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# The Fear Factor: Exploring the Impact of the Vulnerability to Deportation on Immigrants' Lives

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THE FEAR FACTOR: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE VULNERABILITY TO  
DEPORTATION ON IMMIGRANTS' LIVES

by

SHIRLEY PRISCILLA LEYRO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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by

Shirley Priscilla Leyro

This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## ABSTRACT

The Fear Factor: Exploring the Impact of the Vulnerability to Deportation on Immigrants' Lives

by

Shirley Priscilla Leyro

Advisor: David C. Brotherton

This qualitative study explores the impact that the fear of deportation has on the lives of noncitizen immigrants. More broadly, it explores the role that immigration enforcement, specifically deportation, plays in disrupting the process of integration, and the possible implications of this interruption for immigrants and their communities. The study aims to answer: (1) how vulnerability to deportation specifically impacts an immigrant's life, and (2) how the vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, impacts an immigrant's degree of integration. Data were gathered through a combination of six open-ended focus group interviews of 10 persons each, and 33 individual in-depth interviews, all with noncitizen immigrants. The findings reveal several ways in which the vulnerability to deportation impacted noncitizen immigrants' lives: the fear of deportation produces emotional and psychological distress, which leads immigrants to have negative perceptions of reception into the United States, all which create barriers to integration. In addition, the findings reveal that the fear of deportation and the resulting psychological distress constitutes a form of legal violence. Legal violence is an emerging framework by Menjívar & Abrego (2012) that builds upon structural and symbolic violence, and refers to state-sanctioned harm perpetuated against immigrants via harsh immigration laws. The fear of deportation, combined with the structural reality of legal violence, creates an environment that impedes integration. The effect of deportability on immigrants' lives is of interest on the level of both individual integration and community cohesion.

## PREFACE

I originally conceived this project as an exploration of the role that the fear of deportation plays in creating social disorganization. Specifically, I wanted to know whether deportation as a form of immigration control, and the fear that results from the vulnerability to deportation, might play a more causal role in the formation of social disorganization.

As an undergraduate student I was introduced to social disorganization theory and the premise that community newcomers – particularly immigrants – contributed to a decrease in community social control, which eventually led to increased crime rates (Shaw & McKay, 1942). In the spirit of the Chicago School, Shaw and McKay (1942) sought to explain some of the contemporary changes found in urban spaces, particularly in neighborhoods. They built upon Ernest Burgess's (1925) work on how cities develop through the growth of neighborhoods, and were primarily aimed at explaining how a community loses its ability to achieve common goals, self-regulate, and exert social control. Through social disorganization theory they explained how informal social networks, such as friendship ties and formal networks, along with participation in local organizations, are disrupted and weakened, reducing social control and producing low social cohesion (Kornhauser, 1978; Sampson & Groves, 1989). Social disorganization theory, as originally proposed, posited that three structural factors (poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility, also called residential turnover) led to a breakdown in social cohesion and integration. The resulting loss of social control and self-regulation produced social disorganization and led to increased delinquency and crime rates (Bursik, 1988).

Social disorganization, however, was not conceived as a linear process. Rather, Shaw and McKay suggested that immigration became an implicitly central force in the structural factors

that caused the disruptions that create social disorganization – namely, residential mobility (turnover) and ethnic heterogeneity. Residential turnover, which may result from the flight of established residents in response to an influx of newcomers – including immigrants – throws a community into a state of change. It is during this stage that new residents find it difficult to form community ties, impeding the process of integration and the formation of sustainable social networks. In addition, ethnic heterogeneity – the factor most directly associated with immigration – was thought to reduce communication and a sense of shared interest, promoting the adoption of a conflicting cultural value system (Berry & Kasada, 1977; Bursik 1988; Kornhauser, 1978). Finally, economic disadvantage, though it does not directly affect social integration and cohesion, is thought to be more common in areas with high residential turnover and ethnic heterogeneity. Subsequent scholarship has expanded Shaw and McKay’s explanation of these possible mechanisms by including family disruption and urbanization (Sampson, 1987).

Other criminological theories also linked immigration and crime: cultural deviance theories imply a connection between immigration and crime by positing that crime results from the disjunction between the value system of a subculture and that of the dominant culture (Sellin, 1938); whereas social structure theories focus on the economically deprived and their criminogenic coping mechanisms (Merton, 1938). Immigrants were folded into this latter segment of the population as they were seen to experience blocked opportunities that affected their social mobility (Lee & Martinez, 2009). Although all these theories conceive a link between immigration and crime, social disorganization has remained the dominant theory used to describe and explain this association; the theory is still identified as relevant and is widely used to explain community-level crime rates (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Steenbeek & Hipp, 2011).

During my graduate studies, however, I became aware of the increasing number of studies refuting the previously conceived immigration and crime link summed up by Lee and Martinez (2009), who state, “the fact that immigrants were generally underrepresented in crime for 100 years suggested to us that the theories might have it wrong” (p. 5). In general, over the past two decades, there has been an increase in scholarship that has challenged traditional assumptions about immigration and crime. For example, Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld (2001) in their study of immigration and homicide rates in El Paso, Miami, and San Diego, found that crime rates did not increase with immigration. In fact, their research revealed that immigration actually had suppressed homicide rates. Further, Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush (2005), in their examination of 180 Chicago neighborhoods from 1995 to 2003, concluded that increased immigration was significantly associated with lower crime rates. Overall, a host of studies have consistently found that immigration does not increase crime and that these earlier claims of the immigration-crime nexus need to be seriously revisited (see, *inter alia*, Davies & Fagan, 2012; Ewing, Martinez, & Rumbaut, 2015; Feldmeyer, 2009; Hagan & Palloni, 1998;, 1999; Kubrin & Ousey, 2009; Lee & Martinez, 2002; Martinez, 2002; Reid, et al., 2005; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Sampson, 2008; Stowell, et al., 2009; Thomas, 2011; Velez, 2009).

Scholarship in criminology has continued to challenge early assumptions about immigration and crime by indicating that immigration has a negative relationship with violent crime at both the neighborhood and city levels (Davies & Fagan, 2012; Martinez, Stowell & Lee, 2010; Sampson, 2008; Wadsworth, 2010). In the context of Cuban and Haitian refugees’ assimilation into Miami, Portes and Stepick (1993) found that rather than contributing to disorganization, immigration actually stabilized and revitalized communities. In 2002, Lee and Martinez termed this critical movement the “immigration revitalization perspective” (p. 365).



The immigrant revitalization perspective fundamentally refutes the fundamental tenets of social disorganization by suggesting that immigration fosters network ties and relationships, as well as integration in communities; both of which counteract social disorganization and actually reduce, rather than increase, crime. Studies by Lee, Martinez, and others, proposed that immigrants in fact insulate the neighborhoods where they live from crime. The primary reason for this effect is that first-generation immigrants arrive with non-criminal aspirations to achieve success, prosperity, security, and safety (Kau & Tienda, 1995; Stowell, 2007; Tonry, 1997). Although they don't address the revitalization perspective directly, Sampson and Bean (2006) support this finding by suggesting that the "broad reduction of violence in the United States over the last decade was due in part to increasing diversity and immigration" (p. 21). Subsequently, scholars clearly determined that the blame immigrants had been receiving was misplaced. For example, criminal activity among second- and third-generation immigrants is actually attributable to U.S. culture, because as the children of immigrants acculturate they acquire the material expectations of the host society, which, in turn, sometimes leads to engaging in crime to achieve them (MacDonald & Saunders, 2012).

Outside of the field of criminology, social science research on the immigrant experience has consistently found that immigration actually contributes to community stability. For instance, neighborhoods with high numbers of immigrants have been found to be highly cohesive and integrated. Communities with high numbers of immigrants – also known as ethnic enclaves – have strong levels of social network connections that afford economic opportunities through employment and entrepreneurship unavailable to immigrants outside of these communities. This ability to utilize and benefit from these relationships is referred to as *social capital* (Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Velez, 2009). Carter and Sutch (1999) concluded that, "the

impact of immigration on economic growth and on the economic welfare of the resident population appears to have been profoundly positive” (pp. 333-334). In general, immigrant relationships are formed within social networks made up of close familial connections, as well as ties with communities, organizations, and institutions, such as churches and schools (Poros, 2011; Velez, 2009). Immigrants also tend to develop strong ties to existing community residents, supporting the principles of social-contact theory, which suggest that prejudice decreases and strong social ties promote greater acceptance of newcomers by longer-settled immigrants and native-born residents (Andrews, 2011). Research supports that the positive effect of immigration continues into the second generation, exemplified by upward mobility, as this generation continues to contribute to American society (Brown, 2007; Kasinitz, 2008; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Rumbaut, 2005; Rumbaut et al., 2003; Zhou et al., 2008).

Consequently, the consistency of these findings caused me to wonder if the mechanisms that lead to social disorganization originate from factors other than those that are traditionally cited. Contemporary social science research suggests that the basis of any positive correlation between immigration and crime is related to the lack of social capital and integration, including cohesion, ethnic solidarity, and social control, and is not due to the cultural background of new immigrants. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) identified how social capital leads to *enforceable trust*, which is defined as a type of social capital where compliance to a collective effort is motivated by the expectation of a group reward. Such trust deters crime because it is a process whereby “highly connected social networks lower the costs of monitoring members’ behavior and amplify reputational costs of deviance from norms, thereby helping to regulate crime levels” (Graif & Sampson, 2009, p. 244). Immigration also contributes to collective efficacy, which is defined as “the linkage of mutual trust and shared willingness to intervene for the public good

that captures the neighborhood context” (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002, p. 457). In addition, family stability is characteristic of immigrant communities, as immigrants are more likely to have intact families and “pro-family cultural orientations,” thus negating one of the key factors seen as promoting social disorganization and increased crime: family disruption (Ousey & Kubrin, 2009). In sum, there is plentiful and ongoing research indicating that immigration has a positive effect on communities.

Deportation, in contrast, disrupts families and causes emotional and psychological strain on the family members left behind (Arias, 2013; Brotherton & Barrios, 2011; Lonegan, 2007; Mendoza & Olivas, 2009; University of California Berkeley School of Law, 2010; Zayas, 2015). Despite the growing scholarship refuting the link between immigration and crime, deportation rates have risen steadily in recent years, and the rhetoric surrounding deportation continues to unfairly criminalize immigrants. Politically, the perception of the criminogenic nature of immigrants has been used to justify immigration control (Brimelow, 1995; Schnapp, 2014).

In sum, the recent historically unprecedented deportation rates, despite research refuting the negative effects of immigration, created the impetus for this study into the exploration of other causal mechanisms of social disorganization. It is worthwhile to explore whether the lack of self-regulation and social cohesion in immigrant neighborhoods is in fact conditioned by immigration enforcement, especially deportation.

Deportation does, at times, cause family disruption as sometimes the person removed is a parent. In addition, the residential mobility and instability that lead to structural dysfunction can be found in communities where the threat of deportation is ongoing, in that immigrants may feel compelled to relocate or may feel distrustful and fearful if they stay. Fear and distrust tend to exist in environments that are consistently threatening (Adler & Ostrove, 1999). Perhaps, instead

of immigration and cultural variability, it is immigration *control* that produces conditions fostering social disorganization and heightened crime. Pursuing this line of inquiry would entail finding a way of examining whether and how deportation causes the disruptions conducive to social disorganization. Any such exploration would have to begin by documenting the existence of fear of deportation, and the impact this fear has on those factors that foster cohesive communities.

To date, social science research has supported that deportation, and the fear it instills, disrupts the mechanisms that revitalize immigrant communities. Evidence suggests that, at the local level, anti-immigrant policies negatively impact families, cause immigrants to avoid public places, and foment a distrust of law enforcement (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Hagan, Castro, & Rodriguez, 2010, 2011; Provine, Varsanyi, Lewis, & Decker, 2016). In fact, several recent studies have found that immigration enforcement and deportability leads to increased stress on the undocumented; other studies found such evidence specifically within the Mexican immigrant population (Arbona et al., 2010; Ayón & Becerra 2013; Ayón, Gurrola, Salas, Androff, & Krysik, 2012; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007; Hardy et al., 2012; Salas, Ayón, & Gurrola, 2013). In addition, immigration enforcement generates an increase in the “pervasive fear (of police surveillance, family separation, deportation, etc.)” (Szkupinsky-Quiroga, Medina, & Glick, 2014, p. 1725). This fear can cause a breakdown in social capital and cohesion, as well as promote a sense of distrust and weaken the family and social ties that are foundational to community integration and stability (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Moreover, fear of deportation deters immigrants from reporting their own victimization. This reluctance to report crime leaves immigrants vulnerable to increased victimization (Theodore, 2013).

The aforementioned studies discovered the presence of fear while exploring a different

facet of the immigrant experience. However if immigration contributes to neighborhood stability via the formation of those ties associated with successful integration, and fear has been shown to disrupt those mechanisms that lead to incorporation, then a next step would be to explore the fear of deportation specifically and the role it plays in disrupting the process of integration. Such an exploration might find a link between the fear of deportation and the disruption of factors that prevent social disorganization. In this sense, it is not immigration itself, but rather immigration control, via deportation, that can have the unintended consequence of constraining social interaction and undermining social solidarity and cohesiveness, which can provoke social disorganization.

Thus, the current study explores what effect the fear of deportation may have on the very thing immigration enforcement seeks to protect: viable communities. I hypothesize that vulnerability to deportation and the fear resulting from it disrupts the lives of the “deportable” population with implications for the integration and incorporation of the entire immigrant community. Such an exploration contributes to the growing research debunking the immigration-crime link. This dissertation is a preliminary step that contributes one piece to the process of investigating other possible mechanisms for social disorganization. Thus, my scholarship should be considered a work in progress.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my participants. Thank you for trusting me with your stories and experiences. I hope I do you justice.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*For us, the fear of deportation manifests in the sense that this is just not our country. ... We just don't view our presence here as permanent ... to get involved in certain movements or political activities or certain organizations about issues that affect us, you know.... We just don't get involved in those things because of this sense that you're not here to stay. (Amanda, personal interview, August 16, 2014)*

Over the last 20 years, the United States has adopted a “deportation regime,” and deportation has become the most prolific form of immigration control (De Genova, 2010). Increased governmental efforts aimed at ridding the United States of immigrants perceived as undesirable have augmented the scope and severity of immigration policies over the last two decades. The deportation regime has resulted in unprecedented deportations – over two and a half million during the Obama administration alone; the number of deportations during the fifteen-year period between 1997 and 2012 outnumbers the total of all deportations before 1997 (Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Social science scholars have taken note and there is continuing research exploring the detrimental role deportation plays in the lives of immigrants after removal, as well as for their children and families (Brotherton & Barrios, 2011; Coutin, 2015; Golash-Boza, 2015; Martín, 2012; Zayas, 2015). More research, however, is needed on the effects that actual *deportability* – that is, the vulnerability to deportation – has on the lives of immigrants. Existing literature has not yet fully explored the fear of deportation and its resulting consequences. Immigrants may have always been afraid of deportation, but the current state of mass deportations creates an

extreme environment that warrants further examination.

This is a qualitative study exploring the impact that fear of deportation has on the lives of noncitizen immigrants. In addition, I examine the role that deportation plays in disrupting the process of immigrant integration and the consequences of this interruption for immigrants and their communities. I suggest that an immigrant's deportability causes a culture of fear that affects the person's life socially, psychologically, and behaviorally in ways that disrupt integration.

In this study, the concept of integration consists of four major components: (i) the immigrants' path toward social acceptance, (ii) the social recognition that comes with being part of the larger community, (iii) the ability to become involved in major societal institutions such as the political system and the labor market, and (iv) the ability to achieve the same "life chances" as those of the native born (Alba & Foner, 2015, p. 5). Most immigration researchers associate successful integration with an immigrant's perceived upward mobility, as well as their capacity to contribute to *social cohesion*, which refers to the commitment to shared values and loyalties that lead to a sense of community and belonging, and is considered to be a primary goal of integration (Alba & Foner, 2015; Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012; Parekh, 2000; Southall Report, 2002; Vasta, 2009).

Harsh immigration control laws and policies – including high levels of deportations – result from the widely held notion that immigration increases crime. A large part of my focus are the negative effects of this assumed immigration-crime relationship on immigrants and their communities. I argue that fear of deportation and the disruption it causes for integration have far-reaching effects, not only for the individual immigrant, but also bears consequences for their communities.

Thus, my study seeks to understand the following:

1. How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?
2. How does vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it impact an immigrant's degree of integration?

The data for this study were gathered through open-ended interviews with focus groups as well as in-depth face-to-face interviews with individual participants, all of who were noncitizen immigrants (see later section for details on the sample). The data revealed: (i) the degree to which the fear of deportation caused both emotional and psychological distress in immigrants' daily lives; and (ii) how such fear affected the perceptions of reception that either encourage or inhibit integration.

In addition, the data show that fear of deportation and the resulting psychological distress indicate the degree to which noncitizens immigrants are victims of legal violence. By *legal violence* I am referring to the hostile environment created and promoted by the government when it passes and implements laws and policies that cause physical, psychological and/or emotional harm to individuals (Espiritu, 1997; Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). In my study, legal violence plays an important conceptual role and is a central part of my analytical framework that builds upon the notions of structural and symbolic violence (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). I argue that deportation is a form of legal violence, as is evidenced by the fear that results from the vulnerability to it, and these synergistically create an environment that interrupts integration. The impact that deportability has on the lives of immigrants is a concern for those who study immigrant integration on an individual level as well as for those who study such dynamics as they collectively affect community cohesion.

## **Outline of Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. In Chapter Two, I review the literature on the concepts of integration and legal violence, how they pertain to my study, and how my study both addresses and contributes to each. Chapter Three presents the methodology of the research study. Participant information and demographics are provided, along with methods of recruitment. Sources of data for this study and the methods used for its analysis are described. Chapter Four presents the findings and outcomes directly related to the research questions designed for this study. I discuss my participants' responses and how they relate to the concept of integration, particularly how vulnerability to deportation has led to a culture of fear that disrupts the mechanisms that lead to integration. Chapter Five reviews the implications of my findings for research on social integration and incorporation of immigrants and immigration. In particular, I discuss the psychological effects of the fear of deportation and their possible implications for integration. I also deliberate on the emotional impacts of this fear – specifically, concluding that deportation constitutes legalized violence. Finally, Chapter Six is the conclusion, where I present a summary of my findings, the limitations of this study, and possible directions for future research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

I argue that deportability<sup>1</sup> – and the fear associated with it – results in certain social, behavioral, and psychological effects that combine to impede subjects' integration into society. To explore these associations, I draw on the sociological concepts of both integration and legal violence as primary foundations of my analytical framework. In this chapter, I give a brief background of U.S. deportation policy and then review the literatures behind the concepts of integration and legal violence, showing how theoretical claims in this tradition provide the analytical entry points from which to make sense of my data.

#### **Historical and Political Background of U.S. Deportation Policy**

The United States, as a society and in its policies, has a long history of holding foreign-born people and subsequent generations responsible for crime and other social maladies. For example, the Temperance Movement's Prohibition campaign targeted Irish-Catholic immigrants (Reinarman, 1994). Anti-opium laws of the early twentieth century targeted the Chinese, as did the Page Act of 1857, which prohibited entry of Chinese women into the United States (Espiritu, 1997; Morgan, 1978). More recently, post-9/11 immigration policies, the most notorious being the Uniting and Strengthening America By Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (US Patriot Act), was targeted toward the Muslim population, further entrenching our war against the other (Brotherton, 2008).

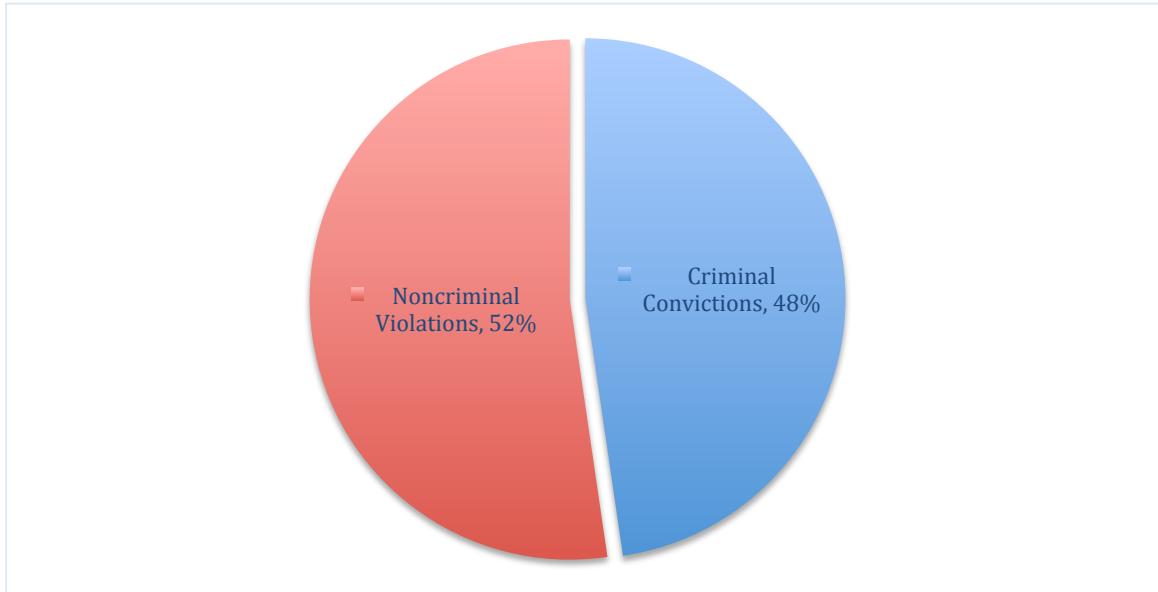
In 1996, The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) both became law. AEDPA

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<sup>1</sup> Anyone who is not a citizen, including legal residents, is vulnerable to deportation. Therefore, I will

expanded the types of crimes that would trigger deportation and instituted mandatory detention for immigrants convicted, even crimes that would not normally carry a sentence of incarceration by either citizens or noncitizens (ACLU, 1999). Meanwhile, IIRIRA granted local police departments the authority to enforce immigration law, which had traditionally been a federal civil responsibility. This accelerated the deportation of immigrants; in fact, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website specifically states that its mission is to remove those immigrants who “pose a threat to public safety” (ICE, 2016).

Yet, the majority of these deportations are for noncriminal violations and most removals due to criminal violations are for minor infractions, such as speeding or driving without a license (Hagan et al., 2010; see also Lopez, et. al., 2011; Pedroza, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2011; Syracuse University, 2013; Thompson & Cohen, 2014). Figure 1, which uses Department of Homeland Security data from the ICE website, shows that removals for noncriminal offenses consistently outnumber those for criminal convictions. Criminal convictions are defined on the ICE website as: “An individual convicted in the United States for one or more criminal offenses. This does not include civil traffic offenses” (ICE Website, “Definitions of Key Terms,” para. 3). ICE does not define the term *noncriminal immigration violators* but presumably it refers to immigrants who overstay their documentation.



**Figure 1** Percentage of immigrants deported for criminal vs. noncriminal violations, fiscal years 2007–15. **Source:** Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Immigration Statistics

Recent data show that deportations have decreased over the last two years (Krogstad & Passel, 2015). In addition, the Obama administration has sought to provide relief for about one-half of the current undocumented population who arrived in the United States as minors in the form of an executive order entitled *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals* (“DACA”) as well as relief for those whose deportation would result in family separation with *Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents* (“DAPA”). However, the executive order for DAPA has not taken effect due to lawsuits from anti-immigrant government officials (Lopez & Krogstad, 2015).<sup>2</sup> Overall, the statistics suggest that deportation is a real threat to the

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Supreme Court’s latest non-decision due to a tie vote of 4-4 resulted in the affirmation of a lower court ruling blocking President Obama’s DAPA executive order. This order would have

lives of immigrants, regardless of their compliance with the law.

Not only is the rhetoric surrounding who is being deported misleading, it is also erroneous. The fact is that there is no positive relationship between immigration and crime. Data do not support the discourse used to justify causes for removal. An increasing number of studies have refuted the immigration and crime link and the scholarship consistently finds that immigration does not increase crime (Davies & Fagan, 2012; Ewing, Martinez, & Rumbaut, 2015; Hagan & Lyons, 2012; Hagan & Palloni, 1998; Kubrin & Ousey, 2009; Lee, 2003; Lee & Martinez, 2002, 2009; Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001; Martinez, 2002; Reid, et al., 2005; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Sampson, 2008; Sampson, Morenoff, & Raudenbush, 2005; Stowell et al., 2009; Thomas, 2011; Velez, 2011). In fact, Hagan and colleagues (2008) conclude, “immigrants are *less likely* to be involved in crime than are the native born” (p. 100; emphasis original).

Many times an immigrant is labeled as ‘illegal’ and therefore a criminal solely on having entered the country illegally, thus stigmatizing otherwise law-abiding immigrant persons as unlawful (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007). The fact that some immigrants come to this country illegally turns into a “crime-immigration nexus,” where undocumented immigrants are perceived as inherently criminal; this perception extends to documented immigrants as well (Hagan, Levi & Dinovitzer, 2008). As an indication of this relationship, deportations continue to increase, while the numbers of persons entering the United States without authorization have gone down (Passel & Cohn, 2015).

In addition to authorizing and facilitating the deportation of immigrants, immigration

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primarily protected undocumented immigrant parents who have children born in the United States or with legal status. The decision effectively eliminates any protection from deportation to the four million undocumented immigrants expected to have been shielded from removal (*United States et al. v. Texas et al.*, 2016).

policies are also designed to promote fear and discourage unauthorized immigration. Militarizing the U.S.-Mexico border is a visible expression of the intent to deter unauthorized crossings into the United States. From a functionalist point of view, the purpose for threatening deportation is in part to create fear, which in turn causes noncitizen immigrants to be scrupulously law-abiding. In this context, the state's threat of punishment (i.e., deportation) is just as powerful as the actual sanction itself (see Robin, 2004). Although fear of deportation is intended to deter immigrants from committing crimes, this fear has the unintended consequence of constraining social interaction and, consequently, undermining the social solidarity and cohesiveness needed to maintain law-abiding communities.

