

Un Largo Destino con Distintas Experiencias: The Stories of Immigrants and Refugees in the Bay Area

A Project Report

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology

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August 2020

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Un Largo Destino con Distintas Experiencias: The Stories of Immigrants and Refugees in the Bay Area

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Abstract

The objective of my project was to contribute to the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) Oral History Project by documenting the stories and perspectives of a range of people who have migrated from Latin America and are rebuilding their lives in the United States. EBSC is located in Berkeley, CA and offers legal and educational services to a diverse group of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. This project focused on the oral histories of immigrants and refugees, particularly the process of sharing their border crossing stories and identifying different factors helping them to adapt to their new environment. Utilizing an oral history approach, I have identified themes that define rebuilding and adjusting in the U.S. My project culminated in an online PDF document that describes the experiences of immigrants who suffered difficult experiences in their home country, and eventually recovered and adapted to life in the United States. The online PDF will be a part of the Amplifying Sanctuary Voices web page under the EBSC website and other forums. My project brings awareness to educate the broader public and potential policymakers by providing testimonies of immigrants and refugees. These testimonies give a glimpse of their lives, futures, dreams, and journeys. This study illuminated the experiences of border crossing and subsequent adaptation by sharing the first-person experience of people who have made the journey. The first-person narrative gives the opportunity to tie a name and a story to the resilience and experiences that these individuals have. This approach reveals the multifaceted aspects of immigrants' journeys and experiences to show policymakers to craft humane policies and assert the humanity of these individuals to the general public.

Acknowledgments

I want to begin with giving my biggest thanks to the participants that were marvelous enough to dedicate their time to talk to me. You have all opened my eyes to new ideas and contributed immense dedication to my research. I am forever grateful to have crossed paths with every single one of you.

My sincere gratitude to Drs. Roberto González and Jan English-Lueck for dedicating many hours of editing into this project. I want to thank them for always guiding me in the right direction. I want to thank Dr. Marco Meniketti for their contribution to the final editing of this project report. I want to thank Dr. A.J. Faas for being one of the first to hear about my ideas and to set the foundation for this project. I want to thank all four of them for believing in me when I doubted myself and for giving me the many opportunities in academia and the workforce.

I would like to thank everyone at the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, especially two staff members: Lisa Hoffman and Manuel De Paz. You both have helped me immensely in this process. This project would have not existed with your extraordinary help and guidance. I am so grateful for all the generous help, support, and love that you have given me in the short amount of time we have known each other. I want to thank Matt Matusiewicz for taking the time to read through this report and for his generous feedback.

I want to thank my parents for never giving up on me: for the immense love that you have given me throughout my academic career; for giving me the agency to do anything that I set my mind to. Esto es para ustedes. El apoyo y los consejos nunca se me olvida. Thank you for being a phone call away at all hours of the day.

I want to thank my crazy cousins! I love all the advice and laughs you have provided through this journey. Thank you to Alba, Jan, Sofie, Marlene, Alan and Isabel for always letting me talk, believing in me, and hyping me up when I needed it the most.

I want to thank the committee from the Bertha Kalm scholarship for seeing the good in my project and making my research financially feasible. I want to thank Charles Klein for publishing a short summary of my work on the Consortium of Practicing & Applied Anthropologists website. I also want to thank Shannon Gallagher and Agnes Borja at the department of Anthropology at San José State University for providing me with support the last few years.

Lastly, I want to thank my cohort (Ashley, Brett, Melanie, Jasmine, and Kevin) for all of the feedback and fun times. These past two years would have not been easy without y'all! To all the tears we have endured in this process.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My project objective was to help East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) achieve their Oral History Project goal by documenting the stories and perspectives of a range of people who have migrated from Latin America and are rebuilding their lives in the United States. In the 1990s, after the Clinton administration adopted Prevention Through Deterrence, a series of linked Border Patrol and immigration policies, migrants were forced to use longer and more dangerous pathways to enter the United States, causing an increase in the number of deaths, injuries, and violence seen. By conducting ethnographic interviews and recording personal testimonies at an immigrant service non-profit organization, I was able to gather personal accounts of the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees as they pursued the “American Dream”--with or without organizational help. My project culminated in an online resource that will describe the experiences of immigrants who suffered in their countries of origin and eventually recovered and adapted to life in the United States. As an intern at EBSC, I was a part of the Amplifying Sanctuary Voices (ASV) team that planned how to execute and use the Oral History Project. The collected stories will be public to anyone who goes to the EBSC website.

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant is an example of one of the countless organizations that have legal, educational, and community engagement programs that help assist immigrants to adapt and recover while settling in the U.S. EBSC has many lawyers, advocates, organizers, and volunteers that run the general operation. Each member helps each other to give the right resources to their clients or visitors. EBSC hears countless testimonies and has helped many immigrants feel safe in their new country. Over the last thirty years, many immigrants have

attempted to cross the U.S.-Mexico border and have suffered, injured themselves or have lost their lives to create a better one (Missing Migrants 2019). EBSC strives to provide immigrants their services free of charge due to the systemic issues that low-income immigrants face (which have only heightened in contemporary times). EBSC wants to ensure that immigrants who leave their country are guaranteed equal opportunity when they arrive in the U.S.

Latin American migration has increased since the 1960s and the routes have become more treacherous, making it extremely dangerous for migrants to immigrate. The U.S. has created policies that make it difficult for migrants to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, but migrants have continued to find ways to successfully enter the U.S. (De Leon 2015). The experiences that these individuals encounter in transit are often traumatic but do not deter them from crossing. In 1993, the Clinton administration heavily focused on immigration policies and have been a priority because of the high number of Latin American immigrants coming into the U.S (White House Archives). Many, if not most, Latinx migrants emigrate in search of economic opportunities in the U.S. and to seek asylum from the violence, political instability, and economic crises in their countries.

There is no age limit to cross the border and often children and young adults are taking this journey. Many of the young ones who cross the border do not have a choice and have little knowledge of what is happening. In one interview, a participant said, “I just remember we were in a car and we both fell asleep and then we woke up in the United States.” When she woke up, she was in a different country and her father was waiting for her at a local grocery store parking lot. She had left family and friends without realizing it. Having different and multiple push factors, many immigrants determine that their best option is to try to make it to the U.S. to have a

chance of earning money. In another interview with participant Jairo, he expressed, “we were literally like scrambling to be able to eat something or to survive. We had basically nothing to lose and everything to win.” Jairo’s mother knew that if they had stayed things would become worse and she believed that coming to the U.S. would benefit them with opportunities they could not attain in Mexico.

The objectives of immigration police enforcement are to decrease the number of migrants. In many circumstances, non-profit organizations No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos accuse Border Patrol Agents of destroying any resources that volunteers and staff leave behind for immigrants crossing the Sonoran Desert (Caroll 2018). The organization No More Deaths has emphasized that Border Patrol Agents kick, drain, stomp, and remove water jugs left behind (Digg 2018). No More Deaths reports that Border Patrol Agents have been using their power to destroy any aid for migrants that are dehydrated, lost, and tired (Digg 2018). In 2019, the current administration is strategically trying to dismantle the asylum process by proposing a “Safe Third Country” agreement with Central American Countries, adding an extra step that immigrants must take to be allowed to start the U.S. asylum process (Ibe 2020).

The first fight that immigrants go through to arrive on American soil is crossing the border. Upon arrival, many do not have the resources to navigate their new environment. It becomes difficult to achieve initial objectives when there is not a community for support and when jobs and housing are difficult to attain. Advancing becomes critically harder when immigrants do not have a legal status that ‘permits’ them to be in the U.S. (Abrego, 2014). Nonprofits like EBSC help individuals to seek the opportunity to attain accessible legal and educational services.

Project Partnership

I developed my partnership with the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) to assist an upcoming project Amplifying Sanctuary Voices Oral History Project (ASV). I came into contact with EBSC while I was researching different organizations dedicated to advocating for immigrants. EBSC caught my attention because a significant amount of their work is in helping indigenous populations from Guatemala. EBSC assists in immigration-related services but also collaborates with attorneys and non-legal professionals in areas such as family, labor, criminal, and employment law (EBSC 2020). My involvement in being a part of the leadership team for ASV was assisting in collecting oral histories, shaping them to cogent stories, and working with my team to construct how to best use the documented stories. ASV has become an interactive educational exhibit that promotes public dialogue about the experiences of immigrants (EBSC 2020). It is through this project that I explored the stages that immigrants have to face to cross the border and their adaptation to the U.S. in order to aid in advocating for policy change and public education.

For this project, I applied an ethnographic approach to gather testimonies of individuals that had left their home country and have been settling in the U.S. I sat down with my participants and had a conversation about their lives. What they wanted to share was up to them, but I had a tool to help start the interview. Through an interpretive approach, I discovered the experiences of immigrants and refugees that utilize the services provided by EBSC and as well as individuals who had not utilized EBSC's services. This approach gave me the insight of how my participants view the world: their experiences and the platform they have to speak and to be heard.

In 2019, EBSC was awarded the “Humanities for All” grant from California Humanities, a non-profit that supports locally-initiated public humanities projects. This grant allowed EBSC to pursue the Amplifying Sanctuary Voices Oral History Project that focused on analyzing the sanctuary movement, as well as documenting the stories and perspectives of those who have migrated and are rebuilding their lives in the U.S. With the help of Lisa Hoffman, the Development Director of EBSC, I became a team member of the ASV to help create an exhibit to educate and to have a conversation with the community.

Anthropological Lens

Immigration has been a popular field of study in anthropology, from studying the first wave of migration to studying the U.S.-Mexican border. In 1942, the bracero program was implemented, giving the U.S. the ability to hire Mexican immigrants who were looking for work. This program quickly became problematic as it allowed farm owners to pay their laborers tremendously low wages and did not punish employers from treating laborers inhumanely. Ernesto Galarza, a labor organizer and historian, dedicated his life to make sure labor workers were treated fairly and were able to speak out about any inequality. Galarza’s work on the bracero program eventually helped terminate the program. His campaign led other organizers to continue to fight for the rights of laborers and immigrants. After 2001, scholars studied the policies' impacts on immigrants crossing the border. Many highlighted how terror and immigration were linked and it created a narrative that immigrants were a threat to the U.S. (Heyman, Morales, Nuñez 2009). Migration anthropology highlights the many motives why migrants decide to leave their home and capture the migrant experience (Heyman 2001). Past studies have also explained how changing policies have made the experience of the migrant

extremely difficult (De Leon 2015; McGuire 2013; Slack and Whiteford 2011). Illuminating the experiences of border crossing and subsequent adaptation is valuable because it allows policymakers to comprehend the complex aspects of immigrants' journeys and experiences in order to craft humane policies. Once they have arrived and are residing in the U.S., many immigrants face difficulties because of their legal status (Gomberg-Muñoz and Nussbaum-Barberena 2011). Immigrants are fearful of any police enforcement and are on alert of any unfamiliar activity, making it difficult to live in anything but a stressful and chaotic environment. Collaborating with EBSC, I was able to identify how this organization helps migrants to become self-sufficient.

This project advances anthropological knowledge by documenting the recovery and healing processes of incoming immigrants. Most importantly, the products of the project could have a broader impact, directly improving the lives of migrants by shifting public attitudes and influencing lawmakers to understand immigrant experiences in a more nuanced and sympathetic light. Similar organizations can replicate this project to amplify the impact. The recovery and healing process are a part of the migrant experience because their journey does not end when they enter the U.S.: it continues after they have arrived (De Leon 2015; Heyman 2001). EBSC focuses on getting migrants back on their feet and directing them to other resources to receive the aid they need. My partner organization can use the oral histories I collect, perhaps through digital storytelling, to bring awareness and to educate the broader public and potential policymakers.

California Immigration Policy

Immigration, specifically Latinx migration, has become a major political issue and debate in the last three decades. Many policies that protect thousands of individuals are being

reevaluated and it has become one of the main political topics of the current administration.

Immigration is the act of leaving one's countries and moving to another country of which they are not natives, nor citizens, to settle or reside there, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take-up employment as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker (U.S. Immigration 2020). Immigration is much larger than migrants coming to the U.S. for a better life—it is linked to the political and economic involvement that the U.S. had in their origin country. The Reagan administration argued that Central America was “an arena of struggle between Democracy and Communism” (LeoGrande 1998). Reagan wanted to end the communism and allocated a vast amount of money to armies in Central America to fight against the guerillas. He believed that the rise of Communism would be a threat to other countries and the U.S. It was clear that Central America was used as an example to show the rest of the world that the world leader is the U.S. LeoGrande explains that the Vietnam War was fresh in peoples’ minds when political revolutions began in Central America. The fear that the Vietnam War created was pivotal in Reagan’s mission to stop the spread of international communism.

The aftermath of the U.S. being involved in the Civil Wars displaced and harmed people and left many without money. Individuals were seeing a rise in violence in their communities, both from their governments and community gangs that claimed certain sections of the neighborhood. Pedro, one of my participants, emphasized that, “your neighbor could report you to the government and they would just come and kill you and your whole family.” Individuals were also struggling with economic instability, which was making it impossible to financially support their families. They no longer had enough assets and resources to stay in their home country. Some participants recall that their parents would not have enough for food and having

food consistently was a constant struggle. These individuals flee the only place they know to in order to find safety and have a chance at survival. Nearly 48% of Central Americans residing in the U.S. came before 2000, but since 2016 there has been a rise in Central American migration (O'Connor, Batalova, and Bolter 2019). Latinx migration has been happening for decades and will continue. The following table shows key events that have shaped immigration policy in the U.S. (Table. 1).

