

(Im)migrant Voices: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Contemporary
(Im)migrant Issues Faced by (Im)migrant University Students

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines contemporary issues that 18 (im)migrant university students faced during a time of highly militarized U.S.-Mexico border relations while living in Arizona during the time of this dissertation research. Utilizing critical race theory and public sphere theory as theoretical frameworks, the project addresses several related research questions. The first is how did (im)migrant university students describe their (im)migrant experience while they lived in the U.S. and studied at a large southwestern university? Second, what can (im)migrant university student experiences tell us about (im)migrant issues? Third, what do (im)migrant university students want people to know about (im)migration from reading their story?

Three conceptual constructs, each composed of three categories, that described the different (im)migrant experiences in this study emerged through data analysis. The first of these conceptual constructs was the *racialized/ing (im)migrant experience* that categorically was divided into *systemic exclusions*, *liminal exclusions*, and *micro-social contextual exclusions*. The second concept that emerged was the *passed/ing (im)migrant experience* where (im)migrant university students shared that they felt they had a systemic pathway to citizenship and/or that their immigration authorization gave them privilege. This concept was also categorically divided into *systemic inclusions*, *liminal inclusions*, and *micro-social contextual inclusions*. The last concept was the *negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience*, which described ways that (im)migrant university students negotiated their space/place in the public sphere while attending a large, public university in Arizona. As with the other two concepts, three categories emerged in relation to *negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience*: *systemic negotiations*, *liminal negotiations*, and *micro-social contextual negotiations*. It is (im)migrant university student experiences that give individuals a better understanding of the complexities that surround immigration. The (im)migrant narratives also highlight that inclusion and exclusion from the public sphere is a complex and dynamic process because all (im)migrant students, including U.S. citizens, experienced moments of inclusion and exclusion from the U.S. public sphere.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents, Francisco Cantú Meléndez and Gloria Botello Gallegos, who (im)migrated to the U.S. and sacrificed so much to give me a better life and an opportunity to achieve my American Dream. Thank you for instilling in me the value of education. You are my *angelitos*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

It is a hot, sunny August afternoon in Phoenix, Arizona. A 73-year-old man took advantage of the slight breeze under a tree to smoke a cigarette outside his house. As he smoked, he looked across the street at the solitary park. No one was outdoors today since the heat reached 112 degrees. As sweat ran down his face, he patted it dry with a napkin from his back pocket. He felt his ears burning from the heat and wondered when the weather would finally cool down.

From the corner of his eye, he noticed a grey pickup truck turn into the street and park directly across from where he stood. With the truck still running, he noticed an older white man seated in the driver's seat roll down the truck window.

"Do you want work?" said the man from the truck.

For a few seconds, the standing man and the man in the truck locked eyes. The 73-year-old was confused. While he did not speak a lot of English, he was able to understand what the man in the truck was asking.

With a puzzled look, the man outside immediately shook his head "no."

"Are you hungry?" asked the man from the truck as both men continued to lock eyes.

Again, the 73-year-old man understood the question and shook his head "no." The older white man rolled up his window and drove his grey pickup truck away.

My partner's father experienced this shortly after he moved in with us and while I sat inside the house typing this dissertation. My partner's father laughed as he gave details of what he encountered outside. I, on the other hand, grew angry.

From my perspective, the pickup truck driver assumed that my partner's father did not belong in our neighborhood. His darker-colored skin, inability to speak English, and perhaps the way he was dressed all appeared to be markers of difference. What the man did not know is that my partner's father became a United States citizen on September 10, 1985, and since then has

lived between Mexico and the U.S. What the man did not know is that my partner's father was living in and not working at the house where he stood outside to smoke.

It is experiences like these that can give individuals a better understanding of the complexities that surround immigration. It brings awareness of how people living in the U.S. may make assumptions of who is and who is not a U.S. citizen based on physical appearance, language use, language accents,¹ among other characteristics. Stories like these give a sense of difficulties that people who are perceived to be foreign, international, nonnative, and/or alien, face in the U.S.

This dissertation intends to do some of this work through an examination of contemporary issues that immigrant² and migrant,³ or (im)migrant university students face during a time of highly militarized U.S.-Mexico border relations (Dunn, 1996; Kil & Menjivar, 2006; Rowe, 2004). I use a qualitative approach to study (im)migration and issues that (im)migrants faced while living in Arizona during the time of this dissertation research.

Throughout my dissertation, I use the terms (im)migrant and (im)migration when discussing research participants. The terms recognize that migration and immigration trajectories are diverse. Study participants came from different parts of the world, for different reasons, and at different times. Participants used terms, such as "immigrant," "international student," "nonimmigrant student," "migrant," "sojourner," "third culture kid," "DREAMer," and "human" when

¹ Romero (2006) described these characteristics as "Mexicanness" when it comes to Mexican Americans and other racialized Latino/a citizens and residents. "Mexicanness" is indicated by skin-color, bilingual-speaking abilities, and neighborhoods individuals inhabit. Under racialized law enforcement, these markers subject individuals perceived to be "alien," regardless of their citizenship status, to unnecessary stops, questions, searches, insults, and so on.

² Immigrants to the U.S. are foreign-born individuals who intend to live and work permanently in the U.S. (Martin, 2004).

³ In 2002, the United Nations defined migrants as individuals who lived outside their country of birth or citizenship for twelve months or more.

asked what label best described them at the time of our interview. Scholars like Arzubiaga, Noguerón, and Sullivan (2009) have used the term im/migrant to denote simultaneously the labels of immigrant, migrant, refugee, and undocumented. While the labels have important distinctions in the social and legal implications that they carry, they are not mutually exclusive or permanent. Arzubiaga et al. (2009) stated:

Immigrants move to a country to seek permanent residence and migrants move to find itinerant work. However, migrants may change their initial intent to return to their home country and immigrants may also change their intent to stay. In addition, families include members who fall within different immigration categories such as siblings who are citizens and who are undocumented. (p. 246)

Participants in this study did not follow the same immigration trajectory. Some described how their intention of staying in the U.S. and/or leaving changed during the course of their stay.

While all my participants lived in Arizona at the time of this research, many described experiences and circumstances where they desired to stay in the U.S. even though that was not their original intention. Others mentioned having no intention of staying in the U.S., that they had moved solely to pursue higher education, and that they would leave after they finished their studies. Yet, others stated that they had really grown to like the U.S. and that they were open to staying if they found a job after they graduated from school. Similarly, participants in this study had entered the U.S. carrying different visa and citizenship statuses. In order to stay open to these different experiences and circumstances, I used (im)migrant and (im)migration in this dissertation to indicate that each research participant was born in another country but came to the U.S. for different reasons, at different times, at different ages, and with different authorization and that each participant has different intentions of staying and/or leaving the U.S.

This chapter serves as an entry point into the dissertation project. Having offered a statement of the problem the dissertation addresses, the following sections list my research questions, provide an overview of the subsequent chapters, and offer a personal statement that describes my positionality in relation to this dissertation.

Research Questions

When I first proposed this study, the research questions that guided this work were:

1. Does Arizona State University (ASU) contribute to the racialized/ing of (im)migrant university students in border militarized states like Arizona?
2. What are the perceptions⁴ of (im)migration by (im)migrant university students at a large, public southwestern university during a time of militarization rhetoric and practices in states like Arizona?

However, as I collected data, made sense of the interviews, and developed themes that connected the data during the analysis process, it was clear that these original research questions were not addressed. I often asked myself, "What questions does my research and data answer?" Therefore, an iterative approach was taken between my previous research and analysis of data to modify the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tracy, 2007). The research and data for this study ended up addressing the following research questions:

1. How did (im)migrant university students describe their (im)migrant experience while they lived in the U.S. and studied at ASU?
2. What can (im)migrant university student experiences tell us about (im)migrant issues?
3. What do (im)migrant university students want people to know about immigration from reading their story?

Modifying the research questions for this study was important due to the themes and information that emerged in the data analysis. This is a common practice when taking a grounded theory approach. The themes that emerged from the interview data also shaped the literatures I engaged in a later chapter to discuss how the themes intersect with scholarship on critical race theory and public sphere theory. The following section describes the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

⁴ This research question was developed to address the perceptions that (im)migrant university students had based on how media and/or public discourse framed discussions of (im)migration.

Explanation of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter 2 discusses the qualitative methods that I used in the dissertation and the emergent design of the study. The beginning of this chapter focuses on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the politics faced when applying for permission to work with human subjects on this project. I go on to discuss the study's design, sampling, data collection methods, and data analysis process and summarize characteristics of the (im)migrant students who participated in this study.

Chapter 3 features (im)migrant university student narratives. The chapter opens with an account of historical, political, and legal dimensions that constitute the structural conditions in which (im)migrant university students live their lives in the U.S. Outlining the relationship among nation-states, immigration, and citizenship benefits this chapter because that relationship shapes and informs the (im)migrant experiences of university students in this study, which in turn shapes and informs the ways they narrate their stories. (Im)migrant student narratives appear in large block quotation form, sparingly introduced and sparingly interrupted. These narratives constitute the material from which the themes articulated in Chapter 4 emerged.

Chapter 4 presents data analysis of the disparate narratives of (im)migrant university student experiences as they negotiate their space and place in U.S. publics. It also discusses three conceptual constructs that are each composed of three categories that describe the different (im)migrant experiences in this study. The first of these conceptual constructs was the *racialized/ing (im)migrant experience* that categorically was divided into *systemic exclusion*, *liminal exclusions*, and *micro-social contextual exclusions*. The second concept that emerged was the *passed/ing (im)migrant experience* where (im)migrant university students stated that they felt they had a systemic pathway to citizenship and/or that their immigration authorization gave them some privilege. This concept was also categorically divided into *systemic inclusions*, *liminal inclusions*, and *micro-social contextual inclusions*. The last concept was the *negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience*, which described ways that (im)migrant university students negotiated their space/place in the public sphere while attending a large, public university in Arizona and

living in the U.S. at the time of this research. As with the other two concepts, three categories emerged in relation to *negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience: systemic negotiations, liminal negotiations, and micro-social contextual negotiations*. The constructs and categories emerged through data analysis and allowed me to make connections and distinctions between the different experiences shared by (im)migrant university students.

Chapter 5 engages key literatures that sensitized me to listen for certain topics and themes in (im)migrant student narratives and that became salient because of and through their narratives. Specifically, I engaged literature on critical race theory and public sphere theory to understand (im)migrant student interactions with immigration and citizenship. Critical race theory allowed me to consider the social construction of race and the usage of race to privilege certain individuals and subordinate others in society. (Im)migrant student narratives that discussed aspects of exclusion from the U.S. public sphere along racial and identity markers offer critiques to how citizenship and belonging is centered in U.S. Whiteness. Public sphere theory was helpful in understanding how access to the public sphere and the privileges afforded by being a part of the public sphere are tied to citizenship. Through data analysis, however, (im)migrant narratives also highlight that inclusion and exclusion from the public sphere is a complex and dynamic process because all (im)migrant students, including U.S. citizens, experienced moments of inclusion and exclusion from the U.S. public sphere.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the lessons learned while doing this research, as well as the limitations of the study, the challenges faced when conducting research, and clarification of the contributions of the dissertation.

Personal Statement and Positionality

“You are a chameleon,” said the man as he stared at my face with a surprised look. “I would have never guessed that your family is from Mexico. You speak too well and are so white!” I felt myself giving him a forced awkward smile as I walked away.

I had just finished playing another “game” that has been jokingly dubbed to friends and family as the “Let me guess where you are from” game. These interactions take place in several

settings, such as the workplace, grocery store, bank, and while traveling. My friends often joke that they are going to buy me a world map to mark all the places that people have mistakenly tried to guess where I am from, including my race and/or my ethnicity.

Jewish, Lebanese, Azerbaijani, Greek, Italian, Brazilian, Black, African American, Spanish, Argentinian, Peruvian, Colombian, Romanian, Portuguese, French, Turkish, and White are the most common places and categories used to describe where or to what group people in the U.S. think I belong. Most of the time, people seem to use my phenotypic characteristics to help them decide. Often, they “misread” those features and assume that my background is not Mexican and/or Mexican American. And while I often joke about these experiences with friends and family, there have been many situations where this “misreading” gives me privilege in these interactions. My ability to pass does, at times, make me a chameleon and allow me to be perceived to be a part of social groups and/or individuals.

Noblit, Flores, and Murillo (2004) stated that “critical ethnographers must explicitly consider how their own acts of studying and representing people and situations are acts of domination even as critical ethnographers reveal the same in what they study” (p. 3). My positionality statement is an important step to acknowledging my own power, privilege, and biases in this research study, as well as an opportunity to help others understand how I came to select the theoretical perspectives that ground my study and the design of the project.

I probably first became interested in immigration studies in my childhood, growing up on the Texas-Tamaulipas border with my father who shared his immigrant story and encouraged me to be proud of my roots and cultural heritage. However, my academic research interests in this topic developed when I moved to Tempe, Arizona, to start a doctoral program. As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, a woman partnered to a Mexican citizen who became a naturalized U.S. citizen during the time of this research study, and a doctoral student who mostly identifies with critical/cultural studies, I am drawn to research that gives me a better understanding of immigration issues because it is a part of my family’s experience. Moving from one southern border state to a southwest border state in pursuit of a doctoral degree, I also became interested

in why people move from place to place and was motivated to learn from the embedded cultural contexts in my life. Through my experiences and my studies, I became hypersensitive to the differences between the sociopolitical environments in south central Arizona and south central Texas when it came to immigration. I not only became aware of how differently Latinos/as, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans express their cultural identity and culture but also experienced several uncomfortable and emotional moments since moving to the Phoenix metropolitan area. This section describes two of many experiences that influenced the development and design of this dissertation project.

In fall 2008, my partner, two friends, and I drove from Phoenix to the Sonoita/Elgin vineyards for an afternoon of wine tasting. On our drive back, we were stopped at a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 82, which is just north of Sonoita Vineyards in Arizona. It is common for there to be checkpoints within 25 to 75 miles along the southern border of the U.S. to check for unauthorized (im)migrants and/or smuggling activities.

As we pulled up, the uniformed Border Patrol agent asked “U.S. citizens?”

My two friends and I said, “Yes.”

My partner hesitated before saying, “No, I am a resident.”

The Border Patrol turned to my partner and sternly asked, “What country are you a citizen of?”

“Mexico.”

The agent’s facial expression changed as he asked, “Is there anything in the back that I should know about?”

“No,” answered my partner, as the agent walked to the back of the 2006 Honda CR-V and peered through the window.

The agent walked back. “Do you have your resident card?”

“I did not bring it with me,” answered my partner as he handed over his Arizona driver’s license.

The agent shook his head and, with his hand, instructed us to pull off to the side of the checkpoint. "You always need to carry your resident card with you."

As my partner drove the car to the side of the checkpoint, we sat in silence for a few seconds. My partner lifted his lowered head and said, "I'm sorry guys. I left my resident card at home."

We each took turns saying, "Oh, don't worry, it's not a big deal. I am sorry that he treated you that way."

As we sat in the car for over 30 minutes, I noticed the worried look on my partner's face. Everyone in the vehicle was quiet and, with every minute that went by, you could feel the level of discomfort rise.

When the Border Patrol agent came back to the car, he sternly lectured my partner about needing to carry his resident card with him at all times. It was experiences like these that motivated my partner to apply for U.S. citizenship in order to try to avoid intimidation and future issues at Border Patrol checkpoints.

This experience had an impact on me for several reasons. The most obvious is that it involved a person that I deeply care for and consider to be a big part of my family. It also made me aware of how privileged I am to not have experienced anything like this while growing up in south Texas or on my frequent travels across the border. I became more aware of how citizenship status and appearance result in differential treatment. This continued to motivate me to research immigration topics in Arizona to better understand our experience.

By fall 2009, I had researched and written essays in graduate classes that dealt with delayed citizenship and popular culture representations of immigration and worked with photographic archives of the Arizona/Sonora border wall. I took a visual ethnography class and completed a class project that dealt with education. My interest in immigration inspired me to come up with a project related to immigration and education. After speaking with several close friends from my master's program at Texas A&M University, I decided to focus on the lessons that international students learn about classroom communication styles of U.S. professors or how

they navigate new education systems when they come to study here. When I discussed these ideas with my professor, he put me in contact with a student from Serbia. I met with her on three separate occasions to discuss why she came to the U.S. for her doctoral studies, what had she learned while living in Arizona, and what it was like to be an international student.

As this student described her experience, I became aware of the challenges that came with her F-1⁵ international student visa status. The F-1 visa required her to be enrolled as a full-time student. She could not apply for school loans or scholarships, and she could only work 20 hours a week at an on-campus job. University budget cuts made it difficult for her to find a job. She had used up most of her personal funds in order to come to the U.S. to pursue a doctoral degree in music, and now with one semester left to finish her degree, she would have to return to Serbia since she had no funding.

This experience humbled me. I started to think about a project that might provide information about different immigrant and/or migrant experiences and create awareness about the difficulties and complexities shared by immigrant and/or migrants in contemporary society. In spring 2010, I began a pilot study that invited immigrants and migrants living in the Phoenix metropolitan area to share their story and their understandings about immigration. I later narrowed the sample for the dissertation to focus on the experiences of (im)migrant university students. I wondered if (im)migrant university student experiences would differ from other immigrants or migrants since their education grants them a different subject position and privilege in the U.S. These choices are further discussed in the methodology section.

While this position statement does not mitigate power relations in the study, it gives insight to the lens that I used to approach this research and why this research was important to me. It is experiences like these that have led me to turn my research interests back onto myself to

⁵ The F-1 student visa is a nonimmigrant visa for academic students who wish to study in the U.S. Students on an F-1 visa must remain enrolled as full-time students. After the culmination of their degree, they have an additional 60 days to prepare for departure from the U.S., transfer to another school and get a new visa, or find an employer who will sponsor a type of work visa.

help me understand the power, privilege, and bias that I have in this project and to consider my own position of authority. Even now, this dissertation research and the environment around me continue to shape who I am, the work that I do, and how I view immigration matters.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH METHODS

In February 2010, I applied for Institutional Review Board (IRB)⁶ approval in order to do a pilot study with (im)migrants to see if it would lead to this dissertation research project. I figured that the first IRB application would be eligible for Expedited Review⁷ with minor changes or clarifications because of the similar class project in my graduate seminar the semester before. Little did I know that it would take over a month and a half of consistent communication with the IRB office and various application revisions to get approval to start this research.

After several attempted revisions to the initial application submitted on February 4, 2010, the IRB reviewers requested an in-person meeting with me and one of my dissertation co-chairs to discuss the significant revisions that needed to be done in order to get approval. On March 5, 2010, one of my dissertation co-chairs and I attended a meeting with the IRB chair and the IRB reviewer to clarify the major concerns that they had with the research project. At the meeting, it became clear that everyone wanted to protect the participants of the research project.

The IRB staff indicated that if the office was ever audited⁸ they wanted to make sure that a project titled *(Im)migrant Voices* did not prompt government officials to require me to hand over all my research materials. They indicated that the sociopolitical environment of the state may lead government officials to be specifically interested in the research participants of this project in search for undocumented individuals and/or “illegal” activity. The IRB staff made several

⁶ The IRB reviews all proposed research involving human subjects to ensure that subjects are treated ethically and that their rights and welfare are being protected. In the U.S., most research involving human subjects requires approval from the IRB.

⁷ The IRB has different review categories depending on the type of research with human subjects. The expedited review category involves no more than minimal risk to the human subjects.

⁸ The IRB office at this large southwestern university has been under strict scrutiny for unethical research that was conducted with American Indians in the 1990s.

suggestions for the design of this research project to ensure that research participants would be protected and that their safety and/or well-being would not be compromised. The meeting was productive in allowing me to further explain the research project and in IRB helping me to understand the politics behind what they were opposed to in this research. After a few more e-mail exchanges of clarifications and suggestions for the IRB application, I finally was granted IRB approval by expedited review on March 16, 2010.

The challenges I encountered while trying to secure IRB approval demonstrate the complicated political conditions of (im)migration in Arizona. The historical and political backdrop for this study consists of a post-9/11, Homeland Security environment with an increase in legislative efforts to secure U.S. borders, anti-immigrant discourse and sentiment across the U.S., and militarization practices in states like Arizona to help remedy immigration problems (Dunn, 1996; Kil & Menjivar, 2006; Rowe, 2004). Similar to many of the states along the U.S. and Mexico border, Arizona has had a complex history of constructing and policing the immigrant or migrant body, particularly that of Mexicans or those perceived to be Mexican (Acuña, 2000; Romero, 2001, 2006). The targeting of individuals' "Mexicanness"—perceived by skin color, language abilities, and the spaces they inhabit—during immigration raids like the 1997 Chandler Roundup⁹ in Arizona illustrate the constant construction of Mexicans as "foreign" (Romero, 2001) and not belonging, as well as the assumption that "Mexicanness" creates suspicion of criminality under immigration law, the policing of citizenship along visible markers, and a reification of the discourse of Mexican immigration as the problem (Romero, 2006).

Similarly, Arizona is home to "America's toughest Sherriff,"¹⁰ Joe Arpaio, who since 2005 has aggressively enforced immigration law by conducting immigration sweeps, also known as

⁹ The Chandler Roundup was a five-day immigration raid conducted in late July 1997 by the Chandler Police Department and Border Patrol agents in the most highly populated Latino/a and low-income section of Chandler, Arizona.

¹⁰ Arizona's Sheriff Joe Arpaio proclaims himself "America's toughest Sherriff" because of his tough stance on immigration and his usage of controversial jail tactics in Maricopa County.

raids, to find undocumented (im)migrants in Maricopa County, Arizona. In April 2010, Arizona adopted Senate Bill (SB) 1070, the nation's toughest law on unauthorized immigration that expanded the powers of state police officers to ask individuals they stopped about their immigration status and/or to detain people they suspected were unauthorized in the U.S. While I thought that this backdrop would influence the experiences that (im)migrant university students shared in their accounts of living and studying in Arizona, I had no idea that it would also create barriers in getting IRB approval or in the recruitment of participants in this study.

After being granted IRB approval, I set out to find participants who would be willing to share their story and participate in this research project. While gaining access to communities and recruiting participants is often a challenge in qualitative work, the terms of immigrant, migrant, or (im)migrant also turned out to be limiting. Since a goal of this project was to take a broad¹¹ approach to studying immigration, I often wondered if the framing of this research did not coincide with how people living in Arizona understood immigration. It was a struggle, at times, to find individuals to participate in this project because many people said that they did not see themselves as immigrants, migrants, or (im)migrants.

For example, when doing the pilot study, I met individuals who had come from other countries to work in private-sector jobs in the U.S. and who had intentions of staying in the U.S. Many of these individuals were on sponsored work visas, and some had begun the process of applying for U.S. legal permanent residency. When I asked these individuals if they wanted to participate in this study, they often said they did not fit the type of immigrant needed or that they were "citizens of the world" and not immigrants. Similarly, when people learned about the research project, they seemed surprised that a project titled *(Im)migrant Voices* did not solely

¹¹ I consider this research project as taking a broad approach because I chose to interview different immigrants or migrants who came to the U.S. for a variety of reasons, through a variety of means, from various countries, and with different immigration classification status. Similarly, I focused on students, a population that is not often considered in discussions of immigration in Arizona.

focus on Mexican, Central American, or South American immigrants. Due to these interactions, it seemed that the terms immigrant or migrant represented the immigrant and/or migrant Mexican, Mexican American, and/or Latin American in Arizona. The terms that I used in this research project seemed to alienate some people from participating since they did not identify with the labels of immigrant, migrant, or (im)migrant.

These interactions (re)shaped the research design and called attention to the politics of doing immigration research in Arizona. They provided information about the initial challenges that I had in this research and the influence that it had in the research design and recruitment of individuals for this study. Some of these interactions motivated me to use ethnographic methods so that I could gain a deeper understanding of (im)migrant lived experiences. The following section provides a brief discussion of my methods and why this approach best fit this research.

Ethnographic Methods

Qualitative research comes with different ethical considerations, challenges, issues of access, issues of representation, and social responsibilities depending on the research context. In order to understand different points of view in context and identify with experienced realities of the (im)migrant university students in this study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), I turned to qualitative research methods for this project. The highly complex and politicized issue of immigration in Arizona motivated me to question and challenge dominant understandings of immigration issues using ethnographic methods.

Throughout the ethnographic process, researchers reflexively try to understand not just their own subjectivity but also “how [their] subjectivity *in relation to the Other* informs and is informed by [their] engagement and representation of the Other” (Madison, 2005, p. 9, emphasis in original). In this dissertation, descriptions of interactions and experiences that occurred as I conducted this research are included in order to help establish my positionality, challenges that were faced, and the choices that were made in the project’s design. A goal of this research was to better understand the lived experiences of contemporary (im)migrant university students. I gave research participants the option to meet on more than one occasion to share their story,

which allowed me more opportunities to learn about their experiences. Similarly, participants learned more about me, the project, and why I was conducting this research. While these multiple meetings did not remove the power relationship, I saw them as productive in helping me gain a better understanding of the experiences that the (im)migrant university student shared throughout the research process.

The dialogic relationship with the Other also disrupts “the ethnographic present” for ethnographers since the Other is not seen as static, unchanging, or timeless. Madison (2005) stated that “dialogue moves from ethnographic *present* to ethnographic *presence* by opening the passageways for readers and audiences to experience and grasp the partial presence of a temporal conversation constituted by the Other’s voice, body, history, and yearnings” (p. 10, emphasis in original). It is through dialogue and interaction with research participants that this project became dynamic, changeable, and lively. The purpose of this project was not to generalize knowledge(s) about immigrant or migrant groups in the U.S. Throughout the research process, I tried to not essentialize the experiences of (im)migrant students. Instead, this research includes a variety of perspectives to illustrate the polyvocal and polemic experiences that (im)migrant university students face while living, working, and studying at Arizona State University.

Anti-immigration sentiment has historically been present in the U.S. Since the mid-to-late 1800s, laws were signed to reduce or prohibit immigration of particular groups of people into the U.S. As immigrant and migrant groups coming to the U.S. have changed, so have laws and policies targeting immigration, immigrants, and/or migrants. As the researcher of this project, it was important for me to keep in mind the historical complexities of inclusion/exclusion of immigrant and migrant groups into the U.S. as well as to be aware of the material consequences that (im)migrant university students face based on the sociopolitical environment in which they live and work in the U.S.

