important as “normal referrals.”

These social service providers seem to vary in their understanding of helping the undocumented to build new dreams, or adapt old dreams to new circumstances. Roy’s answer to the question, “Are you able to help these clients imagine/dream life in the United States” was answered by “I surely hope so,” which suggests he does not comprehend the idea of “imagining” a new community.

Social service providers have indicated in their interviews their deep commitments to the well being of undocumented immigrants. In their overall support, they implicitly believe in the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Undocumented Minors), which extends to undocumented immigrant youth the ability to apply for financial aid. They also, in their actions, implicitly—and explicitly—reject Arizona SB1070, “Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act,” which makes it a misdemeanor to be an “alien” in Arizona if appropriate documentation cannot be produced. They have also progressed beyond the feeling that food and shelter is enough to help these people in their circumstances. Some, however, suggest that they have never comprehended their impact on undocumented immigrants’ sense of well being, which suggests that providers need to be trained in this aspect. If they are more aware of how they emotionally and spiritually influence their clients perhaps they can be more cognizant of not only their own abilities. Also, they can become more cognizant of the abilities of immigrants to find the power within them to fight labeling, refuse criminalization, and understand that they are resilient, and they can deliberately practice resiliency by friends, families, and referrals. All of the respondents concur that this special population is not criminal, needs their assistance, and need to develop a new “imagined community,” in which they are not necessarily the typical American citizen, but that they are the future American citizens, and this may be gained by their strength and ability to adapt to their new country.

CHAPTER 7

Discussions and Conclusions

This exploratory study was limited to undocumented immigrants who voluntarily sought help at St. Vincent de Paul. In other words, this study has limited generalization to this population. This study investigated three aspects of the lives of the specific population of undocumented immigrants identified above: their struggle to survive in illegal status, the sources of and the role resiliency plays in their survival, and how social service providers can assist in finding and employing this resiliency. This work sought to answer three questions that seek to understand the factors and resources that promote resiliency in undocumented immigrants: socioeconomic demographics, social service provider's assistance, and individual and family efforts to deal with and overcome obstacles. Overall, I sought to better understand the increasingly critical problem of Hispanic undocumented immigration from the perspective of the undocumented immigrant family (Bauman, Ennett, Foshee, Pemberton & King, 2002). There are several particular aspects of undocumented immigration that I gradually uncovered and sought to learn more: the efforts made by undocumented immigrant women and their children to stay resilient in very adverse situations. Second, how does criminalization impact the attitudes and resiliency of the undocumented immigrant? Third, how do families, particularly women, manage to deal with and at times overcome the fears of detention, incarceration, and deportation? Fourth, how does a faith-based agency attempt to help clients with these particular

problems? Finally, how do these families imagine success in the United States? Through my data-gathering, explorations and analysis I was able to find some answers to these questions. The understanding that I achieved led me to realize other qualities of the critical relationship between the social service provider and the undocumented immigrant (Goffman, 2001, Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzalez, 1995). One overlooked quality can be viewed as a kind of symbolic interaction (Sandstrom, Martin, Fine, 2003). The social service provider can do more than distribute food and provide shelter; the provider can assist the immigrant to cope with the host society's demands and standards. For example, in one case, a client was allowing an underage daughter to drive without a license. The social service provider did not merely tell the woman that this was wrong; she explained why the host society regarded it as wrong, and what the possible consequences were: arrest, detention, and deportation. The undocumented immigrant "passes" in the host society by trying to remain invisible; the social services provider helps them to remain invisible by alerting them to possible dangers and consequences (Valenta, 2009). Also, another overlooked or less understood quality is that the social service provider may also help the immigrant to gain confidence by enhancing their abilities. For example, their clients are encouraged to attend ESL classes, computer skills classes, and taking advantage of services such as counseling and health clinics.

This study contributes to the literature of resiliency in the three following ways: first, there are many studies of women's resiliency, but there is little

literature specifically on the undocumented immigrant woman's resiliency. This particular area needs to be studied, particularly in light of the impact of SB 1070. Second, this study also contributes to the body of knowledge about undocumented youth immigrants and how their resiliency allows them to cope with the effects of criminalization and the lack of opportunities. Third, this study also contributes to the knowledge about social service providers and undocumented immigrants; observed is how the provider provides unique assistance to the non-legal client.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on two approaches: a symbolic interaction approach inspired by Benedict Anderson's classic *Imagined Communities* (1983, 2006), and Ecological Risk and Resiliency (1997). These two approaches contextualized the immigrants' situation to how environments affect their lives and decisions. This study used mixed methods of research: interviews and descriptive analysis. The qualitative data was drawn from ten social service providers from a faith-based agency, and from a narrative analysis of participants enrolled in an ESL program (English as a Second Language). The subjects for the quantitative design were drawn from a group of undocumented first-generation Hispanic immigrants who received social services during the year 2009 from the same faith-based agency. The collected data, which included nine in-depth interviews with undocumented immigrant adults, ten social service providers, and demographic information from a database, explored the research questions. These discoveries drawn from the explorations, summarized below, identified patterns of exclusion, sources of fear, and sources of strength that

influence the perceptions of both undocumented immigrants and their social service providers of the challenges and obstacles they confront as well the successes they win (Hill, Ramirez & Dumka, 2003) .

Discoveries Made Through Undocumented Immigrant and Social Service Provider Experiences

1. How do undocumented immigrants survive and even thrive under their difficult circumstances. My discoveries are that immigrants show great ability for imaginatively developing strategies in order to survive. The undocumented immigrant first needs are physical, but even after food and shelter and even financial resources are met, emotional and social deprivation takes their toll. In order to survive frequently devastating changes in lifestyle and original dreams of life in the United States, the undocumented immigrant must become imaginative. They must adapt their hopes of prosperity and success to the increasingly difficult reality of harsher laws; and they must keep their dreams alive in a world which is hedged in by sheriff raids, and laws that threaten their well-being. They keep these dreams alive by sending children to school, seeking work whenever possible, enhancing computer knowledge, and language skills, seeking each other through friends and family connections, and seeking help when affairs seem hopeless. A particularly good case is Carla, who turned to making arts and crafts after her husband left her. She takes advantage of Head Start for a pre-school son and plans to learn more about

teenagers prior to her children reaching adolescence. She models herself after a sister-in-law who is successfully dealing with an alcoholic husband. Other women in these cases use new skills such as email and creating business cards to advertise cleaning services. Some bake pastries and tamales. Some cut hair and sit children. Some have dreams of becoming real estate agents; one woman dream of becoming a nurse. Although these particular dreams may seem beyond reach at the moment, these women are thinking dynamically about their future and their children's future. These women have created synergy among them. This action helps keep their dreams alive despite living in situations that a "typical middle-class American" would find intolerable (Clark, 2002).

2. The women in these situations frequently prove more resilient than the men.

In my exploration of the nine cases I discovered that the wives and mothers in the undocumented families seem to prove more resilient than their husbands and boyfriends. These women work hard, are diminished but not destroyed by abuse, desertion and fraud, and seem to be the first to seek outside assistance when the family can no longer rely on its own resources for its needs. This is well illustrated in Case #5 in the example of Marcy who seemed to seek assistance first, rather than her husband. The quantitative data described indicates that more women search for social assistance and that more women actually follow social programs to better themselves than men. Women have considerably fewer felonies than

their counterparts. Although men tend to make more money and to have better jobs, the data clearly indicates that women's main concern is their family. The qualitative data exemplifies this: in only one case was the family still whole; in the eight other cases, the women had been widowed, abandoned, and divorced. In some cases the husband was still present in some fashion, such as in the case of the husband who traded sex for mortgage payments. In other cases the husband or ex-husband, and the fathers of the children are not present. In the case of the mother and daughter, these two women were apparently left with all responsibility of the children, whom they did not abandon. This is not to indicate that women within these families are invincible; they are prey to worries, violence, depression and fear. Also, these women, although concerned about their families' well being, may seek financial well-being over their emotional issues, such as in Case #1, and the example of Carina. However, whether this is a particularly Hispanic trait or a trait of women all over the world, evidence from these nine cases suggests that women more actively seek security for their family (Belknap et al, 2007, Kyunghwa, 2003, Marsiglia and Holleran, 1999).