### **Fear of Deportation and its Consequences**

Immigrant integration is a significant concern of criminologists interested in understanding the relationship between immigration and crime (Disha, 2014). As U.S. society has become more punitive against immigrants, the fear of deportation has arguably also increased, which would be a realistic response to the country's harsh deportation policies. This study examines how deportation leads to a culture of fear in immigrant neighborhoods and the possible effects of this fear in the communities in which it manifests.

Some of the social science research differentiates between feelings and emotions, whereby feelings are conscious and emotions are physical (Duyvendak, 2011). Using an amalgam of the different definitions found in the literature on fear, the current study defines *fear* as: that frightening feeling which is experienced when a person suspects or believes it is likely that he/she is a target for deportation (Andrews & Crandall, 1976; Furstenberg, 1972; Garofalo, 1977; Geer, 1965; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Raulin & Wee, 1984; Whitrod, 1981; Wilson & Brown, 1973). Fear is many times conflated with anxiety, where fear is the conscious experience

and anxiety is the physical counterpart. Some scholars have suggested however that emotions mirror feelings (Duyvendak, 2001; Greco & Stenner, 2008; Turner & Stets, 2005). Thus, as physical symptoms and fear can mirror each other, fear will include feelings of anxiety, which manifest through behavioral reactions such as alterations in daily routines and avoidance of locations or people, as well as subjective reports of lack of happiness, life satisfaction, and quality of life (Liska & Warner, 1991).

There are certain types of relationships among people that create networks that lead to the establishment of mutually beneficial activities and interactions, referred to as *social ties* (Feld, 1981; Granovetter, 1973; Simmel, 1955). These social ties are indicative of social or communal ‘organization,’ and the level of benefits derived from these ties is considered to be *social capital* (Putnam, 1997). Fear inhibits the process of integration by preventing the development of social capital, trust, and network ties, elements which have been empirically shown to contribute to safer, more socially cohesive communities (Graif & Sampson, 2009; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Fear operates as a threat that constantly undermines a group’s sense of solidarity. Although some studies have found that the deportation process can have an adverse effect on incorporation (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008), the role fear of deportation plays, if any, on this process is not well known. I seek to contribute to the literature on the immigration experience by exploring the fear of deportation and the effects of this fear, a topic that has not been researched.

Deportability is a function of an immigrant’s noncitizen status. I refer to anyone born in another country, who is permanently residing in the United States and has not naturalized into a citizen as a *noncitizen immigrant* (Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 101(a)(15)). For this study, the distinction between *documented* and *undocumented* is important. *Documented*

immigrants have legal authorization to reside in the United States, either in the form of legal permanent residency or in a shorter-term “liminal, humanitarian legal standing” (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015, p. 274), such as on a visa, whereas *undocumented* immigrants reside without permission. This may be either because they entered into the United States without approval or because they overstayed their authorized stay. While the U.S. government and the mainstream media use the terms *illegal alien* and/or *illegal immigrant* almost interchangeably, I refer to those immigrants who do not have legal permission to reside in the United States as “undocumented” or “unauthorized.”

Deportability, however, is not limited to the undocumented. Immigration control policies are directed predominantly at the unauthorized immigrant population, but significant numbers of legal permanent residents have also been deported. In the 10-year period between 1997 and 2007, the deportation of legal permanent residents (commonly referred to as green card holders), comprised 10% of the annual deportations, with almost 90,000 legal permanent residents being removed (University of California Berkeley School of Law, 2010)<sup>3</sup>. Of that population, about 68% were removed for minor or nonviolent crimes such as perjury, fraud or deceit (American Immigration Council, 2010). A Legal Permanent Resident, also termed Lawful Permanent Resident (both are abbreviated as “LPR”), is an immigrant who has been granted permission to reside permanently in the United States, but is not a citizen of the country. Most immigrant households are mixed-status, meaning that they are composed of both documented and undocumented family members (Morawetz & Das, 2009). Thus, immigrant neighborhoods are

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<sup>3</sup> This number is the most recent available data regarding how many LPRs are deported annually. ICE claims it does not keep track of which noncitizen immigrants being deported are authorized versus lawful permanent residents (Human Rights Watch, 2015). However, Human Rights Watch has a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit pending, in which they hope to receive data to ascertain this and other information. I have contacted HRW and am awaiting their reply for access to this data once received.

never comprised entirely of undocumented immigrants, making the effects of the vulnerability to deportation more extensive than that of the individual experience. Therefore, exploring the impact of deportability ought to include the possible impact on the community at large. As of 2015, there are 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants living in the United States, and over 13 million living as LPRs (Baker & Rytina, 2014; Krogstad & Passel, 2015).

### **Integration as a Form of Inclusion**

In this study, I explore how fear of deportation interrupts the process by which immigrants achieve full membership into society. I do not frame my study around a specific theory, but rather, as explained in Chapter One, view inclusion as a process that (i) involves social acceptance and recognition as members of the larger community, (ii) the ability to become involved in major institutions such as the political system and the labor market, and (iii) the ability to access the same “life chances” as the native born (Alba & Foner, 2015, p. 5). This process is referred to in the literature as integration (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012).

Deciding on the terminology used to describe the process of inclusion can be a challenging task. According to Alba and Foner (2015, p. 6), “the words” used to describe immigrant inclusion have changed over time, with some scholars using *integration* interchangeably with *incorporation* (Alba & Nee, 1997; Bean, Stevens, & Zierzbicki, 2003; Edmonston, & Passel, 1994; Lee, 2009; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Portes & Borocz, 1989; Zhou, 1999). Alba (1998) defines incorporation as the process by which “immigrants and their descendants change from being outsiders-in-residence...to natives” (p. 1). Alba and Foner



(2015) define integration as the process by which immigrants are enabled to achieve inclusion into the host society's institutions and attain the same level of opportunities as the native born.

The process by which immigrants adapt to the host country has been referred to as *incorporation*, *acculturation*, and *integration*, terminology incorporated in theories labeled *assimilation*, *transnationalism* and *multiculturalism* (see, e.g., Alba & Foner, 2015; Alba & Nee, 1997; Bean, Stevens, & Zierzbicki, 2003; Edmonston, & Passel, 1994; Foner & Simon, 2015; Lee, 2009; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Portes & Borocz, 1989; Zhou, 1999). In the present context I use *integration* to refer to the framework that describes the process of inclusion for my study, and I use *incorporation* to describe the process of inclusion as an overall concept.

Most immigration scholars make a distinction between integration and assimilation – the predominant theory of inclusion used in the United States – with assimilation referring to adopting the same set of core values of and becoming more similar to the native born. The commonality between these views on integration and assimilation, however, is that both are concerned with how immigrants adjust to “their surroundings on multiple cultural, social, economic and political dimensions, and how the host society accommodates or changes in response to immigrants” (Berry, 1997, p. 6). In their most recent work, Alba and Foner (2015) ask, “how different are these ideas really?” (p. 7) and proceed to discuss the overlap in the two concepts: “What is apparent is that there is considerable overlap between the assimilation and integration concepts, and both apply to our major concern...the extent to which immigrants, and especially their children, are able to participate in key mainstream institutions in ways that position them to advance socially and materially” (p. 8).

Generally, theories of incorporation involve some sort of adaptation to and absorption of the dominant society's values and norms, along with participation in societal institutions.

Although I am choosing to use the concept of integration rather than a theory of incorporation such as assimilation, the definition of integration I use for this study encompasses the process by which immigrants achieve the mutual transfer and exchange of values outlined in assimilation theory. Integration, however, places less importance on the social and cultural changes, and more emphasis on how immigrants achieve successful participation in social institutions, particularly the participation in informal social relations in local communities (Alba & Foner, 2015), which I believe are most vulnerable to fear of deportability.

Immigrant integration has been a concern for U.S. policymakers “for as long as there have been immigrants” (Jimenez, 2011, p. 2). For the United States, as a nation of immigrants, the process of how immigrants acclimate, adapt, and adjust to a host society is of enduring interest. The challenge of how to facilitate immigrants’ path to inclusion has become a hot topic during every major wave of immigration into the United States (Schuck & Münz, 1998), with the process of immigrant inclusion spawning an enormous body of literature. Immigrant adaptation has been the subject of a myriad of articles and the concept itself has been referred to in as many ways. In general, scholars have approached the *how?*, *how much?*, and *to what extent?* of immigrant inclusion in a variety of forms – with the ultimate questions behind most theories of incorporation pertaining to how immigrants become included in the host society, what place in society they assume as they are included, or whether they are included at all (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012).

Another reason I encourage the use of the term *integration* is because of its greater acceptability in international scholarship, for in a globalized world, immigrant integration is a relevant topic not just for the United States but worldwide. Integration has become the predominant framework for discussing immigrant inclusion among scholars who prefer to steer

clear of the U.S.-centric perspectives of incorporation (Alba & Foner, 2015; Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012; Berry, 1997; Penninx & Martiniello, 2004; Vermuelen & Penninx, 2000).

### **Processes of Integration**

Successful integration is measured by: (i) an immigrant's positive accumulation of social capital; (ii) participation in the labor market; (iii) educational achievement; (iv) representation in the political arena; (v) participation in community organizations; and (vi) level of interaction with the majority group (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012; Bloemraad & Schoenwalder, 2012; Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012; Smalls, 2009). In addition, "the concept of integration should encompass not only questions of equal participation but also feelings of belonging and commitment to the host society" (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012, p. 58). How these different components are thought to lead to integration is discussed as follows.

**Social capital and integration.** Social capital refers to the number of social network connections (including family and friendship ties) an individual has available to them when trying to realize a personal interest, whether that be to locate a job, receive social services, or simply acquire information. "Social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible" (Coleman, 1988, p. S98). The history of the research on social capital is diverse. For example, depending on the discipline producing them, studies of social capital focus on the sources or the consequences of social capital (Knack, 1999b; Woolcock, 2001). The preceding definition of social capital focuses on acquiring social acceptance and recognition into the larger community, as well as involvement in the major societal institutions.

Social capital theory rests on the belief that social relationships benefit those who are able to form them (Smalls, 2009). Glenn Loury (1977) used the term in an economic sense, to refer to

how persons can tap into a well of available resources (*capital*) when necessary. One of the predominant dominant theorists of social capital, Pierre Bourdieu (1986), proposed that people's networks give them access to different forms of resources, or capital. Among the different types of resources one can draw upon are non-tangible assets, such as artistic knowledge – what Bourdieu refers to as cultural capital – and financial resources, or economic capital. The collective of these different resources constitutes *social capital*. Another major theorist, James Coleman (1988), defined social capital as the total of mutually beneficial resources and interests an individual one accumulates via their network. Coleman extended the concept of social capital to include people's obligations to one another, leading to mutually beneficial exchanges (Smalls, 2009). Both of these definitions of social capital are founded on the concept of leveraging social relationships to acquire resources.

People acquire social capital through their everyday activities and interactions that occur during their daily routine (Smalls, 2009). Close interaction among members of a community who form a mutual sense of shared and collective interests promote social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Clear, 2007; Putnam, 1993). In addition, local institutions, such schools, businesses and local social service organizations contribute to the connections and ties that build social capital (Alba & Foner, 2015; Loury, et.al, 2005). Trust is key to the building of social capital (Smalls, 2009). A precondition for the social support that contributes to the accumulation of social capital is trust in “the intentions, the competence, and the expectations” of the provider of such services (p. 108).

A prerequisite for the formation of relationships necessary for the accumulation of social capital is the ability to achieve some of the other components necessary for integration. Mario Smalls (2009) believes, “Networks do not exist in a vacuum; they are formed and sustained in

offices, schools, churches ... community centers, universities, political clubs, YMCAs, childcare centers, and countless other everyday organizations where people encounter others” (p. 5).

Indeed, the spaces, interactions, and institutional involvement that build social capital largely overlap with those necessary for successful integration.

### **The Role of Belonging**

Another important factor in integration is the process by which immigrants achieve social acceptance and participation in educational and political institutions, community organizations, and the housing markets, all of which would increase their level of interaction with the majority group. Essential for these processes is a feeling of belonging. In fact, “Full membership ... means having a sense of dignity and belonging that comes with acceptance and inclusion in a broad range of societal institutions” (Alba & Foner, 2015, p. 1). The sociological literature abounds with immigrants’ perceptions of their own incorporation into the host country, of which belonging is a key component of integration (Duyvendak, 2011; Ellis & Almgren, 2009; Jimenez, 2011; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Sezgin, 2013).

Research indicates that the degree of integration affects an immigrant’s perception of acceptance and sense of social solidarity with the host country is related to integration (Chow, 2007; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007; Schellenberg, 2004; Wu, Schimmele, & Hou, 2012). This literature relates integration to a commitment to shared values and loyalties, which leads to a sense of community and belonging (Parekh, 2000; Southall Report, 2002). A sense of belonging, or a feeling of being welcomed and secure in the host country, fosters immigrants’ feelings of social solidarity with the dominant society (Chow, 2007; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007; Schellenberg, 2004; Wu, Schimmele, & Hou, 2012). On an individual level, belonging entails being able to identify one’s place in the host society; on an institutional level, it involves the ability to develop

social ties (Crul & Schneider, 2010). Certainly, context matters for integration. Education, the labor market, religion, and legislative laws and policies are all important factors that affect incorporation (Freeman, 2004; Hall, 1989), but belonging is particularly dependent on these social and political contexts (Crul & Schneider, 2010). An important aspect of belonging is the ability to call a place – whether a neighborhood or country – home (Morley, 2001). Home is a material as well as symbolic place, which is not only familiar, but also physically and mentally safe – somewhere where the person feels relaxed, free, and independent (Duyvendak, 2001).

In addition, the interactions with members of the majority group that are necessary to create networks require being able to navigate the same public spaces. An integral part of integration is interaction between members of the community, which allows the formation of the trust, connectedness and shared expectations necessary to build social capital and social cohesion (Schellenberg, 2003). When an immigrant lacks trust and avoids people and places for fear of deportation, the formations of connections and ties are more difficult, hindering integration (Smalls, 2009). For example, in their study on Latino immigrants' renegotiation of place and belonging in a small town, Nelson and Hiemstra (2009) found a pattern of segregated spatial negotiations – such as Whites and Latino immigrants attending the same church or shopping at the same supermarket but at different times. This pattern nearly eliminates interactions amongst the two groups, erecting a barrier to immigrants' sense of belonging.

### **Legal Violence**

Menjívar and Abrego (2012) define *legal violence* as the hostile environment created and promoted by the government when it passes and implements laws and policies that cause physical, psychological, or emotional harm to individuals. Legal violence builds upon the concepts of structural and symbolic violence, as well as the notion of social suffering. According

to Abrego and Menjívar, the current immigrant experience is marked by laws, policies, and practices that have been embedded in the U.S. civil immigration system, intersecting with the criminal justice system and together sanctioning the harsh treatment of noncitizen immigrants.

**Foundations of legal violence.** The term *legal violence* is not new. Robert Cover (1986) used the term to describe how the law and its interpretation are used as a tool in the “organized social practice of violence” (p. 1601). Here Cover refers to the direct forms of violence the state uses as mechanisms of social control. In his analysis, Cover illustrates how criminal law and legal interpretations by judges during sentencing and other decision-making enact violence, but points out that any law, criminal or civil, can be used as part of the practice of violence, and that citizens and other actors also engage in legal interpretation. Haney-Lopez (2001) also used *legal violence* in a direct sense, to refer to the judicial mistreatment and police brutality experienced by the Mexican population in the United States. Menjívar and Abrego (2012) expanded their concept of legal violence to look “beyond these more explicit and direct violent consequences of the law” (p. 1387, fn 9).

An act does not have to be physical or result in visible bodily injuries to be violent. Mary Jackman (2002) has examined the notion of violence outside the context of physical harm:

Psychological outcomes such as fear, anxiety, anguish, shame, or diminished self-esteem ... and social outcomes such as public humiliation, stigmatization, exclusion, imprisonment, banishment, or expulsion are all highly consequential and sometimes devastating for human welfare. The personal pain caused by some of these injuries may be more severe or prolonged than from many physical injuries (p. 393).

Following Jackman’s argument, Menjívar and Abrego (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) conceptualize legal violence in terms of the psychological injuries that the state inflicts on immigrants via its immigration laws and policies.

This new framework of legal violence includes the notion of *structural violence* – defined by Galtung (1969) as “violence where ... there may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure” (pp. 170-171). Structural violence is indirect in that the act is not attributable to a specific person or people. Just as in Cover’s description of legal violence, however, the violent act itself is still explicit and direct: the actor is the state and the victim, the individual. Galtung uses a powerful analogy to domestic violence to explain his concept of structural violence: “When one husband beats his wife, there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence” (p. 171). By this example, Galtung means that interpersonal violence is a direct act with an individual perpetrator and victim, whereas structural violence exists in the overarching societal arrangement of patriarchy that governs the interactions between husbands and wives. Among the various societal arrangements that produce structural violence, Galtung also cites the uneven power structure that prevents some groups from accessing resources. Other scholars have focused on abuses in the area of policing and the situation of mass incarceration that exists today in the United States (Jacobs, 1998; Sarang, et al., 2009; Scratton & McCulloch, 2009). In these cases, it is the state, its agents, and its policies that are the perpetrators of violence.

Several scholars have applied structural violence to the immigrant experience. The exploitive labor conditions for immigrants, their lack of access to health care, their unequal educational opportunities, the physical dangers that so many migrants face while crossing the border without authorization, and the mechanism of deportation itself have all been labeled as forms of structural violence (Brotherton & Barrios, 2011; Holmes, 2007; Martín, 2013; Walter, Bourgois, & Loinaz, 2004). In addition, terms such as *criminal alien*, *illegal alien*, and *illegal immigrant* are often used interchangeably in popular discourse, reflecting the blanket



criminalization of immigrant groups. Juliet Stumpf (2006) has coined the term *crimmigration* to refer to this intersection of criminal and civil laws in the immigration arena, which has produced the record number of deportations previously cited (Lopez, et al., 2011). In general, the deportation procedure demonstrates how the United States has become a security state where marginalized populations are now managed in collaboration with non-immigration institutions, such as the criminal justice system (Hallsworth & Lea, 2013).

Menjívar and Abrego (2012) consider their concept of legal violence “mutually constitutive” with symbolic violence (p. 1385). Symbolic violence refers to the normalization of violence, where the targets become accustomed to their treatment and start to accept it as standard, even justifiable. The different forms of violence, such as inequality, racism, and other forms of class power, become internalized, and the targets of such abuses come to accept and in turn perpetuate their ill treatment. Robert Cover (1986) also discusses the normalization of violence, explaining that individuals accept the legal violence exerted against them not because they feel they deserve it, but because any protest will be met with worse violence. Violence is successful because the fear of being treated violently in retaliation trumps any inherent reflex to fight it. Cover uses the example of a defendant who quietly accepts his sentence and peacefully walks into prison: “it is, of course, grotesque to assume that the civil façade is ‘voluntary’ ... most prisoners walk into prison because they know they will be dragged or beaten into prison if they do not walk” (p. 1607).

Although Cover describes a direct form of violence here, his analysis of the domination of violence is nonetheless similar to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1998) conceptualization of symbolic violence, which is the predominant source for Menjívar and Abrego's legal violence framework. The difference is that Cover describes victims accepting corporeal violence, whereas Bourdieu

describes them internalizing it and accepting it as routine. According to Bourdieu (1998), when the dominated are seemingly complicit in their subordination, this is a form of symbolic violence:

When the dominated apply to what dominates them schemes that are the product of domination, or, to put it another way, when their thoughts and perceptions are structured in accordance with the very structures of the relation of domination that is imposed on them, their acts of *cognition* are, inevitably, acts of *recognition*, submission (p. 13, emphasis in original).

Not only the legitimization of mistreatment, but also the internalization of negative stereotypes and labels are forms of symbolic violence. Anti-immigration policies have resulted in what Schneider and Ingram call the “social construction of target populations,” and go on to explain, “Social constructions are stereotypes about particular groups of people that have been created by politics, culture, socialization, history, the media...and the like” (1993, p. 335). As per Schneider and Ingram’s taxonomy of how political power is distributed, immigrants have a negative construction and, consequentially, weak political power. Terms such as “illegal immigrants” and “illegal aliens” send messages to the citizens that immigrants are outsiders who are also criminals (De Genova, 2002). Indeed, this criminalization of migration, made evident by the recent unprecedented rise in deportations, is a manifestation of the moral panics endemic of the twenty-first century that recent policies have fostered (Dauvergne, 2007, Hauptman, 2013). These embedded messages justify policy-makers’ arguments that passing anti-immigration policies is necessary for the safety of the citizenry. The result has been the previously stated immigration and skyrocketing deportations.

*Social suffering* refers to the shared experience of pain and anguish among a large group (Das & Kleinman, 2001). When multiple individuals experience trauma and adversity, the experiences ripple out into the community in general as well. Menjívar and Abrego (2012)

describe harsh immigration laws as producing both short- and long-term effects on the immigrant community. It is not just undocumented immigrants or those with liminal status who suffer. Rather, the suffering extends to those who live or work with and around the undocumented population. Menjívar and Abrego (2011) found that on the family level, legal violence causes people to live in constant fear of being separated from loved ones. In the common situation where a family has both documented and undocumented members, this fear affects even U.S.-born or naturalized members, "caus[ing] even those with legal status to withdraw from public life, jeopardizing community integration" (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012, p. 3). In addition, they found that in the workplace, legal violence legitimates the exploitation and mistreatment of immigrant workers and silences them from speaking out against these harsh conditions. Such exploitation affects native-born workers as well, because they are forced to accept the same harsh working conditions. Finally, they found that in schools, legal violence causes students and their families to fear schools as possible places of detention, which can cause students to underperform or drop out early. Undocumented youth may feel they cannot acquire a higher education or obtain a good job due to their lack of legal status. Thus, collectively, the immigrant community experiences social suffering as a result of legal violence. U.S. immigration laws routinely shape their lives to the point where the oppression they experience becomes normalized. Menjívar and Abrego (2012) call this "legally sanctioned" social suffering (p. 1413).

Social suffering also comprises the process of structural violence. In their study on persons deported back to El Salvador, Dingeman-Cerda and Coutin (2012) use social suffering to describe the effects that the process of deportation has not only on the deportees themselves but the entire El Salvadorian immigrant community, who are labeled as undesirable and become a

group target for deportation. In their study Dingeman-Cerda and Coutin term deportation as a form of social suffering, as not only does the individual suffer, but deportees as a group as well.

With regard to the importance and purpose of studying legal violence, Menjívar and Abrego (2012) state:

When everyone living in the United States is able to fully integrate, our communities are better off. A more thorough process of immigrant integration will result in... a stronger sense of belonging, greater investment in the collective future of the country, and a more cohesive society (p. 2).

Communities advance through social connections and thrive under conditions of immigrant integration (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012). Sarason's (1974) concept of a sense of community involves "a sense of belonging, membership, and personal involvement. It also involves the reciprocal influence between the individual and the community" which involve integration (Hombrados-Mendieta, Gomez-Jacinto, Dominguez-Fuentes, & Garcia-Leiva, 2013, p. 601). The positive effects of immigration in a community are related to the ability of an immigrant to develop and maintain social and familiar ties. Central to the bonds that form social capital is how an immigrant, raised in one culture, is able to adjust to living in U.S. culture (Berry, 1997).

Ultimately, Menjívar and Abrego (2012) loop their legal violence framework back to integration. They argue that legal violence demonstrates how "the law can block access to society's goods and services that promote integration and success" (p. 7). Their work seeks to "highlight especially the role of immigration laws in delimiting immigrants' short- and long-term integration experiences" (p. 1416). In addition, social suffering has been used to study the "personal distress rooted in aspects that affect the interpersonal forms life takes in particular localities or 'communities'" (Charlesworth, 2005, p. 296). By associating legal violence and the effects on integration as a form of social suffering, Menjívar and Abrego are linking the

individual effects of immigration enforcement to the community and immigrant population at large.

For social scientists interested matters of immigration, the legal violence framework as conceptualized by Menjívar and Abrego provides an opportunity to study the immigrant experience from both an individual and collective perspective.

### **The Current Study**

Immigrant incorporation is a continuing point of scholarly focus, as are those mechanisms that contribute to or inhibit that process. For those studying the immigrant experience, questions still remain regarding the ongoing political climate and ever-changing rhetoric regarding immigration policy and practice and the effects on the immigrant and their integration. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the questions: *(a) How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?* and *(b) What impact does the vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, have on an immigrant's integration?* Building on Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) legal violence framework and its effects on integration, my study seeks to respond to these questions by exploring how the vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it impacts an immigrant individually, by negatively affecting integration and by extension, the immigrant community collectively. In addition, by conducting my study in New York City – a city which has a reputation for being “immigrant-friendly” – I aim to expand the scope of legal violence by demonstrating that the disruption to integration is not limited to newcomers, nor to regions that are experiencing relatively new immigration flows, but applies to long-term immigrants, and impacts areas that have a legacy of immigration and long-standing immigrant communities.

Based on my review and interpretation of the literature, I argue that vulnerability to

deportation creates conditions that result in the disruption of integration. Deportability leads to a state of fear that impedes an immigrant's ability to develop trust networks, social ties, and other components that lead to the development of social capital. In addition, the fear of deportation causes immigrants to feel that they do not belong. The processes of integration include the ability to accumulate social capital and the development of a sense of belonging. Further, immigration laws and policies – in this study, those that specifically create deportability – erect both structural and symbolic barriers to integration, which create a detrimental and harmful environment, not only for the individual immigrants targeted, but for their families and communities as well. I propose that deportation itself is a form of legal violence. Collectively, the disruption of integration and the legal violence that noncitizen immigrants experience disrupts community cohesion.