These instances and the current dominant discourse of immigration that focuses on Mexican or Latin American immigration in states like Arizona encouraged me to design a

dissertation research project that was situated in the “borderlands” (Conquergood, 1991, p. 184), meaning that I did not want to privilege dominant understandings of immigration or immigrant discourse and instead chose to keep a broader discussion of immigration. I tried to do this by asking (im)migrant university students from a variety of countries to participate in this research study. In doing so, I wanted to learn from (im)migrant university students, including those who might not be at the center of immigration discussions in a state like Arizona. Their participation could lead to a deeper understanding of immigration issues and give consideration that there are many (im)migrants living here. Simply focusing on a particular type of (im)migrant, for example Mexican or Mexican American, would contribute to the dominant discourse of Mexican immigration in Arizona, exclude (im)migrants from other countries, and limit discussions of the experiences of (im)migrant individuals living in Arizona at the time of this study. By choosing to include (im)migrant university students from a variety of countries, I hoped that this dissertation might lead to expanded conversations about immigration in the U.S.

Study Sample

Qualitative researchers use a “sampling strategy that guides their choices of what to observe or whom to interview” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 120). The population that I focused on for this research was (im)migrant university students at Arizona State University (ASU), a large, public southwestern university. To recruit participants for this research study, I mainly relied on friends, acquaintances, and social networks.

In order to participate in this dissertation study, individuals needed to be over 18 years old, and, due to my language abilities and for research consistency, it was necessary that they spoke English. To get a variety of perspectives on (im)migrant university student experiences, I used a combination of convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and purposeful sampling. The delicate nature of (im)migration documentation status in contemporary society led me to recruit individuals for my pilot study who were colleagues and individuals from different countries or were referrals I received when those people found out about the research project. Since I worked and studied at ASU, my social network and peers helped me find prospective participants. E-mails

were also sent to inform people about the project. For example, once I discussed my final class project with my professor, he put me in contact with an international student from Serbia via e-mail. This helped me uphold an ethical standard of not making assumptions about individuals who might have an accent or who might not have the same normative markers as white, Anglo-European descent U.S. citizens.

Once individuals were interviewed, I used snowball sampling to ask if they could refer me to anyone in their social circle who might consider themselves an (im)migrant university student and/or who would be willing to participate in this study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), “several situations commend the use of this method... [for it] may be the only way to reach an elusive population...or to engage people about a sensitive subject” (p. 124). Due to the current state of immigration issues in states like Arizona and in order to have a fair representation of different (im)migrant university student experiences, I relied on participants to help me get in contact with individuals who also might be willing to share their (im)migrant story.

The last sampling strategy was purposeful sampling. Schwandt (1997) describes purposeful sampling as “sites or cases [that] are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that ‘what goes on there’ is critical to understanding some process or concept, or for testing or elaborating some established theory” (p. 128). As discussed in the opening of this chapter, I sometimes met people who mentioned that they were from different parts of the world and that they came to the U.S. for work, study, adventure, and so on. Recognizing the different social positioning of these individuals, I asked them if they wanted to participate in this research. Interestingly, on more than one occasion, individuals said, “I do not think that I am the kind of person you are looking for.” Therefore, although I attempted to seek disconfirming accounts from the dominant discourse of Mexican immigration in Arizona, some people declined the offer because they did not see themselves as “immigrant.”

Despite this, I purposefully included university students with different ethnic, racial, social, religious, gendered, and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to have a wider representation of

the (im)migrant university student experience and to analyze different discursive practices and racialized/ing that might occur while living in Arizona and attending ASU.

Data Collection

I collected data for this research project from March 2010 through April 2011. Participation took the form of face-to-face narrative interviews in private or semi-private locations chosen by the research participant, such as their home or office. Since the dissertation research focused on (im)migrant university students, I conducted all interviews in English. I assumed that (im)migrant university students would have a better understanding of the English language since they were taking classes and studying at a U.S. university. This also helped with consistency in the interviews.

Individuals who participated in this project were asked to sign an informed consent letter, which had been approved by the IRB. Each participant had the option of taking a copy of the informed consent form for their personal records. After participants reviewed the form, I asked if they had any concerns about the project. If not, individuals were asked to sign the informed consent form if they felt comfortable participating. Once participants signed, I asked permission to audio record the interview on a digital recorder for transcription purposes. If a participant requested to discontinue the recording of their interview at any time, there was no penalty.

Once we were ready to conduct the interview, I framed the interview as a conversation between the participant and myself about their (im)migrant story. I also indicated that they could request a break, choose not to answer a question, discontinue the interview, or ask me to restate a question at any point during the interview. The interview guide included six sections and served as a way to begin the conversation and probe the (im)migrant university students to share why they came to the U.S., what they experienced in terms of cultural learning and adaption, how they connected to their country of origin, what their views of (im)migrants were, and what contemporary issues they encountered in their everyday life (see Appendix A for the complete interview guide).

At the end of each interview, I asked each participant if they had a name that they would like me to use to represent them or any of their information in reports, publications, or in the actual dissertation. If they did not, I created a pseudonym for the dissertation. This was the name that I used for the digital files and materials of each participant to further protect their identity. While there was a master list to help me stay organized, that list was saved on a separate password-protected computer and USB drive, and it was not stored in the proximity to the other files.

In addition to approving the pseudonym, I provided each participant with an information letter about the option for a second meeting for this research project. If the participant decided not to participate in a second meeting, then I thanked them and asked them if they wanted a copy of their interview. If a participant requested a copy of the interview, I first deleted any identifying information from the digital file or interview transcript.

Throughout the data collection process, I conducted 18 narrative interviews with 11 women and seven men. Thirteen (im)migrant students were graduate students and five were undergraduate students at the time of this research study. The average interview time was an hour and a half. By providing the option of meeting with (im)migrant university students on more than one occasion to learn more about their (im)migrant story, I collected 46 audio files that were transcribed and 70 pages of handwritten notes in a wide-ruled notebook.

While I did not specifically ask individuals about their documentation status, all participants discussed this in relation to their (im)migrant experience. It is important to note that several (im)migrant university students mentioned that their documentation status had changed since living in the U.S. For example, two (im)migrant university students came to the U.S. with refugee status and, while living in the U.S., were able to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Another two (im)migrant university students stated that they came to the U.S. with a temporary tourist visa and overstayed it, which led them to be out of immigration status and, hence, undocumented at the time of this study.

At the time of this research, seven of the participants were on a nonimmigrant student visa (F-1), two were on a nonimmigrant visa that allows U.S. employers to employ foreign professionals in specialized fields (H-1B), six had become citizens of the U.S., one was a legal permanent resident, and two were undocumented.¹² All but two of the participants were enrolled at ASU during the time of the interview and data collection meetings. A woman from Mexico, who at the time of this study had an H-1B visa, graduated from ASU in August 2010 with her doctorate degree and was still working at the university as a researcher. A man from Mexico who had graduated from ASU in December 2010 with his bachelor's degree was still involved in university activities and had contact with individuals on the campus. Since their affiliation and experiences on the university campus were ongoing and recent, I did not see any issues with having them participate in this study. Table 1 lists all research study participants and breaks them down based on their (im)migration status, school classification, and country of origin.

¹² See Appendix B for a listing of the multiple forms of U.S. travel and nonimmigrant visas.

Table 1

Summary of Study Research Participants

Pseudonym	(Im)migration status	Classification	Country
Jade	H-1B visa	Graduate student	Denmark
Butterfly Girl	F-1 visa/ U.S. citizen	Graduate student	Guadeloupe/France
Nikhil	F-1 visa	Graduate student	India
Arjun	F-1 visa	Graduate student	India
Itzel	F-1 visa/H-1B visa	Graduate student	Mexico
Sofia	U.S. citizen	Undergraduate	Mexico
Adela	U.S. permanent resident/U.S. citizen	Graduate student	Romania
Veronica	F-1 visa	Graduate student	Spain
Frida	U.S. citizen	Graduate student	Mexico
Angela	F-1 visa	Undergraduate	Hong Kong
Mariam	F-1 visa	Graduate student	Kuwait
Andres/Andy	B-2 visa/Undocumented	Graduate student	Venezuela
Antonio	B-2 visa/Undocumented	Undergraduate	Mexico
Edwin	Refugee/U.S. citizen	Undergraduate	Sudan
Lahori	F-1 visa	Graduate student	Pakistan
Fey	F-1 visa/U.S. permanent resident	Graduate student	Canada
Curtis Marshall	Refugee/U.S. citizen	Undergraduate	Afghanistan
Serin	F-1 visa	Graduate student	South Korea

When the interviews and interactions with the (im)migrant university students were complete, I had 1,166 single-spaced typed pages of transcribed interviews to analyze. It is important to note that making sense of this research started before I collected all the data in this study. I began my first phase of analysis as interviews were conducted and transcribed. I transcribed the first two interviews shortly after they were completed. As more interviews took place, keeping up with the time it took to transcribe each interview and the fieldwork was a

challenge, so I turned to a professional transcription company to transcribe the remaining interviews. To help protect the privacy of participants, audio files with no identifying information were provided to the transcription company.

Once an interview was transcribed either by myself or by the transcription company, I checked for accuracy by listening to the audio-recorded interviews and read over the transcripts to make sure to fill in missing words and/or to correct transcription mistakes. The continuous review of the 1,166 single-spaced typed pages of transcribed material was important in helping me organize the data for analysis. I started with open line-by-line coding to create first-level, descriptive codes that summarized what was happening in the data (Charmaz, 2001; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). A category codebook of 136 first-level codes was created and used in the next phase of axial coding.

During the axial coding phase, I organized the first-level codes into specific categories and looked for patterns and relationships among the open codes (Charmaz, 2001; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). As part of this process, analytic asides throughout the transcribed interview data were made to help describe how I made sense of (im)migrant experiences, and theoretical memos were written in order to describe how the second-level codes related to previous theoretical work. These were important in my final phase of selective coding where I created conceptual constructs and categories (Charmaz, 2001; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) based on theoretical concepts, such as racialization in the public sphere, that helped me understand how an (im)migrant's subject position played a role in their feelings of inclusion and/or exclusion in the U.S. public sphere. Further discussion of what emerged throughout the data analysis will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

This chapter discussed some initial challenges I faced in this research project, the design of this research study, my data collection methods, and the data analysis process. The next chapter provides (im)migrant narratives from the (im)migrant university students who participated in this research study.

CHAPTER 3

(IM)MIGRANT VOICES

I think almost just in this, this storytelling, this narrative, I think is really important...To have these stories told, to reach an audience that would otherwise not be connected to these stories at all, I think is important...It needs to be a shift in the hardwiring that exists about immigration...I think hearing stories of difference and stories that are unexpected is really key...Something that almost stops people in their habitualized ways and it's, "Wait a minute, we need to rethink this." Something that would do that...

Fey, a graduate student from Canada who had become a U.S. legal permanent resident shortly before the interview, gave this response to my asking what she thought could be done to improve (im)migration matters in the U.S. Like Fey, several (im)migrant university students who participated in this project felt that people in the U.S. have a limited understanding of a complex topic like immigration. Itzel, an (im)migrant student from Mexico, stated that this limited view often led to information about (im)migration to not focus on people like her.

Because they only talk about people who, as I said and there are many, who come illegally...One side saying it's wrong because they are taking so much money from of us. and they use one case—people who are bringing drugs. So they view that case, make it big, and then people think everybody who comes to the United States illegally brings drugs and guns...I think it's more in the sense that immigrants are always bad; there are bad people coming, which is pretty sad. Again, it's biased.

An interesting realization made throughout the research process was how much I enjoyed listening to the stories, experiences, and details provided by each study participant. At times, I found myself laughing with participants, crying with them, feeling happy that they seemed happy, being angered by the stories of how people treated them, and feeling frustrated with the limited options that some felt they had due to their status at the time of this research. I was grateful that individuals shared their lives with me and what I learned from their experiences.

In an effort to expand understandings of (im)migrants in the U.S. and challenge dominant understandings of contemporary (im)migration, this chapter shares (im)migrant students' narratives to offer polyvocal and polemic experiences that (im)migrant students faced while living, working, and/or studying at ASU. These narratives offer insights into the complexities that surround immigration and contribute to critical race theory and public sphere theory by illustrating how access to the U.S. public is a complex, dynamic process of racialization that is context-specific.

These featured narratives are sample responses to many, but not all, of the questions I posed (see Appendix A for complete interview guide). Across the various questions, all (im)migrant university students who participated in the study are represented, even though not every person's response to every question is included. Instead, there are a variety of responses that are largely reported in extended block quote format, with brief introductions but no analytical commentary since that occurs in Chapter 4.

To contextualize the narratives, I open with a brief account of historical, political, and legal conditions that form the contexts of living for contemporary (im)migrant university students in states like Arizona.

The State of U.S. Immigration

While immigration is part of the founding myth and national narrative of the U.S. (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004), anti-immigration public opinion and support for restrictive immigration policies that target the latest newcomers to the U.S. have not been uncommon. There are those who see the immigrant as a threat to White jobs, as responsible for rising crime rates, as drug smugglers, and as a threat to the "cultural and political integrity of [U.S.] America" (Alcoff, 2009, p. 112). Others see immigrants as hardworking individuals who do the jobs that U.S. citizens do not want, as passive, and as a promise to the "policies and practices of the neoliberal state" (Alcoff, 2009, p. 112). These disparate viewpoints have significant consequences for individuals. Each wave of immigrants to the U.S. has been met with new laws, policies, and practices that privilege certain gendered, religious, sexualized, and racialized bodies and exclude others from

the social fabric of the U.S. There are material, discursive, and ideological elements of different texts that construct dominant understandings of “immigrant” or “migrant” in today’s society and hegemonically legitimize legislative efforts to exclude particular immigrants or migrants. Some of this work will be explored in Chapter 5. For now, I focus on how the U.S. government currently handles immigration affairs and some of the material conditions and experiences that certain groups of people have faced.

The U.S. federal government has developed different government agencies to oversee immigration matters in the U.S. Prior to 1940, the Department of Labor handled immigration, followed by the Department of Justice (INS), and in 2003, the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) (Kil & Menjívar, 2006). With each transfer, there has been a shift in how border-crossing immigrants are perceived by each government agency. For example, the Department of Labor saw border-crossing immigrants as “surplus or competing labor,” INS saw them as “drug smugglers and criminals,” and OHS as “potential terrorists” (Kil & Menjívar, 2006, p. 180). The discourse used by these governmental agencies and the public discourse of media have led to a hegemonic anxiety and fear of immigrants that currently targets individuals from Latin American countries, especially Mexican immigrants (Inda, 2007; Zatz & Smith, 2008) and immigrants from Middle Eastern countries (Kim et. al., 2007).

An increase of immigration by people from South America, Central America, and Mexico in the late 1960s led to anti-immigration discourse and legislation that reassert and legitimize Whiteness as the basis of U.S. national identity (Ellis & Wright, 1998; Rowe, 2004). Government legislation and the mass media have constructed and utilized a rhetoric that posits “*some* immigrants (white) come to the U.S. to build the nation, while *others* (racialized) are here only to exploit that which ‘we’ have built” (Rowe, 2004, p. 122, emphasis in original). This discourse of Whiteness has contributed to a moral panic that constructs the White body as victimized and as in need of protection from the criminal Brown alien.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, transformed the Immigration and Naturalization Services to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) under OHS. According to Cornelius and Tsuda (2004):

U.S. immigration policy has long followed a “zigzag” pattern, with expansionary periods followed by restrictionist ones. With the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States clearly has entered a new restrictionist period as immigration control has become conflated with protecting national security. Tightened border controls, closer monitoring of foreign students, and ethnic/religious profiling of immigrants to identify and detain potential terrorists have become accepted practice in the post 9/11 era. (p. 21)

Citizenship and immigration issues have become matters of Homeland Security leading to new protocols and practices in the processing of citizenship applications, including name checks, background checks, and an increase in fees. However, investigative reports have documented that the implementation of these protocols and practices target immigrants from certain countries.

According to the *Americans on Hold* report, federal law requires “U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to grant or deny citizenship within 120 days of an applicant’s examination” (Kim et. al., 2007, p. 2). USCIS also set a policy goal of processing applications within six months from the time of filing (Kim et. al., 2007). However, since 2004, various accounts have been reported on the backlog of pending citizenship applications throughout the U.S. These immigrants, who are eligible for citizenship, have been waiting three years or more for their applications to be processed by USCIS. The *Americans on Hold* report provided data from the Department of Homeland Security revealed:

that more than two-thirds of the over 2.2 million applications filed since April 1, 2001 were not processed within 180 days; more than 776,000 applicants had been waiting for more than a year; approximately 158,000 applicants had been waiting for more than two years; while approximately 41,000 had been waiting for three years or more. (Kim et al., 2007, p. 2)

These delays have serious ramifications for individuals and families. Without citizenship, immigrants are not guaranteed human rights protection nor are they legally considered as part of the nation.

It is important to note that not every immigrant appears to share the same burden of delayed citizenship. The *Americans on Hold* report states that contemporary immigration law has continued to target “men perceived to be Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, or South Asian” as “terrorist Others” (Kim et al., 2007, p. 3). The report stated:

The selective targeting of men from Arab and Muslim countries through the NSEERS [National Security Entry-Exit Registration System] program, combined with other forms of public as well as private profiling of Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim, renders a large number of Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian men vulnerable to having their names or derivations of their names registered as “hits” in any profiling system, including the expanded Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) name check system for naturalization applicants. (Kim et al., 2007, p. 3)

These name checks have led to the backlog of applications and delays for individuals seeking to obtain U.S. citizenship. The delays result in many individuals who are being separated from their families for long periods of time, who cannot travel outside of the U.S. with the promise of reentry, or individuals who are kept from enjoying economic, social, cultural, and/or political rights that are granted with citizenship status (Kim et al., 2007). While Muslims appear to be a target group, other reports have focused on individuals from Latin American countries.

Newspaper articles stated that many of the immigrants from Latin American countries who are eligible to apply for citizenship are in the voter-rich states of California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois (Bernstein, 2004, ¶4). A Pew Hispanic Center Report in 2007 claimed that the electoral clout of Latinos/as continued to be undercut due to many being ineligible to vote either because they are not citizens or are not yet 18 years old. The denial of U.S. citizenship for individuals subjected to lengthy background checks and the racial profiling on

the basis of surnames has led to violations of democratic rights and international immigration laws.

Delays in the citizenship process implicate discrimination on grounds that are prohibited under international law. These grounds include: race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, associated with a national minority, property, birth or other status. The U.S. is further bound under international law to ensure certain substantive rights and to ensure equality between citizens and non-citizens in the enjoyment of particular civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Extensive delays in citizenship processing implicate a number of these rights, including: the right to liberty of movement; the right to profess and practice one's religion; and the right of non-discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly the right to public health, medical care, social security and social services and related rights. (Kim et al., 2007, p. 4)

These practices and procedures are violations of human rights and international laws. However, the U.S. justifies these practices by making immigration and citizenship issues a matter of Homeland Security. As a result, OHS uses militarization rhetoric and practices on the U.S./Mexico border embedded in the discourse of needing to protect U.S. borders from "potential terrorists" (Kil & Menjivar, 2006, p. 180). These discursive practices and conditions contribute to "a social and political climate that encourages violence and social polarization between citizen and noncitizen, white and nonwhite" (Kil & Menjivar, 2006, p. 165).

Alongside U.S. federal legislation, individual states have also passed laws, enacted programs, and used militarization practices to deal with immigration in their state. During the summer of 2011, the state legislature of Alabama passed House Bill (HB) 56, Georgia's state legislature passed HB 87, and South Carolina's state legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 20. These laws are referred to as copycat anti-immigration laws that were inspired by the signing of

SB 1070¹³ on April 23, 2010, by Governor Jan Brewer in Arizona (Altschuler, 2011; Gomez, 2011; Wessler, 2011). Most of these laws authorize state and local law enforcement to ask about the immigration status of anyone they stop based on a “reasonable suspicion”¹⁴ that they are unauthorized/undocumented to be in the U.S. Some of these laws, such as Proposition 300, made it difficult for unauthorized and/or undocumented students from enrolling in any public college after high school (Preston, 2011). These laws have been highly criticized for making immigration verification and enforcement a state issue rather than a federal issue. While several lawsuits were filed by civil rights groups in these states and legal challenges over the constitutionality of these laws were raised, these laws continue to affect the social and political climate of immigration matters within these states leading to material consequences and challenges for individuals who are (im)migrants or who are perceived to be (im)migrant.

As a graduate student living in Arizona during the enactment of SB 1070, I wanted to understand how (im)migrant individuals living in Arizona were, if any, being affected by these practices and to learn what (im)migrants thought about immigration. Arizona provides a rich context to study immigration issues because it is the first state to pass such a strict anti-immigration law and has a highly militarized presence of groups like the Arizona Minutemen Project dedicated to secure the Arizona/Sonora border. The timeliness of these issues motivated me to select a group of individuals who lived and worked in Arizona in order to consider how this dissertation could help raise awareness of the contemporary issues faced by (im)migrant university students.

The following sections feature 18 disparate (im)migrant stories shared by the (im)migrant university students who participated in this project. These stories are organized according to

¹³ On June 25, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key provisions of SB 1070, but ruled that police officers in Arizona can check the immigration status of people they stop.

¹⁴ The ambiguity of “reasonable suspicion” has been criticized by civil rights groups and academics who anticipate “reasonable suspicion” will lead to racial profiling of individuals with certain racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, and/or gendered markers.

immigration status to elicit themes of exclusions, inclusions and negotiations that are expanded on in chapter 4. When I first introduce each (im)migrant student, brief information about their background and characteristics are offered to highlight aspects that students described as significant in their (im)migrant U.S. experiences. This presentation of (im)migrant stories illustrates how immigration status impacts the lives of (im)migrants in multiple ways (Menjívar, 2006) and how immigration continues to be racialized in the U.S. (Romero, 2006).

To help break up the extended block quote format, I use five asterisks (*) to indicate there is a shift between personal (im)migrant stories and vignettes. Ellipsis (...) are used to indicate omissions and selected text from what (im)migrant university students said in our interviews and interactions. Brackets ([]) are used to offer additional information that clarifies the sample responses. I used Standard U.S. American English spellings in the transcribed interviews instead of vernacular/colloquial language that (im)migrant students used in the interview to not create distance of correct and incorrect language between the participants and I. As previously stated, the following does not feature all responses to the questions I asked (im)migrant university students.

F-1 Academic Visa Status

Mariam was from Kuwait and studying at ASU on an F-1 visa. On the day of our interview, she wore a black hijab¹⁵ and abaya.¹⁶ As we walked to a study room, Mariam told me that she had three children. She had grown up as a Sunni Muslim and since converted to Shi'a Muslim. She was also working on her dissertation and glad to know that someone was doing research on this topic.

After Mariam reviewed the IRB materials and consented to an audio-recorded interview, I began to ask questions. I learned that Mariam had first come to the U.S. in 1999 to attend a university in Ohio for her undergraduate studies. After she graduated, she returned to Kuwait for

¹⁵ The hijab is a veil worn by Muslim women that covers the head and neck. It is worn in the presence of non-related adult men and/or in public.

¹⁶ The abaya is a loose over-garment or cloak worn by Muslim women that covers their body.

a few years before her husband and she decided to pursue their doctoral studies at ASU in 2007. Mariam spoke at length about the challenges of getting a visa and her family's experience at airports.

I have to explain the visa issue. I don't know if you want to hear it. Okay, we have September 11, and I hate September 11. Prior to September 11, in 1999, I came to the states. Going to the embassy was like a piece of cake. You apply one day and you get it the next day, and everything was...cheaper. Everything was easier.

After September 11...when I [and my husband wanted to apply for an F-1 visa]— I mean my husband went through a lot because he's male and he's Arab and he's Muslim, so they would critique him and...they asked him, "Why [did] your parents name you this name?" He was like, "They just named me because of my grandfather. They have the same name, and they wanted to name me after him." They would ask you about all details. They would ask you for your expired passport. They want to check all the visas. They want to check all of your privacy. [It is] like, "Can you just take off my clothes and check? Could you do [an] x-ray to check that I'm really safe to come to the states?"...

It was like having a visa is like, "Oh, oh, I got the visa now!" People would... [celebrate] if you got the visa...In less than ten years, things changed. The prices of the visa went really up, and there is no guarantee to get it, so that's...like, "We're not welcoming you."

...The first image when I came to the states wasn't really welcoming because they have this U.S. citizen place versus the non-U.S. citizen [line to check] the passport at the airport...Because you are not a U.S. citizen, you have to wait for one hour, half an hour, and an endless line, while you are seeing that the U.S. citizen [line is an] empty place.

...It was easy when I was alone, but because I have three children, can you imagine me with the children, one wants to go to the bathroom, the other wants to have

some snack. The other one is bored, and I'm just keeping them busy, thanks to iPods.

[Laughter].

...I mean, as I told you, the unwelcoming picture, you see it just right away at the airport. No one wants to help, no one wants—no one welcomes you. You stay for hours and hours in lines. Now they have the new rule, but because I'm [a] woman, I don't feel it. My husband experienced it, that they would take him in a private room for a couple hours. They would ask him weird questions...They take my husband; they don't allow me to talk to him. It's just horrible. They're like, "Okay, go away, you're not allowed to speak to your husband." Well, I don't know where to go. I had to—they don't allow him to use his cell phone. I was stuck at the airport. I didn't know if I should go to the hotel and wait for him, or [if] I should wait for him [at the airport] because they might pull me [in] with him. All these issues, I mean just at the airport. You don't have to resume [any further to feel unwelcome].

Lahori, a Fulbright scholar from Lahore, Pakistan, was in a doctoral program at ASU on an F-1 visa. A colleague at work introduced me to him, and for our interview, I met him outside an office building on the university campus. Throughout the interview, Lahori spoke at length about his Muslim faith and how different the U.S. was from Pakistan. I appreciated that he challenged me in the interview by asking if I had considered how doing this research can also make research participants feel like outsiders.

When I asked Lahori about the process of getting to the U.S., he described his experiences at the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan¹⁷ and at airports when he traveled from Pakistan to the U.S.

¹⁷ In January 2010, the Obama administration declared that citizens of 14 nations would indefinitely be subject to intense screening at airports worldwide. Citizens of Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria were considered "state sponsors of terrorism," and Pakistan, Afghanistan, Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen were "countries of interest"

Coming from Pakistan—it's a very lengthy and trying process to get a U.S. visa, for any reason, even if you are supported by Fulbright. Like I had to do what half of...anyone else from my country has to do because Fulbright was facilitating. I was driven into the U.S. Embassy. Like just getting to the Embassy is a very tedious process for any other one from my country. That was one preparation, like lots of paperwork. A lot of like waiting, interviews, security checks, what not.

