IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL DOWNGRADING:

THEIR STORIES IN LIGHT OF POSSIBLE SELVES THEORY

by

Jan Adversario, M.S.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Adult, Professional, and Community Education
August 2017

Committee Members:

Clarena Larrotta, Chair

Joellen E. Coryell

Miguel A. Guajardo

Jovita M. Ross-Gordon

COPYRIGHT

by

Jan Adversario

2017

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

Fair Use

Duplication Permission

DEDICATION

To Mama, who started this journey and paved the way for us.

To Papa, whose journey ended too soon yet continues to inspire
my own journey every single day.

And to Ate (big sister), who was, is, and forever will be
with me every step of the way.

This is for you, pangets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my professors at the PhD in Education program, thank you for imparting knowledge to me. I have become a better lifelong learner and education practitioner because of your expertise and wisdom: Dr. Robert Reardon, Dr. Ann Brooks, Dr. Duncan Waite, Dr. Sarah Nelson-Baray, Dr. Kathy Edwards, and Dr. Michael O'Malley.

To my ESL students, thank you for inspiring me to write this dissertation. I am a better educator and researcher because of you.

To Cohort 13 – the best APCE Cohort, ever. You have been part of this from the beginning and we have seen each other grow as professionals, researchers, and friends. I have enjoyed graduate studies because of you – Andie, Chinedu, Freda, Jim, Joslyn, Moira, Nat, Ted, Tim, TJ, Vanessa, and Yolo. Good luck to us!

My committee members –Dr. Joellen Coryell, Dr. Miguel Guajardo, and Dr. Jovita Ross-Gordon. Thank you for your unwavering support and expertise. Your guidance not only has enriched my dissertation but also broadened my perspectives on the issues that that this dissertation presents.

And last, but definitely not least, thank you Dr. Clarena Larrotta, for being such an awesome dissertation chair. Words are not enough to describe my appreciation for your guidance, time, and patience to make my idea of a dissertation come to fruition. I am honored to be your student and your mentee. *Salamat po, maestra.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study examined the occupational downgrading experiences of six adult immigrants. Occupational downgrading happens when an individual's occupation post immigration does not match his or her education credentials and previous professional experiences. The goal was to make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory. Therefore, the research questions guiding this study were: (1) What are the journeys of adult immigrants adapting to the demands of the U.S. workplace? (2) How do occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants shape their integration to the U.S. workforce? and (3) How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory?

Phenomenological interviews served as the main source for data collection. In addition, artifacts allowed the participants to enrich their stories and assisted them in triggering important memories. Lastly, historical timelines from the participants' countries of origin provided context for their immigration narratives. Phenomenological analysis was helpful in making sense of the participants' stories. Themes that emerged from the participants' occupational downgrading experiences include underemployment, shift in status, language barrier, feeling of discrimination, and lack of inspiration at the new job. Looking at past, present, and future selves, the participants' narratives were examined first through identity transition processes: (1) separation, (2) transition, and (3) reincorporation and then through identity forming processes: (1) reclaiming past possible selves, (2) rejecting past selves, (3) constructing new possible selves, and (4) expanding current ones. The study adds to a developing body of literature focusing on the possible selves of adult immigrants experiencing occupational downgrading.

I. THE JOURNEY BEGINS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I arrived in the United States as a seasoned teacher. However, my first jobs here were a receptionist and a telemarketer. But that was okay; I kept fighting the odds! I used those jobs to better my English language skills. I had to improve my communication by talking if I wanted to become a teacher again and find better business ventures. Coming from the Philippines, I knew that I had an accent and people here often pointed that out. When they do, I would tell myself, I may have an accent but at least I am grammatically correct. – Medy Allen

This vignette tells part of my mother's professional journey to the United States. She was an elementary public school teacher in the Philippines prior to immigration to the U.S. (see Figure 1). However, she was unable to use her education and professional experience right after immigrating. It took her almost three years before she landed a job that suited her credentials. Her story echoes the stories of countless immigrants all across the U.S. in a quest to seek greener pastures, to realize the so-called *American Dream*. Like her, many immigrants with established professions from their home countries immigrate for better opportunities abroad: "The blue-collar work they find in the U.S. may offer them a path to a better life than the white-collar job they left behind or a better future for their children" (Akresh, 2006, p. 1). Immigrants come to the U.S. bringing their culture, their stories, and aspirations. However, these journeys are often met with hurdles as they transition to the new host society.

Figure 1. Medy Teaching a Kindergarten Class, Philippines, 1973

My father wanted me to become a teacher. He said that being a teacher is a

noble profession - that a teacher can touch people's hearts and make a difference

in their lives! He also said that being a teacher is appropriate for a woman.

After earning my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education, I started an

almost twenty-year teaching career in the Philippines. I taught at various grade

levels, both at public and private schools. In the early 1980s, after my children

were born, my husband and I decided to invest in the food industry by opening a

bakery to augment our incomes. The bakery did relatively well until the height of

Martial Law during the Marcos regime, which affected businesses across the

country drastically. Unfortunately…this included the foreclosure of our bakery in

the mid-1980s.

Consequently, my mother wanted to improve her family's status by trying her

luck in the West. She frequented trips to the U.S. and eventually immigrated here. While

my father worked for a government agency in the Philippines and raised me and my older

sister, my mother sought work in the U.S. in hopes of better socio-economic status and

one day, bring her family over. Her journey was not an easy one; she faced many

challenges finding a job that suited to her education and work experience in the

Philippines. Her first job in the U.S. was a receptionist and then as a telemarketer. What

happened to her work trajectory can be best described as occupational downgrading: "the

situation where an immigrant's U.S. occupation is of a lower index level than his or her

last occupation abroad" (Akresh, 2006, p. 2).   Despite this, my mother saw these

positions as opportunities to improve her language skills in hopes of becoming a teacher

again. At the same time, she wanted to venture into other businesses and her

employment at these places gave her the exposure to the different industries.   She also

worked at an airport retail store (see Figure 2) while applying for teaching opportunities.

It took her more than three years to get her teaching certification for K – 8th grades.

Finally, she was able to secure a substitute teaching position (see Figure 3) and started

teaching for almost ten more years. Needless to say, she had her fair share of stories of

joy and misery in her professional journey.

Figure 2. Medy and Colleagues at an Airport Retail Store

Figure 3. Medy as a Substitute Teacher in the U.S.

The reason I came to the U.S. was to secure a better future my children. Aside

from my language skills, two of my biggest challenges in succeeding

professionally in the U.S., was my age at the time of my immigration and me not

being able to drive. I was in my early 40s when I moved to the U.S. and I feel that

this is not the ideal age to start a career here. This country is for the young and

ambitious…my age limited my professional opportunities. My inability to drive

also restricted me from welcoming better positions. Despite that, I am contented

that my children have the opportunity to improve their lives and help the less

fortunate in the Philippines.

Like my mother, many immigrants come to the U.S. with higher education, skills,

and professional credentials from their countries of origin. However, for some of them,

this exodus is ensued by challenges in the workplace, including underemployment and

underutilization of their credentials and skills (Alfred, 2004). As a result of this

occupational downgrading, these immigrants adapt to the new challenges of the new

work environment. This is the phenomenon I studied for this dissertation.

The Researcher

My positionality in this study is influenced by my own personal and professional experiences as well as my family's experiences.   I came to this country at age 20 shortly after completing my undergraduate degree in Development Communication from University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), a renowned, publicly funded academic, research, and extension institution and one of the seven constituent universities of the University of the Philippines System (see Figure 4). At first, I was hesitant to move to the U.S. because I was afraid that I would land a job that was not ideal to my standards. At that point in time, I was a wide-eyed, relatively fresh graduate who wanted to climb the corporate ladder and conquer the world. However with my immigration papers underway, I knew that I would not be able to use my degree, which was geared towards developing countries, I was going to start from square one and gradually work my way to where I wanted to be. Before immigrating, I had brief stints as a technical writer for the local government website and as a researcher for an agricultural college.
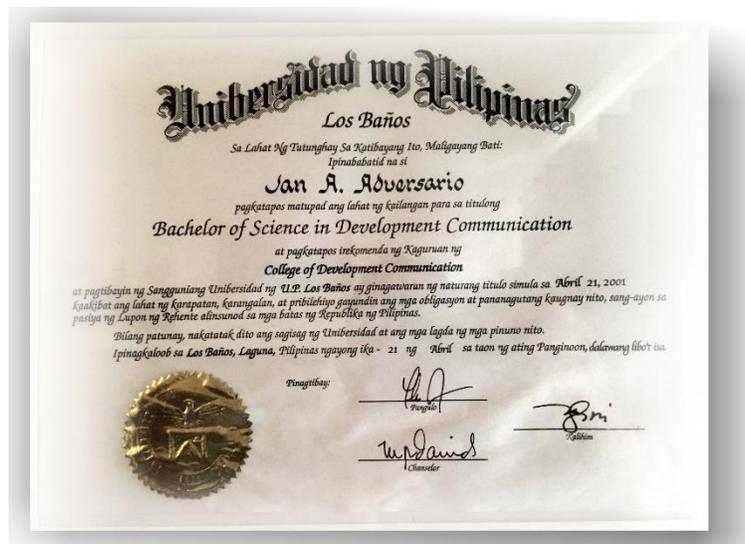
Figure 4. Undergraduate Diploma

I moved to the U.S. as a permanent resident under the family reunification category in the fall of 2001 (see Appendix C). At that time, I had very limited professional experience behind me. Regardless, I stood by this major life decision and was prepared to work at labor-intensive and service jobs. As I feared, finding opportunities that suited my education and very limited professional experience was scarce. In December of the same year, I landed a job as a mail clerk for a managed care (health insurance) company. As a college graduate with a relatively high scholastic achievement, this was not ideal for me but I accepted the job because it was the only company which was willing to take a chance on me. I also considered the location of the company because I did not own a car at that time, and had to depend on my brother-in-law for rides to work. Although I had zero knowledge of the industry, my administrative and clerical skills qualified me for the job. Also, my written communication and software skills drew attention to my leadership who groomed me to move up in the company. After just a few months, I was promoted to claims assistant and subsequently received notable commendations for my performance. Figure 5 shows a citation for me and a co-worker, which was featured in the company's newsletter.
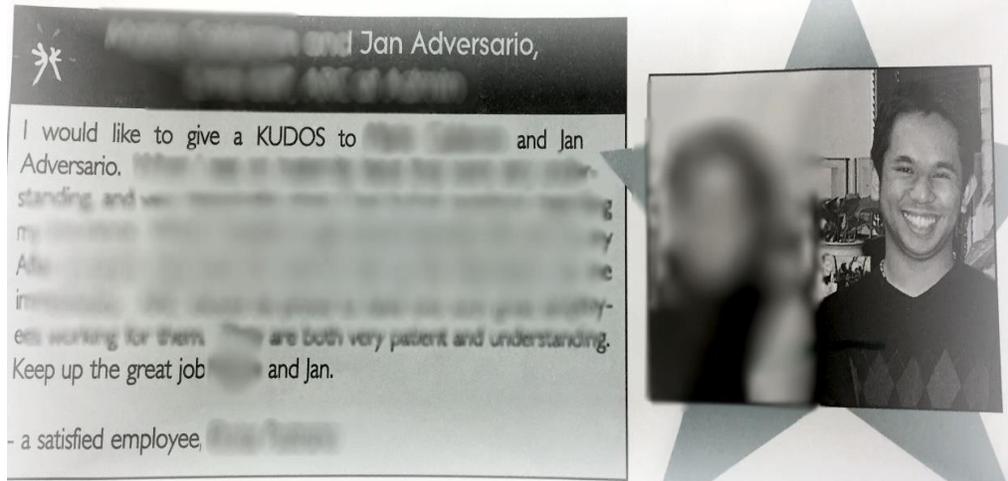
Figure 5. Commendation

As new opportunities came, I envisioned myself to take more responsibilities.

My career path started with that company and gradually I learned the business and

worked my way up to a more professional level. Because I had no foundational

knowledge of the managed care industry, I pursued a diploma program in medical billing

and coding and eventually received a certification. After that, my role shifted from a

functional role to a more project-based position. Soon after, I pursued a Master's in

Project Management from St. Edward's University in order to gain more knowledge of

the industry and to be able to have more mobility in my career. For me, being accepted

to a graduate school also meant a validation of my educational credentials from the

Philippines and finally moving towards a suitable career pathway. After completing my

master's degree in 2009, I landed a role as project manager for a state organization

focusing in public health. At the same time, I started teaching formally as an adjunct

instructor for medical billing and coding at a career college. After several semesters, I

discovered that I enjoyed teaching and wanted to pursue a graduate degree in education.

I wanted to learn new instructional strategies and improve my knowledge of teaching and

hence, I applied to the doctoral program in Adult, Professional, and Community Education (APCE) at Texas State University. In the fall of 2012, I left the state organization and accepted an opportunity in the private sector with another managed care organization. Several months after, I was fortunately accepted to the APCE program in and started my degree in the fall of 2013.

I continued teaching as an adjunct instructor at the career college while maintaining a full time job and pursuing graduate studies. In the winter of 2015, I started collaboration with the Asian American Cultural Center in Austin as a volunteer English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor (see Figure 6) to expand my skills and knowledge of adult education. There, I met students who have experienced occupational downgrading. To name one, there was a medical doctor who worked as a daycare teacher. She blamed her poor language skills as part of the reason for her being in that situation. Thus, my experience as an ESL instructor reinforced my passion to explore this research.

Figure 6. Volunteer ESL Teacher for Asian American Cultural Center

Teaching English to immigrants at the cultural center made me realize how pivotal language was in the immigration experiences of my students. I decided to leave the career college in the fall of 2015 and explore ESL teaching opportunities. During the same time, I accepted an ESL instructor position at Austin Community College (ACC) (see Figure 7). The situation at ACC mirrored what I had experienced at the cultural center. Many students held degrees and professional experiences from their home countries but in the U.S., they were working as wait staff, retail employees, and laborers. When I started my dissertation work, I knew that this would be my topic. I wanted to tell these immigrants' stories as they struggled to integrate into the U.S. workforce.

Figure 7. ESL Teacher at Austin Community College

Immigration to date remains a very political subject which sparks heated debates, not just in this country but also in the global arena. Demands in the workforce for immigrants are therefore still tied to political structures and thus needs to be looked at with a critical lens. These are realities that I face as an immigrant. I believe that more than understanding and interpretation of educational theories, there needs to be a pragmatic application to knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of immigrants in the workforce remains a burning issue in this country. In a 2014 press release on the federal role of immigrant and refugee integration, the White House recognized pillars that are critical to the integration of immigrants (e.g., civic, economic, and linguistic). With regard to the economic domain, the document explains that, "successful economic integration empowers immigrants with self-sufficiency and the ability to give back to their communities" (Economic integration section, para. 1). The press release also identified different strategies to ensure economic success of immigrants such as: (1) Ensuring the public workforce system meets the needs of New Americans, (2) Collaborating with employers, educational institutions, and others to enhance career pathways, (3) Taking full advantage of the talents of New Americans, (4) Enforcing labor standards, protecting worker' safety and enforcing nondiscrimination, and (5) building capital and nurturing individual and family.

In recent years, the U.S. Department of Labor has worked these strategies into initiatives that are aimed at accommodating immigrants' employment needs. This includes creation of New American Centers like one-stop shops that provide assistance to immigrants as they transition to the workforce (United States Department of Labor Employee and Training Administration, 2004). Other initiatives include language proficiency classes made available for those who have deficits in functional English. The goal of these federal and state initiatives is to ensure that every immigrant secures a job and transition to become a productive citizen. At the same token, these programs aim to ensure immigrants gain economic independence and become active in the community.

Despite these initiatives immigrants still face challenges in the workplace, one of them being occupational downgrading. In fact, Akresh (2006) concluded that more than half of the 531 immigrants she studied experienced occupational downgrading. There are several factors that affect occupational downgrading among adult professional immigrants such as transferability of skills, lack of language proficiency, lack of social networks, devaluing foreign academic credentials, ethnic discrimination, and lack of recognition of foreign work experience (Akresh, 2006; 2008; Chiswick, Lee, & Miller, 2005). For example, my mother's story showed that she experienced occupational downgrading but was able to resume to her teaching position after several years. On the other hand, some immigrants are unable to return to the positions they previously held before immigrating to the U.S. For some others, their career trajectories take a while to rebuild which also poses a risk for their previous professions: "Not only do their skills become outdated in light of changes in their fields, but they also offer a deskilling process in light of their original capacities" (Slade, 2015, p. 68). This implies that time is of the utmost essence for immigrants since they are rebuilding careers and reclaiming their former professions.

Another issue with the integration of immigrants are new demands and challenges of the U.S. workforce. Literature on nurses trained in foreign-trained nurses for example, show that they experienced communication difficulty, differences in work (nursing) practices, injustice and racism, and cultural adjustment (Xu, Guttierrez, & Kim 2008). With the interplay of these challenges and occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants, it is important to tell the stories of these individuals and analyze their journeys in integrating to the U.S. workforce.

Research Questions

This study documented experiences of occupational downgrading of six adult immigrants. It also examined their stories in light of possible selves theory. To clarify, *occupational downgrading* occurs when "an immigrant's U.S. occupation is of a lower index level than his or her last occupation abroad" (Akresh, 2006, p. 2). On the other hand, *possible selves*, refer to various components of the cognitive sense of self, the ideal self, who a person would like to be, who they can become, or who they might be afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Therefore, the research questions focusing the study are:

1.   What are the journeys of adult immigrants adapting to the demands and the new environment of the U.S. workplace?

2.   How do occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants shape their integration to the U.S. workforce?

3.   How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory?

Purpose of the Study

The study documented the stories of six adult immigrants as they integrated to the U.S. workforce. The stories provided voice to these immigrants who have experienced the phenomenon of occupational downgrading. Furthermore, this dissertation examined the journeys of these immigrants through possible selves theory. Finally, literature on possible selves among adult immigrants is scarce. This dissertation contributed to the literature making connections between possible selves theory and adult immigrant journeys. Knowledge from this study may be used to inform decisions made by

stakeholders including adult ESL practitioners, employers, and immigration policy makers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework can be compared to the blueprint when building a house: "it serves as the guide on which to build and support your study, and also provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole" (Grant & Osanloo, p. 13, 2014). Therefore, this study draws from possible selves theory to examine the career trajectories of adult immigrants and document their experiences struggling to achieve the American Dream. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), "possible selves derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future. They are different and separable from the current or now selves, yet are intimately connected to them" (p. 954). In other words, possible selves represent past, present, and future selves. Possible selves allowed me to investigate how adult immigrants who experience occupational downgrading tap into their past, present, and future selves. They may create selves that are temporary or provisional, as they attempt to reach their "desired self" or avoid their "feared" selves (Ibarra, 1999). Possible selves can also link to a past self that was not realized and in the new country opportunities to realize it may emerge. For this study, we analyze possible selves in terms of the immigrant experience, more specifically how immigrants transition into the workforce and their career mobility.

Literature suggests that there are two opposing theoretical approaches in the discussion of immigrant occupational mobility: the segmented assimilation theory (Portes

& Zhou, 1993) and the classic assimilation model. The segmented assimilation theory offers a perspective that immigrants are only able to create pathways that are available to them upon immigration. Simón, Ramos, and Sanromá (2014) expound:

> The segmented assimilation theory predicts the lack of occupational assimilation or convergence of immigrants over time, given that immigrants tend to be concentrated in the secondary segment of the labour market, characterized by low-paid, unstable and unskilled jobs with little room for occupational mobility to the primary segment, implying that the occupational downgrading of immigrants is not only transitory but also permanent. (p. 224-225)

In essence, the segmented assimilation theory sets a limit to the trajectories of immigrants as they are relegated into often more inferior segments of the society.

The assimilation theory on the other hand promotes that over time, immigrants will tend to recover from an initial downturn in their careers. Chiswick and colleagues (2005) speak about these patterns of career trajectory; they explain that patterns of career trajectories usually follow a U-shape for immigrants: "the decline in occupational status from the last job in the origin to the first job in the destination, followed by the subsequent rise with the duration in the destination can be described as a "U-shaped" pattern" (p. 335). For example, an immigrant dentist may start as a cafeteria worker when he arrives to the U.S. This becomes the decline in the pattern. After several years, he may secure a better job as a dental assistant while he works towards getting his credentials validated. This implies a rise in the trajectory until he finally secures his desired job as a credentialed dentist in the U.S.

For the present study, I examined more possibilities. One is that the study participants report reaching the same status in the workplace they have in their country while employed here in the U.S. Second, they report a plateau or steady status where they do not go up or down the spectrum of workplace status. Third, the study participants may report experiencing occupational downgrading, remain in that status, and continue towards a downward path (see Figure 8). This graphic representation maps out these three possibilities. The horizontal axis illustrates time before immigration, arrival point in time, and a future direction which presents a time sequence of past, present, and future possible selves. The vertical axis splits time in two to mark in a dramatic way the options upon arrival to the U.S. in terms of workplace and professional achievement while living in the U.S. Thus, the upper right quadrant denotes having more upper mobility. All in all, possible selves theory provides a lens to gain understanding about the career trajectories of immigrants who have experienced occupational downgrading and who are willing to reflect on where they have been, where they are, and where they would like to be.
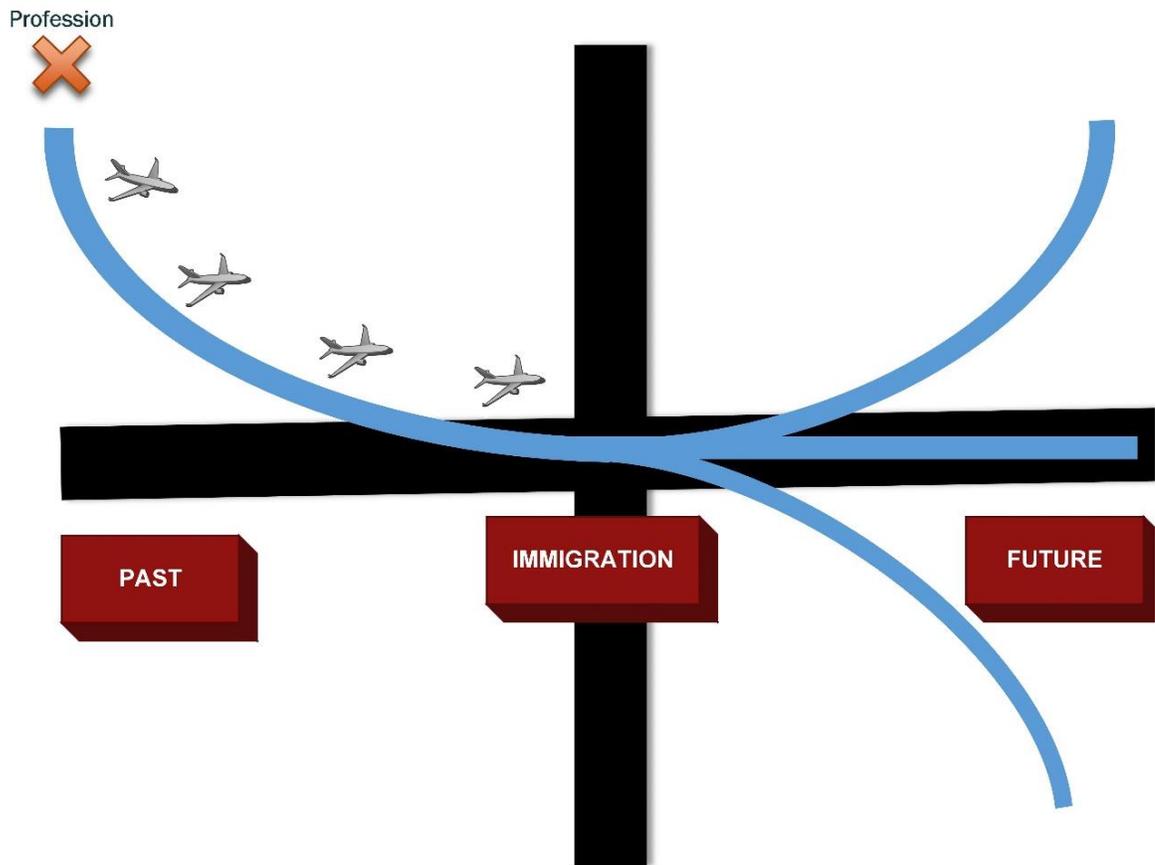
Figure 8. Theoretical Framework

Frazier and Hooker (2006) also identified four theoretical anchors that are key to understanding the role of possible selves in adult learning and development. These critical tenets provide the underpinnings of my research and grounds the context of possible selves in my study. These include: "1) Individuals create their own developmental pathways toward the future; 2) An individual's possible selves are grounded within the developmental, interpersonal, and socio-historic contexts; 3) Possible selves are important motivational forces of present behavior; and 4) Possible selves reflect personality" (pp. 42-43). These four anchors are essential in examining the narratives of the participants in this dissertation. These theoretical anchors help me

present a comprehensive picture of the study participants as individuals who have agency, belong in a context in time and history, have aspirations and frustrations, and above all, have an individual story to share and from which we can learn.

Dissertation Roadmap

The first two chapters of this dissertation introduce the phenomenological study and describe the overall study design. Next, Chapter 3 provides the historical context of immigration to the U.S. In addition, this chapter presents historical timelines from the participants' countries of origin which provided context for their immigration narratives. The following two chapters report study findings. There is not a separate literature review chapter as it is interwoven into the dissertation. Chapter 4 introduces the six study participants, their immigration stories, and occupational downgrading experiences. Emergent themes from the participants' narratives are also discussed in this chapter. Looking at past, present, and future selves, the participants' narratives were examined in Chapter 5 first through identity transition processes and then through identity forming processes. The final chapter highlights study findings, discusses the contribution of the study, and provides recommendations for adult ESL practitioners, employers, and immigration policy.

II. METHODS AND OVERALL STUDY DESIGN

This qualitative phenomenological study examined the occupational downgrading experiences of six adult immigrants. Van Manen (2014) described phenomenology as "driven by a pathos being swept in the spell of wonder about phenomena as they appear, show, present, or give themselves to us" (p. 26). As a researcher, my intent was to discover this phenomenon through investigating the life stories of the participants, therefore placing importance on how they made sense of their immigration experiences. An important hallmark of phenomenology is the modes at which a phenomenon appears or as it is perceived:

> Modes of appearing means that a thing experienced, such as a person, car, idea, emotion, or memory, is experienced in many ways from different perspectives, by one person or by many people. What this means is that a thing has multiple ways of appearing, which provides it with an identity. (Bevan, 2014, p. 137)

In other words, a phenomenon may be experienced by individuals in different ways. In this dissertation, my goal was to gather the stories on how these individuals experienced and perceived occupational downgrading upon immigrating to the U.S. and consequently, how these experiences shaped their possible selves, as they adapted to the demands and challenges of the workplace.

The present chapter describes the methodology used to implement this dissertation. First, I describe phenomenology as a qualitative research approach for informing the study.   Next, I present the study setting and participants, followed by data collection, and analysis. Last, the sections on trustworthiness and ethical considerations present relevant aspects of how the research was conducted.

Phenomenology

Much has been written about phenomenology over time. As a research method, phenomenology seeks to understand "the experiences and perceptions of each participant, and to examine similarities and differences across cases. Generally the experiences coalesce around a major transition or significant event in the life of that person…" (Glesne, 2016, p. 21). Unlike narrative studies that are mostly associated with the rendering the stories of a single individual, phenomenology deals with the shared experience of the individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). According to Patton (2002), phenomenology "requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p. 104). Furthermore, Van Manen (2014) explained that "…a phenomenological question may arise anytime we had a certain experience that brings us to pause and reflect. Even the most ordinary experience may bring us a sense of wonder" (p. 31). In other words, phenomenology helps in understanding the meanings that participants give to their own stories.

In this dissertation, I sought to explore the lived experience of the study participants who have faced occupational downgrading and to find out what "experience means for the person who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description if it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meaning are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1974, p. 13). Through documenting the participants' stories, I aimed to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of each participant to examine similarities

and differences around the phenomenon being investigated.   This research aimed to encapsulate the participants' lived experiences as they undergo or have undergone occupational downgrading. Rossiter (2009) argued that "possible selves reflect a constructivist orientation to identity in which the self is seen as dynamic, contextually interactive, and evolving, rather than fixed throughout adulthood" (p. 61). Although only a handful of studies have used phenomenology in studying possible selves (Klaw, 2008; Quarles, Maldonado, & Lacey, 2005; Rockenbach, Walker, & Luzader, 2012), I found this method fitting to use in the case of adult immigrants learning because it sheds light on participants' lived experiences.

This study drew on a bricolage research process approach, which embraces and makes possible multiple approaches to inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). While this dissertation relied on phenomenology, I also drew heavily on principles of narrative inquiry. I utilized storytelling using first-person accounts of occupational downgrading experiences to report study findings.   This method became compatible with the study's phenomenological approach because the participants' stories became the "means of accessing human action and experience" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which is the focal point for phenomenology. Hence, by examining these narratives, I was able to document the participants' lived experiences.

Study Setting and Participants

Workplace refers to spaces where an employee renders services for an employer. This can be in different settings and environments including corporate, medical, educational, service, and many other different settings. In this study, workplace refers to the different spaces the participants either currently work or have worked previously post immigration, including retail stores, restaurants, fast food places, offices, manufacturing companies, and hotels. These spaces are essential in their stories as they strive to better their pursuit of the American Dream. A study by de Castro, Rue, and Takeuchi (2010) explained that finding suitable employment is critical in the immigration process as "immigrants typically endure demanding transitions requiring considerable financial resources to create and build lives in their host society, hence intensifying the importance of employment" (p. 493). Thus, examining immigrants' experiences related to employment provides an insight to understanding the richness of their stories.

For this study, six participants were selected through referrals and snowball sampling. Glesne (2016) described this sampling method as obtaining "knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests" (p. 51). These participants were critical in describing information-rich cases (Suri, 2011) in order to understand the central phenomenon of the study. They were identified by the following characteristics: (1) have completed a four-year degree or technical training in their country of origin; (2) be legal residents to the United States; (3) be 25 years or older; (4) have stayed in the U.S. for at least three years; (5) career history showed occupational downgrading; and (6) have advanced English language proficiency at the conversational level. I chose participants with varied nationalities, ages, and professional

background to account for a diverse and richer perspective of their experiences (see Table 1). For this study, Dulce, Daniella, Sohrab, Sabrina, Maya, and Pedro served as participants. All names provided in the dissertation are pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities.

Table 1

Study Participants

Pseudonym	Professional Background	Current Work Setting
Dulce	Teacher	Department Store
Daniella	Chemist, Graphic Designer	Industrial Cleaning Company
Sohrab	English Language Teacher	Building Security
Sabrina	Lawyer, Politician	Motivational Speaker
Maya	Indian Languages Teacher	Retail Store
Pedro	Marketing Researcher	Office

As illustrated above, the study participants worked at different workplace settings during the time the interviews were conducted.   These settings have contributed to the study participants' stories as they recounted their work experiences.

Data Collection Sources

Qualitative data can be collected using different sources. For this study, data sources included phenomenological interviews, artifacts, and a research log. Phenomenological interviews included two 1-hour individual sessions that aimed to elicit the narratives and journeys of the participants. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Artifacts are meaningful objects which were collected from the participants. They provided rich visual information which prompted stories and sparked memories

during the interviews. A research log was used to document observations and keep track of the research process.