3. Undocumented immigrant survival does not completely depend upon food and shelter and even money, but also on a sense of well being.

In my explorations, my most critical discovery reflects the old saying "Man does not live by bread alone." All clients are in need of food and shelter, and money to pay for utilities and medicine. Some families have

shelter experience, such as the case of Monica and her children. However, food and shelter only provide for immediate relief for wants; the undocumented immigrant also requires a sense of security, peace, and well-being in order to truly survive and perhaps thrive. Most of these women have endured domestic abuse issues that traumatize them and impact their lives. Monica, for example, benefited from counseling at a woman's clinic; several other women from these cases also sought counseling to alleviate anxiety and depression. Alyssa suffered particularly strange abuse from her husband; her children were deeply disturbed by threats and his actions. Alyssa was able to gain personal and emotional strength by her church and by a woman's clinic and since then she has found strategies to support her when she is fearful and angry (Phinney, Ong, & Maden, 2000). In many cases, the women were able to support themselves and their families and these brought a feeling of self-sufficiency.

4. Social services do make a difference in the lives of undocumented immigrant but not all social service providers are fully trained and prepared to assist them beyond normal standards.

In my exploration of the work, thoughts, and concerns of social service providers, I have discovered that while providers are trained to supply baseline needs for citizens and legal residents of the United States, when dealing with undocumented immigrant the social service provider is challenged by their clients' unique needs. For example, when

undocumented youth needs services such as counseling most of these programs require legal documentation or for the client to pay. This creates a dilemma for the social service provider because he or she understands the needs that these families have but services cannot be provided by them. For example, there is the case of the mother whose daughter was abused by her boyfriend. The girl has run away, and though she has returned, her emotional problems still exist. Does the social service provider know about other resources beyond the ones that the undocumented immigrant cannot access at his or her agency? This points out how social service providers, though good-hearted, are not fully equipped with knowledge that their undocumented clients may desperately need. These social service providers range from teachers to retired police officers and have a variety of training and skills for their work. All acknowledge the stresses felt by the undocumented immigrant. Some are aware of how trapped the undocumented immigrant feels in his or her unhappiness in the United States, particularly in Arizona, and how the idea of returning home is not possible, either out of fear or out of a sense that they have “burned their bridges” and must stay. Even Roy, the ex-police officer acknowledges that most undocumented immigrants are not criminal; and is sensitive to the definition of being criminals because they have crossed a border. He understands this definition wears them down emotionally and mentally; furthermore, their children are affected as well. All social service providers seem to realize that there is more to the

client's need than receiving food and shelter, and most also realize that their emotional support of the client in their distress can be critical. All social service workers seem to have "giving hearts" and show a desire to help, in and out of their agencies. Some of have become friends with their clients. They all seem aware of their limitations. It seems that these social service providers could see and understand that the families were resilient, or growing more resilient, but they seem to reveal very little sense of how important their efforts were or could be in deliberately encouraging resiliency (Lingxin, 2003, Guanipa, Nolte, Guanipa, 2002).

Future Research

Looking to the future, there are still numerous issues to explore in the increasingly important field of the undocumented immigrants' sense of resiliency and survival. One particular issue to explore would be how poverty, in the case of immigrant women and their children affect their resilience, both negatively and positively. Many of these women, according to their interviews, live in extreme poverty which threatens their well being. The mother and daughter who came in together to ask for assistance reveal how poverty and the criminalization of their status leads to depression; the mother sought counseling to deal with her anger. These women also become desperate, which may cause the victim to take measures personally abhorrent to them, such as trading sex with an estranged husband for mortgage payment or accepting dangerous work such as transporting drugs out of state (Boyd, 1999). However, this is the negative side of

impoverishment. On the other hand, poverty increases their imagination, creativity and desire to succeed (Baer, 1999). For example, many of the women became self-employed by cleaning houses, baking pastries, and cooking for others. For example, a young mother, whose husband abandoned her, undertook craftwork and seems to be very satisfied with her life, despite limitations in her living situation. We need to further study how these women respond to threat of poverty by conducting more interviews and ethnographic studies so we can identify the risks that challenges their resiliency.

Another critical area of research is how undocumented immigrant youth is impacted by criminalization of their parents and themselves (Fuligni, & Wtkow, 2004). This area should be studied in terms of gender: how female and male youth respond differently to risks created by their status. Male and female obviously differ physically and emotionally and therefore their responses to criminality may be different (Belknap et al, 2007, Benjet & Guzman, 2001).

This research could shed light on how and why undocumented immigrant women, as indicated by this dissertation, seem to possess greater resiliency than men. In the descriptive analysis of the quantitative study more women sought help from a non-profit, such as attending skills classes. This is complemented by the qualitative findings which reveal that all the women interviewed were willing to “go the extra mile” for themselves and for their children.

Finally, the concept of the “symbolic interaction” calls for further exploration particularly in the case of undocumented immigrants who are seeking

to find their place in the United States. Symbolic interaction may be a superficial gesture to fit it; or, symbolic interaction may be positive reaction to what the host society values (Sandstrom, & Fine, 2002). Finding work of course is a matter of survival—however, is actively seeking work, and working hard under difficult conditions translate into gestures of symbolic interaction? For example, the women under consideration might have remained completely dependent on agencies such as St. Vincent de Paul to supply their needs; however, most of them were willing to think creatively, become in some ways entrepreneurial to exist in their host society. Many of these women also avoid or seem to avoid new relationships with men; could this also be considered a kind of interaction with the host society that no longer places such his value on traditional marriage and family patterns? In other words, are these women copying new patterns in the United States?—this latter would not be done in order to pass in the United States, but rather, a way of developing the personal freedom that legal citizens.

In conclusion, legal reform of the anti-immigration laws would alleviate some of the obstacles and issues that undocumented immigrants face. It is the researcher's hope that this study will shed a stronger light onto immigration policies at the federal level. This study indicates that a vast majority of undocumented immigrants are not criminals, are in the United States to work and support families, and make efforts to comply with the host society. Having legal standing in the United States would help promote these immigrants' ability to work more openly, alleviate feelings of criminalization that occur in such acts as

driving without a license, and strengthen their identity as a contributing member of a society that was built on immigration. In lieu of this reform and the corresponding alleviation of stress and fears, the undocumented immigrant must rely on their resiliency, their creativity, and their personal and family strength to survive and to thrive. Their ally in this difficult struggle is the social service provider who can encourage their efforts more effectively by stronger training in understanding the unique problems of the undocumented immigrant; the generally sympathetic nature of the social service provider, as indicated by their interviews, suggest that this sort of training would be strongly responded to. With the willing efforts of the social service provider, and the desire of the undocumented immigrant to interact with the host society, together they can overcome social and personal obstacles as they seek success and citizenship in the United States.