Table 1. Timeline of key events in Latinx immigration policy

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 1929 | Mexican Repatriation: Border Patrol creates campaigns to detain Mexicans, deporting them back to Mexico during the economic and political crises between the 1920s and 1930s Blease's law put in motion to criminalize crossing the border outside an official port of entry. This law targeted Mexican immigrants; entering unlawfully became a U.S. misdemeanor. |
| 1942 | Bracero Agreement: The U.S. government arranges for the Mexican government to recruit Mexican men to work temporarily in the United States. |
| 1951 | The United Nations Convention recognizes the universal right of individuals seeking asylum from persecution in other countries. |
| 1953 | Operation Wetback allows U.S. immigration officers to arrest and deport more than 3.8 million Latinx Americans. |
| 1965 | Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 is passed, abolishing country of origin quotas and incentivizing foreign laborers to immigrate. |
| 1967 | The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees develops the Refugee Protocol that decreed that individuals leaving persecution and danger cannot be sent back to their countries of origin |
| 1971 | Berkeley becomes the first U.S. sanctuary city. |
| 1980 | U.S. Refugee Act is passed, making the U.S. guarantee asylum if an individual is in danger and cannot return home. |
| 1981 | President Reagan begins funding military elites in Central America. |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 1981-1990 | Almost one million Central Americans seek asylum in the U.S., fleeing political instability and violence in Guatemala and El Salvador. |
| 1990 | Immigration Act of 1990 is passed. A revised act of 1965, it added additional visa programs for immigrants to come to the U.S. by applying the H-1B program for immigrants with necessary education. It also created the lottery system (the Diversity Visa system) and barred U.S. immigration services from denying legal status to immigrants based on an individual's identity in the LGBTQ+ community. |
| 1991 | American Baptist Churches (ABC) comes together to challenge the U.S government about the regular denial of asylum applications from Salvadorans and Guatemalans. |
| 1994 | Operation Gatekeeper begins, a program under the Clinton administration that funds the construction of the U.S. Mexico wall. |
| 1996 | Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American relief Act (NACARA) permits Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans who have left violence and poverty in the 1980s to file for asylum. Guatemalan Civil War ends. |
| 2001 | The U.S. government enhances Border Security and Visa Entry Reform to ensure the expansion of the budget and staff. El Salvador is hit with an earthquake that kills and displaces thousands. |
| 2003 | Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras agree on a free-trade agreement with the US. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is established. |
| 2009 | The Obama administration temporarily ends practice of family detention. |
| 2011 | The Obama administration expands the "Secure Communities" program. This allows for federal and local law enforcement to collaborate with ICE and targeted undocumented folks for expedited deportation. |
| 2012 | The Obama administration created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). |
| 2014 | The Obama administration allows practice of family detention. |
| 2017 | The Trump administration signs to expand U.S. enforcement capacities and detention centers The Trump administration tries to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS). |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | The Trump administration halts DACA application processes. |
| 2018 | <p>A federal judge in California issues an injunction on the Trump administration trying to revoke DACA.</p> <p>TPS holders file a lawsuit against the federal government. TPS holders argue that TPS termination were illegal.</p> <p>DHS announces they have separated about 2,000 children from their legal guardian.</p> <p>East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Trump decides that the Trump administration's restriction on the asylum application process unlawful.</p> |
| 2019 | <p>Migration Protection Protocols (MPP): asylum seekers arriving at ports of entry on the U.S.-Mexico border will stay in Mexico to wait for their U.S. immigration hearing.</p> <p>The U.S. and Guatemala sign an agreement that require migrants who pass through Guatemala seek asylum in Guatemala first before seeking asylum in the U.S.</p> <p>East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Barr decides that Trump administration's Transit Ban is unlawful.</p> <p>DHS extends TPS for six countries through Jan. 4, 2021.</p> |

The civil war in Guatemala and El Salvador had a huge impact in Latinx migration from the 1980s to early 1990s. This Civil War caused displacement, economic instability, and food insecurity. The end of the war had left many without money and food resources. Even now the effects of the war are shaping the economy in those countries. Children were being kidnapped in order to be a part of the militia. People were kidnapped if they defied any party. The war between the government and the "guerrillas" made towns so inhabitable that many people fled for their safety. It became apparent that their home country was no longer safe to live. Warfare was not the only reason Central Americans fled their home countries. The drug trade within these countries flourished because of the poverty in their communities and the corruption in the

governments. Government officials were involved with the drug trade and it became apparent what the leaders were trying to gain revenue and power. The leaders were becoming rich while the people were left to survive on their own.

After the Central American peace agreement was signed, these countries remained with war, poverty, and violence. The only way out of this situation was to migrate to the United States of America, which many Latin Americans perceive as the land of the free. My mother and father were part of the thousands of Central American who migrated to the U.S. in the 90s. My father, who grew up speaking Spanish, was a dedicated rural teacher and had to carry out his duties in a village very far from his hometown of Petén, Guatemala. He worked with an indigenous population who hardly spoke Spanish. In order to get to the village, he had to travel several hours by bus to get there and would stay for long periods of time. The remoteness of the villages attracted the guerrillas who would take over the villages, stop anybody on the street, and interrogate them to see what side of the war they are in favor of. Eventually, the guerrillas completely took over the village and it became theirs. The villagers were forced to stop their daily routine and were demanded to attend warfare meetings. When the villagers defied the guerrillas' orders, they killed or had them disappeared.

The villagers trusted my father and looked up to him to give them the right information. When the guerrillas held their meetings, they told the villagers misinformation about the government so they would be convinced to be on their side. As a teacher, my father had the responsibility to inform the villagers the goals and plans that the guerrillas wanted to execute. Disseminating information against the guerrillas made him a targeted enemy. Friends and neighbors told him to be careful about who he says things to, as it was not known if the guerrilla

had spies in the community. He was a walking target and did not know when the guerrillas would pick him up for being against them. My father no longer felt safe and had to flee for safety. In May 1992, my parents began their journey to cross the border and arrived in the U.S. a month later. By July 1992, my parents had an order for deportation, but were already in the process of applying for political asylum. They were granted asylum in 1994.

My parents' case was one of thousands and many cases people had to return to their home country. About 11% of global asylum seekers were approved for asylum, but Latin Americans had a 2% chance to be granted asylum (TRAC Immigration 2017). In 2001, George W. Bush granted Salvadorans already residing in the U.S. Temporary protected status (TPS) for eighteen months. TPS allows immigrants to legally work in the U.S. and gives recipients an advantage in getting better jobs, adapting better and providing for their families. Currently, TPS is on hold because of two lawsuits that were organized by TPS holders from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras and Nepal which stopped the current administration plan (Ibe and Johnson 2020). These two lawsuits turned into preliminary injunctions and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has extended TPS until January 2021. TPS is one of the most significant policies that Latinx immigrants depend on to make a living in the U.S. TPS is one of the many ways that immigrants can adapt and assimilate to their new environment.

Immigration in Bay Area

The Bay Area is one of the largest urban areas in the United States, with 7.8 million people in 2019 (Green and Shuler 2019). This area is constructed of nine counties: Santa Clara, San Matteo, Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, Sonoma, and Marin. 6.6% of households in the Bay Area live in poverty and 30.3% of household living below the housing

standard (Silicon Valley Index, 2010). In 2018, 27% of the Californian population was foreign born, while Silicon Valley was 38% foreign born and San Francisco followed with 33% foreign born (Silicon Valley Index, 2020). The Bay Area is known for its economy because of the well-known and economically viable companies such as Chevron, Apple, HP, Google, and Intel (Walker 2018). The Bay Area gives individuals employment opportunities to excel in one of the major corporations. This area has more tech corporations, web portals, information technology start-ups, venture capital, complex tech ecosystems than any place on Earth (Walker, 2018). This region has been consistently growing with companies and new people, but it is also displacing many who cannot afford to live in the region. It is a place that people aspire to be in creating new opportunities and lives, which partially explains the high percentage of foreign-born residents. The high cost of living in the area is creating a barrier for new incomers to settle and forcing many others to leave the region. However, the tech ecosystem relies on the work of minorities and immigrants who disproportionately represent low-income households. Low-income and undocumented individuals are predominately in health care and social services, accommodations and food service, retail, manufacturing, and construction (Working Partnership 2020). These sectors are changing with the advancement of technology by eliminating some positions with automation. Automation eliminates the need for these jobs and produces a new position for high-skilled workers (Working Partnership 2020). The Bay Area is considered to be a sanctuary because of the different cultures that reside in the area. Allies of the immigrant community fought to remove the communication between Police Officers and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Sanctuary City

Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma are sanctuary counties (Griffith and Vaughan 2020). There is not a true definition of sanctuary in this context, but generally it is referred to as the practice of protecting immigrants in the United States in violation of law by not cooperating with federal immigration officers. These counties established a policy that prohibited state and local police to communicate with Immigration and Customs Enforcements (ICE) when they have arrested an undocumented individual. It is supposed to be a safe haven for immigrants by allowing them to do their daily routines. Sanctuary cities and counties help immigrants by not allowing police to contact ICE because of a traffic stop or similarly minor infractions. Immigrants in these areas should not be afraid to call law enforcement in case of an emergency, as they will not have to report back to ICE. Immigrants have the right to call for help in case of an emergency without feeling the constraints of being undocumented. Local Police Officers are supposed to protect and not question the immigration status of someone. In a sanctuary city, the police release an arrested immigrant after they have been cleared of charges, posted bail, or completed jail time for the crime they were arrested for. On the other hand, a non-sanctuary city will hold individuals until ICE can pick them up (America's Voice 2019). Sanctuary geographic locations make it easier for immigrants to go to work, drive, and do essential shopping without (as much) fear.

Four cities that are working hard to keep their city as sanctuaries are Oakland, Fremont, Berkeley, and San Francisco. Berkeley was the first city to become a sanctuary city. In 1971, the City of Berkeley passed a policy protecting U.S. sailors that were opposing the Vietnam War (City of Berkeley). The movement began when Pastor Gus Schultz and Bob Fitch, an anti-war activist, worked together to form a plan where local churches would be designated safe places for

sailors to meet other dissidents and to have shelter. In 1982, five churches in Berkeley and a Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona began the modern-day sanctuary movement by holding press conferences demanding the U.S. government grant asylum to the thousands of Guatemalans and Salvadorans escaping persecution, war, and poverty. The five Bay Area congregations made a decision to move forward in declaring sanctuary because of their vast knowledge they gained when researching with lawyers, historians, and refugees. Declaring sanctuary influenced the congregation to create East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC). This grassroots non-profit grew quickly and by 1986 it had grown to thirty member congregations. This sanctuary movement included congregations from Berkeley, Oakland, and Albany involving Protestant and Catholic churches, Buddhist temples, and synagogues. EBSC has been constant in fighting for the rights of immigrants and refugees. They have created a space that makes their clients, volunteers, staff, and visitors feel welcomed and safe.

Road Map

In the following chapter, I discuss East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and my experience as a volunteer. I explain the different statuses that immigrants can obtain and educational programs that are offered to their clients to help them adapt. Chapter two gives a summary of how EBSC helps their community and the different pieces that make EBSC the Santuario. Chapter three discusses my ethnographic method: semi-structured oral histories and how it allowed me to engage with EBSC's clients and staff. This section also provides an overview of how and why I changed my methods to create a welcoming and safe environment for the participants. Finally, chapter four discusses the insights of my ethnographic study. I introduce the lovely individuals who took their time to talk to me about their lives and future goals. I discuss participant

experiences in three stages: the reasons they left their country of origin, the transit itself, and their experiences in settling in the U.S. Dividing this section in three allows the reader to experience the different movements of migration. Last, I provide my memorandum of understanding with EBSC, my interview instrument, and an online resource deliverable that will describe the experiences of immigrants who suffered, recovered, and adapted to life in the United States in this report appendix.

Chapter 2

El Santuario

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC)

I first heard of East Bay Sanctuary Covenant when I started my graduate education. I had to reach out to different organizations and explain to them that I wanted to partner with them to complete my degree. I searched for nonprofits aiding immigrants with legal services and discovered EBSC. I gravitated to EBSC because of the outstanding work that they have done in Central America since the 1980s and their motivation to help indigenous populations in Guatemala.

I emailed staff members in November 2018 and was able to make a meeting with Farzana, a manager with EBSC. We talked via phone about EBSC goals, their mission, and how I envisioned my project in conjunction with them. Unfortunately, Farzana left EBSC and I had to start from ground zero. I had to reach out to other EBSC leaders, which is how I met Manuel de Paz. Manuel and is the Community Development and Education program director. He offered to have me visit the office and to chat with him about my project. During our conversation, he excitedly said that one of his colleagues was organizing an oral history project for EBSC and that I would perfectly fit in. I met with his colleague, Lisa Hoffman, Development Director for EBSC, and discussed my educational program, career goals, and what I had in mind for my project. She asked me to meet with her and in the summer of 2019, she offered me a position in the leadership team on the Oral History Project and my research began.

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC), located in Berkeley, is on the south side of the main road Bancroft and it is located in the basement of the Trinity United Methodist Church. The

United Methodist Church gives the space to EBSC and allows them to check out rooms in the church when they have workshops or other events. EBSC was founded in 1982 and is dedicated to “offering sanctuary, solidarity, support, community organizing assistance, advocacy, and legal services to those who may be escaping war, terror, political persecution, intolerance, exploitation, and other forms of violence” (ESBC 2019). EBSC offers several different legal and community programs to help immigrants secure legal status and improve living conditions in the U.S. They provide a Refugee Rights Program to lower cost or have free immigration legal services to undocumented individuals. Table 2 gives a brief description of the following programs; affirmative asylum, U-Visa, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Unaccompanied Alien Children program (UAC), Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Residency, and Naturalization.

Table 2. Types of Status

| Term | Status |
|---|---|
| Affirmative asylum | for those escaping persecution in their home countries due to a part of their identity (political opinions, religious views, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.) |
| U-Visa | for those who experience domestic violence once in the United States |
| Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) | 2-year deferral from deportation for individuals who were brought to US as minors |
| Unaccompanied Alien Children program (UAC) | for unaccompanied minors |
| Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) | protection of a juvenile because they have been abused, abandoned or neglected by a parent |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Temporary Protected Status (TPS) | Temporary status of deferral from deportation for those coming from countries designated by the US Note: the US government cancelled TPS status for immigrants coming from Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, and several countries in Africa |
| Residency | that allows individuals to live and work permanently in the US |
| Naturalization | The process of becoming a US citizen |

Outside of its legal services, EBSC focuses on its Community Development and Education program (CDE) to help support their clients and community. The CDE helps train and support their community through workshops, community forums on current policy issues, leadership training and social services referrals. This facet of the organization is led by Manuel de Paz, a Salvadoran refugee. Manuel is dedicated to providing free social services for community empowerment building. With the help of volunteers, Manuel is able to achieve the many outlets that the CDE program developed over the years (Table 4).

Table 3. Types of CDE Programs

| Programs | Description |
|------------------------------------|--|
| English as a Second Language (ESL) | Through classroom and home-based ESL classes that are facilitated by trained volunteers, this program helps individuals by referring to community colleges and other school to continue their education. |
| Leadership Training | Through workshops EBSC provides immigrants and educators insight on topics such as Know Your Rights, Workers' Rights, Financial Literacy, and other programs. This allows for individuals to be updated of any changes in immigration law. |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Community Workshops | Throughout the year, EBSC arranges community forums that focus on DACA, Know Your Rights, Medi-Cal, TPS, Public Charge, and other programs. |
| Citizen Preparation | EBSC prepares immigrants who are ready to take their citizenship exam. |
| Referrals | EBSC provides referrals to access extra support for ESL, community college enrollment, health, housing, refugee benefits, and job training. |

The Community Development and Education program offers a wide range of classes that their clients or the community can partake in. These classes help individuals become self-sufficient and allow them to have the agency to have control of their lives. These classes ensure that individuals can learn how to open bank accounts or fill out housing applications. These programs give them access to learning English, financial literacy and health, and to have a place of belonging and community. Manuel organizes workshops twice a month and has ESL and citizenship classes a few times a week. Manuel depends on volunteers to help him organize, take notes, engage with the community and translations, and many more things. He goes out of his way to contact people from the community to educate his classes on the topic. Manuel wants to be sure that everyone is given an opportunity to learn to have better opportunities for themselves and their families. He wants to give them a chance like how he was given the opportunity when he first settled in the U.S. The CDE program is vital to this project because the Oral History Project highlights the stories of refugees and asylum seekers, aiming to create a space that allows for political conversations for the diverse voices and experiences of those who are impacted by policy decisions.