The purpose of my study is to examine how the vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it impacts an immigrant individually, and the immigrant community collectively, by negatively creating barriers to integration. Specifically, Figure 2 presents a visual representation of my hypothesis. This hypothesis builds on Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) legal violence framework. The findings can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of this framework and serve to parse out how legal violence plays out in the context of immigration, as well as expand the scope of impact to include long-term immigrants and areas with extensive histories of immigration.



**Figure 2** Hypothesized effects of the vulnerability to deportation and the negative impact on integration and possible impact on community stability

This dissertation contributes to the fields of criminal justice, criminology, as well as to the areas of immigration and deportation in the following seven meaningful following ways:

- (i) By providing supporting evidence for and contributing to Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) emerging concept of legal violence. Participant responses indicate that immigration enforcement creates conditions of legal violence;
- (ii) By demonstrating that it is not just immigration enforcement broadly that

constitutes legal violence, but *deportation* – and thus the status of deportability and the resulting fear – in particular.

- (iii) By extending this emerging concept of legal violence, which has been confined mainly in the sociological literature, to the fields of criminal justice and criminology. These latter fields are not new to the study of violence, but traditional examinations have been dominated by studies on structural violence, such as policing and incarceration. Considering the role some criminological theories<sup>4</sup> and the criminal justice system play in criminalizing the immigrant, a framework providing a new lens to examine the violent effects of crimmigration is warranted;
- (iv) By contributing to the literature on integration in showing that legal violence is also evident in the community, as noncitizen immigrants do not form the social ties needed to form social capital, nor do they feel motivation to become active in any local community or political organizations;
- (v) By confirming the general idea that the fear of deportation goes beyond the individual experience and that of their families, but also communities as well;
- (vi) By demonstrating that the fear of deportation and the effects of that fear are experienced not just by the undocumented, but by those who are in the United States with Legal Permanent Residency as well as their families, and thus showing that deportation is detrimental to a wider population than assumed by many; and
- (vii) By demonstrating that deportation, as well as the fear and legal violence

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<sup>4</sup> See Prologue



created by it, is not limited to cities experiencing new flows of migration, nor to regions that have passed anti-immigration laws and policies. Rather, legal violence created by deportation occurs even in cities and areas considered to be “immigrant friendly,” and with long histories of immigration and immigrant settlements.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

The purpose of this study, as introduced earlier, is to explore the effect that deportability, and the fear resulting from it, has on the integration and lives of immigrants. In this chapter, I outline the research site, participants, and data collection used for my qualitative study. I also explain the process by which I ensured the protection of my subjects, as well as the steps taken to ensure the validity of my study design.

#### Research Site

My research site is New York City, a historical entry point for immigrants that offers many rich opportunities to research the effects of deportation. New York City's population reached a new peak in 2012, at 8.34 million people, with an immigrant population of more than 3 million, or about 37% of the population, also a new high (NYC Department of City Planning, 2013). As of 2010, estimates of the undocumented population in the city were around 535,000 people, about 6.54% of the total population and about 16.36% of the city's immigrant population (Migration Policy Institute, 2014; U.S. Census, 2010).

Many studies have reported that New York City is relatively "immigrant friendly," which allows easier integration, particularly for second-generation immigrants (Foner 2000; Kasinitz et al. 2004, 2008; Mollenkopf 1999)<sup>5</sup>. On April 25, 2012, then New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg visited the offices of a pro-citizenship organization and declared New York City the most immigrant-friendly city in the United States (Boyle, 2012). During his time as mayor he issued several executive orders that gave support to his claim. For example, Executive Order 41,

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<sup>5</sup> The second generation (also referred to in the literature as "second generation immigrants") are the children of immigrants who were born in the United States. The second generation are by virtue of their birth in the United States, American citizens (Alba & Foner, 2015; Ellis & Algren, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2005).

coined “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” issued in September 2003, which prohibited employees from asking the immigration status of anyone seeking aid from any city agency; in July 2008 Executive Order 120 mandated that city agencies “shall ensure meaningful access to [translation] services by taking reasonable steps to develop and implement agency-specific language assistance plans regarding [Limited English Proficiency] persons,” (Executive Order 120, Section 1). Bloomberg also supported the federal DREAM Act, claiming, “The only place in the country where we don’t have any anti-immigrant sentiments is in New York City” (Boyle, 2012, para. 5).

Yet, a significant number of immigrants have been deported from New York City, including during Bloomberg’s tenure as mayor. In 2009, 23% of immigrants who exited New York City did so via removal by the Department of Homeland Security (NYC Department of City Planning, 2013). According to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) compiled by Syracuse University (2013), New York City ranked sixth highest in the nation in 2012 for the number of persons entering ICE custody, with 1,171 persons; of these individuals 91% were deported (Immigrant Defense Project, 2012). In other words, detention in New York City almost guarantees deportation. In addition, 87% of those persons deported have children living in the United States, highlighting the devastating effects of deportation on families. Moreover, 77% of all ICE apprehensions occur via the Criminal Alien Program, (CAP) which purports to identify those immigrants who have criminal convictions for expedited removal; this percentage is noteworthy because an internal review by ICE in 2009 found that 60% of all immigrants detained through CAP had no criminal convictions on record (Immigrant Defense Project, 2012). This percentage is consistent with national data indicating that most individuals detained and deported are initially apprehended for noncriminal violations. These data

demonstrate that immigration enforcement is alive and well in New York City, thus making it an appropriate location for examining the effects of deportation on immigrants, and the implications for their communities.

New York City's current administration recently implemented a number of "immigrant-friendly" laws and policies. On June 26, 2014, the New York City Council proposed issuing municipal IDs to undocumented immigrants, and on July 10, 2014, the mayor signed the bill into law (Local Law 35). As a result of the law, which became effective in 2015, every resident of New York City, regardless of immigration status, may request a photo identification. In addition, to address the high numbers of deportation proceedings in which the immigrant does not have counsel, New York City was the first municipality to fund free legal representation for undocumented immigrants detained in New York City or nearby centers in New Jersey through the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (New York Immigrant Representation Study Report, 2011; Rodriguez-Schlegel, 2015). Additionally, on October 22, 2014, the New York City Council passed a bill to honor only immigration waivers accompanied by a judge's warrant. City law enforcement will turn over only those persons convicted of a violent or serious crime within the last five years or a person matched to the terrorism watch list (Jorgensen, 2014; NYC Local Law 2014/486). Even despite all these local ordinances, deportation numbers decreased only slightly and the fear of deportation continues to permeate the lives of the vulnerable (Henderson, 2015).

National policy combined with local enforcement efforts paint a very different portrait of New York City. In the first few days of 2016, DHS began to fulfill its pledge to increase the pursuit and detention of individuals under deportation orders. More than one hundred confirmed arrests in early January charged a powerful rumor mill over the country, including in New York

City (Garsd, 2016). New York City immigrants reported feeling frantic and scared over the threat of imminent ICE raids (Robbins, 2016). Feeding this fear, the rumor mill circulated false stories of a family being dragged from a Staten Island mall, and of ICE raiding churches and public schools, while DHS has acknowledged that field agents in New York City are currently seeking to execute deportation orders and have the power to make collateral arrests (Robbins, 2016). Thus, as long as federal immigration policy and national rhetoric remain hostile to immigration, even a benign local government can do little to reduce the threat of deportation. In sum, even though New York City has made significant efforts to support the immigrant community, fear remains persistent among that population.

### **Research Subjects**

Data were collected through 6 focus groups and 33 in-depth individual interviews. A total of 80 immigrants were recruited via a combination of methods; no one was compensated for participation. In order to protect the identity of my participants, I use pseudonyms throughout this study and do not reveal any potentially identifying information regarding employment or current residence. All participants were given an information and consent form (a copy of the information and consent form appears in Appendix A).

Recruitment for this study began in 2012 with two referrals from a community organization I worked with by translating documents. From these referrals I utilized snowball sampling, a method commonly used when trying to gain access to a population that is generally hidden (Trochim, 2000). Specifically, after interviewing them, I asked participants to refer other persons whom they felt would be helpful to my study and whom they thought would be willing to be interviewed. I subsequently received permission to contact those individuals personally and was able to arrange several additional interviews. Via this method, I was able to conduct 20 of

the 33 in-depth one-on-one interviews. The other 13 individuals who agreed to an in-depth interview for my study were recruited through an immigration-related event I helped organize in June 2014 at a local church. Churches are ‘jumping-off’ points for immigrants seeking a place in a new destination, especially when they lack political incorporation and formal political participation (Bullock & Hood, 2006; Cabell, 2007; Odem, 2004; Winders, 2012, p. 141).

The reason for conducting focus groups was to provide an environment that fostered participation, but did not pressure anyone to engage in the participation (Krueger, 1988). In addition, conducting focus groups encouraged interaction between the participants and myself, who at the time was a complete stranger to them. Due to the sensitive nature of my topic of interest, I wanted to provide a comfortable setting for the participants; therefore, the focus groups were conducted at their church. Based on information gathered during the focus groups, I engaged in purposeful sampling for individual interviews, which “lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. ... Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful sampling*” (Patton, 1990, p. 169; emphasis original). This sampling method serves to maximize the range of information uncovered instead of representativeness. Of the 60 individuals who joined in the focus groups, 13 agreed to participate for in-depth, individual interviews.

The majority of my findings are based on the 33 one-on-one interviews with a diverse sample of documented ( $n = 16$ ) and undocumented ( $n = 17$ ) immigrant adults living in all five boroughs of New York City and adjoining Westchester County (1 participant). They ranged in age from 18 to 54, and 73% were female. All but 3 participants had lived in the United States for more than 10 years at the time of the interview; the remainder had lived in this country for at

least 5 years (average 17 years). In terms of education level, 21 had no education beyond the 6th grade in their home country. Many of these participants had families who could not afford to pay for school beyond this stage or emigrated before they reached any point beyond that grade.

Twelve had at least some college education; and 3 held postgraduate degrees. The majority of participants were from Mexico (55%), followed by other countries in Central America (9%), South America (6%), the Caribbean (12%), Europe (12%), Asia (3%), and Africa (3%).

**Table 1.**  
Demographic Information – Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	24	73
Male	9	27
Total	33	100.0

**Table 2.**  
Demographic Information – Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
18-24	5	15
25-30	7	21
31-35	5	15
36-40	6	18
41-54	10	31
Total	33	100.0

**Table 3.**  
Demographic Information – Years in the U.S. (at time of interview)

Years in U.S. (Range)	Frequency	Percent
5-9	3	9
10-14	11	33
15-19	6	18
20-25	11	33
Over 25	2	6
Total	33	100.0

The gender distribution does not align with the fact that at least 90% of deportees every year are male (Syracuse University, 2013). However, because my study looks at the vulnerability to deportation and its impact, and regardless of gender, all non-citizen immigrants are deportable, and it can be argued that this difference does not invalidate my study. Most of my participants are more than 30 years of age, which does align with the deportation data (Syracuse University, 2013). My participants' countries of origin are also consistent with national immigration data, which show that most immigrants living in the United States are from Mexico, followed by other countries in much smaller numbers and less difference in percentage (Krogstad & Keegan, 2015). Both documented and undocumented participants were selected for this study to reflect the reality that most immigrant households are of mixed documentation status (Morawetz & Das, 2009).

I began to reach data saturation fairly early in the individual interviews; that is, no new themes were emerging through additional interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). At around the 20th interview, I began to see predictable patterns in the subject matter. In this sense, I also adopted intensity sampling, which Patton (1990) describes as appropriate for use where there is a rich amount of information in a concentrated number of cases, but not so much information that the cases are considered to be extreme. Although extreme cases would commonly be omitted from studies as outliers, Saldaña (2009) argues that in research such cases are not necessarily useless in terms of their evidentiary value. Thus, even responses that are inconsistent with those of other participants are nonetheless valuable when seeking themes and patterns.

### **Research Design**

I utilized three methods to address the research questions: (a) focus groups, (b) in-depth



interviews, and (c) publicly available data. Triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of data, is crucial when using qualitative research methods, as the variety of data sources tests the quality and accuracy of the information gathered. Triangulation ensures credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research by identifying inconsistencies in the findings emerging from different sources of data (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Patton, 1990). In addition, I used the grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000), in which I would analyze data as I collected it and would use the results help refine future questions and analysis.

**Protection of human subjects.** The Institutional Review Board of City University of New York approved my research protocol and standards to ensure privacy and confidentiality. I gave participants an information and consent form, informing them that the information they provided would be reported in a dissertation, but they were not asked to sign any documents. Additionally, they were assured that information obtained would be reported anonymously, without any personal identifiers such as names, residences, or country of origin attached to specific individuals. During data collection, all identifying information was stored in a locked filing cabinet or a password protected electronic document. After conducting the interviews, I replaced all identifiers with pseudonyms, permanently deleted all electronic traces of these identifiers, and shredded all written or printed traces of these identifiers. Participants were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary and they could discontinue participation at any time without penalty or recourse (see Appendix A for a copy of the information and consent form).

**Focus groups.** Six focus groups of 10 members each participated in a discussion responding to questions about deportation, their vulnerability to deportation, and how deportation affects families and communities. Focus group participants were recruited at a local

church event, and the discussions were conducted in Spanish, in the church common room. I encouraged participants to write down their responses (although not all did). The focus groups ranged in length from 60 to 90 minutes. I applied purposeful sampling to this group of 60 members and requested to interview some participants individually at a later date. After attrition, I was able to complete 13 individual interviews with focus group participants.

**Interviews.** In total, I conducted 33 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with a mix of documented and undocumented immigrants. The interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions carefully designed to allow participants the freedom to express themselves openly without any pressure to give particular responses, especially regarding fear of deportation (Converse & Presser, 1986; Fetterman, 1998). Thus, I was very careful not to ask outright, “Are you afraid of being deported?” To create a safe environment, all interviews began with basic biographical questions relating to country of origin, age, and family composition. Background questions addressed when participants migrated to the United States, their reasons for doing so, their means of entry into the country, where they lived on arrival, and how long they have lived in both the United States and New York City specifically. Subsequent questions probed participants’ attitudes about deportation. All participants responded that they had thought about deportation, so subsequent questions gathered information regarding contexts in which the thought of deportation would arise and how the thought of deportation made them feel.

To establish credible data collection I shared interview transcripts with the respondents afterwards to clarify questions that emerged during transcription and solicit any additional comments about the discussion (Merriam, 1988). As needed I contacted participants by telephone to clarify the answers they gave. Initial interviews ranged in length from 48 to 64 minutes, with follow-up interviews averaging 36 minutes each. Interviews were conducted in

various locations of the participants' choice: some were comfortable inviting me into their homes, whereas others preferred to be interviewed in a public location, such as a park or a café. All but four participants agreed to be audio recorded; in the remaining cases, I took comprehensive notes by hand then transcribed those notes into an electronic document. In all cases, I took handwritten notes.

**Publicly available data.** In order to explore individual experiences relating to a culture of fear within immigrant communities, and the implications of this fear on integration and community cohesion, it is necessary to situate participants' individual narratives within a broader political context. For this purpose, I collected publicly available statistical data on immigration and immigration enforcement, as well as data related to immigration policy. These data were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau; the New York City Departments of City Planning, Immigrant Affairs, and Corrections; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics; the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse compiled by Syracuse University; the Pew Research Center; and the Migration Policy Institute. Table 4 illustrates the sources of various types of data.

**Table 4.**  
Matrix of Information Needed and Obtained by Data Source

INFORMATION NEEDED	Literature review/Additional Sources of Information	Semi-Structured Interviews	Focus Groups
<b>Conceptual information</b>			
Fear	X		
Community	X		
Integration	X		
Incorporation	X		
Social Capital	X		
<b>Perceptual information</b>			
Fear	X	X	X
Community	X	X	X
Integration	X	X	X
Incorporation	X	X	X
Social Capital	X	X	X

**Conceptual information.** Conceptual categories such as community, social capital, incorporation, integration, as well as fear were identified via a review of the literature that informed the theoretical framework, as well as archival information collection, all which contextualized the experiences of my subjects. Participants' actual perceptions of these concepts were also collected.

**Perceptual information.** Perceptual information was informed directly from participant's own experiences as expressed during the interviews and focus groups. The interviews and focus groups also provided rich descriptions of the respondents' perceptions and evaluations of fear and its effects. For this study, perceptions of context identify the elements of living in the United States that lead to vulnerability of deportation; that vulnerability manifests psychologically in a degree of ways – including fear – and subsequently impacts the social fabric of immigrant communities.

## **Data Analysis**

**Coding with MaxQDA.** Immediately after each interview, I sent the audio transcripts to a service provider for transcription. The service provider had previously signed a confidentiality agreement that banned sharing or storing any of the information in the audio files or transcripts (a copy of the confidentiality agreement appears as Appendix B). I then reviewed each transcript along with the audio file to assure accuracy of the transcriptions.

I imported each transcript into the MaxQDA qualitative research software program for coding and analysis. This software provided me an opportunity to highlight key terms and identify patterns in the responses, then catalogue them into themes. This was an ongoing process

that helped guide future interviews and data collection. Once the software identified a thematic pattern, I asked follow-up questions regarding those themes (Guba, 1981; Patton, 1990). As part of my coding, I also used MaxQDA to compile the demographic data appearing in Tables 1, 2, and 3. These procedures facilitated immediate triangulation between data collection methods for these topic areas.

**Development of themes.** From the interview transcripts, I identified themes in the participants' narratives. Using content-based coding procedures, I developed categories that encompassed the existing literature on immigrant incorporation as well as captured participants' reported experiences and how these related to incorporation (Creswell, 2003; Saldaña, 2009). Content-based coding is a process of using specific words or sentences to identify themes. For example, many participants used words to refer to and express feelings of not belonging. Appendix C outlines the themes, how they were defined via indicators, and how they related to each research question.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness in Study Design**

*Trustworthiness* refers to the credibility of the qualitative research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In order to minimize any threats to validity due to my personal bias or reactivity, I utilized Merriam's (2009) framework, as illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5.**  
Strategies to Enhance Trustworthiness and Credibility

Strategy	Description
Triangulation	Multiple sources of information were used; e.g., literature review; conceptual, biographical, and perceptual data; in-depth interviews.
Peer review/examination	Three other doctoral students conducted a peer review of the coding scheme.
Audit trail	A detailed account of this study's methods, procedures, and decisions is provided.
Rich, thick descriptions	Rich, thick descriptions allow readers to contextualize the transferability of this study's findings.
Maximum variation	To the fullest extent possible, participants were purposefully selected for this study to represent a diverse sample that would yield the greatest range of applicable findings (for limitations of this sample see Chapter Six).

**Positionality as the researcher.** At times it was very difficult to conduct the interviews. Quite a few participants burst into tears. I had to suspend and reschedule several interviews because the participant became too upset to continue. As a researcher, I was committed not to omit any questions or allow participants' emotions to steer the interviews off-track, but the process was not easy. At times, when participants would cry at relating their stories or when describing their anguish over their fear of being deported, I was reminded of the clinically cruel quality inherent in research. I knew the information I was gathering was valuable, but I was also cognizant of the history that qualitative research has had of exploiting the vulnerable condition of participants; I was thus very careful and thoughtful in how I proceeded to gather my information. I constantly reminded my participants that they were free to end the interview at any point, and that they were not obligated in any way to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable responding to. Many of my participants were not actively involved in immigration advocacy or

any immigration-related legal proceeding. Therefore, they were not accustomed to exposing themselves or discussing their situations as immigrants. Thus, for participants to tell their story to me, a stranger, required tremendous vulnerability and courage. I am grateful to have earned their trust.

In addition, as a researcher, there is a certain level of dispassion expected from me when conducting a study. But it is difficult to disassociate oneself from the emotional toll that transmits from each and every interview. From the anguish in their voices, the distress exemplified in their demeanor and body language, as well as the pain in their sobs, it becomes my duty to translate these emotions on paper so the reader can truly understand the suffering that they expressed. This is a challenging task, however, because the suffering I am obligated to relay cannot be colored with hyperbole or embellishment it is in our human nature to inject. I treaded a fine line between objective researcher and subjective advocate during this study. My personal ambivalence raises the issue of reactivity as a potential source of research bias. *Reactivity* refers to the researcher's influence on the setting and individuals being studied (Maxwell, 2005). In order to minimize both reactivity and personal bias, I practiced "reflexivity" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) by critically reflecting on my role as researcher and employing the criteria for measuring trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, and transferability. In addition, I employed multiple methods to ensure the validity of the research, such as "member checks," or presenting the data to participants and allowing them to correct errors and misinformation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000).

The issue of *confirmability* also arises, referring to the measures "taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shenton, 2004, p.

72). To this end, I established parameters that distinguished between what is known (data) and how the data are interpreted (explanation of biases) by employing various triangulation methods. An example is providing audit parameters that demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations via an audit trail consisting of raw data, analysis notes, personal notes, and preliminary developmental information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## Summary

In summation, the purpose of this qualitative exploration was to understand the experiences of immigrants who are regularly exposed to the threat of deportation, and the effect that these emotional experiences have on their integration. It is my strong belief that the methodologies used in this study were the ones that best answered the questions: *How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life; and what effect does deportability, and the fear associated with it, have on an immigrant's degree of integration?* Participants met purposeful selection standards, participated in a focus group or agreed to a one-on-one interview. Conscious steps were taken to address issues of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability by engaging in an iterative process that included the strategies listed in Table 5. In the next chapter I will discuss the findings from my study.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from both focus group responses and in-depth one-on-one interviews organized into emergent themes in response to the two primary research questions. The following descriptions include specific participant perceptions of living under the conditions of deportability.

#### **Research Question 1: How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?**

All participants expressed that vulnerability to deportation made them fearful. Fear also led to feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Some participants expressed that their fear was based upon a perceived, rather than actual, risk to deportation, and that it was not commensurate with the direct experience with the deportation system, but could originate vicariously through another's experiences.

In addition, most participants expressed that vulnerability to deportation made them feel emotional and psychological distress related to their fear. Such feelings had a negative impact on their psychological and emotional health, their well-being and overall quality of life.

#### **Focus Group Findings**

The majority of the findings from this study are derived from the individual interviews. There was valuable information, however, from the focus groups as well. Responses to the question, "What are your thoughts on deportation?" will be identified and included in the discussion below of the themes that emerged from the data collection.

## Interview Findings

When participants in the individual in-depth interviews were asked if they ever thought about deportation, they unanimously responded “yes.” Some respondents elaborated, unprompted, as to how this vulnerability made them feel. The question, “How does deportation make you feel?” provoked responses and narratives that clearly showed intense feelings of fear. In addition, participants expressed that deportability influenced how they felt they were viewed by U.S. society in general, the government, and closer to home, by specific members of their communities. The following themes emerged based on the narratives given by participants on what they thought and felt about deportation.

**Fear exists and is ever-present.** When asked how being vulnerable to deportation made them feel, 32 out of 33 of the participants expressed that vulnerability to deportation made them fearful. The specific word *fear* was used 45 times across 16 out of 33 of the participants. For example, Lily, an undocumented mother of three adult children who had been in the United States for 20 years at the time of the interview shared, “*Yo no quiero ser deportada por nada del mundo. Eso sí me da miedo, ser deportada.*” [Translation: I do not want to be deported for anything in the world. That does give me fear, to be deported.] Meg, a young undocumented woman who was brought to the United States as a child and is now in college, said she grew up being told, “‘Don't do anything that'll be suspicious’ I don't know, something like that and that kind of put a little bit of fear in me.”

Meanwhile, Peggy, a hairstylist who is also undocumented, arrived in 1992, indicated fear was the obvious reaction to the threat of deportation: “*Claro, sí, el temor se siente.*” [Translation: Of course, yes, one feels fear.] Polly, currently a green card holder, who at the time of the interview had been living in the United States for 14 years, described a harrowing journey

across the U.S.-Mexico border. She says the trip “*no me fue terrible ... como un viaje normal casi, pero el problema es de la frontera para acá.*” [Translation: was not terrible ... it was like a normal trip almost. But the problem was crossing the border.] During her journey, after several days of international travel and upon arriving in Mexico, Polly recounts being told that next leg of the trip would have to be done by foot. She was told her group would have to walk for 8 hours before stopping to rest. That estimate was wrong. They walked for much longer with barely any food and water. She trekked in the oppressive heat during the day and tried to sleep through animal noises and cold night air. She ambled over hilly and mountainous terrain, climbed over large rocks and boulders, making sure not to leave any tracks behind. She describes reaching a point where she told the group she could no longer continue, “*yo dije que ya no aguantaba, que yo quería que llegara migración, porque ya yo no aguantaba ... Y, cuando yo dije eso, el coyote me dijo ‘Muévete, que ahí está el carro.’*” [Translation: I told them I could not stand it, that I wanted immigration to come, because I could no longer stand it ... And when I said that, the coyote told me, ‘move,an there’s the car.’] Mercifully, just as she was ready to give up, the coyote informed them that they had reached the pick-up point – the rest of the trip would be completed by car. Shortly after she entered the United States. Despite its dangers, Polly portrays her journey as a matter of simple disruption. She then stated: “*Pero eso ha sido más que todo, no trauma, sino que mi molestia. De llegar a este país ... pero después, ahora más que todo lo que nos han marcado bastante han sido las deportaciones.*” [Translation: but that has been, more than everything, not traumatic, rather just an inconvenience. To arrive in this country...but afterward, more than everything else, what has affected us the most is deportation.]

Another participant, Ellen, who now has her green card, but was undocumented for several years, described fear as an expected and predictable emotion: “So, yeah, when you're

illegal, you do live in fear of being deported – of course you do.” Amy, who is undocumented and had been living in the United States 30 years at the time of the interview, indicates that the fear of deportation is not limited to the undocumented population: “*Ya sea que entramos al país legalmente, o por, o ilegal, por la frontera de México, todos corremos riesgo de ser deportados. ¿Verdad? En mi caso...tengo mucho temor, mucho temor.*” [Translation: Whether we came to this country legally or illegally, through the Mexican border, all of us are at risk of deportation, right? In my case... I have much fear, much fear.] Amy is aware that the method of entry into the United States becomes a non-issue in the case to vulnerability to deportation. Whether documented or as a LPR, anyone who is not a citizen is subject to removal – albeit the criteria for removal differs for each group.