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Appendix A

Narratives of Undocumented Immigrants

Case # 1

The following is a brief summary of an interview I arranged with one undocumented immigrant female/client currently taking English classes and accepting services at the Special Works Ministries. This client is forty years of age and she lives with her boyfriend who is almost twenty years younger than she. In the same household reside her two daughters; both of them have two babies each. Also residing in the house is her youngest daughter who is 13 years of age, and her youngest child, a son five years of age

The client and her family are in the United States without legal status. They came from Zacatecas, Mexico, about seven years ago. Originally she came with her husband who passed away in a U.S. jail. The woman speaks some English. The family routine is simple: all of them wake up at 5:30 am and all adult members go to work cleaning houses. They finish their work around 5:00 pm, and return home to have dinner and go to bed.

The two older daughters help the client financially and emotionally. According to the client the three women take care of the household by either cleaning or buying items needed in the house. Both daughters have their own room, and even though they actively participate in household, each can withdraw into their rooms for privacy and independence. According to the client, she does not like her daughters to be around when her boyfriend gets drunk, and loses control of himself. He does not get violent, but has a tendency to make sexual comments regarding women. Both daughters leave their kids with a close friend

when they go to work, because they do not trust the youngest daughter to take care of them. Besides, according to the mother, the youngest daughter needs to go to school. The daughter's children are US citizens so they are able to have state health insurance and food stamps.

The whole family socializes with other families, which share the same social and economic characteristics. For instance, the client states that her best friends work cleaning houses. Some of them are single with children; others are married or have a partner. All these families came from Mexico and are residing in US without legal status. Many of those families, according to the client, have US-born children, so it is common to see the older family member communicating in Spanish and the younger generations communicating in English. Over the weekends they get together to have "carne asada" and beer. According to the client, this is the only time that her memories of Mexico come alive, because they listen to Mexican music, and all of them talk in Spanish about the same topics.

She met the boyfriend through some friends. The boyfriend recently came to United States from Chiapas; he started working as the client does, cleaning houses and offices, and now both of them work for the same cleaning company. He likes to drink and especially over the weekends he drinks heavily until he falls asleep. Although he is hard working man, he is not good with his finances, so the client helps him control his spending.

The client told me it is very important to know why she and many like her are called “ilegales” -- in English, illegal. The client also want to understand why despite having jobs, producing income, and adhering to the law to the best of her knowledge, she and her family have to deal with the fear of being profiled, detained, prosecuted and deported. She is also concerned with the labels created by the media and the consequences that derive from labeling.

The client attempts to be a good mother to her children but due to her heavy work as a house cleaner, she does not have enough time to dedicate to them. When the older daughters separated from their respective husbands the client asked them to move back home, making a point that it was very important to be united as a family. However, client states that she lacks time and energy to more effectively supervise her younger children and the family as a whole. Client has a very strong feeling of guilt over her children’s needs; however she must work long hours in order to pay her bills and even then her income is not enough to cover them. Coming to St. Vincent de Paul has helped her alleviate some of her depression and feelings of isolation. She is able to communicate and express her feelings with a counselor, and also has found other friends who speak Spanish.

Another of her biggest problems is assimilating the new culture. This is hard because everyone in the house speaks Spanish, watches Spanish TV programming, and listens to Spanish-language radio. It is very common for them to shop at a food market at which everyone speaks Spanish, and finally their social network includes only people from Mexico.

Her youngest daughter has problems adjusting to her mother's way of living and to American culture. She resists by showing a negative attitude towards her mother; she often refers to her as stupid, or as someone who is incapable of doing anything. She makes comments that because her mother does not speak English she can only make a low income. The client does have difficulty when conferring with the school staff about the girl's problems. This girl is already on probation and might fail in detention again for the fourth time and go on to an intensive probation. She has run away from home several times; she is constantly truant and relates to friends who belong to a gang in the neighborhood.

Client's youngest child, her son, is not able to speak well either in Spanish or in English. He has been evaluated and diagnosed as having some motor dysfunction disability. Since the child is a US citizen he was prescribed a series of early intervention sessions in order to promote his speech. Due to his mother's inability to be home and/or taking him to the speech therapists, the child has not progressed to the level that he should be.

The client has been coming to St. Vincent de Paul for a long time to use the dining room, the medical clinic for herself and her older daughters, and finally she has become an active participant at the Ministries in which she takes English and computer classes. She often misses her classes but she calls to say that she doesn't have time to come, but that she will be present in the following session.

When client participates in class she shows a good demeanor; she interacts well with the other participants, and she often engages in long conversations

regarding her family and the other participant's families. She displays a vivid frustration about the raids and problems undocumented immigrants have to endure especially here in Arizona. She often questions why, if she is being productive and according to her a good "citizen," does she have to fear the police and other governmental officials.

When the Spanish media broadcast about the enacting of the law "1070" in Arizona and all of the consequences this law will produce for undocumented immigrant, she became sad and at the same time angry towards the "people in the government." She stated that she has emptiness in her soul, and is highly concerned with the damage this law will do to the people.

Case # 2

On February/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is forty-four years of age and she lives with her three children. She has been a client of St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries since the beginning of the year.

This client came from Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, about twelve years ago. She came with her husband and, at the time, their only child, a daughter. They entered the United States legally under a tourist visa. According to the client they had authorization to stay in the United States for one year; this authorization did not allow her and her husband to legally work in the United States, .But, according to the client, she and her husband worked clandestinely. She stated that

working at one time without proper authorization was easy, and “everybody was doing this,” but now hardly any body is working without papers. She states that getting a fake identity was relatively easy at one time but today it is hard and very expensive.

The first time she, her husband, and their daughter were in the United States they returned to Mexico with the goal of renewing their visa. Once they entered the United States for the second time, they never returned to Mexico. Their visa expired and thus they became undocumented immigrant. However, their plan was to gain citizenship. However, as Client indicated, she thought gaining legal status would be easy, but it was totally the opposite.

They had two children born in the United States, and then she and her husband separated due to his physical abuse of both the wife and the oldest daughter. According to the client her husband was a violent man who abused her since the beginning of the marriage. The husband became also violent towards their oldest daughter when she defended her mother. She does not know much about what has happened to her husband, only that he lives somewhere in California. Currently they are not divorced.

The Client currently works in and out of the home; making food for sale (e.g tamales, wedding and quinceañera cakes). Client is able to sell her food through a network of friends and family. Through them she gets referrals to other people who learn about her culinary skills. She also cleans houses and offices around the valley; she gets these jobs through friends, and she also advertises her

work at the church, and at her children's school, and most recently at St. Vincent de Paul.

The family's routine is rather complex: all of them wake up at 6:45 am and the client takes her children to school, after that she immediately goes to her cleaning work, coming home around 5:00pm. Client cooks and bakes her food mostly in the evenings. Client spends Thursday evenings at St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries, taking English and computer classes; also she has become a regular volunteer in St. Vincent de Paul cleaning and helping Sister Carmel with the Ministries to the Homeless. Sister Carmel supervises the Ministries to the Homeless which offers help to anyone who needs help with showers, clothing, shoes, and hygiene items. This program serves both males and females and most recently families with children. According to statistical information among the clients a good number are undocumented immigrants. According to Sister Carmel, since the law has tightened and become tougher regarding undocumented immigration, many people lost jobs, and probably the only source of income, and must come to St. Vincent de Paul to get help. Client states that she is proud of being able to help people that suffer no matter if they are citizens or non-citizens.