Phenomenological Interviews

Interviewing is the foremost element in phenomenology. Effective interviewing strategies allowed me to draw out stories from participants and illuminated the phenomenon being studied. It was therefore critical to ask the right questions that elicited experiences. Van Manen (2014) explained that a phenomenological question "asks what is given in immediate experience and how it is given or appears to us – it asks what a possible human is like" (p. 298). In this study for example, I examined how the occupational downgrading experiences of the participants informed their transition into the U.S. workforce. I sought their perspectives and opinions of these experiences as well as when and how they lived or are living through these experiences. Therefore the key to capturing these stories was effective interviewing strategies.   I used the structure for in-depth phenomenological interviewing that Seidman (2006) adapted (see Table 2): it allows "the interviewer and participant to plumb the experience and to place it in context" (p. 17). This methodical process allowed me to establish a solid foundation of the participants' past and present experiences and assisted in making meaning of the phenomenon being studied.

Table 2

Seidman's Phenomenological Interviewing Process

Focus	Purpose	Researcher's Focus
Life History	Establishes the context of the participants experience	PAST • Personal History • scholastic and career achievements from country of origin • Immigration stories
Details of Experience	Reconstructs the details of participants' experience within the context in which it occurs	PRESENT • Experiencing occupational downgrading • Challenges and successes in the workplace
Reflection on Meaning	Encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experiences holds for them	FUTURE • Making meaning of current or past situations • Future orientations (Where do you see yourself?)

Two interview sessions were conducted following Seidman's (2006) interviewing model. The first interview session transpired for about an hour where I focused on the participants' lives prior to immigration to the U.S. This provided "a window on the past" (Weiss, 1994, p. 1). I emphasized on their scholastic and career achievements to describe their former occupations from their respective countries of origin. In this interview, I also covered the participants' immigration stories and the impetus for moving to the U.S.

The focus of the second interview was two-fold: first, it served as an opportunity to explore the participant's present situation in relation to experiencing the phenomenon of occupational downgrading. This included specific questions on their challenges and

successes in the workplace and their occupational downgrading experiences. This interview also focused on the participants' future goals, specifically looking at their possible selves. Furthermore, this included making sense of their current situations and past experiences to evaluate their options for their future. I had follow-up conversations with participants to make sure the interpretation and reconstruction of their stories were on target.

Artifacts

Artifacts are objects that hold meaning to an individual or a group of individuals; they are rich with meaning and stories. López , Ynostroza, Fránquiz, and Curiel (2015) explained that "it is in how these objects are used that they become cultural artifacts to create histories, to collectively develop understandings, to make intentions and ideas visible, and to evoke power in figured worlds" (p. 191). Such as with the study participants, these objects became part of their histories and through them, they were able to make connections to their journeys. Artifacts allowed participants to provide more meaning (Glesne, 2016) to their immigration stories. Prior to the first interview, I communicated with the participants either via e-mail or phone to clarify the expectations of the artifact that they were to bring in the first interview without mentioning the word "artifact" and provided possible examples for them. I asked them to bring an object, like a picture or any object that symbolized their immigration journey to the U.S. I used these artifacts during the interviews sessions as conversation starters with the participants as well as to put context to their experiences. The study participants brought a variety of artifacts such as crafts from their countries, family photographs, diplomas, and other objects that symbolized either academic or professional achievements.

Research Log

The research log helped document my reflections and analysis during and after the interviews: "This period after an interview or observation is a critical time for reflection and elaboration. It is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable, and authentic" (Patton, 2002, p. 384). This allowed me to assess the current situation of the study and do a preliminary analysis. As I conducted this research, I recorded observations and facts during the interviews. I used these field notes after the interviews to keep a record of the processes that I was implementing, keeping the sequence, and writing questions that I need to answer on the next interview. More specifically, I wrote observations on what was happening to the participant in terms of possible selves. As I wrote these observations, they became "…a tangible form amenable to further analysis and development" (Borg, 2001, p. 69). I also used the research log to write down questions that emerged during the interviews. Finally, it assisted me to evaluate the totality of the research experience and thus, helped me become more methodical and reflective about the research process.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

In essence, descriptive phenomenology aims to discover the phenomenon being investigated: "descriptive phenomenology seeks to provide rich, textured descriptions of phenomena, to understand more about how the world is perceived and what it means to people" (Clarke & Harwood, 2014 p. 530). Thus, to discover and provide meaning to inquiry, this approach uses the experiences of individuals who have undergone the phenomenon. Hence, the nature of phenomenological analysis lies on reconstructing the participants' stories as they express, describe, and render the structure of this

phenomenon. In this dissertation, the participants shared their stories of immigration and experiencing occupational downgrading in the U.S. These experiential pieces became the information I needed to lay the foundation for analysis and answer the research questions. For data analysis, I employed used Colaizzi's (1978) process as guide to phenomenological analysis.

Colaizzi (1978) proposed seven steps for phenomenological data analysis. To keep the study framework in mind, I purposefully added another step to the process (see Figure 9). Although the model presented is very linear in nature, my own analysis was more fluid and organic. I used the steps in the model as a guide for data analysis. However, these steps did not appear in the order they were in the chart. Some steps were repeated and the analysis became more of a cyclical process rather than a linear one. The following section explains each of these steps and how I used them during data analysis.
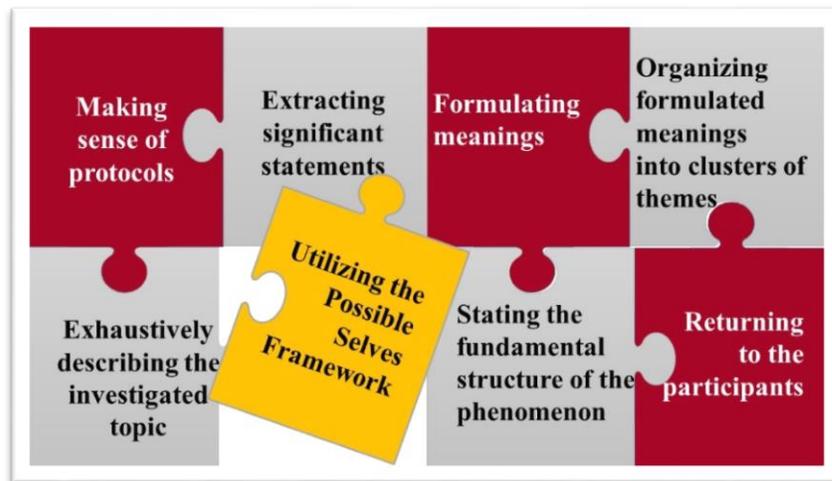
Figure 9. Data Analysis Model

Step 1 -Making sense of protocols. Colaizzi (1978) suggested to read all protocols "in order to acquire a feeling for them, a [sic] making sense out of them" (p. 59). Protocols here, refer to the participants' the interview transcripts. In

phenomenological analysis, it is important for the researcher to immerse himself or herself in the data obtained. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. I started transcribing the data after the first interview. To acquire a sense of each transcript, I listened to the interviews and read each transcription several times. As I listened to the interviews and followed along with the transcript, I reviewed what I had written in the research log. These repeated actions allowed me to immerse myself in data. In doing this, I was also checking for errors that might have occurred during the transcription process. When these errors were identified, I corrected them.

Step 2 - Extracting significant statements. This step recommends for the researcher to "return each protocol and extract from them phrases or sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). Colaizzi spoke in terms of statements. However, for this study I focused on identifying the important stories of the participants. For example, the artifacts provided insight to the participants' different cultures and their immigration stories. The statements were used as a smaller unit of data for this dissertation. As I read through these transcripts, I started extracting phrases and statements that strike a chord towards the different elements being studied in this study. In particular, I extracted statements that were related to answering the research questions of the dissertation. These were phrases and statements related towards the participants' past occupations, scholarly achievements, and challenges applying their educational credentials in the U.S. These helped me identify the emerging themes in the data. Using MAXQDA software, I started by coding these statements in very general themes as they unfold.

Step 3 - Formulating meanings. In this step, I carefully determined the meaning of each statement that was extracted. Colaizzi (1978) pointed out that this step involves a creative insight from the researcher to "leap from what his subjects say to what they mean" (p. 59). Furthermore, he advised that the researcher's formulations must "discover and illuminate those meanings hidden in the various contexts and horizons of the investigated phenomenon which are announced in the original protocols" (p. 59). This was an integral part of this process. Here, I crafted the meanings of these statements as I understood them without severing the original intention or meaning from the participant. Data reduction was also employed during this step. I selected data that were meaningful to answer the research questions and to keep me focused on the purpose of the dissertation.

Step 4 - Organizing formulated meanings into clusters of themes. This step meant deciding on the most potent and meaningful themes from the participants' stories. Colaizzi (1978) specified that the researcher: "must rely upon his tolerance for ambiguity: he must proceed with the solid conviction that what is logically inexplicable may be existentially real and valid. He must refuse the temptations of ignoring data or themes which don't fit…" (p. 61). At this point, the codes were created in MAXQDA and subsequently exported to a Microsoft Excel workbook. This allowed me to manage the data more efficiently as I continued the analysis. Another important process here was to clean up the data by removing what was not relevant.

Thus, I created matrices in Microsoft excel that were in alignment to my research questions in order to look at the cluster of themes more closely. For example, the first matrix focused on the journeys of the study participants. Here, I included the significant statements that talked about their lives prior immigration, their impetus for leaving their

countries, and their expectations when they arrived in the U.S. A second matrix was built

to collect the study participants' occupational downgrading experiences. This matrix

focused on their stories when they were unable to get back to their previous positions and

statements on how they felt while they were in those situations. A third matrix was

created to present the participant's past, present, and future selves. This matrix collected

the stories that were essential in building the participants' concepts of themselves

throughout their lifespans.

      Step 5 - Exhaustively describing the investigated topic. Colaizzi (1978)

described this step of the process as integrating the results of everything so far "into an

exhaustive description of the investigated topic" (p. 61). What this means is, that these

themes transformed into complete narratives which were organized following a logical

sequence. Selected pieces of data were rearranged into coherent narratives giving

illusion of a beginning, middle, and end to a particular story. I also tried to be as faithful

as possible to the stories shared by the study participants.

      Step 6 - Stating the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. Here, "an

effort is made to formulate the exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in

as unequivocal statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible"

(Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61). The purpose is to provide the readers with the core understanding

of the phenomenon in this case occupational downgrading and possible selves. Here I

attempted to illustrate occupational downgrading as it took place in the participants' lived

experiences as well as possible selves.

      Step 7 - Returning to the participants. Returning to the participants is a

confirmatory step in the data analysis process. This is what researchers refer to as

member checking. However, for this study I conducted partial member checking. That is, I sent all the participants a copy of their individual narratives which appear in Chapter 4. The study participants provided input about the fidelity of their stories and suggested edits and clarifications. These narratives included their immigration stories and stories of occupational downgrading. That said, they did not feedback or participated in the data analysis process to report in study findings. Four of the participants approved of the stories. However, I did not receive a response from the other participants. The four participants who responded indicated that their stories were accurately represented. They were happy and thankful to see their stories in written form.

Building Trustworthiness

For Lincoln and Guba (1985), establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research is to answer the question, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290). Therefore, building trustworthiness means to support the value of study's research findings; it speaks about a study's rigor and how well it was implemented (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).   They posited four criteria in order to establish trustworthiness in research: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability. I used these evaluative criteria to inform the techniques I used to conduct this research.

Credibility was established in this dissertation in different ways to ensure that readers and other researchers trust study findings. For one, I followed the study's research design and protocols faithfully. This allowed transparency on the data collection and analysis processes. As well, I provided plenty of data to illustrate study findings.

To achieve transferability, I provided plenty of detail about the study design and included robust and meaningful data for the reader to decide on what can be transferred to a similar setting. By providing sufficient detail on how the study was implemented, other researchers may be able to follow a similar methodology.

Dependability infers that if other researchers conduct a similar study, they would be able to come up with similar findings. For dependability, I focused on bracketing my own personal biases and opinions on occupational downgrading and possible selves. In order to do this, I centered on telling what the participants' stories rather than telling the stories that I wanted to tell. My intent was not to disguise their realties or make their stories look better, but rather to tell their stories as they were.

To achieve confirmability, I made certain that findings are grounded in the data. Thus, if we look at the raw data, we can find the stories that were depicted in the dissertation. To ensure appropriateness of categories for instance, I consulted in existing literature to be able to assign relevant names to each theme. For example, in examining occupational downgrading, I was able to find appropriate category labels such as underemployment, shift in status, language barrier, feeling of discrimination, and lack of inspiration at the new job. Likewise, in exploring the possible selves of the participants, relevant literature revealed identity forming processes such as reclaiming past possible selves, rejecting past selves, constructing new possible selves, and expanding current ones.

Ethical Considerations

The nature of this study was rather delicate and personal; therefore, ethical considerations and confidentiality were important as I conducted the research. I followed ethical considerations relevant to implementing research with humans and obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas State University. I made sure that the participants were aware that this study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any point during the study. I provided the participants with a consent form and allowed them to ask questions and voice out their concerns before the interviews were conducted. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used in the entire study. Safeguarding data was a priority. All document sources and transcriptions were kept in password-protected electronic media. These sources were only accessible to the researcher and the supervising professor.

The study participants were immigrants. As a novice researcher, it was critical for me to build a good rapport, establish trust, and create a safe space for them to be able to share their stories without pretenses. I addressed their concerns before proceeding with the study and explained the research protocols that I have outlined.

During the course of one of the interview sessions, one of the potential participants who was referred to me by a colleague revealed that she did not work in the U.S. after immigration. Because this study's main goal was to document the journeys of immigrants who have worked in the U.S. and have experienced the phenomenon of occupational downgrading, the individual was not a suitable candidate for the research. However, I completed the first part of the interview series as a sort courtesy to her

willingness to participate in the study. Information obtained from that interview was not included in either data findings or analysis for this dissertation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided detailed information of the study's design. I explained the process of participant selection, data collection sources, method of collection, and data analysis. I have also presented the protocols I followed to build trustworthiness and considerations to conduct ethical research. Next, in Chapter 3, I explore both the immigration history of the U.S. and the participants' countries of origin. The historical timelines from the participants' countries of origin provided context for their immigration narratives.

III. IMMIGRATION: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Little is more extraordinary than the decision to migrate, little more

extraordinary than the accumulation of emotions and thoughts which finally leads

a family to say farewell to a community where it has lived for centuries, to

abandon old ties and familiar landmarks, and to sail across dark seas to a

strange land. (John F. Kennedy, 1964)

President John F. Kennedy was known to be a champion of immigrants in the

United States. In the quote above, he praised immigrants on their decision to leave the

familiar and trek to the unknown. Immigration is deeply rooted in U.S history.

According to Martin (2011), "immigration has indeed been formative in making America

what it is and what it will become" (p. 2). Over the years, there have been historic events

and major strides in immigration policies which have contributed to the richness of the

stories of immigrants. I examined these milestones in immigration beginning in 1945 in

order to pinpoint salient events that may have affected the study participants' journeys in

reference to their countries of origin and the U.S. Through this, I present the forces that

are affecting the trajectories of the participants' lived experiences. I contextualized these

realities and frame the push or pull forces that have influenced their stories from a macro

level. I started after World War II (1945) because the study participants might have been

generationally impacted by movements from this period. This can also be described as a

politically loaded era because during this time, global lending organization giants such as

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were formed. Both of these

entities have often been criticized as new agents of neo colonialism due to their strategies

of imposing dominance and control on economically developing countries which tend to be the borrowers of these loan opportunities. (Anwaruddin, S., 2014; Garfolo & L'Huillier, 2014).

Another concept that is connected to the analysis of the historical context of immigration is the theory of transnationalism. This pertains to the migration pattern wherein "migrants maintain ties to the country of origin and transit counties, as well as the receiving nation" (Lange & Baillie Abidi, 2015, p. 99). In other words, this idea suggests that immigration is not just a one-way ticket from the individual's country of origin to the new host country. As a result of immigration, there are recurrent activities, bonds, and relations established among countries and across borders such as economic, socio-cultural, and political transactions (Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Portes, 1999, 2003; Guo, S., 2015).

The purpose of the present chapter is to paint a picture of the immigration situation in the U.S. in two sections. The first section provides an overview on how the current immigration landscape of the U.S was built. The second section introduces the countries where the study participants came from; these are six different countries, namely El Salvador, Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, India, and Iraq. These countries have been grouped in twos by geographical location. Each duo is discussed by their proximity to the U.S, from the closest to the farthest from the U.S., highlighting the reasons why people enter the country. It is important to remember that this study focuses on the stories of documented immigrants and that their career experiences are different than those with undocumented status.

Immigration by Time Periods

Immigration to the U.S. started centuries ago. Despite this, the U.S. society remains to have polarized views in regard to immigrants, which has caused tensions and as of late, a racial divide. DeSipio and de la Garza (1998) lauded this idea saying that, "Throughout U.S. History, citizens and leaders have accepted, raised, and revered immigrants. The symbolic notion of a "nation of immigrants is richly intertwined in the mythology of the United States" (p. 15). From the early European pioneers to Mexican immigrant laborers to refugees and asylees from Asia and Latin Americas, the fundamental history of the United States itself, richly embedded with stories of settlers from different countries of the world.

Over time, this country has experienced leaps and bounds in immigration milestones. As attested by movements like the Bracero program (1942 – 1964), central to the immigration process is employment. As immigrants settle in a new host country, finding work is a primary concern. In U.S. history, patterns of immigration over time directly affected the labor force. This is perfectly demonstrated during the early years of the 20th century, during the industrial regime when there was shift in the ethnic and gender composition of the workforce (Zieger & Gall, 2002). This trend continued and it is not a surprise that the number of foreign-born residents of the United States has increased dramatically over time. According to the United States Census Bureau (2012), while in 1960 this population made up about one in 20 residents, today it represents about one in eight U.S. residents. Historically, people come to this country because of "three large forces - religious persecution, political oppression, and economic hardship" (Kennedy, 1964, p. 6). To date, these remain as the major reasons for migrating to the

country. Some studies have also added that education is an impetus for immigration for some immigrant groups (Aponte, 2003; Pang & Appleton, 2004; Chen, Gee, Spencer, Danzinger, & Takeuchi, 2009; Marcus, 2009; Vicéns -Feliberty & Ricketts, 2016). In a study of Asian immigrants for example, researchers found that different ethnic groups claim significant differences in their reasons for their immigration. While Filipinos and Chinese immigrate to advance either their employment or education, most Vietnamese immigrated as refugees to escape war (Chen, et al., 2009). For individuals from Latin American countries on the other hand, immigration is predominantly driven by the economic reasons: "they are strongly drawn by the opportunity structures of the US" (Aponte, 2003, p. 29). Regardless of the reasons, immigrants generally come to this country - to better their lives and pursue the American Dream.

The next section presents an abridged history of immigration in the U.S. Here, we look at salient events that have shaped the current immigration terrain of the country. Some these events centered on employment as the main reason for immigration and thus, providing a deeper and richer foundation for this dissertation. I begin by describing the immigration situation post war in 1945.

1945 to 1964

The period between 1945 through 1964 contained a period of confusion, disorder, and in general a lack of consistent and comprehensive immigration policies. Part of the reason was because the country was trying to cope with unprecedented demands in immigration challenges. The end of World War II signified a reshaping for most countries, including the U.S. According to Rumbaut (1994), "International migration has been a feature of the new world order that emerged from the ashes of World War II" (p.

589). Rightfully so, after World War II in 1945, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced and faced uncertainty of where to resettle. The U.S. Congress answered with the passage of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, offering hundreds of thousands entry in to the U.S. Daniels (2002) presents this as the "first piece of legislation in American history that set refugee policy as opposed to immigration policy" (p. 330). Extensive immigration from Puerto Rico was also experienced during 1945 as a result of increasing poverty in the country. Most of these nationals settled in New York City and started an immigrant enclave. Policy-wise, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 was an important piece of legislation that was enacted during this period. This modified existing rules which barred Asian immigrants from entering the country, albeit the quota remained low for those groups (Kennedy, 1964; Martin & Lowell, 2005).

Perhaps one of the most well-known immigration movements that transpired during this period is the Bracero program, which was an agreement between the United States and Mexico to recruit and allow temporary Mexican workers to provide labor in predominantly agricultural farmlands. The Bracero program started with about 4,000 workers when it started in 1942. By its termination in 1964, almost 180,000 workers were enlisted in the program. For more than two decades of its operation, the Bracero program brought to the forefront many issues including labor rights, basic human rights, and undocumented immigrants. Martin (2011) described the situation surrounding the Bracero program: "…the roots of large scale illegal immigration also took hold during this period, with the growth slowing only with massive enforcement that was followed by governmental efforts to meet employer demands at the expense of worker rights" (p. 181). Over the years, the ramifications and significance of the Bracero program,

including the experiences of migrant workers, are carried across the history of the country.

1965 to 1980

1965 ushered a turning point in American immigration history. The changes made during this year continued to be experienced the 1980s. Perhaps the watershed event in 1965 which led to a new wave of immigration in the U.S. happened when the U.S. Congress made amendments to existing immigration policies: "it opened America's doors to people around the world who were previously unwelcome" (Gjelten, 2015, p. 139). One of the major changes that the 1965 Act introduced was the elimination of the national origins quotas and immigration restrictions from specific countries. It also established an admission preference system which was "heavily tilted for family reunifications" (Martin, 2011, p. 189). In sum, the 1965 Act provided a framework that was "better suited to modern realities. Regardless of how many new arrivals came to the country as a direct results of the legislation, it is undeniable that the 1965 law better prepared the country to manage the inflow" (Gjelten, 2015, p. 147). The aftermath from these amendments included a surge in immigration for the next decades. Immigrants under the family reunification categories for example, increased dramatically: "immigration of immediate relatives exempt from the ceiling doubled between 1966 and 1986, with about 60 percent of the total annually going to spouses and fiancées" (Simcox, 1988, p. 13). Also, according to Daniels (2002), "In the ten years between 1976 and 1985, for example, recorded legal immigration ranged from a low of 398,089 in 1977 to a high of 798,356 in 1980 and averaged some 546,0000, 88 percent higher than the presumed ceiling" (p. 343). What also marked this wave of immigration was a shift from

immigrants from Europe to individuals from Asia, Mexico and Cuba, and thus the 1970s started a large-scale immigration to the U.S. This decade was also met with challenges from Indochinese refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as a result of the Vietnam War in 1975 (Daniels, 2002; Martin, 2011). Towards the end of 1970s, a civil war in Central America also led to an exodus of migrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

1981 to 1990

By the early 1980s, the U.S. was still experiencing the consequences of the 1965 Amendments to immigration policy including mass immigrations and changes in the demographics of immigrants, from predominantly Europeans to Asians and Latin Americans, because of the ending of national origins quotas. As an example, immigrants who were naturalized continued to bring in close family members as part of the reunification programs. However, a more considerable part of the 1980s immigration challenges centered on the admission of refugees and asylees. Martin (2011) aptly described this time saying that, "For most of the decade, the United States struggled between a commitment to a universalistic notion of refugee protection, based on international human rights standards, and lingering foreign policy and domestic constituency interests that defined who would be admitted" (p. 249). At this time, the immigration from Cuba, which included the Mariel Boatlifts in 1980 (this is presented in the latter part of this chapter), was an important part of discussion as it pertained to refugee policies and exponential growth in the immigrant population. The large-scale Vietnamese migration towards the late 70s also pushed the U.S. Congress for immigration policy reforms. Hence, the Refugee Act of 1980 was created to "solve, once

and for all the problem of refugee admissions" (Daniels, 2002). Included in this act was redefining the term "refugee" and addition of the "asylee" category. Refugee was broadened to adapt the United Nations 1968 definition:

> …any person who is outside any country of his nationality or in the case of any
> person having no nationality, is outside of any country in which he last habitually
> resided, and who is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that
> country because of persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution, on account
> of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political
> opinion (Daniels, 2002, p. 347)

Asylees on the other hand, had to meet the same requirements of refugees. The main difference however is that asylees must already be already in the U.S. either with or without documentation while they apply for admission under that category.

Immigration in the 1980s was also confronted with growing public criticism and negative opinions among the native-born population. Some issues leading to these negative perspectives include: (1) resettlements of immigrants from Southeast Asia at the public's expense during the late 1970s, (2) massive undocumented immigration from different countries especially from Mexico, (3) issues of public and welfare benefits, including cost-free education for undocumented children, (4) public concern on increased immigrant involved crimes, and (5) the rise of bilingualism and multilingualism (Simcox, 1988). Most of these issues listed here remain today and are still met with polarized views by the U.S. society.

Apart from the Refugee Act of 1980, another important policy that was enacted during this time was the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which

came to be known as the largest amnesty effort of the U.S towards undocumented immigrants. Essentially, the IRCA of 1986 legalized all immigrants who arrived to the country before 1982. This affected approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants (Baker, 1997). It was also during this decade, in 1989, that the first Persian Gulf War started and war lasted for almost 14 years until in 2003. This war's and the second Gulf War's ramifications on Iraqi immigration, are discussed on a succeeding section on the immigration history of Iraq.

1991 to 2000

The period from 1991 to 2000 became a time of both consensus and conflict in the U.S. in regard to immigration. Two pieces of legislation emerged during the 1990s as a response to the increasing number of immigrants (both documented and undocumented). The first is the Immigration Act of 1990, which President George Bush dubbed at that time as "the most comprehensive reform of our immigration laws in 66 years". This made possible an increase in the number of the documented immigrants to the U.S. This also included an increase in the ceiling for family reunification categories. In addition, this legislation expanded work visas and employment-based immigration because of the country's growing need for skilled workers. However, a cap was still set annually for these two categories. Aside from family-based and employment-based categories, a diversity immigration category emerged. This category was restricted for individuals who come from countries who have sent relatively few immigrants to the U.S (Legomsky, 1994). The Immigration Act of 1990 also created a provision on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for individuals affected by war, natural disasters, and other

43

cataclysmic events as a response to Salvadoran nationals applying admission due to natural disaster in particular.

Two years later, in 1992, President George Bush signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in order to better trade relations among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. This was subsequently implemented in 1994 under the leadership of President Bill Clinton. While NAFTA is considered an economic development policy, it had significant influence on immigration, especially on Mexican nationals. Indirectly, one purpose of NAFTA was to curb the exponential rise in undocumented immigration during that time: "although this goal was not explicitly stated in the text of the agreement, government rhetoric in Mexico and the United States clearly articulated this objective as a welcome side effect of trade and financial liberalization" (Flores-Macias, 2008, p. 436). The long term goal was to make the Mexican economic market favorable to foreign investors and thus will create better jobs for Mexican nationals who sought better employment opportunities. In contrast, considerable Mexican immigration happened after NAFTA's implementation (Flores-Macias, 2008; Zamora, 2014).

During the early 1990s, the American society continued to have opposing opinions on immigration, especially undocumented immigration. It was during this time, which Daniels (2002) called "the turn against immigrants", where legislative sanctions for immigrants were created. In California for example, Proposition 187 who sought to prohibit undocumented immigrants from using social services such as healthcare and education was passed in 1994 (Daniels, 2002; Gjelten, 2015). During this time, the U.S. was also experiencing conflicts among its minority groups. For example, the acquittal of police officers involved in the beating of African-American Rodney King and

consequently leading into the Los Angeles riots of 1992 also exacerbated the minority-minority relations. Gjelten (2015) explained, "The L.A. riots turned out to be a defining event in the history of minority-minority relations, illustrating that a major immigration wave like the one rolling in to the country could inevitably produce conflicts" (p. 165.) Gjelten spoke to the increasing tension between the African-American community and the Korean American community. In light of the L.A. riots, a lot of Koreans suffered losses from their stores amidst the violence and looting. Grave threats to national security, including the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, also pressed Congress for immigration reform. In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which tightened existing immigration laws, including enhancing border control, restricting benefits to documented immigrants in U.S. five years or fewer, and to all undocumented immigrants. Since the passage of IIRIRA, hundreds of thousands undocumented immigrants have been deported by federal authorities.

2001 to 2010

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11) marked the beginning of even more tightened control on immigration, especially on refugee admission. Polarized views of the public regarding immigration, especially undocumented immigration, were heightened as a result of these events. A month after the attacks, President George W. Bush signed into law the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) which gave the federal government powers for surveillance and intelligence gathering to combat terrorist actions. Statistics show a significant decline in the number of legal

immigration between 2000 and 2004 (Nafziger, 2009). The following year, the

Department of Homeland Security was created in order to prevent and combat terrorism.

Also, as a response to the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government implemented a special

registration program for individuals from 25 Arabic or Muslim countries as part of the

National Security Entry-Exit Registration Systems (Jachimowicz & McKay, 2003).

Before the terrorist attacks, the U.S. administration was pushing for immigration reform

especially for temporary workers from the neighboring country of Mexico (Martin,

2011). President George W. Bush proposed the Fair and Immigration Reform which was

criticized heavily. One of the alternatives was the Agricultural Job Opportunity,

Benefits, and Securities Act to "ensure that the workers employed on U.S. farms are

legally authorized to work in the United States" (Martin, 2003, p. 1282). The DREAM

ACT (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) also targeted a

comprehensive immigration reform. In essence, the DREAM ACT sought to provide a

path to citizenship for qualified individuals and to authorize states to grant students in-

state tuition (Mahatmya & Gring-Pemble, 2014; Martin, 2011). These two did not get

enough traction because of the administration focused on border protection and

antiterrorism.   Despite tighter immigration control, the years that followed showed

significant increase in migration to the U.S. The Center for Immigration Studies reported

that the years 2000 and 2010 set a record as "the highest decade of immigration in

American History" (Camarota, 2011, p. 1). According to this report, an estimated 14

million new immigrants settled into the U.S. during this period.

2011 to 2017

The prior decade, from 2001 to 2010, witnessed the upsurge of terrorist attacks to the U.S. from various fronts. In addition, this period saw large numbers of undocumented immigrants settling to make the U.S. their home. As a consequence, these two historical trends have become the focal points of immigration policies since 2011. Later on, the country faced yet another dilemma on immigration, this time concerning refugees from war-torn Syria.

Under President Barack Obama's administration deportation of undocumented immigrants reached record high. The Pew Research Center reported that in 2013, more than 438,000 immigrants were deported (Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogdstad, 2014). President Obama is said to have deported more people than any other president – more than 2.5 million between his administration from 2009 – 2015 (Marshall, 2016). In 2012, the Obama administration created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a relief program that protected qualified undocumented individuals from deportation. Individuals who were eligible under DACA came to the U.S. as minors and were under 31 as of June 15, 2012. The policy allowed thousands of individuals to receive renewable periods of deferred actions from deportation. Although DACA enabled the recipients' eligibility for work permits, it did not guarantee them a pathway towards U.S. citizenship.

Over the next few years, a series of events linked to terrorism amplified the growing resentment of the U.S. society towards immigrants, especially those from Islamic countries. This included the attack of the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya in 2012, the Boston Marathon Bombings in 2013, the San Bernardino attacks in 2015, and

the Orlando killings in 2016. Terrorist- related incidents globally, including attacks in Ankara, Istanbul, Brussels, and Nice, increased discussions and concerns over immigration policies. Also, in 2016, the U.S. witnessed the public's polarized perspectives regarding the admission of refugees. This was exacerbated by the worsening situation in Syria, which was a major topic of discourse in the presidential campaign in the same year. Between October 2011 and December 2016, it is reported that 18,000 Syrian refugees were admitted to the U.S. (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

Another issue center to the presidential campaign that year which brought to the forefront was continued undocumented immigration. Candidate Donald J. Trump's promised to secure the country's border and build a wall to prevent undocumented immigration from Mexico. In 2017, newly inducted President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order, publicly known as the Travel Ban, which barred non-U.S. citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the country. These countries included Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Lybia, and Iraq (Criss, 2017). This order was met with public outcry and subsequently blocked by a federal appeals court. The new iteration of the travel ban excluded Iraq from the list of these countries but was also blocked by a federal judge, citing that it was unconstitutional. At the time this dissertation is being written, the Trump administration is appealing this decision (Jarrett, 2017).