**Fear persists regardless of immigration status.** Indeed, the difference in removal risk between unauthorized immigrants and green card holders does not play a major role in the fear that an immigrant feels about their vulnerability. Sally, who is undocumented and had been in the United States for 20 years at the time of the interview, said she would not feel free from this insecurity so long as she was vulnerable to deportation: “*Bueno, yo hasta que no tengo eso en la mano tampoco, todavía no estoy segura.*” [Translation: Well, I, until I have that [referring to a green card] in my hand, I still am not secure.] Clearly, Sally believes that a change in her immigration status – becoming a green card holder – would provide her security she does not currently have.

Yet, Polly, who does have a green card, does not feel the security Sally believes comes with documented status:

*Me siento igual porque no soy ciudadana. Me siento igual, que algo me puede pasar...Porque de alguna u otra manera es horrible ver como todo el mundo, como no*

*tenemos, no tenemos una estabilidad, no tenemos, no tenemos nada. Es como, como, estamos viviendo el momento, y estoy siempre pensando que algo puede pasar y me van a deportar.*

[Translation: I feel the same because I am not a citizen. I feel the same, something can happen to me...because in one way or another it is horrible to see how the whole world, how we do not have, we do not have stability, we do not have anything. It is as if, as if we are living in the moment, and I am always thinking something will happen to me and they will deport me.]

Polly expressed chronic feelings of vulnerability, fear, and insecurity regardless of her immigration status. The insecurity that immigrants feel is coupled with a sense of doubt with respect to what to expect in their everyday lives. Uncertainty was a word that was frequently used by participants when explaining their fear of deportation. Polly expressed insecurity and uncertainty, and Jill, who is undocumented and living in the United States for 14 years at the time of the interview, also explained that the possibility of deportation causes her to live in a state of uncertainty:

*Tiene uno que tomar una experiencia que en cualquier momento uno nunca sabe. Antes decíamos, 'OK, yo me voy a ir en tantos años.' Ahora ya no es ese dicho, ahora es, 'Nos vamos cuando nos saquen.' Porque ya está uno pensando que en cualquier momento, uno tiene que pensar '¿Qué vamos a hacer con nuestros hijos?' Porque uno puede salir y uno nunca sabe.*

[Translation: One has to take the point of view that in whatever moment you never know. Before we used to say, 'Okay, I am leaving in however many years.' Now we don't say that, now it's, 'We leave when they remove us.' Because now one is thinking

that in any moment you have to think, ‘What are we going to do with our children? Because one can leave [the house] and you never know.]

Both Polly and Jill live one day at a time, with no idea what might happen tomorrow. Certainly, the participants do not live their lives in complete and constant fear, but the fear can be triggered quickly in certain conditions. Molly, who is undocumented and at the time of the interview had been living in the United States for 19 years, noted how vulnerable she feels to changes in the politics of immigration:

*Sí me siento tranquila. Sí me siento tranquila porque, primero que nada, yo creo, confío en Dios. Pero, por otro lado, sí me existe el miedo, el que algún día las leyes sean un poco más fuertes, más duras e investiguen más a fondo sobre todo a los que estamos o aquí, todos los que trabajamos sin papeles.*

[Translation: I feel calm. I feel calm because before anything I believe; I trust in God. But, on the other hand, yes the fear exists for me, that one day the laws will be a bit stronger, harsher, and they would investigate deeper into all of us who are here, who work without papers.]

Molly, while expressing her faith, nevertheless acknowledges that her fate is dependent on possible changes in government immigration policies and practices. Here, her fears are compounded by the idea that the government will pass laws to increase its efforts to locate and target undocumented immigrants. Molly is less optimistic than Sally, who felt that a change in immigration status would alleviate their feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Polly confirmed Molly’s suspicions when she expressed the same fear and uncertainty despite being an LPR. Molly and Polly are not the only participants to feel that U.S. immigration enforcement was evolving to their peril. Heather, who is also an LPR and at the time of the interview had been

living in the United States for 22 years, reflected that times have changed so much she cannot trust in the past experiences of others in similar situations:

*En lo que respecta a mí...no segura porque las leyes van cambiando, porque en un tiempo estaba ...el que tenía residencia estaba seguro. Pero ahora...tener residencia y tener un número de seguro social no le garantiza absolutamente nada, tiene que hacerse ciudadano y aun si es ciudadano y comete algo, te la pueden quitar, la ciudadanía.*

[Translation: With respect to me...not secure, because the laws are changing, because at one time it was...whoever had residency was secure. But now...having residency and having a Social Security number does not guarantee anything at all, one has to become a citizen and even if one is a citizen and commits something, they can take it away, the citizenship.]

Heather's sentiment that even citizenship might not leave her feeling fully secure aligns with comments of other participants, who are living both with or without authorization.

Furthermore, Madison, a documented young woman with a graduate degree from an American university, stated: "I mean, again, my fear is very different than, for example, the fear of undocumented immigrants. Like I have [an] ID, even though it says like 'alien resident' or some crap – like, my fear is not the same." Despite her relatively secure position, Madison acknowledges she feels fear. Similarly, Amanda, a documented immigrant who had at the time of the interview been in the United States for 11 years, is also aware of the limited protection from deportation her legal status provides her:

Because we're treated a little bit differently because we're documented and we've always been documented. For us, the fear of deportation manifests itself in the sense that this is just not our country, we're not natural-born citizens... Even if we become citizens, we're

still naturalized, so we always think about it. It's a law that made you able to have it and it's a law that can take it away. ... We're not full, full, full citizens and so that's never gonna go.

Amanda acknowledged that her documented status makes her less vulnerable to removal than undocumented immigrants, but still feels fear because being born in another country makes her an outsider in the eyes of some citizens. Amanda's insecurity would remain even if she achieved citizenship, which she feels is still tenuous and vulnerable to a change in immigration policy. Other participants shared this sentiment. For example, Stacy, another documented immigrant currently working in the education field, felt ill at ease about her treatment and vulnerability as an immigrant. When asked if citizenship would relieve her fear of deportation, she answered:

Stacy: No.

SL: Even with citizenship?

Stacy: Yeah. I ask my students – I always have this discussion. What does it mean to be American? And so they were like, 'Well if you don't have an accent and stuff.' And I asked, 'What about if I have a U.S passport?' And they were like, 'No.' And I said, 'Why not, it says "American" clearly.' And they were like, 'No, you're not.'

Stacy believes American society judges citizenship according to criteria other than having the appropriate paperwork, and that her accent would hinder her acceptance in this country. This belief is not unusual, as traditional American assimilationist notions equated foreign accents with the inability to become fully American (Trucio-Haynes, 2006).



Interestingly, the fear of deportation can itself become a barrier to becoming documented. For example, on the subject of whether she would try to legalize her status one day, Molly comments:

Molly: *Entonces, va transcurriendo el tiempo y por mi situación, como me vine y todo y como ha avanzado todo esto, es que no he querido preguntar, porque tengo miedo.*

SL: *¿Y por qué nunca trató de averiguar?*

Molly: *Bueno, igual, por miedo.*

SL: *¿Por miedo? ¿No podía preguntar?*

Molly: *Sí, por miedo, porque, ¿y si pregunto y me la quitan y me botan?*

[Translation:

Molly: And so, time passes and because of my situation, how I arrived and everything and how all of this has occurred, it's that I do not want to ask, because I am afraid.

SL: And why did you never try to ask?

Molly: Well, the same reason, for fear.

SL: For fear? You could not ask?

Molly: Yes, for fear because, what if I ask and they take me and throw me out?]

Molly's undocumented status becomes a self-perpetuating situation because she fears the exposure that seeking legal status would entail. Her fear of amendments in immigration laws, along with the fear of being discovered and deported, thus creates a vicious cycle where she avoids seeking legal status, and instead remains in a state of constant vulnerability.

Chad, who is also undocumented and had at the time of the interview had been living in the United States for 17 years, has an interesting opinion as to why some people get deported:

*Pero pues también hay, en ese aspecto, yo creo que uno mismo comete uno los errores y bueno, hay veces que, pues no sé, la gente no piensa eso también. O sea, sienten como si estuvieran en su país, que no están en un país ajeno.*

[Translation: Well there is also, in this respect, I think that one's own mistakes and, well, there are times, well I don't know, because people do not think. Or rather, they feel as if they are in their own country, that they do not live in a foreign country.]

Similarly, Jack, an 11-year resident, also undocumented, expressed the sentiment that people who get deported might deserve their fate:

*Porque no creo que van y te sacan de tu casa por ir a la iglesia o por estar practicando deportes o porque estás yendo a clases de guitarra. No, yo creo que si te pasa eso es porque estás envuelto en una situación delicada. ...Y la otra que yo he experimentado o he visto es que de repente la terquedad que existe entre nosotros por buscar esa diversion.*

[Translation: Because I do not think they go and remove you for going to church or for playing sports or because you take guitar lessons. No, I think if that [deportation] happens it's because you are involved in a delicate situation. ...And the other thing I have experienced or have seen is the stubbornness that exists within us to seek pleasure.]

Chad and Jack both express an acceptance of their treatment as being due to their status, and hold individuals who do not do the same as responsible for the consequences incurred, including deportation.

Amanda, while not indicating acceptance via internalization as in Chad and Jack's cases, discusses how she and her husband were forced to tolerate treatment they would not have otherwise tolerated due to their "underclass status":

I failed to mention what another effect is, that during the years when we were not residents, it forced us to accept, you know, injustice and like defamation of person and to accept a lot of things on our jobs that we wouldn't have accepted. Accept -- in my husband's case - accept being underpaid for years and overworked because he just couldn't afford to create trouble...So yeah, we accepted a lot of, you know, crap.

Vulnerability to deportation results in fearfulness, insecurity, and uncertainty, regardless of legal status. Fear of deportation is not necessarily assuaged by the possibility of a change in legal status, as some participants were skeptical that vulnerability to removal would be alleviated with a green card or naturalization.

**Fear exists in different ways.** Some participants did not speak of fear directly, but expressed related emotions and feelings. “The boundaries between fear and other emotions are not clear-cut,” as Bourk (2005, p. 8) reminds us. Some of the words used by participants are synonymous with fear, such as being scared or afraid, or related feelings, such as sad, guilty, enraged or angry. This is consistent with studies finding that for many, fear becomes synonymous with other emotions (Ayeni, 2012; Biderman et al., 1967; Spielberg & Sydeman, 1994). It is not easy to disentangle fear from other emotions that result from or are part of the causes of such anxiety; thus, various feelings become associated and interchangeable with fear in the person’s mind (Bourk, 2005).

For example, Anne, a 1.5-generation<sup>6</sup> immigrant now in her mid-20’s, discovered the realities of her undocumented status when she first applied to college. When she received a letter from the government stating that she had a limited amount of time to remain in the United States, she quickly experienced an emotional minefield: “Yeah, I would cry every single night because

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<sup>6</sup> 1.5 generation immigrants were born in another country but brought over as young children (by age 12) and raised in the United States (Kasinitz, et al., 2008).

I'm like, 'What's going to happen to me, what is my future going to look like?'... And there was a lot of anger and a lot of rage." Anne conflated her fear for her future with anger and rage over her situation (see Bourk, 2005).

Anger was a common feeling among participants, too, along with a myriad of other negative feelings. Amanda repeats the word *anger* five times in the following statement, leaving no doubt on how deportation affects her: "You know, stress, frustration, a lot of anger, a lot of anger, a lot of anger. Anger has been real for us and, I mean, some of it is linked to ... racial issues outside of that. You know, it's like – you know, we've been angry."

Frustration, another word Amanda used, is also commonly associated with fear. Maria, a woman from Western Europe with a Ph.D. from an American Ivy League university, expressed frustration along with fear: "Yeah, I'm just really afraid. I mean, I'm just really afraid that it's gonna change my life in ways that I cannot even imagine... And so, yeah, it's just really frustrating." Jack also expressed feelings of frustration when discussing the inability to travel freely:

*Pues, se siente uno frustrado porque, obviamente, no tienes por lo menos la seguridad de que vas a volver. O sea, vas con ese miedo latente de que puedes no volver por las redadas, por las inspecciones en las terminales de autobuses o en los aeropuertos ... Entonces, frustrado, sin libertad.*

[Translation: Well, you feel frustration because, obviously, you don't have even the security that you will return. That is, you go with that latent fear that you will not return because of the raids, the inspections at the bus terminal or the airports. ...So, frustrated, without freedom.]

Many participants expressed such feelings equated with fear. Madison, for example, expressed, “It makes me feel scared. ... I mean, it's just, it just makes me – like, sometimes I'm like really scared. ... It makes me look over my shoulder. ... I mean, it's like a constant fear.” Madison’s fear triggered other feelings, such as insecurity and paranoia, impelling her to look over her shoulder. Other participants also expressed similar insecurity based on their fear. Polly shared: “*No sé, no me siento tan segura, realmente en este país.*” [Translation: I do not know. I do not feel too secure, really, in this country.] Emma, who is undocumented and works in childcare and has been living in the United States for 23 years, discussed the importance of her faith in God and depicted her church membership as a coping mechanism to deal with her vulnerability to deportation. Still, neither her faith nor church provide sanctuary against insecurity: “*Porque no tenemos nada seguro en este país.*” [Translation: Because we do not have anything secure in this country.]

Fear and frustration not only feature in cause participants day-by-day lives, but also leave them with a sense of stagnation and with little hope for the future. Asked to describe how she feels when she thinks about her vulnerability to deportation, Sally’s vulnerability meant she was stuck, with no avenue for mobility or escape:

*Estancamiento, frustración y una persona sin progreso...Esto es frustrante. Es algo, cuando tú estás en un callejón sin salida, que tú estas estancado y más bien si tú eres una persona preparada, si tú eres una persona que te gusta ..Ni que si quieres un trabajo digno, tú puedes hacer.*

[Translation: Stagnation, frustration, and a person without progress ... This is frustrating. It is something, when you are in a dead end street, you are stuck, and if you are a skilled person, if you are a person that seeks to advance...you can't even have a dignified job.]

**Fear, the lack of freedom, and its consequences.** Fear, frustration, and insecurity, with regard to deportation, interweave to form a constrictive state of being, as participants start to feel as if they are living a life of confinement. Feelings of imprisonment or entrapment were common in participants' responses. For example, Sue, who has been living in the United States for 22 years, explained this effect as follows:

*Porque yo siento que a veces, ya siento que es como que me siento atrapada. Ya llegó el punto que sí me siento atrapada, que ya a veces cuando veo mi realidad, es que a veces no... Pero cuando tú despiertas y ves tu realidad, esa es. Entonces, pues obvio que no me siento libre porque no soy libre.*

[Translation: Well, I feel that at times, I feel as if I am trapped. I've reached the point that I feel trapped, that at times when I look at my reality, it's just that sometimes I don't...but then when you wake up and see your reality, that's it. So, it is obvious that I do not feel free because I am not free.]

Heather described similar feelings, “*Y vive un estilo de vida de jaula de oro.*” [Translation: And I lived a lifestyle of living in a golden cage.] The fact that Heather does not feel free and sees entrapment as her “reality” is particularly impactful. She grew up in her home country with a politically active father who instilled in her a sense of civic duty that she has to suppress at this point in her life. Lily, a documented immigrant introduced earlier, also used the “*Jaula de oro/golden cage*” analogy. “*Jaula de Oro*” is a song about the experience of being “illegal” by the Mexican group, “Los Tigres del Norte.” One verse says<sup>7</sup>:

*De mi trabajo a mi casa,  
no sé lo que me pasa,*

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<sup>7</sup> Lyrics are being duplicated solely for purposes of this dissertation, not publication, so therefore fall under Fair Use and does not violate copyright law (Cornell University, 2016).

*que aunque soy hombre de hogar,  
casi no salgo a la calle,  
pues tengo miedo que me hallen,  
y me pueden deportar,*

[Translation: From my job to my house  
I do not know what will happen to me  
Although I am the man of the house  
I hardly to go outside  
Well I am afraid they will find me  
And they can deport me]

The “*jaula de oro*” metaphor speaks of not leaving the house unless necessary, such as to go to work, because of the fear of being deported. That two different participants referenced “*jaula de oro*” speaks to its relevance. Also significant is that its use cuts across legal status: Heather is documented, Lily is not. To my knowledge the two women do not know each other. They come from different home countries, currently live in different New York City boroughs, work in different industries, and were each recruited for this study via different methods – Lily was recruited via snowball sampling and Heather by referral from a community organization.

Lack of freedom also manifested in restrictions participants placed on their activities. Amy says she avoids social settings, such as parties or going out at night: “*Trato de no salir en la noche, porque muchas veces en la noche, a veces los policías hasta lo pueden confundir a uno. O si está en alguna fiesta y pasa algo, los policías se llevan a quien sea.*” [Translation: I try not to go out at night, because many times at night, sometimes the police can confuse you. Or even if you’re at a party and something happens, the police take anyone.]

For Meg also avoids social gatherings due to the risk of deportation:

Yeah, I did avoid a lot of like certain things that [friends] wanted me to go to, I would say no. ... Like house parties. I know they have a lot of those. I know, I heard that they got shut down by police and right away I was like, 'I'm not going to that.' So I would avoid that... like I wouldn't go anywhere friends wanted to, I would avoid that, too.

Sue is another example, adding: “*pero que digas que yo me quiero ir a meter a los clubs, por ejemplo, ah, ¿Y si llega Migra? ...¿Y me llevan?*” [Translation: But to say I want to go to the clubs, for example, and what if immigration comes?... And they take me?] Sue is a single older woman with grown children. She has an amiable personality and seems to have many friends. She does not, however, feel comfortable going out and enjoy herself in social settings. For Sue, avoiding certain activities and places to prevent a situation that might lead to deportation foments a feeling of imprisonment:

*Ahora yo me siento que vivo acá pero es como presa...Yo me siento, yo te digo la verdad, yo aquí me siento presa, yo no siento que soy libre. ¿Porque cómo vas a decir que eres libre si tú no puedes ir adonde tú quieres?*

[Translation: Now I feel that I live here, but it is like being prisoner...I feel, I tell you the truth, here I feel like a prisoner, I do not feel I am free. Because, how can you say you are free if you cannot go where you want?]

Sue's argument that she did not feel free because she cannot go where she wishes is echoed by others. Peggy expressed the harmful effect of her fear of deportation, including a feeling of helplessness, as a form of slavery:

*Miedo es una de las que más te hacen daño. Tú sabes, miedo a que pase de verdad. Me da impotencia, que tú te sientes como, 'No puedo,' ¿ve?...Bueno, eso es miedo, la*



*emoción es el miedo. ...La impotencia es miedo también. O sea, 'No lo puedo hacer,' tú no estás libre – eso es lo que te hace como esclavo.*

[Translation: Fear is one of the things that does the most harm. You know, fear that [deportation] will happen for real. I get powerless. You feel as if, 'I can't,' you see? Well, that is fear. The emotion is fear. ... The powerlessness is fear as well. Or, 'I cannot do it,' you are not free – that is what makes you a slave.]

The fear of being deported and resulting feelings of entrapment and imprisonment seep into the everyday lives of the participants. Sue, Meg, and Amy's avoidance of social settings and spaces are based on a fear that those occasions might lead to a situation where they come into contact with the police and get discovered. For Jack, one must also avoid occasions of civil disobedience that can lead to confrontations with the police:

*Yo pienso que sí hay ciertas cosas donde no me atrevería a participar, que son las protestas, son las protestas y que ahí se origine un acto de vandalismo. Yo creo que sería una de las cosas que sí, de repente, como que me entra ese temor de estar presente y que arresten a tanta gente y, por mi condición de ilegal, me deporten.*

[Translation: I think there are certain things where I would not dare to participate in, which are the protests and [anytime] there is where an act of vandalism can originate. I think that would be one of the things that yes, suddenly, that [I would] start to feel the fear of being present [when] they arrest people because of my illegal status. They could deport me.]

Similarly, Polly also has avoided any political activities where she might come into contact with the police. She said, "*En nada de política, en nada... Porque tengo miedo que, como no soy ciudadana, me puedan deportar.*" [Translation: In nothing political, in nothing...because I am

afraid that, because I am not a citizen, they can deport me.] Madison also has avoided activities that might result in her clashing with the police, stating “I've never involved myself in civil disobedience, I avoid police.”

However, the fear of deportation stretches beyond refraining from behaviors that might involve acts of civil disobedience. Fear has led to a sense of distrust and suspicion, causing the avoidance of disobedient, but perfectly legal and harmless, behavior. Emma explained it as follows, “*Sí, bastante porque si nosotros – por ejemplo, tengo miedo hasta de no pagar la luz, la renta porque te mandan al bureau de crédito, te mandan tantas cosas.*” [Translation: Yes, plenty because we – for example, I have fear of not even paying the light bill, the rent, because they contact the credit bureau, they send you so many things.]

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the reality that most deportations are for non-criminal violations is clearly not lost on the participants, as many expressed avoiding not just criminal behavior, but legal and conforming behavior. Amanda stated how vulnerability to deportation can make one feel that any innocuous mistake might lead to removal:

So there's a certain level of comfort that gets removed, so just knowing that we're not citizens, you know, even little minor things that a normal person probably wouldn't fear that much like, I don't know...Anything that people do that, you know. I mean, not that we do illegal things but, you know, your taxes don't always add up that right, you make mistakes – and we do them all ourselves – but one of the things we think about is the fact that we gotta be careful because this is always a possibility.

Jack also discusses his point of view regarding the state of a deportable immigrant's life:

*Entonces, yo creo que es algo triste, es una situación triste donde ellos, como la autoridad, creen que esa es la manera perfecta de cortar derechos a la gente, los*

*derechos más elementales como el derecho de equivocarte...Estamos hablando de situaciones menores, ¿no?*

[Translation: And so, I think it is something sad, a sad situation where they, as the authority, think that is the perfect way of take away people's rights, the most fundamental rights such as the right to make a mistake...we are talking about minor situations, no?].

Jack, Emma and Amanda's statements further underscore the insecurity felt by participants that even making a simple mistake might lead to deportation. This fear and insecurity leads to feelings of imprisonment and entrapment, with detrimental effects. Polly describes the effects of this fear as harmful and disabling, and equates her lack of freedom to slavery. Sally described the ill effects of her situation: "*Mal, muy mal. Como te digo, como cuando a ti te entran en un hoyo, acorralado, no puedes salir, estancado.*" [Translation: Bad, very bad. How do I tell you... like when they put you in a hole, at bay, stuck.] Sally's description of feeling stuck was common. Other participants also described vulnerability to deportation as being akin to being in a state of stagnation.

The vulnerability to deportation and the accompanying fear it generates undermines participants' ability to make certain some life choices. Madison expressed this suppression of choice by saying, "I can't quit my job, like I can't... and it's like this situation now where it makes more sense to stay here... as opposed to like go somewhere else and have to start it again." Madison's sense of freedom is limited by the job opportunities available to her as a non-citizen resident. Jack also described other similar limitations about securing necessities fundamental to daily living:

*Cuando yo hablo sin libertad, me refiero a que ...Por ejemplo eso, el hecho de no tener un estatus legal te hace como que te limita, pues, a hacer otras cosas, por ejemplo conseguir un carro, por ejemplo conseguir un apartamento - ese tipo de cosas.*

[When I say without freedom, I refer to... for example, that, the fact that not having a legal status makes you, like it limits you, to do certain things, for example getting a car, for example, finding an apartment – those types of things.]

Here Jack shows that the fear of deportation limits the ability of participants to make life choices non-immigrants might take for granted, such as getting a car or an apartment. Meanwhile, certain life choices have been forced upon some participants. When Polly was still undocumented she was accused of child-abuse – a charge she still denies and can provide proof to the contrary. Her fear of being deported, however, compelled her to agree to plead guilty to something she never did:

*Polly: Yo tenía miedo. Y por eso me hice culpable, por algo que yo no cometí -*

*SL: ¿Por qué?*

*Polly: Porque uno, tenía miedo porque me podían deportar si me hallaban culpable*

[Translation:

*Polly: I was afraid. And that is why I pled guilty, for something I did not commit.*

*SL: Why?*

*Polly: Because, one, I was afraid because they could deport me if they found me guilty.]*

Polly was advised not to continue fighting her case, as doing so might bring unwanted attention by court personnel, and possibly cause her legal status to be discovered. Her attorney told her it would be less risky to plead guilty and pay a fine.

Forced decision-making was not imposed solely on Polly. Maria was aware of this in her own situation:

... there are solutions to not being deported, but to me it puts me under a lot of pressure because it doesn't really give you the authentic choices that you probably would've made based on the decisions that I've made in the past...I feel I'm being forced into decision-making processes that I would've never even thought about. So I can only imagine what people with much more threatening situations would think of in order to stay here.

In Maria's case, she considered marrying for the sole purpose of obtaining a green card. Entering into marriage was not an option Maria considered for herself, much less agreeing to fraudulent marriage. However, her vulnerability to deportation was forcing her to consider this an option. Even so, Maria acknowledges that others are in more dire situations with decisions resulting in more ominous consequences, such as Polly's.

The fear of being deported had led most participants to equate any behavior, criminal or not, as risky even when there might only be a remote possibility of contact with a police officer. Ellen, a woman who initially arrived in the United States from a western European country without authorization, reveals how she has felt whenever she simply saw the police before she became a Legal Permanent Resident, that, "They are gonna deport me. They want to deport me."