Lately client was stopped and cited by a police officer. She had to go to court, where she was ordered to pay previous citations, and she was ordered to stop driving in the US due to no driver's license and insurance. She was also warned that the immigration authorities will be notified of her undocumented

status. At one point client wasn't able to pay her monthly rent, forcing her and her family to move to a smaller apartment, with only one bedroom.

She identified her three greatest challenges: (1) driving without a driver's license. She told me that she has been stopped already twice. Because she has been stopped a second time she faces criminal charges and at the moment she does not know if there is a warrant for her arrest. (2) Her oldest daughter is also driving even though she is only fourteen years of age, but the client says that her daughter is helping her by bringing her younger siblings from school while the client is still working. (3) Her ex- boyfriend, who is legal in the United States, is under investigation by CPS because her oldest daughter has disclosed that she has been sexually molested by him, since she was 10 years of age.

Client has a very active social network. She has lots of female friends around her age, with whom she has a good time; and from whom she gets advice and also news of places where she can find jobs. She is concerned over her friend because of them drink alcohol. Also, many of them are single and looking for a boyfriend. Because of her previous experiences with men, client is extremely cautious about getting involved in a relationship. Nevertheless she feels her friends are a solid group of hope and vitality for her; they listen to her and are there for her no matter what. Many of these friends work in the same places that she works; others are friends that she has known since she came to the United States. The client states that a friend will introduce her to another friend at social events, or at church. Client relies on those friends for help in emergencies. For

instance, the client, through her friends, has access to medications coming from Mexico. Also, through these friends she has been able to send gifts to her relatives down in Mexico. She mentioned that her most trusted friends are able to take care of her children when she is in a need of help. This friend was able to legalize her status due to a U-Visa (domestic abuse), and can access social services like medications, counseling and child-care and to travel within and outside the United States and thus can frequently help the client with her needs. Finally she stated that when she needs to talk or cry her best friend is always there for her.

The client is always fearful of being detained, deported and separated from her children. She stated that this fear has made her unable to pursue any legal action against the husband or the ex-boyfriend. Moreover, her oldest daughter is beginning to act out at home and in school and she is beginning to involve herself with gang members. She desperately wants to have a tattoo so that she will please her boyfriend. Client stated that her daughter has told her that the ex-boyfriend used to come to her bedroom at night when the house was quiet. According to the client her daughter has, in the past, run away from home several times. When the client and other family members were asleep, and the house was dark, the daughter left. The daughter would return a couple of days later, with excuses. She believes her daughter is trying to escape the reality of sexual abuse. According to client she feels guilty of exposing her daughter to this situation and feels that she needs to help her to get through this situation. The client stated that she and her

daughter have a good relationship and are able to communicate with each other, so she is hopeful that her daughter's emotional situation will improve.

As for the other members of the family everything seems fairly normal and stable.

Case # 3

In March/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is thirty eight years of age and she lives with her four children. She has been a client of St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries since the beginning of summer 09.

This client came from La Piedad, Michoacán, Mexico, about eleven years ago. Originally she came with her husband and her two older children. She and her husband are no longer living together because of his physical abuse. Since coming to the United States she has had two children who are citizens of the US. The Client currently works cleaning houses and offices around the valley. Both she and the two older children are without proper legal documentation here in the US.

Her husband used to abuse her periodically because he became jealous of her male friends. Client stated that she believed her husband was very insecure and paranoid about her friends, though she only had a few male friends along with many female friends. She also stated that she never gave him a reason to doubt her. Her husband was set to visit a counselor, but he always found a perfect

justification for not going. Client said that she often reminded him how much she loved him and how important it was for both of them and the children to live in a stable environment. She declared that if they did not have much money and wealth at least, when the odds were against them, they had each other.

Unfortunately he did not listen to her and she had to leave him.

Recently, after she separated from her husband, client began working and making income to pay her bills. Client states that she is proud of herself that she provides the only source of income for the whole family.

The family's routine is simple: all of them wake up at 6:45 am and the client takes her children to school. The client is a home-maker until 9:00 pm; then she goes to work until 3:00 am. During these night hours, her children are under the supervision of the oldest son who currently is nineteen years of age. Client spends Thursday evenings at St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries, taking English and computer classes.

According to the client she believes that if she takes care of herself physically and emotionally, she will be a better mother and a better person. She has many worries. She worries of being overweight, which lowers her self-esteem, feeling she looks older than she really is. At this moment she trying to overcome these negative feelings, especially the depression and anxiety that she suffers as a consequence of the abuse she endured. Client is going through counseling sessions at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and also goes to women's clinic in her neighborhood. She also attends different leadership

workshops at her church. According to her it is important to be optimistic about life. She stated she never loses her faith that someday soon she and her older children will become legal residents of the United States.

Client has stated that she does not have many friends, but the few she has are truly exceptional. All are women; she met many of them at church and also at her children's school. Many friends visit her at her home. Almost all her friends are single, divorced or separated; she commented that it is easier to get divorced in the United States than in Mexico. She stated that in the United States, people care less about other people's status than in Mexico.

Client often states that she misses her country, her relatives, her friends and Mexico. She constantly thinks if it might be a better for her and her family to return to Mexico. She said she knows she will not get a job easily and, if she finds one, her income will be almost nothing, compared to what she makes in the United States. But, on the other hand, she and her family would have freedom in traveling, driving, public health care and, more importantly, she would not feel like the criminal she does in the United States.

The client described her main challenges: (1) driving without a driver's license. So far she has been lucky because she has never been stopped. (2) Her two oldest sons are also driving without driver's license but she says they are helping her by taking and bringing their younger siblings home from school. (3) Her husband is no longer living in her house but he returns constantly demanding that the client have sex with him in exchange for him making payments of the

household's bills. The client has disclosed to the interviewer this situation makes her feel like a prostitute. She tries not to consent to his demands and his offers, even though he threatens her with physical and emotional abuse. (4) Recently, in her previous job, the sheriff department raided an office building she used to clean; however she was not there at the time. She says that the sheriff deputies didn't only detain the undocumented immigrants there but also took computer and human resources files. A friend's husband was detained in this raid. The client's friend also heard that the sheriff would search for undocumented immigrants using the information from the records confiscated. She told me that she fears that the sheriff's deputies will find her name and address and this fear has created extreme stress not only for the client but also for her children. She could not sleep for a couple of days, fearful that sheriff's deputies would appear at her front door. She declares that her worst nightmare is to be separated from her children, especially from the two youngest ones.

Client's children are well behaved and she states that she has been a good influence on them. She knows they have enough stress without bearing any more. She spends "quality time" with them by reading storybooks to the younger ones, and then talking about stories after the reading. She also attempts to go to church every Sunday. The local neighborhood church she attends presents the mass in Spanish. She also likes to participate in events done at her church. This is the where she finds herself calm and is able to make friends. Her older children have had more difficulties coping with adjusting into the American culture. She reflects

on this, saying that both kids were traumatized by the abusive relationship she endured with her husband. So far she has not noticed any extreme behavior that will indicate they are using drugs, or getting involved with gangs or something worst.

Recently she became aware of the 1070 law. She stated that she doesn't like to watch much TV because she gets fearful, and she doesn't need that. She has marched several times to protest unjust policies.. She told me "who are the real criminals, us by working and working, and paying our taxes; or they [the one who passed the law and their supporters], who are making people to live in fear.. This type of legal action is really devastating for our community, not only does it break families, but also makes people think they are worthless."

However, client believes that some day she and many like them will be able to live legally in the United States: "people are here to work and pay taxes and not to get in problems." She continues saying if we all stand together, the people in government won't hurt them. It is sad, she declares, to see how many good people, good parents and good workers get deported, just because they did not had a paper that justified their status here in America. She believe that in a long run, this will not help America because of the amount of children left alone with confusion and anger.