EBSC's leadership fights for the protection and safety of the immigrant community and challenges any new law that goes against their stance. They provide educational and legal services that help hundreds of their clients. Staff members organize with community members to elevate their voices and make known that certain policies are inhumane. EBSC's leadership is proud to be able to collaborate with other organizations to fight for immigrant rights.

EBSC Lawsuits

EBSC is involved in two lawsuits against the Trump administration's attack on asylum policies and laws. The first lawsuit happened in 2018 when Trump's administration tried to deny asylum rights to individuals who could not reach an official port of entry. This rule violates the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) that states that any individual in the U.S. or arriving at the border has a legal right to apply for asylum. When the president's administration tried to deny asylum seekers this right, EBSC took action because they believed that it would illegally affect a large number of asylees.

EBSC generally serves low-income and uneducated clients, where it is sometimes unfeasible to attain a visa to come to the U.S. Many are fleeing different types of persecutions and trying to find safety. Asylum seekers are often unaware that there is a designated port of entry, but they are legally guaranteed the right to request asylum. EBSC initiated litigation against the new legal practice and the Supreme Court granted them an injunction. This lawsuit is expected to have a long court battle in the future.

The second lawsuit occurred in July 2019. EBSC joined Al Otro Lado, Innovation Law Lab, and Central American Resource Center to challenge the "Safe Third Country"

administration rule. This rule denies asylum seekers from Central American and South American because they have crossed multiple borders to arrive in the U.S. Individuals who come from these countries have to apply for asylum at the countries that they crossed to get to the U.S. This rule is dangerous because many of the countries do not have sufficient funds to safely harbor these asylees.

In July 2019, the Supreme Court issued an injunction to halt the practice. Two months later, September 2019, the Supreme Court removed their decision, making it impossible for Central and South Americans to apply for asylum in the U.S. This rule will affect a high number of asylees coming to the southern borders except for Mexicans. The Safe Third Country law is in effect, but EBSC is working hard to gather enough evidence against the rule.

Volunteering at East Bay Sanctuary Covenant

My time at EBSC gave me a lot of perspective for my project while I was volunteering there. I had a set of ideas of what I wanted to do for this report, but that quickly changed when I began to interact with the EBSC community. When I first initiated my project, I thought I would be able to get participants quick and begin my interview process with a Life History Calendar activity. Volunteering gave me a different perspective and I no longer wanted to make individuals uncomfortable by having a two day interview process. I witnessed how difficult it is for individuals to talk about things that still bring them pain, but I was fortunate enough to see what brought them happiness. This next section shows the different tasks that I was a part of and what I learned from them. My involvement at EBSC assisted with improving my data collection and how I interacted with the participants by giving me the opportunity to be a part of their community.

EBSC encourages the local community to be involved in their non-profit by volunteering at their office. This is a conduit for community education because it is hands-on training working with organizers, lawyers, and other members in the office. EBSC has partnered up with the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) to give students an opportunity to learn more about the immigration process and system. EBSC is dependent on its volunteers since there is an overwhelming amount of tasks to complete in a day at the office. The office starts to become noisy with chattering, kids playing, phones ringing, and staff and volunteers going up and down hallways. A volunteer is always needed to help out the paralegals, lawyers and staff members. There are always files to be pulled out, forms to be translated or meetings to attend. General tasks are distributed in two ways: tasks handled by fluent Spanish speakers and tasks handled by non-Spanish speakers (see Table 4). In order for EBSC to determine the best fit for the volunteer they have an application that helps them with the process. The application has a short answer portion and a section to translate. This gives the volunteer coordinators a sense of where the volunteer can be placed. EBSC provides training for anybody willing to partake in helping immigrants with the necessary utensils.

Table 3. Volunteer Tasks

| Non-Spanish Speakers | Spanish Speakers |
|---------------------------------|---|
| -filing documents | -Work permits (requires training) |
| -Ongoing projects | -Translations of birth certificates, marriage certificates, notices |
| -Administrative work | -Wait room pre-screening/front desk |
| -Data Entry, digitizing records | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Filing, file copying -Country conditions research -Computer systems help, Network setup, Phones setup -Miscellaneous projects -Mailing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Translations of proofs, family and friend letters, and other documents that may contain more sensitive information -Intake (requires training) -Interpret for psychological evaluations and asylum prep interviews |
|---|--|

Volunteer Experience

I learned a lot during my time at EBSC (whether it was the BART system or the legal system). I learned how to organize workshops, facilitate in Spanish, and learn how to provide information about policies to the community. I began to volunteer for EBSC in January 2019. I began my experience learning how hard each member of the EBSC staff works and about their daily routines. Everyone is eager to help one another and their clients. This office embodied unity and family. Anyone who stepped into the EBSC doors was directed to the right person or were given the needed information. They helped out when it was possible and did not turn people away. The more the community is involved, the more EBSC can evolve to help out their community. At first, I helped with events that EBSC was holding, such as the Celebrating the Sanctuary Movement event and Youth UnMuted/EBSC on an arts-based storytelling workshop (detailed later).

At EBSC, I assisted in the office and directly worked under Manuel de Paz. I helped Manuel with many workshops and disseminating information on “Know Your Rights” and Public Charge, a test to see if a person seeking entry into the U.S. will rely on public benefits

(EBT, MediCal, etc.). Manuel guided me and helped me connect with Lisa Hoffman to be a part of the ASV team. What follows is my volunteer experience that helped me become more involved with the EBSC community and Berkeley community.

Workshops

My very first volunteer workshop experience was when EBSC collaborated with Youth UnMuted. Youth UnMuted believes that young people deserve to be heard, especially those who are marginalized and forgotten. Their goal is to empower young people and elevate their voices using online platforms to showcase their creativity and share their voices with the world (Youth Unmuted, 2020). EBSC invited their youth community to participate in this workshop. I



Picture 1. Art that created the flip book film from the Youth Unmuted workshop

volunteer to assist with the workshop to help translate as necessary and to familiarize myself with the community. In this workshop, the youth were told to create a story about anything that they wanted. They were given clay and other material to create their characters. Five young individuals showed up, all who were evidently nervous. One young man in particular, Antonio, was introduced to me because he only spoke Spanish and was especially anxious. I kept an eye on him and started a conversation with him to make him feel more comfortable in a room full of strangers. We talked and I learned that Antonio had recently migrated from Guatemala and is staying in a sponsored home with another

immigrant, la casa de la Hermana, as he calls it. I approached him and offered him pizza (realizing that pizza is a good conversation starter). We talked a bit more about his family and how he was happy that he was able to talk to someone. We went back to the workshop room and I helped him create his story. They were given the freedom to create film the way they wanted. The youth learned by taking multiple pictures so that they could create a flipbook film. Antonio chose to highlight the community that he had built with his church back in Guatemala. His film captured the sense of community. He expressed how grateful he was to his community for uplifting him and for not leaving him behind. After a few hours, Youth UnMuted hosted a small viewing party and many staff members of EBSC came by, eating popcorn and watching what the youth had created.

Manuel de Paz hosted many workshops throughout my time at EBSC. I assisted and helped with a financial literacy workshop. This workshop consisted of teaching the community the importance of financial health and concepts. Three community members that work for Bank of America were invited to educate and answer any questions the participants had. The three gentlemen spoke about how the banks work, what it means to have good credit and to be better aware of information about banks. They emphasized the importance of building good credit and how they are able to achieve that; how bank checks are useful to keep track of any bills; the pros and cons of getting loans; and speaking about myths that come with finance. Lastly, Manuel talked about the Public Charge rule. This rule led many immigrants to believe that they no longer were eligible to apply for residency because they were enrolled in public benefits. Public benefits include EBT, Medical, Section 8 housing, or cash assistance. This rule does not affect legally approved refugees, asylees or pending U-Visa, T-Visa, VAWA, and SIJS applicants (Refer to

Table 2). This rule may affect individuals who have family members who have petitioned for the individual to receive a green card. Manuel explained how this rule is active and described how this rule can affect the immigrant community. Having this segment in the workshop was important for community education around a policy that was strategically written to scare and incentivize undocumented individuals and citizens with immigrant family members to unenroll from public benefits. Our goal was to give them useful and accurate information to give them a sense of peace.

Amplifying Sanctuary Voices

The Amplifying Sanctuary Voices (ASV) team was created because Lisa Hoffman envisioned an oral history project that described the raw experiences that immigrants go through when migrating. ASV believed that the migrant community in the East Bay (and in particular EBSC's) needed to be heard and have the platform to tell their own story. We wanted to create a space that allowed them to be their true self and to remind them that they mattered. ASV reminded the narrators that with their stories we would be able to educate the public. The initial ASV mission was to create 'Journey to Sanctuary', a special evening of storytelling, listening, and community building. Through live readings of immigrant narratives, we held a safe space to share the narratives of people who have fled violence and persecution in their home countries to seek safety and sanctuary in the Bay Area. The team, which included me, Lisa Hoffman of EBSC, Daphne Morgen of Youth UnMuted, Ela Banerjee of Voice of Witness, and Rebecca Gerny, Michele Castro, and Matt Matusiewicz of UC Berkeley gathered weekly from September 2019 to February 2020. Every meeting, we made progress in our exhibit design and we all contributed new ideas with the same desire: to create a space like our event. We wanted to get

personal; we wanted to spark conversation with educators, members of the community, activists, and public servants.

Every meeting consisted of team building to see where we each could contribute to the project. We spent many hours together and we became a family. Being able to work with such a group of people with a diverse range of career backgrounds was amazing. We encouraged each other to continue to learn, aim for success, and to not shy away if we were in need. Each week we had new ideas about how to make our event better. We developed a structure that we wanted to follow and our process to gather data began.

The ASV team focused on displacement/leaving home, the journey/in transit, and asylum and sanctuary. We wanted to dig deeper into the oral histories of immigrant, refugee, and asylum seekers now living in the U.S. and to provide a space for the public to engage with these stories and deepen their empathy and understanding of immigrant, refugee, and asylee experiences. Most importantly, ASV provided a way for immigrant storytellers to feel welcomed, accepted, and affirmed in their stories in that they share. ASV centered around three main components First,



Picture 2. Check in Table at the February ASV Launch

why do people leave their home countries and seek safety? Second, how to prepare for the unknown? What do people go through to get here? What would it be like to be on a journey where you don't know where your destination is and whether you will make it? Third, what is it

like to land in the U.S. and begin to rebuild? What do you hope for the future? We believe that these talking points will allow for the public to learn the different aspects of how immigrants come to the U.S. Our mission was to break from a “telling the immigrant experience” through a single story because the reality is that it is not. Migration is beautiful, ugly, hopeful, and discouraging all at once. Through the testimonies of migrants, it reveals their resilience, hopefulness, but also their fears and concerns. Their testimonies make people aware that migrants are human, and they have a story. Immigrants are more than just another “Latinx thug statistic.” They can be brilliant and hard-working individuals who want to better themselves and their community.

This “Journey to Sanctuary” event was a pilot, with educators and activists giving us feedback on their thoughts and suggestions on how we can improve the event for the future. We wanted to see how we can evolve and adapt our event to different settings and how to improve our event in order to become an interactive program. Our end goal is to share this interactive program to more community spaces and schools throughout the Bay Area. Overall, “Journey to Sanctuary” was an immersive and thoughtful experience, where Berkeley residents who are not part of refugee and immigrant communities can better understand the lived experiences of people who have sought asylum and sanctuary in the Bay Area.

Another component that I assisted with that linked with ASV were two events that informed the public about the oral history project. The first event was what initiated the ASV project because it was a community event that gave context about the sanctuary movement and information about how EBSC wants to move forward with the oral history project. The second

event, the annual dinner helped ASV to introduce what they were about and how they can be involved.

Events

My first task was to create a presentation about the sanctuary movement. For this community event I teamed up with Amelia, an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley, Lisa Hoffman, and Sister Maureen Duignan. Amelia had done through archival research before I was introduced to the project. During the process, Sister Maureen and I took over and I created a presentation about the sanctuary movement. The goal for this event was to present and discuss the sanctuary movement in the Bay Area, the immigration works that EBSC does, and how it has continued and evolved through the years. We held a panel that consisted of Sister Maureen Duignan (the director of EBSC), board directors, and members of the immigrant community. The community was invited to the Berkeley Historical Society for this event. In the entrance, we had a stand where individuals were encouraged to send a postcard regarding TPS and DACA to Senator Dianne Feinstein. These postcards were to advocate for the importance of DACA and TPS. When community members called or wrote to senators and representatives it would voice that immigration policies are important and that something has to be done to protect the immigrant community.

The second event that I helped out was the annual fundraising dinner event in October 2019. It allows for EBSC to raise much-needed finances but most importantly to recognize the individuals that put in the work in the office and outside of the office. Donors donated jewelry from Guatemala, hockey tickets, restaurant vouchers, and more to auction off. The guest roamed around from item to item, observing and picking which item they hoped to take home. These

items were pricey but the donors did not flinch. Before any of the decorations were installed, tables and chairs were up EBSC had volunteers to turn the venue to a banquet. When the venue was ready to go, I met up with my Amplifying Sanctuary Voices (ASV) team to set up our station.

The ASV team set up a station inside the venue, next to the entrance. Our goal for the night was to explain to our community and important stakeholders what our goal was for this project. We wanted to make our community aware that we would create an event that allowed individuals to be educated and inspired to raise awareness about the immigration system. The ASV team also was conducting small interviews with our guests to learn what they thought sanctuary meant to them and about their involvement in the community. Our table had many of our flyers explaining our project and a sign-up sheet to keep up to date with our project. At this time, our project was still very new, and we did not have a direction of how we wanted to deliver our end product. We listened to the community and appreciated their feedback.