Study Participants' Countries of Origin

The next section presents a brief history of the study participants' countries of origin. As with the previous section, this is an abridged immigration history from these countries focusing on salient events, including push and pull factors that may have

48

affected the participants' narratives. They are presented in twos, by geographical

location and then each country's immigration history is discussed separately. A historical

timeline is provided for each country after this discussion to better illustrate the

chronology of salient events. The world map below illustrates the geographical location

of the study participants' countries of origin (see Figure 10). These countries are Cuba, El

Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Iraq, and India.
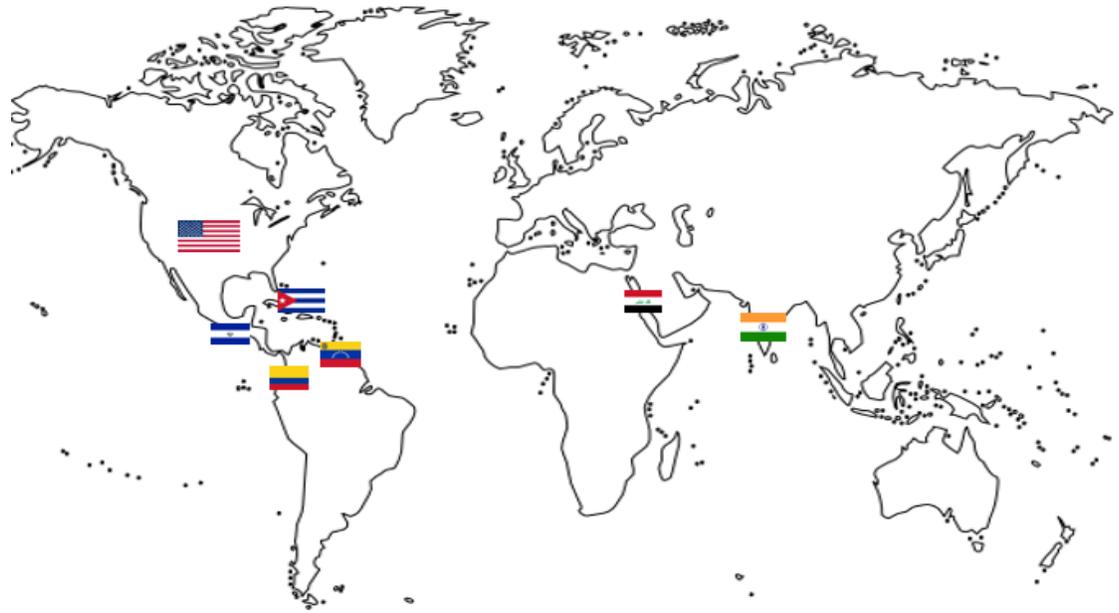
Figure 10. Study Participants' Countries of Origin

Cuba and El Salvador

Figure 11. Geographical Location of El Salvador and Cuba

The first two countries in this section are Cuba and El Salvador (see Figure 11). While Cuba is located in the north Carribean, it is part of Latin America. El Salvador on the other hand, is the smallest country in Central America. See Figure 12 for a historical timeline on main immigration events from Cuba.
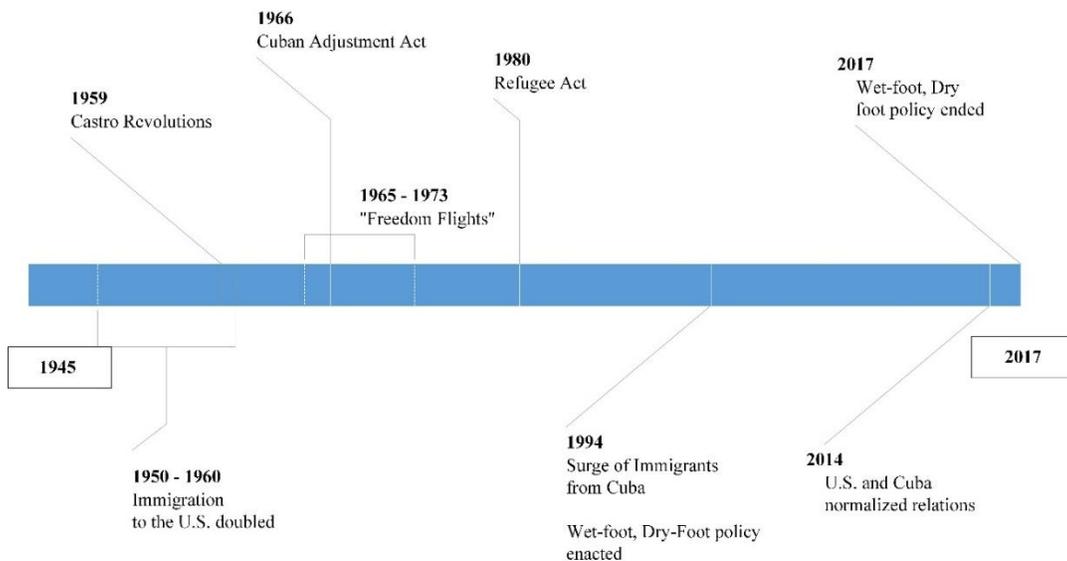
Figure 12. Historical Timeline of Cuba

The island nation of Cuba has a long standing and a rather complicated immigration relationship with the United States. Significant Cuban migration to the U.S. started after the revolution of 1959 led by Fidel Castro to overthrow the government, but "the mass movement of exiles and refugees began only in 1960 when it became interestingly clear that the Cuban revolution was determined to reshape Cuban society from top to bottom" (Daniels, 2002, p. 373). Subsequently, these actions would result for the U.S. and Cuba to negotiate airlifts known as "Freedom Flights" that brought approximately 300,000 Cuban immigrants to the U.S. from 1965 to 1973 (Daniels, 2002; Martin, 2011; Rosenblum & Hipsman, 2015).

According to Rosenblum and Hipsman (2015) the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 constitutes a milestone in the Cuban – American immigration movement:

The cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy toward Cuba is the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA), which Congress passed to accommodate these flows after amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) in 1965 limited the number of Cubans (and other Western Hemisphere immigrants) who could receive visas. Under CAA, all Cubans who arrive in the United States are presumed to be political refugees, and are eligible to become legal permanent residents (LPRs or green card holders) after one year, assuming they are otherwise admissible. (para 7)

The CAA as an immigration policy was impactful to Cuban nationals because it established a path to citizenship which is quicker than most other immigrants. Because of

the CAA of 1966, Cuban immigrants are said to receive special treatment from the U.S. compared to other immigrant groups (Zeller, 2012) .

In 1980, the Refugee Act was signed and established reforms for refugees and asylees. Soon after, Fidel Castro announced that any Cuban was allowed to leave the country through Mariel port. This caused an influx of immigrants to the U.S and these boat migrations continued to increase and peaked in 1994. During this time, the U.S. changed its "open-door" policy and set forth the "wet-foot, dry foot" policy, where Cuban refugees intercepted at sea are deported while those who reach land are allowed to stay in the U.S. In January 2017, this policy was ended by President Barack Obama following a historic renewing of relationships with Cuba in December 2014 (Labott, Liptak, & Oppmann, 2017). Immigrants from Cuba have created their own culture in the U.S. It was estimated that in 2013 there are more than 1.1 million Cuban immigrants in the United States with majority of them settling in Florida (Rusin, Zong, & Batalova, 2015). Next, I discuss El Salvador.   See Figure 13 for a historical timeline of salient immigration events in the country.
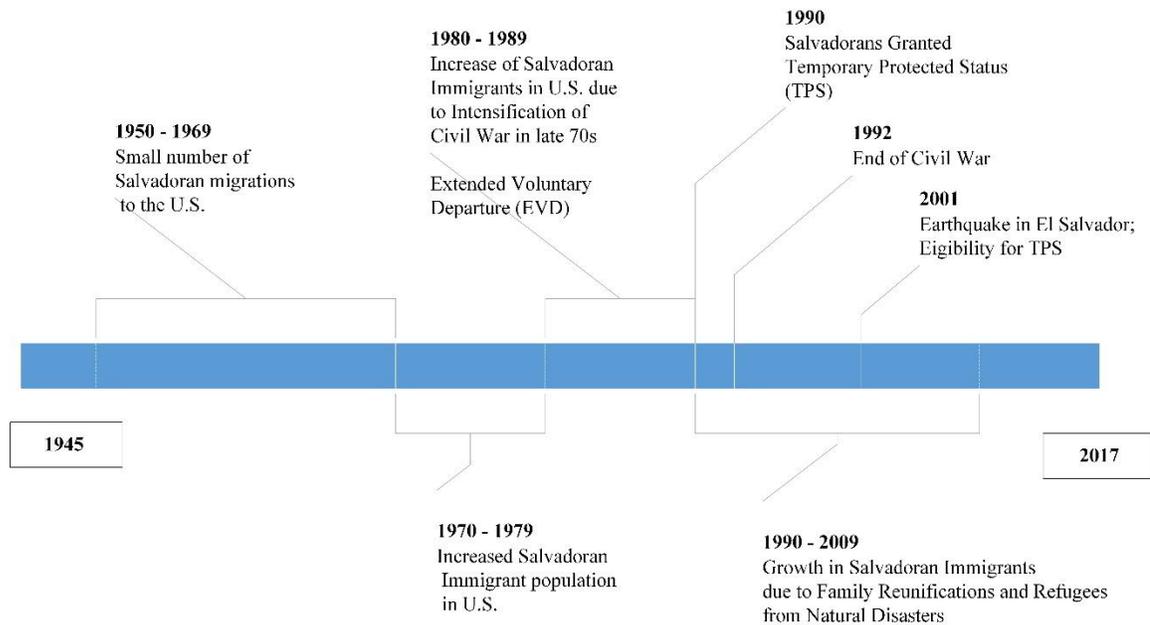
Figure 13. Historical Timeline of El Salvador

El Salvador has long suffered from economic instability: "El Salvador, like many sending nations, has a difficult time providing sufficient employment opportunities for population, and much of the pressure to immigrate is economic" (Healey, 2006, p. 391). To this effect, immigrants that come from El Salvador have been mostly refugees and asylum seekers. Although Salvadorans migrated to the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s (Gammage, 2007), significant immigration from this country increased in the 1970s due to the civil war in the region (Martin, 2011). These immigrations contnued to rise in the 1980s due to the intensification of the conflicts in the country in the late 1970s: "Violence and displacement in El Salvador took many forms. The civil war precipitated large-scale internal displacements as well as international migration. Right –wing death squads precipitated still further movements" (Martin, 2011, p. 243). Aside from the U.S., Salvadorans also fled to neighboring countries Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. From 1980 to 1990, immigration from El Salvador to the U.S. continued

53

to increase from 94,0000 to 465,000 (Terrazas, 2010). Two policies came to play for immigration issues for El Salvadorans during this time. The first is the extended voluntary departure (EVD) which "allowed persons living in the United States to remain temporarily when conditions in their home countries were unstable or insecure"(Martin, 2011, p. 242). However, despite pleas from the Salvadoran government to grant their nationals EVD, U.S. Congress refused. A solution called the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was enacted as part of the Immigration Act of 1990 to provide temporary relief to the deportation process (Gammage, 2007; Martin, 2011) to which Salvadorans were one of the first beneficiary groups. After two years, when the civil war ended in 1992, TPS for Salvadorans came to a halt.

From 1990s and -2000s, Salvadoran diaspora to the U.S. were characterized by family reunifications and refugee seekers because of natural disasters, such as the devastating earthquakes in 2001 (Terrazas, 2010). Subsequently, this led for Salvadoran immigrants to be once more, elgible for Temporary Protected Status. In 2012, it was estimated that there are 1.3 million Salvadorans in the U.S. Most of these immigrants settled either in Texas or California (Terrazas, 2010).

Colombia and Venezuela

Figure 14. Geographical Location of Colombia and Venezuela

The next two countries are Colombia and Venezuela, which are neighboring countries in South America (see Figure 14). Colombia and Venezuela have several similarities; for example, they share histories in establishing independence as separate nations. Both countries have experienced comparable struggles with internal violence and economic issues: "Structurally rooted social inequalities have generated an increasingly violent environment" (Sanchez –R & Aysa-Lastra, 2013, p. 454). In the same way, these two countries have noticeable patterns of immigration to the United States. Next, I discuss the immigration timeline of Colombia (see Figure 15).
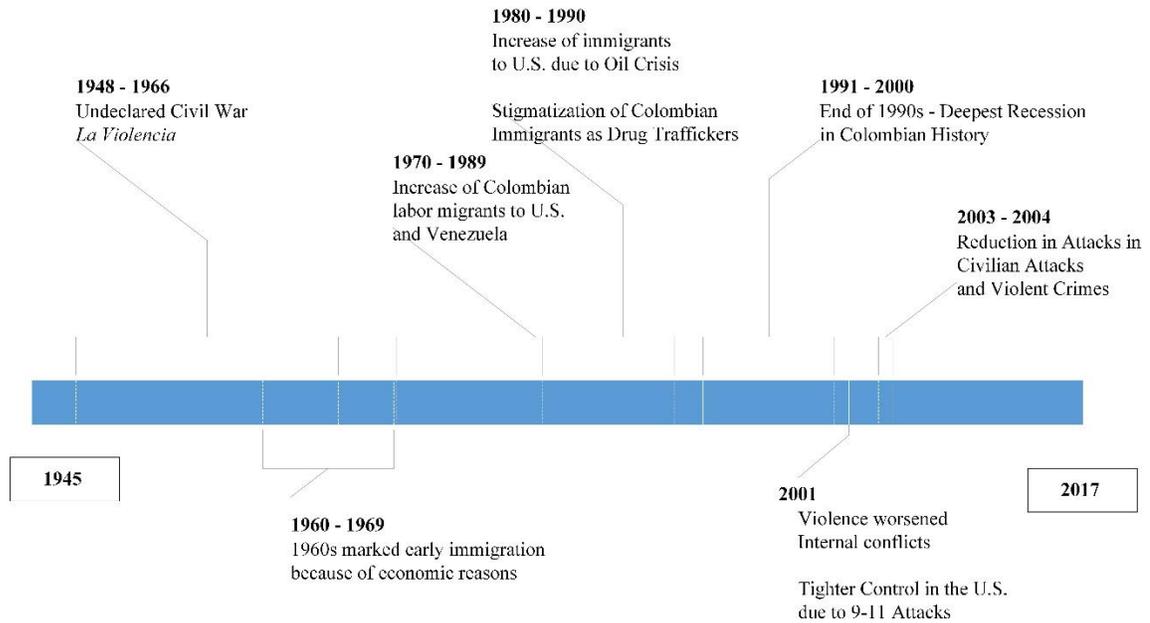
Figure 15. Historical Timeline of Colombia

Research studies have often pointed out violence as key factor in international

Colombian immigration (Silva & Massey, 2015). In addition, the socio-economic and

political problems of the country "…have engendered a massive level of migration, both

voluntary and forced. More than half a million Colombians are driven from their homes

by conflict every year, the majority of them rural people who become internally

displaced" (Ruiz, 2002, para 1). Post World War II, the country was afflicted with a civil

war known as *La Violencia* that went on for almost two decades, from 1948 to 1966.

Thus, large scale immigration from this country started in the 1960s because of economic

reasons; two main destinations for Colombian nationals were Venezuela and the United

States. This trend continued to increase in the next two decades because of socio-

political and economic issues that the country faced. Sanchez-R and Aysa-Lastra (2013)

reported that large numbers of Colombians immigrated to the U.S. in the 1980s because

of the oil crisis. Madrigal and Mayadas (2006) also explained that during this period,

56

Colombian immigrants were put in a bad light: "A distinctive characteristic of the 1980s was the growing number of immigrants who were given jobs by the international drug cartels that set up centers and networks to distribute drugs deeply throughout the United States" (p. 36). Needless to say, Colombians immigrating to the U.S. have been heavily marked, stereotyped, and stigmatized because of this fact. In addition, the end of 1990s was known to be the deepest recession in Colombian history (Sanchez-R & Aysa-Lastra, 2013). Thus, Colombian immigration to the U.S. continued to increase because of growing political instability in the country.

By 2001, the socio-economic and political conditions in Colombia worsened as conflicts between the Colombian government's forces, the left-wing guerillas known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and paramilitary groups increased: "...Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, such as massacres, selective homicides, torture, disappearances, forced recruitment, and sexual violence, were no longer a by-product of the conflict, but they became deliberate strategies…" (Bérubé, 2005, para 20). In the same year, in 2001, the U.S. reinforced tighter controls on immigrations because of the 9-11 attacks. That year, 7,300 Colombians sought political asylum to the U.S. (Ruiz, 2002). However, it was estimated that the number of undocumented Colombian nationals in the U.S. was higher but they refrained from applying for political asylum because of the fear of denial and deportation. In 2003 -2004, the number of violent crimes and civilian attacks lessened due to government negotiations with the military groups. In 2014, it was estimated that 707,000 Colombian–born nationals lived in the United States, the largest group for South

American immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2016b). The next section describes the immigration timeline of Venezuela (see Figure 16).
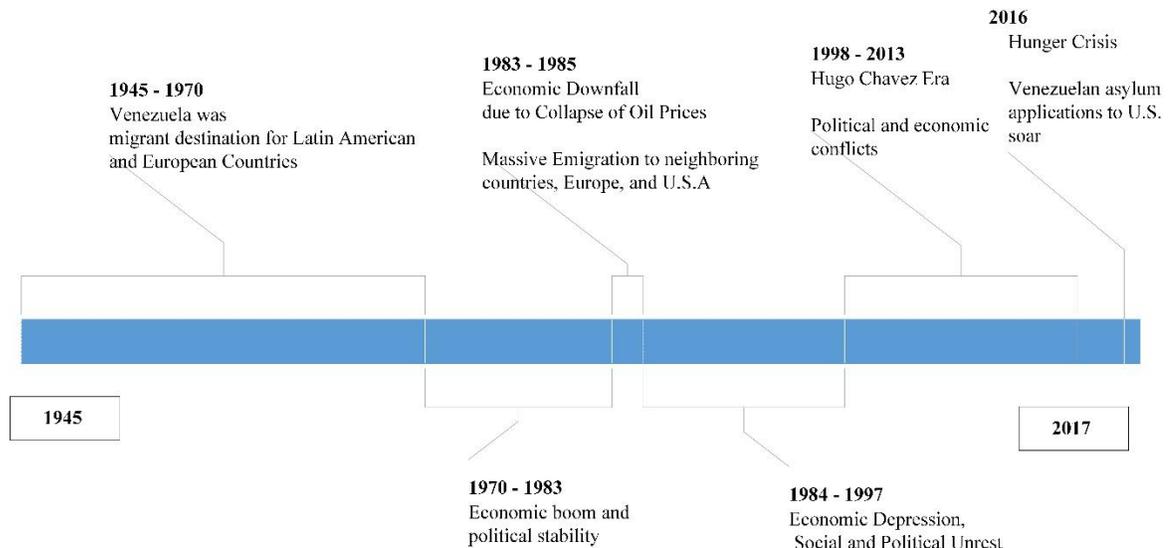
Figure 16. Historical Timeline of Venezuela

For almost three decades, 1940-1970, Venezuela was a popular immigrant destination of neighboring South American and even European countries because of its relatively politically stable conditions (Seijas, 2013). From the early 1970s to early 1980s, Venezuela's economy flourished with the oil boom. However, the fall in the world oil prices from 1983-1985 started an economic downfall and socio-political unrest in the country. Thus, launching massive immigration of Venezuelan nationals to neighboring Latin American countries, Europe, and the U.S. The next years were characterized by further economic depression, and deteriorating socio-political conditions.

The political conditions of Venezuela worsened with frequent social upheavals and strikes, which led to the imposition martial law in 1989 (Tarver & Frederick, 2005). The situation did not change as corruption was still very prevalent in the government. By

1989, the situation in Venezuela was dire: "Venezuelans had witnessed the scarcity of basic necessities among the poorest segments of society, massive hoarding and shortages of food items, a disproportionate increase in public transportation fare and gasoline prices…" (Tarver & Frederick, 2005, p. 142). What followed this was decades of further economic depression and political unrest. In 1998, Hugo Chavez won the presidency and steered the country with a different style of revolutionary leadership. Yet again, Venezuela faced internal political and economic conflicts during the Chavez regime until his death in 2013. To date, the country has not recovered from its economic collapse. The situation has worsened in the past years, with the country unable to produce enough food for its people and martial law imposed in several cities (Casey, 2016). By 2014, it was estimated that almost 220,000 Venezuelan nationals were living in the U.S., accounting for 8% of total South American immigrants. In 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that there was a massive surge in the asylum applications filed by Venezuelan nationals; this was an increase to 168% compared to the previous year (Krogstad & López, 2016).

Iraq and India
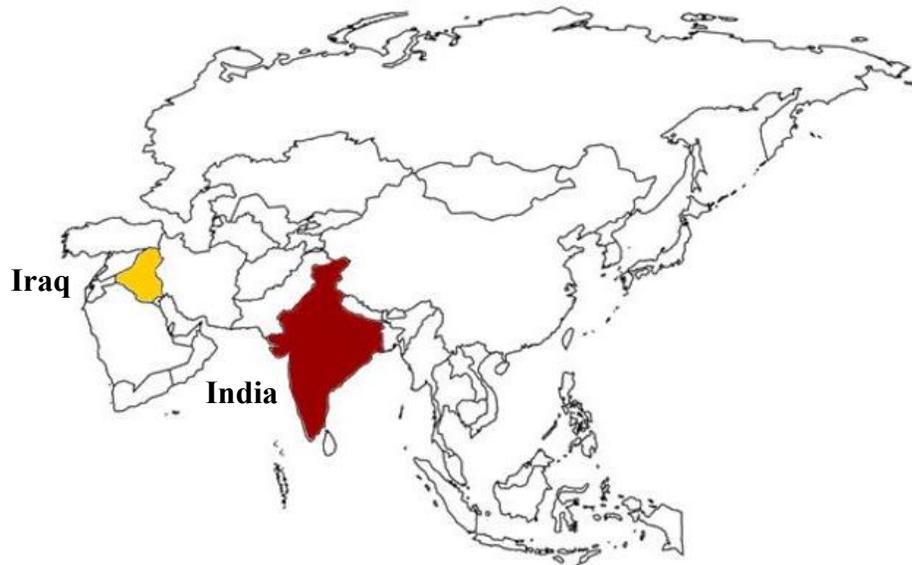
Figure 17. Geographical Location of Iraq and India

Two of the study participants come from countries in Asia, namely Iraq and India, (see Figure 17). The immigration focus for these countries cannot be any more different. While I focus on the immigration of highly skilled individuals in India including the issuance of H-1B visas (non-immigrant visa for temporary workers in specialty occupations) , for Iraq, emphasis is on individuals impacted by wars, including refugees and people who came to the U.S. because of Special Immigration Visas (SIVs). These two types of visas are central in the discussion of immigration patterns for these two countries. What follows next describes a timeline of immigration events from Iraq (see Figure 18).
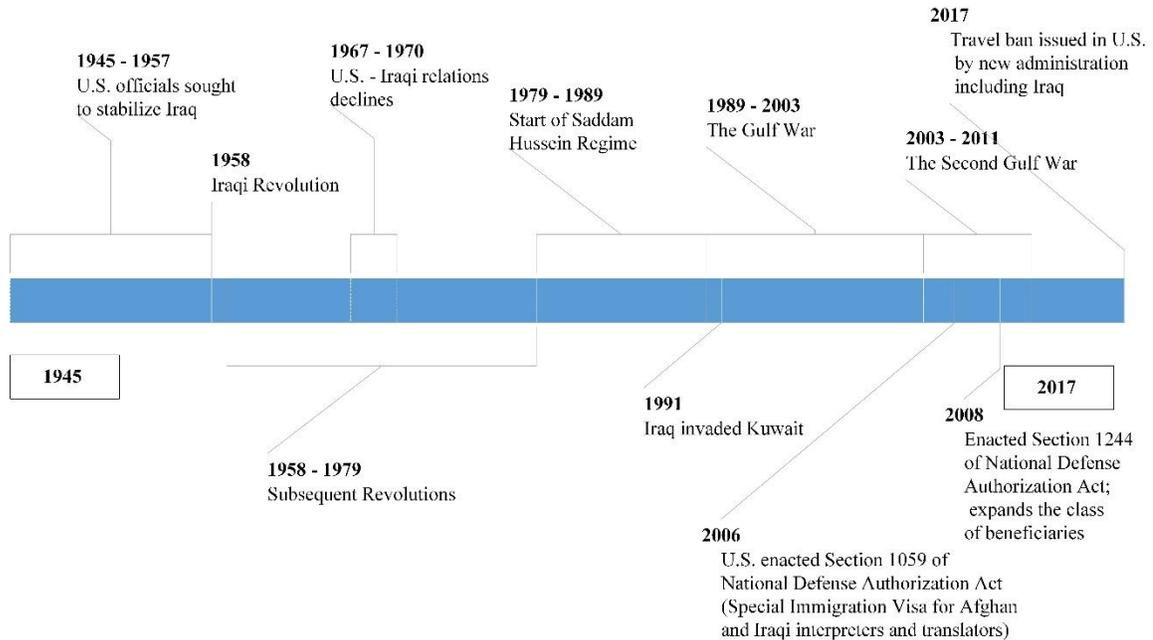
Figure 18. Historical Timeline of Iraq

The Iraqi diaspora to the U.S. can be contextualized by describing Iraq's political

situation and political relations to the U.S. The Republic of Iraq and the U.S. have had a

long and tumultuous relationship. Post –World War II and British control of the country,

the U.S. officials attempted to stabilize Iraq through negotiations and providing military

aid. However, a coup d'état erupted in 1958 against the Iraqi monarchy which marked

the start of a new regime and ignited a succession of events, including internal

revolutions that shaped the socio-political and economic terrain of the country in the

following years. Relations between U.S. and Iraq declined in the late 1960s and unto the

early 1970s. In June 1967, specifically, Iraq severed diplomatic relations with the U.S.

due to its involvement in Israeli military invasions (Hahn, 2012).

In 1979, Saddam Hussein rose to power and ushered a new era of political tension

between Iraq and the U.S. From 1989 - 2003, this was heightened with the First Persian

Gulf War. After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1991, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad was closed

and once again, diplomatic relations between the two countries was cut. The U.S. embassy did not reopen until 2004 which signified the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (Office of the Historian, n.d). The Second Persian Gulf War started in 2003. By 2007, violence declined in Iraq. However, the war lasted until 2011 after U.S. withdrew its military presence in the country. Significant movement to the U.S from Iraqi-born individuals was seen during The Gulf Wars. In the late 1990s and 2000s, the number grew from almost 45,000 Iraqi immigrants from 1990 to almost 90,000 by 2000 (Terrazas, 2009). In 2006, the U.S. Congress enacted Section 1059 of National Defense Authorization Act which allowed Iraqi and Afghan nationals who worked as interpreters and translators and assisted the U.S. military during the Gulf Wars, a pathway to U.S. citizenship through a special immigration visa (SIV) (Twu, 2010). In 2008, this was amended to include any Iraqi nationals who were employed by the U.S. government. In the more recent years, Iraq and other predominantly Muslim countries have been subjected to scrutiny and debates over immigration to the U.S. presumable because of ties to terrorist groups. In January 2017, President Trump signed the executive order, known as the Travel Ban, to keep refugees and immigrants from seven countries, including Iraq from entering the U.S. (Criss, 2017). Next, I discuss the immigration timeline of India (see Figure 19).
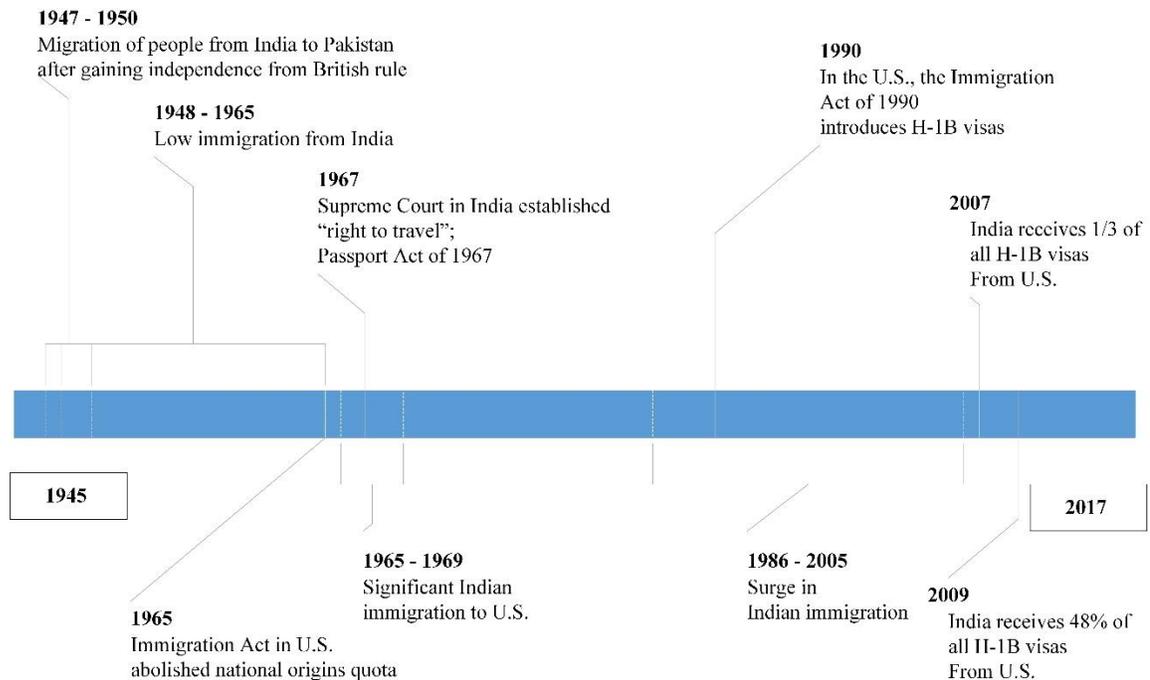
Figure 19. Historical Timeline of India

Early immigration of Indians to the U.S. started as early as 1800s but it was not until the late 1940s that Indians saw significant migration movements. In 1947, the country gained independence from British rule and led to massive migrations to the neighboring country of Pakistan. Even after that, Indian immigration to the U.S. was relatively low: "Fewer than seven thousand East Indians entered the United States as immigrants in the period of 1948-1965, almost all of them nonquota immigrants" (Daniels, 2002, p. 363). In 1965, the U.S. Immigration Act abolished national-origins quotas. This meant that high-skilled immigrants, including Indians were now able to gain permanent residence and bring their family members. In 1967, the Indian Supreme Court established the "right to travel" and enacted the Passports Act (Naujoks, 2009). Both the 1965 Immigration Act and the 1967 Indian Passport Act contributed to significant immigration of Indian nationals to the U.S. in the late 60s.