...When you come from Pakistan for the first time they check you in London. *Really* like check you. They opened up everything. Then from there to Chicago...there was another...very scary kind of checking. They take you—make you sit on steel benches, and they don't talk to you. If you ask questions they tell you not to ask questions. About...two hours of that....They're especially bad when [travelers] come to the U.S. [from Pakistan] because the U.S. has a formal list of countries¹⁸ that if you are from these countries you will be checked...thoroughly. I heard stories—like those were the reason of my nervousness [in traveling to the U.S.] because I just found out about them a couple of days before I left [from] reading the [online] posts by other people in my group who had traveled to the U.S. in the same week. They're like, "Okay, I'm here, and this is what I went through."

When I asked Lahori if he wanted to stay in the U.S. after he completed his doctoral degree, he said that based on recent media accounts, he did not consider the U.S. safe for Muslims.

(Lipton, 2010, ¶4). In April 2010, after several critics called the additional screening measures "discriminatory" and "overly burdensome," the Obama administration announced that the policy would not use "nationality alone to determine which U.S.-bound international air travelers should be subject to additional screening and will instead select passengers based on possible matches to intelligence information, including physical descriptions or a particular travel pattern" (Kornblut & Hsu, 2010, ¶1).

¹⁸ For more information about the list of countries, see footnote 17.

... I would like to live in a place that is relatively more accepting of the fact that I am a practicing Muslim. Because like for example these days...I read about that bill that is in the Georgia Senate that they are trying to ban the overt practice of Islam... Just being a practicing Muslim, I want to be in a place that is a little safer for me. If those kinds of laws are being passed, it will definitely make it difficult for me [to stay in the U.S.].

When asked why he thought people treated him differently, Lahori stated “my accent, my appearance” as factors that probably led people to think that he was not from the U.S. He also stated that people had different ways of asking him where he was from.

Most [people] would be—like they ask me if I am an international student. That is the most common. Or the people who are like more direct—and depending on who they are—some will say, “Are you Indian?” or “Are you Middle Eastern?” Or some will say, “Where are you from?”...like the most polite are the people who say, “So where did you grow up?” or “Did you grow up in Arizona?”

...Going back to the point, I am not a local here. That is like pretty much the hardest lesson in every aspect...Coming to terms with the fact that I should not expect people to completely understand me. The fact that...if I want people to understand me, I have to explain to them. This the hardest realization.

Veronica was from Spain and at the time of the interview was studying at ASU on an F-1 visa. I arrived to her apartment on a January afternoon to conduct the interview. As I asked questions, she sometimes responded with Castilian Spanish words while she thought about how to say the words in English.

Veronica first came to the U.S. in 2008 on an F-2 visa,¹⁹ which allowed her to join her spouse while he studied at ASU on an F-1 visa. Soon after her arrival to Arizona, she applied for a master's degree program at ASU so that she could continue her studies and be allowed to

¹⁹ The F-2 Dependent of Student Visa is for spouses and children of people who have an F-1 Academic Student Visa.

work. Veronica mentioned how being on an F-2 visa had not been the best experience for her because of the limitations placed on what she could do, such as employment.

While the F-1 student visa did allow Veronica the opportunity to be employed part-time on the university campus, she still experienced visa limitations and negative treatments at airports when traveling to and from Spain.

I don't have the same rights...in terms of working, I don't have the right to find the job [in] whatever I want or to leave the country without my papers. I mean, those practical things, like [getting signatures on] your I-20,²⁰ you need the signature to leave the country [and] in order to be able to get in [to the U.S.] Or when [immigration officials] treat you like shit [at] the airport...I mean, I know that they treat me better than they treat some other people that [are] darker than me, but that's their job. It can get like super nasty for travel. The last time that I came here, I mean, the [man] was a huge, huge, huge ass. Like, "What are you doing?" "Well, I'm studying." "Who pays for that?" "Actually, the school." "Oh, so I am paying for you." Like, "I'm paying for your education," like that kind of pushing, pushing, pushing, pushing and making you feel really bad in order to catch you in a lie or something... It was in New York. It was... [pause]—customs...They might be super nice. "Oh, you're from Spain. How is the weather there? So I like that Prado,²¹ the food...," or they might be like really nasty. This was...the second time that they were really mean. The first one was when I was leaving [Spain] to move here. I [had] tons of [luggage] and I just have a visa waiver, so it was like, "Why do you have so [much luggage]? How long are you staying?"... I said, "I don't know"... I said the wrong thing, basically, and they were really mean to me. This time, it was like...pushing, pushing. "Oh, so we pay for this, and how much do you pay?" Then like, "Why do we pay you for your tuition?" I say, "Because I'm a good student." "So, what is your GPA?" For example, stuff

²⁰ I-20 is issued by an educational institution and provides information for the issuance of a student visa. The form includes a student tracking number.

²¹ Referring to the Prado Museum, one of the largest collections of art in the world.

like that. They can also ask you for bank statements if they want to, so they can do whatever they want, basically.

I asked Veronica to share experiences of settling in the U.S. and to describe the cultural similarities and differences she encountered.

...I think I'm very, very, very lucky...There's like a lot of different types of migration, immigration, and mine is like the easiest one [since I am a student]...Well, the easiest one will be to come here because you have an amazing job. The next one is coming here because you are a student. Then from there, there's all kinds of immigration [statuses]...I'm legal, so that makes the whole difference.

...I think [people in the U.S.] see me like European, basically. That's like the main difference with [people from other countries]...The main thing is that I am European...and they are American [so I am more accepted than other people].

...I adjust in the things that I have to because there's no other way, so in the school,...I am really, really glad that I'm having the chance to be exposed to this [education] system because it's pretty different to our system [in Spain]. The whole incentive thing and having to pay [tuition], and the effort also. Not really speaking about the quality, but I think what I'm doing here, it's better than what I could be doing in Madrid, for example.

...I was really scared when I was teaching [since]...there's things that are less flexible here. I don't think it's necessarily bad. Well, I don't agree 100 percent with it. For example, you're a teacher; you cannot bring political issues or some social issues or religious issues. I'm not used to that. I'm not used to that at all.

...One day, when my students [evaluated the class], especially the first semester, it was like, "Oh, my God, it's [going] be so bad. It's [going] be so bad." I always apologized [for my accent], like, "Oh, this is my second language." I know that I shouldn't be having to make that effort, but you have to—only with [the students]. In some of the

[class evaluations], some of them said that there was like a slight thing going on because of the language, but everybody has been patient, super patient...

[Now when I teach] I also try to bring my background with me in the way in which I do things. That is not necessarily bad; it's just a different way...In my professional environment, I bring in artists that I know, that [students] might be not exposed to—well, now it's like you have access to everything [online], but there might be things that are going on in Spain that they don't know [about here].

...[Some of the biggest adjustments have been being] polite, this kind of being cautious and careful all the time...If I do [something] wrong, you can just...forget about it in Spain. Not here. I play by the rules.

Nikhil was from Mumbai, India, and he first came to the U.S. in 2006 on an F-1 academic student visa to do his undergraduate studies at a university in Louisiana. He graduated in three years, applied to graduate programs, and chose to attend ASU for his doctoral studies in engineering since he had a cousin who lived in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Nikhil still was on an F-1 student visa when I interviewed him.

I met Nikhil in an on-campus conference room right after he finished working on a project in one of the engineering labs. As we exchanged stories about the hectic end to the spring semester, Nikhil seemed comfortable using U.S. English idioms and phrases.

When I asked Nikhil about the immigration process he followed, he described that getting an F-1 student visa in India to come to the U.S. was easy. When he first came as an undergraduate student his parents were able to help him due to his age. He mentioned that people at the consulate were “tense” and that most people who go for a visa interview are dressed in formal or semi-formal clothes with all their financial documents, school records, and certificates. Nikhil said his interview took less than a minute. That [man] just asked me, “So you’re going to be a Bulldog?” I didn’t know Bulldogs were the mascot of the [university in] Louisiana, so I replied, “Yes. Sure.” And that’s it! That’s all it was.

When it came time for him to apply for an F-1 visa to come to Arizona for his doctoral studies, Nikhil also felt that the process went smoothly. However, he did share that he had experienced immigration challenges at airports.

Immigration? Well it's negative. First thing comes to mind is negative. Especially living in Arizona... I've had many immigration stories. I've [gotten] stuck at airports. And it's not a very fun story for me now... This past summer, I was going back to India, and I decided to take a break in Germany and Holland. I [had completed] all my visa paperwork. I was going to stay there for six days, and my flight was supposed to be out of Amsterdam to Mumbai. And of course from London to Amsterdam to Mumbai. And at the counter [in London] they told me I didn't have a British visa, transit visa,²² even though I was not going to get out of the airplane. That lady would just not let me go, so I had to buy another ticket and stay at the airport for 24 hours because my visa had expired. And I was not allowed to go out [of the airport]. So I don't know. It was such a bad experience, that much I know. Like other people think there are more intense things than what happened [pause]. I was different. And I wasted a lot of money on the new ticket.

I asked Nikhil if he had reached out to the ASU International Students and Scholars Office, and he stated the office was unapproachable.

Well my problem is that the student's office in Louisiana was really helpful. And if I had any problems they would always stick with me, [and explain things] to me. Now I have to have an appointment, and this is too formal [of a process]... I feel that [an] international students' office should not be formal. They should be very helpful and friendly. Especially

²² According to the United Kingdom (UK) Border Agency website, the UK government uses a Direct Airside Transit Visa (DATV) for travelers who are of certain nationalities, including India. A direct transit visa is needed before travelers can travel through the UK airside. This includes, arriving in the UK on a flight, remaining in the arrival lounge of the airport without passing through UK immigration, and then departing on another flight from the same airport.

when it comes to immigration issue[s]. The first thing that comes to mind is you do anything, you get deported. And that's pretty fearful for anyone. And I feel [the university office staff] could...[serve students] in a better way, in a way that...could be friendlier.

Arjun was from Bangalore, India, and came to Arizona on an F-1 student visa to pursue a graduate degree in business administration. I met Arjun in an on-campus computer lab study room for the interview. As I went through the IRB script describing the interview process, Arjun smiled when I told him that he could ask me to restate a question at any point of the interview. He said that I could do the same since he sometimes struggled to convey his thoughts in English.

Once we started the interview, Arjun focused on what had been his process of settling into the U.S. education system and culture. He spoke highly of resources that were available to students like him at ASU.

They have...orientation program[s] for the students...in which they teach you different culture aspects of [the] U.S. They have [an] accent adjustment program, so they have been a great help. So whatever problem you're facing, you can talk to them...It's offered to W.P. Carey MBA students at least, so there is a language expert. She teaches us to—she kind of teaches us the American accent. She's an expert. She knows how the words are pronounced in different cultures, so she teaches...American business language to international students. So there are weekly classes...You can go practice, and...those classes are very helpful. So those students who come here and [have not previously been] to [the] U.S., after a while of attending those classes, they become pretty...comfortable with the language. Then there [is] the International Student Office, ISSO, so that helps you a lot. The students which are already here, they help you a lot, so I mean those kind of resources [are available to] help you adjust.

...And then in terms of challenges you asked [about], I [will] say...getting the attention of recruiters [for an internship] was very difficult. [Even though] I'm studying for the same job as the domestic students,...domestic [students make] it because [they are]

able to communicate what [they are] trying to say. For business people, sometimes you meet people who have never gone outside [the] U.S., so they are probably not aware of culture as much as some people who have [traveled] all around the world. So... [responding to a recruiter's questions was initially] very, very difficult for me. A tutor would [also] give me feedback and say that he didn't fully understand all parts of our conversation...In class discussions [when] you make a comment, I feel like most...people don't understand what comment you made, even though you were right. You [say] exactly [the] same point that your fellow student said, but still because your accent is different...they didn't catch your key words...If they are not aware of these different linguistic grammatical things based on the fact that...[I am from] India, [where] there's [a] more British style of English versus the U.S. style of English, then people don't fully understand what you are trying to tell them...I don't get the same treatment as the domestics, and I am not sure if that it is a bad thing. [Domestic students] get most out of those discussions than I do, but still, it's a learning curve.

...Also, when people see me, I think they see me as an immigrant. There was an experience when I went to my internship in Tennessee. So, I remember, I was talking to one person...We [had] just [gotten] introduced, and we started talking. I told him that I am from Arizona, and he said, "No, really are you from Arizona?" I told him I was. So I mean—then he says...“Really? Where are you *really* from?” Okay, now I have to tell him that I am from India, so probably by looking at my appearance people think that you are [an] immigrant, or—but that's, I would say, like specific to only a few people. Some people that I have seen and met, like, they try not to mispronounce my name...They don't seem to recognize I'm [an] immigrant or from somewhere else because they do not ask me [where I'm from], so, it's like [different from] person to person.

One of the youngest (im)migrant students who I interviewed was Angela, a sophomore, undergraduate student from Hong Kong. Angela came to the U.S. in the summer of 2009 on an

F-1 visa to study biology. I met Angela at her apartment to conduct the interview. Before the interview, she showed me around her apartment and highlighted several artifacts from her home country, including a framed family picture, packages of dried food from Hong Kong that her family sent her, and a motivational saying in Chinese that her mother gave her before she came to the U.S. for school.

When I asked Angela questions about her travel experience to the U.S., she mentioned that it went smoothly and that the U.S. was a great place to come for her undergraduate studies because Hong Kong did not have the same educational opportunities that she was interested in.

In Hong Kong, not a lot of people are involved in science. So they don't really like science, or they just focus on law, medicine, and business, or those kind of majors. So that's why I wanted to go to a country where...science is important. So that's why I [came] here. And the reason why I [chose] Arizona is because I have family here...I have two uncles and two aunts here. So my mom wants me to be taken care of, so that's why I'm here. Actually I stay[ed] with my uncle for the first year. And then I [moved] out last summer...I now live in my own apartment... At first it was [strange] because it was the first time that I ever lived by myself. But actually my history is a little bit interesting because I lived with my grandmother, my grandparents since I was 7...My parents they work in China and...in Hong Kong. So I've been living...more independently than other people. So that is not like a giant leap forward [for] me, but it's still a big change...

[In terms of school] I think my professors are really good. [I] actually went to downtown campus instead of [Tempe] campus to take my biology and chemistry classes...because all the classes here are full...Sometimes chemistry has an advantage that the class size is really small. So the professor gets to know you. And then for the first semester [of] chemistry, I think I almost...[learned] the entire material for the class...The way that they teach it is very different from Hong Kong...And it [helps] me understand better and appreciate...science better. So my professors are great. And also I got into the research lab at ASU. I think within the first two months...I went to the lab...I started

working with different people...and...getting hands-on experience...I think that makes me feel like I chose the right major...I like the major a lot...[I am] motivated to learn more... I know if I study in Hong Kong, things [wouldn't be as]...good. So I know that this will be a very good option [for me].

...I think my challenges are...making new friends and trying to adapt into another family, because I [lived] with another family [when I first got here]. Like human relationships [are] the biggest [challenge].

When I asked Angela if information that she heard about immigration related to her, she stated that since moving to Arizona, immigration was mainly a Mexican issue.

I think they are mainly concerned [with] Mexicans. I think they still have a big issue [with] Mexicans...even though they have friends that are Mexican. They tend to think of Mexican[s]...*differently*. I don't really know why that happens. For example, like Asian[s] see Black[s] differently. So, I guess that's why. But it's a little bit strange for me to observe that...

As far as immigration [to the U.S.], I think the formal official process, it's pretty straightforward. They have...really good guideline[s]...But I think a lot of U.S. citizen[s], they don't have a passport. So they don't even bother going out of the country. [Chuckles] So I don't think they would bother knowing that there is [an immigration] process.

...[When] I think about the settling [in] process [in the U.S.], I think people here are really welcoming. So I think [it is important] to just to be open about different immigrants. Like, for example, if you see a Mexican, don't try to think of [them in] general terms that describe them...Be open and just treat them as a person...and...respect them. Respect they have cultural differences. Because sometimes [people from other cultures when] they...become friends with you, they will cross some lines...that [are] not supposed to be [crossed] in your culture, but they don't really know that. So sometimes it's good [to tell them], "Okay, that's not okay in my culture."...I think when you're already

very welcomed [in the U.S.], it's just really easy...for me, maybe it's because I'm Chinese, so I don't really face a lot of problems. But I guess if I were...Mexican, then I might face more problems. Then I would [want] people to really just treat me as a normal person and don't stereotype me.

...I don't really particularly have a strong urge to [culturally adapt to the U.S. way of life]. I think I don't want to change myself or change my identity because I [came] here. Actually...when I'm teaching in class, I also tell [students] my Chinese name first, and then I tell them, "Well you can call me Angela, but I still go by [my Chinese] name. And that's my formal name." And I know a lot of people if they become U.S. citizens, they will change their first name into [an] English name...But to me, like, I won't do that... I think people here can adapt to me as well as I am adapting to them. So for them, when they look at me, they already know that I'm not, probably not from [the] U.S...I don't have a really strong urge to change...[maybe] some little details...I will adjust to them. I think that's because it helps us to communicate or become friends. But I won't really change...dramatically [things] about myself to just adapt into this culture.

Serin described herself as a "third culture kid" from South Korea and a doctoral student on an F-1 visa. We conducted the interview at her apartment on a Saturday afternoon, and as I entered, she politely asked me to remove my shoes. She had just finished cooking a traditional Korean tofu dish so I slightly smelled onion, garlic, a type of spice, and the incense that she lit to neutralize the air.

When I asked about her background, Serin disclosed that her father worked in the foreign affairs ministry, and from a very young age, she traveled with her family and lived in different parts of the world. Throughout the interview, Serin appeared very comfortable speaking English. She had lived in the U.S. three times prior to moving to Arizona for her doctoral studies.

The first time I came to the U.S. was when I was [in] third grade. At that time, my perception or, I guess, fantasy or imagination of U.S. was mostly like what I read in books

and mass media, on TV, of Anglo-Saxon Whites. The first city that we lived [in] was Los Angeles. Well...when I went to school, I was quite shocked. It wasn't at all what I had expected. In fact, it was very, very diverse. For instance, the first time I came, the school that I went [to] in Los Angeles, for the most part, students were friendly even though I didn't really speak the language. They would include me in the games. I didn't know the rules, but they would invite me into the games. I would always, what do you call, be the first one to be out, but they would invite me again and use body gestures. There was that positive sort of linkage or trust or implicit respect for each other. At the same time, something I realized, oh, not all Asians are like me, especially Japanese-American, Chinese-American. I would approach them as if I would approach a Korean student, but no. They kept a certain distance. They would cut me off...to indicate that no, we are not the same, and I am not like you. I am different. Or that's how I perceived some of the Japanese-American students...And then the second one [was high school] ...and the high school was mostly Jewish-Americans. I found the environment, even though I was maybe the third Asian student out of the four that was at school, I felt quite comfortable in that environment despite the different skin colors or language ability or family history or background, socioeconomic status...So that memory of Jewish-Americans, it's quite—I hear some bad things, you know, stereotypes about them, but my own personal experience is, on the whole, quite positive, and it was mostly in the school context...And then in college...I don't know what it was. It wasn't like any of the [Wellesley College] WASP-y girls had any personal dislike towards me or they weren't making me a target...but I did not sense the initiative...you know, even nonverbal or some sort of welcoming, inviting, or openness that I had hoped from many of my classmates. And I myself did not take steps trying to befriend the White Americans...

I didn't know that I myself was going through identity...issues, but I think that's sort of the beginning where all that I had kept to myself and never really examined—my family, my parents. [!] really didn't talk about those issues, either. I think that's when it

started to unravel, when I realized...interaction just doesn't happen. That loss of comfort or confidence, both in myself and in other people. I saw myself being more discerning, and I didn't know why...But now, so that's many years between [then] and now, so I've sort of had to face the identity issue. When I had returned to Korea and I realized that I wasn't very Korean, but that I had to learn how to be a Korean, or at least a functional Korean, in order to study and work there....

So I like my trip out to the U.S. this current time more than the earlier ones, but I guess it's...more [of a] reflection of my own development path, if that's a good way of putting it...[I came back to the U.S. because] in Korea, I wanted to teach in a university setting in Korea, but in order to be qualified or be eligible for that kind of position, you have to have a PhD. Korean PhD programs are not recognized, even by Korean universities, when it comes to preference of who to hire. They would prefer to hire someone who has had overseas experience, especially U.S. or Japan or even Great Britain. English-speaking PhD programs. So that left [me] very little choice in that sense, so I [had] to go overseas to get a PhD that would be recognized or held more valuable than comparable Korean PhDs.

At another point in our interview, Serin described learning more about U.S. racial politics in everyday interactions while living in Arizona:

When they first installed the light rail, it was free so that people [could] get used to the light rail. And at some point, they began to check your tickets. So one evening, quite late, I was waiting at a light rail station to catch the train back to my apartment, and on the platform, it was [a] mixed crowd...There were, you know, African Americans, Hispanics, me, Asian, and also Whites there, and I think three enforcement officers. I don't know if they worked for the light rail.... They appeared on the scene, and they patrolled, and they were checking people's tickets...But before they did that, there were...one or two African American men just walking. And in my eyes, you know, innocent. But they picked on them for the stupidest reason. [One African-American man] was just...looking into the

trash can in the station, and the three [enforcement officers] began to, in some sense, shoo [him] off, you know, scare off or have this African American not be in the premise if they weren't going to ride the light rail...And I was like, oh, this is interesting! How did they know that these men are bad or going to pose problems? So I watched the three of them more carefully, and they circled to the other side of the platform and then they picked on, first, the people they asked for tickets were African Americans. They skipped the White, the Hispanic. They moved from one African American to the next one... Then they came to my side of the platform. And once they had checked the tickets of the African Americans, they began to ask the Hispanics for the tickets...I was like, wow! You know, if I were them, I would be asking one person after the other in sequence, not based on their skin color or ethnicity. So they started from my side, Hispanics, to the other, and it seemed like they were finished, they didn't want to check other people's tickets.

Let's see if they ask the White Americans, the six, seven people standing. They never asked them. And the White Americans were oblivious to all of this, but I noticed that the African Americans were, their eyes were following these men. The Hispanics, not so much, but the African Americans, I sensed that they were watching carefully...that was one huge impression...

So like in Asia...if there's any [common] criteria that [are]...used to distinguish us/them or, you know, identity, is more the [nationality]...and your family...But here, in addition to that, my nationality and that [familial] status, there is my skin color, there is my language, what sound is she or he making...I can see that when I meet a new person, like at a party—I was at a Christmas party this past year, and I noticed at first when I don't say anything and people just look at me, they think, "Okay, so she's not, I don't know how to interact, what are the rules of engagement with her?"

...But once I say my first sentence and they hear the sound that I make, they start to treat me like American or someone who they feel comfortable enough to be fully whoever they are without all the politeness or the need to be accommodating like talking

slow, for example. Or even jokes would become more the kind of jokes that they would make around their friends, right?

...So my pronunciation, skin color. I feel like there are so many more loose fragments that [are] informing the interaction that I do with others here than I would normally need to master in other countries. That's sort of a challenge.

When I asked Serin if she had the desire and/or if she had ever felt pressure to culturally adapt to U.S. culture, Serin stated that it was important for her to stay true to her background and values.

...I don't want to be Americanized. I don't. The motivation for me to adjust is so...[that my] interaction [with others] can be functional, that we can carry on the daily task so that it will be smooth without discomfort or without creating unnecessary awkward moments.... At the same time, I do want to show that I'm not American, that this is sort of the limit or the extent that I will acclimatize or adjust to life here...I'm going to hold on to my beliefs or values that I hold dear, even if—for instance, back at school, there are really nice people, and they want me to be more explicit or more outspoken and be interacting because my pronunciation is, it doesn't have a heavy accent. So they think, or they're led to believe, that my thinking is Americanized. But I want to show, yes, my sounds are very, has very little accent, but the way I use my English, I want to use it to show what values I hold. And I'm going to show that through, you know, maybe I will be more [of] listener than a talker. I won't be so loud or more assertive. I will use qualifiers, a sort of hedging language, because I want to leave it open, even though I know it's not what is expected or desired, that it makes my own comment less credible for the American audience, but I want to sort of bring in [the] cultural value[s] that I have...so that is how I'm trying to find a comfortable combination of adjusting to U.S. habits, lifestyle, way of life, at the same time sort of displaying my identity.

H1-B Specialty Occupation Visa

Jade is from Denmark. She invited me to the house she rented with her husband for the interview. Throughout the house, Jade pointed out things that reminded her of where she grew up. She displayed a small Denmark flag on her kitchen windowsill and a Lego poster on the wall right next to the kitchen table. Jade completed an industrial design engineering master's degree in Denmark where she began working on a research collaboration between the Danish toy company, Lego, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the fall 2004. While working at the media lab in Boston, she met a man who eventually became her husband. Jade returned to Denmark to complete her master's degree and maintained a long distance relationship for a couple of years.

She moved to the U.S. in the summer of 2007 to join her husband, a U.S. citizen, who had been offered a faculty position. Jade was on an H-1B visa²³ since she would be doing research at a university lab. She decided to take classes that might help with her research. After a year and a half of coursework, Jade was accepted into a doctoral program at the university and retained her H-1B visa status. When I asked Jade if she thought people considered her an immigrant, she stated:

Not until they hear my accent, I guess. [Chuckles]...Of course...they notice that I'm not, that [English] is not my first language. Actually I was just on the phone with a secretary from the Mayo Clinic, and she asked me what my first language is. I don't know maybe they ask everyone that? But it was interesting...I think it might have been my accent. I didn't experience that before. So in that instance, it's a new thing. It tells me I'm different.... I don't know what people think. [Chuckles] ...But [there's] been a lot of really positive experiences [regarding my accent]. And I imagine that my experiences here [have] been even more positive than what I imagine people moving to Denmark would be going through. Like there's this janitor, I was waiting for my husband in his office, and this

²³ The H-1B Visa is a nonimmigrant visa that allows individuals with highly specialized knowledge to work in specialty occupation fields in the U.S.

janitor came by, a security guard, whatever. And we talked a little bit. And he asked, “So where is that lovely accent from?” [Chuckles] I was like, “Whoa. That was so sweet.”
...It’s not really, I haven’t really had it as a problem.

When I asked Jade specific questions about immigration and whether the information that she heard about immigration made reference to her, she chuckled and discussed an experience she had in one of her doctoral seminars shortly after the passing of SB 1070.