Inside the Office

Document translation is a critical part of the EBSC's service to the immigrant community. Volunteers have the opportunity to translate police reports, personal letters, birth and death certificates, court documents, newspaper articles, medical reports, and many other documents that the clients need in order to support their claim for immigration relief. Most of my time in the office was to translate documents for the paralegals. The documents that needed to be presented in court had to be translated in English. Translating documents is the lengthiest task (but the most important) because client's documents were in Spanish: for the court to accept legal paperwork they must be in English. One particular incident I remember was when a

paralegal came asking for help because a Guatemalan woman needed her documents translated. The client's appointment was the next day and the paralegal had packets of documents to translate. We split the work and spend all day translating the documents: from death certificates to birth certificates to coroners' reports. Many of the documents that we translate to are confidential because they describe a person's life in their home country.

These documents are evidence of the hard realities that people go through. These documents empower volunteers to keep pushing in helping in spaces like EBSC. We realized the importance of translating these documents and how powerful they can be in a court case. We had to be precise to give every individual a chance in court. Translating documents also helps volunteers improve their Spanish. It gave an opportunity to learn the languages that legal documents have. For instance, many documents were from the medical examiner and to present these documents in court they must be translated to English. Volunteers learned the language and how to translate the terms correctly in order to have a precise and correct translation. We became familiar with what information is needed in these documents and the proper way to translate. It gave me the practice I needed to improve my Spanish to better help my community.

I familiarized myself with the wait room at EBSC. The Wait Room is the first stop for many of EBSC's clients. Volunteers assigned to the Wait Room answer a large variety of questions and may often do the preliminary intake interview on a client, to determine whether EBSC will be able to help them. Volunteers are reminded that they are not allowed to give legal advice, just basic information. Giving legal advice without proper education and credentials is unauthorized practice of law and we are reminded to tell them that if they have any questions,

they have to ask their lawyer or a lawyer. We learned that sometimes clients want us to make a decision for them but unfortunately, we can only guide and provide accurate information.

Staying Up to Date

One of the most important tasks for Manuel was data entry. He depended on me to enter the data into the EBSC Community Development and Education program database. Entering information into the database gave us key information of who attended and what county they come from. This position helped me learn that many of EBSC's clients come from all over the Bay Area. This information is crucial because EBSC applies for many grants throughout the year in order to have sufficient funds for their programs. Specific grants require to report what language information was being disseminated, how often workshops and other classes are being offered, and most funders require a report of how their money is being spent. During any workshops, ESL, or citizenship class, participants are required to fill out a survey that EBSC provides. In these sheets, we collected basic demographics such as the location of outreach/event, name (first name and last name initial), name of presenter, the language it was given in, the clients native language, ethnicity, the city, and county they reside in. This information also helped us track how we could better help our community, what languages our community is most comfortable with, and broadly gives an insight into how to improve organizational outreach.

Building Trust

Trust is one of the biggest key elements in this project. Trust allowed my participants to feel safe to speak about their past and current situation. This took the most time because I was just a stranger who was doing research in an office that was a safe haven for most. I had to

participate in the community, show up to events, help out the paralegals with what was necessary. When I was told someone was interested, I reached out and thanked them for willing to participate in my research. It was during this time where I gave them a glimpse of my life. I told them who I was, where I grew up, where I went to school and told them why I was so gravitated to have them tell their story. They listened and I would ask them if they had any questions for me. I told them that some topics might be difficult for them and that I did not want to have them bring back up past memories that they did not want to. I explained to them that it would be a fun normal conversation about their lives. I was just there to listen and to learn from their experience.

It was difficult at first to get a hold of people because of their bust and unpredictable schedule. They were either going to night classes, working double shifts, or taking care of their children. As I called the night before to confirm I would hear on the other side of the phone, “Híjole,” expressing that they had double booked themselves and would not be able to make it. I pivoted my approach and became creative to learn when my participants were the freest. When they stopped at the office and I was there, I would take the time to stop what I was doing to greet them and see how they were doing. Seeing their small children was my favorite. I would see how they would interact with their kids and how proud they were of them. I loved seeing them in the office and seeing their smile and asking me, “How was the ride over here?” Being able to interact with them for a small amount of time gave them the safety net to trust me. This process was the most tedious but I was able to meet and given the privilege to learn from and about them. I began coming to the office in December 2018 and I began my interviews in October 2019. It took a full year of talking to my participants and explaining to them every step of my work and

how I think this can impact the community for the better. With each call or interaction, I saw glimpses of their lives with the way their body language, face expressions, and tone of voice.

My volunteer experiences gave me a chance to get to know and grow with the EBSC community. My time at the Santuario [EBSC] provided me with so much insight about the immigration system and the process that individuals have to take. This office is filled with many moving parts and it helped me shape why I want to share the stories of the people I came into contact with. Many of the times their stories stay within the office, but it is important to recognize that their stories are powerful and can make a change outside those walls. The more I engaged with the community, the more aware I became that the individual telling their story is one of a kind. Many come from the same region but their experiences make them who they are. The details within someone's life is what makes their lives distinctive. People have the right to tell their story in their own words without any judgement for what they had to experience to get to the U.S. It was important to me to give them the chance to feel comfortable and safe to tell their life story.

Being more involved with the Santuario changed the way I wanted to do my report. I no longer was interested in hearing all the gory, sad, and stereotypical immigrant stories that the public hears in the media. My volunteer experience showed me that they are humans with goals, families, friends, and aspiration. I changed the way I did my methods by eliminating the Life History Calendar, not wanting the participants to point out and repeat different parts of their lives that impacted them. Rather, I wanted to highlight and elevate their voices by giving them a platform to be themselves and to have the agency to tell me what made them uncomfortable. Volunteering at the Santuario guided me to redefine my methods and analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodological Approach

Site and Population

I started my research because I was interested about what immigrants and refugees go through to reach the U.S and how they recover, heal, and adapt to life in the U.S. When I presented my ideas to Lisa, she had suggested that I would fit perfectly in the oral history project. EBSC was seeking volunteers for their Celebrating Sanctuary Oral History Project to document the experiences of a range of people who have fled violence and persecution and are rebuilding their lives in the U.S. The EBSC team wanted to focus on the immigrant community in the Bay Area and wanted to uncover how they are adapting. EBSC was highly interested in their future goals and their achievements in order to give them a face and a voice since they are more than their status. I took an interpretive approach to reveal how people's perspectives are being constructed through their experiences, social interactions, and social groups in my methodology (LeCompte and Schensul 2010, 80). Individuals' reactions reflect their experiences and interactions they have gone through—immigrants and refugees perceive the world differently because of their background and experiences. This approach allowed me to grasp the perspective of my population, immigrants and refugees, experiences and adaptation to their new setting in the East Bay Area.

When I first started, I had a set of questions and topics I wanted to cover. I wanted to learn about their lives and experiences. Going into this project, I knew I wanted to give them a platform to have others outside of the immigrant and refugee community understand that these individuals are human, and they are no different than the rest of the population. Being more

involved in the community changed my perspective of how I was viewing my project. I still want to give them a platform, but it was more than them telling me their story. It consisted of radical listening to them when they were at their most vulnerable, appreciating them for allowing me to be a part of their world. It took time and patience for my participants to want to share their story with me. I went to the office more and helped out as much as I could. I was lucky enough to have Lisa Hoffman and Manuel De Paz to help me recruit my participants. Hoffman and De Paz acted as gatekeepers and allowed my participants to feel comfortable to reach out to me to be a part of my research.

I used an oral history approach and was guided by semi-structured questions. An oral history collects personal memories of events and helps anthropologists recognize historical autonomy (Creswell, 1998; Olmedo, 1997). Oral History is a method that involves open-ended questions over multiple sessions to recollect deeper memories and to identify their experiences and the ways they are adapting (Leavy 1975, 3). The questions that I used focused on the individual's life history, experiences, and behaviors. I divided my questions into three parts, each focusing on the different phases that immigrant's experience. My interview instrument (appendix A) consisted of questions related to their lives back in their home country, the reasons why they decided to leave, their migration journey, and adapting/settling into a new environment. My instrument was a guide to help me cover one of many immigrant stories in the U.S.

My oral history approach was successful because it helped my participants be more comfortable that it was more of a conversation flow rather than the specific kind of closed-ended interview that they have experienced before with lawyers and other intimidating officials. This conversation style allowed my participants to go on tangents about distinct aspects of their life.

The resulting easiness helped me discover how their experiences have influenced their lives. Overall, it gave the participants more room to talk about anything that was in their head that day. The interview permitted me to ask my participants deep and personal questions about their childhood, family, friends, struggles, successes, and dreams. I asked them to share how they learned about EBSC and how EBSC has helped them adapt in the Bay Area. I also focused on outside forces that helped my participants other than EBSC. My goal was to have twelve participants to hit saturation (Guest et al.). I learned quickly that people's stories are very different, so I cannot hit saturation. I cannot group together all migration stories in one date point because of how diverse and unique each story is. Each story revealed their childhood, heartbreaks, obstacles, celebrations, and goals. These themes identify how they perceive the world and how their environment has influenced them. Overall, I recruited twelve participants who were Mexican, Guatemalan, and Salvadoran.

I recruited my participants through Lisa Hoffman and Manuel de Paz. In the beginning, I depended on them to tell their community about my project. They spoke to people who they believed would be open to sharing their experiences. I used a purposive sampling approach to recruit my participants because I wanted to give an equal representation of the Latinx population. Purposive sampling helped me select my participants based on my research objectives (Bernard 2011, 160). The participants had to fall under certain guidelines such as having to be a Latinx immigrant from Mexico, Central, or South America and over the age of eighteen. Lisa and Manuel warned me that it would be difficult to recruit individuals because they are afraid that their story can be held against them. I understood and bolstered my efforts to be more involved with the community such as attending events, workshops, and helping Manuel with his outreach.

After a while, my participants started to agree with Lisa and Manuel that it was safe to speak with me. With more participants being familiar with me, they told their friends or suggested people that they thought would be a good fit for. This began my snowball sampling to recruit a higher number of participants. Snowball sampling allowed for the word of mouth recommendation to recruitment for my research (Bernard 2011, 163). My current participants had advised me that they would tell their friends first and to wait a day or two to contact their friend. All I had to do was to introduce myself and tell them that a particular individual had told me to call them.

Before the interviews started, I informed my participants about my project. I wanted to give them fair warning about my goals and what my research was for. I discussed with them that I would not use their name in this project and that they have full anonymity. I further explained that they had the whole right to not want to participate and to contact me if they no longer wanted to participate. When we talked prior to our interview, I read them the consent form and reminded them that they would get a copy of it in English and Spanish for them to keep in their records. I clarified that all records of their interview and demographics would be kept confidential and would be destroyed after my project. I explained that they had the right to not answer any question if they felt uncomfortable or that they could reach out to me after the interview if they had thought about something in their lives that they think is relevant. Lastly, I asked them to think of a place where they felt most comfortable to hold the interview. I emphasized that I was flexible and wanted the space to make them feel safe and secure.

Oral History-Semi Structured Interviews

The oral history approach proved to be an essential method to gather information from my participants. Participants were required to be eighteen-years of age or older to participate in the project. Hoffman and De Paz at EBSC helped me recruit my participants. Participants were recruited if they were current or have been clients at EBSC and other members of the Latinx community. Participants who were not part of the EBSC community were recommended to me by the people who I came into contact with. I interviewed twelve adults in different settings because it allowed them to be comfortable. I used a stratified sampling method to have a representation of the population. There were an equal number of four Mexican, Guatemalan and Salvadoran participants each in order to meet standard stratification requirements. The sample included a representative presentation of four women and eight men in this project to have representation in the study. The participants are from different parts of the Bay Area and come from different parts of Latinx countries. The sample contained speakers of both Spanish and English. Individuals under the age of eighteen were excluded, as their age and status as a minor can potentially leave them vulnerable. This is the appropriate population for the study as it fulfills the goals of the purpose of the study: to examine the experiences that Latin American immigrants and refugees go through to reach the U.S and how they are recovering, healing, and adapting in the U.S. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, English, or a pidgin of the two (i.e. Spanglish). Ultimately, participants decided what language the interview was in.

I also held informal interviews with clients that I interacted with at the EBSC office or at events. These small interactions were quick, but most of the time this is where I would get a lot of small miscellaneous details. When I would see participants or other members of the community at an event or at the office, I would walk up to them and greet them. I would ask how

their day was going and to see how they were doing. These interactions led me to understand and connect to how they live their day-to-day lives. It gave me glimpses of what was on their mind that day. I learned how EBSC's clients learned about different aspects about life such as opening a bank account, enrolling their kids in school, and finding other financial and housing resources. These conversations filled in gaps that my interview questions missed. These smaller and informal conversations gave me a better insight on the daily life of an immigrant.

I began this process thinking it would be easy to set up an interview with my participants. I quickly learned that the time of my participants is valuable and that they have much more important priorities than to cut a chunk of their time to talk to me. I made it my mission to schedule appointments on their time and explained that they could choose the location. Having them choose the location made it easier to conduct the interview (if, for example, they had to be home to take care of their kids they were there). I did not want to disrupt their schedule, so I committed to being flexible to fit their schedule. I was available Monday through Sunday. It was easier for me to make appointments on the weekends, but nevertheless I traveled after work to get to my participants location. It was rough maneuvering up and down the Bay Area, from San Jose to Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito, San Francisco, and San Leandro. Every trip that I did was on BART because of the quick ride and I was dropped off near the participant's location. I interviewed my participants in their homes, parks, the EBSC office, and the courtyard of the church connected to EBSC. These locations helped my participants to have agency in choosing where and when they would want to be interviewed. I ended with twelve interviews over a three-month period, in which I hit saturation for a representation of Mexican and Central American (Guatemalan and Salvadoran). It took three months to collect my data because of the

different schedules we had. Many of my participants would cancel and reschedule because they did not have childcare, they had to pick up a shift or simply were not ready to talk about their lives. With every reschedule, it reminded me that people are busy and that it takes a lot of my participants to sit down with me.

My interviews lasted from sixty to ninety minutes. These conversations ranged depending on how much detail my participant gave about their life. All my interviews were set up through a phone call. Calling secured that my clients would answer the phone. Most of the time I would have to tell Manuel to tell the people that I would be calling from a 661-area code. I noticed that many of my participants would not answer if they did not recognize the number. They often would also confess that they would not listen to the voicemail either. We would laugh and I explained that it is common and that a majority of people would do the same. At the beginning of each interview, I made my intentions clear for the project to the participant and relay a brief description of the project and gave them a chance to read over the consent form. I gave my participants the option to split the interviews in two parts if they felt the conversation was getting too emotional for them. I explained to each participant that any shared information would be anonymous, personal information would remain confidential, and that I would record the interview. I then disclosed that the recording is needed to ensure that I am representing them accurately. I ended by emphasizing that the recording and any other information about will be deleted at the end of the project in May 2020.