In the discussion of Indian immigration to the U.S., the role of temporary work categories for admission, especially the H-1B category, is an important topic for discourse. According to Martin and Lowell (2005), "temporary work categories are increasingly important as the vehicle for admission of foreign workers, particularly professionals, executives and managers" (p. 393). Most Indian nationals get admitted to the country through temporary work visas which create a pathway for permanent legal residence. The Immigration Act of 1990 introduced the H-1B temporary worker category which allowed U.S. employers to hire foreign born individuals in specialty occupations in order "to attract highly skilled labor to fill domestic labor shortages in, among others, the information technology sector" (Sahoo, Sangha, & Kelly, 2010, p. 300). The H-1B visa was a modification of the H-1 non-immigrant visa created under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 for U.S. employers seeking to hire foreign workers temporarily (Banerjee, 2006). Since its introduction, India has received the most number of H-1B visas. In fact, in 2007, one third of the H-1B recipients were Indian nationals. From 1986 -2005, it is reported that immigration has tripled annually. (Naujoks, 2009). This was further increased in 2009 when almost 48% of the H-1B recipients were from India (Batalova, 2010). In 2014, it was estimated that 2.2 million Indian immigrants resided in the U.S (Zong & Batalova, 2016a).

Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a succinct overview of a history of immigration to the U.S. and painted the picture of the immigrant landscape. Additionally, it highlighted the push and pull factors for immigration affecting the study participants'countries of origin namely Cuba, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Iraq, and India. The intent of this

chapter was to describe the socio-economic and political situations of these countries

which laid the foundations for the study participants' journeys to the U.S. While these

countries faced many changes because of the outward migration from these individuals,

the U.S. as a host country also encountered a dramatic change over the years:

"Immigration, perhaps more than any other social, political, or economic process, has

shaped the United States as a nation" (McCabe & Meissner, 2010, para 1). Immigration

has been and continues to be a fundamental part of the country's history. The next

chapter is divided into two sections: the first introduces the six participants and their

immigration stories. The second section recounts these immigrants' occupational

downgrading experiences as they integrate into the new host country and into its

workforce.

IV. IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCES AND

STORIES OF OCCUPATIONAL DOWNGRADING

When I came to the United States, I expected so many good things to happen! I had a bachelor's degree. I had professional experience, so I was confident that I could make it and be successful here. But after five years living in the country, I still find it really difficult to get a job that makes use of my education and skills. - Daniella

The present chapter introduces the heart of this research, the study participants – individuals who set on a voyage to the U.S. in hopes of changing their lives, either by achieving their personal dreams or securing a better future for their families. This chapter is divided into two sections: immigration journeys and occupational downgrading stories. The first section describes the journeys of these adult immigrants adapting to the demands and the new environment of the U.S. workplace. To give voice to the participants, each narrative uses first person accounts. They are each introduced through a vignette that provides a glimpse of their journeys. These first-person narratives help the reader understand the participants' life situations and their impetus for immigration to the U.S. Next, using the artifacts they provided during the interviews, their stories are enriched and given deeper meaning with their own explanations of these symbolic objects followed by a paragraph summarizing the participants' demographic information to add more context to their realities.

The second section of the chapter examines the participants' stories in relation to occupational downgrading. The goal is to illustrate the participants' professional

experiences in the U.S. when they were in a lower index level than their last occupation abroad. In order to do this, the participants' stories described how they felt at that time and how they made sense of the experience. The purpose is to establish the context of occupational downgrading to later make connections to possible selves theory and highlight commonalities in these stories. Like the first section, their stories are shared in first person to help the reader visualize the emotions the participants were going through as they experienced the phenomenon. I have given the participants their own monikers which are related to their original profession so that the reader can remember each one more easily. For this study, Dulce, Daniella, Sohrab, Sabrina, Maya, and Pedro (all pseudonyms) served as participants. Table 3 displays the participants' country of origin, age, years lived in the U.S., educational attainment, profession prior to immigration to the U.S., and profession or occupation post immigration.   The participants are presented in terms of how long they have lived in the U.S. - from the participant who has lived in the country the shortest time to the participant who has lived here the longest.

These and all narratives in this dissertation were constructed using the participants' words. Stories were collected throughout the interviews to present cohesive narratives. To avoid repetition of ideas and present a coherent thought, these stories were reconstructed to follow a beginning, middle, and end which allowed me to preserve the fidelity of the participants' stories and make them easy to read.

Table 3

Profiles of the Study Participants

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Age	Years in U.S.	Education/ Degree	Profession Prior Immigration	Work/Position Post Immigration
Dulce	El Salvador	42	3	Bachelor Graduate Certificate	Teacher, School Administrator	Retail Associate/ Cashier
Daniella	Cuba	43	5	Master	Chemistry Teacher, Graphic Designer	House cleaner, Assembler for computer parts, Industrial Cleaner
Sohrab	Iraq	34	6	Currently Pursuing Master	English Teacher	Multiple positions including bus boy, dishwasher, security officer
Sabrina	Colombia	60	10	Bachelor of Law	Lawyer, Politician, Motivational Speaker	Fast Food Worker, House Cleaner, Motivational Speaker
Maya	India	61	14	Master	Principal, Indian Languages Teacher	Ice cream shop staff, Retail Associate
Pedro	Venezuela	45	16	Bachelor	Marketing Researcher	Multiple positions including kitchen aide, restaurant server and manager, gas station worker, customer service support

Study Participants' Immigration Stories

During the time of the interviews, the participants were individuals with ages from 34 years through 61 years. They come from different countries. Four of them were female and two were male. They have various lengths of stay in the country, the shortest one has been in the U.S. for three years while the longest one has been in the country for sixteen years. They also come from different occupational backgrounds: teacher and school administrator, chemist, Indian Languages teacher, English teacher, marketing researcher, and lawyer. They were all happy about sharing their cultural, personal, and professional artifacts, their educational achievements, and photographs (see Figures 20 to 29). All of them were proud of their cultural heritage and their decision to move to the U.S. even though they faced challenges throughout the journey. In the next section, I introduce each of these participants and their immigration stories. I start with Dulce, an immigrant from El Salvador.

Dulce the Salvadoran Teacher

El Salvador is a small country with too many people and too many gangs. It's a poor country. I have never thought about living in the United States…Never. But the situation in my country is bad. I wanted to try to live here maybe for six months then travel back to El Salvador. Six months here, then maybe six months there. But my family is here and we very close; they help me a lot.

Figure 20. Bachelor's Degree Diploma   *Figure 21.* Certificate in Physical Education

These are my certificates when I graduated college. I am proud of them because I studied hard. I like what I did in El Salvador. I like working with children…singing with them, and teaching them different things. I like it when they hug me. I felt very happy when I received these certificates because I finally reached my goal! I paid for everything myself; I supported myself to go to college. So these are very important to me. When I look at them, I feel very happy. The second certificate was for a degree I earned through a scholarship. I didn't pay any for it; I took an exam and qualified to study for free.

Dulce, 42, is an immigrant from El Salvador. She has a Bachelor's degree in Kindergarten Education and a certificate in Physical Education. In El Salvador, she served as an instructor and a school administrator for an academy that she and her sister established. She worked in that institution from 1995 until she immigrated to the U.S. in 2014. At the time of the interview, she works as a retail associate for a multinational retail corporation.

70

Daniella the Cuban Chemist

To start a new life in the U.S. was very difficult for me and my family. We never imagined to come here. We had to start from zero. The political system in the U.S. is different; in Cuba, we never had to pay rent or pay taxes…we knew nothing about this.

Figure 22. Wooden Key Holder

This is a wooden key holder that my cousin made for me. That's my flag. And this is the island of Cuba where I was born. There are all the names of the districts for each province. I've had this for almost four years.   This is a palm tree and this is a guitar. In Cuba, people usually play the guitar and make music.

Life in Cuba is very hard. People there have opportunities to study but finding a job after graduating is difficult. The pay is also low. The economy was bad in Cuba. When you see other opportunities, it's hard to come back.   I also said I want a different future for my children. We have many professionals but we did not have any jobs. That is the problem in Cuba.

Daniella, 44, is from Cuba. She moved to the U.S. at age 38. She holds a master's degree in Chemistry. Prior to immigrating, she worked in Cuba as a Chemistry teacher for six years. Due to an unfortunate event which involves poisoning, she decided to quit Chemistry and pursued a second career as a Graphic Designer, which she did for more than five years. At the time of the interviews, Daniella has worked in the U.S. as a house cleaner, assembler for a computer hardware company, and an industrial cleaner.

Sohrab the Iraqi Scholar

All the time I had this dream of traveling and leaving because I assumed that the country is going from bad to worse. The economy was growing, but all the services were down because of corruption. Iraq is rich; it's a petroleum producing country! We had a lot of money, but it all went to the government.
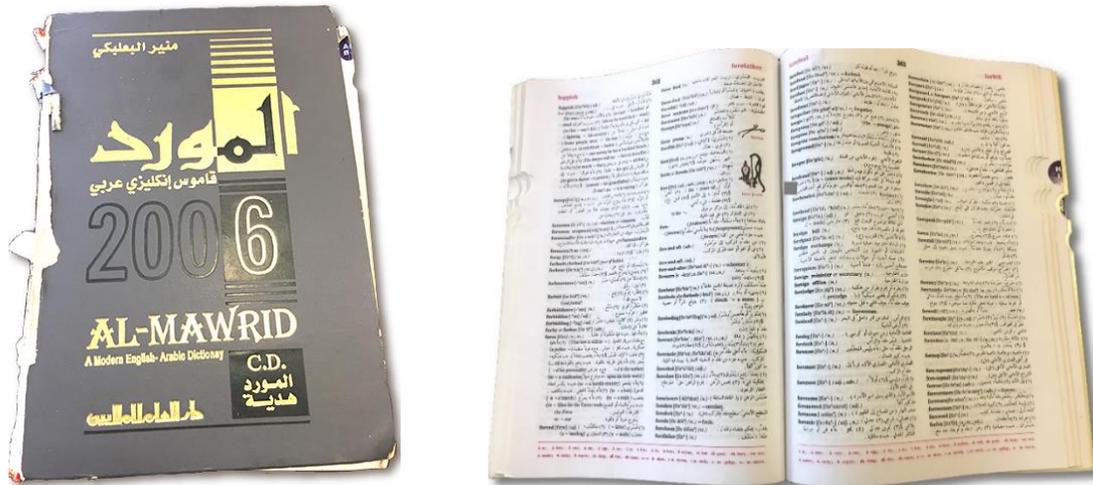
Figure 23. English-Arabic Dictionary

I carried this English-Arabic dictionary) with me when I moved here. As an English learner, I must have a dictionary. English was a passion for me. It wasn't just learning to read and write the language itself... I wanted to learn the structure of the words and the language. I was very passionate about learning new words. I read every

72

sign I saw! English was the door that opened the world for me. It was the means or the instrument I used to communicate with the world. I used to have a passion of exploring the world because I wanted to know what's out there…other countries, other cultures. English is the universal language, so learning English makes me feel like I can communicate with anybody. I haven't used this dictionary for years because I have Google translate now, but it still means so much to me… it reminds me of my memories of learning the language.

In 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, everything changed. The dictatorship regime fell and Iraq was a mess. We thought it would change for the best of the country, but tensions broke among the Iraqi people and the differences became very obvious. Everybody started to call for their local identity instead of calling for the Iraqi identity…there were tensions and violence. Before then, I was really happy with myself. I was very self-accomplished that I'm getting a degree. I hoped something good will happen to me. All of a sudden, the country was in a mess.

Sohrab, 34, is from Iraq. He has a bachelor's degree in English Language Education. In Iraq, he worked as a middle school/high school teacher and as an interpreter for the U.S. military. Sohrab was 28 when he moved here. After immigrating, he worked various manual labor jobs including as a busboy at a hotel and in product assembly. Currently, he works as a security officer while he pursuing a master's degree.

Sabrina the Colombian Lawyer

I am Sabrina and I am from Colombia. I think that I can celebrate the journey that led me across the border. In my country, I served as a House Representative. For 11 years, I worked with people, helping themselves to move to a positive future. However, the violence in my country violence affected my family and myself. I decided to leave Colombia in July 2006. For me, it was the beginning a new stage in my life. That day, I exchanged all I had and all what I used to be for a peaceful and quiet life.

Figure 24. Parents' Wedding Photograph

Figure 25. House of Representatives Pin

This is my parents' wedding picture. For me, it means my roots. I owe them my

life and what I am. I'm very grateful to my parents because thanks to them, I am here.

My father made all things for us possible. I love them; they were the best parents and

they made me the person I am now. In Colombia my father was a high-ranking official in

the military, and my mother was a teacher. My mother came to the U.S. in 2014, but she

didn't like it here. She said there are no people in the streets. The other object is a pin

that I wore when I was in politics as a house representative. This meant how successful I

was in Colombia and how hard I had to work to achieve that. It tells of my journey to

become a house representative and how difficult it is to be a woman in politics. For 11

years, my job was to help people improve their lives and help them with self-esteem, self-

confidence, and self-value. I helped about 10,000 people.

Colombia is a beautiful but violent country. One day I went to the bank and I was

at a stop light. Four men attacked me. One of them broke the car window. My driver

and my bodyguard were in front of the car and I was in the back seat. One attacker

75

broke the window of the driver and pointed a gun me at me. But my bodyguard started to

shoot. He killed two of attackers but he died too.   Soon after, I sought political asylum in

the U.S.

Sabrina, 60, comes from Colombia. She has a law degree and was a politician in her native country. She was a member of the House of Representatives for more than a decade. After losing an election, she started giving workshops as a motivational speaker. After an assassination attempt, she sought political asylum and immigrated to the U.S. in 2006. In the U.S., she worked manual labor jobs including cleaning houses, packing at a bookstore, and preparing food at a fast food joint. At the time of the study, she works as a motivational speaker to Latino communities.

Maya the Principal from India

I am Maya and I am from India. In my country, I was a teacher of Indian

languages, basic English and even music. My husband was an engineer who came to the

United States for his job through an H-1B visa at first. My brother in law who came to

the country before us, encouraged us to come here. In India, everybody who went to the

U.S. seemed to have more money. I thought the same was going to happen to us; we

were going to have good jobs and earn more money.

Figure 26. Bindhi

Figure 27. Mangalsutra (necklace) and bangles

Figure 28. Purse Made in India

This is a symbol of marriage. During weddings, the husband puts the bindhi and the mangalsutra. He tells the wife in Suhagan (Indian language), "you are my world, you are my baby". In the old culture of India, everything depends on the husband. This is important for me because in India, you only have only one husband and one wife. It symbolizes respect - the husband gives respect to his wife and the wife also gives to the husband. I have been married for forty years. This jewelry is for social functions to show that you are married. Widows don't wear bangles and bindhis. Traditionally, these objects tell you that you're married. But right now, everybody wears them. The colorful purse is what you use with your dress to match. I like matching my purse with my dress, in the same color; it's a hobby.

Maya, 61, is originally from India. She has a master's degree in Indian languages. In her country, she taught many subjects to elementary students including Indian languages (Marathi, Gujarati, and Hindi), basic English, and music. She came to the U.S. in 2002 when she was 47 years old. Here, she has worked at a hotel and at an ice cream shop. Currently, she works at a retail store at an outlet mall.

Pedro the Venezuelan Marketing Researcher

I imagined myself staying at my old job in Venezuela. But the economy was going down. Whatever you buy this year, next year, the same amount will buy less. I was doing the math. What's gonna happen when I'm 40? Can I buy a house? No. What am I gonna do? Everybody had the same feeling. A friend who was an economist told me, "Yeah, you're right, the same money you have this, next year it's gonna be worth half as much". The economy kept getting worse and worse. I couldn't stay there. When I left, my mom and a friend both told me, "You're not gonna come back here when you leave".

Figure 29. Pedro's Mother's House

This picture was taken at my mother's house in Venezuela. This is what you see when you open the door. It is meaningful for me because the view is very relaxing. After I left work, I just sat and watch the whole area. A lot of people did that… they just sat outside and had drinks. It was nice; it has been eight years since I have seen this view.

Pedro, 45, comes from Venezuela. He has a bachelor's degree in Marketing Research. In Venezuela, he worked as a marketing researcher for a transnational food and drink company. He immigrated to the U.S. in 2000 at age 29. In the U.S., he worked various jobs including as a kitchen help at a country club, a server at a Mexican restaurant, a gas station attendant, and an office worker to name a few. At the time of the interview, he worked as a customer service associate for a national auto-insurance provider.

This section sought to gain an understanding of the reasons why the study participants immigrated to the United States. Through the stories of the six adult immigrants, I was able to draw out the push and pull factors (Lee, 1966; McMahon, 1992) that contextualized these immigration journeys (see Table 4). Push factors refer to the forces that drove these individuals away from their native countries which include: poor living conditions, economic unpredictability, war, violence, and isolation. On the other hand, pull factors are those forces that attracted these immigrants to the U.S. The pull forces that were unearthed in the participants' narratives include a better way of life, economic stability, political stability, protection for conflict and family reunifications.

Table 4

Push and Pull Factors

Push	Pull
Poor living conditions	Better way of life
Economic unpredictability	Economic stability
War	Political stability
Violence	Protection from conflict
Isolation	Family reunifications

To summarize, this section introduced the study participants and provided a window to their journeys to the U.S. It also informed the participants' reasons for immigration. The artifacts they brought during the interviews provided an opportunity to share their life stories and spark memories about their immigration experiences. These artifacts also helped adding flavor to the different cultures that they represent. The next section highlights the participants' narratives in terms of occupational downgrading. More importantly, the participants share their experiences integrating into the workplace and these are examined more carefully to illuminate the phenomenon being studied.

Relevant Literature on Occupational Downgrading

It is important to provide a relevant literature review on occupational downgrading in order to be able to understand the phenomenon better. Employment is central to the immigration process; it is "…an important marker of resettlement because economic success increases the likelihood of social and cultural integration" (Suto, 2009, p. 418). For some immigrants however, gaining suitable employment, or any employment at all, poses a major challenge in transitioning to the new host country (Ressia, Strachan, & Bailey, 2017). Alfred (2004) described the social and economic challenges some immigrants face despite their previous professional work from their country of origin, "…some climb their way back, but for many, discrimination has a stronger downward pull than the push afforded by their qualifications and their ambitions to move up socially and financially" (p. 14). Thus, this downward career trajectory for immigrants may cause frustration for these individuals. This phenomenon is referred to as "occupational downgrading"; it occurs to some immigrants when they encounter a

decline from their previous work status upon immigrating to a new host country (Akresh, 2008). Other terms that have been used synonymously with occupational downgrading include "downward occupational mobility" and "occupational demotion" (de Castro, et al., 2010). However for this research, I am adopting the term "occupational downgrading".

There are multiple elements that may cause occupational downgrading (see Figure 30). The succeeding image comes from review of literature of occupational downgrading (Akresh, 2006; 2008, Chiswick, et al., 2005; de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008; de Castro, et al 2010).   The literature identified identify six elements that contribute to occupational downgrading: country of origin, devaluing foreign academic credentials and work experience, racial discrimination, language skills, lack of social networks, and transferability of skills. de Castro and colleagues (2008) explained:

> Immigrants may encounter circumstances that limit job availability and selection, such as documentation status, limited English proficiency, and ethnic discrimination. This, in turn, may direct or force them into undesirable jobs or jobs that do not match their aspirations or training, prompting dissatisfaction. Moreover, once in undesired or mismatched jobs, immigrants may face barriers that undermine successful and productive work experiences (p. 36).

Moreover, these elements add to the complexity of the immigration and resettlement process of immigrants as they integrate into the workforce. These elements are explained more closely in the succeeding section.

Figure 30. Elements Illustrating Occupational Downgrading

Country of Origin

An immigrant's country of origin influences the likelihood of occupational downgrading experience: "Immigrants from countries very similar to the destination - for example, an English-speaking Canadian moving to the United States – may experience little or no downward mobility on migration and hence will experience little subsequent increase" (Chiswick, et al., 2005, p. 335). By the same token, immigrants from countries with similar economy as the host country, may not experience the same degree of occupational downgrading than those immigrants coming from countries with blatant differences in their economies (Duleep & Regets, 1997; 1998; Haley & Taengnoi, 2011). Simón, and fellow researchers (2014) also argued this point:

Nonetheless, the pattern of occupational mobility of immigrants could differ

between countries according to international differences in factors such as the

nature of immigration and pre-existing ethnic community networks, but also to

their particular institutional and economic characteristics, such as immigration

policies, government policy and labour market structures. (p. 228)

Following the same example, an immigrant from an industrialized country with a more

stable economy may have better chances at upward mobility than an immigrant from a

developing country with an unsteady economy.

Devaluing Foreign Credentials and Work Experience

Some immigrants encounter occupational barriers when presenting their academic

credentials and work experiences. In many instances, these may either yield little or no

recognition at all to potential employers. Zuberi and Ptashnik (2016) for example,

investigated the experiences of working poor immigrants in Canada. According to them,

"some respondents expressed frustration and felt disrespected, especially at institutional

barriers, such as the lack of recognition for foreign academic credentials and work

experience" (p. 87.) In some other studies, many professional immigrants, especially

those with evident transferrable skills such as nursing, were even subject to deskilling and

devaluing of credentials. Sochan and Singh (2007) for example, explored the experiences

of internationally educated nurses in their efforts to gain entry to practice as Registered

Nurses (RNs) in Ontario. In this study, these nurses enlisted via the Canadian Domestic

Caregiver Programme to gain entry to the country and get legal residency status.

"However, it did not allow them to maintain their nursing skills. This interruption in

practice resulted in their deskilling of home-country nursing knowledge and expertise"

(p. 132). Respondents in the study explained that contractual obligations bound them to work as a caregiver for two years before applying for a permanent residency status and obtaining the eligibility to take refresher courses.

Racial Discrimination

Another element that illustrates occupational downgrading is racial discrimination. Many studies suggested that racial discrimination against immigrants is still prevalent in the workplace (Kosny, Santos, & Reid, 2017; Nayar, 2009; Reyneri, 2004). Oftentimes, immigrants face these negative experiences which may consequently deter their upward mobility at work. Salami and Nelson (2014) for example studied the occupational downgrading of nurses educated in the Philippines who became domestic workers in Canada. According to them, "the migration of nurses as domestic workers results from global capitalism and reinforces racial and gendered inequalities as these nurses experience contradictions in class mobility" (p. 159). The researchers mentioned situations where these professional nurses upon becoming domestic workers, experienced racism and abuse from their employers. Showers (2015) on the other hand investigated the racial and ethnic identities of first generation black African women in the U.S. She reported that the study participants not only experienced individual acts of racism towards them but also spoke of structural racism at their workplace. These negative experiences of ethnic and racial discrimination from immigrants may dissuade them from improving their status in the new host country.

Language Skills

According to Suto (2009), "Language ability is seen as the most critical form of cultural capital influencing long-term work outcomes for skilled migrants" (p. 425).

Numerous research has been conducted to show the link between language barriers and underemployment (Akresh, 2006; 2008; Leong & Tang, 2016; Zorlu, 2016; Zuberi & Ptashnick, 2011). Immigrants from countries with similar languages with the host countries may tend to experience minimal occupational downgrading than those with different languages (Chiswick et al., 2005; Akresh 2008; Ro, 2014). On the other hand, immigrants who are not proficient with the host country's dominant language may tend to experience a greater chance of occupational downgrading. Das (2006) for example, investigated the economic choices of Asian Americans and showed that Korean immigrants come to the United States with high levels of education but despite their credentials either accept lowly or they start small businesses because of linguistic differences.

Lack of Social Networks

Social network here refers to ties to other individuals from one's country of origin such as family, friends, and community organizations in the new host country. The presence of a social network is influential for new immigrants' employment choices for reasons such as assistance in initial job search (Chiswick et al., 2005), occupational prestige (Tegegne, 2015), and wages (Greenwell, Burciaga Valdez, & DaVanzo, 1997). Therefore, the lack of social networks for immigrants may impact for their occupational mobility (Zuberi & Ptashnick, 2011). Zorlu (2016) underscored this argument and explains that without a social network, new immigrants may not be familiar with the host country's labor market situations: "In principle, immigrants face intensive information problems when searching for jobs because they know little about the host country labor market institutions and because they have only weak contacts with social networks,

formal mediating organizations, and other search channels" (Zorlu, 2016, p. 6). Needless to say, social ties are critical in finding suitable jobs for immigrants.

Transferability of skills

Chiswick, Lee, and Miller (2005) noted that there is an indirect relationship between immigrants' transferability skills and occupational downgrading in the new host country: "The lower the transferability of skills, the greater will be the decline in the occupational status from the "last" permanent job in the origin to the "first" job in the destination" (p. 335). Here, transferability pertains to the degree the host country values the skills these immigrants have accumulated from their home countries (Haley & Taengnoi, 2011). In other words, some occupations requiring skills that are specific to a country of origin will unlikely be transferrable to the host country and thus, might potentially cause occupational downgrading. For example, a lawyer or a government employee from a foreign country may find it difficult to find work in the new host country that matches their previous work because their past occupations are significantly connected to their home countries' social and economic structures. Immigrants with transferable skills on the other hand, follow a different trajectory. The same sentiments about immigrants' transferability of skills are shared by Portes and Manning (2001). According to them, skilled immigrants such as "…doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, and craftsmen—generally enter the "primary" labor market; they contribute to alleviate domestic shortages in specific occupations and gain access, after a period of time, to the mobility ladders available to native workers" (p. 50). Thus, immigrants possessing transferrable skills may initially experience occupational downgrading but eventually will have a better opportunities for upward career mobility

Occupational downgrading is not localized in the United States. Canada, which has a big immigrant community, also experiences this phenomenon despite the big disparity in educational attainment between Canadian-born individuals and immigrants. Frenette and Morissette (2005) suggested that recent immigrants are generally more educated than Canadian-born individuals. According to them, "16% of Canadian-born men in our sample had university degrees in 1990 (reference year); by 2000, this had risen to 19%. In contrast, 25 percent of recent immigrants had university degrees in 1990; by 2000, this shot up to 44 percent" (p. 231). Despite statistics, the volume of peer-reviewed articles about occupational downgrading is significant.

Occupational Downgrading: Study Findings

This section delves into the occupational downgrading stories of the study participants. These are meaningful pieces of data provided by the participants during the interviews. They describe what they considered were significant events that marked occupational downgrading for them. These stories were not collected in a linear manner; these were excerpts gathered throughout the interviews and subsequently reconstructed to help the reader better understand the participants' stories.

According to Akresh (2008), the modes of admission into the new host country play a crucial role in professional mobility: "Economic immigrants are expected to be more likely to experience a lateral transition than are family immigrants or refugees" (p. 437). In other words, immigrants who receive company sponsorship will not follow the same career trajectories than those who come here under other categories. Most of the study participants were admitted to the U.S. under the family reunification visa, one was granted political asylum, and another one was offered special immigration visa (SIV).

The stories are discussed at the end of the chapter to make connections to literature and to explain how study findings address a gap in the literature.

Dulce the Salvadoran Teacher

Sometimes, people ignore me, maybe because they don't like Hispanic people. I don't like that but I still greet them, "Good morning!, "Good afternoon!", "Thank you for shopping", or "Have a good day!" One time, a customer said she needed to talk with the store manager because she didn't like Spanish music playing in the store. Sometimes, the music is in Spanish, sometimes it is in English. She talked with the manager about that because she said that this is United States and there should be no music in Spanish. I think here in the United States, we need immigrants. We need people who speak both in English and Spanish especially in our store.

I studied for seven years to be a teacher in El Salvador. Now I'm a cashier. Sometimes I think about that situation but I also see it the other way around. Here, I am learning different things; I learn English at my job. I'm okay right now, but in the future, I want to work in my field…in what I studied for. When I decided to live here, I started to look for job and to learn English, but it's difficult to do those two things. I started working for a department store with very little English. My manager suggested that maybe I could work at the back of the store, folding clothes. I said, "No, I wanted to be a cashier". I said that if couldn't handle it, I'll let her know so she agreed. So whenever I don't understand customers, I reach out to my supervisor and he helps me. Now I understand more but I still need more practice. When I started at the store, it was difficult because sometimes I would get off at midnight, and then return to work at six or seven the next day. I rested for about four or five hours and then started working again.

My feet hurt a lot, but I worked hard because I wanted to show that I was an efficient worker so I can change my schedule and have time to learn English. I get nervous sometimes because I can only understand a few words. I ask people to talk a little slower. Sometimes, I feel like I'm paralyzed when customers ask me and I don't know what they mean. Other times, when my supervisor or another manager tells me something to do, I don't understand what they want. I have to tell them I don't know too much English and that I need them to explain it again or how to do it.

Sometimes, I dream about my job back in El Salvador – that I am teaching at the academy. Ah…but it's okay, my family's here. Back in my country, I like teaching students at the academy in different things, not just the computer. I like to teach them all that I know. At the department store where I work now, I like to train new employees. In El Salvador, I always tell my students and tell my co-workers what to do. They never tell me what I should do. Here, I don't like when people tell me what to do and not do. I don't like that because I am not yet accustomed to the people but I am getting used to it. One time, a customer complained about me and told the store manager. The store manager called my supervisor and told him what happened. The supervisor called me in and I had to explain my side. He took my side and didn't file a complaint. I always try to do well in my job. Just recently, I got an award for being an exemplary cashier. I'm surprised because all of the other cashiers speak English and I speak little English…but I like it. I would not have worked in El Salvador as a cashier though. [laughs] No, no. It's different there. I would have never thought about being a cashier there because it's too much work. It's hard. That is for people who do not have diplomas, those who do not have education - maybe they can't study for different reasons and they need the

90

money. If I needed the money and I didn't have any options, maybe I would. But the pay there is very little for so much work.

Daniella the Cuban Chemist

I don't think I can compare my career in Cuba and my career in the U.S. In Cuba, it was possible to think creatively. I was free to apply my knowledge in my job. Here in the U.S, I really don't have any good experiences or any professional experiences. In my first six months here, I cleaned houses. In Cuba, I usually cleaned my house or help somebody clean theirs but not for money. It's something that I had to do here to earn money. I am a big personality in my country. Here, I am really nothing. People don't know I have a master's degree. I did my best but I feel really bad. Many people think lowly of me. I know many of these people have less education than I do. In one job, I had to clean offices. My supervisor was a female and she had 17 years working in that area. She was someone who thinks she knows everything. Sometimes we have a discussion because I tried to explain to her an easier process of how we could do things. She only says, "No it's my job for 17 years! I know everything here". I felt disappointed.

My father always says, "How is this the life of my daughter?! She sacrificed all her time to study". I never went to the disco! I never went to see movie in the theater! I never did any of those…I only studied. And now, I am just cleaning…just cleaning. My father is disappointed about this and I am too. I feel like a baby right now because I am learning slowly. I learn a little bit and then I apply my knowledge but I don't learn much. When I was in my country I had a title - I was a chemical specialist, I was graphic designer. In the United States, I wanted to realize my dreams. But when I come here, my dreams disappeared. Now what can I do? How can I find my way?

I never applied for graphic design jobs before because of my English. It's really hard when you have lost everything and you have two children to raise. I had the future of my children in my hands. I was really lost so I needed to learn. My hardest experience was when I owned a trucking company together with my sister and brother. At that time, I didn't speak any word in English and I needed to communicate with other people who spoke English. I had to learn the way it worked in United States. I felt the needed to grow up and look in every solution to every problem. I did many things - many ways to learn because I felt the need to. My company depended on me.

The work has really been easy for me. I had a prior job experiences as a verifier for hardware assembly. It was really easy, I just had a map and I have a product. I needed to compare them. I didn't need to think - just look for errors. It was not difficult at all. My current job is also really easy for me. Cleaning is the same like it is at home. But I have to stay in my job. I have to go one step at a time right now. I like my job but I want to make more for myself. I want to improve.