I don’t feel like, “Oh they’re talking about me.” [Chuckles] Or...I don’t really relate to it like that. There was a strange discussion in a class I was in. There was a guy from Chile in the class, so we were talking about this notion that a law enforcement officer could pull you over and ask for your legal papers. And so I asked the professor, “So does that mean that I should keep my visa in my car with me, and in my purse at all times?” And she looked at me, and said, “No it’s probably not going to be an issue for you. But Oscar on the other hand he might [chuckles] need to.” And I was just like, “Whoa, that’s so unfair on his behalf!” It just like we’re the same. We’re here for the same reasons. We’re both here to study. And it’s just a matter of genetics. It’s kind of very surface oriented. But I guess, what can [immigrants] do?

Itzel is from Mexico City. On the day of the interview, we met at her university office. After reviewing the IRB paperwork and answering questions about the research project, Itzel agreed to audio record the interview. She said she was now comfortable expressing herself in English but had struggled with the language when she first came to the U.S.

Itzel left a successful business in Mexico to come study in a master’s program at a university in Wisconsin in 2001. In 2005, she moved to the Phoenix area to start a doctoral program at ASU. At the time of our interview, Itzel had graduated with her doctorate degree the semester before and was now doing research in one of the university labs. Upon graduation, she had to adjust her visa from an F-1 student visa to an H-1B visa in order to stay in the U.S. and work. Itzel described various challenges that she faced while studying and living in the U.S.

The attitude was not as welcoming as I thought it could have been [in Wisconsin]...I noticed that some people were...super clear. They didn't think women were good enough for...engineering, which I had experienced before in Mexico. I was kind of used to it, but then the other thing is being Mexican. I had one [man] ask me specifically, "So what did they teach you in Mexico for electrical engineering?" I would say, I'm spicy I guess, I would say "Well, exactly the same thing they taught you but in Spanish. It is math! It is like the same math as you do here, we do in Mexico."

...I would get upset about those things. And it was a little harder because I thought I spoke the language, but when you get here and people start speaking really quickly and with different—how do you call it—accents. Oh, my God, I couldn't understand anything. I was looking like a stupid person.... I wanted to say something, and I couldn't because by the time I was ready to say something, the conversation went to some [another] subject. I would have to ask people to say to me things four times and [by] the fourth time, I'm like I'm not going to say anything, I'm just going to say yes...

I think that people thought, woman, Mexican, and doesn't understand. It's like the [worst] combination. I remember, for instance, that's another thing, the change in cultures. They would see [a greeting kiss] as really bad and would tell me, the people in the lab where I was working in the College of Engineering, they were like, "What are you doing? Are you having sex with him?" I'm like, "Are you kidding me! He's like an old person. He's an old [man]. He's my mentor. That's how we say hi to each other." It's like, oh my God, every single thing that I was, it was like so different and so misunderstood. That it was very hard. Now I'm getting even emotional because it was fucking hard [Crying]. I'm sorry about that but it was fucking hard! I was even thinking, shit man, I'm not good enough because the people try to convince you, and I experienced that in Mexico. I thought I was done with that [sexism and racism], but once I came to the United States—and specifically, in that area. Maybe engineering is still a lot more [sexist and racist] than in other areas, and I understand that...It was fucking hard! It was a constant

effort. I am good, man, come on I am good. I'm trying to convince myself. I am fucking good! I can do this the same way that you can do it and maybe even better, and I pushed real hard.

...People [were] also taking advantage of my position and how people view[ed] me. They would take ideas from me and present it as theirs. I mean, scientists doing that and I was like, fuck! I'm not going to let that happen again.

...Discrimination can really harm your ability to recognize what you can do.... That's one of the things that I've fought the most within myself and that I have learned little by little to overcome and succeed.

...Now, to be honest, once I moved [to Arizona], the whole thing was different. I don't know exactly how everything happened, but I [had] another experience [from] being here, which is good and which makes me feel comfortable. I'm good and happy to be doing this experience that you're doing [with your research project].

...Let's go back to Wisconsin. I did my master's. I was extremely nervous about doing my PhD because of all the reasons that I just said. In the PhD, you do your comprehensive [exams], you do all these things, and people judge...who you are...Another thing that I have, which doesn't stop me, is that I have learning disabilities, like, so I am slow. That doesn't mean I'm stupid...but it makes me look stupid, and people think, "Oh she doesn't know." Those were the things that I was scared [about], but my personality just doesn't stop. Probably I should stop sometimes, but it just doesn't let me stop. And that's why I keep going, keep going, keep going, keep trying because I really believe when you keep trying, you can do it. The proof is I finished up my PhD when people [doubted] that I could...I did my PhD almost by myself because, as I said, the advisor didn't know very much [about my research topic]. Even my committee didn't know very much. But still I found those areas that the committee and my advisor had, [and] that increased what I was doing. I saw it almost as a very personal project... And I got a nice environment that allowed me to do that, too. I have to admit that an environment of

trusting and thinking that I knew what I was doing, both from my lab mates and my classmates and the professors that I interacted with, helped me a lot to grow and grow and grow and grow more than I would say a normal PhD student.

At another part of the interview, I asked Itzel what came to her mind when she heard the word immigration. She stated:

...When I think immigration, I think of all the problems other people have of being here [illegally].... And people who want to do what most of the people think that Mexicans want to do, which is just live here forever, and people even think [that Mexicans] take advantage of the system....What I think of...[is] how...educated people in Mexico come here thinking that that's the best way to live and how American people are against anybody who comes from anywhere else because they think they are going to take away everything they have.... It's sad to have [all these legal processes], but at the same time, I feel very confident that if I need to be somewhere, the doors are going to be open. If they're not open, then I shouldn't be there. That's how I view things. It has been for me, very simple to get all the paperwork to be where I am, and so if it doesn't become like that, then maybe it's because I should be somewhere else. In a way, that doesn't drive my decisions...I don't believe in doing things illegally. Maybe that's the American part of me. I don't believe in that. If you are going to do it, just do it right and be patient and do it in the way that you should do it...

I guess one of the things that I experienced in Mexico but I definitely experienced more...here is [to] know myself. Know that I am valuable and recognize that and work for that. Don't allow anybody to tell you what you cannot do. Just try it and do the best you can. I think that's one of the biggest lessons and goals along the lines of discrimination...Know yourself and be proud of yourself and fight for what you want to do.

Refugee Status

Edwin is a Sudanese refugee who came to the Phoenix area in 1999 with the help of a social service agency that provided a refugee assistance and immigration services program. At

the time of our interview, Edwin had become a naturalized U.S. citizen. When he first arrived to Phoenix, he did not speak English and did not know anything about the area.

He came to my house for the interview. As we sat at the kitchen table, I noticed that Edwin had a right-side prosthetic hand, and his left hand was missing four fingers. He had a natural storytelling style in answering my questions, and even with an accent, he confided that he enjoyed talking to people.

...When I left Sudan, I was a little boy...I stayed with my grandmother when the Second Sudanese Civil War broke out...As we fled...[I] got separated from [my] grandmother...captured at the age of 6...I was able to escape captivity in 1999...[I] fled to Cairo, Egypt...From there [I] went to Israel...then back to Cairo before coming to the U.S. in 1999. Due to my arm injury and some issues with the Egyptian government, the United Nations and the U.S. Embassy [arranged for me to come to the U.S.]...I arrived in the U.S. through New York during the month of February...Since the cold weather was not ideal for my arm injury...there were several attempts to get me to Nevada, Utah, and Oakland. All fell through until I was told Catholic Social Services found me a place to stay in Phoenix, Arizona...

[The] organization picked me up at airport and help[ed] me settle into Phoenix. ...[The] first days were bad, I got sick...no one spoke Arabic...I could not speak English....After sometime, [I] met a woman and man at the organization who helped [me]...The man tried so hard to teach me English, and the woman [found] me an artificial hand that is implanted

...Later, as a part of the Lost Boys of Sudan²⁴ in Arizona, I met a professor at ASU who encouraged me to go back to school.

At the time of our interview, Edwin was 32 years old and was enrolled in an undergraduate program at ASU. He also took classes at the community college since the tuition

²⁴ The Lost Boys of Sudan is a refugee resettlement program in the U.S. that began in 2000 when 4,000 Sudanese refugees were resettling throughout the country (McKinnon, 2008).

there was more affordable. When he was not working or taking classes, he spent time with a young girl he adopted from Sudan and his friends at the Lost Boys of Sudan Center in Phoenix. Edwin described immigration and some of his experiences as follows:

Every human society, every animal, every living thing is a visitor to the Earth...The land [doesn't] belong to you...Everyone [is] a visitor of the Earth...People move to the places where they can eat and work, that is it...Sometimes people make you feel like [you don't] belong...Yep. I've had people ask of me, "Where you from?" I'm like "Oh, I'm American but I'm from Africa, from Sudan. I'm a refugee, and I immigrated here."...One thing is funny. When a person ask[s] you where you're from, think about it. Why couldn't they ask you what's your name? Why ask you first where are you from? They're right there thinking about something, but he's not going to tell you because he [does] not want to create any problem...

A smart person will not ask you "where are you from?" A smart person will come to you, "what's your name?" You will say your name. Okay. "Are you from Arizona?" I [will say] "no." "Oh okay, where you from?" See how a smart person would get it? They would bring it at the top and try to get to know you first. Even [if] you know that [this] person has something to say to you, about immigration [status] or whatever, or they might look at you and think that you are from a different country.

When a person asks you where you're from, that means you don't belong here, and I don't even know [them]. He knows you [are] not from here, so I'm not connected to you. And even if you live here, we can never be connected...

[People may think you don't belong because] your gender and maybe the way you have an accent. Maybe the way you look. It could be the way you talk to people. Some people can ask you where you [are] from to maybe find good thing[s] about you...Sometimes they need to learn more about [yourself] and where you are from. Like when you²⁵ work on your school project, and you ask me about how the culture is in

²⁵ Referring to me, the researcher for this project.

Sudan. I was like, “The thing I know about culture in Sudan is this,” and I know you mean [well] because you really want to learn. But not everyone has those intentions....

[From everything I have been through] it’s important to give back to community and help others who find themselves in similar situations...I was able to come to the U.S. with refugee status...as part of [the] Arizona Lost Boys. [I] and [others] went back to Sudan—we are the first people to sign in the law for the Lost Boys because that is what they call us in Catholic Social Services. We don’t have a lot of Sudanese in Arizona...We had only six Sudanese in Arizona...They’re like, “Well, you [all] have to make a decision to help the Catholic Social Services.” They’re trying to bring in 3,000 Lost Boys or 4,000 something Lost Boy[s] [to] Arizona...This means...Sudanese [coming] here, including Jenny [the girl that I adopted]...I was like the first person [to sign]. I was so happy, like Sudanese coming here. Wow! We went in[to] the meeting. We signed the paper. They sent it to the State Department and cleared it. [That allowed other Sudanese refugees to come to Arizona]. [For] many days, I was every day at the airport waiting. I was so happy.

Curtis Marshall is a naturalized U.S. citizen who came to the U.S. with his family as a refugee in 1990. His parents were from Afghanistan and had fled to Pakistan in the mid-1980s after the war with the Soviet Union broke out. It was in Pakistan that Curtis’ mom met and married her husband. They spent about six years in Pakistan, which is where Curtis was born. The family applied to come to Canada or the U.S. as refugees. Since they were accepted by both countries, the parents chose to come to the U.S. for its “magnificent reputation abroad.”

We initially met at a park in Phoenix for our interview and then moved to a bookstore coffee shop to finish the remaining questions. As I began to ask questions, Curtis Marshall stated that while he was an undergraduate student studying physics, he was thinking of pursuing an occupation as a firefighter or something that made an immediate impact on people’s lives. Due to his parent’s sacrifices, he felt he could choose an occupation with purpose even if it was not the

most financially lucrative career. When I asked him if he could expand on what sacrifices his parents had made, he discussed the reasons why his family fled the Middle East.

[My parents] filled out the paperwork, and we came across on the plane. I came across barefoot. I remember my mom telling me that because the shoes I had were apparently poor quality. I was drinking water at the drinking fountain at the airport. I got some water on them, and they just fell apart. I came to the United States barefoot [laughter]...

The refugee agency that my parents came with had two locations available at the time, New York and Phoenix. My parents decided against New York because the manager that my mom worked with warned her against it. She said New York is cutthroat. There's a whole bunch of crime. I guess she was a little bit racist because she went on and on about Blacks. Anyway, my parents decided not New York because they'd seen their fill of violence. We came to Phoenix...

The first thing my parents noticed about Phoenix was how incredibly hot it was. They came at night—it was around midnight. They stepped out. My mom says she thought they were near an iron factory or like somewhere where [they were] melting things because it was the middle of the night, and the concrete was so hot to your touch. She was like, "We've got to be close [to a factory]—like this isn't natural. Weather shouldn't be like this." That's how we started our life here in Phoenix...

I do remember my parents had [it] hard—when they first came, they didn't know anyone. They were in this sort of basement-type apartment over on Camelback. Their sleep got messed up. For like that first week, they were asleep during the day and awake during the night. They had nothing in the fridge to really eat...My parents are religious, so there are certain things, like we can't eat pork as Muslims. There was nothing in the fridge that they could eat at the time. They didn't know how to get to a store. They didn't know how to get food or do anything until the refugee worker came the next day, and kind of showed them...If I remember correctly, the refugee worker took them out a few times...He introduced [my parents] to another Afghan immigrant family who kind of

showed them the ropes...One of the first things my dad did was, he learned how to drive and get his [driver's] license because he needed to. Before that, I remember he had a job at [a gas station]...He worked there for—I want to say two or three years, and he would actually bike [several miles] there....

I think the biggest shock to them at first was just how much they had to work just to stay afloat. I remember after we moved out of the apartment we were in a house. My dad still worked all the time. We had food stamps, but I remember it being really [financially] tight. Like my mom says we had around \$500 a month. That was our budget, and \$450 was spent on rent and utilities and stuff. We had about \$50 [left after those monthly expenses]. My sister was born at this time. My mom came over when she was pregnant. We had about \$50 for diapers and anything that would go wrong. I think that was a big shock to them at first, just how much they had to work to stay afloat...

I have to say I'm impressed. [My parents] went through a lot. Like they went through one of the craziest events that's happened in the 20th Century. They came through it successful, and they [bore] with it. So, I have more respect for them for dealing with that...

[As for me in] kindergarten—my name in my language is [Changaze]. I remember in my [kindergarten] teacher couldn't pronounce it. She said, "Curtis is that your name?" I first of all was scared....It was a new environment. I didn't really understand what she was saying, so it's like Changaze, and that's why I'm still Curtis. I didn't know English, so I had no way of correcting her. I was put into the ESL program. I remember when I went to school...I just kind of sat—or I knew very little English, like what I picked up from TV basically...

I didn't really make friends with any of the other [children]. My parents—in addition to telling the stories about how they came over....They would always talk about the Mujahedin back in Afghanistan, the Freedom Fighters, the religious ones. How they fought against the Soviets. They fought against the non-believers. Later, the U.S. also

had—they didn't have involvement in Afghanistan, but in the mid-90s Clinton did fire a couple missiles because by that time Osama was hiding out in Afghanistan. So the U.S. had some interest. Once that happened, my parents also started talking about how the U.S. killed...people in Afghanistan...

That just furthered my feeling of this is not my home. This is not where I belong. I don't like this culture. I don't like this country. At school I was really introverted. I didn't really talk to the other [children] or connect. I spent recess digging tunnels in the sand, so. There was a real sense of isolation.

When I asked Curtis Marshall if he could expand on his feelings of not belonging and isolation, he stated:

...Well, [my parents] always telling me the stories about how we came over. As a kid, it really precluded me from having any sense of nationality of any sense of home when it came to America. Like I always as a kid felt I'm from Afghanistan. That's where I'm from. [The U.S.] is not my home. This is not where I'm from.

U.S. Legal Permanent Residency

Fey was born in Alberta, Canada, and had lived in Ontario before moving to the U.S. with her family when she was 15 years old. Fey's father, who worked in the golf industry, had been offered a job, which led him to uproot his family and move to Arizona when Fey was in high school. At the time of the interview, Fey had lived in the U.S. for eight years. She had attended university on an F-1 visa, and since she had recently married a U.S. citizen from Texas who she had met while she was in a master's program at ASU, she was now a U.S. legal permanent resident.

We met at her apartment for the interview. Fey described people's reaction to her Canadian citizenship.

...When it's made apparent that I'm not a U.S. citizen, when it's followed up with, "What are you?" or, "Where are you from?" and it's Canada, then it's met definitely with welcome. "Oh, that's totally fine! Canada, great"—almost like their brother to the north

sort of thing. That you're one of us. That sort of sentiment is definitely something that I hear often...It's just so much more behind the scenes that not many people understand. Not many people see [Canada as different]. It's been interesting in my process too, because especially with my White body, my voice, that sort of thing, it's not expected that I've been going through some sort of process. So that's almost why, in my navigation of it all, I've been trying to claim to *mark* this is what—I've had to go through this and almost sort of bringing it to light that this is how immigration is. This is what it's about. So it's just interesting, the...lack of awareness of what is all involved for [immigration processes].... It was almost the struggle where I... [have to make] sense of navigating my way around as an immigrant, with this...invisibility of immigration that I have—of immigrant, I guess, that I have—to...navigate the barriers that have come up in my way because of my immigrant status... My visa has constantly been shifting. Being [constantly informed] with that and knowing the travel restrictions, and work restrictions, and it's been constant that I haven't been able to work. So there's always that kind of...constant fear that you're always trying to safeguard yourself, make sure that you're doing everything properly and according to what you are supposed to be doing. Making those trips to the international student office and that sort of thing. So...obviously, it's...petty in the sense of complaining, but it's just this sort of navigation, trying to understand what process to take.

Then on top of that, so...when I graduated as an undergraduate, it was...like, what do I do now, because I can't stay in the United States with no status, right...So it was kind of you have to make a decision on your life. What are you going to do? Where do you want to be located? Where do you want your home to be? So in that kind of covering all bases...I did have some desire to...[apply] to graduate school and, thankfully, got in and was able to continue on a student status for the next two years...

So it's not necessarily adapting to an American way of life, which perhaps might be pretty similar to a Canadian way of life, but more about just my movement within spaces and my ability to work, those sorts of things. To always claim myself as an

immigrant has been something that's been quite difficult to do and has always made things a little bit more difficult. There's always an extra step in even filling out paperwork.... That's been a part of my navigation, I guess, within the U.S. So just...an ignorance to that process, that experience, because when you have mobility and it's easy to cross a border...it would seem immigration is just this very easy thing. You want to move, you pick up your bags and you move across the border, and voila...

I know just recently, my husband and I went to Texas...we were stopped [at a Border Patrol checkpoint] and [the officer] asked, "Are you both American?" My husband says, "No," and you could see the look of shock. Like, I read the officer's face. He was immediately shocked, really taken aback. Then he asked, "Where are you from?"...My husband said, "She's Canadian." ...I could see him almost starting to form the words of, "Can I see your papers?" because I'm sure everyone, if they say that they're not [a U.S. citizen], he asks...He stopped himself from saying that...I saw him almost going through the script, the proper protocol, and he stopped himself, thinking that it wasn't really necessary... Just things like that have been very interesting for me to understand my role as an immigrant. For me to understand, because my experience is my experience, it's very different than many other people.... The hardships and process that I've gone through is very specific to my situation, but I think when people think about immigration, it's a very specific situation that they think of too. That's why I think that kind of awareness needs to happen...

I always wanted to distinguish myself...as Canadian and having my heritage. Even if, for some reason, there was some push to get U.S. citizenship, I would definitely want to have dual citizenship. I guess it's just some tie to my homeland. I don't know really where it comes from, but...there's not really a desire for me to emulate an American way of life...Perhaps I am. In my everyday-to-day life, maybe I am living an American way, but I would claim it probably as Canadian.

I asked Fey about her goals and if she intended to stay in the U.S. after she graduated with her master's degree. She said:

...It's interesting to think about the kind of goals that I have that are related to living here...because it was never my intention to live in the United States. I never wanted to [laughter]. Nice place to visit, but I never thought I would be living in the United States, let alone married to a United States citizen.... The U.S. has a draw because my husband's here and my immediate family, but there's nothing really—I don't know if have any real goals tied to being in the U.S...

...Thinking about things that I'll accomplish living in the United States, I hope now, as of a week ago [since I became a U.S. legal permanent resident], I can walk into [laughter] relatively anywhere and apply [for a job], which is pretty fascinating and exciting to me. So hopefully, to be employed somewhere in the near future, because I probably will be tied to the United States for the next few years, or maybe the rest of my life. It's interesting to think about raising a family here and having my [children] be American. I think that's going to be a very interesting process, not necessarily tied to the goal question. I was wondering just the other week about whether [my children] would be—they probably [would] be able to apply for dual citizenship, but more than likely they would be born in the United States and would be U.S. citizens. Just, that's kind of an interesting thing for me to wrap my mind around, but I mean...even thinking about school systems and what they're going to learn. I'm unprepared for that, and I don't know what necessarily they teach in the schools. It's just interesting thinking about that process.

Naturalized U.S. Citizens

Adela was 29 years old when she came to the Phoenix area from Romania to be with the man she loved in 2015. Her husband was a U.S. citizen who had immigrated to the U.S. in 1978 from Romania. Adela, who had a successful career in journalism and public relations in Romania, got married a couple of months after she arrived to the U.S. By the time of our interview, which was conducted at her townhouse, she had become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

After I got here, a couple of months later, my friends all have started to ask me, “So [have] you adapted yet? Did you adapt?” I’m like, “I have no idea what you’re talking about because I don’t know what it means [to adapt] or what it means to be [culturally] adjusted.” And I still have no idea. I think that, or maybe I only now am starting to understand what that means. On the other hand, the question was a little bit bothersome because I didn’t understand why do I need to adjust? I mean, from a pragmatic point of view, of course, I understand that you kind of have to align yourself to whatever culture you’re in, if you don’t want to look weird.... The idea in itself is, why? Especially for an environment or place²⁶ claiming that is open to diversity and multiplicity and the whole idea of being an immigrant country.... I don’t know about adjusting.

Adela disclosed that that her initial experiences in the U.S. led her to miss and appreciate her life in Romania. When I asked her what specifically she missed, she stated:

...When I say that I miss my friends, I miss going out for a beer with them. It’s not that I don’t get out for a beer here but it’s that sense of—I actually don’t know how to explain it. It’s that sense of shared something, background, history, context, all of that, that I miss in my conversations with the friends that I made here [in Phoenix]. I always need to explain something to provide background, and I also need them to explain to me and provide background for me. There are a lot of things that I have to catch up with... here. Culture, political events, pop culture, movies because I’m not on the same page in a lot of ways. I’m becoming more and more aware of that because I don’t live in Romania anymore. Even when I go back there and I talk to my friends, there are things that they have now to explain to me because I cannot keep up with them. It’s this really interesting thing that is going on.

...I’m torn out and in between two worlds, and I love them both. I feel sometimes like I don’t belong in either right now. I don’t belong to the Romanian world as I used to,

²⁶ Referring to the U.S.

and I don't belong here entirely because, as I said, a lot of things to catch up with and to learn about. I do feel, a lot of times, in between.

When I asked Adela if people in the U.S. considered her an (im)migrant, she stated that her accent was one way that people knew she was not originally from the U.S. However, she also stated that, at times, people had opinions about her (im)migrant experience.

...One of my students wanted to give a speech on how he would stop this whole thing with becoming instantly [a citizen at birth]—how is it called? His idea was that it's not right for children to immediately become—it was practically about the anchor babies. What a way to call them! He would change something about how [children] are immediately becoming American citizens...I smiled at him and I said, "Are you kidding me? I have a kid who even before I became a citizen is an American citizen." I didn't want to dissuade him in picking that topic. I just wanted him to think about that and his answer was, "Yes, but you're doing everything right." I don't know what this story says. I only know that some people are concerned, and I've seen it brought up a lot of times. Even thinking about calling these babies, anchor babies. It's, I'd say, interesting.

...It's the same thing with the marriage thing. Having babies and getting married, these are facts of life. People are doing this every [day]. It is so difficult to sort out intentions. I did not intentionally have a baby so I can later...gain...legal status in the United States. I got married because this [man] that I had met is an American citizen, but my intention [was] not to eventually...get the American citizenship. People normally get married and have children. It's so difficult to sort out these intentions. A lot of the people who are doing it because this is their life. Having to go through, I have to prove that I did not [having] this baby so I can get the citizenship or I have to prove that I love my husband and I have entered...the marriage in good faith. It's so weird! I understand there is fraud...from the viewpoint of the government, but I don't know. It's difficult.

Butterfly Girl is from the island of Guadeloupe²⁷ and lived most of her life in Paris, France. She moved to the U.S. in 2001 on an F-1 student visa to pursue her undergraduate studies at a university in Montana. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in math and computer science, she decided to move to Arizona to enter a computer science PhD program. During Butterfly Girl's time in the U.S., a friend of her mother sponsored her U.S. legal permanent resident status. By the time of our interview, which took place at an on-campus office, she had become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Even though I'm American now, the accent is still here. So I can say I'm American but I have an accent, so I will never be American, if that makes sense. I mean, maybe on the paper I am, but when you hear me, you know that I'm coming from somewhere else...So I think it's something that people may remind me sometimes, and that's [fine] because I don't say, "Oh, I'm American."... I say, "I live here in America"...It's just like there's so many things [in] how you define what it is being American or being African American, right? And there's a lot of [moments where] I don't fit in, so it's hard for me to use those words [to identify myself]. And I tend to stay away from [those labels] because then you get into this debate with people that you really don't want to start. But then you get there and then you agree, disagree, and then at the end everybody is mad, right? So sometimes some of the issues that I'm having...I guess, it's kind of the culture barrier or language barrier and what it is to be Black in America, which is something that I never really asked myself, "what is being Black?"...In Europe it's totally different.... We have so many [countries] around us [with] different languages...

...When I applied for college [in the U.S.] I [had] to explain my ethnicity, gender. I never [have] done that before, and all of a sudden, it has to do with status or whatever, but even I think it's in daily life like when I deal with African Americans, for example. They always, how can I say, there's always differences in terms of being Black. In Europe...we have African and Caribbean for Black people...I never spend time asking, "Are you from

²⁷ Guadeloupe is a French Caribbean Island.