During each interview, I tried my best to make sure each participant was heard and comfortable and did not take extensive notes during the interview so I would not feel distant or disengaged. I found that not taking immediate notes during the conversation allowed for open

conversation. However, when the interview ended, I took notes on the environment, how it went, the body language expressed and facial expressions that happened throughout the interview. I also took note of what topics made my participants sentimental and what topics were tough to talk about. Immediately when I went home, I would upload the audio file to my computer. Some of the interviews that were in English went through Otter.ai for a quick transcription. I then would go in and fix all the errors to make sure I have the full transcript. The interviews that were in Spanglish or Spanish, I would use OTranscribe to transcribe the audio manually. After all the audio files were converted to transcripts, I would transfer them to a Word Document.

Finally, I created a codebook that contains my themes and their meanings. For this project, coding was essential to explore and define the multiple layers of the immigrant and refugee experience. Constructing the codes came from my enthusiasm to understand how immigrants and refugees define their own stories. My codes were broadly defined by the details that the narrator told. Each narrator spoke about the reasons they left and their journey coming to the U.S. They discussed how they were able to get around the U.S. and what resources helped them. I was able to sort when the narrators spoke about their day to day life. Being able to hear about their day to day life shows their experiences, hopes and dreams for the future. Sorting out the interviews in this way made it possible to see how the narrators viewed their life story.

I began the coding process and highlighted the transcription texts that pertained to my project (LeCompte and Schensul 2010, 200). I highlighted sections of text and specific words that related to the participant experience. I then broke down each of those concepts by age, gender, and ethnicity, who they received the information from, and how they think will help them achieve their future goals. This process allowed me to see patterns as demographic factors

intersected with their experiences of immigration. For instance, when I analyzed how they crossed the border, the age demonstrated the different ways that people cross. The younger they were, the more feasible it was to cross the border by car or have used fake papers while older participants went through the treacherous journey on foot.

In this next section, I talk about the life histories of my participants. Each part has different stories that illustrate the different movement of migration. The participants leave their country for different reasons but come to the U.S. with one goal: to have a better life than what they had back home. Many of them went through many obstacles to get to the U.S., which gives a glimpse of what they went through. The natural flow of the stories begins by revealing why the participants migrated, followed by the journey, and conclude with how they have adapted and what they hope for the future. I organized the stories by dividing them into three sections. The section describes the different experiences that the participants and others can go through in order to arrive and adapt in the U.S.

Chapter 4

Oral Histories of Latinx Immigrants Living in the Bay Area

An important part of this research was to consider the life history of previous and current clients of EBSC and others who were recommended. To do this, I connected with twelve Latinx participants that were willing to share their oral histories with me. The participants were Jay, Jairo, Pedro, Israel, Beto, Santiago, Benito, Antonio, Daniela, Esperanza, Blanca, and Coco. The interviews took place from November 2019 – February 2020 at various locations across the Bay Area and lasted between sixty to ninety minutes. The interviews were divided into three main parts: motivation for migrating, the journey, and settling. The range of different information comes from the different experiences that the participants have gone through. Each participant has his or her own views, values, and struggles making them distinctive. These stories do not tell the stories of other immigrants residing in the Bay Area or in the U.S. The following sections provide a summary of the interviews conducted, followed by a quantitative analysis on the process of these individuals being able to settle. This section discloses the strength and resilience of the narrators and it gives a glimpse of their lives.

Why they left

Immigrants from Latinx countries leave their country for many reasons. Some do not have a choice and are forced out to leave. People of all ages come to the U.S. seeking safety and new beginnings. Children and adolescents embark on the journey not knowing what lies ahead of them. Adults save enough money to take on the journey as safely as possible with a coyote, an individual smuggling people across the U.S.–Mexico border, but sometimes they go alone. Before they decide to migrate, they think long and hard to figure out if migrating to the U.S. is

the right choice for them. They think about the circumstances that they are going through to make this decision. Leaving the only country they know is difficult because they leave behind family, friends, and their home. Many of them leave the only place they know to find a better opportunity for themselves and their family. Many of the participants left their home country because of poverty, violence, and/or because they were adolescents with no choice. They believed that living in the U.S. was better than their home country. They trusted that the U.S. would provide them with jobs to make income. They wanted a chance of survival and to have a better life for their children. In what follows, the different reasons why some participants decided to leave their home country are detailed.

Poverty

The living conditions that two of my participants went through in their home countries were the biggest influence on their departure. Jairo, a twenty-six-year-old from Mexico mentioned that his family's neighborhood was up in the hills and explained that families who lived up there were impoverished. He described that the area he lived in was mostly dirt roads and the houses that were there were constructed of bricks. He explained that many times there were multiple families living under one roof. Nevertheless, his mom tried to do her best to raise her children.

[My home] was essentially a little... I mean it was home because we live there, but it wasn't really like an apartment or anything. It was just... think like a brick house and then like lamina (metal sheet) on top and that was it. And the door would also be lamina. There wasn't anything. So that's kind of how most of the houses where we live were. It was that way in every place that we lived, but like no apartment. No, none of the

accessories that there are today. Growing up there, it was very rural. There weren't a lot of homes. There was a house maybe like every now and then... every so few feet away, but a lot of them were just being constructed or people just have like the lock there, but there wasn't anything. So, there was a lot of empty land where I lived. It was up in the hills. So essentially, the atrocity of it is if you have less money then you live up in the hills, and if you have more money then you live closer to the city, so we lived up in the hills.

It took his mother to have multiple small jobs to make enough to feed him, his sister and brother, and herself. When his uncle visited from the U.S., he told Jairo's father that the right decision was to migrate to the U.S. because they no longer had enough to survive. Jairo's uncle believed that their lives would be better once they left their town and reached the U.S and that Jairo and his siblings would have a better future with enough resources. Jairo's parents decided to migrate in 1999, and Jairo's family has been in the U.S. for two decades.

Carlos, a thirty-five-year-old Salvadoran, explained that his parents and siblings lived in a small two-bedroom house in El Salvador. He shyly said that his sisters slept in one room and he and his brother slept in another. His parents slept in the living room to make sure that their kids had enough space on the bed. Carlos' parents tried their best to keep their children comfortable and would find different ways to entertain them. He remembers that his parents would fight because it was difficult to find jobs to get money. Carlos tenses up and mentions that his parents did not like fighting in front of him or his siblings and would move to an isolated room. He explains that despite the closed door, they would still hear their parents fight. Carlos expressed that, "being in a small place does not give you enough privacy. Everyone knows everything and

if you wanted your own space...you went outside". Ultimately, his parents decided that it was best that his father went to the U.S. to find a job in order to send money back home.

After a while, the money being sent back became less and less, and it was becoming hard for his mother to find enough small jobs in El Salvador to provide food. Carlos recalls that his oldest brother decided he was going to the U.S to live with their father. Carlos' brother made it to Los Angeles and found a position that helped him save money. Time had passed, and his older brother had saved enough money to help Carlos hire a coyote. Carlos crossed two borders to get to the U.S. at the age of eighteen. When he successfully set foot in U.S. soil his brother was waiting for him at a gas station. His brother had been living in El Cerrito, CA and helped Carlos find a job at a restaurant as a dishwasher. Carlos highlighted that when he lived in El Salvador he knew he was poor and did not know if he would be able to afford to pick up and leave his country.

Living in poverty makes it difficult for individuals to carry on a day to day life because they are wondering if there would be enough money to live. Food resources become sacred and it becomes apparent that parents will make sure their kids are nourished. Jairo and Carlos both migrated when they were young because their families did not have enough resources to continue to live in their country.

Violence

Over the years, crime has increased in Guatemala and El Salvador. Many people are fleeing their country because of the harsh crimes that happened and are happening. Three of my participants revealed that they fled their country because they did not feel safe anymore. They constantly had to watch their backs; they did not know who to trust. It became difficult to live a

day to day life with this constant fear. They believed that their only option was to migrate to leave behind the violence that was occurring. Pedro, a 58-year-old Salvadoran man, migrated to the U.S. because his village was taken over by army soldiers. These soldiers killed anybody who spoke out publicly against them, but sometimes it did not matter who they took. Unfortunately, Pedro's three siblings were killed publicly, and Pedro became fearful for his life. Pedro's siblings were tortured and ridiculed because they were involved with a group that demanded change. Pedro with a blank face and few words illustrated a horror scene of how his two brothers and sister were murdered. He explained that after the deaths of his loved ones he decided to flee his village. Pedro described that he no longer could stay in his village because he was afraid that he would be next. He fled to the nearest town where it was safer and took shelter there. Pedro worked for about a year when he decided that the only way to fully live without fear was to migrate to the U.S.

Benito, a twenty-five-year-old Mexican man, left Mexico because his mom built up the courage to migrate after his dad's passing. Benito was eight when his mom decided it was time for her and her children to migrate to the U.S. He explained that it became difficult when his father passed away because his mom acquired all the debt and responsibility that he had. Benito's parents had owned small shops and were able to bring small amounts of money each day. These shops gave them the chance to stay afloat. When Benito's fathers passed away his mother took over his shop and that is when her problems surfaced. Benito mentioned that his mother took more than she could handle but did it anyways because she needed the money. He explained that his mother maintained both of their small shops open until she could not anymore. He described that when his father passed away, they had lost their protector. Benito emphasized

that his father would do anything for them, and it became hard because they relied on him. When his mother decided to leave it was because she was being harassed by a man that his father owed money too. Benito vividly recalls how this man would force his way into the house to talk to his mother.

Yeah, this guy would just randomly go to the house and you know, tell her that she needed to pay up. If she didn't have the money, she could pay him another way, and my mom would never and she would always stop him and be like, oh I'll get the money. She would always just do that. So, when we left it was just, we just needed to leave.

Luckily, for him and his mother, his brother had migrated to the U.S. years earlier before their father passed away. When Benito's father was alive his mother had applied to get a U.S. visa and was granted permission to travel back and forth. Benito's father, mother, and sister would save money and buy airline tickets to visit his sister in the U.S. When his father passed away all of this changed, and they no longer could afford to go. His sister took the responsibility to help his mother pay any debt that she had acquired to make sure she would not get any malicious visits. Benito's sister worked multiple jobs to sustain herself in Oakland, CA and to send money back. Many of the times the money she sent back was not enough and his mom would find different outlets to have enough. When it became too difficult his sister told his mother to pack up because he was going to buy them airplane tickets. Benito stated "the last few years there [Mexico] I didn't really see it, but my mom had to deal with a lot of really hard decision making. Making decisions to pack up and leave everything behind is difficult because it sometimes involves more than one person." Individuals have to come up with a plan and decide

how they are going to migrate. It is not a choice that is made over night because it needs planning and money.

Lack of Alternatives

Many children do not have a choice to migrate because they are too young to make a decision. Their parents decided for them and they do not have a choice. They do not know what is happening. They only know that they are leaving their homes. Three participants were under the age of four and they had little knowledge on the transition that was going to happen. One participant was eight years old and he knew that they were going to migrate to the U.S. to live with his sister. He didn't have a choice because his mom was not going to leave him alone in Mexico.

Daniela, a twenty-four-year-old DACA recipient from Mexico was three years old when she left her home. She remembers that it was early in the morning when her mom dressed her and her brother to start the journey. Daniela remembers very little about that day, but she remembers being in the car with an unfamiliar lady. Daniela stated "I left when I was three. I don't remember anything. I think that's what a lot of people won't understand about people who leave Mexico at such a young age. Like, we don't have the ability to say if we wanted to leave, to leave family or to not." With tears in her eyes she explained that it was difficult for her to understand that they had left their family, friends, and her dog. She thought that they would return, but eventually one year turned into twenty years.

As the years passed, Daniela had lost memories that she had with her family in Mexico. It was hard for her to remember her grandparents because there were a few years where she had no contact with them. She empathized "I don't remember any of them [family members] and that

was taken from me.” When kids are young, they follow their parents. Their parents want a better life for them. They believe that they can achieve that by having their kids assimilate into American schools. They will get the necessary education in order to advance to the next degree. The parents of my participants hold them to a higher standard wanting them to achieve great things in academia. Two out of the four have graduated from a CSU and one is on her way to complete their B.S. degree.

En Route

There are many ways that immigrants migrate to the U.S. Many times, individuals take the journey multiple times to reach the U.S. The journey is not the same for everybody. Some go through horrible instances of violence, are captured by border patrol or make it on their first try. The migrant story is intertwined with different paths, but the end goal is to make it to the U.S. Some immigrants overstay their visas, travel with fake papers, cross deserts, and lakes to have a hopeful future. My participants took different paths to get to where they are now. In what follows are stories of how some of my participants crossed the border.

Airplane

One participant flew to the U.S. with his mother while his siblings crossed the Sonoran Desert. Santiago, a thirty-six-year-old explained that it was easier for him to cross the border because he went on a plane. He explains that his journey was not anywhere near as difficult as his siblings. Santiago was twelve when he left Mexico with his mom, but it was not until after his siblings had gone with the coyote. He expressed that his mom felt guilty that two of her children were not granted visas. Santiago and his mother were approved a year earlier and had saved

enough to buy airline tickets. During our interview, Santiago becomes closed off because he remembers how hard it was for his siblings to cross the border. He felt guilty that his entry was easier because of the detailed stories his siblings told him and his mother.

Santiago explained that his mother did not want to leave until enough days had passed since her children left. His mother wanted to get them to get to the U.S. before her because she would know that they were safe. She did not want to leave Mexico in case her children were apprehended and sent back. Santiago, playing with his hands, says “she just wanted them to get there and to get here safely and before us so we can just all be together when we got here. But that wasn't the case.” Santiago explained that his siblings struggled a lot to get to the U.S. They had to walk through the desert. They were robbed and were left behind in the desert by their coyote. Santiago was taken back when he heard that a group of people helped his siblings get to the border of Tijuana. The group were going to try to cross the border with fake identity cards.

At the very end they just went through the linea with some fake micas [I.Ds]. So, yeah, they had to wait and see if they could go through with the fake micas. They went through the wrong side and a coyote nearby was, like, no, no, you have to go through this side. But they didn't. They went through another side. And my sister went through and my brother had to glue his ears back because he didn't look like the picture so he had to glue his ears back a little more and apparently when they were in line waiting to go through the glue just came off 'cause of how nervous he was. He had a hat anyways so he kind of just tucked his ears in there. They let them through and the other people that were trying to cross through the actual, you know, linea, they didn't allow them in. So, my sister and brother made it in.

Santiago was thankful that his siblings made it because they were together once again. He explained that Christmas was around the corner and he felt fortunate that he was with his family even in a new environment.