From a policy perspective, promoting fear within the deportable population by threatening removal is intended to deter of criminal behavior (Robin, C., 2004). However, this desired effect appears to have created secondary issues related to law enforcement. For Polly, fear of deportation and concern with being arrested made police encounters risky. Her fear of being deported led her to doubt whether or not she should even call the police in the case of an emergency:

Polly: *Depende, en qué emergencia.*

SL: *¿Depende en qué?*

Polly: *Si es algo que yo puedo solucionar, quizás no. Porque, lo primero, casi siempre, lo primero que vienen a hacer es preguntar... Yo no le doy mi 'ID' a nadie.*

[Translation:

Polly: Depending on the emergency.

SL: Depends on what?

Polly: If it is something I can resolve, maybe not. Because, the first, almost always, the first thing they do is ask – I do not give my ID to anyone.]

Polly's fear of being deported and the resulting distrust of the police is understandable and common for undocumented immigrants. Polly, however, is a legal permanent resident, and yet she still does not trust the police. This distrust extends to the point that she would think twice before calling the police in case of an emergency. Polly's situation further underscores that fear of deportation cuts across legal statuses.

Distrust of the police was not the only form of distrust that existed. Mistrust of neighbors was another common theme. Ellen, cited earlier regarding her feelings toward the police, added, "I would say most of the residents who are here illegally, they're constantly thinking, 'I'm gonna get deported,'... 'then my American neighbor will say something about me,' Like things like that." The previously described amiable Sue added that she does not trust her neighbors for fear that, "*Al rato se enojas conmigo, me echas la Migra, ¿no? Porque ha pasado, ha pasado.*"

[Translation: After a while [they] get annoyed with me and call immigration on me? Because it has happened, it has happened.]

Throughout the response analyses, we have seen that the fear of deportation leads to insecurity. Ellen and Sue’s testimony both demonstrate that the fear of deportation results in not just insecurity of their current personal state, but also the insecurity that leads to the inability to form social relationships. Fear of deportation leads to the lack of trust in neighbors. In addition, Meg expressed apprehension in trusting friends: “Because, you know, of course there's still like you never know, because someone could be an asshole and just be like, ‘I don't want you here blah blah...’ Maybe they would, I don't know, I don't know everybody fully.”

**Fear exists vicariously.** Participant responses also revealed that fear is not necessarily related to an actual threat, such as fighting a current case of deportation. Nor is it related to personally knowing someone who has been deported. The fear of deportation was not limited to actual direct experience, but can be perceptual as well as vicarious in nature. Fear of being deported led participants to discuss their fear as a product of indirect experiences, such as hearing news of others being deported or of enforcement activities. For example, Jack:

*Por ejemplo, las redadas en las fronteras de simplemente meterse y buscar quien tiene ID o no y lo deportan. Yo creo que esa es una situación que podía haber parado y sembró demasiado miedo. Y aquí en Nueva York no llegamos a tanto, no. Pero, pues sí, yo creo que es una situación que sí aterroriza a mucha gente.*

[Translation: For example, the border raids, simply going in and looking for anyone who does or not have an ID and deporting them. I think that is a situation that could have stopped but planted too much fear. And here in New York we do not go that far, no, but, well yes, I think that is a situation that does terrorize a lot of people.]

Jack’s knowledge of immigration raids and the fear that arose from that information is similar to the fear discussed in Chapter Two. Both actual and rumored raids led members of immigrant

communities in New York City to express fear. Thus, even though New York City is considered an ‘immigrant friendly’ city, immigrants are not necessarily entirely comforted. As Sue stated:

*Lo peor del caso es que cada vez me siento más difícil porque, como te digo, ahora mismo yo siento que esta mas – Es que también hay muchos lugares que ya no es tan seguro. Y mira, todavía aquí en Nueva York estamos un poquito mas tranquilos...Pero no digamos que estamos bien, bien seguritos, no... Porque también aquí, te digo, ha habido redadas.*

[Translation: The worst of the matter is that each time I feel it more difficult because, how do I tell you, right now I feel that it is more – it’s also because there are many places that are not safe. And look, still here in New York [City] we are a bit more safe...But let’s not say we are good, very secure, no..., because here (referring to New York City) also, I’m telling you, there have been raids.]

Sue admits that immigrants are safer in New York City. However, when Sue says in her quote that “we are a bit more safe,” she changes her tone to a higher inflection at the word “bit,” denoting that immigrants are “safer” in New York City, but not by very much. This awareness is consistent with the research. A 2011 study by the Pew Hispanic Center showed that 41% of Latinos were aware of the current record number of deportations, and 24% of all Latinos knew someone who had been deported or detained within the previous year.

Vicarious fear was also felt in the context of fear for family members who would be affected by participants’ deportation. Deportation has a domino effect, as some of the focus group responses indicate. As demonstrated with the focus group quotations below, families, communities and society in general are affected<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> The cited focus group responses are translated from Spanish.



- “We relate with the parents for the suffering at being separated from their children and breaking the family in two parts.”
- “Families must remain united.”
- “[Deportation] Affects economically, emotionally, the children suffer a lot.”
- “[Deportation] Affects the families, society, and the community.”
- “Familiar disintegration, moral, spiritual, economically, childhood education, psychologically.”
- “Because it separates the families.”
- “Especially the separation of the families because [it makes] the children become separated from the parents.”
- “Many times family values are lost, the respect for parents, the customs. The children are raised with foreign customs, and when [the children and parents] are reunited, there is no comprehension on either side.”
- “It made us think a lot to be ready for these deportations; the parents are sad because they [will miss] this country.”

Anne elaborated on this in the following way: “I think it was more fear for my parents because after the whole commotion of, you know, being called by ICE I realized that my parents were very unsafe... But I think it’s always being just fearful for my parents and not really fearful for myself.” Jill also expressed:

*Tiene uno hijos y ya es totalmente diferente. Ya se piensa diferente, ya se siente uno inseguro, ya no es por uno – es por los hijos. ... Por los hijos, porque ellos ya se han acostumbrado a este país y ya es difícil que ellos se lleguen a acostumbrar a nuestro país, entonces uno se siente más inseguro.*

[Translation: One has children and it is entirely different. Now you think differently, now you feel insecure, not for yourself – it is for the children. ... For the children, because they are accustomed to this countr and it is difficult for them to get accustomed to our country, and so you feel more insecure.]

**Fear for those who will be left behind.** This fear on behalf of one's family and the concern for those left behind also turns into guilt, often related to having to leave people behind. Leaving behind children, in particular, and the effects participants' absence would have on them was a major concern. Polly specifically expressed this, sharing, "*Pero como te digo, la verdad, muchas veces me da más miedo por mi hijo que por mí.*" [Translation: But how do I tell you... The truth, many times, is that I am more afraid for my son than for myself.] Molly added, "*Ya tengo dos hijos que desde siempre me van a necesitar, soy yo la que estoy mamá y papá, entonces más miedo me da.*" [Translation: I have two children who will always need me. I am their mother and father, and so I am more afraid.] Cody, an undocumented father of two, who at the time of the interview was living in the U.S for 14 years, said, "*Bueno, yo trato de no pensar en la deportación porque, imagínese, si me llegaran a deportar a mi, tengo a mis hijas acá.*" [Translation: Well, I try not to think about deportation because, imagine, if they were to deport me, I have my daughters here.] Ken, who has a green card and at the time of the interview had been living in the United States for 24 years said, "And I think that's a major factor in most of our lives: who will be left behind. My daughter...who I feel I will have abandoned her. So for that reason I feel anxious." Jack also stated,

*Entonces cuando uno ve, por decir, en la televisión, que están deportando gente y eso, uno se pone... de imaginarse y decir, '¿Que será de mis dos niñas?*

[Translation: And so when one sees, so to speak, on the television, the deportations, one starts to think...to imagine and say, 'What will happen to my two daughters?']

This guilt was especially harsh on the single mothers: Lily, Polly, Amy, Molly, Holly, Betty and Alice are all single mothers. Sue summed up her role of a single mother:

*Porque también... aunque ellos están ya grandes, me necesitan aquí, me necesitan aquí porque, sea como sea, pues yo soy la que llevo mi casa. ... Por que yo soy la madre y siento que yo soy la cabeza de mis hijos.*

[Translation: Because also... although they are now grown, they need me here, they need me here because, either way, I am the head of the house. ... Because I am the mother and I feel I am the head of household of my children.]

Along with other participants, Amy expressed the weight of this guilt,

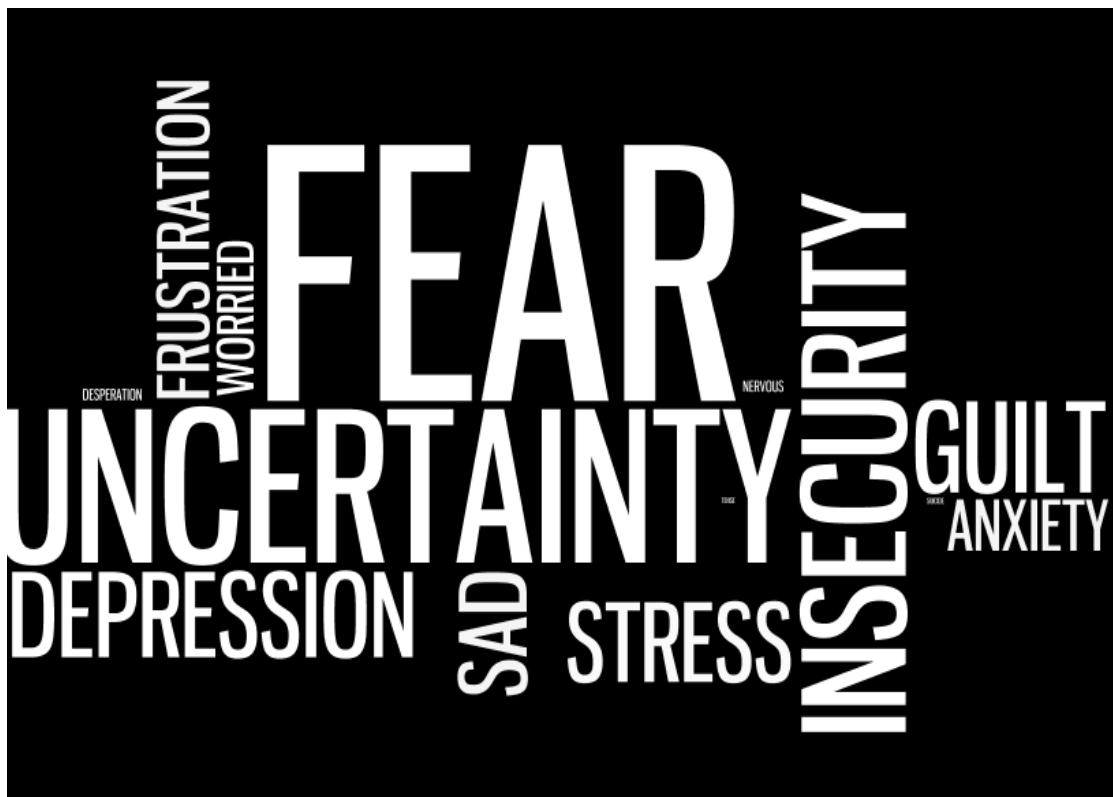
*Si me llegaran a deportar... No, no, como madre no hay palabras para decir cuánto me afectaría eso. Más siendo madre soltera, mentalmente, emocionalmente, es lo peor quizás, que pueda pasar.*

[Translation: If I were to get deported... no, no, as a mother there are no words to express how this would affect me. And more so being a single mother, mentally, emotionally, it is probably the worst that could happen.]

As noted throughout the previously cited quotes, the impact that the fear of deportation has on the lives of immigrants extends far beyond just behavioral effects. Besides avoidance techniques, participants expressed the emotional toll that vulnerability to and fear of deportation has on their lives. In addition, feelings of insecurity and uncertainty were prevalent among the responses, for some this especially manifested in anguished concern for those left behind.

**Fear results in emotional and psychological distress.** There is a tendency in the social sciences to reduce the discourse of emotions to some human rationality or dispassionate logic, where the narrative of fear refuses to see that it has a physiology (Bourk, 2005). However, as

shown in the previous section, emotional states associated with fear include frustration, anger, rage, and insecurity and uncertainty. These emotions led to certain behaviors and avoidance patterns. In addition, participants elaborated on their sense of identity and reception in the United States. The findings cited here reveal feelings and expressions that are also associated with anxiety and other emotional and states of being that have been found to impact a person's emotional and psychological health along with well-being and overall quality of life. These expressions are listed in the following sections.



*Figure 3 Wordcloud of Participant Responses.*

As the word cloud demonstrates, a common theme found across participant responses was not just that they had a fear of deportation, but that this fear had an emotional or psychological impact. Their fear also affected them socially. In the previous section, I introduce

to some of these effects, such as insecurity and uncertainty, as well as feelings of isolation, entrapment, and feelings of guilt. That section accounts for how vulnerability to deportation made immigrants feel. The second research question for this study pertains to how the feelings associated with deportation manifest in their daily life. As such, the next section elaborates on the emotional effects of vulnerability to deportation.

In this section I discuss participant responses in terms of how they described their fear of being deported in relation to their emotional and psychological state. When asked about their fear of deportation, participants used words such as “anxiety,” “stress,” “desperation,” “worry” among others, to describe their state of mind. Many respondents spoke of depression and some stated physiological effects as indicators of these emotions, for example, constant crying or breaking out in hives.

**Fear creates a state of anxiety.** The language of anxiety is commonly used when discussing fear, where fear is the response to an immediate threat and anxiety is a more generalized state in response to an anticipated one (Bourk, 2005). This was evident in the responses from participants. The fear of deportation and constant thoughts of what might happen becomes a source of anxiety for them. Amy explained that her anguish was hard to articulate, but her emotional state was very visible as she attempted to do so. As she cried, she described what goes through her mind when she thinks about being deported back to her country of birth:

*Yo las veo a ellas, y me pongo a pensar, qué voy a hacer yo...si eso pasa. Si me llegaran a deportar...No, no, como madre no hay palabras para decir cuánto me afectaría eso. Más siendo madre soltera, mentalmente, emocionalmente, es lo peor quizás, que pueda pasar.*

[Translation: I look at [her daughters], and start to think, what will I do...if [deportation] happens. If they were to deport me...No, no, as a mother there are no words to express how much that would affect me. And even more as a single mother, mentally, emotionally, is the worst probably that can happen.]

Fear relates to the immediate, while anxiety relates to the anticipated (Bourke, 2005). In her quote, Amy describes her fear of deportation (the immediate) and her anxiety (the uncertainty of when the immediate will actually occur) as she recounts her fear and the distress that she experiences when thinking about the possibility of deportation. Similarly, when Anne talked about her emotional rollercoaster of anger and rage, she also discussed how her this led to anxiety due to the constant thinking: “I think when I was in my teens and I realized hey, I’m undocumented, I’m not really supposed to be here. Yeah, I would cry every single night because I’m like what’s going to happened to me, what is my future going to look like.” Maria also describes a similar state: “I mean, if I think about it, I could also just cry for half an hour. Like it's no problem and there were a lot of times in the past when I just cried constantly.” Madison reinforced Maria’s perspective in saying, “I mean, it's just, it just makes me... It makes me look over my shoulder... I mean, it's like a constant fear, like little things”

Just as fear is not limited to an immediate or direct experience, neither is anxiety. Anxiety is not limited to the persons who are directly impacted. For example, Claire, who is documented and at the time of the interview lived in the United States for 21 years, described: “It was a huge source of anxiety for [her family] even after they had their Green Cards because they were afraid for me.” Here, Claire describes the vicarious nature of anxiety.

**Fear creates a state of insecurity and uncertainty.** As highlighted throughout participant responses, the vulnerability to deportation leads to feelings of insecurity and living in

a state of uncertainty. Besides being accompaniments to fear, these reactions are emotional states that have been found to be indicators of a lack of well-being (Chavez et al., 2013). Cody described his emotional state as “...*mas tenso, mas preocupado, mas nervioso.*” [Translation: ...more tense, more worried, more nervous.] He goes on to narrate his daily life the following way:

*¿que tal si me toca un día a mi...Que me deporten. Uno nunca sabe...Uno nunca sabe que le puede tocar el día de mañana...Todos los días me persigno, me despido de mis hijas esperando que las pueda volver a ver otro día.*

[Translation: ... suppose it's my turn one day... to get deported. One never knows...one never knows when it's their turn tomorrow...every day I cross myself [religiously], say goodbye to my daughters hoping that I will be able to see them another day.]

Cody does not feel secure. His insecurity due to being vulnerable to deportation makes his daily life a cycle of uncertainty, where he is unsure if he will see his family at the end of each day. Thus, for him, it is crucial that he cherish each day with his family, and he does not leave the house without saying a quick prayer first.

For Jill, the fear of deportation and resulting uncertainty leads to stress:

*Me siento – Bueno, por una parte me siento segura y por la otra me siento insegura porque uno nunca sabe. Uno nunca sabe que es lo que hoy puede pasar...Y entonces eso, siempre estando pensando, pues nos pone tristes al mismo momento..No es así porque uno se viene con otro tipo de forma de pensar y cuando uno llega aquí la vida es un poco mas estresante.*

[Translation: I feel – well, on one side I feel secure and the other I feel insecure because you never know. One never knows what will happen today...and then that, also thinking, well it makes us sad at the same time...when one arrives here life is a bit more stressful].

Jill's life of uncertainty and the stress it engenders makes her sad. She does not feel secure. She says she is constantly thinking about her situation, which indicates her anxiety. Others shared this state of living in uncertainty. Participants described their vulnerability as leaving them in a doubtful, insecure state. Lily described the pressure her uncertain situation posed on her:

*Porque nunca se sabe. Yo hoy estoy aquí, pero no se mañana que va a pasar conmigo. Que si me deportan o me muero..A mi deportarme es lo más difícil para uno... Siento la presión de que un día, por cualquier cosa, uno nunca sabe, que pueda ser deportada.*

[Translation: Because you never know. I am here today, but tomorrow I do not know what will happen with me. If I get deported or I die. For me to get deported is the most difficult for one...I feel the pressure that one day, for whatever reason, one never knows, you are deported.]

In addition to these expressed states of insecurity and uncertainty, in relation to the fear of deportation, participants articulated feelings of stress and sadness. These emotions were previously associated with participants' sense of imprisonment and entrapment.

**Fear creates a state of isolation.** Another condition stated by participants was isolation. As mentioned in the previous section, participants described their vulnerability to deportation as leading to a life of confinement. This situation indicated compounded feelings of isolation. Jack describes his situation this way:



*A entender varias situaciones emocionales, el estar lejos de la familia, el hecho de sentirte aislado.*

SL: *¿Usted se siente aislado?*

Jack: *A veces, muchas veces así me sentía - aislado.*

[Translation:

To understand various emotional situations, to be away from the family, the fact of feeling isolated.

SL: You feel isolated?

Jack: Sometimes, many times I felt that way – isolated.]

Emma also discusses feelings of isolation:

*A veces yo me deprimó, me pongo muy... Todo el tiempo estoy sola, entonces me siento muy - ¿cómo se dice? - muy vulnerable porque, pues, ni estoy aquí ni estoy allá, ¿verdad?*

[Translation: Sometimes I get depressed, I get very... all the time I am alone, and so I feel very, how do I say, very vulnerable because, when I am neither here nor there, correct?]

Emma states that her vulnerability to deportation makes her feel as if she is always alone. In addition, she says she sometimes feels depressed, and discusses her state of limbo, where she is neither in her home country nor at home in the United States, her “host” country, underscoring the lack of belongingness.

These comments are reminiscent of “*Jaula de Oro*,” as previously discussed. The state of confinement and isolation can be found in the lyrics of the song. In addition, the chorus for that song also speaks of the sadness that the feelings of imprisonment bring:

*De que me sirve el dinero,  
si estoy como prisionero,  
dentro desta gran nacion,  
cuando me acuerdo hasta lloro,  
aunque la jaula sea de oro,  
no deja de ser prision*

[Translation: What good does money do me

If I am like a prisoner

In this great nation

When I remember I even cry

Even though the cage is golden

It does not cease to be a prison]

**Fear Leads to Sadness.** The actual word “sad” was used 13 times by participants. For instance, when asked how vulnerability to deportation made her feel, Jill shared, “*Pues, a la vez muy triste, pero a la vez, pues, no se puede hacer mucho.*” [Translation: Well, at the same time sad, but at the same time, there is not much that can be done.] Jack similarly expressed his view of the sad state of vulnerability to deportation similarly: “*Pues, es algo triste. Honestamente, es algo triste.*” [Translation: Well, it is something sad. Honestly, it is something sad.] Maria’s sadness turned into feelings of despair, “I mean, I cry a lot. So if I would bring it up at home, I would definitely cry about it and just – because you’re just hopeless and helpless and there’s nothing much you can do apart from giving up who you are.”

As stated throughout, the predominant feeling expressed by participants was fear and it correlating emotions of frustration and anxiety. However, as we’ve seen in this section, may

participants expressed feelings of sadness. At the same time, sadness was accompanied by other feelings, such as in Maria's case. More often, sadness was mentioned along with feelings of depression. Peggy, for example, along with the underlying fear, expresses her sad and emotional state and its accompanying depression:

*Miedo. Miedo es una de las que más te hacen daño. Tú sabes, miedo a que pase de verdad. Me da impotencia... La impotencia es miedo también. O sea... tú no estas libre - eso es lo que te hace como esclavo... eso es algo duro porque, tú ves, la tristeza, es muy triste... Depresión, tú sabes, se siente muy fuerte. Triste por muchos años, muchos años... Es triste, tú sabes, yo creo que tú tienes que aprender a lidiar con eso... Aprender a vivir con ese dolor. Pero ya no dices, 'Ya con el tiempo.' Tú no lo pierdes, no. Yo aprendí a vivir con eso.*

[Translation: Fear. Fear is one of the most harmful [effects]. You know, fear that it [deportation] will really happen. It makes me impotent. The impotence is fear as well. Or rather...you are not free – that is what makes one feel like a slave...it is something hard because, you see, because the sadness, it is very sad. Depression, you know, is felt very strongly. Sad for many years, many years. It is sad, you know, and I think you have to learn how to deal with it...learn to live with that pain. But you no longer say, 'and eventually' [one will get over it]. You do not lose it, no. I learned to live with it.]

Peggy expresses how her vulnerable state results in an amalgam of emotions. Peggy echoes the feelings of Heather and Sue and others who expressed that the fear of deportation results in feelings of not being free. She also discusses, as Polly did, that the lack of freedom makes her feel like a slave. She then discusses the long-term sadness she has felt, and how that has also

turned to depression. For Peggy, the sadness and depression are not temporary states, but emotions she's had to continually endure.

Both Sally and Madison discuss the stress their situation puts them in, and how these create a depressive state. Sally: "*Tú queriendo hacer y no he podido. Entonces, esa es una frustración, me quedé chaspeada, me entristecí, hasta me deprimí un poco.*" [Translation: You are wanting to do but unable to. So then, that is a frustration, I was left swindled, I was saddened, I even became a bit depressed.] Madison described her emotional state, as "stressed," and added, "Like three years ago...and I was kind of depressed."

**Fear leads to a state of depression.** The previously cited quotes are examples of how, unsurprisingly, feelings of sadness, hopelessness, isolation, and the perpetual state of fear in which the participants find themselves can evolve into depression. As introduced in the previous section, participants commonly described feeling sad, and, in more severe cases, depressed over the conditions of their lives. Depression was referenced 15 times, with the actual word being used 28 times. Depression was referenced in conjunction with other emotions, such as sadness, but was also used as a stand-alone emotional state. Sue stated, "*pues, yo la verdad me siento con mucha depresión.*" [Translation: well, the truth is that I feel a lot of depression.] Maria also shared:

You know, [she has] no history of being depressed or anything. But I can tell you, since the moment that I knew [she could be deported] everything changed in my life, everything changed. When I heard this, like I think I cried the whole day because I really didn't know what to do ... and just because of this bullshit I'm being put in an emotional place where I didn't even know I would be.

Maria discusses being “put in an emotional place,” specifically she describes her state of depression. Similarly, Claire states, “So a lot of helplessness and helplessness, a lot of depression and anxiety.” Claire echoed Maria’s previously cited feelings of helplessness. In addition, she expressed that she felt anxiety and depression.

Focus group responses also indicate the impact of deportability leads to feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, stress, sadness and depression:

- “The insecurity.”
- “The uncertainty over the insecurity in our [home] countries.”
- “It is sad, it is cruel in all forms, it affects us a lot, spiritually and economically.”
- “The stress of being undocumented and a student; that this can affect us; we cannot think about status; rather we are all humans; the pain that we go through solely for trying to be in a better situation.”
- “Deportation affects persons with depression, economically.”

Expanding on Sue’s quotation when she described the “reality” of her situation as being trapped, she also expressed: “Pues uno viene y vienes a sufrir porque en realidad.” [Translation: Well, one comes and one comes in reality to suffer.] Other elements of fear include shame and humiliation (Bourk, 2005). Such elements are shared by Peggy, who relates, “*Tu sientes una depresión horrible, horrible porque te sientes humillado.*” [Translation: You feel a horrible depression, horrible because you feel humiliated.] Peggy’s feelings of depression and humiliation, as a deportable immigrant, were extreme enough for her to seek professional help: “*Yo busqué ayuda profesional porque estaba muy deprimida, muy. A un extremo, ya no quería como ni trabajar, yo no quería.*” [Translation: I sought professional help because I was very

depressed, very. On one extreme, I did not even want work, I did not want to.] Meanwhile, Amanda confirmed similar emotions:

I've been depressed and the depression has been linked to that, it really has been... We also advance ourselves academically in hopes of making ourselves more likely to stay, so we do have the ambitions, but these things all factor in, everything we do connects back to that.

Amanda also links her depression to her vulnerability and resulting fear to deportation. She discusses the steps she and her husband have taken to decrease the likelihood that she would be deported. As a couple, they hoped the mutual ambition of seeking higher education degrees would make them more desirable. Yet these steps – all motivated by the fear of deportation – take a toll.