Africa?” “Are you from the Caribbean?” “What shade of brown are you?” Or stuff like that. Here, I feel like it’s something that people really focus on. Like for example, my roommate’s husband told me...that if I don’t eat macaroni and cheese or fried chicken I’m not African American. I said, “Well, I’m not African American. I’m not trying to be African American.” And he says, “that’s why you’re not Black.” I said, “Well, it has nothing to do [with] what you’re eating. I eat all this stuff that is [a] part of my culture [and] that you don’t eat. I’m from the Caribbean. We don’t eat the same foods, and I don’t feel you should.”... I think it has to do with the history of America. I mean, and maybe it’s something that we disregard in Europe that we should maybe look at because we have issues there, but it’s not so—here it’s, everybody thinks like that, ethnicity, I mean, class, gender, everything, and sometimes I just want to be just me. I don’t want to be talking about that every day.

Frida is from Northern Mexico and had dual U.S. and Mexican citizenship. We met at an on-campus coffee shop for the interview. When I asked how she ended up at ASU, Frida said that while she had grown up on the Mexican side of the border, she thought she would come live in the U.S. to attend university. In 2000, Frida moved to Chicago, Illinois, since she had family there. After a year, she decided to move to the Phoenix area so she could be closer to her parents in Northern Mexico. In 2002, Frida began an undergraduate program at ASU. At the time of our interview, she was completing a master’s degree in industrial design. To help her earn money for school, Frida had worked as a server at a local restaurant. She discussed assumptions that people often made about her.

There’s lots of Americans that embrace...diversity and embrace like “Oh, you’re from Mexico and you speak Spanish.” And they talk to you, and they want to learn. And when you talk, they’re interested. But some of the people, you start talking and you can see the looks on [their] faces, especially some older ladies that I’ve bumped into. They just squint their eyes, and they’re like, “Is that English that you’re [speaking]?” Like they just like

look at me....I was a server so people...would ask me or tell me, "So, I really think that you should apply for your green card and apply for this and that." And I thought, why do you assume that I don't have all this? Just because this is my job, you're already saying like you have to do things legally...I'm like, you don't even know my name. Stop assuming that I'm here illegally...I would hear them from far away saying, "Tip her a little bit extra, so maybe she goes back home." I'm like, "Oh, that's always nice!" [Yes], or assume that I didn't have my legal status in order...I'm like, "Yes, it's going to be \$18. Here's your tab. Thank you very much!"... In Chicago, maybe I was naïve, but I didn't feel it at all. It was more when I came here to Arizona. Maybe Chicago's more used to having different people. I don't know.

...I started studying architecture back [in Mexico at] Universidad de Sonora, and then after the first year, I saw that many people were getting opportunities through scholarships and through different programs to come and study to the U.S. My best friend was going to take a year to come and learn English. I already kind of knew a little bit more [English], but I decided maybe it's a good chance to try [and study in the U.S.] You're young. You're trying to decide what you do. [Make] the right decisions and so...Why not? Let's go and check out Phoenix...Since I got this dual citizenship, maybe I can get a good scholarship, a good opportunity. I decided to take the opportunity. And somehow my mom was [fine] with it, and my little sister decided to join.... It was the three of us that...came over to study. I started. I went to [a community college] just doing this whole new thing about financial aid and getting everything [in order]. It was completely new for me. I started the community college, and I remember then it was very interesting because they were very confused about the fact that I was born here but I was not from here. It's usually the other way around. It was a pain, I remember, like filling out everything. People couldn't like understand that new idea.

...In any case, I started [at the community college], and then after that, I applied to ASU and I was trying to do architecture. I applied. I [transferred] all my credits. I finally

got it figured out. And I went and made my residency [appointment for tuition purposes], and I talked to the girl...I guess she like just saw...[that] I really need[ed] this chance. And so she gave me the chance to get in-state tuition, and I got into ASU. That's when I started studying architecture. It was, I guess, like 100 times harder than what I thought because when I came here I didn't have anything. I had my books, a sleeping bag, and that's it. [Pause. Crying]...I guess I didn't make it...because I didn't make the cut. I didn't have...the money that other people had. I...[felt] pressured in that I couldn't do my dreams so I had to go and do urban planning, which was good. And at the end, I think it was better because it allowed me to work, to sleep, to eat, to have—and I had the same chance to get into an architecture firm, so that's where I started.

...I worked for an architecture firm for over two years, and everything was going well. But then the economy [fell], and so it was like another bump. It just seems like every time there's bumps in the road and bumps and bumps, but I always say you can see it as the glass is two ways. It's either half empty or half full. So I think if you're going to stop... at every bump and just get frustrated and give up—well, too bad. You can't keep doing that...Then after that I had to go back [to] serving tables and...restart again. And that's when I found a job reprocessing medical devices and this internship and things have been leveling out a little bit more. And I got into my master's [program] of industrial design. I don't know, even though things have [changed] from architecture...I think life has a plan and it changed. Because I am actually interested in design and doing something that somehow through design you can help people, and you can either improve their small business or improve their lifestyle. That's where I'm at. Like trying to think like how through what I love to do I can do something...doing design with a purpose...I still want to do my passion, but that doesn't mean it can't have a human cause to it.

When I asked Frida what helped her during these challenging moments while living in Phoenix, she said:

... I think I have to say there's a little chain that I have with a pendant that says—I can't remember the whole phrase right now—but it says that all the strength you need is within you. Anything that you want to do, all you need, all the strength, you have is right there [Points to her chest]. You just need to make a decision that you want to do something or make a change or work here or have a family. Whatever is your goal, you just need to decide and making a decision is what's crucial. But then after that, then the homework comes, and you have to do all the steps to support and backup that decision to get there, but everything that you need is going to be inside you. You just need to know that you can do it, and [that] you're strong enough to do it.

Sofia was born in San Luis Potosi, a city in central Mexico. Her journey to the U.S. began in 1994 when her parents decided to move for financial need to the U.S. She was 4 years old and her brother was 3. Sofia's father was a permanent resident of the U.S. who for years moved back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico. Now that he was married and had children, his wife and he decided to apply for permanent residency for the family so that they could all move to the U.S. and be together. By the time of this interview, Sofia had become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Shortly after arriving to the Phoenix area, Sofia was enrolled in preschool. She continued attending schools in the Phoenix metropolitan area, and throughout the interview she mentioned how much she loved learning and how grateful she was for the education that she had received. At the time of our interview, which took place at her house, she was one semester away from completing her bachelor's degree at ASU. When I asked Sofia if she ever felt the need to adjust to the U.S., she stated that there were moments in school where she felt pressure to choose between cultures and/or which group of friends she would hang out with.

...I definitely felt like there was pressure from either side saying, "Well, either—you have to make a decision, you're American or you're not." There was definitely that pressure then. I think once you enter a university setting or you become older and you begin to kind of reflect on that, you become a little more independent and kind of say, well, "Why

can't I be both?" But I know I did feel pressure to either speak English or speak Spanish but [I] can't mix both of those languages.

...I remember in high school distinctly, well, either you hang out with the White or Caucasian group or you hang out with the Mexican group, but you can't hang out with both. That was always really hard for me because I would always question, well, why can't I? I mean, I feel like I can fit into either group, but I don't want to fit into just one group. I want to fit into both.

...I definitely want to continue the use of Spanish. For me, language is so important. I'll find myself switching, like switching from Spanish and English all the time. That's definitely something that I'm going to teach my children, if I do have children, or when I do have children. I definitely want to keep that alive. A lot of the traditions—one of our traditions was to go back [to Mexico] in August because that's when they celebrate the patron saint of our town, which is Santo Domingo...I don't think there's a year we've missed out on some sort of activities with that. That's so beautiful to me, and I know I want to keep that, and just different traditions like Dia de los Muertos, our Christmas celebrations, Posadas. Traditions like that I definitely do want to keep....They're so beautiful. There's also some family recipes that I'm going to get my hands on as soon as my aunt will pass those recipes down to me.

When I asked Sofia to describe what she had learned as she adjusted to the U.S. way of life, she said:

...With the juxtaposition that I mentioned of different values, you learn to incorporate them or mesh them a little. And so you learn to kind of deal with the U.S. way of life of openness and cultural diversity and the diversity of language and all that with, but also mixing the traditions, which is really, really nice. That's definitely something very positive. You can go teach other people about what you've learned here and what you learned from Mexico. I know when we go back, we get lots of questions about, "Well, what are you doing in school?" And "How does this work in the U.S.?" And so we're definitely able

to pass along some different knowledge that we've gained over the years to people that don't have the opportunity to come here, which is nice.

Out-of-Status

I first connected with Antonio when a colleague put me in contact with him via e-mail. After a phone conversation about the research project, Antonio agreed to come to my house. Since he was out of immigration status at the time of this study, he rode his bicycle as he did not have a driver's license due to state laws, like Proposition 200, that prohibited individuals without authorized immigration presence to have access to public benefits like a state driver's license.

He was 8 years old when his single mother and he came to the U.S. via airplane on a tourist visa in the summer of 1996 from Chihuahua, Mexico.

[My mother] has a brother, older brother, and he was here two years before we moved to Phoenix. He [told my mother that he could] lend [her] a hand. [We could]...stay [at his] house, and then, once [we] can become independent, [we could] move out and do [our] own thing. That's why [we came to] Phoenix.

[Once we arrived] we took a taxi. My uncle didn't live too far away from the airport. Back then, I remember my family just being extremely cautious going anywhere near the airport. For some reason, they thought that immigration was there the entire time, and that's why we would just [took] a taxi [to my uncle's house].

[The decision to come to the U.S. was]...solely my mom's decision. She did it mainly for me. She thought it would be a better future for me, for us, if we came to the U.S. and looked for educational opportunities primarily. Originally, she thought, "okay we'll go for a few years. My son is so smart, and he can learn English in a couple years. And then we can come back [to Mexico], and he can do whatever he's going to do here." Just the couple years turned into "we'll leave next year," and then we ended up staying now 15 years.

I remember that I did want to come. I was 8 years old finishing second grade. I had a best friend...since kindergarten... I just didn't feel like it was necessary for me to

go. I thought I was well off. I was doing well in school and had lots of friends [and family]. I have a lot of cousins. I'd say there are about 20 of us only on my mom's side of the family. I was comfortable [in Mexico] knowing that I had cousins to play with because I'm an only child. I didn't want to come.

...It was really hard adjusting. I was one of the top students back in my first and second grade class, and then to go into a class and not know what's going on [was hard]. I was really self-conscious about that knowing that I couldn't write and read in English. It was a bit disappointing, but I adjusted just fine.

...[Now] I've made great friends. I've had a great experience playing soccer. I started playing soccer here and until this day, I still play. Education opportunities like definitely I wouldn't have found them in Mexico. I was able to attend a private high school, and then to attend university for me was kind of like far-fetched back when I was really young...[Then I got a full-ride scholarship] from the elementary school that I went to. If you left the elementary school in really good standing, once you graduate high school you can come back and apply for the scholarship. I was accepted. I was given the scholarship.

...For the first half of my life here, I considered this a very welcoming environment. Second half, not so welcoming because I've been more aware of what's been going on. Lately it's just been ridiculous with state laws. I've been personally affected by these laws, so that's why lately I've kind of felt pushed.

When I asked Antonio if he could expand on what state laws personally affected him and made him feel not welcomed, he said:

...Prop 300²⁸ was voted on—it was passed my freshman year at ASU. I had a full ride scholarship for four years. Once it passed, I got a notification that I had lost my

²⁸ Proposition 300 was passed in November 2006 by Arizona voters. The law requires college students to show lawful immigration status in the U.S. in order to qualify for in-state tuition and state financial assistance when attending institutions of higher education.

scholarship. I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know if I was going to be able to continue education even at a community college because tuition was so expensive. I was fortunate enough to talk to the right people at the right time at the university and they started funds for students in my situation.

...I was involved since the beginning of the Arizona DREAM²⁹ Act Coalition. The DREAM Act Coalition started with a group of students that were recipients of the same scholarship at ASU...After that, we all decided to get together and meet. We didn't really know what it was going to turn into, but we figured it would be good to know someone in the same situation and maybe help each other out and network. The DREAM Act was proposed, and we felt the need—that we were the best advocates. And we could give a good image to the DREAM Act, and we could do a lot for it. I was vice president for the first year and just did actions with them and visited congressmen and stuff like that.

I asked Antonio about the main challenges that he as an undocumented student faced at the time of the interview, and he explained:

It's been mainly lately after graduation from university. I felt like I'm stuck—like I can't move forward too much. I've been unemployed for the most part of my life but that was okay because I was in school and I was doing something that was benefiting me. Now I've graduated. Grad school is a bit far-fetched because of money. I feel like I just haven't done anything for myself. I just have to accept it, that it's due to circumstances.

...To achieve my dream job, first getting some [work] experience, and I can't get that without any documents.³⁰ I can still keep learning, even though, I'll have all this theory and no actual work experience.

²⁹ The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act is bipartisan legislation that would qualify undocumented youth to for a six-year conditional path to citizenship that requires completion of a college degree or two years of military service (<http://dreamact.info/>).

³⁰ This interview took place before Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which is an executive order announced June 15, 2012. Immigrants without status who meet several key

Andy, a graduate student out of immigration status, was first introduced to me via e-mail by a work colleague and then in person a couple of days later before a student organization meeting. After Andy agreed to participate in this project, we met on campus late in the evening the following week for the interview.

Andy was born and raised in Merida, Venezuela. He was 15 years old when his family and he came from Venezuela to visit extended family in Phoenix, Arizona, in December 2002. He stated that the entire population in his country was boycotting the Venezuelan government because they wanted President Hugo Chavez to leave the country. As he talked about this childhood, he described himself as a “great student” who had always been interested in U.S. American culture. He said he had grown up with U.S. films and music and that he was “very much whitewashed even back then,” because he loved everything about the U.S. so much so that he self-enrolled himself in English classes at an institute in his home city when he was 12 or 13 years old. At the time of our interview, Andy was 23 years old.

So it was a very unstable, very chaotic environment before we came. But anyway, we made it. We came. We were with our dad for Christmas, and things were still bad in Venezuela. People thought there was going to be in a civil war. We didn't know what was going to happen. School, it was January and school [in Venezuela] still wasn't back on the regular schedule. People weren't working. So we didn't know what to do, so my dad enrolled us in school, me in the high school and my brother in the middle school here, just for now...until things were better in Venezuela. We started. I was really excited [to] experience that culture that I loved so much. I was like, “Wow, this is great!” I'm going to go to a high school here like the movies...And...a few months later, I think it was in March, when everything kind of settled down back in Venezuela, and at that point we

guidelines can request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and to apply for work authorization.

were already half[way] through the semester so my dad said, “Well, why don't you... just finish the semester here, and then you can go back so that you won't lose your credits...”

...My mom ended up going back [to Venezuela] by herself, and she actually sold our house back there...I remember she went back in May. My [tourist] visa, the permit that we had, was going to expire in May or in June because they gave us six months. And so she called me and she tells me, “You can come back to Venezuela. You can live with your uncle...grandma, or any of your relatives... You're going to live a normal life, and we're going to send you money from the U.S. Because I'm going to have to go back to the U.S. to help your dad, to work with your dad, and because we have to pay off so many things, and we're going to be there for a long time. Or you can stay with us there in the U.S., but it's not going to be easy, and we're going to be undocumented.”

...And so that was the choice that I had, and, as a 15-year-old, it's a tough choice. It's everything you had back there. You know, your normal life, but without your family. Or being with your family here at a place where everything is different, and I liked it a lot but it wasn't home....And I remember I had a dollar in my pocket, and I started to think, well, the economy revolves around this dollar. Unfortunately, this is the place where everything happens. This is where opportunity happens. This is where the magic happens. And one day I want to be able to help my family, not only here but back there as well. I can only help them if I can get a piece of this dollar. And so I decided to stay. I decided I wanted to finish high school here and hopefully go to college later on and, you know, become somebody who was going to be able to help my family. I also took it as a fresh start. You know, I kind of had the chance to build myself however I wanted. I could be exactly the person who I wanted to be, and I decided to take that opportunity to stay here.

At another point of the interview, Andy described when he started to feel out of place in the U.S. due to difficulties he experienced in getting accepted to ASU after high school.

...When I first applied to the university here. That was the first time that I've felt out of place because they rejected me because of my immigration status. And I just felt like all of this work that I have done through high school, like I said, I used to hyperventilate to speak in public and I overcame that. I did hundreds of hours of volunteer work. I did all this hard work and it was for nothing because they couldn't let me in the university because of my immigration status. That was the first time that I felt major rejection from this culture, and it felt bad. I didn't want to be here anymore because "What was the point of being here?"

...I ended up going to a community college because some people encouraged me. And I applied a second time to ASU, and I got rejected again. Now this time instead of getting disappointed and being heartbroken and being like this doesn't make sense, it was the other way. It just kind of gave me more fuel to keep going and more motivation. And after I finished two associate's degrees from [a community college], I applied again to ASU, and that's when they let me in. But anyway, just that process of not being able to get in, that challenge, not being able to find money for school, having to work full-time in order for me to pay my way, those were instances when I started to feel out of place. Like, well, this isn't the place I thought it was.

Now that Andy was in a master's program, I asked if he faced similar challenges.

...Last summer, as I was coming into the master's program, I interviewed for an RA, research assistantship, and...[those] usually go to PhD students. I got the interview, and I actually got the assistantship. They were not able to hire me after all because the state requires certain documentation to be able to hire you. So I wasn't able to do that, and it was going to be great for me because it would have paid for pretty much all of [my tuition]. I would be going full-time right now, and I would even be making a stipend, and it would have been great. But I couldn't, and now I'm only going two classes a semester. I'm very much behind in my degree.

...I started to feel that they didn't want me here. You know, the laws were working against me. And then they passed a lot of other laws, and they proposed a lot of laws, like [SB] 1070, but always Governor Napolitano³¹ would veto them. I remember all the times she would always block [them]. And so I started to see the reality of things when I was in college, and seeing that this wasn't necessarily, it was still a great place but not the perfect place that I thought it was.

...More recently, as with [SB] 1070 and...with all the laws that they've been trying to pass just a few weeks ago against the 14th Amendment and denying citizenship to children who have been born here but of immigrant parents, and all of those laws. And some of them have been passed in other states where students cannot enroll in college. Here, we can't get in-state tuition. It makes you feel like you shouldn't be here, like you don't belong, like the larger group is telling you, "you should go away."

...Later on in life, I became involved in advocacy and sort of activism and fighting for a dream, you know, our DREAM Act, our American dream. This was back in 2009. It's been over two years now, and we've done a lot of things. We've done tabling at events. We've done conferences. I have spoken at churches, at schools. I put together a project that was a small documentary for the DREAM Act exposing some true stories about DREAMers. And we've just done a lot of advocacy for the DREAM act. You know, trying to get people to support it, trying to get senators and representatives to support it. We've been trying to get McCain to vote for it. We slept outside of his office for three weeks last year. I've been to DC lobbying and just trying to get support for the DREAM Act. And it's been a lot of work and a lot of great work and great people who really just want to be better and really just want to help the country but don't have the chance. It's been a great learning experience for me. I've been able to put a lot of what I've learned through my

³¹ Governor Janet Napolitano served as governor of Arizona from 2003 to 2009. She held the position of United States Secretary of Homeland Security under the Obama administration from 2009 to 2013. She currently is the president of the University of California system.

degrees and through my experiences into practice, and it's been really fulfilling to see that things [that you advocate for can] actually work.

This chapter presented excerpts from my interviews, which serve as introductions to the 18 (im)migrant university students who participated in this research project. These polyvocal and polemic experiences highlight disparate (im)migrant paths that individuals took to come to the U.S., challenges that they have faced, lessons they have learned, and experiences that have shaped them. The following chapter is an analysis of these (im)migrant narratives with a discussion of the constructs and concepts that emerged in my data analysis, which provides an understanding of contemporary (im)migrant matters.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

The narratives in the previous chapter are in-depth, complex narratives that (im)migrant university students shared with me. As I analyzed data, I took an iterative approach between my previous research and the (im)migrant narratives to modify the questions that I had intended to address (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tracy, 2007). I found the research and data for this study better addressed the following research questions:

1. How did (im)migrant university students describe their (im)migrant experience while they lived in the U.S. and studied at ASU?
2. What can (im)migrant university student experiences tell us about (im)migrant issues?
3. What do (im)migrant university students want people to know about immigration from listening to their story?

As previously stated in Chapter 2, I found that modifying the research questions for the study was important because new themes and information emerged in the data analysis. Emergent questions are common when taking a grounded theory approach. Themes that emerged from the interview data led to new literature that I reviewed in order to discuss how the themes intersect with scholarship on critical race theory and public sphere theory. The following section describes the constructs and categories that emerged from data analysis and the academic literature that informs these constructs.

Development of Conceptual Constructs

Throughout the data analysis process, one of the most interesting themes that emerged was that every individual who participated in the study felt at times included and at times excluded from the U.S. public sphere. This was important since the different interactions and contexts in which (im)migrant university students felt at times included or excluded led me to think about how access to the public sphere is a dynamic and complicated process. (Im)migrant university student experiences could help contribute to a better understanding of the politics of inclusion and exclusion. For some (im)migrant university students, feeling included or excluded

from the U.S. public was related to their documentation status and the constant need to be up-to-date with their visa paperwork. For others, it was how people in the U.S. constantly asked them about their country of origin, since they were not perceived to be from the U.S. based on accent and/or physical appearance that did not fit the normative assumptions of U.S. Americans as White, Western, and Northern European-descent individuals. Similarly, (im)migrant students also described how aspects of their culture, such as religion, marked them as outsiders if they did not practice Christianity, the normative religion in the U.S.

Through focused and axial coding, I developed three conceptual constructs that were each composed of three categories that described the different (im)migrant experiences in this study. It is important to note that each category is not isolated from one another and does not fully capture the story of each (im)migrant university student. Instead, the constructs allowed me to make connections and distinctions between the different experiences shared by (im)migrant university students. It also highlighted how the context of (im)migration matters in states like Arizona has material consequences for (im)migrants living there.

I developed tables that visually helped me define each conceptual construct and the categories within that construct, while also providing definitions that paraphrase what (im)migrant university students said in their interviews (see Tables 2, 3, and 4). It is important to note that systemic categories focus on institutional factors of exclusion, inclusion, and strategies (im)migrant students used to systemically negotiate their place in the U.S. public sphere.

The liminal categories highlight the gray area between (im)migrant experiences of exclusion, inclusion, and negotiation based on their subject position. The micro-social contextual category accounts for everyday interpersonal interactions of exclusion, inclusion, and how they specifically dealt with these experiences to negotiate a place within the U.S. public. Specific examples of these categories are provided in the following sections. For now, I provide tables that broadly define the different constructs and categories that emerged in my data analysis.

Table 2

Conceptual Construct: Racialized/ing (Im)migrant Experience

Category	Definitions
Systemic Exclusion	Institutionalized practices and procedures of exclusion. A noncitizen or nonresident of the U.S. who is systemically targeted and/or systemically denied pathway to citizenship. Denial of public benefits and/or education due to (im)migration status.
Liminal Exclusion	"In-betweenness" of spaces and experiences of exclusion. A U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident who is frequently asked to identify their country of origin. U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents perceived as "Other." U.S. citizens and/or residents who are told they are "different" and/or sound "different."
Micro-Social Contextual Exclusion	Interpersonal, local everyday experiences of exclusion. A noncitizen, nonresident, citizen, and/or resident in the U.S. who faces discrimination based on appearance and/or subject position. U.S. public assumes individual is not from U.S. and/or as "Other," regardless of (im)migration status. Individuals in the U.S. tell (im)migrant student that they do not belong or "fit in" to the U.S.

Table 3

Conceptual Construct: Passed/ing (Im)migrant Experience

Category	Definitions
Systemic Inclusion	Institutionalized practices and procedures of inclusion. Noncitizen and/or nonresident (im)migrant who has legal authorization in the U.S. A noncitizen and/or resident able to adjust their (im)migration status. Restrictive immigration laws do not pertain to them due to privilege in the U.S.
Liminal Inclusion	"In-betweenness" of spaces and experiences of inclusion. A noncitizen and/or nonresident who thinks they have privilege. Individuals described being able to "pass" due to European-phenotypic features or needing to navigate "invisibility" of (im)migration. Individuals are not negatively perceived as "outsiders."
Micro-Social Contextual Inclusion	Interpersonal, local everyday experiences of inclusion. Individuals perceive (im)migrant as "U.S. American" due to European-phenotypic features. U.S. public does not see their country of origin as "foreign." (Im)migrant told they are "doing it the right way" in following immigration procedures.

Table 4

Conceptual Construct: Negotiated/ing (Im)migrant Experience

Category	Definitions
Systemic Negotiation	(Im)migrant students who follow institutionalized practices and procedures and/or challenge institutionalized practices and procedures to negotiate their space/place in the U.S. public sphere. (Im)migrant university students who had assistance settling into the U.S. through formal organizations. (Im)migrant university students who believe that they should follow the system. (Im)migrant university students who see Western education as pathway to inclusion in U.S. and home country. (Im)migrant university students who organize and advocate for change to restrictive laws and policies.
Liminal Negotiation	“In-betweenness” of spaces and experiences where (im)migrant students actively work to maintain and include cultural aspects while living in the U.S. (Im)migrant university students who want to raise their children as dual citizens. (Im)migrant university students who want others to also adjust to them. (Im)migrant university students who don’t want to be “Americanized.”
Micro-Social Contextual Negotiation	Local everyday individualized experiences of how (im)migrant students described their determination, growth, and personal lessons as part of their (im)migrant journey. (Im)migrant university students who described needing to be resilient in order to make it. (Im)migrant university students who believe “everything you have is within you.” (Im)migrant university students who persevere despite barriers and challenges they faced while living in the U.S.

In the remainder of this chapter, I refer to the interview data to show how the three conceptual constructs and nine categories explain the experiences that participants faced as they traveled and/or attended ASU. As previously stated, the constructs and categories are not exclusive to any particular (im)migrant university student who participated in this study. Instead, in the following sections, I focus on various factors that led (im)migrant students to feel included and/or excluded from the U.S. public sphere, as well as how they negotiated their space in the public sphere.

Conceptual Construct: Racialized/ing (Im)migrant Experience

Systemic Exclusions

The category of *systemic exclusions* captures historical, discursive practices that have material consequences for groups based on the current sociopolitical climate in Arizona. This category emerged from the (im)migrant student narratives in which some individuals described moments of exclusion that were directly tied to the current sociopolitical climate. These exclusions manifested in policies, rules, and procedures that restrict individuals from particular liberties, rights, and privileges, among other things, that are afforded to others (Blauner, 2001; Broeders & Engbersen, 2007; Feagin, 2001; Hanchard, 1994; Pickering & Weber, 2006; Rowe, 2004).