Sohrab the Iraqi Scholar

All my life, I wanted to have a decent job and feel respected because I'm a good reader and I think I'm educated enough but the minute they see your name – that you are from the Middle East or when they listen to your accent, you are not preferred. People treat you like you are the less than them. They don't explicitly say it but you feel that… it's clear. To be honest, I felt like going to graduate school was an excuse; as if I was running away from the fact that I was not successful in my profession. I went to an internship as part of my master's degree. Every now and then, the supervisor tells me

that I have to improve my accent. Sometimes, I feel depressed because of this… the thought of not landing a good job after graduation.

When you come from a different country, your degree is not validated here, it means nothing. So whenever you apply for jobs, you have to go through tests and everything. It's very hard to get experience in this country even in entry level positions. I tried. I applied for so many jobs trying to get a job… an entry job for anything, but it's really hard to get.

I was excited about my first job offer. I went for an orientation and everything. They gave me a job as "technician". As it turned out, it was a housekeeping job at a hospital. I worked one day and then I quit. I couldn't do it. This is not what I came here for! I felt very bad. I felt like going back to Iraq to visit my family and return to teaching or something but was discouraged with the situation in the Middle East and especially in Iraq. For three days, I also worked at a U.S., military facility where I had to portray a war prisoner to train military personnel in detention facilities. I was treated like a prisoner; I had my uniform and even I stayed in a prison cell. It was really hard for me but I needed money at that time. That was in 2010, three months after coming here. After the three days I spent there I said I will never come back to that place! I will find any job, but I won't do that. I've been through very tough times.

All my life, I dealt with books, readings, and having conversations. Now I had to do physical, manual labor jobs, which I'm not good at. Every time I think about the experiences I've had, like being a dishwasher for example, I am reminded that this is not what I came to the United States for. I came here - hoping to get further my education and get a good job. I was really depressed – one day, I was a teacher in Iraq and

everybody knew me as Mr. Sohrab. If you're a teacher there, it means you're educated, people respect you, and many generations after will recognize and respect you. After teaching for ten years for example, the whole city will know you and they will respect you because you are a teacher. If you tell somebody, you will have a very high level of respect in the society. When I came here, I feel like I was downgraded. I was degraded from being on a very good social status to a very low one.

Right now, I work in security, like at a front desk at night. I prefer the night shift because I don't want to deal with people. I met people and I learned about …let's say another level of people. When I lived in Iraq, I was a good student; I was clever. When I was in college, I was one of the top 10 students at college, so all my friends and people around me are people like that…scholars - educated people from higher level, social status. They are very decent people. When I moved to the United States, because of my job, you have to deal with everyone. You have to deal with people like who never went to school.

Sabrina the Colombian Lawyer

Some people in the United States don't believe in Latino people. You need to prove many things to other people before believe in you…in your knowledge, in your capacities… in what you can do. They think that the Latino people do not know or do not have enough knowledge for special jobs…high level jobs. They believe that we excel in cleaning, making hamburgers, packing, but not on those the high level jobs. Also, some Latino people don't seem to help the other Latino people. I don't know why. Maybe they're jealous that the other people will take their job. It's like competition in the workplace. When I was in Reno, Nevada, the majority people came from a ranch, and

94

they don't have education and maybe jealous about the other people who are educated. I

had a manager, she was Latina. She was abrasive with people. But when she realized

that I used to be a lawyer, her attitude towards me changed. My language is a challenge

at work because I think about many ideas but I can't express or communicate them.

Spanish uses many words to say one thing while English is very straightforward.

My first job here was working at a fast food store. I never imagined that I had to

do that. [Crying] I was high…very high, and now I had to work at a fast food store -

washing plates and making hamburgers. It was difficult for me but it was necessary.

When I look back at my life, I can understand that all things in my life…all the people

who made me who I am now. Now I can understand how hard it is to make hamburgers.

When you buy a hamburger, you don't know how hard it is to make them. I burned my

hands. I had to take lessons to learn how to make a hamburger in my house. I needed to

study to make a hamburger!!! I have never made a hamburger in my life. I have never

eaten a hamburger. All things that happened in my life was necessary. When I take a

look back at my life, I think that it's like a puzzle. Each piece is perfect; everything falls

in to place. Maybe some things are not good but it's necessary. When I went to work at

the fast food store, it was necessary --- for me to understand many things.

Sometimes I think about being a politician again because I can help people. But I

think it's very difficult with the way politics is here. During the elections… during the

campaigns (referring to the 2016 presidential elections) the candidates say many bad

things about their rivals. I have a friend in Los Angeles, who was campaigning for the

county council. In a meeting, somebody said, "You are a Colombian drug dealer!"

Something like that is difficult to hear.

From being the house representative to cleaning houses…it was the best

experience of my life. I was a politician and a house representative. When I came to the

United States, I believed that I was the best. A politician has a high ego, and I did too. I

think that sometimes bad experiences is the best way to learn something. Here, I learned

to appreciate and value people for really who they are. Sometimes you need to feel what

other people feel. In Colombia, I wouldn't have cleaned bathrooms and made

hamburgers. I had three or four people helping in my house. I had two secretaries and

two drivers. I never went to the bank to deposit money because I have a person who goes

to the bank to do that for me. I had three people clean my house, wash clothes, and cook.

I didn't do anything but work. And here, I cleaned houses…I cleaned bathrooms.

Maya the Principal from India

When I started working, I had a very bad feeling because I did not know any

English.   I don't know why I even pursued a master's degree because at that point, my

education had no meaning. It reminded of a neighbor in India whose daughter wrote her

a letter and she couldn't read it. So later, she came by and asked me to read her

daughter's letter for her. I read and she listened. I felt bad for her. Now in the U.S., I

was in the same position. I told my son, "This is not my job! My job is teaching

languages!" I was working at the hotel one time and a customer came and I don't think I

replied appropriately so I was told that I cannot talk to the customers. I felt bad.

Another time, I already knew a little bit of English and had to call someone for the

laundry. I talked with the person on the other line and he could not understand me

properly. He said, "What? What? What? Excuse me?" I could not understand him

either because he talked too fast.   Right now I don't feel good because I'm not teaching.

I want that job - it is my dream. I want to reach my dream but how can I do this when nobody guides me? At home, every person is busy… busy with their own jobs. Nobody is interested so nobody supports me.

My work experience in the U.S. is totally different from my experience in my country, India. When my family and I moved to the Unites States, I was expecting my job to be the same or similar than my previous job in India – in line with teaching. There, I had a high-level job as a teacher but coming here was a struggle for us at first. There were four of us, and we had only one car. I was expecting a good job and more money. In India, anyone who went to the U.S. had more money so I thought the same thing. When we first came here, everybody needed money so it was very hard, very tough. We accepted any kind of jobs like the job at the hotel. The position was not a fit for my education and work experience but I accepted it. We needed the money and we helped my son who was studying. I was not happy about the work. There was no satisfaction. It was just work so I just did my work. I needed the money to help the family. One year, when my husband and I was working at the hotel, I had not eaten so I felt really bad. Then, there was a customer who complained and my husband got mad at me. I told him that I don't want this job. I said, "Why did I come here? Why did I come here when my old job was good? I don't like this but I like to help the family that's why I accepted this. But this is not my job. Why did I come here? How am I a maid?" Another time, a customer complained three times about the room. The customer wanted the money back even if everything was okay. He was very picky. That complaint was reflected on my paycheck.

After that, I started working at an ice cream shop. I felt bad about this too but it made the check kept coming. Life was very hard. Money is necessary so I had to accept any kind of job… anything. My son was also a student at that time so I had to help him out. The first time I ran the store alone, I was scared. I operated the register and I mixed the ice cream. There was this customer who goes to the store every day. When I gave her ice cream, she said "Thank you very much", and she was very appreciative so that made me more confident. Sometimes, employees don't come to work but it was good for me so I can learn. My boss was also happy with me that I learned to run the store by myself.

Pedro the Venezuelan Marketing Researcher

When I moved to the U.S., I thought everything was possible but I didn't get a job that I liked. I thought when I came here with a green card, I'll have a better life but I couldn't get into a marketing research company, which was in line with my degree and my experience so I had to do different stuff. I remember meeting people from Germany and Mexico. They were engineers and they were doing something else here. It's the same thing they tell you, "We'll call you". They don't. The only thing I was offered were sales jobs. Potential employers said they recognized the degree but in reality, they didn't. They don't recognize credentials. They would say that they do, but they wouldn't give you the job. Once, I got laid off then had unemployment for a while. Then I worked at a loan direct lending company. It was a $%#@@& job but it paid the bills. I was still applying to marketing jobs but never got a call back.

When I first worked in the kitchen of a country club making salads. There, people assumed that I did not speak English. They were surprised when they learned that I did.

When I was working for a staffing agency, the supervisor said that I didn't speak English. He asked me to leave. After a couple weeks, I applied for unemployment. The guy told me, "Well, look. The staffing agency said that you didn't show up anymore at work". B%$#@*. It was all on the call. He said, "I'm gonna record the call, I'm gonna ask you several questions". I said, "Sure". Well, I got an email and I got a voicemail from my supervisor saying I couldn't work there anymore because I didn't speak English. So the guy was quiet. I got pissed, but I didn't care.

I knew English before coming here. Maybe I have to improve on my accent but I knew how to read and write in English. In my current job at the auto insurance company, my supervisor told me, "You are doing so well in the Spanish calls, so now you're gonna start taking English calls. Are you gonna be able to do it? It's not your first language". I replied, "We'll see". Now my English calls got so high…they got very well. So I felt like telling her, "Do you remember when you asked me that?, "What can you say now?" but I can't. I would have been treated differently if I were not an immigrant because they wouldn't doubt I spoke English. At my work, sometimes you get calls like, "Look, I want to speak with somebody in the United States" or "I don't want to speak with somebody in Asia, or in China. I wanna talk to somebody here". I would respond, "Well, I'm in Texas". Then they would say, ""Oh, you're in Texas? Where?", I'd say, "Austin". And they'd reply with, "Oh, cool… yeah. Let's talk". They get quiet for a second and then they kind of change their attitudes from the beginning. I had a guy who called once and asked me, "Do you know what an iPhone is?" It was an older guy. I responded "Yeah, I have one. What are you trying to do"? And he didn't know how to

use internet or download the app, so I had to walk him through it. But that was the first

question, ""Do you know what an iPhone is?"

> *To compare my previous work and my work here….well, it's another world. It's not even similar. My previous job was more technical. It was more challenging and it required more thinking. You have to multi-task more. And also, I had the opportunity to travel over and over again for work. Sometimes you have to work from the morning until night, but it was good because you were doing something different. Here, I'm not challenged.*

Occupational Downgrading: Discussion

After reconstructing the stories that the participants shared on the topic of occupational downgrading, five themes emerged. As illustrated in Figure 31, these are: (1) underemployment, (2) shift in status, (3) language barrier, (4) feeling of discrimination, and (5) lack of inspiration at the new job. The next section examines each of these themes more closely.

Figure 31. Occupational Downgrading Themes

Underemployment

All of the participants experienced underemployment post immigration. They were unable to use their education, skills, and professional experiences from their previous work, regardless of their lengths of stay in the country. They all accepted service industry jobs as maids, busboys, wait staff, cleaners, and retail store clerks that were a stark contrast to their white collar professions in their countries of origin. Pedro, who has been here the longest has not able to use his specific skills in market research but has used his other skills like customer service in his office job. Daniella, who had two professions prior to immigration, first as a chemist and second as a graphic designer, has not been successful in utilizing either of these careers. Sabrina, did not follow her career as a lawyer and a politician presumably because of the differences in the legal system in the U.S. Rather, she pursued her career as a motivational speaker for the Latino community. Maya, Sohrab, and Dulce worked as either teacher or education administrators in their countries. All of them were unable to use their teaching education and experience; they are still working towards being able to return to the classroom again.

Two of the participants attributed underemployment to the lack of recognition of their academic credentials. Pedro and Sohrab voiced out concerns that their foreign credentials are devalued by potential employers. They expressed that despite their education and work experience, employers tend to overlook these credentials. In his vignette for example Pedro, argued that although employers claim to recognize the credentials, that in reality they do not. Sohrab on the other hand conveyed that his credentials meant nothing when he came to the U.S. and that he had to start over.

All of the participants were from countries with different economies from the host countries. This is congruent to study findings that immigrants from countries with different economic structures than the host countries may find it more difficult to find work that matches their previous professional experiences (Chiswick, et al., 2005; Simón, et al., 2014; Zorlu, 2016) In fact, in their narratives, the economic situation of their native countries were one of the reasons in migrating to the U.S. Pedro for example, conveyed his unease and discontent for Venezuela's declining economy as a principal reason for moving into the U.S. In sum, the participants felt that their current jobs masked their high education credentials, skill levels, abilities, and work experiences.

Shift in Social Status

All the study participants felt a change in their social status and class due to their occupational downgrading experiences. According to Ro (2014), "For immigrants who experience occupational mobility after migration, status inconsistency can arise if their post-migration occupation is not commensurate with their previous occupational standing or other aspects of their social status" (p. 1149). As well, Ressia and colleagues (2017) explained that during migration, class becomes disrupted for these individuals: "left with their human capital (education and skills), which they may find difficult to transfer, they face a change in social class as a result of their 'new migrant' status" (p. 66). Maya, Sohrab, and Dulce, had well defined and established roles as teachers in their countries. Their roles implied a sense of prestige, respect, and higher social status in their communities. However, this status soon faded after immigration as they took on new roles that did not equate to the same status they held previously.

Sabrina's story showed that she was a politician and was even elected to the House of Representatives in Colombia. In the U.S., she had to work manual labor jobs including cleaning houses and making hamburgers for a fast food joint. In her vignette, she showed extreme frustrations about this experience because of the blatant difference from her previous position who held esteem and recognition. However, she came to terms with this and used these downgrading experiences to enhance her knowledge and skillsets. Sohrab on the other hand, expressed that his occupational downgrading experiences exposed him to a different class of people that he may not necessarily have encountered. Like Sabrina, he too felt dismayed because of the loss of this prestige and at times felt depressed in the situation he was in.

Language Barrier

All study participants shared significant memories which were related to their linguistic challenges in the new work environment. As illustrated in the narratives, they are all at different language levels. However, they have succeeded in learning the language and being able to communicate important ideas related to their previous and present work experiences. To note, Maya, Sabrina, and Dulce were all English language learners at the time of the interviews while Daniella has previously attended ESL classes. For most adult immigrants in the U.S., language skills are a critical factor in successful employment; the lack thereof presents immense challenges in the workplace.

In this study, the participants came from countries whose main language is not English. Four of them spoke Spanish, one spoke Hindi, and one spoke Arabic. The participants explained that they felt the need to improve their English first before they can achieve their dream job. Daniella for example, admitted that it was her lack of English

language skills prohibited that her from pursuing jobs as a graphic designer. It was also for this reason why she started a trucking business with her sibling but unfortunately, this venture did not pan out for her in the long run.

On the other hand, Pedro and Sohrab, who were proficient in English before coming to the U.S., expressed linguistic challenges in the workplace but focused on their accents. Akomolafe (2013) wrote about foreign-accented speakers and their upward mobility in the workplace. According to him, despite professional immigrants' proficiency of the English language, they become "…victims of the most egregious, albeit subtle forms of discrimination mostly as a result of their foreign accent. They are more often than not marginalized and relatively limited in their pursuit of happiness and thus, of the American dream" (p. 8). Other studies suggested that immigrants who speak with foreign accents experience limited options in workplace and that it intensifies the foreignness that they already feel in the workplace (Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Showers, 2015). Pedro and Sohrab speak with discernable Spanish and Middle Eastern accents respectively. Both were cognizant of their accents and felt that it became an obstacle towards obtaining their success in employment.

Feeling of Discrimination

A common myth for immigrants with high levels of education and professional experience is that they experience less discrimination or racism in society: "because they tend to be affluent and enter a growing sector of the labor force, immigrants with professional backgrounds tend to attract less notice and fewer racist reactions than their more unskilled counterparts" (Healey, 2006, p. 410). However, this does not seem to be the case for the study participants. Four of the study participants shared their experiences

104

of perceived discrimination and stereotyping in the workplace. It seemed that the feeling of discrimination as a result of occupational downgrading encumber upward mobility for professional immigrants. For instance, study participants felt like they had been relegated to their current positions because of systemic racial structures either in the workplace or in the new host country. Pedro shared his experience about his co-workers and their assumption that he did not speak any English. Dulce, who has been in the U.S. the shortest time among the participants, observed racial prejudice and stereotyping among customers at work and expressed their sense of dislike for Hispanic people. Similarly, Sabrina pointed out how Latinos in the U.S. are stereotyped to be only good for manual labor jobs such as cleaning and cooking but not competent enough for professional or "high-level" jobs. By the same token, Sohrab expressed frustrations on how his Middle Eastern name limits job opportunities inferring that there is an indifference towards job applicants of a certain race. He perceives that his ethnicity is a disadvantage in the workplace.

Lack of Inspiration

The last emergent theme describing the occupational downgrading experiences of the participants is their shared their lack of inspiration and motivation while at their new positions. Daniella, Maya, and Pedro all expressed the absence of passion and creativity in the jobs that they have either had or currently have. They either described their occupations as "just work" or are unchallenged by their current occupations. Although they were grateful of these experiences, they felt disconnected from their current work and perceived these jobs as merely necessities to keep the paycheck coming. Maya, despite being unchallenged and discontented with her experiences, always saw the silver

lining when she knew that she was earning money and contributing to her family's

success. This is congruent to current research on immigrants who endure their low level

jobs for "quick money" (Covington-Ward, 2016) because of their immediate financial

needs. Sohrab even shared an incident that was traumatic for him where he played the

role of a prisoner in a military training facility. Despite the scene being all too familiar

for him, he still took the job because he needed money at that time.   In the theoretical

framework that this study employs, this reflects the trajectory where immigrants tend to

have a plateau, where there is no up and down movement in the spectrum: "it becomes

more difficult to find a new job that matches their skills and experience if they have

already spent more time in a deskilled job" (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016, p. 11). This was

also evident in some of the other study participants. Maya for instance, stayed at her job

at the hotel and ice cream shop for many years; she was unable to transition to other jobs

that suited her educational and professional experiences because she needed the money to

help her family. Reyneri (2004) aptly described this situation where an immigrant,

despite his or her discontent, stays at the job and endure the situation: "…the immigrant

lives in some kind of moratorium where any job is acceptable as long as it enables him

(or her) to earn money" (p. 1157). Despite this lack of inspiration at their current or past

jobs, further education was noted by almost all of the participants to seek better

employment, either in improving their language skills, more formal education related to

their previous jobs, or learning new skills.

In discussing the themes surrounding study findings on the occupational

downgrading, it was evident that structural barriers were present which aggravated the

situations for the research participants. Structural barriers can be described as issues or

conditions that are inherent to the context or the environment in which an individual operates. Therefore, these barriers are often beyond the control of the individuals as they are systemic and social in nature. In the study, race, racism, overt and covert discrimination were observed and resonated throughout study findings. For one, because of their accents and at times, language barriers, some study participants felt discriminated against and experienced racial tensions participating in both the workplace and the community. All in all, their stories depicted an illusion of the U.S. workplace as a welcoming environment for immigrants. Instead, they realized that this was a place that was laden with structural barriers – that in reality, it was unwelcoming to someone with a thick foreign accent, looked a certain way, or answered to a non-Western name.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the immigration journeys of the study participants to gain a better understanding of their lives and reflect on their stories of occupational downgrading. This chapter is key to answering the first two research questions of the dissertation study: What are the journeys of adult immigrants adapting to the demands and the new environment of the U.S. workplace? And How do occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants shape their integration to the U.S. workforce?

Throughout the chapter, we learned why the study participants immigrated to the U.S.: to reunite with families, to seek a more stable economy, to escape war and political turmoil through special immigration visas (SIV), and to flee violence through seeking political asylum. From the participants' reconstructed stories, we discovered five emergent themes. These are underemployment, shift in status, language barrier, feeling of discrimination, and lack of inspiration at the new job. Next, Chapter 5 explores the role

107

of possible selves theory in understanding the study participants' narratives. It addresses the final research question: How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory?

V. CONTINUOUSLY EVOLVING SELF:

PARTICIPANTS' NARRATIVES

Throughout this research, the study participants critically reflected on their immigration journeys to the United States. It was evident that in the course of these journeys, there were changes in how they viewed themselves – specifically in work-related roles in the new environment. Through their narratives, I was able to make connections to their past, present, and future selves. Therefore, this chapter examines the study participants' occupational downgrading experiences through the lens of the possible selves framework. It addresses the final research question on "How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory?"

The chapter is divided into three sections: (1) possible selves theory relevant literature, (2) possible selves and identity transition processes, and (3) possible selves and identity forming processes.   The chapter begins with a review of the literature on possible selves theory. The goal is to inform the reader and lay the foundations for understanding study findings presented in this chapter. The next section on **identity transition** processes refers to the evolving self. In this case, the processes that the study participants experienced include detaching from their previous work-related identity, making the transition to a new work-related identity, and establishing a new work-related identity. Lastly, the section on possible selves and **identity forming** processes describe more permanent ways in which study participants construct and visualize new work-related identities based on reclaiming past selves, rejecting past selves, constructing new possible selves, and expanding current possible selves.

Possible Selves Theory Relevant Literature

Research on possible selves has been the topic of numerous studies from different

disciplines (Packard & Conway, 2006). These include diverse subjects in human

resources and career development (Nazar & Van der Hejiden, 2013; Plimmer & Schmidt,

2007; Rossiter, 2009; Strauss, Griffin, & Parker, 2012), gerontology and aging (Bardach,

Gayer, Clinkinbeard, Zanjani, & Watkins, 2010; Bolkan, Hooker, & Coehlo, 2015; Dark-

Freudemen, West, & Viverito, 2006; Hsu, Lu, & Lin, 2014; Markus, & Herzog, 1991;

Smith & Freund, 2002), and managing chronic and mental health illnesses (Bak, 2015;

Frazier, Cotrell, & Hooker, 2003; Schindler, Berg, Butler, Fortenberry & Wiebe, 2010;

Tse, Yuen & Suto, 2014; Wilson, Barrineau, Butner, & Berg, 2014) just to name a few.

Even though the origin of possible selves theory is rooted in the psychological

sciences, it has also been widely used in educational research Essentially, possible selves

are links to adult learners' past experiences and are gateways for opportunities in the

future (King & Hicks, 2007; Leondari, 2007; Stevenson & Clegg, 2013). Rossiter

(2007a) explained that possible selves denote "an individual's conceptions of future

selves, including the selves that are ideal and hoped for as well as those possible selves

that one fears or dreads" (pp. 5-6). Essentially, they are images that one either wants to

be or does not want to be in the future (Barreto & Frazier, 2012; Erikson, Hannson, &

Lundblad, 2012; Hamman et al., 2013; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Fryberg,

2006). To illustrate a future orientation of selves, Strahan and Wilson (2006) provided

more descriptive labels, like the ones for positive aspirations, such as "…'the good

parent,' the 'successful business person,' and 'the loving spouse;' as well as the selves

that we are afraid of becoming, such as the 'alcoholic,' 'the college dropout,' and 'the

lonely spinster" (p. 3). Thus, possible selves symbolize both an individual's aspirations and trepidations. Although they are future views of the selves that individuals want to be or fear to be, possible selves are ultimately connected with the past and present selves.

The balance between the desired selves and feared selves has been a conflicting issue for scholars. Oyserman and Saltz (1993) investigated delinquency and possible selves among juveniles and found no connection between the participants' negative and possible selves over their motivation for behavior. On the other hand, Dunkel (2000) found a salient connection among undergraduate psychology students. He argued that "the balance between negative and positive possibilities may supply the motivation and direction necessary for eventual commitment and identity achievement" (p. 527). For this study, it was important to look at both the desired and feared selves of adult immigrants through their narratives. The goal however was not to assess the balance of these possible selves but rather to document how they made an impact towards how the participants' navigated their professional journeys.

Researchers of possible selves (Lee & Oyserman, 2007; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004; Rossiter, 2009; Strahan & Wilson, 2006) have agreed that creating and activating one's possible selves is key to how individuals evaluate their options: "When certain current self-conceptions are challenged or supported, it is often the nature of the activated possible selves that determines how the individual feels and what course the subsequent action will take" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961). Suffice to say, the presence of both desired selves and dreaded selves may determine an individual's important life decisions. In the participants' narratives for example, it was pivotal to examine how their possible selves steered them towards taking

a path towards avoiding their feared selves or a path towards achieving their desired selves (Barreto & Frazier, 2012).

A review on research methodologies show that quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches may be used in investigating possible selves. In 2006, Packard and Conway conducted a literature review on possible selves within the last 20 years in order to identify methodological choices for researchers. From the 141 articles they analyzed, they identified four clusters of methods that scholars use, namely: (1) structured surveys and interviews, (2) narratives, (3) visual representations, and (4) drama. Packard and Conway (2006) suggested to choose a methodology that befits the researcher's view of the self: "Of critical importance in understanding the methods used is one's paying close attention to researchers' explicit or implicit epistemology of the self—that is, how the researcher assumes that one comes to know the self in the first place" (p. 266). As a constructivist myself, I see the value of possible selves in creating knowledge from individuals' lived experiences - from reality and through their narratives. Thus, this study is aimed at providing voice to the study participants to "hear" from them and gain understanding of how they envision and construct their past, present, and future selves.

Possible selves roots itself in changing self-concepts during transitions and salient events that happen during an individual's life span (Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Manzi, C., Vignoles, V. L., & Regalia, C, 2010). Thus, individuals' possible selves are not constant; they constantly change throughout the lifetime (Cross & Markus, 1991). Furthermore, Barreto and Frazier (2012) contended that "the more salient and stressful the life event

112

was, the more of an impact it had on sense of self" (p. 1803). Therefore, events with varying degrees of impact and importance will hold different meanings for individuals.

On the other hand, Nazar and Van der Hejiden (2014), explored possible selves in relation to career development focusing on male middle-aged managers from Chile. In the study, they recognized that "identities, being core components of the self-concept, comprise self-representations that are contextually based and rooted in a social structure" (p. 66). Important findings from this study showed that possible selves (1) are evolving processes that vary in terms of content, stability and elaboration; (2) are related to career variety or diversity of previous work experiences; (3) help in both career transitions and the adjustment process in novel situations; and (4) act as an incentive in career development. Possible selves elicit changes in individuals' behavior towards their aspired selves or away from feared selves: "Individuals that have assumed to fulfill more roles or have developed a complex identity appeared to translate that complexity in the selves that were imagined for the future" (Nazar & Van der Hejiden, 2014, p. 74). Furthermore, the research findings are consistent with what Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) postulated about the postmodern view of the self as a concept that is continuously evolving: "the self in the postmodern thought is not the unified, integrated, authentic self of modern times. Rather, the self is multiple, ever changing, and some say, fragmented" (p. 260). This malleable view of the self is key to understanding possible selves of individuals going through critical changes and transitions, such as the immigration and resettlement process.

Connected to this idea of the evolving self-concepts are identity forming processes. Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014) also described three phases of identity

transition process, which involves, "separation (detaching from the old sense of self), transition (resolving ambiguity inherent to this indeterminate state), and reincorporation (establishing a new sense of self)" (p. 68). In the separation phase, the individuals dissociate with their old self to establish a new identity. On the other hand, the transition phase is a "time of identity sensemaking during which individuals create identity narratives" (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014, p. 68). Hence, it is a period where individuals explore and/or test their identities. Finally, the reincorporation phase involves adopting a new identity which allows for growth and development.

However, the identity transition process is not definitive for immigrants and transnationals because immigration and resettlement is a rather intricate process. As a matter of fact, it is layered with many other elements including resistance into this space of becoming. Maslow (1951) spoke of this resistance to acculturation and described that some individuals may be adjusted to a culture but they may possess "a certain inner detachment from the culture in which they were immersed" (p. 26). As in the case of some transnationals who send money remittances back to their families in their home countries, acculturalization to the new host society is not their primary goal. As such, identity research is multifaceted. Other researchers have investigated dimensions of identities such as the idea of the enduring, situated, and endangered self (Spindler & Spindler, 1992); describing identities through personality types such as realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (Holland, 1997), and identities in relation to the concept of human development (Cole & Vygotzky, 1975; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). However, this dissertation does not center on immigrant's

114

identity itself. Rather, it focuses on the identity transitions and identity forming

processes of immigrants as they relate to the workplace.