Other participants shared similar insights into their well-being, such as constant crying and the feelings of desperation. Jack shared he experienced the feeling of desperation: “*Me senti muy desesperado.*” [Translation: I felt very desperate.] Though Maria, as previously noted, is a self-described “proud” woman, she does manage to convey their deep despair and weigh of situation:

So, for me, it was just really a shocker... And it turns out I'm really under a lot of pressure... I mean, if I think about it, I could also just cry for half an hour. Like it's no problem and there were a lot of times in the past when I just cried constantly because I just thought that it's just not fair. It's just not fair, I've been working really hard... Okay, emotions are not useful in like public situations... It's just I'm not crying [at the moment of the interview]. But... probably if we'd be in more of a private situation like there's no question about it. And so it's probably cultural that I'm not crying but trust me, if there

would be ten more minutes or something and I would talk about it, I would just be desperate.

By her own admission, Maria is not an emotionally expressive woman, particularly when it comes to crying. However, her deportability has turned her into a person who has broken down crying both in private and sometimes in public. Maria's personality change is consistent with her earlier statements of how deportability changes people, when she says that being vulnerable to deportation and the fear associated with it forces people into situations they would not normally be in and decisions they would not ordinarily make.

**Fear leads to thoughts of suicide.** Another predictable outcome to the negative emotional impact that the vulnerability to deportation had on participants' lives is that of thoughts of suicide. Taking these outcomes together, where participants are expressing emotional states that denote anguish, and especially the overarching feeling of debilitating fear, it comes as no surprise that they would seek ways to end the suffering. It is a foreseeable reaction that such an option to end one's life might emerge as the only way to end these tumultuous emotions. Such was the sentiment of one of my participants, as Jack discloses:

*Sí, y es así. Entonces incluso hubo situaciones a veces en las que consideras el suicidio, ¿no? Son situaciones muy fuertes...Tu sientes una depresión horrible, horrible porque te sientes humillado...bueno, yo me siento mal, un impedimento, una impotencia, sí. Hasta cierto punto, todas estas cosas te deprimen, tú sabes.*

[Translation: Yes, it is so. And so there were also situations in which I sometimes considered suicide, no? There are strong situations. You feel a horrible depression, horrible because you feel humiliated...well, I feel bad, an impediment, a helplessness, yes. Until a certain point, all of these things depress you, you know?]

Jack also mentions humiliation and feelings of impotence. Such feelings were expressed by other participants as well, such as Peggy and Polly. Similarly, Jack discusses feelings of depression. He is the only one, however, who discusses feelings of suicide. However, considering that the tangential feelings he mentions when discussing his previous thoughts of suicide were shared by other participants, it might be fair to say that perhaps others have considered it as well. I did not, however, ask any participants if they ever considered thoughts of suicide, as it was not my place to inject any ideas or expressions into the responses of my participants.

**Fear leads to physiological changes.** Physiological changes are also associated with fear (Bourk, 2005). Such changes were expressed by participants. Claire discussed how her fear of deportation manifested itself physiologically: “But then I think I went home and then, that night, I broke out in hives.”

## Summary

While researchers believe there is no consistent response to fear (Bourk, 2005), the previous section reveals a pattern in participant responses in relation to this dominant emotion. Participants expressed how vulnerability to deportation manifested as fear and they described how that fear impacts their lives. This fear was not limited to undocumented participants, but was universally felt among them regardless of their immigration status. Moreover, the fear was a result of both a real and perceived vulnerability, wherein some participants also felt a vicarious fear resulting from the experiences of others. In addition, participants described this fear as isolating and caused them to engage in specific avoidance behaviors.

Moreover, the extreme lengths that the fear of being deported drives people to is a



powerful statement on the gravity of impact that immigration enforcement has on those vulnerable to deportation. In reality, however, the reactions are not necessarily “extreme.” The feelings expressed by my participants are understandable, considering that the imposition of fear is meant to elicit such a reaction. However, the impact is nevertheless considerable and greatly detrimental. The vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it causes emotional and psychological distress, negatively influencing participants’ well-being, and overall quality of life.

**Research Question 2: How does vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, impact an immigrant’s degree of integration?**

Most of the participants expressed how being vulnerable to deportation gave them the perception of being unwanted, unwelcome and not belonging. Said feelings led participants to feel unmotivated to be civically engaged, affecting their ability to build social capital and harming their social relationships. When participants were asked to express how vulnerability to deportation made them feel, it became apparent that those feelings mentioned in the previous section compounded to form a particular identity associated with their social position in the United States. In this section, I present and discuss perceptions of being unwanted, unwelcome, and not belonging, and how these perceptions caused them to restrict their level of civic and social engagement.

**Feelings of being unwelcome or unwanted.** As noted earlier, fear of deportation was accompanied by varied emotions. Among others, insecurity and uncertainty were mentioned, which also led to feelings of isolation, imprisonment and entrapment. These responses also indicated feelings of being unwelcome in the United States. For example, Maria stated very clearly:

Not welcome, not welcome... So I don't feel like there's a high degree of being

welcome... I mean, I'm so demotivated, I don't even know why. And to tell you the truth, if I'm in a position where this country doesn't even acknowledge the work that I'm doing...I don't even wanna be here...And that used to be different, by the way. When I was much, much younger...and I knew when I was like fourteen - I even have it in my little journal - that New York was once supposed to be my home and this completely changed.

Maria's sentiment here reflects a frustration, possibly because the predominant belief is that she will never feel the respect she deserves because she is an immigrant. Maria's frustration is compounded by the fact that her dream was for the United States to be her home. I introduced Maria as a woman with an Ivy League education who has a high socio-economic status. Due to her education and skill-set, Maria resents her situation and appears to deal with this frustration by considering bringing her societal contributions elsewhere. Maria was aware of her position relative to other immigrants, as was evidenced in her acknowledgement that her forced decision-making was relatively minimal. Thus, she felt that, although her dream of living in the United States might not come true, she had options. Others, however, with different backgrounds, did not consider Maria's option because they are not in her socio-economic level or have her education background and resulting social capital. This awareness was also evidenced by Chad who feels excluded and outside of the mainstream opportunity structure. When asked to elaborate what he meant when he expressed that the United States is not his country, he explains:

*Pues sí porque - ¿cómo le diré? - por lo mismo que no tenemos documentos. O sea, creo que somos, digamos, marginados, si se puede decir, porque no puede uno tener los derechos de un ciudadano de este país.* [Translation: Well yes, because, how do I say? Because we do not have documents. I think we are, let's say, marginalized, if you can

say, because one cannot have the same rights as a citizen of this country.]

To Chad, it is not just the lack of “papers,” but the lack of citizenship that puts him in a socially diminished position. Although he had been living in the United States for 17 years at the time of the interview, his legal status made him feel this was not his country.

Scott, who came to the United States as a child and had been living in the United States for 32 years at the time of the interview, saw his status as a Black man plays a role in him being unwanted:

And deep down inside I had thought about it and said, I wish I wasn't Black. But there's when there was a tremendous amount of fear... When the fear that immigration was going to come after me... It was really fear of the state. In fact, the way that I'm feeling now, all these fears makes me feel like the state doesn't want me and I'm a threat to the state. And that's when the fear shit really kicked in.

He adds:

So the fear is everywhere, like I have fear that I'm going to get locked up, I have fear that I'm going to get stopped, I have fear that if I get locked up that I'm going to get deported, I have fear that if they do try to deport me I'm going to be detain in immigration indefinitely because they won't be able to get travel documents... So fear isn't prioritized, there's just a singular fear of just being a black man; right? And the way that I look at it is that there are different entry points of those fear, different entry points that society reinforces that fear, you know what I mean?

For Ken, the feeling of being welcome is more nuanced. Ken prefers not to see his position in the way Chad or Maria do. He does not deny that, at the institutional level, the United States intentionally wishes for him to feel unwanted and unwelcome. His choice, however, is to

reject this perceived negative reception and seek more local connections:

We are thinking beyond that when the reality is it is only the space that we are can control and that we need to worry about. So whether nationally there's an unwelcome feeling, it doesn't change where I am, the community that I'm in. So I don't go so far out to say, 'Well, do I feel welcome in this country?' Is not about-- This country is made up of communities and I feel welcome in those communities.

Indeed, many participants belonged to some form of a community. Many immigrated into this country with the assistance of others, and were able to temporarily settle with family members or friends who were already living in New York City. In fact, it was via their affiliation with the church that I was able to recruit several participants for this study. However, respondents indicate that their reception into U.S. society in general suggests that they are unwelcome and unwanted. Ken's response indicates awareness of this reception, and he chooses to negate the rejection. His attitude with how to cope with his being unwelcome was not shared by other participants. For other participants, the prevailing sentiment of being unwanted and unwelcome brought the to the conclusion that they simply do not belong in the United States

**Feelings of not belonging.** The feeling of being unwanted, unwelcome and marginalized affected how participants identified themselves in the United States This identification was related to how they perceived they were being received in the United States Across the responses, many participants identified feeling a lack of belonging. Peggy succinctly captured this sentiment, stating, *"No, hasta que tú no estas legal, tú no te sientes así, que eres parte. Aunque haya contribuido muchas cosas más."* [Translation: Until you are here legally, you don't feel that way, like you are part of things. Even when you had made many contributions.] Similar to Chad, Peggy felt that her status dictates her reception into this country. This feeling of being

negatively received overwhelms her in spite of being a “contributor” to society. Peggy was at one point a small business owner here in the United States. Peggy’s role as an economic provider to U.S. society, was a non-issue to her, as she believed that her undocumented status negated her contributions.

Participants expressed their feelings of not belonging in a variety of ways and contexts. Clearly, for these participants, not having a legal status has consequences, as many of the pathways to belonging are denied as undocumented persons in this country. This reality was reinforced daily, for example, in Sue’s case, having a social security number, or even the ability to establish credit was out of reach:

*Pero yo quiero un crédito... A mi no me lo dan y no importa que si aquí viví, o sea, no pertenezco acá. ¿Por qué? Porque no tengo un número de social, que eso es lo que te abre el mundo completo.*

[Translation: But I want credit...they will not give it to me, it does not matter that I lived here, I do not belong here, why? Because I don’t have a social [security] number that is what opens the whole world to you].

Sue’s sense of belonging is in part connected to her ability to have a social security number and therefore the denial of certain benefits from having one, such as being able to acquire credit, reinforces this sense. Sue desires to be a contributor to society, and acquiring credit would aide her in doing so. Her undocumented status, however, denies her that ability.

Interestingly, the previously cited quotes were direct responses to the question of how being vulnerable to deportation made them feel. Amanda’s response also indicates that she does not feel she belongs. She elaborated by saying, “For us, the fear of deportation manifests itself in the sense that this is just not our country...we just don't view our presence here as permanent.”

For her, the political climate and shifting sentiment toward immigration appeared to create a sense of uncertainty even if she were to achieve citizenship. This uncertainty led her to feel that she does not belong, that her time here in the United States is provisional, and that the United States might never feel like home.

A few participants shared how this lack of belonging can become internalized to the point that they come to accept that they are not in a place they can call home. Stacey, a woman from an eastern European country who was living in the United States for 12 years at the time of the interview expresses her sense of not belonging as a reality which she has come to accept: “I mean, I clearly know that I’m not a citizen of this country, I’m grateful to be here but I know that I don’t have the same rights. And that I’m to some extent a guest in this country. And I recognize it. So it’s not my country.” In addition, Chad, when he expressed feeling marginalized, also stated: “*Y tampoco tenemos derecho, por ejemplo, de comprar una casa, de comprar un carro. Quizás tenemos las posibilidades, pero por falta de documentos, no podemos.*” [Translation: Nor do we have the rights to buy a house, buy a car. Perhaps we have the ability to do so, but because we lack documents, we cannot.]

Sue, Amanda, Stacy and Chad’s perceptions of belonging have become a reality based on the inability to do the things that lead to forming roots. There is scholarship demonstrating that belonging has been tied to the ability to form roots (Duyvendak, 2011).

**[Not] making yourself at home.** As Amanda acknowledged, not being able to view yourself as a true permanent resident, but rather someone whose stay is temporary, serves as an inhibitor to building a home. This inability to make themselves at home in the United States was shared by a majority of participants. The vulnerability to and fear of deportation fosters this perception of not belonging and not being able to form roots. This, in turn becomes an

impediment for the participants to feel they can make themselves at home. Making oneself at home is something that Maria recognized as a natural desire: “You need to belong, and you need to have a home base especially if you found a place where you wanna build something... Why would you stop people from doing that? You're just disrupting their entire system and their emotional health.” Here, Maria expresses frustration over her vulnerability to deportation and the barrier it presents for immigrants to call the United States home. The inability to build a foundational social system, which would lead to a sense of home, was also expressed by Madison, who shared her experience, explaining: “It just feels stressful. It just also feels like I can't actually build my life, like everything is... like...for example, if I wanted to really put down roots and, I don't know, like get a mortgage and a house, I can't do that.” An account of the social effects of being vulnerable to deportation marks how access to common components of building a life or a “home” is restricted. Although she does acknowledge similar frustrations to those expressed by Maria, Madison further states that despite such hindrances, she still felt a longing to have a normal, socially rich life. She continues to believe that she had earned the privilege of such basic desires:

[I] created my community here, I wanna be in a place where I have spent a long time building. I became an adult in the United States, you know? And so I feel that, because I became an adult here, because I've contributed a lot sort of socially and economically to this place, that I should have the right to stay. All of my friends are here... Well, I don't because I'm not a Green Card holder and I'm not a United States citizen and like I believe, I know I have the right to stay - I believe it. But because of this particular paperwork that you need to stay, like I don't have the right, right? And I think that there's just so many unnecessary loopholes. ...Like the system does not make it so that someone who's been

here for eleven years... do it [referring to establishing permanent residency] by themselves.

The inability to set down roots and build a home is echoed by Amanda, as she declared, “There's definitely that effect that you just don't take roots, you don't lay down deep roots.”

Participants’ perceptions of being negatively received in the United States have led to feeling that they do not belong. This sense of not belonging leads to the inability to set up roots and make themselves at home. In addition, participants felt the inability to gain access to the same things as non-immigrants, which would also lead to establishing themselves, and to feeling at home here in the United States.

**No motivation toward civic engagement.** The sense of not belonging caused participants to be unmotivated and unwilling to civically engage. Participants’ vulnerability to deportation and the fear resulting from it, which gives rise to a feeling that they do not belong, also made them disinterested and unmotivated in civic engagement. Amanda expressed her view on why she felt no motivation to engage with such organizations: “Well, I mean, like being here to get involved in certain movements or political activities or certain organizations about issues that affect us, you know... we just don't get involved in those things because of this sense that you're not here to stay.” To Amanda, her vulnerability to deportation, and the resulting feeling of detachment, led to feeling unmotivated to participate with any local institutions or activities. She considered investing in these pursuits not worth the time of possible benefits, as she did not see her time in the United States as permanent, despite the fact that such activities might actually be in her benefit.

Similarly, Polly, a woman who has her residency, explained why she no longer



participates in a local community organization:

*Por ahorita, he parado mucho...pero ahora no me quiero meter ..En nada de política, en nada... Porque tengo miedo que, como no soy ciudadana, me puedan deportar, ...Yo no quiero trabajar con organizaciones que ayuden a inmigrantes porque tengo miedo de que me vayan a deportar ..pero sí estoy interesada en trabajar con organizaciones cuando ya yo, cuando ya yo tenga la ciudadanía.*

[Translation: For now, I've stopped a lot...but now I don't want to get involved...in nothing that is political, in nothing...because I am afraid that, because I am not a citizen, they can deport me...I do not want to work with organizations that work with immigrants because I am afraid that they will deport me...but yes I am interested in working with organizations once I have, once I have my citizenship].

Polly was politically active in her home country. She also had an affiliation when she first came to this country with a local organization. However, Polly's feeling that even being a resident would not protect her from deportation if she participates in local – all legal – political matters has caused her to cease such activities and refrain from even helping other immigrants. The vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it led participants to feel they cannot make themselves at home in this country. These perceptions result in a disinterestedness in becoming involved in civic activities.

**Effect on social relationships and spaces.** Aside from local community and political issues, the feeling of being unwanted and not belonging can lead immigrants to avoid certain social activities and spaces. These in turn inhibit their ability to form social relationships. In the previous section, I framed the reluctance, and refusal participants felt about being involved in social activities, such as parties and nightclubs, as a behavioral change resulting from the fear of

being deported. This fear also caused participants to avoid other social – and not so social – spaces. It became apparent that the complexity of being vulnerable to – and fearful of – deportation brings to the lives of immigrants a confluence of emotions and behaviors that affected the nature of their social network and how they developed social ties. For example, Claire shared: “It still affected how I interacted with other people personally. Like I was always very friendly in high school, but I think there’s definitely barriers that I had built in how close I would allow people to my life.”

The trust necessary to form the close – and not so close – relationships in their communities appeared inhibited. Ellen elaborates, stating “I would say most of the residents who are here illegally, they’re constantly thinking, ‘I’m gonna get deported,’... ‘then my American neighbor will say something about me,’ Like things like that.” Ellen’s viewpoint that the fear of being deported impedes trust of their neighbors was common among participants. Sue was previously cited as stating that she does not trust her neighbors for fear that they would call immigration on her. Sue expressed in the previous section how her fear of being deported led her to avoid social gatherings and functions. These feelings thus bar her from forming social relationships with them. Similarly, Meg expressed doubts about her own associations: “Because, you know, of course there’s still like you never know, because someone could be an asshole and just be like, ‘I don’t want you here blah blah...’ Maybe they would, I don’t know, I don’t know everybody fully.”

In addition to social situations, participants also avoided social spaces. For example, Emma mentioned:

*Por ejemplo, a mi me hubiera gustado mucho conocer City Hall...porque dicen que es muy bonito por ahí, pero no voy porque esos son lugares donde hay - ¿cómo se dice? -*

*donde hay mucha vigilancia.*

[Translation: For example, I would have liked to visit City Hall...because they say it is very pretty around there, but I do not go because those are places where there is, how do you say? Where there is much vigilance.]

Emma initially discussed her inability to travel, and her desire to see Disney World, or Miami, both in Florida. She realizes, however, that as an undocumented person, such a trip carries too heavy a risk of being discovered: traveling by plane is impossibility, and she also sees traveling by land via bus or automobile as too risky. The fear of long-distance travel was a universally expressed concern by my undocumented participants. Emma, however, had another fear related to travel. A visit to NYC's City Hall would be less than a 30-minute subway train ride away for Emma. Located in lower Manhattan, the area around City Hall is densely populated during the day by both private-sector and municipal employees, as well as tourists from all over the country (and the world), making her discovery as an undocumented person less likely than in her own neighborhood, which is less populated. Yet, for Emma, her simple wish to visit City Hall is untenable because of her vulnerability to deportation.

The avoidance of public spaces was common. Madison shared a disturbing experience at a park:

Yeah, like little things. Even like silly things around, like when people are hanging out. Like I remember one time, I was like much younger, 23, and me and my friends were in [a local] Park and some people had like beers and stuff out, and the cops came and they ticketed people and I was like, 'Oh my God.' Like I hid behind my friend because I was like, "I cannot be the one who's ticketed.

For others, the avoidance of spaces also led to refraining from interacting with family or other

institutions. Sue's fear caused her to refuse to pick up her daughter from the airport:

*Yo te digo, pues, yo te estoy sincera, yo no me acerco a un aeropuerto, yo no voy...*

*¿Para que me agarren? Yo no voy. Por ejemplo, mira, esta vez que fue mi hija a México, yo no la fui a encontrar al aeropuerto, yo le dije, 'M'hijita, agarra tu taxi porque...tú llegas y a mí me mandan.'*

[Translation: I tell you, well, I will be honest, I do not go near an airport, I will not go...

So they can grab me? For example, look, my daughter, the time she went to Mexico, I did not go get her from the airport, I told her, 'daughter, get a taxi because...you arrive and they send me (back)].

Sue's fear also, at times, makes her rethink going to church:

*Tú viniste una vez a la iglesia de nosotros que está enfrente. Ves, tú sabes que una vez ha habido redadas por allá abajo...Y ahora digo, 'Ay, Dios mío.' Yo siempre que voy para la iglesia digo, 'Ay, Dios mío, ¿y si un día se les ocurre? Yo voy para la iglesia, pues ya, me llevaron.'*

[Translation: You came to our church that is out front. You know that one time there was a raid close to down there...and now I say, 'Oh my God.' Every time I go to church I say, 'Oh my God, and if one day they [immigration] decides? I go to church and they take me.]

Avoiding public spaces where the belief that increased security might exist and therefore discovery of their immigration status is an understandable one, after all. However, the fact that their avoidance caused them to deny themselves interactions, such as with children, or desires, such as visiting a tourist location, arguably indicates an extreme effect. Certainly, expressing apprehension at going to church, a place of sanctuary for many, is evidence that vulnerability to

deportation has a negative effect on mechanisms that have been found to foment feelings of inclusion.

**The role of race.** Participants, while expressing the impact of their vulnerability to deportation, were also aware of how their race/ethnicity played a role in their treatment and risk of deportation. For example, Stacy, who is of European origin, when she expressed that she would never be seen as American because her accent will constantly make her vulnerable, still acknowledged that her risk of being targeted by immigration enforcement is lower because of her race:

But it made me think that I wasn't any different even though my sister tells me you're a different kind of immigrant but I'm seeing, yeah, maybe by skin color... Let me put it this way, no police officer is going to gun me down like the African immigrant. I don't foresee that. I don't think that I will be treated the same way... So I'm clearly aware that there's a difference but when you sit, for example at the airport when you're switching statuses you sit with everybody else and you sit for hours there... But I would not want to deny the fact that I know that I would not be treated the same. I would definitely be treated better. I mean, there's no doubt behind that.

In addition, Polly was aware of how race and legal status are intertwined when officials are interacting with Latinos when she explained:

*Le tengo miedo, miedo, terror, horrible, horrible, a la policía...Y cuando veo que agarran a un muchacho, y que tienes rasgos hispanos yo pienso que es mexicano, o un salvadoreño, y ya siento que lo van a deportar. Eso es lo único pues, porque sólo para eso sirven.*

[Translation: I have terrible, horrible, horrible fear of the police...and when I see they grab a kid, and he has Hispanic features, I think he is Mexican or Salvadorian, and I feel they will deport him. That is the only thing they are good for.]

Scott, expressed the feeling of being a Black man in U.S. society was compounded by being an immigrant:

I'm still a young Black male who's a stateless non-citizen...I think first and foremost – let's just talk about the fear of deportation, of going back to [home country]... I still fear that deportation imminent. And I think I would be made an example of, you know what I mean? Especially when you're trying to be an activist and trying to be out there and stuff like that. Because I do know the U.S. government never really liked that especially not coming from a Black male.

Unlike Polly, Chad and Amanda, Scott does engage in activism. However, his fear of deportation still exists and continues to feel “imminent.” Most participants, as expressed throughout the responses, are acutely aware of their legal status and its affects on their vulnerability to deportation. They are also keenly aware of how the law treats those who fall into a racial hierarchy. Scott's legal status is compounded by his race. As a Black man, he knows that he is doubly exposed to potential enforcement: whether immigration or criminal law, and therefore vulnerable.

**The outlier.** Of all the participants, there was one person who said that they “did not feel anything” at the thought of deportation. Alice, who had been living in the United States for 11 years at the time of the interview, shared that she never thought about deportation. However, soon after, she clarified her statement by saying that the “only time” she ever thought about deportation was when she had a conflict with the father of her children. Alice said that her

decision to avoid calling the police was directly due to vulnerability to deportation. When asked to elaborate on that situation, Alice was adamant that except for this occasion, she never thought about deportation and felt “nothing” at the thought of it. Interestingly, Alice did not agree to being audio recorded, although she did not explain why.

Alice’s outlying account of being indifferent toward potential deportation was a rarity. In fact, several participants rejected the notion that someone could be unfearful. For example, Maria colorfully disagreed that one would not feel fear, saying “That's bullshit. That's bullshit, like it's complete bullshit. I mean, even I feel it and I have the options to stay...” Ken, who is cited as refusing to allow his reception in the United States to make himself feel unwanted or unwelcome, also rejected the possibility that someone would never think about being deported and explained outlying accounts reflect a coping strategy:

When people say that they're not afraid...and they don't think about it, yeah, they may not think about it every day or they may think that they're not thinking about it but they have a coping mechanism. We all have learned to cope with the situation and that coping is that we don't go out of the safety zone that we know and understand...So if I say I don't have any fear, that's not true, right?

Coping mechanisms are used by persons to deal with negative experiences. The fear experienced by the participants as a result of their vulnerability to deportation certainly can qualify. Ken’s point of view essentially makes the case that if a person alters their behavior to accommodate the possibility of deportation, then some degree of fear must be present, even if they do not feel or display it as strongly as others.

## Summary

Participants discussed how fear resulting from deportability related to how they felt they were viewed by U.S. society in general, the government, and more closely by specific members of their communities. The language used by most participants demonstrated an overarching sentiment of not belonging and feelings of being unwelcome or unwanted. Ultimately, they were unable to make themselves at home.

As confirmed by the majority of responses recounted here, the participants' sense of vulnerability to deportation produced feelings of fear, which impacted their lives socially, emotionally and psychologically. The cited participants' responses demonstrate that the vulnerability to deportation and associated fear negatively impacted their desire to become civically engaged and were a hindrance to their ability to form important social relationships and build social capital. Such feelings, I argue, work as barriers to their successful integration into the United States.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study, as stated throughout, is to understand the emotional experience of immigrants who are regularly exposed to the threat of deportation, the social effect that these emotional experiences have on their integration, and the implications for their community.

As explained in Chapter Four, to accomplish this purpose, we need to respond to the following questions:

- 1. How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?*
- 2. How does vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, impact an immigrant's degree of integration?*

The following discussion is organized around the research questions and presents several themes that arose regarding participants' vulnerability to deportation and the emotional impact of the fear of deportation (see Table 6).