Therefore, while all (im)migrant university students interviewed for this dissertation faced moments of exclusion, some specifically made reference to how the current sociopolitical climate made it especially difficult for them to feel as if they belonged in the U.S. For example, Mariam, the doctoral student from Kuwait, and Lahori, the Fulbright doctoral scholar from Pakistan, were Muslim (im)migrant graduate students who stated it was more difficult for them to get an F-1 nonimmigrant student visa to come study in the U.S. because of their country of origin. Each mentioned the unwelcome treatment they received at airports after September 11th when coming to the U.S.

What is particularly interesting and significant about the experiences that Mariam described during our time together is that the racialized/ing public sphere of the U.S. is something that Mariam and her family, particularly her husband, began to encounter at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait. The constant interrogations and intimidation strategies used by Embassy officials in Kuwait are examples of “technologies of control” (Pickering & Weber, 2006, p. 9). The “technologies of control” are used as “highly technical, increasingly punitive and innovative methods of border control” (Pickering & Weber, 2006, p. 9). Broeders and Engbersen (2007) argued that technologies of control are used to locate, detain, and/or deport suspected “illegal aliens” and/or to “exclude irregular immigrants from key institutions of society, such as the labor

market and the housing market, and even from informal networks of fellow countrymen and family” (p. 1595).

In Mariam and her family’s case, the unwelcome and exclusionary practices were something they began to experience in their home country as they prepared to come to the U.S. The fear and misunderstanding of the Muslim religion and the fact that those who practice it have been racialized and perceived to be “terrorists” in the U.S. mind justifies the ability for U.S. immigration officials to treat Kuwaiti citizens—and others from predominantly Muslim countries—as criminals in their own country if they want a visa to come to the U.S. Once in the U.S., Mariam and her family experienced the same interrogations, the family was separated at the airport to question her husband for long periods of time. These exclusionary practices are related to the racialized/ing public sphere.

Lahori’s experiences were similar to Mariam’s in terms of the lengthy process and the strict interactions with officials when obtaining his visa and/or the treatment he experienced at airports. Scholars have noted that “similar to the animus toward other racial minorities, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim animus can be viewed as part of a dynamic process of ‘racialization’” (Akram & Johnson, 2001, p. 302). Arabs and Muslims become considered as racially different from Whites, and racial profiling has been legitimized in the search for “terrorist Others” (Kim et al., 2007, p. 3).

Similarly, the enforcement of laws creates and leads to a continued hostility toward Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. (Akram & Johnson, 2001). Aas (2007) discussed how nation-states use technologies of control to construct moral boundaries that reify “assumptions about national identity” (p. 288) in that the nation is in need of defending itself from the foreign Other through practices of enforcement and exclusion. Using Foucault’s work, Engbersen (2001) theorized that the contemporary disciplinary state is being transformed from panopticon to “banopticon,” which habituates migrants and/or immigrants “to their status as excluded” (p. 288). Based on contemporary immigration policies and the enforcement efforts to protect the U.S., (im)migrants who are racialized based on their appearance, gender, religion, and class, among other

perceived identity markers, continue to be excluded. The sociopolitical climate legitimates these policies and practices.

Other (im)migrant university students who were not Muslim also mentioned feeling systematically excluded and/or targeted at airports. Veronica described the need to constantly be on top of her visa paperwork when she traveled. While she recognized that the treatment that she received was probably better than other people's, she discussed the interrogation and harassment done by airport officials asking her to prove her place in the U.S.

Sánchez (1997) wrote:

Unlike nativist calls which center around immigrants taking jobs from citizens, this sentiment feeds into stereotypes of nonworking loafers, particularly targeting women who supposedly come to the United States to give birth and sustain their families from the "generous" welfare state (p. 1021).

The notion that immigrants come to the U.S. to take away public benefits from its citizens feeds into the fear of the newcomer. In Veronica's case, airport officials asked her about her grades and told her that they are the ones who pay for her education. Veronica mentioned that she found these interactions "frustrating" and that it reminded her that she is a "very specific type of citizen;" "you are a visitor" in the U.S. Mariam, Lahori, and Veronica described how airports and embassies were spaces where they had to deal with the policies and procedures of entering/exiting the U.S. and places where their foreignness and Otherness became systemically (re)produced.

For other students, it was Arizona state laws, such as Proposition 200 and Proposition 300, that systematically targeted them. Since these students and their families overstayed their tourist visas and did not have authorized immigration status in the U.S., they did not have access to public benefits, such as getting a state driver's license,³² or were not eligible for in-state tuition

³² As previously mentioned, at the time of the (im)migrant interviews, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was not an option for undocumented individuals. In December 2014, under court order, Arizona began issuing driver's licenses to DACA recipients.

at Arizona institutions of higher learning. Students like Antonio, who was a freshman at the university when Proposition 300 became state law, lost their scholarships, and their tuition costs almost doubled overnight for not being able to establish legal presence within the state.

At the time of our interview in February 2011, Antonio had just graduated with his engineering degree in December 2010. Due to his lack of documentation status and the fact that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)³³ was not yet an option for eligible individuals who were out-of-status, Antonio could not “legally” work and/or formally apply what he learned in his engineering studies. Instead he replaced chipped and broken car windows at a shop for income. During our interview, Antonio referenced the limited opportunities he had as an undocumented (im)migrant, and without a pathway to adjust his (im)migration status in the U.S., he would not be able to fulfill his dream of working in the field of engineering.

Similarly, Andy said the first time that he felt excluded from the U.S. was in 2004 when he was not accepted to ASU because of his immigration status. Since his family’s arrival from Venezuela, he had always been able to go to school and felt welcomed and embraced as part of U.S. culture. However, after being denied the opportunity for higher education at ASU and feeling the effects of Proposition 300 on his ability to afford an education or Proposition 200 on his ability to access public benefits, Andy felt rejected and excluded from the U.S. It was the effects of state laws that restricted opportunities and presented challenges in his everyday life that made Andy feel “unwelcome,” like “[he] should not be here,” and caused him to re-evaluate his views of Arizona and his options due to systemic exclusions.

Researchers who have examined the experiences of undocumented youth have found that during adolescence many are stressed and anxious because they experience defining moments and challenges as they try to assert themselves into U.S. mainstream culture in their desire to drive, go to school, work, and so on (Coutin, 2007;Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). These scholars have extended the concept of “abject” and “abjectivity” in their work with undocumented youth to discuss how “technologies of biopolitics and practices of governmentality become

³³ For a more detailed description of DACA, refer to chapter one, footnote 26 and footnote 35.

achingly apparent in their lives” (p. 262). Gonzales and Chavez (2012) describe the 1.5 generation, a term used to describe people who arrived in the U.S. as children and adolescents and who are undocumented, as:

[Coming] face-to-face with illegality, a condition that they had been partially protected from by their age and by their parents. But as they began to anticipate the rites of passage common to adolescents and young adults in the United States, reality quickly entangled them. (p. 262)

In states like Arizona that have passed laws to exclude unauthorized (im)migrants from public benefits, their ability to access higher education and the need for them to show proof of immigration status to local law enforcement are examples of how they continue to be systematically targeted and excluded from the public sphere. These students’ accounts of feeling like “outsiders,” who are not welcomed/wanted and the knowledge that they had to cautiously follow the system to avoid being “removed” or “deported,” define the significant coding category of systemic exclusions.

Liminal Exclusions

While almost all (im)migrant university students described occasions where they “felt different” or recognized that their country of origin differed from the U.S., there were a few who described feeling “in between.” These were students who had become citizens and/or legal permanent residents in the U.S. yet still encountered moments of Otherness and exclusion.

This type of exclusion complicated the understandings of “legality” and/or citizenship as important concepts that describe an individual’s relationship to the polity (Rubenstein & Adler, 2000). Bosniak (2000) described citizenship as: “legal status,” “rights,” “political activity,” and “a form of collective identity and sentiment” (p. 455). In democratic societies, these areas are interrelated and define the sociopolitical membership and responsibilities of individuals within a community or nation. Citizenship grants individuals the ability to vote, hold government positions, take part in demonstrations/protests, and deliberate about meaningful issues that pertain to them,

their families, and their communities. It is in these rights, actions, and behaviors that individuals become part of a public that can participate in a public sphere.

However, while citizenship “signifies the rights necessary to achieve full and equal membership in society” (Volpp, 2001, p. 57), there are many groups within the nation who do not experience these rights (Rocco, 2004; Rubenstein & Adler, 2000). In the case of the (im)migrant university students I interviewed, their emotional connection to “home” and/or the assumptions made about them based on their appearance and/or accent complicated their feelings of belonging in the U.S. even when having a pathway to citizenship.

To help me capture these experiences, the category of *liminal exclusions* identified how citizens and/or legal permanent residents still felt “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony” (Turner, 1969, p. 95). Liminal exclusion focuses on the gray area and in-betweeness of (im)migrant university students and challenges the dichotomized understandings of “inclusion” and “exclusion” of the U.S. public sphere for “legal” and “illegal” individuals. For example, Butterfly Girl, who is a naturalized U.S. citizen, said:

Even though I’m American now, the accent is still here...I can say I’m American but I have an accent, so I will never be American, if that makes sense. I mean, maybe on the paper I am, but when you hear me, you know that I’m coming from somewhere else...So I think it’s something that people may remind me sometimes...

Liminal exclusion illustrates how documentation that authorizes an individual to be in the U.S. does not necessarily establish experiences for individuals to visually and/or culturally feel as if they can fully participate and belong in the U.S. Many of the examples provided by participants show the ways that interactions in the U.S. public demonstrate that race “provide(s) clues about *who* a person is” (Omni & Winant, 1994, p. 59, emphasis in original) and make assumption about them.

For example, Edwin, the Sudanese refugee who came to Phoenix in 1999 and became a U.S. citizen, frequently experienced subtle ways that people interact with him that make him feel like “[he] does not belong.”

When a person asks you where you’re from, that means [they are saying] you don’t belong here, and [they] don’t even know you. [They] know you [are] not from here, so [they do not feel] connected to you. And even if you live here, we can never be connected...

When I probed Edwin to tell me what he thought it was about him that made others ask him where we was from, he identified markers, such as “gender,” “accent,” and appearance.

Similar experiences were offered by Frida, the master’s student from northern Mexico with dual Mexican and U.S. citizenship. She described instances when the U.S. public made assumptions about her. In Frida’s case, her Mexican accent and her appearance marked her as a “brown-bodied” Mexican who was likely in the U.S. without proper documentation and/or status. For Edwin and Frida, and similar (im)migrant university students, their interactions with others seemed to, as stated by Omni & Winant (1994) “depend on preconceived notions of a racialized social structure” (p. 59). Based on their experiences, the larger U.S. public relied on a “racialized social structure [to shape] racial experience and conditions of meaning” (p. 59) for these (im)migrant university students. In a sense, Frida and Edwin were expected to “act out their apparent racial identities” (p. 59), which required applying for the Green Card to acquire legal status in the U.S. They were also assumed to have a country of origin other than the U.S.

U.S. racial categories also posed identity challenges as seen in the case of Butterfly Girl, the student from Guadeloupe. Like Edwin and Frida, she recognized that her accent and her culture were markers for assumptions others made about her. In addition, her Caribbeanness, her Europeanness, her Blackness, and her Africanness, did not fit in with the African American and/or Black experience in the U.S. Instead, she was confronted with “what is being Black” in the U.S. Even though her racial, cultural, and ethnic background did not relate to the U.S. African American and/or Black experience, many people assumed it did. These experiences complicated

Butterfly Girl's feelings of belonging in the U.S. Edwin, Frida, and Butterfly Girl all expressed how frustrating it was to frequently explain their difference to others or to have those they came in contact with make assumptions about them based on their appearance or accent.

In other instances, (im)migrant university students struggled with feeling pressure to choose between cultures. As a naturalized U.S. citizen, Sofia had traveled with her family between Mexico and the U.S. since she was young and felt that she could not remove her Mexican experiences from her U.S. American experiences. Even when she felt outside pressure from others to choose one or the other, she wanted to remain proud of the hybridity in her Mexican American experience. In my interactions with Sofia, she mentioned how "beautiful" it was to speak Spanish and celebrate different Mexican cultural traditions, like Christmas *posadas*, in the U.S. This hybridity is a part of life in the U.S. in terms of language use, Spanish-language radio and television, and food.

In contrast, Adela identified being "in between" cultures. After living in the U.S. for six years, she needed her family and friends in Romania to explain current movies, songs, and popular culture she missed while living in the U.S. As a consequence of missing out on current cultural and political events in her homeland, she not only felt somewhat of an "outsider" in the U.S., but she also felt as an "outsider" in Romania.

These experiences led (im)migrant students to feel "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1969, p. 95) cultures and U.S. society. While these individuals had legal status in the U.S., either citizenship or permanent residency, they experienced systemic inclusion into the U.S., but also felt excluded as a result of assumptions that people made about them and/or their own cultural sense of belonging between cultures and countries.

Micro-Social Contextual Exclusions

In my axial and selective coding of interview data, the category of *micro-social contextual exclusions* emerged for (im)migrant university students who at the time of the interview where in

the U.S. either on nonimmigrant visas,³⁴ such as an F-1 or an H-1B, or who were undocumented. Since the documentation status of these students does not grant them “full” inclusion into U.S. society and/or the U.S. public as U.S. citizenship would, this category captures unique features of their experiences in the U.S. in regards to inclusion/exclusion from the U.S. public sphere.

Unlike others, some (im)migrant university students mentioned that their accents, not looking U.S. American, the food they ate, the religion they practiced, the difficulty that people had in pronouncing their names, and/or any combination of these experiences, reminded them that they were different. (Im)migrant students described everyday interpersonal interactions where people in the U.S. constantly asked about their country of origin, since their physical appearance did not fit normative assumptions of U.S. Americans as White, Western, and Northern European-descent individuals. Others described how their religion marked them as outsiders if they did not practice Christianity, the normative religion in the U.S.

An understanding of micro-social contextual exclusions is important since many (im)migrant students mentioned that depending on the context or who they interacted with, some (im)migrant students saw daily experiences as normal reminders that they were not from the U.S. Others students saw these experiences as unwelcome interactions where they felt excluded.

Lahori, who is introduced in Chapter 3, recalled not only feeling like a foreigner, nonresident alien in institutional encounters like airports, but he also mentioned daily interactions where people asked questions about food and/or his home culture that frequently reminded him that he was different and “not local.”

That is like a realization that I am a demographic...When people...ask me, “do you have [any] dietary restriction of eating this thing?” If they ask me, “is everyone going all right at home in Pakistan?” Or ask me, “do you eat this in Pakistan or do you use this in Pakistan?” Every time that happens, [I realize that I am different].

³⁴ Nonimmigrant visas are available for temporary visitors to travel, study, and work in the U.S.

For more information about visas for temporary visitors, please visit

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1286.html#

Or if I...meet like a...random group of people. If I have done something that is considered cool here, people are reserved, and they try to be like more respectful in my case. Or if I have done something that is like bad, then people will try to be more respectful of that too. I am sure they would [react differently] if I was from the U.S. It just does not feel normal.

Lahori also mentioned that, people like me, as a researcher, made him feel like a foreigner since I asked him to participate in this study that focused on the experiences of (im)migrant university students and I was asking him to describe the differences and similarities between living in the U.S. and Pakistan. People asked Lahori, like other (im)migrant university students, where he was from. Being confronted with these questions and often needing to explain himself to people, led him to feel as if he did not belong or as if he was “not local.” Micro-social contextual exclusions are the interpersonal, local everyday experiences where (im)migrant university students are frequently reminded of their Otherness.

Other (im)migrant university students mentioned that individuals they interacted with would probably not have assumed that they were foreigners until people heard their accent. Jade, the student from Denmark, described contexts where she felt different as moments where people heard her accent and/or when she interacted with people off the university campus where the variety of accents was less common. Jade described an interaction that she recently had with a secretary from the Mayo Clinic where she was asked to state what her first language was. Jade found this question interesting and as a way of telling her, “I’m different.”

These are some examples that describe how social context and who (im)migrant students encounter in everyday moments influences how they make sense of their place in the U.S. The micro-social contextual exclusions incorporate the social contextual everyday instances and interactions encountered by (im)migrant university students who were in the U.S. on nonimmigrant visas and who on a daily basis are reminded of their difference. As previously stated, while the category of systemic exclusion accounts for the institutional factors of exclusion both in students’ (im)migrant experience in the U.S. and their pre-migration experience in their

home country, the micro-social contextual exclusion accounts for the everyday interpersonal practices, preference, cultural identifications, and interactions that (im)migrant students faced while living and studying in Arizona at the time of this study.

Throughout this section, I discussed the conceptual construct of the racialized/ing (im)migrant experience that categorically was divided into systemic exclusion, liminal exclusions, and micro-social contextual exclusions. Systemic exclusions were tied to laws, programs, projects of inclusion/exclusion for particular individuals based on country of origin, needs of the country, and the racial projects of nation building. (Im)migrant university students shared experiences, such as the visa process and paperwork at embassies and airports, that resulted in some of their most challenging and stressful experiences and memories. Airports and embassies were spaces where they had to deal with the policies and procedures of entering/exiting the U.S. and spaces where their foreignness and/or Otherness became systemically (re)produced. Liminal exclusions was the category used to reflect the (im)migrant experiences of individuals who had become citizens and/or legal permanent residents of the U.S. and yet still felt moments of exclusion or Otherness because individuals often asked them where they were from based on their accent, facial characteristics, and/or their physical appearance. Micro-social contextual exclusions helped me understand how social and situational everyday interactions play a role in how (im)migrant university students are excluded from the U.S. public. From the (im)migrant university students who participated in this study, it was students on an F-1 visa, H-1B visa, and/or who were undocumented who mentioned that, dependent on the context and/or who they were interacting with, they saw daily experiences, such as being asked about their first language or where they were truly from, as normal reminders that they were not from the U.S. There is overlap between the constructs, and these categories are not mutually exclusive to any particular (im)migrant university student who participated in this study.

The next section discusses interactions and experience of inclusion that emerged from the (im)migrant university student interview data.

Conceptual Construct: Passed/ing (Im)migrant Experience

Race and other identity markers are complex and multidimensional constructs. Scholars have theorized about the social construction of race (Calavita, 2000; Ehlers, 2004; Feagin, 2001; Omni & Winant, 1994; Thaggert, 2005) to problematize the biological conceptualization of race along the lines of physical traits. Despite these theoretical contributions, individuals continue to be racially categorized by characteristics, such as facial features, skin tone, body type, and hair.

The reliance on physical traits to determine a person's race and the discursively situated racial categories and understandings have been normalized and continue to stabilize and privilege Whiteness over other racial categories. Whiteness continues to be centered because it is usually the non-White/Other body that is labeled, as in "my Black friend," or questioned, as in "where are you from," or feared, as in "Muslims become... 'terrorist Others'" (Kim et al., 2007, p. 3), or prohibited from White spaces or people, as in Jim Crow laws and anti-miscegenation laws (Chin & Karthikeyan, 2002). Similarly, white skin color is not the "only criterion for racial distinction" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 137). According to Hunter, "hair texture, nose shapes, culture, and language also multiply the privileges of Whites or those who *approximate* them (as cited in Leonardo, 2004, p. 137; emphasis in original).

In the (im)migrant student narratives from Chapter 3, many (im)migrant university students noted that they thought that they had privilege in the U.S. since they were lighter-skinned, had a visa or legal status in the U.S., and/or were from countries that were not considered threatening to the U.S. public. Others acknowledged that they could pass in public spaces because their accent was perceived to be from the U.S. Similar to the cases of passing that scholars have examined (Carlson, 1999; Nisetich, 2013; Squires & Brouwer, 2002; Thaggert, 2005) the (im)migrant university students in this study, at times, utilized their ability to pass in the U.S. public as a form of protection—to blend in and not be perceived as different. Yet, other (im)migrant students acknowledged their privilege and used it to reflect on the current sociopolitical climate that they found themselves in while they attended. To help capture (im)migrant university students who said that they had a systemic pathway to citizenship and/or

that their immigration authorization gave them some privilege, the concept of *passed/ing (im)migrant experience* emerged. This is also central to critical race theory, which is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Systemic Inclusions

The construct of *systemic inclusions* emerged for noncitizens and/or nonresident (im)migrant university students who had immigration status at the time of this dissertation study and who felt that their “legal” immigration status made their experience with immigration different. Immigration scholars like Menjívar (2006) stated that “legal status [becomes] paramount in...immigrants’ lives” (p. 1003) because it “shapes who they are, how they relate to others, their participation in local communities, and their continued relationship with their homelands” (p. 1000). Similarly, Aleinikoff (2001) argued that legal status is used by nation-states to create “immigration laws that shape immigrant integration, playing a significant role in opportunities for work, rights and social benefits” (quoted in Menjívar, 2006, p. 1003). In this project, (im)migrant students who had a legal status often indicated that they had a systemic pathway to easily adjust their (im)migration status, and, in most cases felt there was a systemic pathway to U.S. citizenship available.

Unlike Antonio and Andy, who were unable at the time of this interview to adjust their (im)migration status, the passing of the DREAM Act was important in giving the undocumented students in this study the opportunity to have a pathway to citizenship. Other (im)migrant students who had visas were not affected by the immigration policies passed in Arizona since they were here “legally.” Similarly, some of the (im)migrant students expressed that their education and/or (im)migration status provided a sense of protection despite legislation passed in Arizona.

An example of this protection is found in my discussion with Veronica about recent immigration issues in Arizona in reference to SB 1070. She explained how this legislation did not apply to her.

Well, the law, the [recent] new law that you have to document yourself if you are immigrant and that it's totally related [to] racial [profiling]...[doesn't apply to me] because

I've never suffered that at all. I don't need my passport if I'm on the street. I know that nothing's going to happen to me if I am not documented...that [law] was totally directed...[to] Mexicans.

Similarly, Itzel described the process of obtaining proper documentation as “simple” for her. She described herself as an “international professional” who had recently completed her PhD and was working as a researcher at ASU on an H-1B visa. As a consequence of her education, Itzel was “confident” that she had options of where to reside and work. She did not consider her opportunities limited as other (im)migrant students did.

In Itzel's case, her class background, which enabled her to obtain a high level of education and granted her different opportunities than most Mexican (im)migrants in the U.S, allowed her certain privileges and access to realms of U.S. society because her scientific background and training were beneficial to the U.S. This was different from other Mexican (im)migrant university students who participated in this study, like Antonio, who did not have Itzel's level of education and described working in jobs like automotive glass repair. He could not join the formal labor sector because his options for adjusting his undocumented immigration status are limited.

Another similar situation is described by Nikhil, who was working on his PhD at the time of our interview, and was on an F-1 student visa. He stated that he did not have to pay attention to immigration issues because he was in the U.S. “legally.”

Well I don't think any of those rules affect me immediately right now. I don't know if they will...But I haven't really thought about it because I know I'm here legally. And as long as I know that...it's not affecting me...

As I analyzed this data, one thing that became evident in the 18 (im)migrant university student narratives was that the more students felt they had systemic pathways to adjust their immigration status and/or they felt a sense of inclusion into U.S. mainstream culture, the less they felt that immigration matters in the U.S. pertained to them and the less they actively sought out information about immigration. It was these systemic inclusions that gave them privilege while living in the U.S. and studying at ASU.

The (im)migrant students highlighted in this section made distinctions about their (im)migrant experience based on the fact that their immigration status was “legal.” Their ability to adjust their immigration status, easily navigate the immigration paperwork process, and not have to pay attention to current anti-immigrant legislation in Arizona granted them inclusion into formalized work and opportunities that other (im)migrants do not have.

Liminal Inclusions

(Im)migrant university students with European roots recognized that others did not perceive them as “outsiders” and found that they were able to pass as someone from the U.S., and, in doing so, they had invisibility. These students described situations in which they were mistaken to be from the U.S. based on aspects like their light-colored skin and/or their European background. The construct of *liminal inclusion* accounts for these experiences.

Jade recognized her ability to pass and acknowledged she gained this privilege because of her tall height, light skin, and blonde hair. She chuckled as she described an experience that she had in one of her doctoral seminars shortly after the passing of SB 1070.

There was a strange discussion in a class I was in. There was a guy from Chile in the class, so we were talking about this notion that a law enforcement officer could pull you over and ask for your legal papers. And so I asked the professor, “So does that mean that I should keep my visa in my car with me and in my purse at all times?” And she looked at me and said, “No, it’s probably not going to be an issue for you. But Oscar on the other hand he might [chuckles] need to.” And I was just like, “Whoa that’s so unfair on his behalf.” It just like we’re the same. We’re here for the same reasons. We’re both here to study. And it’s just a matter of genetics. It’s kind of very surface oriented...

Jade became aware of the advantage she had over her peers and the way that legislation like SB 1070 did not target her because of her phenotype.

Fey was another (im)migrant student who described that people in the U.S. did not see her as different because of her skin color and her voice. Similarly, people did not seem to consider Canadians as too different from people in the U.S.

“Where are you from?” and it’s Canada, then it’s met definitely with welcome. “Oh, that’s totally fine. Canada, great”—almost like their brother to the north sort of thing. That you’re one of us. That sort of sentiment is definitely something that I hear often...

Fey described that she often felt that she was an “invisible” immigrant and that it was important for her to mark her place and experience when it came to (im)migration in the U.S. because most people did not fully understand the (im)migrant process that she faced in staying current with (im)migration paperwork, work restrictions, and so on because of her visa.

Micro-Social Contextual Inclusions

(Im)migrant university students also described specific contextual moments when U.S. citizens perceived them as citizens because of their accent. Other students also provided instances where people in the U.S. appeared accepting of their (im)migrant experience because they followed immigration procedures. The category of *micro-social contextual inclusions* refers to distinct, everyday interactions involving (im)migrant students’ ability to pass. While the category of systemic inclusions refers to systemic pathways to adjust (im)migration status and liminal inclusions refers to an (im)migrant’s ability to pass based on their visual European-phenotypic characteristics, micro-social contextual inclusions refers to specific instances that (im)migrant university students have been able to pass based on characteristics that are not marked as distinctly foreign and/or are considered to be proper models of immigration in the U.S.