Car/by foot with fake papers

When children migrate many of them can cross the border with fake birth certificates. Many parents sought help from individuals who would sell their children's birth certificates in order to cross young migrants. Early in the 90s and 2000s it was easier to cross young migrants in this matter. This was possible because it was before 2001 where the borders were not as strict as they are now. Before the 911 attacks, it was easier to enter the country, but after the attacks the U.S. immigration policies have become tougher and the security has tightened. Israel, a twenty-six-year-old Mexican, stated “we crossed over with unos este [some] birth certificates. So, through the linea they just basically asked for our names and they said so and so raise your hand... and the lady we were with told us to raise our hand when they said our name. They [Immigration agents] just said our names and we raised our hands. And we went through customs essentially to the linea basically walking. I arrived in California or stepped foot in California in November of 1999.” He explained that it was easier when you could fit the description and were little because it was harder to question a little kid.

Another participant, Coco, a thirty-six-year-old Guatemalan woman, crossed her kids with a lady from her town that would sell her kids birth certificates. The lady would travel back and forth to the U.S. that it became a business for her. Coco explained that she paid the lady 300 pesos for both her kids, while she crossed the border. She didn't care how she got to the U.S. because she only cared that her children would get to their location safe and sound. She

explained that her kids were too young and don't remember how they crossed. She buckled them up at their old house and saw them a few days later. Her kids slept through the whole car ride to the border. The Border Agents didn't not hesitate or ask the travelers any questions. They crossed the border and arrived in East San Jose where their father had lived for the past few months.

Settling

Sometimes arriving at a new place is hard to navigate. There are many unknown possibilities such as finding a place to stay, job, or other resources. Immigrants have to be cautious of their surroundings because they do not have the proper paperwork to stay. They constantly are in fear if they will get deported, their visas will expire, or if policies will change. My participants expressed that their community or their status helped them adapt to where they are now.

Community/Friends

My participants highlighted the importance of community and friends. Many of them believed that without community they would not be able to have fulfilled the things they have accomplished so far. Since arriving the community of my participants helped them with babysitting, finding jobs, housing, and with favors. My participants emphasized that sometimes you only have community to rely on. My participants and their community had created a system that helped them adapt and survive in a new country. Many of my participants explained that they did not see it as a favor because they knew they would return the gesture. Some of my participants explained they were grateful for the people they had met because they all helped in

some way. Esperanza a twenty-three-year old from Mexico, tells how her father's friend helped them settle the first few years

“It was my dad's family friend that helped us out a lot. He gave us like a room for all of us, knowing like his family was huge, too. So, like, he helped us out a lot. They're a big family like my parents never had to worry about like oh, who can take care of us and who can do this or how are they gonna treat each other? Because I think we all literally helped each other. We kind of grew up together for those first six months and then after that I literally think that every place that we have lived at like has the people who rent to us have helped us in their own little way.”

Esperanza looks back on how easy the transition was for her because her father's friend gave them a place to stay. Her father's friend lived near a school and his children, Esperanza, and her brother would go to school together. Her parents did not have to worry if Esperanza and her brother were okay because there were some always watching them. Her father's friend made the transition easier for them and it allowed them to find the right resources.

Antonio was another young man that relied on his community when he arrived in the U.S. When I first met Antonio, he was shy, and barely spoke to anyone. He had been living in Oakland, CA for a few months and was receiving aid through EBSC. He was staying at la casa de la Hermana (Sister's house) and lived with other men who were transitioning to living in the Bay Area. He was able to adjust to his new home because of his friends. He lived in a safe place where immigrants were welcomed. It was a home and he was encouraged and supported. He was able to obtain a job that allowed him to go to school. He works every day to be able to sustain himself and with the support of his friends he is able to adapt in Oakland.

Legal Status

Temporary Protective Status (TPS)

Many of my participants are allowed to work and reside in the U.S. through TPS. This program allows my participants to work and to have more job opportunities. It gives them somewhat of an equal chance to assimilate in the U.S. Blanca, a forty-two-year-old Salvadoran woman voiced that she was granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 2003. She explained that she was one step closer to being able to settle in the Bay Area. This gave her the opportunity to have a secure job and to worry of being deported. She stated, "I felt that my entire life would change when I received TPS." She felt relieved that her TPS status would help her family.

To this date, I don't take my TPS status for granted, because it is a privilege. I am very careful to never violate the privilege of having TPS status here in the United States.

It has allowed me to gain social security, health benefits, job opportunities, security from being deported, and a better life for my family and me. TPS has also given me independence, a wonderful home, and a community here in El Cerrito.

Blanca expressed that she was nervous when she heard that TPS may not be renewed. Every year she is afraid that TPS will end and it will force her to go back to El Salvador. She raised her concerns that if TPS is not renewed she will lose all the things she worked hard for in the last twenty years that she had been in the U.S. Blanca advocates for her community and the TPS community because she believes that TPS grants many opportunities to people who have come here for a better life.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA)

The participants that arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16 applied for DACA and were granted the status. This allowed them to work, travel, have a driver license, and to apply for in-state tuition. It helped the participants succeed in their lives, but they still fear that the program will end due to the current administration. Daniela explained to me that her DACA status gave her the ability to work, but most importantly it helped her financially during college. She explained that she was lucky because when her brother went to college he paid through scholarships. She explained that she did not know what DACA was when Former President Obama announced it. She paid little attention, but her mother was the one who became informed and knew this would be beneficial for Daniela and her brother. When Daniela was approved for DACA she was aware that she would obtain a social security number, but did not expect that she would be able to gain many other things. She expressed “it [DACA] allowed me to work which is what I needed to do, and then allowed me to practically obtain things that I wouldn't have gotten.” She excitedly said she was able to get a driver license and now has her first car. Daniela feels safe with DACA and it permits her to travel to other states. With a smile on her face she says, “it really gave me that sense of belonging and being like a part of a community.”

Having a legal status gives individuals the benefits that a resident and citizen have with a bit of restrictions. They are able to apply for grants, FAFSA, their licenses, or a credit card. These small gestures give individuals the liberations to feel like they pertain to the community. Having a legal status allows them to breathe and to feel a sense of relief because they do not have to constantly worry about being detained.

The Future

When I was finishing my interviews, I wanted to ask my participants what they hoped for the future and what they are most proud of. Many of them were taken back as those are questions, they have not been asked before. The confused faces of what they hoped for was compelling because it seemed like there were thousands of thoughts running through their head before they opened their mouths. Many times, there was a long pause and nervous laughs before they could think of something. Esperanza stated that she wants to continue going to school to complete a degree in a science field. She explained during high school there would be representatives of San Jose State and other colleges that would give presentations about the different fields they can go for. Esperanza noticed that the representatives did not look like her and she could not identify with them. She made a goal that she would become a person that younger girls can relate to. She wanted to be an outlet for younger girls, and she is striving to meet that goal.

After that, I was always conscious of the people that were speaking in front of me, like who they were, where did they come from? It was hard to connect with people who would come to your class to talk about so and so when they hadn't even been close to what you've been through. They didn't even represent the color of your skin, didn't even represent your own sex, or anything like that.

Esperanza has high hopes for her future. She wants to be that person for someone else because she did not have that. She emphasizes that it will not be easy, but she is determined to fulfil her dreams. Esperanza arrived in the U.S. when she was four and transitioned to school pretty well. She wanted to be the example for immigrant children coming to the U.S. with little knowledge of

the language and culture. She wants to be the representation that was lacking when she went to school.

Jay, a twenty-five-year-old male from Mexico explained to me how he wants to obtain his GED to be able to get to leave his job as a lead clerk at a bathhouse. He believes with a GED he would obtain a better job now that he was granted asylum. He continued with telling me that he hopes to start his own family soon. “Eventually in the future, I really do want to get married. I do wanna get married. I wanna have kids. I used to think that like, you know, I just wanted my own blood, but as time goes by, I’m okay with a surrogate or something.” His vision of how he sees his life shows that he thinks similar to others. By talking to him it revealed that he is a young man trying to live his life without fearing the consequences of what ifs. Jay highlighted how he feels blessed to have his asylum granted and that he can work to put in the paperwork for his residency.

On the other hand, Jairo had a different outlook in his life. His DACA status does not permit him to plan for the future. He hesitated to respond but expressed that there is no certainty in his future. He does not like to plan for his future because he does not know where DACA is going to land. He earned his teaching credentials in December 2019 and is living day by day. Jairo kept emphasizing that “this whole status thing is still somewhat uncertain.” He is grateful for the opportunities that DACA has given him but is worried that it can change in an instant. Jairo clarified that he will push ahead regardless of the circumstances. He expressed that it would be nice to own a home or have nice things, but to him he cannot plan for the future. He concluded by saying that he is a stranger in Mexico and in the U.S.

I can't call this place I guess quote on quote home but even in Mexico like I have property and everything and it's not home. I don't know anybody there. I don't know what the future really holds because it's up to the hands of what these people [policymakers] are thinking as far as like immigration status. But I think for the future it's just to continue to be knowledgeable of the stuff and I think continue to work hard to basically be qualified for whatever is coming ahead.

It becomes difficult to plan your life when the current administration threatens to remove the only things that allow people to work and go to school. My participants and others have to constantly worry if TPS or DACA will be renewed. These statuses are the way that they can adapt by attending school, traveling, and having a decent job.

Based on the research I was able to identify the multiple paths that Latinx immigrants go through to reach the U.S. The participants' shared their stories about how they were able to migrate and adapt to their new environment. These stories explained why statuses are important and what they contribute to the success of immigrants. They reveal their hopes and dreams and what it means for them to be successful in their lives. Each participant disclosed their views, values, and struggles making them distinctive and personal. These stories do not tell the stories of other immigrants residing in the Bay Area or in the U.S. Each story has a name behind it and this project elevates their voices so they can be heard and tell their truth. The concluding chapter focuses on the online pdf that EBSC can use for their online platforms. It also dives into how this project is driven by having an Anthropological lens and the limitation that the project had.

Chapter 5

Implications and Conclusions

Immigrants and refugees are extremely resilient. They workday and night and still try to maintain a “normal” life. This project allowed me to produce a narrative for the ASV launch in February 2020 and online PDF that will include the rest of the stories that I collected (Appendix A). These stories go into depth of immigrants who suffered, recovered, and adapted to life in the United States. EBSC has dedicated a page on their website for the ASV project. This page explains what ASV is, past events, and a timeline of the Sanctuary Movement. Most importantly it holds that space for the stories that were collected by ASV. This page is upcoming and in the process of being updated with the ASV February Launch event stories and the stories that were collected for this project. The raw stories allow the public to understand the different layers that people go through to come to the United States. It reveals more than their stories, but their values, morals, and beliefs. My participants were asked about their lives in their home country, their lives in the U.S., employment, and family/friends. The subtopics helped me explore their lives and learn what they are hoping for the future.

The online PDF for EBSC highlights multiple stories. When I was creating the PDF, I asked my participants if they would like to have their stories shared online. Many of my participants were excited to have their stories shared in a public forum. Four participants shied away from having their stories shared in this online form. I respected their decision and kept them off the online PDF. The ASV team will have access to these stories and will manage which stories they would like to share. Ultimately, the stories will be a part of the EBSC website to highlight different segments of the immigrant experience.

The stories presented were divided by reasons of leaving, journey, and settling. These stories were constructed by their own words. I printed out their transcripts and pulled sections to create a cohesive narrative. I read through the sections and began to remove filler words. Once the filler words were removed, I read throughout the transcripts to see if there were sentences that were incomplete. I removed these sentences because I did not want to fill in their thoughts. The narratives were constructed by their own words. Reading through the transcripts, I made sure that the verb tenses were consistent to have a natural flow.

Similar to the ASV launch, these stories will highlight a section about their journey. These stories are raw and spotlights individuals who migrated and settled in the U.S. People will be able to get a glimpse of their story. The stories are shared for individuals who are not part of the immigrant community. These narratives help understand the lived experiences of people who have left their home country in order to build empathy and solidarity. This online PDF gives a voice to those who are directly impacted by U.S. immigration policy.

The Anthropological Difference

An anthropological take on the immigrant experience involves multiple stakeholders from policymakers, public servants, families, to teachers. Anthropology contributes a different lens than most because it reveals details that many cannot obtain without ethnography. Anthropology makes you question the popular discourse on the current state of immigration. How immigration is being talked about in the news? How immigration is being talked about in the current administration? How are organizations advocating for immigrants? These ideas are connected with one another and it reveals how it was being discussed and how it is being

discussed now. Anthropology helps you question the categories used to understand the world (Blomberg and Darrah 2015). Questioning how we perceive the world deals with evaluating the knowledge one has and how knowledge is being disseminated. The stories I have collected tell that the individual is more than an immigrant. They are people with goals and dreams. As an anthropology student, I made use of ethnography. It helped me learn how a subgroup of people within a larger society understood and interpreted the environment around them. In order to understand their lifestyle, I had to comprehend how society and their culture influenced their daily lives.

The use of ethnography within immigration highlights the individual's morals, values, and the way they think by the way they interact with me. I am able to see how they understand the world and how people view their world. Ethnography permitted me to analyze patterns in how they think and their assumptions about the future. Overall, it revealed if there were tensions, inconsistencies, or contradictions within their thoughts. Having an anthropological lens allowed to look further than the surface to understand and empathize with immigrants and refugees.

Anthropology influenced me to take a step back in my research; to understand how my participants understood their environment and how their environment influenced them. Coming from an immigrant family, I heard similar stories, but hearing from others gave me a historical and contemporary context about their lives and a greater appreciation for the wide diversity of experiences that lead people to migrate. Sitting down and being able to talk to individuals about the most vulnerable parts of people's lives meant having to look at immigration on a larger scale. In Fall 2018, when I first began to explore how I wanted to discuss immigration was because of how the political climate had made it acceptable to depict immigrants as criminals. It became

very apparent that the news was painting a bad reputation about immigrants coming to the U.S. to steal jobs and to be criminals. Immigrants and refugees were under attack and it created this essence of them being the other. They no longer had humanity because of how they were being painted to the public.

In 2018, The New York Times published an article explaining that Trump took advantage of the Central American Caravan by increasing the anxieties of Americans. The authors explained that the president had been tweeting about the Caravan blaming democrats for the intrusion. The administration were not the only ones who were talking negatively about immigrants. The news also took part in dehumanizing the experiences of immigrants and exploiting the situation to gain political momentum. The stories that were being told about immigrants did not give the public a good impression to resonate with them. The news created false narratives and influenced many individuals to believe that immigrants are harmful to the public and the economy.

The language used has power in how the message is being presented. The individuals who have the media platform show who has power, who is important, and why they are important. Political and media narrative influences the public, and it shows that the language can define how someone interprets the message. Many times, the political and media narrative speak for the immigrant and do not give them a platform. This creates a barrier of only knowing the narrative of the media instead of immigrants. It is important to create a space to hear about first-hand experience by an individual who is being affected. Hearing their perspectives can provide new information to someone who is not familiar with the immigrant experience.