*Table 6. Themes According to Research Question*

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**Research Question 1:**

*How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?*

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<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Vulnerability to deportation makes immigrants feel fearful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Uncertainty</li><li>• Insecurity</li><li>• Avoidance Behaviors</li><li>• Lack of Freedom</li></ul>

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<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Fear of deportation results in emotional and psychological distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frustration</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Anger/Rage</li><li>• Shock</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Thoughts of suicide</li><li>• Physiological effects</li><li>• Feelings of paranoia</li><li>• Isolation</li><li>• Self-segregation</li><li>• Distrust</li><li>• Shame</li><li>• Humiliation</li></ul>

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**Research Question 2:**

*How does vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, impact an immigrant's degree of integration into U.S. society?*

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<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Fear of deportation results in feelings and perceptions of reception that inhibit integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feelings of being unwelcome and unwanted</li><li>• Lack of Belongingness</li><li>• Not feeling at home</li><li>• Unable to establish roots in U.S.</li><li>• Distrust</li><li>• Isolation</li><li>• Self-segregation</li></ul>

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## **Research Question 1: How does vulnerability to deportation specifically impact an immigrant's life?**

In general, participant responses demonstrate a pattern: concerns regarding the separation of families caused by deportation; cultural conflict that ensues as a result of deportation; and the psychological and emotional damage caused by deportation. Other patterns arise, such as language that refers to *spirituality*, economic disruption and effects on the community and society in general.

The narrative of fear is a subjective one, but fear itself is a universal response to certain situations (Bourke, 2005). Fear of deportation should be considered a natural reaction to a deliberate, manipulated action imposed upon vulnerable non-citizen immigrants. Indeed, the state uses fear and intimidation as a mechanism to deter criminal behavior and justifies this stance with policies directed towards crime prevention (Hauptman, 2013; Waters & Kasinitz, 2015). However, when describing how being vulnerable to deportation made them feel, participants used words that denoted reactions to fear that reached far beyond normal expectations, including psychological and emotional states associated with distress, and even trauma.

**Deportation is legal violence.** The fear associated with deportability is evidence that deportation is legal violence. The behavioral, social and psychological effects expressed by respondents were very similar to those described by Mary Jackman (2002) in her call for an expanded discussion of violence. Indeed, the harm caused to my participants is comparable to the kind of maltreatment discussed by Menjívar and Abrego (2012) in their discussion of legal violence and its application to immigration enforcement. Legal violence is also more salient to not only immigration enforcement but to deportation in particular.

Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) concept of legal violence weaves together several different ways in which violence has been analyzed to demonstrate how immigration laws, policies, and the resulting enforcement mechanisms have been used to legitimize the cruel treatment of immigrants. In their work, they point to "Jackman's call to open up the sociological optic to the examination of violence and focus on those instances that might, otherwise, elude attention" (2012, p. 1384). As introduced in Chapter Two, they incorporated Jackman's invitation in an extended definition of violence the notion of structural violence. My study finds supporting evidence of Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) analytical framework and highlights how deportation, in particular, is a specific form of legal violence. Participant responses indicated psychological injuries almost verbatim to those described by Jackman (2002), as other forms by which violence can manifest itself in the lives of victims. Moreover, beyond those emotional and psychological indicators listed by Jackman, participants discussed feelings of uncertainty, isolation, being "trapped," in a "golden cage," and that they felt like "slaves." They experienced stress, depression and had thoughts of suicide.

In addition, similar to Menjívar and Abrego (2012), I found legal violence present within the contexts of family and the workplace. Vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it resulted in participants expressing concern for and on behalf of their children and other family members. Focus group responses, as well as individual responses from Anne, Polly, Ken, Lily, Amy, Molly, Holly, Claire and Sue all expressed worry, fear, anxiety, and guilt over the consequences on their families resulting from deportability. There was also legal violence evident in the workplace, as presented by Amanda who said her husband had endured treatment and conditions they would have not otherwise tolerated but did so because of their state of deportability.

Such effects are a direct result of the vulnerability to deportation, as such a consequence certainly constitutes a form of banishment and expulsion. This evident fear of deportation has resulted in the psychological injuries described by Jackman. In addition, psychological effects extend to physical ones (McFarlane et al. 1994; Pennebaker et al. 1988; Resnick et al. 1997, as cited by Jackman, 2002). Claire, for instance, described breaking out in hives. Physical manifestations also include crying and sobbing, as described by Polly, Anne, and Maria.

Legal violence also incorporates the internalization process, as detailed by Bourdieu (1998) in his description of what constitutes symbolic violence. Social harm caused by public policy is apparent in the way in which immigrants are depicted. The idea of the criminal alien and the need to deport these persons has become embedded in both political and popular rhetoric. The argument that the undocumented person knowingly entered the country illegally or overstayed their documentation is seen as negating injury and making them responsible for, deserving of, or even complicit in, any injury to them (Jackman, 2002). This anti-immigrant sentiment has resulted in Hagan et al. (2008) applying Bourdieu's idea of symbolic violence and defining it as the notion that immigrants are inherently criminal – which is perpetuated in the public sphere. These mechanisms of vilification serve as justifications for the harsh treatments against immigrants and result in a more punitive immigration policy, with its ensuring record levels of deportations.

We saw examples of this vilification process and the internalization of violence when participants confirmed the criminalizing terminology that justifies their ill treatment by using those same terms to describe themselves. Jack, Chad, Amanda and Ellen all use the term “illegal immigrant” to refer to themselves or others. This internalization of the oppression being inflicted by the state becomes a form of self-harm. This self-blame leads immigrants to express feelings of

acceptance of their situation and “understand their marginalized positions as natural and can then become contributors to their own plight” (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012, p. 1386). Accepting criminalizing labels and subscribing to the rationalizations agents of the state use to exert said treatment against them is quite common among victims of violence, as seen in the cited examples.

The internalization of violence is further affirmed by Chad, in his discussion of deportation. Chad feels believes that deportation is sometimes self-imposed because those who get caught and deported feel they can do as they wish as if they are in their own country and not a foreign one. This attitude reflects the premise that deportation is deserved. Chad’s sentiments, as cited here and in the findings section also exemplify the concept of living in the nation but perceiving that he does not belong (Chavez, 2008).

Jack’s view that deportations are the result of the stubborn nature of those being removed, denoting that such removals are merited, is another example of how legal violence is internalized. In addition, Jack’s sentiments support Nelson and Hiemstra’s (2008) findings that immigrants begin to accept the narratives of their own exclusion and the perpetuation of the feeling that they do not belong.

These internalized notions and distinctions of who gets deported and why turn into a narrative of the “good” versus the “bad” immigrant, and further perpetuate the vindictive nature of U.S. immigration policies (Brotherton & Barrios, 2011). While Chad and Jack’s perspectives are that only those who commit wrongdoings get removed, the data prove otherwise. In addition, despite the government’s assertion to the contrary, deportation is being utilized by the government as a form of punishment (Chin, 2011), further exemplifying the violent nature of U.S. immigration policies.

Jackman (2002) states that many times violence is exerted for society's best interest: "First, a variety of violent acts appear to be motivated by the desire to benefit the community" (p. 400). Therefore, violence can be motivated by some seemingly positive intentions, or because it is supported by the community, and can then go unnoticed along with its effects. The intended consequences of deportation might be to protect the nation, or to deter entry into the country without inspection. The concept of deterrence might have the support of some citizens, but fear and anguish are incidental ensuing effects, which permeate through the lives of both documented and undocumented immigrants. Whether or not this harm is intentional is unclear. Some policy analysts might look at the fear created by immigration policy and argue that fear is, in fact, the objective of said policies. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to argue that the psychological damage experienced by the targets of these laws was the intention of any policy, nor is there any testimony or record explicitly stating that this trauma is an intended consequence. I argue, however, that intentional harm is not a criteria for there to be legal violence, nor is it a requisite that the legal agents themselves are causing the maltreatment, as it would be in a case of an immigration or border patrol agent using excessive force on an immigrant. Legal violence can still exist when the law acts as an enabler for others, who use it as a means to exert injury to the targets (Menjívar & Abrego, 2011).

Furthermore, the fear of deportation forces many to make decisions they would not make under other – less punitive – circumstances. Legal violence creates these forced decision-making situations (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011). Amanda discussed how she and her husband were forced to accept behavior they would otherwise not have. They were not the only ones whose decisions were dictated by their fear of being deported. We saw this when Polly explained that she pled guilty to a crime she did not commit. Polly, who has a young child born in the United States was

falsely accused of child abuse by her former partner's current companion during an ugly custody battle. Her fear of deportation led to her false admission of guilt, and the fear was so significant that she described the process as "traumatic." A legal permanent resident, Polly was still aware of her vulnerability to deportation, which meant that even though she insists on her innocence, because she did not want to risk deportation, she agreed to plead guilty.

Polly's example is also a particularly impactful example of the legal violence against immigrant mothers and how said violence contextualizes the decision-making process (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). The fact that she was forced to make a decision which led to a criminal record is an example of how legal violence frames the experience of immigrants in general. Beyond this, however, Polly's example also demonstrates how immigrant mothers in particular are forced to make decisions that impede their opportunities of changing their legal status should the opportunity arise. This forced decision-making puts their families and children in a further state of flux.

The impact on the decision-making process is also seen in the example of another participant, Maria, a self-described "upper-class" resident. Yet, her vulnerability to deportation found her making decisions contrary to the law, which she would not have ordinarily made, but was still particularly perceptive in terms of her own position compared to others in her situation. Maria's decision-making process was affected by her fear of being deported. To avoid deportation, she was willing to take the drastic action of marrying her boyfriend – a decision she admits would not have been a normal consideration had the threat of removal not been imminent.

This forced decision-making is also an indication that persons can be desperate enough to avoid deportation and are willing to break the law to avoid said removal. In Maria's case, she considers entering into a marriage just to avoid removal, something that is illegal. While the



mutual affection in her relationship is not at issue, marrying for the purpose of avoiding immigration law, such as removal, is considered marriage fraud – a felony offense punishable by up to five years in prison (Immigration Marriage Fraud Amendments Acts of 1986). Maria was aware of this fact but still willing to consider taking the risk. The legal violence perspective demonstrates the contradictions of immigration enforcement: while seeking to deter wrongdoing, the threat of deportation pushes them to spaces *outside* the law (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Moreover, the mere consideration of breaking the law can also be seen as an extension of the release of any inhibition to engage in violence themselves (Cover, 1986). This reality is in contrast with the notion that persons will avoid breaking the law to avoid deportation. In addition, the fact that a person's fear of being deported will drive them to break the law to remain in the country underscores the violent nature of our current state of immigration laws. Those feelings of desperation can lead them to break the law. This in and of itself is a reaction to violence.

The interaction necessary for integration is hampered by the self-imposed segregation immigrants engage in. Immigrant segregation has a negative impact on children of immigrants, employment opportunities, immigrants' ability to relocate, overall economic and cultural integration, and even self-perception (Alba, et. al., 2010; Castaneda, 2012; Cutler, et al., 2008; South, et. al., 2005; Waldinger, 2001). Segregation is a barrier that prevents immigrants from attaining integration because they purposely do not share space with the dominant groups (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2009).

Legal violence causes immigrants to live in perpetual fear of being separated from their loved ones, as was made evident in many of the stories from the participants. Ken, Polly, Claire, Sue and Amy all recounted how the thought of leaving their loved ones behind made them feel

anguish. This fear, however, extends beyond the deportable immigrants and affects even U.S. native-born citizens with relatives at risk of deportation (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Thus, legal violence affects not just the deportable immigrant, but native-born persons as well.

Legal violence further perpetuates the United States's tendencies toward social exclusion by driving many to live at the margins of society so as not to be discovered (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Participant responses support this as well, with the cited avoidance behaviors and tendencies to shy away and avoid social occasions and spaces. In this way, legal violence has also been found to affect integration.

**Deportation is legal violence made evident by trauma.** Participant responses related to the psychological impact that vulnerability to deportation had on their lives also denote that they are experiencing trauma. In fact, several emotional reactions were expressed by participants consistent with the National Institute of Mental Health's (NIH) symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These included: (i) frightening thoughts; (ii) avoidance symptoms such as staying away from places; (iii) arousal and reactivity symptoms such as feeling tense; (iv) cognition and mood symptoms such as negative thoughts about oneself or the world (NIH website, "Signs and Symptoms" section, para. 4).

These symptoms were most notably found in Polly's story of migrating to the United States from Central America. Polly discussed the harrowing ordeal with the emotional tone of someone describing a trip to a local market. To the average listener, her story would be distressing. Her story, however, belies her nonchalant presentation. There was a disaffected and detached quality to the way Polly related her story. The psychological literature refers to this emotional detachment from thoughts as *numbing* (Malta, Levitt, Martin, Davis, & Cloitre, 2009;

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). Numbing is considered to be quite common among those who have experienced traumatic events (Kuhn, Blanchard & Hickling, 2003). Clearly, Polly's travel across the border was a traumatic experience, and her coping mechanism when relating her story is to numb herself from the experience. She cannot, however, do the same when relating her fears about the possibility of deportation. From the moment she began to discuss her fear of being deported, she breaks down emotionally and begins to cry, then sob. Molly, too, expressed distressing feelings of depression. Perhaps the most powerful example of this impending crisis is that of Jack, who confessed to having thoughts of suicide because of his situation.

The study of trauma, whether within the scope of PTSD, Acute Stress Disorder or Traumatic Stress, is beyond my scope of expertise. I do not purport to turn this thesis into a work in the discipline of psychology aimed at identifying deportation as a stressor for trauma. However, the findings from my study support the notion that increasing calls to expand the study of trauma should also include the effects of the fear of deportation. Respondents' report of stress related to the fear of deportation can pose a public health issue.

highlights the categories of the psychological and emotional impact the fear of deportation has on participants. This chart was inspired by Carter, et al.'s (2004) their study on race-based trauma and to include symptom clusters not typically considered in studies of PTSD. While Carter et al.'s study was on the trauma created by persons who experienced instances of racism and discrimination, their study was focused on expanding the research on trauma. As I am also urging an expansion on their conceptual framework highlight instances of psychological effects experienced by the participants in this study.

*Table 7 Categories of Psychological or Emotional Effects*

	Category <sup>9</sup>	Definition	Sample Statements
1	Extreme Emotional Distress	Feelings of being upset including multiple emotions such as anger, rage, depression, shock, physically ill	<p>Anne: “You know, stress, frustration, a lot of anger, a lot of anger, a lot of anger. Anger has been real for us and, I mean, some of it is linked to that, some of it is linked to racial issues outside of that. You know, it's like-- You know, we've been angry.”</p> <p>Maria: “So, for me, it was just really a shocker... And it turns out I'm really under a lot of pressure... I mean, if I think about it, I could also just cry for half an hour. Like it's no problem and there were a lot of times in the past when I just cried constantly because I just thought that it's just not fair.”</p> <p>Claire: “But then I think I went home and then, that night, I broke out in hives.”</p> <p>Amanda: “I've been depressed and the depression has been linked to that, it really has been.”</p> <p>Sue: “Well the truth is I feel a lot of depression.”</p>
2	Mild Emotional Distress	Feelings of frustration, anxiety	<p>Maria: “Yeah, I'm just really afraid. I mean, I'm just really afraid that it's gonna change my life in ways that I cannot even imagine... And so, yeah, it's just really frustrating.”</p> <p>Jack: “Well, you feel frustrated because, obviously, you don't have a least the security that you will return. That is, you go with that latent fear that you will not return because of the raids, the inspections at the bus terminal or the airports...So, frustrated, without freedom.”</p> <p>Sally: “Stagnation, frustration, and a person without</p>

<sup>9</sup> Some of these categories and definitions were inspired and taken from Carter, et al., (2004).

			<p>progress...This is frustrating.”</p> <p>Claire: “So a lot of helplessness and helplessness, a lot of depression and anxiety</p>
2	Hyper-vigilance	Increased awareness of vulnerability, feelings of paranoia	<p>Polly: when I see they grab a kid, and he has Hispanic features, I think he is Mexican or Salvadorean, and I feel they will deport him.</p> <p>Madison: It makes me feel scared.... I mean, it's just, it just makes me-- Like, sometimes I'm like really scared... It makes me look over my shoulder... I mean, it's like a constant fear.</p> <p>Amy: I try not to go out a night, because many times a night, sometimes the police can confuse you. Or even at a party and something happens, the police take anyone.</p>
3	Avoidance	Staying away, self-segregation	<p>Meg: Yeah, I did avoid a lot of like certain things that they wanted me to go to, I would say no... Like house parties. I know they have lot of those. I know, I heard that they got shut down by police and right away I was like, "I'm not going to that." So I would avoid that... like I wouldn't go anywhere friends wanted to, I would avoid that, too.</p> <p>Emma: For example, I would have liked to visit City Hall...because they say it is very pretty around there, but I do not go because those are places where there is, how do you say? Where there is much vigilance</p>
4	Distrust	Reluctance to engage or form social relationships	<p>Claire: It still affected how I interacted with other people personally. Like I was always very friendly in high school, but I think there's definitely barriers that I had built in how close I would allow people to my life.</p> <p>Ellen: I would say most of the residents who are here illegally, they're constantly thinking, 'I'm gonna get deported,'... 'then my American neighbor will say something about me,' Like things like that.</p>

5	Enslavement	Feelings of confinement (“Jaula de Oro”), entrapment, isolation, no mobility.	<p>Sue: Now I feel that I live here, but it is like being prisoner...I feel, I tell you the truth, here I feel like a prisoner, I do not feel free. Because, how can you say you are free if you cannot go where you want?]</p> <p>Heather: “And I lived a lifestyle of living in a golden cage”</p> <p>Sally: “. How do I tell you... like when they put you in a hole, at bay, stuck”</p> <p>Peggy: “Clearly, yes, the fear is felt... fear. Fear is one of the things that does the most harm. You know, fear that [deportation] will happen for real. I get disabled. You feel as if, ‘I can’t,’ you see? Well, that is fear. The emotion is fear. The disability is fear as well. Or, ‘I cannot do it,” you are not free – that is what makes you a slave.”</p>
6.	Lower Self-Worth	Feelings of shame and humiliation	<p>Sally: “It is something, when you are in a dead end street, you are stuck, and if you are a skilled person, if you are a person that seeks to advance...you can’t even have a dignified job.”</p> <p>Peggy: “You feel a horrible depression, horrible because you feel humiliated... I sought professional help because I was very depressed, very. On one extreme, I did not even want work, I did not want to.”</p>

**Research Question 2: How does vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, impact an immigrant’s degree of integration?**

Beyond the role the legal violence plays in the inhibiting the process of integration, immigrant perceptions of their reception into the country influence their integration. The data demonstrates that vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, serves as a barrier

due to giving immigrants the sense that they do not belong. The inability to establish roots and make themselves at home have also been found to inhibit integration.

**Deportability and the fear associated with it are barriers to integration.** People tend to make themselves “at home” in places that are not confined to the domestic environment. Pictures and other personal items are observed in temporary spaces where we tend to spend an equal, or sometimes more, time than we do in our homes. Whether those spaces are our workplaces, or extreme settings such as prisons, people use pictures and other personal objects in an effort to make the space more familiar and at home. It makes sense, then, that even though first generation immigrants were raised in another country and might even maintain strong attachments to these places, they still have a desire to “belong” to the United States, a place where many have transplanted themselves and have spent many years in. Yet, several participants have said that they do not feel they can make themselves at home or will not make themselves at home. This reluctance or inability is due to their perceptions of reception based on their deportability.

Moreover, the lack of belonging and ability to develop roots, along with feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, are a result of changing immigration policy and practice discussed by participants. The immigrant becomes the victim of the pendulum-like rhetoric regarding immigration reform versus immigration control. Heather expressed frustration over the continuously changing immigration laws and expressed she would never really feel her vulnerability to deportation would go away. Stacy expressed similar feelings, as did Molly, who expressed awareness of the perpetually changing tone of immigration laws, both rhetorically and politically, from reform to increased control. Indeed, Molly’s reluctance to naturalize one day is due to the constantly changing immigration policies. Such policies are the natural result of U.S.

capitalist society and the neoliberalism apparatus, where immigrants are no longer humans but commoditized and given value according to their potential contributions to the market economy (Lehman, Annisette & Agyemang, 2016). Immigration policies give preferential entry to persons from certain countries or to persons with desirable skill-sets. However, the United States still limits their opportunities for full inclusion, beyond the bureaucracy involved in the ability to become a legal permanent resident, which can result in the person feeling as if they are not wanted or welcome. While the current belief is that the individual characteristics of the high-demand immigrant are what will impact the position they will occupy in the host country, this is not always the case (Reitz, 1998).

In this context, the immigrant becomes a “neoliberal subject,” a term used by Monica Varsanyi (2008) to refer to “an alternative, evolving institution of ‘membership’ for noncitizens living within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state” (p. 882). As discussed earlier, participants expressed their perception of marginalization and knowledge that, as immigrants vulnerable to deportation, they are also victim to the erratic tendencies of immigration policies surrounding membership and exclusion. Known for its tendency toward social exclusion, the United States is considered the prime example of neoliberalism, which pushes entire communities into social isolation and denies full rights of civic, political, and social life (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006). The U.S.’s immigration policies are another mechanism by which the state furthers its agenda of neoliberalist exclusion, and the vindictive practice of deportation typifies the U.S. political economy of punishment (DeGiorgi, 2010; Garland, 1991; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2009; Stageman, D, 2013).

Both Amanda and Polly have expressed how the fear of deportation has led them to avoid participation in community institutions or any other type of civic engagement. In addition, a



measure of belongingness is the desire to become naturalized (Chow, 2007). Heather was dubious as to whether or not her fear of deportation would ever cease, due to the constant changing immigration policies. Molly's testimony, wherein she expresses apprehension to become documented, is another example of how the fear of deportation presents a barrier to integration.

Aside from political matters, the feeling of being unwanted and not belonging can lead immigrants to avoid certain social activities and spaces, as shown with Emma, who mentioned she would like to visit City Hall but was too afraid to go because of her fear of deportation. Amy also indicated this avoidance when she said she never went out at night. Amy is still an attractive woman in her early 30's; going out at night or attending a party is a perfectly normal activity for women her age living in NYC. Her fear of being discovered and deported, however, makes her avoid such social activities.

To be clear, the participants of this study had some network and social ties. Indeed, most of them came to this country via those ties, initially lived with their connections, and even secured jobs via those connections. However, despite these connections, the fear of deportation creates an overriding sense of mistrust and apprehension at building social ties and engaging in activities that are conducive to forming social capital.

This particular trust issue brings us back to Polly. Polly's fear of being deported makes her doubt the legitimacy of the police, and when asked if she would call the police in case of an emergency she doubts she would call them. This is consistent with Messing, Becerra, Ward-Lasher and Arndroff's (2015) finding that fear of deportation affects Latinas' perceptions of police and their willingness to report violent crime. In addition, Amanda expressed distrust in the

immigration system itself. This inability to trust the legitimacy of those agents who are supposed to provide support is another barrier to integration.

Moreover, the setting of my study – New York City – is considerably safer for immigrants than other cities where the anti-immigrant rhetoric is more vocal and the drive toward oppressive policies is stronger. New York City has been lauded for being relatively immigrant friendly and my participants, such as Sue, have acknowledged the kinder situation they live in. However, despite the privilege of living in a comparatively immigrant-friendly city that promotes a more sympathetic environment towards its foreign-born population, the fear of deportation exists, and manifests itself in the very damaging, traumatic ways outlined previously. This study makes evident that fear of deportation and legal violence exist irrespective of where in the United States an immigrant lives, or how long they have resided in the this country.

**The role of race.** The United States has such a storied past with imposing hierarchies on its population that one cannot discuss immigration and deny the social constructions of race. I would be remiss if I did not discuss the role racialization plays in the treatment of immigrants and their perceptions of belonging. Immigrants are aware of the racial hierarchies that exist, and how these play a role in their treatment by institutional agents. When Polly described her fear of police and the certainty she felt whenever she saw a young Hispanic [male] being stopped by police that he would be deported, she is expressing a consciousness of the racial positioning that occurs by political agents when engaging subordination and disempowerment, and how they are linked to legal status (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008).

In addition, Stacy, while expressing her vulnerability, still acknowledges that immigration acceptance or treatment, as well as access to citizenship, comes in “classes” and if one has an accent, one is positioned racially, but even more so if one is Brown or Black, where

one is considered the lowest class. This racialization manifests itself psychologically quite differently, as Stacy points out by saying she is not as fearful as other immigrants and she is not as comfortable as non-immigrants – she is somewhere in the middle.

Scott's story clearly demonstrates the distress of being a Black man in society compounded by being an immigrant, and how these factors do not go lost on immigrant males of color. The United States is known for its exclusionary policies and practices against Blacks and a history of the separation between Blacks from Whites. This racialization extends to immigrants of color – those with African ancestry including Dominicans and Afro-Cubans who also get treated and seen as Black – and also suffer discriminatory treatment and excessive social control (Waters & Kasinitz, 2015). Furthermore, Mexican immigrants in particular, because of their high visibility and overrepresentation in the undocumented population, are considered by some scholars to be categorized as a racialized ethnic group (Foner & Alba, 2015).

Clearly, participants are aware of their position in society, not just as marginalized commodities in U.S. capitalist society, but also in terms of where they stand in the racial hierarchy. As expressed by Stacy, while her accent makes clear she is foreign born, because U.S. society has historically attributed citizenship based on phenotypical traits relatable to those of European ancestry, a superficial look at her white skin would not make obvious her immigration status (Trucio-Haynes, 2006). Nevertheless, Stacy feels she will never be seen as fully accepted. The assessment of her “otherness” is made upon further inspection, i.e., speaking with her and hearing her accent. On the contrary, my participants of color, such as Scott and Polly, admit that their obvious phenotypical differentness makes their outsider status obvious, also making their exclusion and targeting for immigration enforcement easier. This awareness is another

component that leads immigrants to suffer feelings of being unwanted and not belonging, serving as another barrier to integration.