Serin, who is from South Korea, described situations involving first encounters in which U.S. citizens assumed she would speak with a distinct foreign accent because of her facial features. However, once they heard her speak, they almost had a look of relief because there was an absence of a marked accent, and thus, she could “pass for a native speaker” (Piller, 2002, p. 186). Serin often found that her lack of a marked non-English accent gave her the ability to pass, which was helpful and productive in daily encounters.

Adela also shared a specific interaction with a student who wanted to do a speech on birthright citizenship and anchor babies in a class that she taught at ASU:

[The student was proposing that] he would change something about how [babies] are immediately becoming American citizens [if born to foreign mothers]. I smiled at him and I said, “are you kidding me? I have a kid who even before I became a [U.S.] citizen is an American citizen.” I didn’t want to dissuade him in picking that topic. I just want him to think about that, and his answer was, “Yes, but you’re doing everything right.”

Adela stated that this interaction made an impression on her because the student, who knew limited information about her background or her immigration journey, assumed that since she was a doctoral student who was teaching at a university, she must be following proper immigration protocol. It was this distinction from other forms and experiences of (im)migration that made her an (im)migrant that was accepted by the student in her class.

The passed/ing (im)migrant experience section presented different types of inclusion that (im)migrant university students described while living in the U.S. Systemic inclusions refers to (im)migrant student experiences that provide an easy pathway to adjust their (im)migration status, and, in most cases included a systemic pathway to U.S. citizenship. Liminal inclusions described how noncitizen and/or nonresident (im)migrant students experienced privilege based on phenotypes or their European background. Micro-social contextual inclusions referred to distinct characteristics, such as accent or the following of immigration procedures, which allowed (im)migrant university students to pass as U.S. citizens and/or be accepted by members of the U.S. public. Racial privilege is tied to the dominant U.S. racial understandings that were previously discussed as part of the systemic exclusion conceptual section. However, for the U.S. imaginary, the racial characteristics of individuals in the systemic inclusion sections are accepted for their ability to perform notions of Whiteness and/or their ability to successfully integrate into the U.S. social fabric. The next section discusses the last conceptual construct that describes how (im)migrant university students negotiate their place in the U.S. public sphere.

Conceptual Construct: Negotiated/ing (Im)migrant Experience

The different interactions and contexts in which (im)migrant university students felt at times included and at times excluded from the U.S. public led me to think about how access to

the public sphere was a dynamic and complicated process. When discussing their (im)migrant journey, most of the (im)migrant students mentioned individuals who had helped or were helping them get used to living in the U.S. In some other cases, (im)migrant students described that it was their resilience and/or personality that helped them through challenging moments. For others, becoming aware of behaviors that people in the U.S. may not accept or see favorably. Throughout the interviews, it seemed that some of these strategies were intentional while others seem to gradually happen as they lived in the U.S.

These sections discuss the different categories within the construct of negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience. I start off by discussing the category of systemic negotiation.

Systemic Negotiations

What I found most empowering about (im)migrant university student experiences were the strategies that many used to negotiate their place in the U.S. I understood these tactics as productive and resistive. The category of *systemic negotiations* emerged from my data analysis to encompass experiences and/or strategies where (im)migrant university students follow systemic processes as they settle into life in the U.S. and/or their attempts to become part of institutions that surround them so that they may be part of the U.S. public sphere. This can be seen as a form of structural assimilation where (im)migrant university students strategically navigate how to be a part of social networks and institutions that are not available to them (Brown, 2006).

In some cases, formal organizations existed to assist the students and their families in settling into the U.S. Curtis Marshall was assisted by one of these organizations that provided information, resources, and trainings when he first arrived with this family. Edwin also worked with a resettlement agency that assisted him in learning English, exposed him to aspects of U.S. culture, and introduced him to a network of individuals willing to help him. Systemic negotiations also include Itzel's experience shaped by her strong belief that following immigration rules and procedures was the best way to adjust.

What I found interesting about systemic negotiations is that Edwin later got involved with the resettlement organization so that he could help others with similar aspects of his journey

settle into the U.S. I assumed that part of this motivation was to give back to his community. However, I also feel that this allowed him to be surrounded by people who had similar journeys, challenges, memories, and stories. By being a part of this organization, he was not only serving a community but also building a community that he could more closely identify with.

Systemic negotiation accounts also include working with organizations to actively resist and/or seek change to systems that exclude them. For example, (im)migrant students, like Antonio and Andy who were out of status, joined community-based organizations to advocate for the DREAM Act, raised awareness of (im)migrant issues, and to volunteered in civic engagement activities to motivate community members to vote for candidates who supported (im)migrant rights/issues. As Andy explained, "While I cannot vote since I am undocumented, I can encourage my community to vote for issues that affect me and for representatives who have our communities' best interest in mind." DREAMer social movements and activism have achieved gradual changes against repressive and exclusive anti-immigrant legislation that has been so pervasive for the last 20 years. These movements and activism are included in systemic negotiation and are important in gaining systemic change within the state that has impacted the ability for undocumented students and DACA recipients to get an Arizona driver's license and in-state tuition at Arizona public institutions of higher learning.

Liminal Negotiations

Liminal negotiations is a category that refers to the experiences of (im)migrant students who want to include aspects of their culture, language, and/or background in their everyday interactions with others. This includes an (im)migrant student sharing something unique about their culture in an everyday conversation. Angela provided an example of using the classroom to inform students about her culture and tell them her Chinese name. While she uses an Anglicized name in everyday interaction, in her classroom, she makes her students aware of her background. Sophia prefers to mix U.S. and Mexican traditions and informed her family members in Mexico of life in the U.S. Sophia found it fun to be able to mix and match from both cultures and enjoys the flexibility in developing new traditions.

Serin expressed her desire to hold on to aspects of her culture while she lived in the U.S. and to show others that she is not U.S. American. She described how people in her doctoral program wanted her to be more “explicit or more outspoken.” However, she had decided, “I want to use [my English] to show what values I hold,” which included being more of a “listener than a talker.” These strategies of sharing culture with people in the U.S. while also marking yourself as different were important to understand how (im)migrant students negotiate their space/place/presence in the U.S. public sphere. Liminal negotiation also includes the decision to keep their citizenship or maintain dual citizenship should (im)migrant university students have the opportunity to apply for naturalized U.S. citizenship.

Micro-Social Contextual Negotiations

The *micro-social contextual negotiations* category captures the determination, growth, and personal lessons that most (im)migrant students depicted as part of their (im)migrant journey. Examples included how (im)migrant university students overcame adversity and their commitment to accomplish the goals that they set out for themselves while living in the U.S. no matter how big or how small the feat that they are trying to accomplish was.

An example of micro-social contextual negotiations is found in Frida’s story. She discussed not making it into her preferred major of study, financial troubles, and trying to figure out her next career steps. Her story helped me consider that, even with dual citizenship, there were several aspects of her educational journey that made the experience and choice to study here overwhelming, unattainable, and difficult. In Frida’s case, micro-social contextual negotiation is represented in how she navigated various schools, areas of study, and her jobs in order to work toward her goals. While her degree was not her first choice, she was still able to live in the U.S., go to school, and work toward a career where she felt she could make an impact. These were all primary reasons why she chose to leave Mexico and come to the U.S. to study. Frida stated that her life was based on a motto that she has on a pendant, “Anything that you want to do, all you need, all the strength, you have it right there.”

Somewhat related to Frida, Itzel described the importance of “knowing yourself” in such a way that no matter what comes your way, you have the strength and ability to follow your hopes and dreams. Itzel consciously made an effort to not internalize the discrimination that she faced in the engineering lab. Instead, she left the institution to work with professors who were experts in her field of study. This empowered her and she became confident in her ability to complete the doctoral program. Using micro-social contextual negotiations, individuals learn to find their inner strength despite the “bumps” and obstacles that they faced.

This section provided different examples of what I considered negotiations that (im)migrant university students described while living in the U.S. Systemic negotiations account for how (im)migrant students who got involved in social movements and advocacy work designed to create changes to policies and laws that affected them. One student that I highlighted was Andy and his involvement in the DREAMer movement in Arizona. Liminal negotiations described (im)migrant students who stated that they actively included aspects of their culture, language, and/or background in their everyday interactions so that others were aware of where they came from. Angela, for example, often also told students her Chinese name so that people became aware of where she was from. Micro-social contextual negotiations described the personal lessons and determination that some (im)migrant students described as part of their (im)migrant journey. It was through micro-social contextual negotiations that individuals learned to find their inner strength to keep going despite challenges that they faced while living in Arizona.

Throughout this chapter, I developed the conceptual constructs that helped inform instances and experiences of exclusion, inclusion, and the strategies (im)migrant university students used to negotiate their sense of place in states like Arizona. The following chapter expands on the theoretical frameworks that informed this work.

CHAPTER 5

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter provides a synthesis of the primary literatures that helped me make sense of data across the span of the project. I start off the chapter with a discussion of the social and historical construction of the nation-state. At times, I make reference to the data collected in this study to note where (im)migrant university student experiences and perspectives confirm, challenge, and/or expand these theoretical frameworks.

Nation-States and Immigration

Policing and controlling the movement of people is an invention linked to the development of the nation-state (Aleinikoff, 2001; Rocco, 2004; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Rocco (2004) traced the Treaty of Westphalia³⁵ as establishing the “central principles of the nation-state—territoriality, sovereignty, autonomy, and legality” (p. 14). It was the creation of a single centralized government with the authority to establish laws, make policies, and in which power rested within that government that led to the development of the nation-state and the emergence of the modern era (Torpey, 2000). This process of nation-state building led to current understandings of citizenship and notions of belonging to a country:

Nation-states were constructed as classes and elite strata, striving to maintain or contend for state power, popularized memories of a shared past and used this historical narrative to authenticate and validate a commonality of purpose and national interests (Anderson, 1991). This process of constructing and shaping collective memories can be called nation-state building. Key to nation-state building as a political process has been the construction of a myth that each nation-state contained within it a single people defined by their residence in a common territory, their undivided loyalty to a common government, and their shared cultural heritage. (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995, p. 51)

³⁵ Also referred to as Peace of Westphalia and the Peace of Exhaustion since it is a collection of treaties that brought an end to the Thirty Years War from 1618–1648 in Europe.

The social and historical construction of the nation-state is important in understanding how nations continue to (re)create the physical geographical boundaries of borders and notions of national identity.

Anderson (1991) conceptualized the nation as “an imagined political community that is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (pp. 15–16). Nations are limited since they do not consist of all humans in the world and instead lie in contrast to other nations that exist (Chavez, 2001). Similarly, since individuals in a society cannot know everyone who lives within it, the community is imagined for “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1991, p. 15). The “imagined community” defines national identities of a shared history within a nation and defines different nationalities along markers of difference³⁶ (McLean & Cooke, 2003).

When it comes to the U.S., Whiteness is at the center of how the “imagined community” gets defined. (Im)migrant university students who fit the White European phenotype, such as Jade from Denmark, described social interactions where she can visually pass in the U.S. because of her blondish-brown hair and her white skin. In this case, (im)migrant university students who share these characteristics become imagined as part of the U.S.

On the other hand, some (im)migrant university students, such as Edwin, the Sudanese refugee who became a U.S. citizen, mentioned that he would likely never fully a part of the U.S. because of his skin color and accent. These markers have historically been constructed to fall outside the U.S. imagined community, and as a result, the dominant U.S. imaginary will continue to see Edwin as different.

Anderson (1991) highlighted the relationship between the development of the “imagined community” of a nation and the emergence of print media, such as newspapers, in providing “the

³⁶ Dualism is often associated with Western philosophy, thought, and language. Saussure (1960) saw the simplest way of marking difference was through binary opposition, and that concepts are often defined by its direct opposite. It is through difference, or through the “Other,” that certain groups are included and excluded.

technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation" (p. 30; emphasis in original). Scholars, such as Chavez (2001), have examined visual images that tell about the nation and its people on magazine³⁷ covers in the U.S. Chavez states that individuals who compose magazine covers to tell immigration-related stories "draw on narrative themes, well-worn tropes and metaphors, cultural elements, social contexts, and stereotypical scenes and characters that are 'out there' as part of society's generalized cultural knowledge and social memory" (p. 53). The continued usage of these narratives and images in media plays a role in constructing the imagined community of a nation like the U.S.

In my study, a topic that often came up in the (im)migrant student interviews was the negative and exaggerated coverage of immigration issues by media outlets. Fey, the master's student who was originally from Canada and is now U.S. legal permanent resident, stated:

I think [media coverage about immigration is] really harmful, I don't think there is a good place, currently, where people can go learn about immigration. More than likely, it's a story about someone who has done a crime or something. Then there's the association that happens, and those are the stories that are going to make the news, and those are the stories that are going to inform ignorant Americans; Americans [who are] ignorant about immigration and ignorant about the process.

Fey's quote highlights how media contributes to the (mis)understandings of immigration in the U.S., especially for members of dominant groups. Media becomes a mechanism for how Whiteness gets maintained in the U.S. and stabilizes the "imagined community" as being different from immigrants and/or other countries. Negative, exaggerated, and biased media coverage about immigration becomes "generalized cultural knowledge" of the differences between U.S. citizens, immigrants, and other nations. Dangers that become evident to the U.S. community

³⁷ Chavez (2001) examined images, symbols, and icons used in U.S. magazines that told an overall message of immigration and nation. Through his analysis, he found nine visual techniques, such as water-flood imagery and the Statue of Liberty icon, that were used in how visual and textual languages conveyed meanings of immigration and the nation on magazines.

legitimizes violence, denial of citizenship to racialized groups, and/or material consequences for people perceived to be outside the U.S. imaginary.

States authorize and surveil the movement of people throughout the world in an effort to protect their interests and people. States determine who is allowed into the nation, how many are allowed, and the periods for expansion and restriction of foreigners (Aleinikoff, 2001; Citrin & Sides, 2008; Martin, 2004). With the birth of the nation-state came the creation of documents and identification measures that “make distinctions between nationals and nonnationals, and...track the movements of persons in order to sustain the boundary between these two groups” (Torpey, 2000, p. 2). While “states claim the sovereign right to control their borders,” their concerns with border control have varied over time (Andreas, 2000, p. 3).

For example, in 1890, the U.S. enacted quotas that restricted the entry of southern and eastern Europeans in attempts to favor immigrants from northern and western Europe (Martin, 2004). The surveillance and usage of certain tools to track and monitor the movement of individuals will also vary depending on the nation. In the U.S., the attacks of September 11, 2001, led the Department of Homeland Security to create the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology³⁸ (US-VISIT), which is a biometric entry-exit system designed to “restructure and manage all aspects of U.S. air, land, and sea port of entry security” (Amoore, 2006, p. 337).

³⁸ According to the Homeland Security website, US-VISIT helps federal, state, and local government decision makers “accurately identify the people they encounter and determine whether those people pose a risk to the United States” (www.dhs.gov/files/programs/usv.shtm). On November 9, 2001, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was developed as part of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 established the Department of Homeland Security, and in 2003, TSA was moved to the Department of Homeland Security.

It was (im)migrant university students, like Mariam and Lahori, who mentioned the challenges that people from countries like Kuwait and Pakistan faced at airports while traveling to/from their home country to the U.S. after September 11th. Both students became aware of how coming from predominately Muslim countries would lead to extensive questioning, and how men, in particular were targeted by these new protocols.

Aleinikoff (2001) discussed the two boundaries of the state that consist of the “physical boundaries—the border,” where the state regulates by “immigration policy,” and the “political and legal boundaries—membership,” where the state regulates by “citizenship and naturalization policy” (p. 267). Aleinikoff (2001) argued that the regulation of these two boundaries are interrelated:

...whom states choose to admit as immigrants in part determines who shall be citizens; and most state immigration regimes give special admission preferences to family members of citizens. The legal status bestowed by immigration rules is an important determinant in immigration integration, playing a significant role in opportunities for work, rights, and social benefits. (p. 267)

Therefore, the individuals who nation-states allow within their borders might ultimately depend on how those individuals fit into the “imagined community” of the nation and whether those individuals should be eligible for the legal status of citizenship. Citrin and Sides (2008) stated that nativist resistance to immigration in the U.S. is also tied to the “cultural consequences of immigration,” in that citizens become concerned that newcomers will not assimilate to U.S. democratic values, cultural identity, and language (p. 35). Because many of these aspects are tied to issues of race, I turned to critical race theory about immigration.

Critical Race Theory

The examination of delayed citizenship and immigration policies has expanded the research agendas of scholars working in critical race theory (CRT) to study the ways in which immigration, notions of citizenship, and perceptions of who belongs in the U.S. public is constructed along racial lines. Romero's (2006) work on the racial profiling and law enforcement

of roundups in Arizona finds that Latino/a immigrants become positioned as “brown-bodied” individuals/citizens based on physical appearance, language, or the neighborhoods in which they live. This section elaborates on how CRT informs understandings and studies of immigration. I also offer some illustrations and short quotes of racialized experiences that (im)migrant students described to make connections between theory and data.

Race, cultural identity, and citizenship cannot be seen as mutually exclusive categories when using CRT since it is the intersectionality with other forms of subordination that are important in examining immigration in the U.S. Romero (2008) argued that “Intersectionality becomes crucial in theorizing about the immigration experience in a nation that has a history of social exclusion by race, class, gender, and citizenship” (p. 33). These identity markers influence the role of race in nation-building projects and the racial politics of the state that have dictated and defined who is eligible for U.S. citizenship. Citizenship affords individuals privileges and rights, such as voting, access to public programs, and, in some cases, protection. Since Whiteness is the main factor for individuals to fully gain citizenship status, Romero (2008) stated that “CRT analysis of recent immigration includes the racial construction of newly arrived immigrants and their relation to groups sharing similar racialized characteristics” (p. 34).

CRT also would challenge discussions of race in terms of citizen and noncitizen status especially since the racial project is not distinct to the “foreign-born,” “noncitizen,” or “outsiders” of the U.S. Instead, CRT conceptualizes immigration and who is seen as eligible for citizenship in terms of historical, discursive practices that have been permeable and shifting based on the needs of the U.S. According to Hasian and Delgado (1998):

Between the 1924 National Origins Act and the 1965 Immigration Act, immigration was almost totally barred for those from many non-Northern European nations. At the same time, there were occasionally instances of government-sanctioned support for temporary immigration labor forces. For example, the 1942 Emergency Farm Labor program reopened the border to Mexican workers (Gutiérrez, 1996, p. 118). By 1980, many Americans were again concerned about the alleged dangers that came from illegal

immigration, and the federal government passed the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. (p. 253)

While these laws and programs describe the exclusion/inclusion of individuals based on their country of origin and needs of the U.S., other analyses have looked at how different dimensions of cultural identity play a role in who is allowed citizenship.

Romero (2008) stated that the “Americanization process cannot be fully comprehended without identifying the construction of the ‘alien’ and the ways we act upon all groups as ‘ethnic’, ‘foreign’ or non-White” (p. 33). In the post 9/11, Homeland Security environment of the U.S., laws like SB 1070 and Operation Streamline continue the racial projects/politics of exclusion by the state. As previously stated, it was the increase of “brown” immigration by people from South America, Central America, and Mexico in the mid to late 1960s that has led to anti-immigration discourse and legislation that reasserts and legitimizes Whiteness as the basis of U.S. national identity (Ellis & Wright, 1998; Rowe, 2004). The militarization rhetoric and practices on the U.S./Mexico border are also embedded in the discourse of the U.S. needing protection from terrorists, which legitimizes the racialization of immigrants, the Islamophobia of the U.S., and the denial of citizenship.

As I analyzed the data for this project and reflected on the (im)migrant student narratives, the most emotional, frustrating, and difficult interviews were experiences shared by Mexican (Itzel, Sofia, and Antonio), Muslim (Mariam and Lahori), Venezuelan (Andy), and Sudanese (Edwin) (im)migrant university students. These stories captured experiences of continued discrimination, feelings of rejection/exclusion, insidious policies that targeted them, and limited options based on their immigration status and/or racial markers. These (im)migrant student narratives highlight how the socio-political environment, anti-immigrant policies, and militarization in the U.S., especially in states like Arizona, continue the racial projects and politics of exclusions for (im)migrants of Latin American and/or Muslim countries.

To summarize some of the important points, CRT analysis of immigration focuses on “civil rights and human rights agendas” (Romero, 2008, p. 34). CRT informs the analysis of the

social construction of race. In terms of immigration analysis, it considers the social construction of racialized citizenship (Sanchez & Romero, 2010). Therefore, CRT of immigration examines the obstacles presented by anti-immigration sentiment and state-created conditions for individuals seeking work, education, access to public programs, and/or citizenship. A CRT of immigration considers the social construction of illegality (Sanchez & Romero, 2010). Johnson (2004) made the connection between the legal construction and the social construction of “aliens as the other” and the conditions that strip individuals from basic human rights. In 2009, Johnson stated:

There is no better body of law to illustrate the close nexus between race and class than U.S. immigration law and its enforcement. At bottom, U.S. immigration law historically has operated—and continues to operate—to prevent many poor and working noncitizens of color from migrating to, and harshly treating those living in, the United States. The laws are nothing less than a “magic mirror” into the nation’s collective consciousness about its perceived national identity—an identity that marginalizes poor and working immigrants of color and denies them full membership in American social life (p. 2).

CRT analysis of immigration highlights “white privilege embedded in law and its enforcement, as well as, its subordination of people of color” (Romero, 2008, p. 33).

While living in Arizona during the time of this research, several (im)migrant university students stated that they became aware of the privilege they had based on their skin color, immigration status, and/or class. Jade, the student from Denmark on an H-1B visa, revealed how shortly after SB1070 passed, a professor told her she does not have to worry about carrying her visa paperwork but a Chilean student in her seminar class likely would. Veronica, the student from Spain who was on an F-1 visa, describes how people in the U.S. see her as European and that SB1070 did not affect her because of her appearance and her visa. These students’ white privilege protects them from targeted discriminatory practices by law enforcement.

Critical race theorists analyzing immigration issues also consider how immigrants use civil rights discourse and strategies to organize around racial and economic justice issues (Romero, 2008). In this project, students like Antonio and Andy, the two (im)migrant university

students who were out of immigration status, joined organizations, got involved with advocacy efforts, and became leaders in the DREAMer movement. Andy describes how he got involved in civic engagement efforts because while he could not vote, he could connect with communities who could. By raising awareness about the issues that affect him and communities in Arizona, he encouraged voters to consider representatives who were supportive of (im)migrant rights and unsupportive of current and future anti-immigrant policies. Through these efforts, changes like work authorization, driver's licenses, and in-state tuition for DACA students became possible.

This section presented CRT's important contributions in complex understandings of race, citizenship, and immigration. CRT was helpful throughout this dissertation in making connections between racialized immigration, White privilege, notions of belonging, and citizenship. In terms of the (im)migrant university students who participated in this project, Muslim and Latin American students described several instances of racialized experiences connected to the current socio-political climate. While European (im)migrant students stated that they became aware of the privilege they had over (im)migrants from other countries. The following section discusses public sphere theory.

Citizenship and Public Sphere Theory

In broad terms, the public sphere has been seen as the discursive space where individuals come to deliberate and discuss important matters. The public sphere is important for democracy and the development of civil society. Key features of the public sphere traditionally included certain individuals who share a common interest, individuals who come together to articulate their own interests, places for "rational-critical" deliberation, and opportunities where the information is not manipulative but instead critical and productive to the task/issue at hand (Dewey, 1954; Habermas, 1989). This section will focus on public sphere theory since access to the public sphere and the privileges afforded by being a part of the public sphere are tied to citizenship. I also discuss the concept of the racialized/ing public sphere, how it has been historically constructed, and how it is significant to the U.S.

Public sphere theory has been heavily influenced by the work of Dewey (1954) and Habermas (1989). Their contributions have given scholars frameworks for what constitutes the public, where to find the public, and the significance of the public to democracy and the nation-state. During the time of Dewey's (1954) writing, being a White male and owning property were important characteristics that granted individuals access to the public sphere mainly because the public consisted of a group of individuals who came together as a result of indirect consequences. It was when those individuals recognized that they had a common interest that they organized to protect those interests, which made them a "public."

Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere (1989) focused particularly on the bourgeois public sphere, which consisted of property-owning, educated, predominately male individuals. Habermas also saw an importance in the rational-critical debate within the public sphere, which functioned as a form of checks and balances of power. The spaces of rational-critical debate occurred in salons, coffeehouses, and courtyards. It was out of the public sphere that civil society emerged as a space to articulate its interests. However, as economic and structural changes occurred in bourgeois society, Habermas claimed that a "refeudalization" happened that blurred the boundaries between states and societies because the state and society became involved in each other's spheres.

There have been several critiques to the way that public spheres have been conceptualized. For example, Feliski (1989) critiqued the male-centric focus of public sphere studies. Habermas' (1989) and Dewey's (1954) public spheres are populated with men, who were landowning and educated. Felski (1989) suggested that there is no focus on women during these times and during the developments of these public spheres. Therefore, the ideological structures of a public sphere emerged as a male activity that was populated by landowning men. Felski used the term counterpublic as the oppositional discursive space of women. Fraser (1992) proposed "subaltern counterpublics" as "parallel discursive arenas" (p. 67) where marginalized social groups deliberate and develop counterdiscourses to the exclusion of the dominant public that allows individuals the ability to consider their identities and needs. Squires (2002) critiqued

the foundational writings of public sphere scholarship and looks at how members of different races, ethnicities, and marginal positions have also developed their discursive spaces, especially as members who do not have the same access to resources and media as members of the dominant public sphere.

In this project, I wanted to offer polyvocal and polemic experiences that (im)migrant students faced while living, working, and/or studying in the U.S. to expand discussions of immigration and to offer (im)migrant university students a space to share their (im)migrant journey with others in an effort to alter and/or counter dominant understanding of immigration. Based on the constructs and categories that emerged from the data in this project, the construct of negotiated/ing (im)migrant experience offers examples of how (im)migrant negotiate their place in the public sphere. For example, Angela, the undergraduate student from Hong Kong who was on an F-1 visa, states how she shares her Chinese name and aspects of her background in the class that she teaches. Angela mentioned that she does this because she wants the students in her class to also learn about her. She states “I think people can adapt to me as well as I am adapting to them.”