Case # 4

At the end of February/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is 24 years of age and she lives with her two children. She has been a client of St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries since August/09.

This client came from Chiapas, Mexico, about six years ago. Originally she came with her husband. She and her husband are no longer living together because of he was unfaithful to her. Since coming to the United States she has had two children who are citizens of the US. The client currently works from home; she makes artisan work such as paintings of her native Mexico as well as hand-crafted religious items such as rosaries. She sells these to a retailer who every week provides her with basic supplies, and who also gives her a percentage of the sale. She sells her remaining inventory at a swap meet at which she either sells her merchandise or trades it for things that she needs at home, such as clothing, food and especially prescription medicines (which are black market).

The client lives with her two children in an office building which she is allowed to occupy. She has two small rooms and a bathroom that has only a toilet and a sink but no bath or shower; however according to her this is enough. The tenant charges her \$350.00 per month which includes utilities. The client has requested to be a volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul; also she is willing to take English and computer classes there as well. Also, she has enrolled her older son in a neighborhood Head Start

The family's routine is rather complex: all of them wake up early in the morning. She is a stay home-mom until 1:00pm when she takes her older son to

catch the school bus for the afternoon session; she comes back home and waits for her niece who will take care of the client's younger son while she is volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul. Around 4:00pm she picks up her oldest son from the school bus; they both come home, then she prepares dinner and puts the children to bed. After that she works on her paintings and craft items until midnight or more.

Client socializes with a group of people who immigrated from the southern part of Mexico, mainly Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tabasco; according to her, all of her friend like the same food; they hear the same music and they look alike. She went on to describe the people: most of the people from these states come from indigenous roots. They are not too tall, and are very brown-skinned; they are very folkloric and traditional with their views and customs. According to the client these group of people network within themselves. For instance, many of the women that are not working help take care of the other families' children; they also help each other with money and medication. Since all of them are without a legal status in the United States, they all have the same challenges. Most of the men work for a big supermarket nearby, all of them have been able to disguise themselves and have adopted another identity in order to work, the rest of the men work in landscaping business or cleaning offices. Some of the women work, mainly cleaning houses.

Client's best friend is her sister in law who is married to her brother. According to the client this woman grew up in the same village that she did; she

went to school with her and she knows her family well. This friend has become her confidant and her best ally when she was going through the separation from her husband. Client describes her sister in law as a very strong woman, stronger than her, and she admires how effectively she takes care of her husband and her children, as well as taking care of her mother who is living in her house. Client's brother is her friend's husband and even though he is "great guy," he has slowly developed alcoholism which he struggles with. But he has accepted that he is sick and he is going to a local Alcoholics Anonymous, where he's been helped. The wife participates with him a AA and most recently their oldest daughter has started to participate. Client constantly talks to her brother reinforcing how important it is that he remains sober.

When the client works at St. Vincent de Paul, she enjoys distributing clothes to the homeless; she also enjoys working with Sister, a Catholic nun, who is in charge of the Ministries to the Homeless. Client has many times said that Sister reminds her of her beloved Chiapas. Client's former home has many Catholic churches which she describes as sanctuaries in which people seek protection and peace. The client reported that the state of Chiapas has always been afflicted with many struggles both political and social. One side is the minority of the population, who are immensely rich. The vast majority is poor, exploited and terrorized by the constant guerilla warfare and the government repression. Many native poor people of Chiapas have fled to other states of Mexico and the United States in search of jobs, and overall a better sense of well-being. That is the case

of the client who at a very young age fled to Cancun, Mexico to assist a street vendor of shrimp cocktail; her work included peeling the shrimp, cooking and serving them. She met her husband at this job; he was the cashier. Desperately seeking a better source of income, they decided to come to the United States where they believed they could find better work. They asked the client's mother for a loan and with their savings came up with two thousand dollars for the trip crossing to the United States. They arrived at Nogales, Sonora, Mexico and from there they went on to Altar, Sonora, Mexico where they hired a coyote who charged them \$750 per person to take them across the border to Tucson, Arizona. The coyote told them to bring enough water and food for a two-day journey; in reality it was a six-day trip. The group they traveled with included women, men and children. They walked during the night, and rested during the day. The women and children walked at the front and the coyote and the men walked behind them. The client says that she was fearful of the Migra (immigration) officers patrolling the desert searching for undocumented immigrants as well as snakes, scorpions and spiders. As they walked along she could hear noises on either side of their group. In one night time incident a helicopter flew overhead with searchlights and the whole group panicked, running in different directions. She was able to find her husband when he accidentally fell over her, and they both fell over a cactus plant. They remained there for at least twenty minutes until the helicopter flew away. They regrouped again with exception of one young girl that was never found.

Client went on to tell that once they established in Phoenix Arizona, she became pregnant with her first baby, a son now four years of age. She remained at home while her husband worked in a nearby food store as a helper. Then her next son was born, who is now two years of age. About a year ago she found that her husband was unfaithful to her; when she told him she knew about his affair with the other woman his response was “I don’t love you anymore”. When she begged him to stay for their children, his response was that it was better for her and the children to return to Chiapas. She slapped him in the face and told him to leave the house, which he did. Since then she has been the responsible party of the house. She came to St. Vincent de Paul with the sole intention to volunteer herself. When this researcher asked her why she was volunteering, she described that it was better than being alone at home.

Case # 5

At the end of January/10 I arranged an interview with one female client and her husband. This client is 36 years of age and her husband is 40 years of age; they both live with their only son who is seventeen years of age. This couple has been clients of St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Ministries since April/09.

This family came from Leon, Guanajuato about 7 years ago. The whole family came together with a legal visa; unfortunately this visa expired two years after they had been in the United States. Before coming to the United States, client’s husband was very reluctant to leave Mexico, his main argument, according to the client was that he had a job in which he was happy and

progressing, he started cleaning a mechanic shop, but he learned quickly, the basics of mechanics and he was promoted to assistant mechanic, and couple of years later he became a full mechanic, his aspirations according to the client was to own a mechanic shop.

According to client almost all her primary family as well of her husband have had immigrated into the United States. For instance her father made several trips to the “north,” mainly to Alaska and to California. She remembers her father would go early in the year and come back at the end of summer, whenever his father came, it was a big event, mainly because he brought a lot of money, he also brought gifts for her and her siblings; it almost looked like Christmas. She continued saying that it was bigger than Christmas, all her family got together, and her mom made a huge party, in which many people were invited, for instance, the priest, the major and some other important people. My father was not the only one who came back; there were other men who returned to their families and other parties.

Client stated that she understands now that her town grew from being a modest pueblo to a progressive city, mainly due to the men that immigrated to the United States and brought money to her town. She remembers that back then, being illegal was not an issue, my dad crossed many times and he never was neither detained nor deported. My dad, the client states, is now retired, with the money he saved from his trips to the United States, he was able to buy a small

farm and he invested money in a tortilla factory. Client stated that she believes her father made the “American dream.”

According to client that is the reason why many young people come to the United States, is almost something that you have to do; it is a tradition, but she realizes now it is different. For instance, now it has become dangerous and inhumane. Client mentioned that she was happy that she crossed the border legally and that she and her family did not suffer the painful consequences of crossing illegally through the desert.