## Summary

Participant responses were similar to those expressed by persons suffering from contexts involving violence. A recurring theme was that vulnerability to deportation made participants feel fearful and that this resulting fear led to changes in behavior. The findings also show us that participants experience a range of emotions, such as sadness, anger, and anxiety, but the fear of deportation also leads to feelings that are deemed unhealthy, such as loss of freedom, slavery, allusions to living in a golden cage, feeling trapped and living in confinement – all feelings that affect well-being/quality of life and strongly associated with poor mental health such anxiety, depression, and even suicide. These recurrent descriptions of the emotional turmoil resulting from the fear of being forcibly removed from this country were similar to those who experience violence and the trauma associated with it.

The data collected provide supporting evidence for and contributes to Menjívar and Abrego's (2012) emerging concept of legal violence. Participant responses indicate that immigration enforcement creates conditions of legal violence. In addition, the study demonstrates that it is not just immigration enforcement broadly, but deportation, in particular that constitutes legal violence. Moreover, legal violence is also evident in the community, as noncitizen immigrants do not form the social ties needed to develop social capital, as well as feel no motivation to become active in any local community or political organizations.

In addition, the data confirm the general idea that the fear of deportation goes beyond the individual experience and that of their families; it bears implications for their communities as well. By demonstrating that the fear of deportation and the effects of that fear are experienced not just by the undocumented, but by those who are in the United States with Legal Permanent Residency as well as their families, the study shows that deportation is detrimental to a wider population than commonly assumed. Finally, my study demonstrates that fear of deportation and legal violence exist irrespective of how long an immigrant has lived in the United States, or whether or not the city they reside in is immigrant-friendly.

## CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

*When I deal with...the immigrant communities throughout Lake County, there is fear that's through these communities. They know the horror story of their uncle or their brother who committed the most ticky-tack of offenses, got incarcerated as a result and is now being deported. It just sends chills through their spine. (Sheriff Mark Curran, 2011).*

My participants expressed fear and feelings that echo those described by Sheriff Curran. My study, however, also demonstrates that the fear experienced as a result of the vulnerability to deportation went beyond simply “chills.” Deportability impacts immigrants’ lives on a multitude of levels. Individually, the psychological and emotional toll experienced by immigrants threatens their mental health and overall well-being. In addition, the perceptions of my participants on how they are received by U.S. society impacted their ability to develop the necessary tools that lead to successful integration.

Strong proponents of immigration enforcement, such as Sheriff Mark Curran, have reversed their position after witnessing the effects on the lives of immigrants, their families, and their communities. A major motivation for this study was to keep both the academic and political spheres properly informed about the immigration experience. In particular, the research explores what effect, if any, the fear of deportation has had on the very thing immigration enforcement seeks to protect: communities. Yet it seems that policymakers’ excessive concern over immigrant integration has ironically created an environment that results in the development of feelings and behaviors that impede integration for the immigrant community.

## The Function of Fear

Several conclusions and recommendations are highlighted by the findings in this study, including: (i) vulnerability to deportation results in fear; (ii) the fear associated with the vulnerability to deportation has a salient impact on an immigrant's life; (iii) this effect goes beyond the intended consequences of the threat of sanctions and provides evidence that deportation is legal violence.

In their study of El Salvadorian deportees, Dingeman-Cerda and Coutin (2012) call deportation legal violence. They use the term, however, to refer to the post-effects of deportation. I argue that deportation constitutes legal violence by the mere virtue of one's vulnerability to it and the resulting fear. My study participants have indicated that the fear of deportation goes beyond the intended consequence resulting from the threat of punishment. Respondents' accounts regarding the level of fear they felt and the impact of this fear is in fact evidence that deportation specifically is legal violence.

Legal violence highlights how the immigrant experience is compounded by "otherwise 'normal' or 'regular' effects of the law" (Menjívar & Abrego, 2014, p. 1384). The typical outcomes of deportation include the separation of the family, as well as the exploitation of labor. While these are nonetheless harmful, they are still relatively standard for the deportable immigrant. We have seen, from my participant stories, however, that while fear is a predictable and expected outcome of the vulnerability to and threat of deportation, there are also overreaching effects on many levels from this fear.

Legal violence was evident in various ways in participant responses. From behavioral patterns that create a cruel system of self-harm, including being driven to engage in or consider criminal behavior, to forced-decision making, to the fear of being discovered – leading to the

further victimization of immigrants, who are too afraid of reporting crimes against them – deportation, as a mechanism of immigration enforcement, results in the same effects that result from other forms of violence.

Another example of legal violence was evident from the internalization of the anti-immigrant rhetoric. Legal violence contributes to the “good v. bad” immigrant narrative. Vulnerable immigrants are so fearful of deportation that they begin to adopt the same hateful and divisive language being used against them. This internalization, coupled with their desire to avoid removal, results in vulnerable immigrants creating a separation between themselves and those who do get deported. Immigrants who avoid getting deported start to believe that (contrary to the statistical evidence) those who are being removed deserve to be because of their evil, criminal deeds. Other participants expressed feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, isolation, entrapment, imprisonment, and equated their situation to slavery. Several more indicated feelings of depression. The psychological trauma and damage experienced by those who fear deportation is another example of how deportation is legal violence.

This study’s participants all came to the United States on an assumption that their lives would improve. Yet, as their testimonies demonstrate, their vulnerability to deportation has actually caused them great distress. For the majority of participants, fear of deportation has negatively affected their welfare. Participant responses reveal that they are literally worrying themselves sick. Vulnerability to deportation manifests as a novel type of fear that, in turn, impacts not only how participants behave from day-to-day, but their overall health and wellbeing. Respondent expressions indicate there is a possible link between the fear of deportation and poor mental health.



As discussed previously, this study's findings confirm that the vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, leads to feelings and behaviors that in their totality serve as barriers to integration and incorporation. Furthermore, the behavioral, emotional, and psychological effects of the fear of deportation are indicators of legal violence which, as Menjívar and Abrego (2012) assert, "is particularly useful in the study of immigrants and immigration as it grasps the complex and often overlooked effects of the law on immigrants' paths of incorporation and assimilation" (p. 1381).

Belonging is a natural human need, and crucial for acculturation. For immigrants, there is always an initial outsider feeling and uncertainty about how they fit in. Nevertheless, eventually a sense of belonging gradually develops and a commitment to stay in the host country and become a part of it is cemented (Arredondo, 1984; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Capra, Steindl-Rast, & Matus, 1991). As this study indicates, however, the vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it, does not allow the uncertainty to dissipate nor does it let the sense of belonging to develop, and therefore deters the process of integration. This finding is especially impactful when considering that the average time my participants have lived in the United States is 17 years. Yet, they expressed that they did not belong or feel wanted, despite their longevity in this country. In addition, my study took place in New York City, which – as outlined in Chapter Three – has a long history of immigration, and a reputation for being immigrant friendly. Nevertheless, while there is acknowledgement that they are relatively safer in New York City against immigration enforcement efforts, my participants expressed that they still feel vulnerable and fearful.

We saw how the fear of being deported drove participants to engage in behaviors that impede integration. Such behaviors include the refusal or avoidance of getting involved with any

local community matters or other types of civic engagement. In addition, participants reported habits of self-segregation and isolation, wherein they refused to frequent some public places. In addition some reported their refusal to participate in social activities.

Besides avoiding public spaces and social events, participants also expressed sensitivities to how they were received in the United States. Such perceptions led respondents to feel unwelcome and isolated. This impression of feeling unwanted and unwelcome in this country drove my study participants to feel less trusting of neighbors and others close to them. These feelings converged, creating a sense of apathy toward forming social ties, which, in turn, was a key inhibitor to integration. Moreover, participant perceptions of not belonging made them feel less trusting of service providers. Participants, such as Polly, expressed dubiousness over calling one such agency – the police department – for help in case of an emergency.

Additionally, some undocumented participants, because of their fear of being discovered and deported, will refrain from trying to legalize. Refusing to seek legalization means that respondents will be forced to remain marginalized. Thus, the fear created by the threat of deportation is actually perpetuating their situation of uncertainty and insecurity, further driving them into a vicious and vindictive cycle of vulnerability.

Fear of deportation serves as a barrier to integration and incorporation. Participant responses demonstrate that the fear of removal drives them to engage in behaviors that inhibit integration. Moreover, the study shows that fear of deportation is related to an individual's perceptions of negative reception by the host country. The state of being unwelcome spills over, inhibiting their desire to make themselves at home. Combined, these emotions prevent participants from establishing political and social relationships, which also impedes integration and incorporation.

## Recommendations for Future Research and Consideration

**Looping back to social disorganization.** For researchers studying violence and the immigration experience, the legal violence framework provides another context that can be utilized to examine how immigrants are being victimized, not just by direct violence, but by deportation specifically, as a consequence of immigration enforcement.

Moreover, as explained in the Preface, the seeds of this study began with an attempt to reexamine the mechanisms that lead to social disorganization. Considering the abundance of scholarship arguing that the link between immigration and crime does not exist, I hypothesize that perhaps it is immigration control, rather than immigration itself, which leads to the factors that create social disorganization. While this current study is a departure from that initial inquest, there are indications in the findings that point towards a legitimate basis to explore deportation as a mechanism that leads to the factors associated with social disorganization. In addition, there are studies suggesting that segregation increases crime and to some degree this has been substantiated by my participants, as the fear of deportation has led immigrants to consider engaging in illegal – sometimes criminal – acts. Although often such acts might be involuntary, it is clear from their alienation, both by the state and their own isolation, that immigrants are vulnerable to crime and violence.

Deportation and the fear it generates is a daily presence in the lives of immigrants. This fear can lead to a breakdown in social capital and cohesion, as well as promote a sense of distrust, thus weakening family and social ties normally experienced as a result of community integration and stability. Recent scholarship continues to debunk the immigrant-crime link of social disorganization and instead has found that the revitalizing effect of immigration on communities occurs in communities with stronger immigrant incorporation. In their study, Velez

and Lyons (2012) sought to find out if the level of immigrant reception influenced the revitalizing effect immigration has on neighborhoods, as well as reducing the crime rate. They found that the immigration revitalization effect occurs in neighborhoods with “stronger institutional arrangements to incorporate immigrants into society (p. 172). In addition, they found that the influence of immigration on decreasing crime is limited to cities with a long history of immigrant settlement and greater ethnic diversity. These established and enduring immigrant settlement locations are referred to as *gateway cities* and New York City is a classic example of one (Denton & Villarubia, 2007; Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Certainly, the findings from my study can serve as a call to expand this research to study the effects of the fear of deportation on the immigration revitalization perspective. This current study was conducted in such a gateway city. Yet, fear persists and legal violence is evident, showing a relationship between the fear of deportation and patterns that impede integration. The fear and legal violence created by deportation is not limited to new immigrants, nor to cities and regions experiencing newer waves of immigration flows. Rather, fear persists across all legal statuses, and cuts through time, space and place, affecting both new- and long-term immigrants, cities with recent immigration flows, as well as older immigration settlement areas. In addition, fear of deportation, legal violence, and the disruption of integration is not limited to regions with explicit anti-immigrant sentiments. Rather, said elements exist irrespective of how “immigrant friendly” a city might be considered. Indeed, my findings can serve as a call to expand this research to study the effects of the fear of deportation on both social disorganization and the immigration revitalization perspective.

**An expanded look at fear.** Trauma associated with immigration has focused mainly on those experiences involving the migratory process itself, or those who have come from war-torn

countries (Chu et al., 2013). Levers and Hyatt-Burkhart (2012) examine trauma associated with the controversies surrounding immigration reform. There is very little literature, however, which examines trauma related to the state of fear associated with being susceptible to deportation. In one of the few studies that explores the trauma caused by deportation or the threat of deportation, Luis Zayas (2015) explores the experiences of the children of the vulnerable to deportation. I seek to contribute by also offering the experiences of adults who are vulnerable to this experience.

Such an expansion of the scholarship on trauma might prove fruitful, as the descriptions given by respondents about how they feel when they think about deportation are not unlike those attested to by persons who have experienced trauma related to war zone exposure or other traumatic events and are suffering from anxiety disorders.

Studies on trauma and anxiety disorders traditionally examine the effects of traumatic events and reactions to extreme stress, which are based on key definitions offered by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V) such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (“PTSD”) and Acute Stress Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Carter et al., 2004). There have been increasing calls for an expanded scope of assessing “trauma” beyond the narrow measures for PTSD and Acute Stress Disorder outlined in the DSM. There is interest in incorporating stress associated with life events that have been characterized by respondents as negative, producing symptoms such as numbness and feeling intruded upon, which have lead to effects like loss of self-worth (Carlson, 1997; Carter, et al., 2004; Herman, 1992; Norris, 1992). Indeed, several studies have looked at the incidence of trauma, including PTSD, resulting from situations such as in the workplace, racial discrimination, serving time in

prison, and living in high crime areas (Butts, 2002; Goff, et al., 2007; Rasmussen, Aber & Bhana, 2004; Skogstad, et al., 2013).

According to the National Institute of Mental Health's information page on PTSD, "Not everyone with PTSD has been through a dangerous event. Some people develop PTSD after a friend or family member experiences danger or harm" (NIH website, "Signs and Symptoms" section, para. 1). This statement supports the notion that participant testimony regarding how the vulnerability to deportation and the fear associated with it is indicative of suffering PTSD. As established throughout my study, my findings have indicated that fear of deportation has a negative impact on a person's well-being and quality of life. From feelings of insecurity and uncertainty, to psychological trauma including depression and thoughts of suicide, participants have reported numerous negative affects stemming from the fear of deportation. In addition, the fear of deportation fosters a sense of vulnerability that drives some who are vulnerable to behave in ways that can jeopardize their formation of social capital and thus impede successful integration. These discoveries and effects warrant an expanded look at these effects, on a wider and broader scale. One manner in which my study can be expanded could be to conduct a mix-methods study. For example, participants who have been interviewed for this current study would be asked to participate in a more extensive process, where the level of anxiety and fear can be measured. The impact reported by my participants indicates that the effects are experienced not just on an individual level, but also on a wider scale, which includes the family and community. Currently, there are several sponsored studies funded by the National Institutes of Health seeking to understand those mechanisms related to the mental health of vulnerable populations, including immigrants. A study, similar to this one, which has found that fear of

deportation, can have a severe psychological impact on the immigrant population can also contribute to that research.

**Public health research.** As mentioned in Chapter Five, this paper does not aim to make any conclusions or causal statements regarding mental health. However, due to the extensive statements from participants denoting trauma, further examination of the psychological anguish should be conducted. The loss of humanity experienced by the participants as well as the feelings of suicide mentioned by one respondent are indications that the United States is on the precipice of a serious mental health crisis. Although my study is a small sample, there are currently about 25 million deportable immigrants living in the United States. Even if small percentage of these immigrants have experienced similar affects to what my participants have, the United States could be close to a public health crisis.

**Neoliberalism, the political economy of punishment, and social bulimia.** This study's findings should not come as a surprise, considering the fact that the U.S. neoliberalist tendency is to push entire communities toward the margins, excluding them from social, political and civic arenas (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006). Deportation is one example of the U.S.'s political economy of punishment and typifies the socially bulimic nature of the United States. Social bulimia was introduced by Young (2007) and refers to the concurrent absorption and rejection of segments of the population. U.S. capitalistic society invites the world – particularly those from developing nations – to seek the American dream, while simultaneously pushing immigrants to the margins of society with the constant threat of removal. This process exemplifies the social bulimic nature of the United States

It is in the neoliberalist tradition to reduce the human to a commodity. To take this tendency even further, my study demonstrates the level of inhumanity that deportation imposes

on immigrants. If humanity involves the propensity to err, then participant responses have indicated that the fear of deportation has stripped away part of their humanity. Several participants indicated that they were afraid of making simple mistakes, such as forgetting to pay a bill on time, or perhaps an error in their taxes, for fear that they might be deported. Indeed, even more serious mistakes, such as drinking too heavily and getting into an altercation, are still errors in judgment that are common among all persons, irrespective of citizenship. Certainly, the act of making a mistake – of being human – should not hold a person to such a vindictive and cruel measuring rod that their membership to humanity is challenged. Yet, that is what deportation is causing – immigrants are forced to hold themselves to standards that are unrealistic considering the propensity of all humans to transgress.

This pattern clearly emerged in my study. Each participant came to this country for better opportunities, but their vulnerability to deportation has led to fear and permanent feelings of susceptibility to removal. This reaction has subsequently led to avoidance behaviors that have inhibited their ability to form social or political relationships, accrue social capital, and achieve integration and incorporation. Moreover, the vindictive, cruel, and violent nature of immigration policies leads to a process of internalization whereby immigrants accept their stigmatized positions and even engage in harmful, accusatory rhetoric against those who do get deported, perpetuating the dialogue of the good v. bad immigrant. This divisive language leads to distrust and causes further disruption to the community.

## **Limitations**

There are two major limitations to this study: sample size and gender distribution. The



inability to generalize from a small convenience sample is a common limitation for most qualitative studies. By virtue of their marginalized position, there is a certainty that many immigrants will never feel comfortable enough to become participants of a study such as mine. Indeed, I had several people refuse to participate due to their fear of being identified and discovered, and possibly being exposed to deportation. However, this study was initiated as a first step toward the exploration into the impact that the vulnerability to deportation has on immigrants and their communities. Now that there are data demonstrating that fear is, indeed, an outcome, and that this fear leads to behaviors and feelings which are extremely detrimental to immigrants' well-being and quality of life, as well as their ability to incorporate, further steps towards wider ranging studies and explorations into those detrimental effects on larger samples can be initiated.

In addition, while the vast majority of deportations are of men, my study's participants are mostly women. Simply stated, I had more access to women during recruitment, and women were more receptive to speaking to me for this study. The small amount of the male perspective is a limitation of this study. It does not, however, invalidate my findings. A recent TRAC study found that between July 2014 and December 2015, 18,607 "women with children" were ordered to be removed in immigration court. These people are part of a priority removal program, where expeditious processing of cases is the goal (Syracuse University, 2016). The majority of these removals were from Texas and California, but New York State ranked in the top 10 who ordered these removals. These removal orders represent an upward trend in expedited proceedings involving women and children. The point of view of my female participants, therefore, should not be discounted. Future studies exploring the impact of the fear of deportation should seek to have a larger, and more evenly distributed sample.

The fear of deportation indeed exists, and there are a variety of effects which stem from this fear. My study looked at a variety of persons under different circumstances. The sample is merely a small fraction of the population in question, but should not be considered non-representative. The fear, pain, anguish, and trauma expressed by my participants should not be minimized because they are part of a small group in a dissertation study. The participants are in the same vulnerable position as the 11.3 million undocumented immigrants and over 13 million Legal Permanent Residents living in the United States. If the same sentiments are expressed by just a fraction of these groups, there is a good argument that U.S. immigration policy is not only causing harm to individuals and their immediate families, but also causing wholesale damage to entire communities, precipitating a public health crisis where thousands, possibly millions, of individuals who live in fear are suffering emotional and psychological trauma.

### **Policy Implications**

The recent wave of immigration into the United States, along with increased migration across the globe has brought concerns of successful immigrant integration to the forefront for both policymakers and scholars (Alba & Foner, 2015). The role that immigration enforcement plays in hindering successful incorporation by disrupting the processes of integration should also be a concern. My study demonstrates that vulnerability to deportation, and the fear associated with it is a barrier to successful integration.

To argue for or expect the end of all deportations would be, at this time, fantastical. However, the results from my study do give support to the very plausible argument that a reprieve from deportation should be provided. In addition, the reality that most persons being

deported are not the most dangerous or criminogenic, along with the fact that deportation causes extreme disruption to the lives and families of those who are removed, speak to the need of a moratorium – the deportation regime must be reexamined and overhauled. Further, immigration enforcement protocol should also be reexamined, where immigrants who are detained should be given the same rights as those of citizens. The Obama administration recently issued an executive action that would provide relief for parents of U.S.-born children (known as “Deferred Action for Parents of Americas,” also known as “DAPA”) and, at the very least, such relief should be further developed. The detrimental effects experienced by individuals and families and the implications for their communities are only a part of the problem. The psychological trauma is another significant impact that cannot be ignored. Politicians – on both sides of the spectrum – should take a close look at the damage and distress being experienced by this very vulnerable population. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the scholarship that has inspired some policy-makers to move toward passing polices and laws that are gentler and more sensitive to the effects that the current threats of removal have imposed upon the deportable population. In addition, the fields of criminal justice and criminology need to consider the importance of studying immigration. With the intersection of criminal justice and immigration, there needs to be a development of this topic by incorporating classes on immigration and deportation in all program curriculums so that future criminal justice professionals benefit from studying this very important issue.

**APPENDIX A – RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (English Version)**

*The Graduate Center – City University of New York  
Department of Criminal Justice – John Jay College of Criminal Justice*

**INFORMATION SHEET**

*PROJECT TITLE: Studying the Effects of Deportation on the Social Organization of Immigrant Neighborhoods*

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My name is Shirley Leyro and I am a doctoral student at The Graduate Center – City University of New York. I am conducting a research study about the effects of deportation on immigrant communities. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of recent immigration control policies, which have made deportation a real source of fear in the lives of many immigrants.

If you choose to participate, I will conduct an open-ended interview with you which is expected to last approximately 60-75 minutes. I will ask you questions about your everyday life, and if and how deportation has impacted these routines. You need not have experienced deportation directly. I am looking not just at *direct* deportation, but also how the *threat* of deportation impacts the lives of immigrants. **Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions and are free to stop the interview at any point. If you choose not to take part, there will be no penalty.**

Everything you tell me will be kept confidential – that is, anything you share with me will not be connected with your name. No one will know what you said or what opinions you expressed. I will not use your name on any of my records or in any reports or published materials that I make about your interview. I will use a fake name to protect your identity. I will be the only person with access to all files. Print records will be kept in a locked file cabinet and electronic records will be password protected on a private home computer. All indentifying information will be removed from all recordings, notes and transcripts. I do not foresee any physical or mental pain for you by taking part in this project.

I will use an audio recorder during the interview unless you do not give me permission to audio record the interview.

If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact me, Shirley Leyro, at 646-244-1211 or email me at [sleyro@gmail.com](mailto:sleyro@gmail.com). You can also contact the advisor on this project, Dr. David Brotherton, John Jay College of Criminal Justice: 212-237-8694 or by email: [dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Carina Quintian, IRB Administrator at John Jay, at 212-237-8961 or [jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu).

Thank you for your participation in this study. I will give you a copy of this sheet to take with you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shirley Leyro

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## APPENDIX A – RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (Spanish Version)

*The Graduate Center – City University of New York*  
*Departamento de Justicia Criminal – John Jay College of Criminal Justice*

### HOJA DE INFORMACIÓN DE UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

*Título del Proyecto: Estudiando los efectos de la deportación en la organización social de las comunidades de inmigrantes*

Mi nombre es Shirley Leyro y soy una estudiante de doctorado en el Centro de Graduados de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York. Estoy conduciendo un estudio donde quiero examinar los efectos de la deportación en las comunidades inmigrantes. El propósito de esta investigación es examinar las maneras en que las políticas del control de inmigración han impactado las vidas de los inmigrantes.

Si usted decide participar, se le entrevistará por unos 60-75 minutos. Las preguntas serán relacionadas con sus experiencias diarias, y también cómo estas experiencias han sido afectadas por las políticas de la deportación. Usted no tiene que haber experimentado la deportación directamente. Yo estoy examinando no solamente los efectos de la experiencia directa de la deportación, sino también los efectos resultantes de la amenaza que trae estas políticas. **Su participación es voluntaria. Usted puede rehusar participar sin pena alguna. Además, si usted está de acuerdo en participar, está libre de rehusar cualquier pregunta y terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento.**

Toda la información se mantendrá en privado. No se usará su nombre en ninguna de mis discors o en los informes o materiales publicados que se hacen acerca de su entrevista. Yo le daré un nombre falso para proteger su identidad. Yo seré la única persona con acceso a todos los archivos. Todos registros se mantendrán en un archivador bajo llave y los registros electrónicos serán protegidos con contraseña en un ordenador privado. Yo no anticipo ningún tipo de dolor físico o mental para usted en participar en este proyecto.

Voy a utilizar una grabadora de audio durante la entrevista a menos que usted no me da permiso para grabar las entrevistas.

Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre el estudio ahora o en el futuro, usted puede ponerse en contacto conmigo, Shirley, Leyro, 646-244-1211 o me puedes enviar un correo electrónico a: [sleyro@gmail.com](mailto:sleyro@gmail.com). Usted también se puede poner en contacto con el avisador del proyecto, Dr. David Brotherton, John Jay College of Criminal Justice: 212-237-8694 o por correo electrónico: [dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu). Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante en este estudio, puedes ponerte en contacto con la administradora, Carina Quintan, 212-237-8961 o por correo electrónico: [jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu).

Gracias por su participación en este estudio. Se le entregará una copia de este consentimiento para mantener con sus papeles personales.

Shirley Leyro

Firma

Fecha

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board

Approval Date: June 5, 2014  
Expiration Date: June 4, 2015

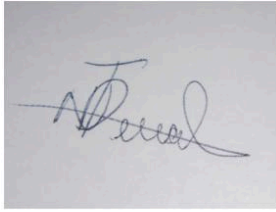
## **APPENDIX B – TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY FORM**

### **AGREEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALTY**

I have agreed to transcribe audio recordings of interviews for Shirley Leyro in connection with her dissertation work.

In being allowed access to the audio files for the purposes of transcription, I hereby agree to the following:

- 1) None of the information contained in the audio files shall be shared with any other person, organization, or entity.
- 2) I will not discuss, share or show any of the transcripts I create for the audio files.
- 3) I will not keep or store any independent files of my own related to this job.



\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

Nicole Tendler  
PRINT NAME

Dated: June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014



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