Possible Selves and Identity Transition Processes

This section of the dissertation examines the narratives of the study participants in

light of possible selves theory to make sense of the implications of their occupational

downgrading experiences. Therefore, this section is a continuation of the findings

presented in the previous chapter and at the same time an expansion of the concept by

looking into the possible selves constructed by the study participants. This section is

driven by the postmodern view of self as continuously evolving (Merriam, Cafarella &

Baumgartner, 2007). As illustrated in Figure 32, the point of departure for the analysis of

the participants' stories focusing on their career trajectories is immigration to the U.S. It

becomes the epicenter of events looking at past, present, and future selves. Each

participant's narrative is organized as follows: (1) a meaningful story shared by the study

participant, (2) a table illustrating, past, present (immigration), and future selves, and (3)

highlights of the three phases of identity transition process, i.e. separation, transition,

reincorporation (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014).
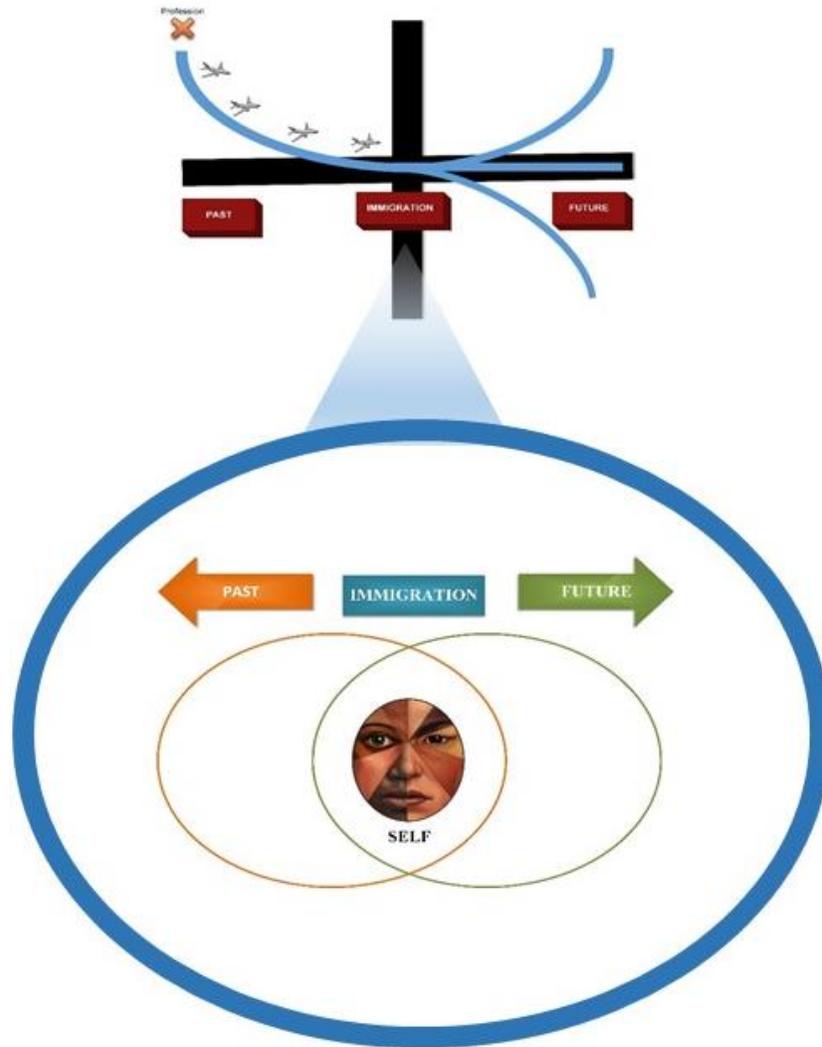
Figure 32. Occupational Downgrading in Light of Possible Selves

This next section provides an analysis of the career trajectories of the study participants. Figure 33 illustrates how their career trajectories varied and juxtaposes them with the theoretical framework. While none of the participants' career trajectories fully exhibited the U-shaped pattern, nobody continued the downward path after experiencing occupational downgrading.
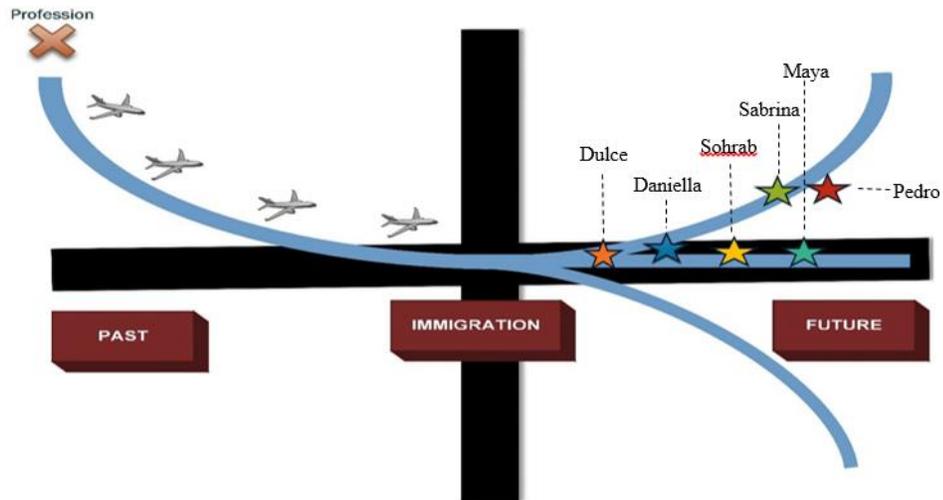
Figure 33. Career Trajectories of Study Participants

 At the time when the study was implemented, the research participants have not been able to reclaim their previous professions. Four participants (Dulce, Daniella, Sohrab, and Maya) showed a plateau in terms of workplace mobility during their stay in the country.   Two participants' (Sabrina and Pedro) career trajectories demonstrated a slight ascent in the U-shaped career trajectory. This meant that they were either on their way towards reclaiming a previous profession or expanding their current career to match their past occupations. These trajectories are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Dulce's Possible Selves

I have six nieces here. I teach them Spanish and also different physical exercises. I have not used my teaching experience professionally. At work, I like to interact with children…I give them stickers and they are happy. One day, a little girl who was about three years old started chatting with me while I was working in the store. She talked a lot but I didn't understand her well. When she was about to leave, she asked if she can get a

117

hug, which made her mom give me a strange look. I asked her mother if I could, and she

said yes, and I gave the little girl a hug!

Dulce majored in kindergarten education for her college degree and spent many

years teaching and running a school that she established with her sister in El Salvador.

She brought this zeal to work every day, and sought to further her education by

completing an additional degree in Physical Education. At her current work at the

department store, she carries her traits as a teacher and her passion for teaching children.

Her vignette above described an incident at her work which reflects this passion about

how much she enjoys working with children.

Table 5

Dulce's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
A member of a big family in El Salvador (six sisters, four brothers) A diligent school teacher and administrator who worked during the day and a went to school at night in order to complete her degree A visionary who started an academy with her sister An educator and physical education enthusiast with a passion of teaching children	A motivated retail associate for a large multinational company who aspires to have a better paying job An English language learner at a community learning center who has struggles speaking the language in her job A daughter who helps take care of her ailing father who goes to dialysis three times per week	A college student in the U.S. A home-owner in Texas A financially stable education professional teaching English or Spanish to immigrants

Table 5 illustrates Dulce's past, present, and future selves. For Dulce, the

separation from her previous work-related identity as a teacher happened when she was

unable to find a teaching position upon immigration and decided to accept the next available job. At present, she is a retail associate who wants to excel at her job by improving both her professional skills and English language skills. She is relatively new to the U.S. workforce being only in the country for three years. Thus, she is still undergoing the *transition* phase as she tries to make sense of what is happening to her professionally and how she would navigate through this experience. She is dedicated to her work despite the challenges that she has faced including long working hours and balancing family responsibilities like providing care for a sick parent. Because of this, *reincorporatio*n has not occurred yet. Her long term possible self is reclaiming her old profession as a teacher. However, Dulce's immediate possible self is securing a job, regardless if it were in the education industry or not, as long as she earns enough money so she can buy a house. According to her, she cannot afford to make that dream into fruition with her current income. Because Dulce is relatively new to the U.S. and has held only one position since she first got here, Dulce's career trajectory at this point does not show an up or down movement in terms of workplace achievement.

Daniella's Possible Selves

    Maybe I'm not at the best age to fulfill my dreams. Right now I am 44 years old…I don't have a lot of time to study and I don't have a lot of time to work. But I did my best and I am proud of myself! I want to see my son graduate here in the United States.   My dream is not for me right now, it is for him. That is also why I have to improve my skills so I can help him. Sometimes, I get frustrated because he's doing his homework and I can't help him. I'm frustrated because if we were in Cuba, I would be able to help him…I would know what to do.

As a mother and provider, Daniella balanced her sense of self between her professional goals and familial responsibilities. Daniella first wanted to study Chemistry in college but because she was pregnant at the time, she opted to study Chemistry Education because it was offered at a college near her town and therefore was more convenient for her at that time. In 2001, her son had a poisoning incident due to a chemical product. As a result, she swore off any chemical products and started a new career in graphic design to avoid endangering her children. Although Daniella strives to improve her skills and better her professional situation, her drive is more anchored towards her children's, especially her son. However, as shown in the vignette above, she expresses her frustrations about not being able to help him out academically because of her own limitations.

Table 6

Daniella's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
A young mother in Cuba who obtained her master's degree in Chemistry while working The only female staff at her Chemistry department in Cuba A Chemist and Chemistry teacher who traded her former profession for Graphic Design due to a chemical-related accident involving her child A family-oriented individual whose goal in the U.S. was to reunite her family and have a better life	A small trucking business owner, a house cleaner, a corporate cleaner, and a quality assurance specialist in assembly At present, a crew lead for industrial cleaners for a big company A provider for her family, who wants her son to graduate in the U.S. An English language learner who detests complacency and boredom A professionally motivated individual with hopes of advancing her career	A successful professional in the Chemistry industry, or close to at least A retiree in Cuba in 10 years A mother of a college graduate in the U.S.

Daniella's selves continued to evolve at the different stages of her life (see Table 6). In her case, it is important to note that **separation** from her old work-related identity was observed in two occasions. For one, because of her son's unexpected poisoning incident, she decided to forego everything that her chemist title came with in order to avoid the incident from recurring. That event led to her taking a job as a receptionist for a television company which eventually led towards a career in graphic design. The next time this was observed was post-immigration, when she was unable to find a profession and had to accept on manual labor jobs as office cleaner and as a quality assurance

specialist for an assembly company. She is currently at the **transition** phase in her current occupation as an industrial cleaner; she is creating new work-related identity narratives as she struggles to make sense of her job while enjoying small accomplishments along the way. Daniella eventually wants to reclaim her previous identity as a successful professional in Chemistry. She sees her current work as a stepping stone towards returning to her field of expertise. Thus, **reincorporation** was not observed in her story.   In terms of career trajectory, Daniella showed potential to return to her previous work as a Chemist and at this point, displayed a minor but not significant increase in her professional status since she first worked as a cleaner.

Sohrab's Possible Selves

I had a dream of living out of the country. But because of the sanctions that were imposed by the government, we were not allowed to go anywhere, especially in the United States. It's almost impossible to get a visa, even for a tourist visa! I didn't have any other way until I heard about the special immigrant visa, they offered in 2007. They issued visas for people who help the United States government in Iraq. This was a dangerous profession…they say at least 300 interpreters were killed when the U.S. Army was there in Iraq. I have a friend of mine who was killed. Iraqis thought of us as traitors helping the U.S. Army. We were the first targeted first. An interpreting job in Iraq was rated the most dangerous job in the world.

When I started teaching during the internship at my master's program, I was very happy. I wanted to stay there and teach all the time. I felt like I built very good relations with all the people there. I felt like they depended on me when they wanted to speak they

look at me and ask for words. I wanted to stay all the time. I felt good that this is a

requirement for school. I wanted to go every day to teach and help people.

Sohrab's journey (see Table 7) is an immigration story fueled by a passion to escape country in turmoil. Disillusioned by the situation of his native country Iraq, he wanted a better life for himself. He sought the path to a special immigration visa by becoming an interpreter for the U.S. military despite the perils that come along with it.

Table 7

Sohrab's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
Born in a war-torn Iraq to a small middle-class family A language aficionado and a scholar who was one of the top 10 students in his college An English teacher for middle school and high school students A determined individual who dreamt of relocating to the U.S. and escaping the dire conditions of his country by enlisting as an interpreter for the U.S. military to pave a path for a special immigration visa	After immigration, held multiple manual labor positions including a bus boy and a product assembly worker Currently, a security officer A master's student at a university majoring in ESL An appreciative new U.S. citizen who expresses frustration at not getting a professional job in his field	An ESL educator A world traveler

Sohrab was a teacher and a scholar in his country. He enjoyed learning and sharing the knowledge with his students. He liked being a teacher and the respect and reputation that went along with it. However, he was also a realist who understood the consequences of war in his country. As illustrated in Table 7, Sohrab's past, present, and future selves are intertwined by a burning desire to flee Iraq and start a new life in a place

that is not constantly endangered by war and political unrest. He did whatever necessary means to do this even if it meant giving up an esteemed and promising career in his country. The *separation* phase of identity transition was first observed when Sohrab gave up his teaching job and became an interpreter for the U.S. military in exchange for a pathway for U.S. citizenship. He created a temporary sense of self in order to reach his goals. During this time, he exchanged a scholarly profession to work that also required taxing physical challenges to which he was not accustomed to but endured because of the promise of a better and safer life. In the U.S., he sought to practice his teaching profession but met challenges that relegated him to manual intensive positions such as a busboy, dishwasher, assembly worker, and currently as a security officer. Sohrab has had challenges adapting with these roles post-immigration. Through this *transition* phase, he struggles to identify with his new work-related identity. His desired self is to become a language teacher and thus he tries to reclaim this self by pursuing graduate education. His feared self is not being able to secure a profession where his teaching and language skills are not valued. However, he believes that in order to be successful and get to where he desires to be, he needs to improve himself as well by acquiring more skills. Thus, *reincorporation* has not been attained as he has not created a coherent new work-related identity. At present, Sohrab's career trajectory exhibited minimal movement since he first came to the country.

Sabrina's Possible Selves

My daughter was with me when the attack happened. She was about 10 or 12 years old at that time. After the exchange of gunfire, I got out the car, took my daughter, and ran away. I left her in a business establishment that was open at that moment. I

came back to my car, and saw that my bodyguard died, my driver was in panic! After

that, life was difficult. We were fearful about everything – motorcycles… calls…

everything. That was the reason I decided to the leave Colombia and apply for political

asylum in the U.S. After being granted political asylum, I expected to live a peaceful and

quiet life. That was my dream. I expected for my children to have better opportunities

than they would in Colombia. Now as a motivational speaker, I forget that time exists

when I am speaking… I can speak for hours. My workshop is like a trip for the

participants within themselves to find out who they are. I am like a guide to my

participants…I guide through with my words, with movies and music. People heal

wounds in my workshops.

Sabrina wanted to become a doctor when she was growing up in Colombia.

However, she had difficulties with the application process. It was her mother who went

to the university and completed her application to be a lawyer. Sabrina claims that she

never thought of being a lawyer but was thankful that her mother made that decision for

her; that is how her professional journey started. Table 8 provides Sabrina's past,

present, and future selves and depicts her as a mother and as a professional. Like

Daniella also struggled balancing career and familial obligations. Her profession in

Colombia was remarkable yet took a downturn when her life was threatened and thus

forcing her to leave the country and seek political asylum in the U.S.

Table 8

Sabrina's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
The oldest of 10 children from a poor family in Colombia who became a successful lawyer	A house cleaner, a retail associate, and a fast food worker	A motivational speaker to various audiences
The mother of three children who balanced her political aspirations and family life	At present, a motivational speaker for Latino community	A founder of an organization that will help parents and abused women in the Latino community
A public servant who served for more than a decade as a house representative	An English language learner at a Community based program	
The only female elected representative in her political party	A self-directed learner who learned about software programs and other courses mostly on-line	
A motivational speaker after losing the election		
A former politician who sought political asylum in the U.S.A because of an assassination attempt		

Sabrina's story showed the desired U-shaped career trajectory for immigrants. However, her return to motivational speaking is not as profitable as it was prior immigration. Therefore, her trajectory in the U-shaped path did not match its original peak. While in Colombia, Sabrina rose to prominence as a lawyer and political leader. After losing an election, she reinvented herself as a motivational speaker delivering workshops to improve other people' lives. This is when *separation* from her work-related identity first manifested; the loss in the election opened up a new career for her as a motivational speaker. Unfortunately, the violence in her country led to an attack to her

life and prodded her to seek asylum in the U.S. Here, she worked in the service industry as a cleaner and as staff for a fast food store. Again, this was a separation from her previous work-related identity; it was even more strenuous because it was an absolute shift from a white to a blue collar job this time around.   However, the circumstance did not deter her from regaining her professional life. Instead, she used these experiences to enrich her perspectives. Sabrina showed a powerful *transition* phase when she was able to return to her motivational speaking endeavors. Through learning new skills such as PowerPoint, Corel, coaching, and interpersonal skills classes, she was able to construct a new work-related identity. Although her workshops have not been as lucrative they were in Colombia, she is determined to promote them. Her immediate desired self is to expand her motivational workshops and gain more audience. In the long run, she wants to establish an organization that benefits abused women in the Latino community. It seems that Sabrina's feared self is not being relevant or not being able to use her experiences and the skills she has learned to help other people. At this point, she has reached the *reincorporation* phase of the identity transition process where she has reclaimed part of her previous work-related identity but development continues.

Maya's Possible Selves

My parents were both teachers. My father was a school principal and was head of the school board…he wanted me to be a teacher too. In fact, when I pursued my master's degree, he encouraged me to major in Indian languages – Hindi and Gujarati. There has been no satisfaction in my work here in the United States… I just earn the money and help my family. My husband kept telling me that it's okay, that we need to wait and be patient. Now, our family is happy because my son is now a successful big

127

business man. But right now, I'm 60 years old and still not teaching...but what can you do?

Maya came from a family of teachers. Her father had a major role in choosing her profession as a teacher, which she adores. She is proud to say that after what she and her husband have been through, her sons are now successful and that their patience and sacrifices paid off. Maya was a language teacher in India for many years. Like Sohrab, she is passionate in imparting her knowledge of languages. She was not able to return to this position after immigrating to the U.S. but is determined to keep learning to reclaim her old teaching profession. However, she is fearful that she may not recover her this role because of her age.

Table 9

Maya's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
A language teacher (Hindi, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Basic English) in India from a family of teachers

A devoted mother, wife, daughter, and daughter in law whose family's ambition and needs took precedence before her own

A trailblazer in her own accord, whose academic feats (bachelor's and master's degree) meant a personal sense of accomplishment for an Indian female in the 1970s | A hotel supervisor and an ice cream shop associate

Currently, a retail associate who helps her husband manage a store

A grandmother of three who helps take care of grandchildren

An ESL student at a community college program

A support system for her children making them reach their dreams | A proficient English speaker

A graduate of a teaching certificate program

A teacher or a teaching assistant in Texas |

Maya's possible selves have been inextricably linked to her familial role. She brought up these roles while explaining her artifacts and the narratives of her professional achievements. In her case, her profession was first put on hold first when she married and took a few years break to care for her father-in-law. However, the *separation* phase from her old profession was observed when she immigrated to the U.S. where she focused on becoming a provider for her children until they graduated from college. To date, Maya remains a support system for her family assisting with her son's businesses at any capacity she could and babysitting for her grandchildren (see Table 9). When she came here, her possible selves as the good parent and good wife took precedence before her professional goals. Her possible self as a successful teacher was placed on the backburner. Instead, she worked at service jobs such as helping manage the hotel and retail store jobs in order to support her family.

Now that her children are accomplished individuals and that her family has acclimated to the life in the U.S., Maya is starting to explore her own path towards reclaiming herself as a teacher. This is her *transition* phase; she is an ESL learner who hopes to improve her linguistic abilities so she can obtain her certification to become a teacher or a teaching assistant. She is as passionate in learning as she is in teaching. Success for her however, is defined by the achievements of her children. In her narrative, Maya shared that her family is preoccupied with their own responsibilities and that she feels that she received insufficient support for her learning. She hopes to one day return to the classroom where her skills and passions are most appreciated. Therefore *reincorporation*, was not observed in her situation. Maya's career trajectory has remained in a plateau for a decade. As a family-oriented individual, reclaiming her

previous profession was not a priority until recently, when her children graduated and achieved success in their careers.

Pedro's Possible Selves

I owned a home in Venezuela. I could find better jobs but that wouldn't mean that the economy wouldn't collapse sooner or later. I could have stayed in Venezuela and not worked as a cook. I did that here but I didn't care. Before I moved here, it was already in my mind that in the beginning, I will do anything to work my way through. Now, I have used some of my skills in marketing research here in the U.S. I've also learned a lot from my current company (auto-insurance). For example, when you approach somebody, you need to have knowledge of what you're selling and what you want to offer to them. A lot of people might not know the product, so you can't sell if you don't know the product, or how to approach somebody that speaks the language. Some people say it in Spanish and kind of mix it up with English. You're not going to sell it like that because people don't understand what you mean. So as someone who previously worked in marketing research and who knows how to speak Spanish correctly, I am able to approach customers the correct way.

In the vignette above, Pedro recounted his experience and his thoughts prior leaving Venezuela. Pedro had wanted to work with marketing and computers. Before graduating from college, he applied to a multinational product company in Venezuela where he started in the field of marketing research. He relished his experiences in going to different cities, conducting product research, and collecting and reading customer interviews. He stayed with that company for more than four years. However, the economic situation of Venezuela kept getting worse. He started to explore other

130

international opportunities, which included Australia and the U.S and was ready to make a move despite his fondness for from his old profession.

Table 10

Pedro's Past, Present, and Future Selves

Past	Immigration	Future
A marketing researcher specialist in his native country of Venezuela

A sports aficionado who played soccer for many years

A dreamer who wanted to escape the deteriorating economic conditions of his country

An avid traveler in his country | Worked various manual labor jobs as kitchen aide at a country club, associate at a gas station, manager for a restaurant, and customer service positions

At present, a customer service associate for a nationwide auto insurance provider

A music lover who frequents live music events | A professional at an organization that involves traveling

An on-line business owner

A world traveler |

Pedro is as a traveler and an adventurer. This was first manifested after he started a position as a marketing researcher in Venezuela. Because of his work, he was able to travel parts of the country which he really enjoyed. However, as he mentioned in his narrative, this enjoyment did not last because of the deteriorating situation in the country. This prompted him to scout for a better prospect for his future, even if it meant abandoning his previous profession that held esteem and opportunities for travel and starting from the bottom in the new country. This was the start of the *separation* phase in his identity transition process. In the U.S, he held multiple service–oriented positions that did not offer the same perks and benefits that his old job did (see Table 10). Regardless, he was unfazed by these challenges and continued working hard and enjoyed

the freedom here. In these positions, he explored different work-related identities which was totally different from his previous ones which reflects his *transition* phase. In his new job, although the nature of the job is different than a market researcher, he is able to integrate some of the professional skills that he previously had prior immigration. Although he has reached the *reincorporation* phase, he continuously strives for growth professionally. He hopes to one day, land another job that allows him opportunities for travel like the one he had in Venezuela. He also hopes to one day become a business owner but still is deciding on what product to offer. Pedro has made gradual steps in improving his career path in the U.S. As a matter of fact, it has shifted from the service industry (i.e., doing manual labor jobs) to holding an administrative role. Although this is not in the marketing research field, at his current job, he is able to use some of the skills he learned from that industry.

In summary, the phases of identity transition process manifested in similar and different ways for the participants. For most, they showed separation from their previous work-related identities when they immigrated to the U.S. and were unable to secure to jobs that matched their education and work experiences, thus experiencing occupational downgrading. For some however, separation happened at earlier stages of their lives. Sabrina and Daniella for example showed separation from their old work-related identities as a result of second careers. Both of these second careers were results of unfortunate losses: Sabrina lost at an election while Daniella suffered a traumatic event. Sohrab on the other hand, experienced separation from his previous work-related identity when he enlisted to aid the U.S. military in exchange for a path to citizenship through a special immigration visa.

The study participants' narratives showed that some of them were in still in the transition phase as they try to reclaim their old work-related identities, regardless of their lengths of stay in the U.S. Dulce and Daniella for example, have been living in the country the shortest. Their stories show how they are still trying to negotiate and make sense of their work-related identities in their jobs. Maya on the other hand, who has been living in the country for more than a decade has only started to take steps towards pursuing her old profession. As an ESL student, she is slowly pushing towards becoming a teacher again.

Finally, the reincorporation phase was only observed in two participants, namely Pedro and Sabrina. They both have been in the country for more than a decade. Pedro and Sabrina have both created new work-identities where they are able to integrate some of facets of their previous professions. Figure 34 illustrates these identity transition phases as they happened in the participants' narratives.
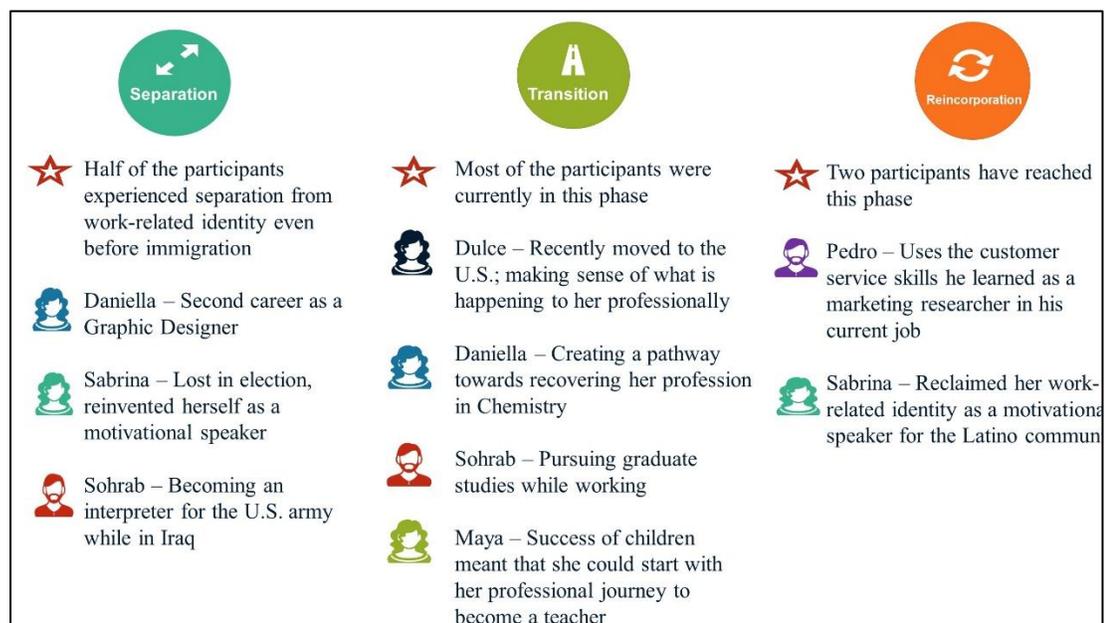
Figure 34. Study Participants and Identity Transition Process

In reviewing the participants' stories against the phases of the identity transition process, it was evident that their immigration journeys were very different and complex. Immigration in itself is a dynamic process and it is influenced by many different elements. The phases of identity transition provided an understanding of significant stages on their journeys in terms of their work-related identities as they experienced occupational downgrading. However, they did not account for all nuances in their stories. For instance, the phases of identity transition are expected to be time-bound and linear and that there is a beginning (separation), middle (transition), and end (reincorporation). To put it differently, these phases do not address the possibility that these individuals may remain in the transition phase and may not reach the reincorporation phase. As some of the participants' narratives showed, these individuals can possess multiple work-related identities as they go through the process of reclaiming their work related identities.

This section illustrated that the participants' sense of self changed over time. These selves continuously evolved as they made important choices such as the decision to immigrate, experienced traumatic events, faced challenges in the new workplace, and attained milestones. These findings are consistent to research of the postmodern view of the self as fragmented and constantly changing (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Thus, reviewing possible selves throughout their lifetimes establishes that possible selves are temporal and malleable.

Possible Selves and Identity Forming Processes

In the succeeding section, I used the identity forming processes suggested by Babineau and Packard (2006) to discuss study findings. These identity forming processes

134

include: (1) reclaiming past possible selves, (2) rejecting past possible selves before constructing new ones, (3) constructing new possible selves, and (4) expanding current ones. I analyzed the participants' narratives and classified which of these identity forming processes were present in their stories. The participants' stories did not just show one identity forming process; some demonstrated multiple processes in their narratives (see Table 11). These identity forming processes (Babineau & Packard, 2006) and the identity transition processes (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014) discussed in the previous section complement each other in developing the stories of the study participants. While the latter explored the stages or phases of the participants' work-related identity transitions, these identity forming processes illustrate how the study participants navigate more permanent spaces of their work-related identity.

In analyzing the data, it became critical to bring to the forefront the tensions that the study participants faced during the immigration and resettlement process and as they developed their work-related identities. The general assumption is that all immigrants come to the United States to move through a certain trajectory. However, the study findings illustrated the participants' resistance toward these overgeneralizations. That is, they wanted to achieve the American Dream on their own terms; they wanted to participate in the U.S. society but they also desired to remain true to themselves. As an example, Pedro worked at many manual labor jobs and was unmoved by the downward mobility of his occupation as long as he was able to have continuous income flow and enjoy his new life in the U.S. while traveling and enjoying the arts.

Table 11

Identity Forming Processes of Study Participants

Identity Forming Process	Observed With
Reclaiming past selves	Dulce, Daniella, Sohrab, Sabrina, Maya
Rejecting past selves	Sabrina, Pedro
Constructing new possible selves	Sohrab, Pedro
Expanding current possible selves	Dulce, Daniella, Sabrina, Pedro

Reclaiming Past Selves

Reclaiming past selves meant recovering the study participants' original professions prior to immigrating in the U.S. All but one showed intent in reclaiming their past selves. However, this was most evident in the cases of Maya, Sabrina, and Sohrab. Maya transitioned from being a respected teacher in India to working manual labor jobs in the U.S. It took her quite some time to realize that she wanted to return to teaching. In fact, it was not until her children graduated from college and became successful in their careers that she made a conscious decision to improve her profession. When Maya felt that she had succeeded in providing for her family, she was able to re-evaluate her situation and mustered the courage to reach for her dream of becoming a teacher once again. In her situation, her family's needs came before her professional desires.

Meanwhile, Sabrina underwent a traumatic event that prompted her to seek for political asylum to the United States. Of the participants in the study, she is only one who has showed steps to recovery towards her old occupation. After her loss in the election, she started delivering workshops in Colombia until the attack on her life. When she came to the U.S. she cleaned houses, worked at a fast food store, and at a retail store

before meeting someone that would help her start delivering workshops for the Latino community, although this was not as lucrative as the one ones she did back in Colombia. Sabrina viewed her shift in status as necessary for her well-being as she reinvented herself professionally in the U.S.

Sohrab on the other hand, who is almost 30 years Maya and Sabrina's junior feels like his quest to reclaim his past self is just starting. Unlike Maya, Sohrab believes that he will be able to reclaim his past self in due time. He is hopeful through learning more skills and improving himself, he will be able to become a teacher. His challenge right now, is to get his foot in the education industry after completing his master's degree. However, he worries that despite a graduate degree, he will be unable to find work because of anecdotal evidence from some peers who are in similar situations than he is. Sohrab lost this work-related identity when he immigrated to the U.S. but since then has aimed to rebuild his possible self as a teacher. He attempts to reclaim his previous self by enrolling at a master's program in hopes of reclaiming not just the prestige but also and innate drive to help other people.

Rejecting Past Selves

Babineau and Packard (2006) pointed out that this identity forming process discards the old self and explores new possibilities. For this, the focal participants in this identity process are Pedro and Sabrina. Their narratives speak of an old career that they were presently not pursuing. Although all the participants have in one way or another rejected their past selves at one point in time during their journeys, this was most evident in their cases. As illustrated in his story, Pedro was able to let go of his past self and reinvent himself by being open to the changes before him. He was ready to let go of his

past self and create a new self in order to adapt to the new life in the U.S. Although he enjoyed his past work in marketing research, his main goal was to survive in the U.S., which offered a better prospect than his home country of Venezuela, and enjoy life here. He also attempted to return to this industry but to no avail. However, he claimed that his credentials and work experiences were overlooked and thus, prompted him to search for other opportunities. Furthermore, he thinks that he would have a better chance in returning to the marketing research business had he chosen to live in a bigger metropolis. Unable to go back to his previous profession, Pedro let go of his past self and sought other job prospects.

Similarly, Sabrina entertained the thought of once more becoming a politician but was dismayed with the political situation in the U.S. Despite her desire to help other people through politics, she determined that it was difficult to be in that environment. As discussed in the previous section, she was able to reclaim her job as a motivational speaker but at this point, she showed no desire to enter the political arena, and thus rejected that past self.

Rossiter (2007b) spoke of the value of letting go of the old views of the self and acting on expanded possible selves. According to her, "the scope and boundaries of possibility, along with associated values, are defined by our meaning systems and habits of minds" (p. 89). Simply put, in order to embrace new possibilities and opportunities, it is critical for individuals to be able to liberate themselves of their old self views and create new expectations. Letting go of possible selves does not necessarily mean giving up a dream or losing one's self. Rather, it suggests " a tolerance for one's own vulnerability, an acknowledgement of change, and a lack of defensiveness in the face of

one's inconsistencies – qualities that may be characteristics of the developed and developing person" (King & Hicks, 2007, p. 33). Out of all of the study participants, Pedro had the most jobs after immigrating to the U.S. His experiences display his adaptability skills regardless of what role he was is. In many of these jobs, Pedro not only survived but excelled. Despite these many jobs and the challenges that went along with them, he was unmoved, celebrated his successes, and remained determined that the best was still to come.

Constructing New Possible Selves

Two of the study participants demonstrated constructing new possible selves. However, this process was not as explicit in their narratives as the other identity process were. For one, Pedro hinted at becoming a businessman but is undecided of the product that he would be offering. Likewise he has an unclear idea of how to start the business. Sohrab on the other hand, spoke about expanding his skill because he is determined that knowing English can only get one so far in a predominantly English speaking country. He did not go into detail what skills he wanted to prepare better but he is certain that he needed to learn more in order to succeed.