Two years before embarking to the United States, both client and her husband started planning their trip; according to client they had enough money to allow them settle in the United States for at least a year, and they thought Los Angeles as their first choice. Her father convinced them, that California is one of the most expensive states in the United States. After more research, they decided on Phoenix, Arizona, since a couple of their friends immigrated to this place, and according to the news everyone coming was successful. Client stated that their intention was a 10 year plan, and the idea was for both to work, and save as much money as possible so that when they returned, her husband could open a mechanic shop, and client could open a beauty salon. Also, it was a good time to come back because their son will be teenager and he will be able to grow up in Mexico.

Client stated that when they got to Phoenix, Arizona, about seven years ago, the political climate was different; it was more welcoming to immigrants in general, documented or undocumented. Also the financial situation was more

successful; she remembers that it was fairly easy to get fake documents and to buy a house and a car. Also, it was extremely easy to get jobs. In the recent years of settling in the United States they both were working, according to client they had enough money to pay a friend to help child-caring her son meanwhile both she and her husband were working. Today the story is different; according to her it has become painful and frustrating, and it is almost impossible to succeed in the United States if you don't have legal papers.

In the last three years their story change dramatically, both lost their jobs, according to her, employers were only looking for legal workers, therefore through networks both the client and her husband were able to work in a carwash near St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix. Unfortunately the carwash was raided by the Sheriff department; however both were not there that day. As in a previous case the sheriff deputies didn't only detain the undocumented immigrants there but also took computer and human resources files from this business. Since the raid both of them have been without a steady job. The client, fearing that the sheriff's deputies will find her name and address, has recently moved with her family to another apartment and has suffered extreme stress as has her husband and her son. This family was then referred to St. Vincent de Paul by a local immigration law firm. The client and her husband have since been working in different jobs. For instance, she is cleaning houses and taking care of friends' children. Her husband is a skilled mechanic and has been able to fix some of his friends' automobiles,

and he also helped at a mechanic's near his house. Their son is currently attending a nearby high school and helps his mother with her cleaning.

Recently the father had an accident playing soccer and broke his left arm. He was able to go to an emergency room and get help, but he hasn't been able to follow up with the doctor's recommendations and prescriptions; he has mentioned that he is constantly in pain and has headaches.

Their son is an excellent student (A+) and seems to have a high level of maturity for his young age. He makes comments such as "hopefully my family situation will change so that my mother and father don't have so much stress on their shoulders" and "I hope all the undocumented children which get separated from their parents will soon be back together." He is also a regular volunteer in the Special Ministries in which he interacts with homeless people, working poor families and undocumented people from diverse countries. When I observed him, this youth gives me the impression that he really likes volunteering and helping other people. At times he has asked if I could hire him. Once I've asked him if he were bothered by being called "illegal" and his response was that he in fact is here without documents and that perhaps he is illegal, but that he believes he has done nothing wrong coming to the United States with his parents. This youth has never had problems with the law, he is an exceptional student and he helps support his household financially and emotionally. He also has helped me with the children's program in St. Vincent de Paul by mentoring some of the children with life skills.

The mother registered in the program as the primary client; she was also the one who requested help with specific needs such as their rent and utilities. They also got into our opportunity program in which they both were enrolled in English and computer classes. They gained access to the Internet and were able to send and receive email from their family back in Mexico. Also both were able to search for job opportunities through the Internet. In addition they both are able to socialize with the other participants of the immigration program in St. Vincent de Paul.

Case # 6

At the end of February/10 I arranged an interview with one female client and her daughter who is also a client. This client is 45 years of age and her daughter is 21 years of age; they both have children. Mother has three other children; a 17 year old girl, a 12 year old boy and a 9 year old boy. The daughter has a one year old boy. Both women are single, both victims of domestic abuse, and both live in a house that rents rooms. Mother rents two rooms and one bathroom for herself and her three children and pays \$200.00 per room. The daughter shares the restroom with her mother and her siblings and she pays \$150.00 for her room. Both of them work cleaning houses and office buildings. The mother and her daughter are unauthorized immigrants; the mother's younger kids are US citizens as is the daughter's baby.

Both clients came to St. Vincent de Paul with the hope to get financial help for their respective rent and utility bills. Also both wanted to have a medical

evaluation; the daughter had been complaining about finding some swelling in her breast. The mother has been complaining about arthritis in her hands and her back. Both of them have had their job hours reduced. Moreover both are highly concerned about sheriff department raids.

Both were well dressed; both of them have fair skin and hazel eyes. They were courteous but direct; neither wished to take either English and/or computer classes, they were only interested in the financial and medical help, and did not ask for any other services.

The mother and her daughter came from Mexico City, about 17 years ago. They came together with a legal visa; unfortunately this visa expired two years after they had been in the United States. Before coming to the United States the client used to live close to downtown in Mexico City, she used to work in a nearby hospital as a clerk. According to client she did not make much money, but it was enough to pay for the bills. She was also attending a night school to become a nurse. At the time she got pregnant and many of her dreams stopped. For instance she got fired from the hospital and because she did not have income, she could not pay her nursing school. After meditating her alternatives she decided it was best to try her luck in the United States. Client was able to get a visa for herself and her child so she was able to legally enter into the United States.

Like most of undocumented immigrants that had been living in the United States for a long time, at the beginning, more than fifteen years ago, the ambience

was totally different. According to her there was no need to adjust to a legal status, because there were not so many laws against undocumented immigrants. Today, client states, not only can you not get a job, people also become criminals just for being illegally in the United States. Client never thought that the situation would get so difficult; she never thought that she would feel so scared of the police. It is almost like a “bad dream” client said. Their chances of becoming successful in the United States are almost impossible; the client states undocumented immigrants don’t have opportunities as the rest of the population and therefore they will always be oppressed.

Recently client lost a job in a factory; she used to work in the assembly line making tools for construction. She was making a bit more than the minimum wage, but she had benefits for herself and her children. She lost her only income to pay the bills, so for a time client and her family struggled and they lived in a family shelter. According to client she never thought she would have to endure that situation. Client remembers that they went through moments in which only her spirituality saved her. Client feels that she has learned much, but still there is much to do and learn, her greatest concerns are her younger children and her grandchildren.

This family was recently referred to St. Vincent de Paul by a parochial Catholic church. The mother and her daughter work as a team cleaning various offices and houses. Meanwhile all the rest of the children go to school. The mother’s other daughter has been using drugs, but she has never been caught and

put on probation; she has escalated from marijuana use to stronger drugs such as cocaine and meth. She is currently going to a local agency for treatment and counseling. Mother is concerned that her daughter is also sexually active, since she has a boyfriend with whom she spends much of her time without any supervision. The mother is buying her daughter contraceptives; as stated by the mother, this is “just in case.” I’ve observed the second daughter; she has an Ipod that she listens to. When I asked the type of music she likes, she mentioned several types, except Mexican music; she commented that she hated such music. Also, I found that this girl is artistic and she likes to hand stitch and also makes handcrafted ornaments. I asked her if she were planning to go to college; she told me she would like to go into the army and go overseas.

The mother never explained where the father of the children was, and seemed bothered when I asked her about the father. Her only comment was that there were different men in her life and that the kids including her oldest daughter had different fathers.

Both clients participated in the financial literacy program, and both participated in the women’s circle. This is a program that helps women that are victims of domestic abuse. Recently client had in mind to open her own business by bringing merchandise from Mexico, her philosophy is simple but realistic, “if they won’t hire me or my daughter because of our immigration situation, we’ll hire ourselves.” Her dilemma is to find financial resources to start her own business. She also commented that this solution came out of the financial classes

she is taking at St. Vincent de Paul, where she was encouraged by the teacher/mentor to become independent and to look for a loan in a bank. The problem as stated by the client is because she does not have a legal status that disqualifies her from asking money in any financial institution. Client thinks that her best opportunity is to request a loan from relatives in Mexico, and also a start up financial loan from factories in Mexico.