Other scholars, like Stephenson (2002), have critiqued Habermas’ work for assuming “that citizenship has already been universally implemented and fully extended to individuals” (p. 100) when looking at how indigenous groups have been kept from the dominant public sphere in Bolivia. Similarly, Hanchard (1994) argued that the “public sphere, far from being simply the location of bourgeois culture’s prized subject—the individual—has also been the place where the West’s others have been displaced and marginalized, inside and outside its borders” (p. 166). He demonstrated this in looking at the “symbolic function of Afro-Brazilian within Brazilian society as bearers of noncitizenship, in accordance with racist ideologies and practices by the Brazilian state and in civil society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” by depicting these Afro-diasporic groups as “embodying the antithesis of modernity” (p. 166). Brazil is not an exception in the way that racial ideologies create hierarchical distinctions within the public sphere. As previously mentioned, the United States has historically implemented government legislation and

regulation of who is allowed full citizenship within the nation-state. A historical look at citizenship provides an understanding of how citizenship has always been tied to the politics of inclusion/exclusion.

(Im)migrant students like Frida, who had dual Mexican and U.S. citizenship, acknowledged that even with citizenship, she was unsure if she would fully be able to be a part of the U.S. based on her facial features, skin tone, and/or accent since those were marked as different and/or outside of the U.S. public.

Aristotle saw the citizen as the “one who participates in the rights of judging and governing” (Barker, 1959, p. 295).

Citizenship was understood to be located within the Greek city-state; in Roman times, its site was the empire. In the modern age, however, the territorial nation-state became the paradigmatic political community and citizenship today is almost invariably presumed to be a creature of such an entity. (Bosniak, 2000, p. 473)

Bosniak (2000) claimed that “citizenship is understood to be a national undertaking by definition, and the site of citizenship is therefore presumed to be that of the political community of the nation-state” (p. 454). Therefore, “citizenship is almost always conferred by the nation-states, and as a matter of international law, it is nation-state citizenship that is recognized and honored” (p. 456). It is this recognition and inclusion of an individual into the nation-state that allows access to the public sphere and democratic public. Citizenship grants “legal” individuals the ability to vote, take part in demonstrations/protests, and deliberate about meaningful issues that pertain to them, their families, and their communities. It is in these actions and behaviors that we see the formation of a public participating in a public sphere. However, as previously described, there are exclusionary practices that limit certain individuals from gaining full access to the public sphere and/or citizenship.

The historical role of race in exclusionary practices tied to the state is not distinct to the U.S. These understandings were significant to the colonial experience and in nation-building projects. Stoler (1995) revisited the colonial project by extending Foucault’s notion of biopower to

show how nationalist discourses gave force to the “wider politics of exclusion” (p. 8). Stoler (1995) tracked how culture resulted from colonialism as a way of not just dividing the society by class but also by marking those entitled to having property rights, citizenship, and public relief while at the same time excluding others. Stoler (1995) utilized Foucault’s work on sexuality to explain how race and culture were important to colonialists and how a racial grammar was constructed to understand the “Other” as well as “themselves” in the colonies.

The questions of racial identity and class distinction pervaded the colonial discourses in the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina, British Malaya and India in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at different moments but in patterned ways. Mixed bloods were seen as one problem, poor whites as another, but in practice these persons were often treated as indistinguishable, one in the same. In each of these contexts, it called into question the very criteria by which Europeaness could be identified, how citizenship would be accorded and nationality assigned. (Stoler, 1995, p. 107)

These historically constructed discourses still have ramifications for society today. Looking at historical practices and the way that institutions practice biopower provides insights on power and the arrangements that construct our notions of normality and exclusion (Foucault, 1978; Stoler, 1995). In Chapter 3, I discussed how individuals with undocumented status in the U.S. have been characterized as abject³⁹ through the passing and enforcement of laws that make it difficult for them to access higher education and public services in states like Arizona.

Blauner’s (2001) discussion of White privilege focused on the exploitation and control of labor, land, and resources that arose under the establishment of early capitalism in Western Europe and in the U.S. However, while “discipline and control” eventually worked for the young proletariat, the idea of control through racial terms led to “racial control [becoming] an end in

³⁹ Scholars have used the word “abject” and “abjectivity” to examine and understand how (im)migrant and racialized populations are subject to exclusionary practices in society (Butler 1999; Chavez, 2008; De Genova, 2008; Ferguson, 2002; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012; Kristeva, 1982; Willen, 2007).

itself, despite its original limited purpose as a means to exploitation and privilege” (Blauner, 2001, p. 32). This racial control was played out in the aggressive cultural domination of other cultures and religions that were seen as non-Western and that affected the “original cultures of the colonized” (p. 32).

According to Blauner (2001), the “United States was founded on the principle that it was and would be a white man’s country” (p. 32). Blauner noted the “hegemony of Western European values in the national consciousness and in the symbolic forms that have expressed this cultural hegemony—institutionalized rituals (such as ceremonies of patriotism and holidays), written history, the curriculum of the schools, and today’s mass media” (p. 32). Scholars like Feagin (2001) and Blauner (2001) recognized these prominent practices of racial control presently active in all institutions of U.S. American life to culturally, politically, and economically maintain control of “third world minorities” (p. 34).

Another strategy of maintaining racial control is the shifting categories used by the U.S. government to racialize groups to suit their needs, as can be evident when looking at the history of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigration to the U.S. around the mid to late 1800s (Feagin, 2001). When these groups immigrated to the U.S., they were not considered White and were portrayed as being violent, dangerous, and/or uncultured (Blauner, 2001; Feagin 2001). In addition to bringing other problems to the U.S., such as taking jobs and changing U.S. culture, scholars have critiqued the assumptions that exist about crime and criminality of immigrants (Calavita, 1984; Chavez, 2008; Mears, 2001; Zatz & Smith, 2012).

Policies like the Chinese Exclusion Act (1923) and the Immigration Quota Act (1924) established the standards for granting individuals from particular areas of the world the right to citizenship while excluding and silencing others. According to Johnson (2003):

Periodically in American history, a vocal segment of the population has expressed hostility, at times with great intensity, toward the newest members of the nation. Barred from the electoral process, noncitizens lack the power to effectively resist attempts to

restrict their rights and may fear risking deportation through engaging in political activity.
(p. 386)

Latino/a and/or Hispanic groups are no exception, and their recent migration trends have only shifted more hostile reactions to brown-bodied immigrants. According to Rocco (2004), "Latino groups have been categorized within a pre-existing racialized cultural imaginary produced, limited, and modified by the dominant cultural institutional apparatus such as media, legal, and educational spheres" (p. 10). These practices have been historically tied to the adoption of Mexican states into the U.S. after the Mexican-American War. Scholars like Menchaca (2001) have shown that the subordination of Mexican populations was achieved by legal and political strategies since the Anglo presence took over the northwestern region of what was Mexico and respatialized that region into the southwest region of the U.S. after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Other scholars have noted other important moves in having Latinos/as and Mexicans fit the cultural imagery for the U.S. public during the Jim Crow era. According to Padín (2005):

Ambivalence and ambiguity have always characterized the racial status of Latinos/as. Mexicans, for example, experienced de jure and de facto segregation, either alongside African Americans or singled out as a distinct "race." In spite of this experience, even during the Jim Crow era, the racial status of Mexicans was not fixed or uniform: in some settings they were legally treated as whites; in other settings some early-twentieth century advocacy organizations fought to have white status recognized under the law.

There is no indication that this racial ambivalence is disappearing. (p. 50)

These fears continue to be reified based on public discourse, governmental legislation, and the media representation of the "brown alien." This has also spurred nativist sentiment from individuals who advocate for stricter immigration laws for fear that the browning of the U.S. will be detrimental to the social fabric of the U.S.

According to Rocco (2004), "Citizenship is a political mechanism for the control and containment of access to institutions of power and of the distribution of rights, benefits, privileges,

entitlements, and resources of different sectors of the population who reside within the territorial, sovereign boundaries of the nation-state” (p. 15). Scholars like Hanchard (1994) demonstrated how racialized bodies, such as Afro-Brazilians in Brazil, provide a symbolic function for societies to be bearers of noncitizenship. In the U.S., the state and civil society work in accordance with racist ideologies and constantly create understandings of the racialized/ing public sphere.

Several (im)migrant narratives provide examples of the material consequences of racialized immigration and citizenship. Butterfly Girl, a naturalized U.S. citizen and the student from Guadeloupe and France, explained that she constantly struggled with how she is different in the U.S. because of her accent. She, like other students, symbolically become noncitizens due to their markers of difference that are defined by Whiteness in the U.S.

Today there are several regions in the southwest United States where Latinos/as, both citizens and noncitizens, work the jobs that others do not want and pay taxes but have no opportunity to influence the decisions that affect them directly in the political process (Rocco, 1999). Based on these exclusions, the construct of racialized/ing public sphere provides an understanding of the politics of citizenship and the various forms and practices by which different groups are racialized. Similarly, I suggest that the dominant public sphere, such as Habermas’ bourgeois public sphere, is not possible without having a racialized/ing public sphere. Historically, it has been the racialized Other who has given a sense of identity and privilege to the dominant public sphere because it is the dominant public sphere that controls the resources and modes of inclusion into their public sphere. The works of Habermas (1989) and Dewey (1954) did not attend to the racial ideologies that existed and that still exist in the public sphere. However, the racialized/ing public sphere exists as part of the dominant public sphere as a way for the dominant public sphere to maintain its dominance.

Public sphere theory helped inform matters of citizenship. Chapter 3 and 4 focused on the racialized/ing nature of citizenship in the U.S. and the racialized/racializing strategies that manifested in different contexts for the (im)migrant university students who participated in this dissertation. While the racialized/ing nature of citizenship in the U.S. resulted in (im)migrant

students feeling excluded from the U.S., many (im)migrant students also discussed moments where they felt included. These (im)migrant university groups focused on experiences and interactions where they could “pass” and/or where they were not perceived to be foreign or different from dominant culture based on their accent, physical appearance, and/or the way they spoke.

In this chapter, I cite literature that describes the theoretical frameworks that have informed this dissertation and provide examples from the data. Critical race theory allowed me to examine the continued nature and construction of immigration along racial lines in U.S. society. Public sphere theory allowed me to consider understandings of citizenship and access to democratic forms/practices that are afforded by citizenship in the U.S. and exclusions from the public sphere on the basis of race.

I conclude this dissertation with the next chapter in which I discuss limitations and the continued need for research on the topic of (im)migration matters in the U.S.

CHAPTER 6
FINAL THOUGHTS

“Why do you want more illegal Mexicans to come to Arizona?” shouted a woman at me as I participated in an In-state 4 DACA Students Solidarity Walk on April 7, 2015, on the ASU Tempe campus.

“That’s such a limited view,” I responded. “It is not about legal or illegal. It’s about people who are out of status, who have been here for so many years, who have contributed to this country, and who should have access to affordable education. Plus, not all people who are Mexican or of Mexican origin are undocumented. People from all over the world come to Arizona.”

“That’s not true,” responded the woman. “It’s Mexicans who are illegal. I came from El Salvador, and I was illegal for many years. It took me a lot of time and money to become a [U.S.] citizen, and I did not just do it for myself. I also fixed my family from being illegal. If I could do it, then Mexicans should also do it the right way.”

“But people are not illegal!” I frustratingly said. “I would think that your experience would lead you to understand that immigration is not a simple process, and the broken immigration system makes it difficult for people to, as you say, immigrate the right way. Besides, don’t you want people who are already here, who feel like they are a part of the U.S., to have access to education?”

“No, it is not our responsibility. It will just make others come,” the woman responded. “I have read a lot about this, and the problem is that you have so much to learn.”

The woman and I exchanged various opposing views about this topic until the woman and her children angrily walked away from the event as undocu/DACAmented students shared their stories in the center of campus and informed the crowd of the challenges that they face in accessing higher education. After finishing out the workday, I remember going home that evening and discussing this interaction with my family at the dinner table. I was frustrated by how limited

the woman's views of (im)migration matters were, especially as someone who appeared to have struggled with her/her family's (im)migration status in the past. I was saddened by her use of the word "illegal" and how her usage of that word was equivalent to people from Mexico, especially as someone whose parents/family are from Mexico and who is partnered to a man from Mexico. I was angry at how I was perceived to be ignorant in this topic since this was a subject that I have been researching and writing about.

This interaction stands out to me for various reasons. It first reminds me of how contentious and personal the topic of (im)migration can be for individuals. As a "nation of immigrants," many people in the U.S. identify their family's background to an (im)migrant story, whether it occurred several generations ago or whether it has been a recent experience. It becomes contentious and personal when individuals feel personally attacked in discussions of (im)migration.

Similarly, it reminds me how there are multiple (im)migrant stories and factors that influence an (im)migrant's experience in the U.S. It would have been interesting and informative to know more about this woman's story as a way of better understanding her perspective on the issue. While the woman stated that she (im)migrated to the U.S. from El Salvador, was at one point out of immigration status, and then became a U.S. citizen, I am only able to assume that the woman had the means to adjust her status and that she valorizes her (im)migrant story as a way to distinguish herself from negative viewpoints that many in dominant culture have about the topic of undocumented (im)migration. In other words, distinguishing herself from "illegals" may allow those in dominant culture to better accept her and/or her family into the U.S. public sphere. As an assumption that I made based on the brief information that the woman provided, it reminds me that having a plurality of voices and multiplicity of experiences can allow us to have a better understanding of this complex topic.

Lastly, I find myself reflecting on the woman's comment about how I have "so much to learn." It motivates me to question what I have learned throughout this dissertation process.

What Could Be Done Better and What Can Be Done Next?

Despite all the time that I dedicated to this dissertation study and the amount of information that I was able to collect, there are several limitations and future areas of research.

While I purposefully wanted to include (im)migrant university students from different parts of the world who were living in Arizona at the time of this research study in my efforts to not reify dominant understandings of who or from what country of origin are the people who (im)migrate to Arizona, I feel that limiting my sample may have helped me have more specific points of comparison of how people were included and excluded from the U.S. public. For example, in this dissertation, I may have benefitted from having more than one person from a particular region or country in the world so that I could more specifically compare the similarities and differences of (im)migrant university students from particular regions and/or countries. Similarly, I would have also liked to have a more even number of graduate and undergraduate students participate in this project, and a more even distribution of men and women to see if there were more points of comparison between these different levels of education and characteristics like gender.

Another limitation in regards to sampling was that I used convenience sampling and snowball sampling to recruit students to participate in this research study. Many (im)migrant university students were eager to participate in this study since they felt they had an (im)migrant story that they wanted others to know about. Part of the limitation of convenience sampling and snowball sampling is that biases may exist in the research study and that I do not have a representative sample.

In regards to research design, one major limitation is how big this dissertation project became and how much data I was able to collect from various interactions with (im)migrant university students. While I very much enjoyed interacting with (im)migrant university students during the various phases and I learned a lot throughout this process, analyzing and putting this dissertation together was a daunting task.

While I identified areas for improvement in this project, it is also important to highlight the potential areas for future work. As I reflect on what I have learned since I began to do research on

this dissertation topic, I have come to understand how much research will continue to be needed on a complex topic like (im)migration. In doing research for this topic, I was often troubled by how anti-immigrant sentiment, xenophobia, and discriminatory practices toward (im)migrants has been prominent throughout U.S. history and how it continues into contemporary U.S. culture. What has changed is/are the group(s) that are targeted and the victims of anti-immigrant sentiment and behavior. Future work in this area can provide more voices to the violation of rights and the immigrant experience.

Aside from the need to have a better understanding of (im)migration in the U.S., I think there is a lot of potential to do (im)migration research around the world. With a growing presence of migrants and asylum seekers from African and Middle Eastern countries to places like Europe, it is important to understand how aspects of race are tied into notions of citizenship and perceived notions of who belongs and who does not in these regions. More importantly, it will enhance the academic literature that focuses on state-created vulnerabilities of immigrants, the collateral damages of immigration, and how dominant ideology continues to reify notions of power and inequality to marginalized individuals.

Another area of future work within this topic that is needed is for academic scholars to figure out how to apply and share their research so that it is beneficial to local and/or (im)migrant communities. Encouraging scholars to work with community groups and individuals can help provide them with new information that they can use when advocating for people's rights and/or to legitimize the work that they are doing to individuals who do not see their grievances as warranted.

Lastly, individuals working with (im)migrant populations should also work on humanizing (im)migrant experiences. Gaining more understanding of how issues impact immigrants could help provide alternative voices and stories to the dominant narratives that criminalize (im)migrants in U.S. popular discourse. Similarly, focusing on the human story can allow for individuals to connect with and/or empathize with aspects of the human condition.

This section identified the limitations of this research study and future areas for research. I turn to the next section where I share dissertation reflections.

Parting Reflections

As I prepared for this chapter of the dissertation, I could not help but notice how (im)migration issues continue to be prominent in the public sphere. (Im)migration has been a dominant theme in the 2016 primary campaign. At the time of writing this chapter, Donald Trump was the front-runner in the Republican primaries, and his anti-immigrant plans for deporting 11 million undocumented people in the U.S. and their U.S. citizen children within 18 months to 2 years of becoming President of the U.S., if elected, were met with chants of “USA, USA” at a campaign rally in Dallas, Texas, in mid-September 2015.

About a week later, during Pope Francis’ visit to the U.S., the Pontiff morally urged U.S. Congress to treat immigrants in a “humane and just” way and made reference to his own and many others’ immigrant backgrounds.

A few days later, House Speaker John Boehner announced that he would resign at the end of October 2015. Many (im)migrant advocate groups commented on how one of his biggest failures as House Speaker was his refusal to pass the 2013 Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill that was passed by the Senate (Attanasio, 2015; Gamboa, 2015). The inability for the House of Representatives to pass comprehensive immigration reform keeps millions of individuals out of immigration status, without protection from deportation, and without a pathway to citizenship.

While the U.S. continues to be plagued by a broken (im)migration system, millions of (im)migrants continue to face material consequences and difficulties that people who are perceived to be foreign, international, nonnative, and/or alien face in the U.S. Despite the Pope’s call for a more “humane and just” approach to this subject and a reminder of how U.S. history is heavily influenced by (im)migration, what can, unfortunately, quickly get lost in all this chatter is a focus on the human side to (im)migration and what (im)migrants want others to learn from their story.

One important point that was highlighted when discussing experiences with various (im)migrant university students was the importance of changing the narratives and highlighting the positive aspects of (im)migrants to the U.S. and to the university campus. Sophia described immigration as “a beautiful process,” for the diversity and cultural hybridity that stems from multiple people from various cultures living together. Sophia stated that reframing dominant narratives with positive aspects may help people see the benefits of all (im)migrants to the U.S.

Other students, like Edwin and Lahori, noted how language choices were so important when interacting with them and how people should consider how questions like, “Where are you from?” can be perceived as marking someone as different. Edwin stated that he preferred for people to get to know him first with questions like, “What is your name?” and “Are you from Arizona?” He described this approach as friendlier and that it did not automatically make him feel like he did not belong in the U.S. despite the fact that he was a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Many (im)migrant university students also stated how people in the U.S. do not have an understanding of the complex and lengthy immigration process, which leads many to assume that it is an easy process that anyone can follow. Fey mentioned that she wanted people in the U.S. to know that as a Canadian (im)migrant she had to navigate visas, paperwork, application fees, and the inability to work due to her visa-status, since many are unaware of challenges that her and other (im)migrants faced.

As someone who currently holds a full-time staff position at ASU and manages a research program and events for the academic community, local communities, and artists to come together and dialogue about the impacts and complexities of border issues and immigration, I am motivated to think of creative programming that continues to highlight alternate stories of (im)migration. Similarly, opportunities to work with university administration to discuss how the offices that have been created to support students may not provide that welcoming environment is important in improving the experiences of (im)migrant university students on campus. Students like Nikhil highlighted how the International Students and Scholars Office was too formal and did not provide a welcoming environment for (im)migrant and/or international

students to go for help. Similarly, more professional development opportunities should be offered so that practitioners are able to help students with different (im)migrant visas and statuses. For example, students like Frida mentioned that community college and administrators did not know how to deal with her because she was a U.S. citizen who had not lived in the U.S. and who needed help in navigating aspects of financial aid and the U.S. education system. Administrators assumed that since she was a U.S. citizen she did not need this extra help.

It is important to note that while I close this document, the conversation of (im)migration matters in the U.S. does not end. My hope is that the disparate (im)migrant stories in this project help expand discussions of (im)migration on university campuses and states like Arizona. My hope is that these experiences give individuals a better understanding of the complexities that surround immigration and that more spaces are created to allow (im)migrant voices to be heard, seen, respected, understood, and celebrated.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

BACKGROUND OF INDIVIDUAL/COMING TO THE U.S.

1. First of all, I would like for you to give me some background about yourself, your family, and your home before you came to the U.S.

Probes:

- i. Where are you originally from?
- ii. What did you do in your home country?

2. What can you tell me about your decision to come to the U.S.?

Probes:

- i. Why did you decide to come to the U.S.?
- ii. When did you decide to come to the U.S.?
- iii. How did you choose the location in the U.S.?
- iv. What did you know about that the location?
- v. If you did not decide, who decided that you would go to that location?

3. How did you prepare for your trip to the U.S.?

- i. How did your friends and family react to your decision to come to the U.S.?
- ii. How did you feel about coming to the U.S.?

4. Can you think back to the day that you arrived to the U.S. Please describe what that day was like.

Probes:

- i. Did you have any vivid memories of the day that you came to the U.S.?
- ii. What are interesting to you?
- iii. What was strange?
- iv. Any positive things?
- v. Any difficulties adjusting?
- vi. What were some of your first thoughts of what you saw or who you saw?
- vii. Did you know where you were going to live?
- viii. Did someone pick you up when you arrived?
- ix. Anything special happen on the travel here?
- x. Do you remember how you felt?

ONCE IN U.S./CULTURAL ADAPTATION

1. What did you learn from your first days in the U.S.?

Probes:

- i. Please describe what it was like when you first arrived.
- ii. What experiences have made you feel positively about your decision to come to the U.S.?
- iii. What experiences have made you question your decision of coming to the U.S.?

2. Have you feel the need to adjust to the U.S. way of life?

Probes:

- i. Can you describe what has made you feel that you need to adjust?
- ii. Can you describe how this has made you feel?
- iii. Have there been any challenges?
- iv. Have there been any positive things that emerge from this adjustment?

3. Do you have the desire to adjust to the U.S. way of life?

Probes:

- i. Can you describe what it is about the U.S. way of life that you desire to adjust to?
- ii. Can you describe how this has made you feel?
- iii. Have there been any challenges?
- iv. Have there been any positive things that emerge from this?

4. What has helped you adjust to the U.S. lifestyle?

Probes:

- i. Was there a person or group of people who helped?
 - ii. Did you seek an organization's help?
3. How welcoming have people been to you in the U.S.?
- i. Describe some of your greatest memories.
 - ii. What are some of the difficulties that you have had to face?
4. How have these experiences shaped your view of the U.S.?
5. What can be done to help people like you adjust to the U.S. way of life?

CONNECTION TO HOME

1. How have you kept in touch with friends/family back home?
2. How often do you get to go home?
3. How often do you speak to people back home?
4. What do you talk to them about?
5. In your last conversation with friends/family, what did you talk to them about?
6. What do you miss the most about home?

STAYING IN THE U.S

1. Are you happy living in the U.S?
2. Based on what you just stated, do you want to stay in the U.S.?

Probes:

- i. Why do you want to stay?
- ii. Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to stay in the U.S.?
- iii. What does your family/friends think about this decision?
- iv. If you go back, what will you miss most?

3. What are some of your goals here in the U.S.?

Probes:

- i. Are you working in the industry you wanted to work in the U.S.?
- ii. If not, then how can you accomplish your dream job?
- iii. Are you living in the area you wanted to live in the U.S.?
- iv. If not, then how can you accomplish your dream home?
- v. Without borders, the need for passports, or visas, where would you live?
- vi. What would be the ideal living situation for you?

4. How do others (friends, family, work colleagues) like about your decision to stay (or your decision to leave)?

VIEWS OF IMMIGRATION

1. What comes to mind when you hear the term "immigration"?

Probes:

- i. Do you consider yourself an immigrant?
- ii. If not, what do you consider yourself?

2. Do you stay current with what is going on in terms of immigration in the U.S.?

Probes:

- i. How do you stay updated?
- ii. What is the best place to find out information about immigration in the U.S.?

3. What type of media do you engage with frequently about immigration in the U.S.?

- i. What are your views about how dominant media outlets frame the immigration issues?
- ii. What would you like to see happen in these representations?

4. When people see you, do they consider you an immigrant?

5. When you hear information about immigration, are they talking about people like you?

6. Are their issues regarding immigrants in your home country?

Probe:

- i. Are they similar to the U.S. issues?
- ii. Can you describe more about these issues?

7. What do you think should happen in terms of immigration in the U.S.?

AMERICAN LESSONS

1. What have been the hardest lesson you have learned while living in the U.S.

2. What have been the most interesting things that you have learned about living in the U.S.?

3. What would you want people to learn from your story?

Probes:

- i. Is there anything that U.S. people should know about immigration from listening to your story?
- ii. If you knew someone from back home that was moving to the U.S., what advice would you give them?

APPENDIX B

TRAVEL TO U.S. AND NONIMMIGRANT VISAS

Travel to U.S. and Nonimmigrant Visas	Visa Type
Athletes, amateur & professional (compete for prize money only)	B-1
Au pairs (exchange visitor)	---J---
Australian professional specialty	E-3
Border Crossing Card: Mexico	BCC
Business visitors	B-1
Crewmembers	---D---
Diplomats and foreign government officials	---A---
Domestic employees or nanny -must be accompanying a foreign national employer	B-1
Employees of a designated international organization, and NATO	G1-G5, NATO
Exchange visitors	---J---
Foreign military personnel stationed in the U.S.	A-2, NATO1-6
Foreign nationals with extraordinary ability in Sciences, Arts, Education, Business or Athletics	---O---
Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Professionals: Chile, Singapore	H-1B1 - Chile, H-1B1 - Singapore
International cultural exchange visitors	Q
Intra-company transferees	---L---
Medical treatment, visitors for	B-2
Media, journalists	---I---
NAFTA professional workers: Mexico, Canada	TN/TD
Performing athletes, artists, entertainers	---P---
Physician	J , H-1B
Professor, scholar, teacher (exchange visitor)	---J---
Religious workers	---R---
Specialty occupations in fields requiring highly specialized knowledge	H-1B
Students: academic, vocational	F, M
Temporary agricultural workers	H-2A
Temporary workers performing other services or labor of a temporary or seasonal nature.	H-2B
Tourism, vacation, pleasure visitors	B-2
Training in a program not primarily for employment	H-3
Treaty traders/treaty investors	---E---
Transiting the United States	---C---
Victims of Criminal Activity	U
Victims of Human Trafficking	---T---

Information taken from http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1286.html