Expanding Current Selves

This identity process means building on one's current self to advance in the new position (Babineau & Packard, 2006). Pedro, Dulce, and Daniella are exemplars for this process. Pedro let go of his expectations to return to the marketing business and looks forward to advancement in his new job. On the other hand, although Dulce still wants to be teacher in the future, her immediate concern is to either advance in her own job or get

a new job that provides better monetary compensation. Finally, Daniella wants to move up in her current job through learning and certification tests.

For these participants, expanding their current selves also meant reconciling them with their old ones. In other words, they try to adopt part of their past selves to their new roles in order to advance their careers. Pedro for example, was able to let go of his past professional self and started discovering new ones. At his current job as a customer service support for a national auto insurance company, he admits using some of the skills and attitudes he learned in the past to be better at this job.

Dulce also tries to reconcile her previous self as a teacher to her new role as a cashier. At the department store, she trains new cashiers and enjoys imparting the new knowledge and skills she has acquired specifically with new employees. Dulce's desired selves for the future includes becoming a college student in the U.S., a home owner, and an educational professional. In order to attain those goals, she believes that she needs to improve her English as she struggles with it in the workplace.

Daniella's shift in professions and changes in possible selves is vital in the discussion of possible selves in adult education and transitional learning. Stroobants, Jans, and Wildemeersch (2001) described that transitional learning happens "when individuals are faced with unpredictable changes in the dynamics between their life courses and the transforming context. And when they are confronted with the necessity to (learn to) anticipate, handle and reorganize these changing aspects in life" (p. 117). In her story, she first transitioned professions from a Chemist to a Graphic Designer before coming to the U.S. as a result of a traumatic event. Because of this event, she was compelled to reevaluate her options and steer towards what was most important for her at

that time. Rossiter (2007b) also stressed out that "probably the most fertile common ground shared by possible selves and adult education is in the realm of transformational and transitional learning. The very term possible selves implies the potential for change" (p. 88). This denotes that significant events that happen during an individual's lifespan, either positive experiences or traumatic incidents, as evidenced by Daniella's story may cause changes in an individual's possible selves.

Overall, possible selves theory provided an appropriate lens in understanding the occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants and their transitions to the U.S. workforce. However, what this theory did not account for were structural barriers such as racism and discrimination which repeatedly manifested in the participants' narratives. These barriers either delayed or impeded these individuals' paths towards realizing their full potential as professionals. Learning about these structural barriers which are endemic in the immigration and resettlement processes through the participants' stories, therefore brings these issues to the forefront and informs the elusiveness of the American Dream, which is not easily attainable by everyone who is invited to the country.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 provided an analysis of the participants' narratives in light of possible selves theory selves to answer the final research question. In this chapter we learned about the study participants' past, present, and future selves. The chapter examined the study participants' stories using the identity transition process specifically identifying where the phases of separation, transition, and reincorporation occurred (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2006). The chapter also highlighted the four identity forming processes proposed by Babineau and Packard (2006), namely reclaiming past selves, rejecting past

selves, constructing new possible selves, and expanding new current possible selves. In the next and final chapter, I present the contribution of the study to adult education, internalization of adult education, and possible selves literature. As well, I offer recommendations for adult ESL practitioners, implications for practitioners, employers and immigration policy. Finally I share tensions and challenges faced when implementing the study, ideas for future research, and my concluding thoughts.

VI. THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

My experience here work-wise is not very good, but I think I still have time to make it here! I changed a lot in the U.S., which includes my way of thinking. A good profession will come in the future. Some people like Einstein was a failure at first. He was jobless; he was working in the archives. After publishing his papers, he became Einstein. So I feel like I need to work on myself - on my skills and on my credentials first. - Sohrab

Sohrab's vignette speaks of a sense of hope for the future despite challenges during this immigration journey. Like Sohrab, the rest of the study participants are optimistic that one day, they will improve their situations professionally and reach their aspired selves. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to document the stories of six immigrants who have experienced occupational downgrading upon immigration to the U.S. Likewise, this study examined the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves. This final chapter presents the highlights from the study findings and the contributions of the research to adult education, international education, and possible selves. As well, I provide recommendations for practice, specifically for adult ESL (English as a Second Language) professionals, employers, and policy makers. The chapter also includes the tensions and challenges experienced through the course of this dissertation and offers suggestions for future research in regard to this topic. Last, this final chapter shares my concluding thoughts about this research and this dissertation process.

Highlights of Study Findings

As I wrote this portion of the dissertation, I kept in mind all the major stakeholders of this research. They included immigrants, students, teachers, employers, employees, community centers and immigrant groups, and policymakers who may benefit from the study findings. The long term goal was to use these data findings to inform future policies that will assist in the integration of immigrants into the U.S. workforce and create platforms to better serve the immigrant community.

Research Question One

What are the journeys of adult immigrants adapting to the demands and the new environment of the U.S. workplace?

This research question was answered in Chapters 3 and 4. By reviewing the immigration history of the U.S. and the participants' countries of origin in Chapter 3, we were able to identify immigration milestones and salient events that painted the current situation of immigration in the U.S. By doing this, we put the participants' journeys in a more meaningful historical context.

In Chapter 4, we learned that the participants' reasons for coming to the U.S. are varied. We witnessed how one participant sought to escape the war and deteriorating conditions in his country, one fled to elude from violence and threats, and the rest to secure a better life, improve their socio-economic statuses, and reunite with their families. Through examining these stories, we learned the push and pull factors that contextualized their migration to the U.S: poverty to and a better quality of life, from war and civil unrest to political security, and from isolation to being reunited with family. From the artifacts they brought during the interviews, we also learned important stories

that enhanced their narratives. We learned of their counties' cultures culture, their

families, their academic successes and professional accomplishments, and their

sentiments about their journeys. As an example, because of the wars in Iraq presented in

the historical context of immigration, we learn why Sohrab wanted to flee the country

and seek a better life in the United States. As well, we highlighted the history of violence

in Colombia which prompted Sabrina to seek political asylum here. We examined

Pedro's story in light of Venezuela's history of economic struggles and understand his

desire to live in a country that has economic stability. In sum, learning the immigrants'

journeys, examining their stories, and sharing their experiences allowed us to identify the

commonalities and differences of these individuals' experiences and reflect on these

stories.

Research Question Two

How do occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants shape their

integration to the U.S. workforce?

The second research question aimed to shed light on the phenomenon of

occupational downgrading as experienced by the study participants. This question was

answered in Chapter 4. In this chapter, we learned that all participants struggled to

integrate into the U.S. workforce and find jobs that suited their academic credentials and

professional experiences. Looking back at the theoretical framework, we show that the

participants followed different career trajectories than the typical U-shaped path for

immigrants regardless of their lengths of stay in the U.S. Four of the participants (Dulce,

Daniella, Sohrab, and Maya) remained at a plateau where no discernable career mobility

was reflected since they arrived in the country. In short, either very minimal movement

or no significant movements were observed at all in their career trajectory since they arrived in the United States. As an example Sohrab, who worked as a busboy and dishwasher when he first came to the country, currently works as a building attendant pursuing graduate studies. Likewise, Maya's first job upon immigration was a hotel employee. At present, she works as an associate in a retail store. Both their narratives indicated that there have not been either upward or downward movements in their career paths.

On the other hand, two of the study participants (Sabrina and Pedro) showed significant upward career mobility since they first arrived in the country. For example, although Sabrina did not return to politics, she was able to find an avenue for her career as a motivational speaker. Similarly, Pedro was able to find a professional job that offers a career ladder. His current job shows a significant increase from the manual labor service jobs that he had when he first immigrated to the country.

Five themes emerged from these stories: underemployment and devaluing of skills, language barrier, a shift in social status, and a sense of discrimination, and a lack of inspiration. These themes were critical in looking at the challenges and successes the study participants while integrating into the U.S. workforce. The participants portrayed determination and hope despite their frustrations about their situation.

Structural barriers were repeatedly observed in the participants' narratives. In fact, they conveyed clear and powerful messages of racism and discrimination. These barriers either delayed or impeded these individuals' paths towards realizing their full potential as professionals, and having greater access to participation in the workforce and society.

As a final point, despite the challenges of their occupational downgrading experiences, the participants demonstrated qualities that empowered them to integrate into the U.S. workforce. Self-directedness for example, was manifested in Sabrina's narratives and allowed her to pursue what she wanted to learn, learn it, and adopt into her profession as a motivational speaker. Pedro on the other hand, displayed adaptability in different occupations that he pursued. Sohrab, and Maya, showed passion and determination to recover their old selves despite the odds. And finally, Daniella and Dulce, despite being the newest immigrants to the U.S. of the group, showed optimism and hope that the best is still yet to come for themselves and their families.

Research Question Three

How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of

possible selves theory?

In Chapter 5, the study examined the phenomenon of occupational downgrading through the lens of possible selves theory. Study findings corroborate to Frazier and Hooker's (2006) four theoretical anchors of possible selves presented in earlier in this dissertation. The participants created their own pathways as they navigated the intricacies of immigration and resettlement. Their possible selves reflected not only their intrapersonal developments but also provided real-life situations, socio-cultural influences, and global forces. Sohrab for instance, created a provisional-self as military translator in the hope of escaping a war-torn country and create a better future for himself. Also, the participants' possible selves served as the driving force for their current behavior. Maya is in a self-fulfilling quest to become a teacher again and hence, she enrolled in an ESL class to improve her English in hopes of continuing her education.

147

And finally, the participants' possible selves reflected their personalities, such as Pedro's unwavering wanderlust which led him to the U.S. and which prompts him to keep traveling in the future. As well, this showed in Sabrina's inherent passion to inspire, motivate, and guide people which was a recurring theme in her narrative.

This dissertation also evaluated the study participants' stories based on the identity transition process suggested by Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014). The phases of identity transition phases, namely separation, transition, and reincorporation manifested through the participants' narratives in different ways. They showed separation from their previous work-related identities when they immigrated to the U.S. and were unable to secure to jobs that matched their education and work experiences, thus experiencing occupational downgrading. For some however, separation happened prior to immigrating to the U.S. as a result of traumatic events. Most of the study participants were still in the transition phase; their stories reflected how they are still trying to negotiate and make sense of their work-related identities in their jobs. Finally, the reincorporation phase was observed in two participants. These participants were able to integrate their previous work-related identities to their newly created selves.

This study also analyzed the participants' possible selves through the identity forming processes proposed by Babineau and Packard (2006), which were (1) reclaiming past possible selves, (2) rejecting past possible selves before constructing new ones, (3) constructing new possible selves, and (4) expanding current ones. This illuminated the different pathways immigrants adapt to the loss of their previous work-related identities. For instance, not because an individual is in the same role or profession he or she was prior to migrating to this country does not mean that he or she neither have aspirations

nor using their skillset at a different capacity. Dulce for example, used her teaching and

training skills in the department store to train new employees. This demonstrated an

intrinsic passion to teach others despite not being in the teaching profession. Likewise,

Daniella excelled at her job as an industrial cleaner by providing her supervisor with a

schematic and organized a weekly report which she previously did at her previous job as

a chemist.

As a final point worth mentioning, the phenomenon of occupational downgrading

is not exclusive to the U.S. It is a global phenomenon that is experienced in many other

countries such as Canada, Italy, and Australia, just to name a few. Thus, there is a

growing need for awareness of the dynamics between immigrants and the employment

sector in the host countries. To make sense of immigrants' journeys, it is imperative to

tell and examine their stories as a starting point towards attaining critical justice and

equity for the immigrant community.

Contribution to Adult Education

Findings of this study add to the literature of ever-growing and changing field of

adult education. In particular, they inform who is participating in adult education.

Likewise, this study centralizes the immigrant as participant to adult learning and

development; it provides new narratives of adults in transition. Telling these participant

stories are important; each of the participants had their own stories to tell and which we

can learn from. When we tell these stories, we also keep questioning what adult

education can offer them. In addition, this study expands on theories that are organic in

the realm of adult education such as identity formation in the workplace, transitional

learning, and lifelong learning.

Lastly, this dissertation calls attention for adult educators to continue to examine social justice and equity issues affecting immigrants who participate in adult education programs. As Y. Guo (2015) succinctly explained, "Adult educators need to adopt a critical multiculturalism approach that challenges their own deficit perspective of difference and becomes cultural brokers and transformers by providing immigrants with strategies to overcome employers' racism" (p. 48). Thus, the findings of the study urge adult educators to be perceptive and cognizant of their students' stories and to be more critical about their roles as educators in the classroom.

Contribution to Internationalization of Adult Education

This study showed that despite efforts towards the integration of immigrants into the community, immigrants continue to encounter challenges in finding suitable employment that matches their professional credentials and skills. The study participants experienced challenges because of the absence of academic mobility between their country of origin and the new host country. That is, their academic qualifications and credentials were not recognized upon immigration which limited their employment opportunities. Findings of this study then, contribute to the increasing call for internationalization of higher education and adult education and add this conversation to globalization. Maringe and Woodfield (2013) suggested that internationalization is "a transformative process that aims to integrate people from different places, their cultures and knowledge systems in ways that create added value for everyone involved" (p. 2). Moreover, internalization of higher and adult education increases the chances that educated and professional immigrants to transition easier into the new host society and improve their opportunities for work mobility. Furthermore, this might contribute

towards collaborative scholarships and understanding between universities, as well as standardization of academic programs, to some extent, that will benefit learners in the long run.

Contribution to Possible Selves Literature

Finally, this study adds to the literature of possible selves theory. While the number of research studies for possible selves theory is abundant, research in connection to adult immigrants is scarce. This research was unique in its own accord because not only does it focus on the development of the individuals alone but also takes into account what was happening around them. The study overlays the socio-political and economic context into the participants' stories, and thus enriches their narratives. For this reason, an examination of occupational downgrading through the lens of possible selves enables researchers and readers to recognize and the complexities and the multi-dimensionality of the self. To put it differently, occupational downgrading and possible selves, when viewed together, create a more meaningful approach in making sense of the stories of those who have experienced the phenomenon.

Also, this research generated a framework that has not been used before. This framework builds on concepts from assimilation theory, segmented assimilation theory, and occupational downgrading theory to analyze possible selves for professional immigrants. While this framework was designed to gain understanding of the narratives of adult immigrants, my goal is to continuously refine this framework and extend it for future studies related to possible selves and immigrant studies.

Given these points, this research also challenges possible selves theory and current literature on occupational downgrading. Using possible selves theory alone was

inadequate in rendering the study participants narratives. To be more specific, the theory allows for examining the temporal components on the individuals' path, such as the past, present, and future concepts of selves, critical in exploring their lived experiences. However, it did not account for the structural barriers that were present in the research participants' stories, and that halted their trajectories.

Recommendations for Adult ESL Practitioners

This dissertation brings several recommendations for adult education and ESL administrators and practitioners. For one, transition programs targeting skilled and educated programs are scarce. I propose that programs need to be designed to cater to this population and specifically be designed to create pathways for immigrants to reclaim their professional credentials. ESL programs should also go beyond traditional "low, intermediate, and high" level categories for their students. Some immigrants who "top out" of these programs once their English proficiency has been reached are unable to navigate through the job market, more specifically in the fields that they want to pursue. I suggest that there must be bridge programs for individuals who fall under these situations.

Some of the advanced ESL programs that are in place usually focus on resume writing, what to do on job interviews, and completing applications. However, they do not offer individualized career-specific counseling that may serve their occupational aspirations better. These advanced ESL programs for immigrants must be more directed for the purpose of getting immigrants back in track towards their own professional goals. Furthermore, most existing programs right now are private and expensive, which is a

burden for most of these individuals as they are trying to rebuild their careers. Therefore, public or community-based education should be tapped to support these programs.

Possible selves pose a number of implications for both learners and teachers of adult education. Several studies (Fletcher, 2007; Hock, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2011; Klaw, 2008; Leondari, 2007; Yang & Noels, 2013) explored connections on possible selves and academic achievement. More importantly, studies also show the relationship of possible selves and motivation. Whether possible selves are viewed as either beacons of hope that one aspires to attain or ominous forecasts that one tries to avoid, possible selves become reasons for individuals to take action towards a desired goal (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Therefore, a notable recommendation for ESL practitioners from this study is to employ instructional strategies that utilizes the students' experiences, skills, and prior professional knowledge as assets in the classroom.

As an example, one of the strategies that I used in my ESL class is an activity where students select images from a magazine that are representative of their past, present, and future self (see Figure 35). This activity is connected to the essence of possible selves theory. It allows students to talk about themselves at different stages at their lives - who they were before, who they are now, and who they want to be in the future. It provides them a time to reflect and share their experiences which could also be very useful for the instructor in designing the lessons and activities for the classroom. Using students' prior professional knowledge in the classroom is also critical for students' to feel valued in the classroom and quite possibly increase retention. For example, one of my previous ESL students was previously a medical professional in her country. I have often asked her assistance in health-related ESL activities in class not

only to recognize her skill set but also to make her peers realize the richness that each one can they can contribute to learning.
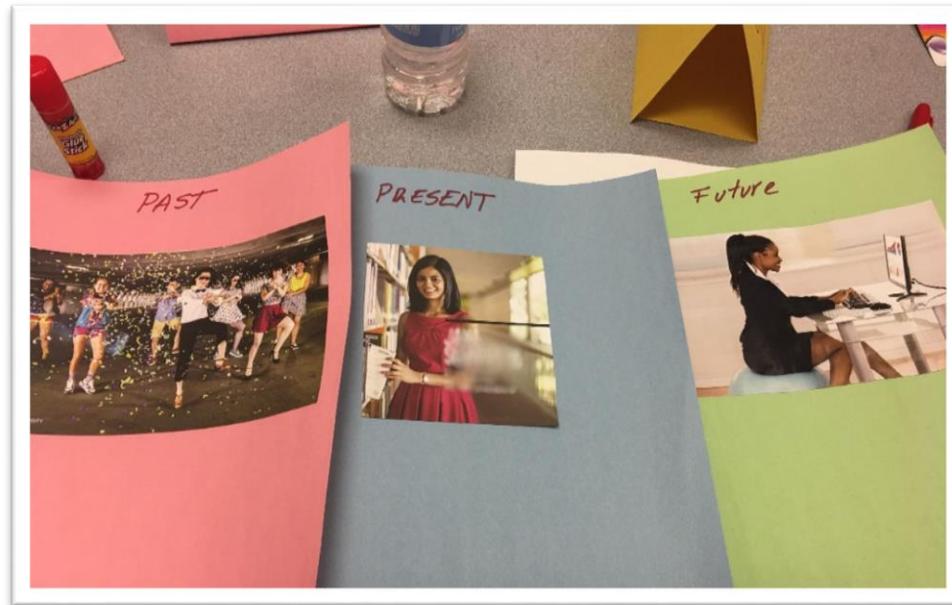
Figure 35. ESL Activity for Past, Present, and Future Selves

Equally important is utilizing the concept of possible selves in mentoring adult learners. Maya expressed her lack of a guide or a mentor to help her navigate the intricacies of the workforce in the U.S. Adult educators and practitioners can employ possible selves to mentor learners and create mentorship initiatives to guide them towards their career aspirations. Adult educators and learners can therefore use possible selves to create powerful experiences in mentoring.

Recommendations for Employers

Employment is central to the immigration and resettlement process. Most of the study participants wanted to improve their socio-economic status and aspired to have a better life by seeking jobs that will help them through this transition. However, the path towards achieving the American Dream is sometimes murky and often filled with unmet

expectations and other challenges. Therefore, a recommendation for employers is to make the work environment conducive to cultivate an individual's aspirations and identities. This could be done in a couple of ways.   Immigrants in the study were employed in low-skilled jobs during their transitions. Their level of contentment at their work post immigration varied. For some, they were contented with those jobs because they made them earn the money that they needed at the time. But for most, there was no contentment because of sheer underemployment and underutilization of their skills. In addition, most of them were discouraged by the lack of mobility in their jobs. I think it is an important strategy to use these low-skilled and entry level jobs as transitional jobs but offer benefits and continued training in order to advance the careers of this group of individuals. In other words, companies should consider providing workplace education programs such as software training and ESL classes, as a benefit to their employees.

Finally, as the number of immigrants in the workplace continues to soar, employers must recognize the need to provide assistance to immigrants as they integrate into the workforce. Most of the study participants perceived a sense of racism and discrimination in their workplace which exacerbated their occupational downgrading experiences. Diversity training for employees may be utilized to make the workplace better for all employees. Current diversity programs focus on the differences among cultures but fail to address the other nuances that come with the process of immigration. I recommend that these diversity training programs be redesigned to do more than just raise awareness of the cultural diversity in the workplace.

As observed in the dissertation, some participants felt a sort of otherness and exclusion because of the negative experiences they have encountered in the workplace.

Thus, this created a major obstacle towards their full incorporation to the American society. If incidents such as these were reduced or eliminated, immigrants and transnational employees will more likely feel empowered and included, and participate more in the American society. Therefore, human resource specialists must acknowledge the presence of immigrants and transnational individuals in the organization and be cognizant of their stories to develop an understanding of this group. As well, they must strive to adhere and enforce federal and state guidelines regarding a discrimination-free environment which makes possible a safe space for all employees.

Recommendations for Immigration Policy

This dissertation illuminates the need for a comprehensive immigration reform that focuses not only on the admission process for immigrants but also their resettlement in the U.S. The study findings showed employment roadblocks for immigrants despite their academic degrees, work experiences, and documentation status. The participants in the study did not necessarily qualify as "skilled individuals," who benefit from temporary work visas such as H-1B. Rather, they came here through varying modes of admissions (e.g. family reunifications, SIV, and political asylum). The participants suffered lack of support and transition programs to help them acclimate to the new host country, specifically with finding jobs that match their educational credentials and work experience. Thus, they had a difficult time navigating the labor market in the U.S. New immigrants face more competition for entry-level jobs; therefore, a recommendation for immigration policy is to establish culturally competent and publicly-funded placement programs as resettlement agencies to assist these individuals during their transition period.

In addition, current immigration policies conform to a "one-size fits all" model that generalizes immigrants into broad categories. As shown in this dissertation, immigrants' stories are diverse and complex. Immigration policies must shift towards a more encompassing model that takes into consideration these individual stories to better serve the immigrant community. For instance, some programs and policies have relatively high expectations in regard to timeframes for immigrants to fully transitioning into the workforce. As findings of this study suggest, transition is a process and may take a longer period of time for different individuals, depending on their circumstances.

Tensions and Challenges

The purpose of this section is to recognize and explain the challenges and tensions that transpired while this study was conducted. The interviews were conducted during the height of the 2016 presidential campaigns and elections. During this time, as mentioned on the literature on immigration, there was increasing negativity towards the immigrant community. While all of the study participants were either permanent residents or U.S. citizens, the dismal political climate at that time may have contributed towards fear and uncertainty regarding policies surrounding immigrants. Because of this, I had to constantly remind the participants of the confidentiality of the research study. I explained to them that the study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university and that their identities are going to be masked throughout the entire study. Furthermore, during the writing of this dissertation study, there have been drastic changes to immigration policy, such as the travel ban, which have added to the complexity of the immigrant story. In fact, Sohrab was directly temporarily impacted by the implementation of the executive order. Aside from Iraq, tensions were also identified

in the study participants' countries of origin. For example, Venezuela where Pedro is originally from, was experiencing food shortages at the time of the interviews. Also, at the time I was writing this dissertation, President Barack Obama ended the wet-foot, dry foot policy to restore relations with Cuba, where Daniella is originally from.

Another challenge I encountered as a researcher was finding participants that satisfied my study requirements. One of the major qualifications for study participation was for individuals whose career history showed occupational downgrading. Some of the potential participants I previously identified did not show this trajectory. For example, one potential participant had an English literature degree from her country but worked as a laboratory technician in the U.S. However, prior to immigration, she worked as a manager for her family's business. Therefore, she did not use her academic degree and started with a career track. Her story was not representative of the stories that I wanted to be part of the study. Therefore, I did not proceed with the interviews.   Another participant worked as a teacher in her country but decided not to work upon immigrating to the U.S. and became a housewife. Because an important piece of the dissertation was telling the stories of how immigrants integrate to the U.S. workforce, her story was not included as part of the dissertation. Also, I specifically sought participants who had English language proficiency at the conversational level. I wanted this so that the participants would have direct conversation with me without the use of an interpreter. I thought that bringing in a third party might cause mistrust among the participants. Finding participants who qualified for this requirement and were willing to do the study was a bit more problematic than I expected. Thankfully, I was able to find these participants and proceed with the study.

Initially participants were supposed to be individuals in professional positions. However, as we found out in this dissertation, transition is not brief for these individuals despite their academic credentials and work experiences. Some of the study participants have been living in the United States for more 10 years but they were still unable to return to their previous professions. Therefore most of the participants were in jobs were not necessarily a profession.

Future Research

This study documented six adult immigrant associated with occupational downgrading. A recommendation for future research would have a larger number of participants to account for more stories and therefore contribute to the richness of the immigration process. Another recommendation would be to explore differences between the experiences of male and female participants. In this dissertation, four females and two males served as participants. It was observed that the female participants seemed to have gendered view of their possible selves. Future research can include a cross-examination between the female and male experiences of occupational downgrading.

This study focused on individuals from different countries namely Cuba, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Iraq, and India. While I found commonalities and differences from this group of individuals, future studies should focus on larger cultural groups. Another idea for future research would be to hear collective stories from each cultural groups and note the commonalities and differences among them. This study only focused on the perspectives of the adult immigrants who experienced occupational downgrading. Future research can explore the experiences and perspectives of employers.

This dissertation was a qualitative phenomenological study. Future research should use quantitative methodology to explore the different factors illustrating occupational downgrading among adult immigrants and how they influence upward mobility for this population. Likewise, quantitative method may be used to study the different phases of work-related identity and its connection to occupational downgrading and implications for possible selves.

For immigrants, there is an assumption that they are in pursuit of the American Dream and desire for assimilation. However, their stories also illustrate the resistance to assimilation. In other words, immigrants also aspire to be accepted for who they are and what they can offer. Another idea for qualitative research that would be worth doing is a study that highlights this perspective and explores these issues in depth.

One of the factors of occupational downgrading that was highlighted on this study is the language barrier. All the participants expressed that this contributed to their inability to find suitable employment. To review, two of the participants, despite their knowledge of English, also felt stigmatized because of their accents. Future research can focus on language barrier its connections to possible selves theory. Studies can focus on the linguistic needs of the learners and find out how improving their linguistic abilities influence their possible selves and career mobility in the workplace.

Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation process was in itself, a journey of its own. I started with a very simple idea – I wanted to tell stories…stories that were similar to my mother's, my students', colleagues', and mine. Since then, the humble idea morphed into a multi-layered web of complexities, albeit timely and relevant to the current situation of the immigrant community. Learning from the study participants' journeys – their struggles, successes, and realizations from their own voyages transformed me in many ways as a researcher, as an educator, as an immigrant, and as a person. Their stories have inspired me to continue this research beyond this dissertation and bring back the essence of what I learned into the workplace, into the classroom, and into the community. In as much as learning from my study participants, I have also learned a great deal from my mother's own story, one that I did not really examine until lately. From that, I have acquired a piece of my own narrative which I will forever treasure.

Discovering and exploring possible selves theory was perhaps one of the milestones during this dissertation process. It was through this concept that I was able to create a framework that was appropriate for the goals of the research. Furthermore, possible selves and adult education are inextricably linked. I am excited to be able to put forth my contribution to the literature of both possible selves and adult education.

Although this dissertation may come to a close, I feel like there is still plenty of work left to be done. As I write, debates regarding immigration continue not just in the U.S. but also throughout the globe. Dreadful events such as war, terrorism, social unrest, and economic collapse persist and perniciously carry out a reminder of a world that is at risk and that the social landscape is continuously changing. As an ESL teacher, I

continue to encounter students in very similar situations as my study participants; they struggle to find employment that matches their education and professional experience. Therefore, the dissertation work might be ending, but the quest for equality and critical justice has barely started. I will draw upon this research to work towards improving the current situation. This research has truly influenced me and opened up my eyes to new dimensions and perspectives for me to even think that this is the end of the journey.   This is barely the beginning of another one.

APPENDIX SECTION

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Interview Questions

Interview 1

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and share with story…

1. Please tell me about yourself. What is your story?

    a. Tell me about your family

    b. What is your country of origin like?

    c. How can you describe your culture?

2. Please tell me about the artifact that you brought today.

    a. Pleas describe the artifact.

    b. Why is it meaningful to you?

3. What are some significant events you recall from your life prior to living in the United States?

4. Let's talk about your education background.

    a. Please describe to me your post-secondary school experience.

    b. How would you describe your profession back in <country of origin>?

5. Please tell me about your professional goals and aspirations prior to coming to live in the U.S.

6. How did you decide to immigrate to the United States?

7. What is your immigration story?

8. What expectations did you have in immigrating to the U.S.?

9. How did your employment journey begin in the U.S.?

10. Please tell me about any difficulties you have experienced utilizing the professional credentials you brought from your country.

11. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview

Interview 2

1. Tell me about your current job.
2. Please describe a typical workday.
3. How have you used the professional credentials you brought from your country in the different jobs you have held in the U.S.?
4. As a whole, how do you describe your work experience in the United States?
5. How have your work experiences in the U.S. been different from those of your country?
6. How do your work experiences compare to your expectations prior to coming to the U.S.?
7. Think of an event (positive or negative or both) that happened at work that was important for you.
    a. Why is it important to you?
8. As an immigrant, what difficulties have you experienced at the workplace setting?
9. How would you describe your role or roles at the different places where you have worked so far in the U.S.?
10. What is something you have done at work here in the U.S. (positive or negative) that you would not have done when you were employed back home?
    a. How does that make you feel?
11. What are your work/professional aspirations for the near future?
    a. What is your plan to achieve these goals?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

APPENDIX B

RELEVANT TERMS

Discrimination – "the unequal treatment of a person or persons based on a group membership" (Healey, 2006, p. 27)

Immigration – "the movement of people into a country" (DeSipio & de la Garza, 1998, p. 139)

Motivation – "the force that drives employees to work toward their goals and is often manifested in their willingness, desire, or commitment to perform tasks that will lead to goal attainment" (Boyer, et al., 2014, p. 22).

Occupational mobility – "defined in terms of class systems where a person belonging to a particular class, such as low, middle or upper, is determined by their education and occupation, and by other factors such as cultural and social interests" (Ressia, Strachan, & Bailey, 2017, p. 66)

Occupational Downgrading – "the situation where an immigrant's U.S. occupation is of a lower index level than his or her last occupation abroad. The index reflects the average education of individuals holding those positions" (Akresh, 2006, p. 2).