Client's older daughter is convinced that her mother's idea of creating a business a very risky idea, because that they don't have money and don't understand how the market is in the United States. She stated that it was better, to look for jobs where they really need people like us. She declared that she is willing to start working in farms where there is always work. She does understand that her mother maybe too old to be working in the fields picking up, or seeding fruit and vegetables, but she goes on telling that maybe a better solution than playing with money that is not ours.

Client feels like a solution has to come soon, or her life and her families will start deteriorating. She feels that she has the responsibility of her family's well being. Client feels strongly that as the head of a household, and because there are no men in her life that will take care of her and her children, she stated that she has had assumed that responsibility. She finalizes by saying back in Mexico, it will be hard for me to do a men's job, but here in the United States not only you have to do it, it almost seems you are obligated.

Case # 7

At the beginning of March/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is 33 years of age; she lives with her mother and her three kids. This client was born in Hermosillo, Sonora; she came to the United States approximately five years ago.

Client told me how she came into the United States: first, her mother immigrated in the early 1960s and she was able to become a US citizen in a farmers (bracero) program. Then the mother returned to Mexico where she had her daughter (the client) and another two kids. The mother's husband passed away ten years ago and when she became ill, the client began taking care of her. At this time the client was married and having children.

The client then immigrated to the United States after she divorced the father of her children seven years ago; moreover, she could not find work in Mexico. The client, knowing that her mother was a US citizen decided to try her luck coming into the United States in search for a better life. The client's mother entered the country first, crossing legally at the border at Nogales (Arizona-Mexico). The client and her children were smuggled into the United States a couple of months after her mother came. Client arranged with a coyote who charged her and her children \$1000 USD. She gave him \$500.00 in Altar, Sonora, and then once in the United States, she gave the other \$500.00 USD to the coyote. Money was not an issue, the clients stated; it was the concern of crossing illegally into the United States, she was concerned about her own well being and the children's well-being, the client declared. Furthermore she went on to say that she

was concerned of being sexually molested (raped), or that one of her children may be abducted or something worst. Nothing happened and they came into the United States in good condition. Client declares that she knows this their safe passage was not the same for many people who have crossed the dessert, especially women who were raped and subjected to violent acts.

The description of this family is the following: the client's mother is in her late seventies; the client's oldest son is fourteen years of age, her middle son is twelve years of age and her youngest son is nine years of age. All of them live together in a two bedroom apartment in south Phoenix. The client's mother uses one bedroom and the client and her youngest son use the second bedroom, the other two boys sleep in the living room. The client and her mother do not know how to speak English, but the kids are fluent in both Spanish and English. The client is 6 feet tall and has a strong appearance; she has worked in construction sites and at warehouse jobs and she seems to like physical labor. The impression that I got when I met the client is that she was not a physically conventional Mexican woman who are usually around 5 feet tall and do not like working at such jobs. Even though the client likes working in such physical jobs, she still experiences a lot of problems created by her lack of fluency in English. She did not finish grade school, and she frequently says that "school was not her thing". She has problems when attempting to help her kids with their school homework and the kids often make fun of her. One time her oldest son called her in Spanish *analfabeta* (analphabet) which in Mexico refers to people who do not know the

alphabet. The client became upset and depressed. Client believes that perhaps the reason she is successful in those jobs involving physical labor is that she has never applied for jobs requiring skills that she should have gained in grade school.

The client has attempted to pursue a legalization path in the United States through her mother's citizenship, but she has been unsuccessful due to previous criminal charges involving DUI and drug abuse, charges that she denies categorically. However, client states that in the DUI charges she had been drinking but that she was not drunk. For the drug abuse charges she stated that even though the drugs were in her car they belonged to her ex-boyfriend. The law firm that represented her before immigration authorities referred her to St. Vincent de Paul to get financial assistance and to take English classes. The law firm also referred this client to another agency for emotional support and counseling.

The family displays a good demeanor; the children respect their mother and the client's relationship with her children is cordial. She has mentioned that she is preparing her children for the worst scenario; meaning that if she gets deported to Mexico, they will need to survive by themselves in the United States. Just like in previous cases, the client's oldest son is also driving without a driver's license; client states that he needs to drive in order to pick up her younger children from school. This boy also works at a nearby convenience store as a janitor.

The client's mother helps her by taking care of the children when client is working or out of the house; she cooks, cleans and washes the clothes, helping the client a great deal.

The client's mother is concerned about the friends of her oldest grandson. She doesn't think his friends are a good influence on his good health and behavior. She gets extremely upset when she sees her grandson drinking and/or smoking. The kid has stated that he does not drink often, but he admits he smokes regularly and has a girlfriend with whom he is sexually active. From the mother's view her son is behaving like a normal boy-teenager, and she actually sees her son as more mature than she is.

Just like in a previous case and because client was able to take a financial workshop at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, client admitted that she has it in her mind to open her own business, "painting houses and businesses" she declared. Her philosophy is simple but realistic just like in the previous case, "if they won't hire me because of my immigration situation, I will create my own business." Her dilemma as the previous case is to find financial resources to start her own business. Client thinks that this is great idea since she has extensive experience in painting; she also knows exactly what she needs, and how to start a small business. Client jokes "I know how to manage men." She believes if she starts her own business, her children will get involved and the business will be a family business, client declared.

As in the previous case the client's mother is convinced that her daughter's idea of creating a business a very risky idea, but in contrast with the previous case in which money was the issue, in this case client's mother is more concerned about her daughter's gender role, stating "business are for men;" and "why don't you marry with a gringo, it will be easier for you." Client gets offended by her mother's reaction and believes she thinks that way because she is old.

Client knows that she needs to do something soon; she also knows that she is head of the household and that the well-being of her children, her mother and herself are her responsibility. Client stated that she just can't believe how American people see them (undocumented immigrants) as criminals, and asks herself the following reflective questions: "Why would they think that?"; "What had we done wrong to be treated like this?" ; and "Why blame children for something they do not have responsibility for?"

Case # 8

At the beginning of March/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is 38 years of age; she lives with her mother and her two kids. This client was born in Hermosillo, Sonora; she came to the United States approximately twenty years ago. Both the client and her mother are in the United States without legal papers. The client's children are both US citizens. The client immigrated to the United States when her father brought her, her mother and her other siblings to Phoenix AZ. They all initially crossed into the United States with

a tourist visa, which expired many years ago. Other family members have returned to Mexico, but she and her mother stayed in the country.

Even though the client has lived many years in the United States she is not fully able to talk and write in English. She was able to get her GED but was unable to enroll in a community college because client needed to work. Client got married a year after she came into the United States. Her husband was physically and emotionally abusive to her since the beginning of the marriage, but she stayed in this relationship for almost 10 years until one day she finally decided to leave. This happened quite suddenly. The following is what she described happened: her husband in a jealous rage falsely accused her of having an affair, and attempted to beat her. She told him that she was going to call the police and that she wanted out of the marriage. To appease her he told her that he was leaving and he went upstairs to get some personal belongings. He then took her dentures and left. Away from her, he self inflicted, by means of her dentures, bite marks in his arm. He also self-inflicted stab wounds and then called the police, falsely accusing her of such acts. Although the police investigated this matter they did not formally charge her; however she developed some type of criminal record and hasn't been able to successfully apply for legal residency in the country.