As an anthropologist collecting their testimonies it gives the opportunity to educate the public about the harsh and happy realities they experience. Their testimonies can have a greater impact to change policies because they speak their truth. Their words provide meaning about their lives and how they perceive the future. When I asked the participants what messages they wanted to tell the public, many of them answered that they want the public to look at them as the “other.”

I was brought here. I didn't ask to come. There's DACA but I couldn't apply for it. We all have our struggles and we have a reason to come to the country. We are not all bad people. Just like in any background. Not everybody's bad. And just take a chance on people, you never know, you might get surprised and befriend someone who you never thought you would be friends with. - Jay,

I think it would probably be that regardless of ethnicity or race we're all human. I don't think a nine-digit number should be those things to define whether one belongs in a certain place or not. – Jairo

To always keep fighting through activism, whether it's creating those spaces for others to be welcomed in, whether it's using your privilege to help someone else like us, whatever your abilities are and whatever resources you have will help a lot of people. – Daniela

These narratives convey how they believe they are being perceived. Changing the political and media narrative about immigrants can change how the public views them. They have goals to contribute to their community, but have restraints on how much they can do. In the past few weeks, the future of DACA was unpredictable. The current administration ending

DACA left organizers, advocates, DACA holders, and parents were devastated that this program had ended. Shortly after, the Supreme Court decided that DACA ended abruptly and the administration did not provide enough and justifiable reasoning to end the program. Then, once again, the administration put a hold on new DACA and Advance Parole applicants and decreased the approval time of DACA work permits. This constant back and forth leads immigrants with the instability to move forward. They want to be heard and advocated for to have equal opportunities.

Limitations

This project had a limited area of immigrant participants and future studies can address the larger immigrant population in the Bay Area. The number of immigrants and refugees in the Bay Area are high making it difficult to collect everybody's testimonies. One main limitation to my project was my sample size and diversity of sample population. My sampling population was produced by email thread and word of mouth, which fairly worked well with the community of EBSC and outside of EBSC. An extended study or a broader outreach approach would benefit finding a larger sample size. The sample was limited to twelve participants, which is small and does not fully represent the views of the diverse community of Latinx immigrants. Despite the small sample size, the idea was to help EBSC have stories that they can use on their online platforms. ASV can use these stories to create a public forum with the community and to educate and learn how we can use these dialogues in other ways. The stories are there to demonstrate the narrator's courage and hard work as they rebuild their lives.

Now in June 2020, there has been an outbreak of a new virus COVID-19. COVID-19 has created new challenges that EBSC has to face and overcome. On March 18, 2020, the Bay Area

ordered a Shelter in Place to stop the spread of COVID-19. This order made EBSC close its doors and work remotely. This outbreak changed how EBSC employees, volunteers, and staff interact with one another. EBSC employees are working on updating client's files and maintaining communication with their clients. EBSC provided Manuel with a computer in order to continue his work and helped him connect to the internet. Prior to COVID-19, Manuel only used his smartphone to communicate with family members and friends. COVID-19 brought unexpected problems, but EBSC is trying to prevail. There has been a stop in bringing volunteers because EBSC has transitioned to remote work. Now EBSC staff depends on the volunteers that they had in Spring 2020. Many have moved on and can no longer volunteer their time making it difficult splitting their times between paralegals and lawyers.

Employees are supporting their clients through phone and updating them on their case. Transitioning the communication through the phone is easier because they have built a trustworthy relationship. They had the chance to meet each other and see each other a few times. Making it easier to have a trustworthy relationship and to make sure the client feels safe and comfortable. I speculate gaining the trust of a new client will be difficult because it is not a face to face conversation. Many immigrants do not have the luxury of having a computer to communicate through a video conference call. Gaining the trust of new clients will take time, but the transition gives EBSC a chance to work closely with their community to see how they can support them in this time.

Closing Remarks

Overall, this project in partnership with East Bay Sanctuary Covenant uncovers the multiple faceted immigration experience. I applied a set of ethnographic methods such as

participant observation and an oral history interview approach to capture the participant's life story. This approach revealed the perspectives on why they left their home country, their journey, and what it is like to rebuild in the U.S. Further research is needed to get a more overall scope of Latinx Americans specifically from South America and the Caribbean to amplify their immigration story. The testimonies from this study show a different side of the immigration story that is not always disclosed. They reveal the dedication and goals that immigrants have to continue their lives. The testimonies give an insight into learning the immigration experience with personal stories. These life histories provide personal opinions, values, and beliefs. The deliverable is an online PDF to link the public with testimonies of individuals who have migrated from Latin America. The online PDF is public on the EBSC website giving access to future clients, volunteers, advocates, and visitors. Having this platform for this project helped elevate these wonderful stories.

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Appendix A: Online Website PDF Deliverable

Testimonies

Jay is a 25-year old man who was born in Jalisco, Mexico. He migrated with his mother when he was eight years old, received asylum in 2018, and is waiting to apply for his residency.

In 2008, I heard about EBSC through my friend Alex. We met up for coffee and I explained my situation to him. At that time, I hadn't processed my trauma and I didn't think that they would take my case. A while later, he mentioned East Bay Sanctuary Covenant again and I made an appointment. I remember I came in and I talked to a girl and she asked me if it was okay for her to type it in English and I told her I can do it in English or Spanish. She made sure the process was the easiest for me. She wrote everything down that I told her and after that, I met up with Cristina who has been amazing. Cristina referred me to the OLAS LGBT Sanctuary Project, and I've met some great people there. OLAS helps LGBT asylees emotionally and psychologically. The people at OLAS have been a resource that I needed but didn't know I needed; they made me feel that I wasn't alone.

While going to OLAS, I applied for asylum. I remember receiving letters from immigration and saying "oh my God, it's happening. What if I don't make it?" There's always that possibility. Fortunately, it's been such a great experience, I feel very grateful. I can finally breathe. I don't want to be in limbo or forced to wait years to become legal. I'm so glad I got that little push from my friend Alex.

The first immigration interview was to make sure that you are who you say you are and that your case is valid. From that interview, it could go two ways. One way is a follow-up interview and the other is sending your case straight to court. I remember being so scared that my case was not good enough. I walked into the officer's office and the interview started. In the end, she told me, "all right, we're going to do a follow-up interview."

My next appointment was on January 2nd. Unfortunately, they had given a lot of people an appointment that same day and they had to reschedule me. In February I go with my lawyer and a translator. I walked to the asylum office and met with my officer. He was really nice - and very handsome, too. During the second interview, I told the officer what had happened to me in Mexico. He only interrupted me once or twice during the whole interview. At the end he said "all right, well this is the date when you're going to come back and get your response." I left thinking, "that's it?"

I received a letter again telling me to go pick up my response in early March. I went with my best friend. I remember being there and thinking "I'm back here again in this building. I'm scared." The worst part was that we were given a number and we had to wait to be called. I'm sweating and thinking "what is happening to me?"

They called me and I went to the desk and I blanked out. I noticed the lady's talking and I see her mouth moving. But I can't hear anything. I just see her pull some papers with a blue stamp on it and I don't know what that means. I look at the bigger letter and it says "asylum approval notice." When I read that I was so happy.

I'm looking at her and nodding and saying thank you so much. I didn't even notice anything else she was telling me but she was giving me papers and talking to me and I was just agreeing while saying "Thank you." I was just so happy. I walked to my best friend and told him, "my asylum case was approved."

Blanca is a 42-year old woman who was born in El Salvador. She migrated alone to the United States. In 2002, her Temporary Protected Status was approved, and she began to work.

I was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. to seek a better life and to escape the violence and extreme poverty. I lived in a small poor village with my parents, sisters, brothers and my two boys. We could no longer afford food for all of us. There were too many of us. Sometimes we were lucky to find a job for the day and that would help us for a bit. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't the life I wanted for my children.

In 1999, I had decided that I wanted to leave El Salvador because I wanted to provide for my children. I didn't want to worry that I wasn't providing enough for them. My parents were afraid. They didn't want me to go, but I knew I had to. I remember my mom asking me "Blanca, are you sure you want to leave?" I told her that I was ready, and it would help her.

I remember thinking that it would be easy to find a job on the other side. I remember being scared because I didn't know what was going to come. When I first arrived, I was alone, sad, and scared, but at the same time, I was excited and eager to seek the American Dream. The first few months in LA were hard. I found jobs that paid very little, but I was grateful that I had them. I couldn't send money back right away because I was only making enough for myself. Time went on and I met new people and they helped me find other jobs.

In 2001, during the big earthquake of El Salvador, I was granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS). I felt that my entire life would change if I received TPS. I knew it would open many opportunities that I did not have prior to TPS. To this date, I don't take my TPS status for granted, because TPS is a privilege. I am very careful to never violate the privilege of having TPS status here in the United States.

I am extremely grateful to have TPS. It has allowed me to gain social security, health benefits, job opportunities, security from being deported, and a better life for my family and me. TPS has also given me independence, a wonderful home, and a community here in El Cerrito.

I have lived in the U.S. for twenty-one years and am proud to call El Cerrito my home. I have 3 children in their twenties. My two sons have received asylum and are on the pathway to U.S. citizenship. We have created a life in the U.S. I get emotional and stressed when I hear that TPS may not be renewed. I feel that everything that I have worked for with my TPS over the past years is going to be thrown out like garbage.

The fear of being deported to El Salvador after more than two decades of living here in the United States is unimaginable. If forced to return to El Salvador, I would be afraid for my life as well as for the lives of my immediate family members. I would be forced to either leave my children here in the U.S. or expose them to dangerous conditions in El Salvador.

Santiago is a thirty-six-year-old male who was born in Mexico. He is currently waiting to hear about his case.

Me and my mom had visas. He had been to California because my oldest brother migrated and helped us get visas. When my grandma passed away me and my mom were visiting my brother. We were visiting because my brother's wife had just given birth to my niece. She was the first grandchild and my brother really wanted us to be here. When we came to visit it was a whole new country for me. I remember I got a figure for Max Steel and it was my first official toy. I was all excited and I was ready to take it back to Mexico.

I remember one morning my mom received a phone call from my sister in Mexico. She told my mom that we need to go because my grandma was very sick. My grandma had already passed away, but my mom has heart problems, so my sister didn't want to just say it over the phone. I immediately felt that my grandma had passed away. I remember my tias that were living here came over and told my mom that my grandma passed away. By then my brother was buying us tickets to go back to Mexico.

My grandma passing away made my mom want to come live in the U.S. She didn't want to stay in the house because that's where my grandma passed away. My mom wanted to leave and go live with my brother. She wanted all of us to go, but my brother and sister didn't have visas. I remember her trying to figure out how she could get my brother and sister to the U.S. She got the rest of the money that we had, and she paid a coyote to cross them over.

It was around Christmas time when we were leaving Mexico. I remember my mom wanting them to get to the U.S. safely before us. But that wasn't the case. They struggled a lot to get here. They had to go through the desert. My sister and brother got robbed and were left to die. They went through a lot before they eventually were able to get to the border.

At the very end they crossed the border by walking. Border Agents let them cross with some fake micas (I.D). My sister had told me that they went through the wrong side. She recalled a coyote was nearby and told them they needed to go through another side. They didn't and went through the side that they were waiting in. My sister went through and my brother had to glue his ears back because he didn't look like the picture. When they were in line waiting to go through the glue came off because of how nervous he was. They let them through, and they made it to Arizona.

My mom was so glad. I remember thinking we can spend Christmas together now. Me and mom flew to the San Francisco Airport a few days later. I had it easier than them, but I was glad we were together.

Daniela is twenty-four-year-old DACA recipient from Mexico. She was three when she migrated with her brother. Her family have been living in East San Jose for the past two decades.

It's hard when people asked me how my life in Mexico was. I have little memory of my life there. I only remember certain things. I remember where we lived and our two-story house. I remember having tons of dogs. I had a nanny back in Mexico. I think my family was really well-off out there. For the most part, life in Mexico was good, if not better than what life is out here in California.

In Mexico, I lived with my parents and my brother. It was just us in the house, but my brother and I had our own nannies. They would sometimes stay with us. They would take care of us because my dad had a little convenience store. My mom had her nursing degree and worked in a hospital. My mom was working or my dad would either be in the store, so we had a nanny to take care of us.

After a while the little convenience store wasn't producing enough revenue anymore. I don't know what happen, but I know my parents closed it down. My dad couldn't financially support us anymore. Back in Mexico, men are upheld to a certain standard. They need to be the ones producing all this money. At that time, my dad felt that the best thing was for him to come to the United States. He thought he would work for a while and come back to Mexico with the money he saved. My mom was a nurse, but when my dad decided to leave, she stopped working. She had to take care of us and live off with what my dad was sending back.

I don't think we would have been able to have that lifestyle that we had in Mexico if he would have stayed. My dad migrating was best for everybody because he would financially support us. My dad was gone for two months when I started to become sick. When I got sick my parents started to talk and plan how we would migrate. The plan wasn't for us to come to United States. But I got sick.

I started getting sick and the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. There was a point where I stopped eating. I couldn't keep anything down; I was just sick. I was sent to see a specialist and they couldn't find anything either. Once the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong my mom had decided that we were going to go with my dad.

I remember my mom telling us that we're going to be moving and that we were going to go to Disneyland. I don't remember how long after we visited the doctors that we came to the U.S. I only remember my mom leaving and my brother and I staying with family members until our last day in Mexico. I thought we would come back, but its been twenty years. I've created a life in San Jose and I barely remember my time in Mexico.

Israel is a 26-year-old man who was born in Mexico. He migrated with his siblings when he was four years old. In 2013, Israel was approved for DACA.

Back in Mexico, it was my mother, sister, brother, and me. There were four of us because my dad was never around. My dad had migrated to the U.S. with godfather a couple of years ago. My dad came back because he wanted all of us to move to the U.S. It wasn't livable for us there anymore. We were really poor, and we only had our mom's income before my dad came back.

I was five when we left Mexico. If I can get the date correct it must have been November 16, 1999. We left el Estado de Mexico to go to la Ciudad de Mexico airport. From the airport, we landed in Tijuana and met up with a coyote. My parents had hired him before we even got to Tijuana. For safety matters, we had a code. The code was to make sure that we were the group he was looking for. The coyote had part of the code and we had to say the other part. The code gives you protection because it's a life-risking situation. The coyote was for my mom.

My mom couldn't cross with fake papers. My brother, sister and I took a different route. My mom paid a lady that would cross kids with her children's birth certificates for my us. We stayed in Tijuana for three days before we crossed over. During those three days, we stayed at this hotel named La Frontera. We were there for a couple of days in a small room. I was lucky because the coyote that crossed my mom over mentioned that it was easier for him to not get mugged by the people there if he had a kid with him.