Possible selves -   concept that "derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future. They are different and separable from the current or now selves, yet are intimately connected to them" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

Refugees/Asylees- "are aliens who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution" (O'Donnell, & Batalova, Definitions, para 1)

Self-Directed Learning - " that process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

APPENDIX C

RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL CAREER TRAJECTORY
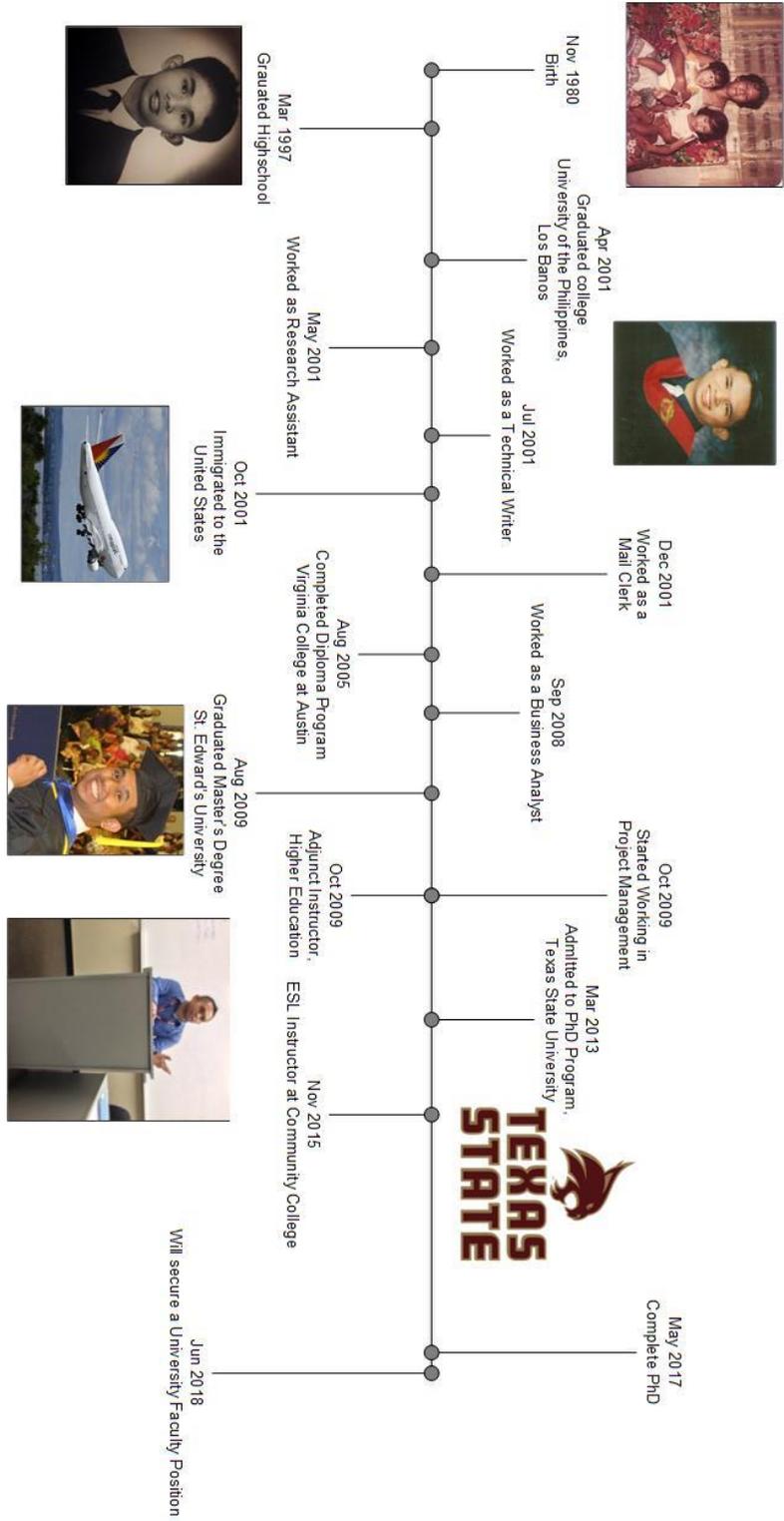
REFERENCES

Akomolafe, S. (2013). The invisible minority: Revisiting the debate on foreign-accented speakers and upward mobility in the workplace. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 20*(1), 7-14.

Akresh, I. R. (2006, Winter). Occupational mobility among legal immigrants to the United States. *International Migration Review*, *40*(4), 854-884. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2006.00046.x

Akresh, I. R. (2008, September). Occupational trajectories of legal US immigrants: downgrading and recovery. *Population Development and Review*, *34*(3), 435-456.

Alfred, M. V. (2004). *Immigration as a context for learning: What do we know about immigrant students in adult education?* Paper presented at the Adult Education Research Conference, University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Retrieved from http://www.adulterc.org/Proceedings/2004/papers/Alfred.PDF

Anwaruddin, S. (2014). Educational neocolonialism and the World Bank: A Rancièrean Reading. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS), 12*(2), 143-174.

Aponte, R. (2003). Latinos in the US: the new largest minority & its discontents. *Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies (JOLLAS)*, *1*(1), 29-46.

Babineau, M. E., & Packard, B. W. (2006). The pursuit of college in adulthood: Reclaiming past selves or constructing new? *Journal of Adult Development*, *13*(3), 109-117. http://dx.doi.org/DOI 10.1007/s10804-007-9017-4

Bak, W. (2015). Possible selves: implications for psychotherapy. *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction*, *13*, 650-658. http://dx.doi.org/DOI 10.1007/s11469-015-9553-2

Baker, S. G. (1997). The 'Amnesty' aftermath: Current policy issues stemming from the legalization programs of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. *The International Migration Review*, *(1)*. 5-27.

Banaji, M., & Prentice, D. H. (1994). The self in social contexts. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *45*, 297-332.

Banerjee, P. (2006). Indian information technology workers in the United States: The H-1B visa, flexible production, and the racialization of labor. *Critical Sociology (Brill Academic Publishers)*, *32*(2/3), 425-445. doi:10.1163/156916306777835295

Bardach, S. H., Gayer, C. C., Clinkinbeard, T., Zanjani, F., & Watkins, J. F. (2010). The malleability of possible selves and expectations regarding aging. *Educational Gerontology*, *36*, 407-424. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03601270903212393

Barreto, M. L., & Frazier, L. D. (2012). Coping with life events through possible selves. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *42*(7), 1785-1810. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2012.00918.x

Batalova, J. (2010, October 7). H-1B temporary skilled worker program. *The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved October 23, 2016, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/h-1b-temporary-skilled-worker-program#23

Bérubé, M. (2005, November 1). Colombia: In the crossfire. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved November 12, 2016, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombia-crossfire/

Bevan, M. T. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 24*(1) 136 –144. http://dx.doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1049732313519710

Bolkan, C., Hooker, K., & Coehlo, D. (2015). Possible selves and depressive symptoms in later life. *Research on Aging*, *37*(1), 41-62. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0164027513520557

Borg, S. (2001). The research journal: a tool for promoting and understanding researcher development. *Language Teaching Research, 5*(2), 156–177.

Boyer, S. L., Edmonson, D. R., Artis, A. B., & Fleming, D. (2014). Self-directed learning: A tool for lifelong learning. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *36*(1), 20-32. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/027347531349401

Camarota, S.A. (2011, October). A record-setting decade of immigration: 2000 to 2010. Center for Immigration Studies. Retrieved March 14, 2017 from http://cis.org/2000-2010-record-setting-decade-of-immigration

Casey, N. (2016, June 19). Venezuelans ransack stores as hunger grips the nation. The New York Times. Retrieved March 2, 2017 from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/20/world/americas/venezuelans-ransack-stores-as-hunger-stalks-crumbling-nation.html

Chen, J., Gee, G. C., Spencer, M. S., Danzinger, S. H., & Takeuchi, D. D. (2009). Perceived social standing among Asian immigrants in the US: Do reasons for immigration matter? *Social Science Research*, *38*, 858–869.

Chiswick, B. R., Lee, Y. L., & Miller, P. W. (2005, Summer). A longitudinal analysis of immigrant occupational mobility. *International Migration Review*, *39*(2), 332-353.

Clarke, N. J., & Harwood, C. G. (2014). Parenting experiences in elite youth football: A phenomenological study. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, *15,*528-537. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2014.05.004

Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. Valle & M. King, *Existential phenomenological alternatives for psychology* (pp. 48-71). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cole, M., & Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard Univ. Press.

Conroy, S. A., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. (2014). Letting go and moving on: Work-related identity loss and recovery. *Academy Of Management Review*, *39*(1), 67-87. doi:10.5465/amr.2011.0396

Covington-Ward, Y. (2016). African immigrants in low-wage direct health care: Motivations, job satisfaction, and occupational mobility. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, 1-7. doi:10.1007/s10903-016-0400-8

Creese, G., & Wiebe, B. (2012). 'Survival employment': Gender and deskilling among African immigrants in Canada. *International Migration, 50*(5), 56-76. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00531.x

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Criss. D, (2017). Trump travel ban: Here's what you need to know. *CNN*. Retrieved

    March 12, 2017 from http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/30/politics/trump-travel-ban-

    q-and-a/index.html

Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves across the life span. *Human*

    Development, *34*, 230-255.

Das, S. (2006). Life in a salad bowl! Marriage, family life, and economic choices in

    Asian-American communities in the United States. *Race, Gender & Class*

    Journal, *13*(1/2), 248-272.

Daniels, R. (2002). *Coming to America: A history of immigration and ethnicity on*

    American life (2nd ed.). New York, NY: HarperPerennial

Dark-Freudeman, A., West, R. L., & Viverito, K. M. (2006). Future selves and aging:

    Older adults' memory fears. *Educational Gerontology*, *32*, 85-109.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03601270500388125

de Castro, A., Rue, T., & Takeuchi, D. (2010). Associations of employment frustration

    with self-rated physical and mental health among Asian American immigrants in

    the U.S. labor force. *Public Health Nursing*, *27*(6), 492-503. doi:10.1111/j.1525-

    1446.2010.00891.x44e3wq

de Castro, A., Gee, G., & Takeuchi, D. (2008). Relationship between job dissatisfaction

    and physical and psychological health among Filipino immigrants. *AAOHN*

    Journal, *56*(1), 33-40. http://dx.doi.org/10.3928/08910162-20080101-01

DeSipio, L., & De la Garza, R. O. (1998). *Making Americans, remaking America:*

    Immigration and immigrant policy. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duleep, H. O., & Regets, M. C. (1997). The decline in immigrant entry earnings: Less transferable skills or lower ability?. *Quarterly Review of Economics & Finance*, *37*(1), 189-208.

Duleep, H. O., & Regets, M. C. (1998). Projecting immigrant earnings: The significance of country of origin. *Social Security Bulletin*, *61*(4), 32 -44.

Dunkel, C. S. (2000). Possible selves as a mechanism for identity exploration. *Journal of Adolescence*, *23*, 519-529. http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1006/jado.2000.0340

Dunkel, C., & Kerpelman, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Possible selves: Theory, research, and applications*. New York: Nova.

Erikson, M. G., Hansson, B., & Lundblad, S. (2012). The possible selves of adult women with Anorexia Nervosa. *Eating Disorders*, *20*, 288-299. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10640266.2012.689212

Fletcher, S. (2007, Summer). Mentoring adult learners: Realizing possible selves. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2007*(114), 75-86. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace.258

Flores-Macias, G. A. (2008, October). NAFTA's unfulfilled immigration expectations. *Peace Review, 20*(4). 435-441. doi:10.1080/10402650802495023.

Frazier, L., Cotrell, V., & Hooker, K. (2003). Possible selves and illness: A comparison of individuals with Parkinson's disease, early-stage Alzheimer's disease, and healthy older adults. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *27*(1), 1-11.

Frazier, L., & Hooker, K. (2006). Possible selves in adult development: Linking theory

    and research. In C. Dunkel, & J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory,*

    research and applications (pp. 41-59). New York: Nova.

Frenette, M., & Morissette, R. (2005, Spring). Will they ever converge? Earnings of

    immigrant and Canadian born workers over the last two decades. *The*

    International Migration Review, 39(1), 228-257. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.txstate.edu/stable/27645482

Gammage, S. (2007, July 26). El Salvador: Despite end to civil war, emigration

    continues. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration*

    Policy Institute. Retrieved February 28, 2017, from

    http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/el-salvador-despite-end-civil-war-

    emigration-continues/

Garfolo, B. T., & L'Huillier, B. (2014). Economic colonialism: The new empire building

    of the 21st Century. *Academy of Business Journal*, *1*. 48-55.

Gjelten, T. (2015). *A nation of nations: A great American immigration story*. New York,

    NY: Simon & Schuster.

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Boston,

    USA: Pearson.

Gonzalez- Barrera, A. & Krogstad, J.M. (2014, October). U.S. deportations of

    immigrants reach record high in 2013. *The Pew Research Center*. Retrieved

    February 23, 2017, from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/02/u-s-

    deportations-of-immigrants-reach-record-high-in-2013/

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house". *Administrative Issues Journal: Education, Practice, and Research*, *4*(2), 12-26.

Greenwell, L., Burciaga Valdez, R., & DaVanzo, J. (1997). Social ties, wages, and gender in a study of Salvadorean and Pilipino immigrants in Los Angeles. *Social Science Quarterly (University Of Texas Press), 78*(2), 559-577.

Grieco, E. M., Trevelyan, E., Larsen, L., Acosta, Y. D., Gambino, C., De la Cruz, P, Gryn. T, Walters, N. (2012). The size, place of birth, and geographic distribution of the foreign-born population in the United States: 1*960* to 2010 [Population Division Working Paper No. 96]. *U.S. Census Bureau*, 96, 1-38.

Guo, S. (2015). The changing nature of adult education in the age of transnational migration: Toward a model of recognitive adult education. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, *146*. 7-17.

Guo, Y. (2015). Language policies and programs for adult immigrants in Canada: Deconstructing discourses of integration. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, *146*. 41-52.

Hamman, D., Coward, F., Johnson, L., Lambert, M., Zhou, L., & Indiatsi, J. (2013). Teacher possible selves: How thinking about future contributes to the formation of professional identity. *Self and Identity*, *12*(3), 307-336. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2012.671955

Hahn, P. (2012, April). A century of U.S. relations with Iraq. *Origins: Current Events Historical Perspective, (5),* Retrieved October 11, 2016, from http://origins.osu.edu/article/century-us-relations-iraq

Haley, M. R., & Taengnoi, S. (2011). The skill transferability of high-skilled US immigrants. *Applied Economics Letters*, *18*(7-9), 633-636.

Healey, J. (2006). *Race, ethnicity, gender, & class: The sociology of group conflict and change* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Hock, M. F., Deshler, D. D., & Schumaker, J. B. (2011). Enhancing student motivation through the pursuit of possible selves. *Journal of Education Research*, *5*(3/4), 197.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Hsu, Y., Lu, F. H., & Lin, L. L. (2014). Physical self-concept, possible selves, and well-Being among older adults in Taiwan. *Educational Gerontology, 40*(9), 666-675. doi:10.1080/03601277.2013.871868

Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *44*(4), 764-791.

Jarrett, L. (2017). Trump administration appealing halt of revised travel ban. *CNN*. Retrieved April 15, 2017 from http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/29/politics/hawaii-trump-travel-ban-extended/

Jachimowicz, M. & McKay, R. (2003, April). 'Special Registration Program'. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute.* Retrieved April 10, 2017 from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/special-registration-program/#1

Kennedy, J.F. (1964). *A nation of immigrants*. New York, NY: Harper & Row

Kincheloe, J. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative

    research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *7*(6), 679-692. doi:10.1177/107780040100700601

Kincheloe, J. (2005). On to the next level: Continuing the conceptualization of the

    bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *11*(3), 323-350. doi:10.1177/1077800405275056

King, L. A., & Hicks, J. A. (*2007*, Summer). Lost and found possible selves: goals,

    development, and well-being. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing*

    Education, 2007(114), 27-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace

Klaw, E. (2008). Understanding urban adolescent mothers' visions of the future in terms

    of possible selves. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *18*(4),

    441-462.

Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed Learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. New

    York, NY: Cambridge.

Kosny, A., Santos, I., & Reid, A. (2016). Employment in a "land of opportunity?"

    Immigrants' experiences of racism and discrimination in the Australian

    workplace. *Journal of International Migration & Integration, 18*(2), 483-497.

    doi:10.1007/s12134-016-0482-0

Krogstad, J.M. & López, G. (2016, August 4). Venezuelan asylum applications to U.S.

    soar in 2016. The Pew Research Center. Retrieved March 4, 2017 from

    http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/04/venezuelan-asylum-

    applications-to-u-s-soar-in-2016/

Labott, E., Liptak, K., & Oppman, P. (2017, January 13). US ending 'wet foot, dry foot'

    policy for Cubans. CNN. Retrieved February 12, 2017 from

http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/12/politics/us-to-end-wet-foot-dry-foot-policy-for-cubans/index.html

Lange, E., & Baillie Abidi, C. (2015). Rethinking social justice and adult Education for welcoming, inclusive communities: Synthesis of themes. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, *146*. 99-109.

Lee, E.S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, *3*(1). 47 -57

Lee, S. J., & Oyserman, D. (2007, Summer). Reaching for the future: The education-focused possible selves of low-income mothers. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *114*, 39-49.

Legomsky, S. H. (1994). Diversity and the Immigration Act of 1990. *In Defense of the Alien (17)* 63-66.

Leondari, A. (2007, Summer). Future time perspective, possible selves, and academic achievement. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *114*, 17-26.

Leong, F. L., & Tang, M. (2016). Career barriers for Chinese immigrants in the United States. *Career Development Quarterly*, *64*(3), 259-271. doi:10.1002/cdq.12059

López, M. M., Ynostroza, A., Fránquiz, M. E., & Curiel, L. C. (2015). Cultural artifacts: using "Sylvia and Aki" for opening up authoring spaces. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *38*(2), 190-206.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation, (30)*, 73-84. doi:10.1002/ev.1427

Madrigal, C. R., & Mayadas, N. S. (2006). Push and pull factors: A profile of Colombian

    migration to the United States. *Social Development Issues*, *28*(3), 30-42.

Mahatmya, D., & Gring-Pemble, L. (2014). DREAMers and their families: A family

    impact analysis of the DREAM Act and implications for family well-being.

    Journal of Family Studies, 20(1), 79-87.

Manzi, C., Vignoles, V. L., & Regalia, C. (2010). Accommodating a new identity:

    Possible selves, identity change and well-being across two life transitions.

    European Journal of Social Psychology, *40*, 970-984.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.669

Marcus, A. P. (2009). Brazilian immigration to the United States and the geographical

    imagination. *Geographical Review*, (4). 481.

Maringe, F., & Woodfield, S. (2013). Contemporary issues on the internationalisation of

    higher education: critical and comparative perspectives. *Compare: A Journal Of

    Comparative & International Education, 43*(1), 1-8.

    doi:10.1080/03057925.2013.746545

Markus, H. R., & Herzog, A. R. (1991). The role of the self-concept in aging. *Annual

    Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, *11*, 110-143.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, *41*(9), 954-

    969.

Marshall, S. (2016). Obama has deported more people than any other president. *ABC

    News.* Retrieved April 15, 2017 from http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obamas-

    deportation-policy-numbers/story?id=41715661

Martin, P. (2003). AgJOBS: New solution or new problem?. *The International Migration Review*, *37*(4). 1282 - 2291.

Martin, S. (2011). *A nation of immigrants*. New York, NY: Cambridge.

Martin, S., & Lowell, L. (2005). Competing for skills: U.S. immigration policy since 1990. *Law & Business Review of the Americas, 11*(3/4), 387-407.

Maslow, A. H. (1951). Resistance to acculturation. *Journal of Social Issues*, *7*(4), 26-29.

McCabe, K. & Meissner, D. (2010, January 20). Immigration and the United States: Recession affects flows, prospects for reform. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved October 22, 2016 from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigration-and-united-states-recession-affects-flows-prospects-reform/#10

McMahon, M.A. (1992). Higher education in a world Market. An historical look at the global context of international study. *Higher Education*, *24*(4), 465-482.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nafziger, J. R. (2009). Immigration and immigration law after 9/11: Getting it straight. *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy, 37*(4), 555-565.

Naujoks, D. (2009, October 15). Emigration, immigration, and diaspora relations in India. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved October 22, 2016 from

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/emigration-immigration-and-diaspora-relations-india/

Nazar, G., & Van der Hejiden, B. I. (2013). Possible selves and identity in relation to career development: evidence from Chilean male middle-aged managers' career narratives. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *18*(1), 66-77. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12019

Nayar, S. (2009). Immigrant teachers' experiences of racial discrimination. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, *21*(1), 7-18.

O'Donnell , K. & Batalova, J. (2007, December 17). Spotlight on refugees and asylees in the United States. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved February 2, 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/spotlight-refugees-and-asylees-united-states

Office of the Historian (n.d). A guide to the United States' history of recognition, diplomatic, and consular relations, by country, since 1776: Iraq. *Office of the Historian.* Retrieved February 2, 2017 from https://history.state.gov/countries/Iraq

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible selves as roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *38*, 130-149.

Oyserman, D., & Fryberg, S. (2006). The possible selves of diverse adolescents: Content and function across gender, race and national origin. In C. Dunkel, & J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 17-39). New York: Nova.

Oyserman, D., & Saltz, E. (1993). Competence, delinquency, and attempts to attain

    possible selves. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*(2), 360-374.

Packard, B. W., & Conway, P. F. (2006). Methodological choice and its consequences for

    possible selves research. *Identity: An International Journey of Theory and*

    Research, *6*(3), 251-271.

Pang, B., & Appleton, N. (2004). Higher education as an immigration path for Chinese

    students and scholars. *Qualitative Report*, *9*(3), 500-527.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Penuel, W. R., & Wertsch, J. V. (1995). Vygotsky and identity formation: A sociocultural

    approach. *Educational Psychologist*, *30*(2), 83-92.

    doi:10.1207/s15326985ep3002_5

Plimmer, G., & Schmidt, A. (2007, Summer). Possible selves and career transition: It's

    who you want to be, not what you want to do. *New Directions for Adult and*

    Continuing Education, *114*, 61-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace

Portes, A. (1999). Conclusion: Towards a new world--the origins and effects of

    transnational activities. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *22*(2), 463.

Portes, A. (2003). Conclusion: Theoretical convergencies and empirical evidence in the

    study of immigrant transnationalism. *The International Migration Review*, 37(3).

    874 -892.

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: pitfalls

    and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *22*(2), 217-

    237. doi:10.1080/014198799329468

Portes, A. & Manning, R. (2001). The Immigrant enclave: Theory and empirical

    examples. In D. Grusky, *Social stratification: class, race, and gender in*

    sociological perspective. 2nd ed. (pp. 47 – 68). Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and

    its variants. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*

    (530) 74-96.

Quarles, A., Maldonado, N., & Lacey, C. H. (2005, April). *Mentoring and at-risk*

    adolescent girls: A phenomenological investigation. Paper presented at the

    America Educational Research Association, Montreal, CA.

Ressia, S., Strachan, G., & Bailey, J. (2017). Going up or going down? Occupational

    mobility of skilled migrants in Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human*

    Resources, 55(1), 64-85. doi:10.1111/1744-7941.12121

Reyneri, E. (2004). Education and the occupational pathways of migrants in Italy.

    Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies, 30(6), 1145-1162.

Ro, A. (2014). Occupational mobility and depression among the foreign-born in the

    United States. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, 16*(6), 1149-115

Rockenbach, A. B., Walker, C. R., & Luzader, J. (2012, January/February). A

    phenomenological analysis of college students' spiritual struggles. *Journal of*

    College Student Development, *53*(1), 55-75.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2012.0000

Rosenblum, M. & Hipsman, F. (2015, January 13). Normalization of relations with Cuba

    may portend changes to U.S. immigration policy. *Migration Information Source,*

    the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved January 12, 2017,

from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/normalization-relations-cuba-may-portend-changes-us-immigration-policy

Rossiter, M. (2007a, Summer). Possible selves: An adult education perspective. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *114*, 5-15.

Rossiter, M. (2007b, Summer). Possible selves in Adult Education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *114*, 87-94.

Rossiter, M. (2009). Possible selves and career transition: Implications for serving nontraditional students. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, *57*, 61-71. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377360902991858

Ruiz, H. (2002, December 1). Colombians flee war without end. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved November 12, 2016, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombians-flee-war-without-end

Rumbaut, R. G. (1994). Origins and destinies: Immigration to the United States since World War II. *Sociological Forum, 9*(4), 583 -621.

Rusin, S., Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2015, April 7). Cuban Immigrants in the United States. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved January 13, 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/cuban-immigrants-united-states

Sahoo, A. K., Sangha, D., & Kelly, M. (2010). From 'temporary migrants' to 'permanent residents': Indian H-1B visa holders in the United States. *Asian Ethnicity*, *11*(3), 293-309. doi:10.1080/14631369.2010.510872

Salami, B. & Nelson, S. (2014). The downward occupational mobility of internationally

     educated nurses to domestic workers. *Nursing Inquiry, 21*(2), 153-161.

     http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nin.12029

Sanchez-R, M., & Aysa-Lastra, M. (2013). Portrayals of Colombian and Venezuelan

     immigrant organisations in the United States. Bulletin of Latin American

     Research, 32(4), 451-467. doi:10.1111/blar.12066

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in*

     education and the social sciences (3rd ed). New York, NY: Teacher's College

     Press.

Schindler, I., Berg, C. A., Butler, J. M., Fortenberry, K. T., & Wiebe, D. J. (2010). Late-

     midlife and older couples' shared possible selves and psychological well-being

     during times of illness: The role of collaborative problem solving. *Journal of*

     Gerontology, *65B*(4), 416-424. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbq030

Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., & Vignoles, V. L. (2011). *Handbook of identity theory and*

     research. New York, NY: Springer

Seijas, A. (2013, October 4). The bright side of the Venezuelan Exodus. *Americas*

     Quarterly. Retrieved March, 3, 2017 from

     http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/bright-side-venezuelan-exodus

Showers, F. (2015). Being black, foreign and woman: African immigrant identities in the

     United States. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *38*(10), 1815-1830.

     doi:10.1080/01419870.2015.1036763

Silva, A., & Massey, D. (2015). Violence, networks, and international migration from

     Colombia. *International Migration*, *53*(5), 162-178. doi:10.1111/imig.12169

Simcox, D. E., & Center for Immigration Studies, W. D. (1988). *U.S. Immigration in the 1980s: Reappraisal and Reform*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Simón, H., Ramos, R., & Sanromá, E. (2014). Immigrant occupational mobility: longitudinal evidence from Spain. *European Journal of Population, 30*(2), 223-255. doi:10.1007/s10680-014-9313-1

Slade, B. L. (2015). Migrating professional knowledge: Progressions, regressions, and dislocations. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing* Education, *146*, 65-74.

Smith, J., & Freund, A. M. (2002). The dynamics of possible selves in old age. *Journal of Gerontology*, *57B*(6), 492-500.

Sochan, A., & Singh, M. D. (2007). Acculturation and socialization: voices of internationally educated nurses in Ontario. *International Nursing Review*, *54*, 130-136. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2007.00564.x

Spindler, G. D., & Spindler, L. S. (1992). The enduring, situated, and endangered self in fieldwork: A personal account. In L. B. Boyer, R. M. Boyer, S. M. Sonnenberg, L. B. Boyer, R. M. Boyer, S. M. Sonnenberg (Eds.), *The psychoanalytic study of society, Vol. 17: Essays in honor of George D. and Louise A. Spindler* (pp. 23-28). Hillsdale, NJ, US: Analytic Press, Inc.

Stevenson, J., & Clegg, S. (2013). 'My past is a double edge sword': temporality and reflexivity in mature learners. *Studies in Continuing Education*, *35*(17-29), 17-29. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2012.684794

Strahan, E. J., & Wilson, A. E. (2006). Temporal comparisons, identity, and motivation: The relationship between past, present, and possible future selves. In C. Dunkel,

& J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 1-15). New York: Nova.

Strauss, K., Griffin, M. A., & Parker, S. K. (2012). Future work selves: How salient hoped-for identities motivate career behavior. *Journal of applied psychology*, *97*(3), 580-598. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a002642

Stroobants, V., Jans, M., & Wildemeersch, D. (2001). Making sense of learning for work. Towards a framework of transitional learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *20*(1-2), 114-126. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02601370121184

Subedi, R. P., & Rosenberg, M. W. (2016). High-skilled immigrants-low-skilled jobs: Challenging everyday health. *Canadian Geographer, 60*(1), 56-68.

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research Synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal (RMIT Training Pty Ltd Trading As RMIT Publishing)*, *11*(2), 63-75. doi:10.3316/QRJ1102063

Suto, M. (2009). Compromised careers: The occupational transition of immigration and resettlement. *Work, 33*(2), 417-429. doi:10.3233/WOR-2009-0853

Terrazas, A. (2009, March 5). Iraqi immigrants in the United States. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute.* Retrieved October 13, 2016 from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/iraqi-immigrants-united-states/#15

Terrazas, A. (2010, January 5). Salvadoran immigrants in the United States. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy.* Retrieved November 22, 2016 from

*Institute.*http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/salvadoran-immigrants-united-states/

Tarver, H. M., & Frederick, J. C. (2005). *The history of Venezuela*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Tegegne, M. (2015). Immigrants' social capital and labor market Performance: The effect of social ties on earnings and occupational prestige. *Social Science Quarterly, 96*(5), 1396-1410. doi:10.1111/ssqu.12212

The White House. (2014).Strengthening communities by welcoming all residents: The federal role in immigrant & refugee integration. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/07/16/fact-sheet-strengthening-communities-welcoming-all-residents

Tse, S., Yuen, Y., & Suto, M. (2014). Expected possible selves and coping skills among young and middle-aged adults with bipolar disorder. *East Asian Psychiatry*, *24*, 117-24.

Twu, M. (2010). A sanctuary for those who serve: United States Iraqi special immigrant visa programs. *North Carolina Journal of International Law & Commercial Regulation*, *35*(3), 723-759.

United States Department of Labor Employee and Training Administration. (2004). https://www.doleta.gov/reports/dpld_immigration.cfm

Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-giving in phenomenological research and writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Vicéns-Feliberty, M. A., & Ricketts, C. F. (2016). An analysis of Puerto Rican interest to

migrate to the United States using Google trends. *Journal of Developing Areas*,

50(2), 411-430.

Weiss, R. (1994). Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview

studies. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Wilson, S. J., Barrineau, M., Butner, J., & Berg, C. A. (2014). Shared possible selves,

other-focus, and perceived wellness of couples with prostate cancer. *Journal of

Family Psychology*, *28*(5), 684-691. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000015

Xu, Y., Gutierrez, A., & Kim, S. H. (2008). Adaptation and transformation through

(un)learning: lived experiences of immigrant Chinese nurses in US healthcare

environment. *ANS. Advances in Nursing Science*, *31*(2), E33-E47.

http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1097/01.ANS.0000319570.99254.e5

Yang, R. P., & Noels, K. A. (2013). The possible selves of international students and

their cross-cultural adjustment in Canada. *International Journal of Psychology*,

48(3), 316-323. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2012.660161

Zamora, R. G. (2014). Crisis, NAFTA, and international migration. *International Journal

of Political Economy, 43*(2), 27-46. doi:10.2753/IJP0891-1916430202

Zeller, G. (2012). Do Cubans deserve special treatment? A comparative study relating to

the Cuban Adjustment Act. *Elon Law Review, 4*(2), 235-258.

Zieger, R. H., & Gall, G. J. (2002). *American workers, American unions: The Twentieth

Century* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2016a, January 6). Asian immigrants in the United States.

Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy

Institute. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/asian-immigrants-united-

states/#Distribution%20by%20Region%20and%20Country%20of%20Origin

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2016b, March 1). South American Immigrants in the United

States. *Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy

Institute.* Retrieved January 12, 2017, from

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-american-immigrants-united-states/

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2017, January 12). Syrian Refugees in the United States.

*Migration Information Source, the Online Journal of the Migration Policy

Institute.* Retrieved March 8, 2017, from

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/syrian-refugees-united-states

Zorlu, A. (2016, September). Immigrants' occupational mobility--down and back up

again. *IZA World of Labor, 290,* 1-12. doi: 10.15185/izawol.290

Zuberi, D., & Ptashnick, M. (2011). In search of a better life: The experiences of working

poor immigrants in Vancouver, Canada. *International Migration*, *50*(S1), 60-93.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00659.x