The client was involved in another relationship in which the boyfriend did not abuse her, but he did defraud her. They both bought a house under the client's name; it had a huge mortgage, but they intended to get married and live in the house. When the interest rate went up, instead of paying \$1,000 per month they

had to pay close to \$3,000 per month. Since neither of them had that much money, he abandoned her and the house went into foreclosure, affecting her emotionally and financially. Client since then has gained some weight and even though she has not gained that much weight; she has developed some feelings of low self esteem. Despite these problems client is an excellent mother; she is constantly saying that her time with her kids is “sacred” and that they are the most important source of motivation in her life. She has not lost the idea that eventually she will find the right man.

Financially client works two jobs, and makes enough to pay her bills and enjoy some luxuries such as going to a hair salon; she also has manicures and pedicures, and she is trying to enroll in a nearby gym. All of this seems to be an effort on her part to feel better about herself by making an attractive appearance. She came to St. Vincent de Paul after being referred by a friend who works in this agency. She has enrolled in the English and computer classes; she is planning on improving her skills in reading and writing English. She is often stating that she would love to attend college and become a nurse and also help women that have endured domestic abuse.

Recently client has become interested in going back to school; she feels that she is still young and that school is something important. She thinks that going to a community college nearby her house and taking night-classes and online-classes will help her not only in bringing her more knowledge, but confirms that she is smart enough to do something with her life. She would like to

major in social work, she said that her calling is helping other people, but she has never had actual experience on this. Coming to St. Vincent de Paul was an eye opener for her. According to client, she was able to notice the homeless people, and she was alarmed when she saw young women and children being beggars outside the shelter, according to her several thoughts came into her mind: first, what if she and her children become homeless, what would they do in order to survive; second, she knew she was not in that horrible of a situation; she always got food on her table, and a bed to sleep in. But nevertheless, those thoughts worried her to the level that she wanted to do something to alleviate people's suffering.

Client has been interested in volunteering, but due to her heavy work schedule it is impossible for her at this moment, client was advised, to volunteer from her house, by washing children's clothes and also fixing them. Client has stated that this brings some comfort to her anxiety, regarding homeless children.

Client's daughter is 16 years of age; she is enrolled in the neighborhood high school as a junior. The girl has good grades and is bi-lingual; she also plays varsity basketball and softball. This girl does not have a boyfriend but does have a lot of friends, and considers herself to be popular in school. The client is very involved in her daughter's life. The client attends all of her daughter's games and then takes her daughter and her friends for dinner. The client talks often to her daughter about sex and pregnancy and recently she talked to her about abusive

relationships. The girl works in the summer and is saving her money to buy a car. She also aspires to become a medical doctor.

The client's youngest son is fifteen years of age and he is a freshman in the same high school as his sister. His grades are not as good as his sister's but nevertheless they are passing grades. He likes playing baseball and soccer. He is also very close to his mother and sometimes when he is scared at night still sleeps with his mother. The client's biggest concern about her son's life is that his friends all have good moral values. She also is concerned about drugs and alcohol and she smells her son's clothes before washing them to check for evidence. She is constantly observing his behavior. So far she is proud of both her children.

Case # 9

At the end of March/10 I arranged an interview with one female client. This client is 40 years of age; she lives with her two oldest kids. This client was born in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico and she came to the United States approximately fifteen years ago. The client has four children and all of them are US citizens. The client immigrated to the United States with her husband. Originally she crossed the border legally with her husband and they both went to live to Chicago, Illinois. Her husband is a mechanic by profession and he found a job in which he made enough money so that the client did not need to work. She became pregnant two years after they arrived in Chicago. At the beginning her husband treated her with respect and he came straight from work to the house, but

he changed when some old friends from his native town became associates of his and embroiled him in illegal activities, specifically drug-dealing.

At the beginning she did not know what he was doing, but she noticed that he was always carrying large amounts of cash, he became very secretive, and that he would leave late in the morning and return very late or not come home at all. His behavior changed progressively; he started by yelling and pushing her around and later became very violent and aggressive toward their children. He started smoking marijuana in the house and drinking almost every day; but she was most concerned that her husband was carrying a gun in the house. Some times when he was drunk, he would clean his pistol and then go to sleep, forgetting his gun on the dining table, to which the children had easy access

Recently the entire family returned to Mexico when her husband found that he had a warrant for his arrest. Once in Mexico her husband's behavior worsened and he almost killed her one time. She asked him for a divorce, and then he became obsessed and paranoid at the idea of her leaving him. She was able to escape and took her two older children with her but had to leave her two younger children behind because she knew that returning illegally to the United States would be dangerous for them.

The client and her older children were smuggled back into the United States. Once in the States she was contacted by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regarding her husband. At this time she is cooperating with this agency and

through them she was able to relocate in Phoenix, AZ. She is now in a shelter for women and their children who are victims of domestic abuse. Client came to St. Vincent de Paul with the desire of learning English and taking computer classes. She also has enrolled in a relaxation class that helps alleviate the stress that she endures through the day, especially the pain of not knowing the whereabouts of and how her younger children are doing. She often states “I hope my children are not sick;” and “I hope my children are eating healthy food.”

In the shelter her routine is pretty systematic: she wakes up, eats breakfast and gets her kids ready for school. Then she concentrates on taking several classes offered at the shelter related to domestic abuse and self esteem. The client is also able to see a doctor and was referred to an immigration law firm, who is helping her in applying for a special visa for women who endure domestic abuse in the United States, if granted then she will have a path for becoming a lawful permanent resident.

The client was able to get a divorce in the United States and full custody of all her four children. At the moment the federal government is also trying to find the two younger children in order to reunite them with their mother. This client has many fears and needs. She is very fearful that her ex-husband will hurt her children in revenge. She is also fearful that she won't get her visa and then will have to return to Mexico. Finally she is fearful that she will never see her younger children again. The client especially needs psychological help. When she

deals with her guilt of leaving her children behind, she is constantly tormented with the idea that it was her fault that his happened to her children.

Client's first goal is the return of her children; her second goal is, according to her, to become a legal resident of the United States. Finally her last goal is to become financially stable; client does not want to stay much longer in the shelter, nor does she want to depend on the government to help her and her children. Client believes that she has strength to do child-care or elderly care; she also feels that working as a kitchen aid would be something that she could effectively do. Back in Mexico, the client declares, she was running a small grocery-store; here in Phoenix they are called "carnicerias." She was in charge of two employees and the administration of the business. Interacting with people is something that she likes to do, and working in a legal job that will bring financial resources to herself and her children, is really important to her.

At the moment, she is volunteering in the shelter in which she stays, by helping to cook for the clients, and also assisting in cleaning the facility. Client does not have many friends at the shelter, but she feels a lot of sympathy for all the women there. She has, according to the client, a good friend who lives in California and she has known her since they were teenagers and met in high school. She often talks to her on the phone, and recently her friend invited her to move in with her and her daughter. This friend was able to get her legal residency and since her husband passed away two years ago the friend is living with her

daughter only. Client is thinking that moving to California may be a solution to her problems.

Appendix B

IRB Approval



To: John Johnson
WILSN

fr **From:** Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 11/16/2010

Committee Action: Expedited Approval

Approval Date: 11/16/2010

Review Type: Expedited F7

IRB Protocol #: 1010005664

Study Title: Contesting criminality: Undocumented families and their effort for a legalization path in the United States

Expiration Date: 11/15/2011

The above-referenced protocol was approved following expedited review by the Institutional Review Board.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.