I went out with him every time he left the hotel. He left for different reasons and we didn't ask questions. I would be with him when he would make calls to the U.S. I went to stores with him. I remember him buying sandwiches and milk for us. I remember all that vividly. I did a lot with him. I was able to see more and experience outside of the hotel, rather than being inside the hotel.

On November 19, 1999, we crossed over by foot through the linea with our fake birth certificates. In the linea, the lady my mom hired told us to raise our hand when the officers said our names. They explained to us that they would call our names and we should raise our hands. The officers called out our names and we raised them. They didn't question us. We walked through customs and immigration walking. We were eating conchas while crossing the border to San Diego. That's how simple it was during that time.

Benito is a twenty-five-year-old from Mexico, He migrated to the U.S. with his mom. He has been living in San Leandro for two decades.

I grew up in a small town near Guadalajara. I was there up until I was around 13. My life in Mexico was very interesting. Overall as a child, you don't really expect how things will affect you in the future or you don't really think about it as something bad. Overall with my family, it was okay. My mom would cook every day and then eventually, she got her own business, near the house. She had a boutique type of thing. She would sell lingerie, perfumes, Jafa and Avon. At first, she started by going door to door. Then eventually rented this little locale (spot). My mom and my oldest sister were the ones that basically took care of that whole place.

My neighborhood in Mexico was full of nosy people. Everybody knew everything about everyone. It was like that saying pueblo chico, infierno grande [Small town, big hell] That's pretty much how it was because it was such a big deal if you were gay or it was a really big deal if you were not a Catholic. I mean my mom got along with most of the neighbors.

We used to rent a house. It was a two-story house. My sisters and my brother had a room upstairs and I slept with my mom and my dad in the same bed. It was a king size bed, so we had a lot of space. In the house my dad had his own shop. He used to sell jewelry. He would make earring, bracelets, and necklaces. He was always working. Then there was this huge living room, kitchen, and a dining room. We had one of the bigger houses in the neighborhood. It wasn't ours, but it felt like home. We had to move from there because the price was increasing, and we couldn't afford it anymore. We had to move to another house, and it turned out to be right behind our old house. That house was a lot smaller than the previous one. We didn't mind because we were still together. It wasn't until my dad died that things started to become bad.

My mom started to get harassed by a guy who my dad owed money to. She had to take care of everything. My dad's shop, her shop and feeding all of us. My sister who moved to the U.S. would help us, send us money, but it wasn't always enough. The last years there I didn't really see it, but my mom had to deal with a lot of hard decision making. This guy would just randomly go to the house and tell her that she needed to pay up. If she didn't have the money, she could pay him another way. My mom would never do that, and she would always stop him. She tried her best to pay him back.

We left because we needed to leave. My sister told my mom that she didn't have anything over there anymore. I remember my mom being hesitant, but she eventually agreed. Originally it was supposed to be my mom and me. My sister told my mom she would pay for my other sister to cross with a coyote. My mom didn't agree because my brother would stay behind. My mom wanted us all together. She didn't agree until both my sister and brother had a way to cross the border. My sister agreed and collected enough money for both of them.

Esperanza is a twenty-three-year old woman who was born in Mexico. She wants to continue her education to complete a degree in a science field.

I don't know what surprised me the most about arriving to the U.S. I think it was the fact that we had a lot of people help us. My dad had been to the U.S. multiple times and he had made friends. When we arrived one of his friends really helped my mom and dad with housing and jobs. My dad's friend helped us with a room at his house for all us. He had a big family, but it didn't stop him from offering.

It was because of my dad's friends and his family that made the transition super easy for us. Someone was always at their house. My parents never had to worry about who can take care of us or who can do this. We all helped each other. We kind of grew up together for those first six months. After that, we found our own place and we stayed there for a few months. Every place that we have lived at has helped us in our own little way.

The third place we moved to was a two bedroom apartment. My mom had made friends with our neighbor in case if she needed someone to check on us when they were at work. My parents would and the lady would just come and go to check on us. My brother and I always played video games when they were gone. One time someone had called the cops on us. They called the cops saying that there were two kids, and no one was taking care of them.

I remember being scared because we didn't have papers. We had always done what we can to not have any contact with the authorities. I remember they were banging on the door. We would hear banging and then a shout "it's the police. It's the police." We were little kids and we didn't know what to do. My brother had to take care of me, and he was scared too, but he couldn't show it.

We were just sitting down, and we stayed quiet. We could hear them banging and trying to come in. Thankfully, our neighbor came, and she asked them what the problem was. They told her that someone called us that there were children here who were underage. I remember hearing her say that she was checking up on us and that she lived right next door.

My brother and I were behind the couch when she knocked and said that she was coming in. I remember the cops coming in and asking us how we were. Our neighbor told them that we had food and we were playing video games. I remember the cops telling her that someone had called saying that two kids were in this apartment with no parents and were alone for a couple of days.

They made it seem like we were starving. I felt so scared because I didn't understand who would say that. We were just little kids. I was so grateful for our neighbor because she protected us. Every place that we stayed helped us. In one way or another all the families that we crossed paths are family. We still stay in touch with all the families. If it wasn't for them our transition here wouldn't been as easy.

Jairo, a twenty-six-year-old from Chimalhuacán, Mexico. He migrated in the U.S when he was five years old. In 2013, he was approved for DACA.

I grew up in el Estado de Mexico in the city of Chimalhuacán. When I migrated to the US, I grew up in San Leandro, California. My Life in Mexico was not the best. We were very poor. I had a father, but he was never there. I tend to say that I didn't know who my father was until I arrived in the U.S. There really isn't much of a harmony memory with him. We moved back and forth when we were in Mexico. We've moved consistently because it was either renting a room or renting like a small little thing. By the time I was two we had moved to four different cities around Chimalhuacán. Living in those cities ranged from a few months to no more than probably a year.

There were a lot of this things that was scarce to us because we didn't have much. For example, because my father was not around my mom would work constantly. She would take my sister and I with her and sometimes she would collect like alambre [wire] to sell. This was a way that my mom was able to get money. It wasn't much, but we would have enough for food. A lot of the food that we bought was just the simple stuff like eggs, beans, tortillas, stuff like that. Nothing too luxurious or anything. We were just grateful that we had food.

Mexico was different because everything was walking distance. None of us had a car so we would walk everywhere. We also used the bus to move from place to place. Taking the bus was my favorite because we didn't have to walk back to our house. My house was essentially a little worn-down place. I mean it was home because we lived there, but it wasn't an apartment or anything. Think of a house built with brick and then a lamina as a roof and that was it. The door would also be a lamina sheet. There wasn't anything.

Growing up there it was very rural. There weren't a lot of homes. There was a house maybe every few feet away, but a lot of them were just being constructed but there wasn't anything. There was a lot of empty land because in Chimalhuacán where I lived a little bit more. It was up in the hills. So essentially, if you had less money than you live up in the hills, and if you have more money than you live closer to the city, so we lived up in the hills.

The motive my mom had to leave was quite interesting. My dad had come back from the U.S and we still had nothing. A few months after my dad had returned, my uncle came to Mexico to visit us and he saw how bad we were living. He saw how bad my mom was struggling to feed me and my sister. He didn't like that we were living in this small little home with nothing. He gave my dad a lecture and basically told him "How is this possible? You're working almost seven days a week and your family is living in horrible conditions. They don't have enough food."

My uncle convinced my dad. It didn't take much for my dad to be convinced. He already had lived in the U.S. and knew what to expect. A month passed by and my dad had found two coyotes. One for him and my mom and the other for my sister and me. I remember it was early in the morning when we got into a car and we didn't come back home.

Appendix B: MOU

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East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC)
Kristen Constanza (San Jose State University, Applied Anthropology M.A. Program)
Memorandum of Understanding

Purpose

This MOU is to establish a collaboration between East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC) and Kristen Constanza. EBSC is a nonprofit organization serving low-income immigrants and asylum seekers. Kristen is a graduate student in Applied Anthropology at San Jose State University who is writing a thesis on the experiences of asylum seekers from Latin America and different forms of recovery and healing that Latinx immigrants/refugees develop while using EBSC's services.

Roles and Responsibilities

This project calls for active engagement and clear communication between EBSC and Kristen Constanza.

EBSC Role and Responsibilities:

- EBSC will help Kristen to have access to and build relationships with EBSC clients, staff, and volunteers by facilitating introductions at events, workshops, or at the EBSC office, as appropriate and mutually agreed upon.
- EBSC will connect Kristen with possible interviewees and provide spaces to conduct interviews as mutually agreed upon.
- EBSC will include Kristen in meetings related to the Amplifying Sanctuary Voices (ASV) oral history project and facilitate connections with other ASV staff and volunteers for mutual benefit.
- EBSC staff Lisa Hoffman will be available to communicate and coordinate with Kristen as appropriate and mutually agreed upon.
- EBSC will not provide any monetary compensation.

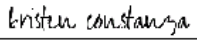
Kristen Constanza Role and Responsibilities:

- Kristen will protect and respect all individuals affiliated with EBSC, including staff, volunteers, and clients. To ensure trust, Kristen will spend time building rapport with EBSC members, including volunteering at workshops and events.
- Kristen will meet regularly with EBSC staff Lisa Hoffman, CDE Coordinator, Manuel de Paz, and other staff and interns to discuss any questions or areas of mutual concern.
- Kristen will maintain confidentiality of participants at all times. If there are any questions or concerns related to confidentiality, Kristen will request a meeting with EBSC staff to clarify.
- Kristen will ensure that all participants understand EBSC's confidentiality policies and sign an EBSC release form. Kristen will submit a copy of all release forms to Lisa Hoffman.
- Kristen will be responsible for scheduling, conducting, analyzing and coding interviews.
- Kristen will share a summary of interviews for possible use in EBSC's ASV oral history project (if participants have agreed to share their story in this way).

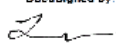
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- Kristen will complete a report of findings and share this report with EBSC. This report will keep all individuals and locations involved anonymous and safe. This report will be constructed with full respect of the community.

Signed

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10/ 29/ 2019
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Kristen Constanza
San Jose State University
Applied Anthropology M.A. Program

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Lisa Hoffman
EBSC Director of Development

10/ 29/ 2019

Date

Appendix C: Interview Instrument (English)

EBSC Interview Questions- English

These interviews should be in a conversational style.

These questions are a guide for the interviews (you can add or omit)

Background (Get to know them a bit)

- Where did you grow up?
- What was your life there like?
- How was it different from here?
- How many people are in your family?
 - Who are they?
- What did they do for a living?
- What was your home and neighborhood like?
- Do you have any particularly good memories of home, or bad ones?
- Do you have interesting stories, or funny or sad ones, from home?

MOTIVATION FOR MIGRATING

- What was your motive to come to the U.S?
 - What was your parents' motive to come to the U.S? (If teen)
- What were your parents' hopes for your new life here?
 - What was your parents hope for a new life here (If teen)
- Why did you choose to come to this country instead of somewhere else?

THE JOURNEY

- Who did you come with and who did you leave behind?
 - Did anyone come ahead of you?
- What was the most difficult part about leaving your home country?
- What was your journey to the U.S like?
- What was the most difficult part of migrating here?
 - Physically, emotionally and mentally could be topics you can touch.
- Was there anything in your journey that you didn't expect?
- What was it like when you first arrived?
- What surprised you the most about the U.S?
- What did you miss most about home when you arrived?
- Who was most helpful with getting you settled?

Settling

- How did you learn about EBSC?
- What services do you use from EBSC?
 - Legal or educational
- If so, what services has helped them the most
- What's your occupation now?
 - How do you like your job?

EBSC Interview Questions- English

- What do you do on a daily basis?
 - Any routines?
- How does your experience compare to what you expected?
- Can you think of times when you have felt unsafe/unwelcomed as an immigrant?
- What about when you have felt welcomed?
- So far, what is the thing you are the most proud of?
 - why?
- What are you hoping to accomplish in the future?

Appendix D: Interview Instruments (Spanish)

EBSC Interview Questions- Spanish

Estas entrevistas deben ser de estilo conversacional.

Estas preguntas son una guía para las entrevistas (puede agregar u omitir)

Antecedentes (conócelos un poco)

- ✓ ¿Dónde creciste?
- ✓ ¿Cómo fue tu vida allí?
- ✓ ¿Cuántas personas hay en tu familia?
 - ¿Quiénes son ellos?
- ✓ ¿Qué hacían para ganarse la vida?
- ✓ ¿Cómo era tu casa y tu vecindario?
- ✓ ¿Cuáles eran sus creencias y prácticas religiosas?
- ✓ ¿Tienes algún buen recuerdo de tu hogar o uno malo?
- ✓ ¿Tienes historias interesantes, divertidas o tristes, tu hogar?

MOTIVACIÓN PARA EMIGRAR

- ✓ ¿Cuál fue su motivo para venir a los Estados Unidos?
 - ¿Cuál fue el motivo de tus padres para venir a los Estados Unidos? (Si es adolescente)
- ✓ ¿Qué esperaban tus padres de tu nueva vida aquí?
 - ¿Qué esperaban tus padres de una nueva vida aquí (si era adolescente)
- ✓ ¿Por qué elegiste venir a este país en lugar de a otro?

EL VIAJE

- ✓ ¿Con quién viniste y a quién dejaste?
 - ¿Alguien vino primero o antes que tí?
- ✓ ¿Cuál fue la parte más difícil de dejar tu país de origen?
- ✓ ¿Cómo fue tu viaje a los Estados Unidos?
- ✓ ¿Cuál fue la parte más difícil de emigrar aquí?
 - Física, emocional y mentalmente pueden ser temas que se puedan tocar.
- ✓ ¿Hubo algo en su viaje que no esperaba?
- ✓ ¿Cómo era toso al principio?
- ✓ ¿Qué es lo que más te sorprendió de los Estados Unidos?
- ✓ ¿Qué es lo que más extrañabas de casa cuando llegaste?
- ✓ ¿Quiénes te ayudaron mas a establecerte?

Estableciendose

- ✓ ¿Cómo supo del EBSC?

EBSC Interview Questions- Spanish

- ✓ ¿Qué servicios utiliza de EBSC?
 - Legal o educativo
- ✓ De ser así, ¿qué servicios les han ayudado más?
- ✓ ¿Cuál es tu ocupación ahora?
 - ¿Te gusta tu trabajo?
- ✓ ¿Qué haces a diario?
 - ¿Alguna rutina?
- ✓ ¿Cómo se compara su experiencia con lo que esperaba?
- ✓ Te has sentido inseguro / no bienvenido como inmigrante a veces?
- ✓ Cuando te has sentido bienvenido?
- ✓ Hasta ahora, ¿de qué estás más orgulloso?
 - por qué?
- ✓ ¿Qué esperas lograr en el futuro?