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Now Hiring: Exploring Deportee Transnational Identities and Socio-Economic Reintegration in Baja California, Mexico's Call Center Industry

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Socio-Economic Reintegration in Baja California, Mexico's Call
Center Industry

Brenda Vargas

MASTER OF ARTS
in
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

November 20, 2018

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Baja California, Mexico's Call Center Industry

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

By Brenda Vargas
November 20, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all members, this
thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for this degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Esta obra es dedicada a los
migrantes deportados en
tierra lejana por su
fortaleza y perseverancia*

To my mother and father, from whom I learned true perseverance. Thank you for your unconditional support, love, and motivation.

To my brother, for the long hours spent as writing companions and for his optimistic reassurance of this academic journey that kept me grounded and focused.

Thank you to Professor Brian Dowd-Uribe for his guidance when this thesis topic was initially discussed in his office as simply an idea.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Diana Negrin for going above and beyond, for her constant involvement, endless guidance, knowledge, encouragement, and for helping me grow as a writer.

And lastly but certainly not least,

This would not have been possible without the men that provided their deportation narratives. My deepest thank you to the participants and the U.S. deported veterans for their trust, openness, strength, and resilience.

ABSTRACT

The anti-immigrant rhetoric in the U.S. intensified deportation, including that of Mexican and Salvadorian migrants with some having served in the U.S. military. Despite weak social connections and explicit/structural barriers in Mexico, many deportees make the decision to stay in Mexico. The focus of this thesis is male deportees belonging to the “1.5 generation,” aged late 20’s-early 60’s, who, after spending their childhood and adulthood in the U.S., have undergone deportation and are faced with social and economic reintegration in the northern border area of Baja California, Mexico. Through 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews, I explore transnational identity negotiations that impact the socio-economic reintegration of deportees within the call center industry. This thesis addresses how strong ‘American’ self-identification, feelings of not belonging, and familial networks in the U.S. influence temporary and long term reintegration. Identity markers, the transnational space of the call center sector, recyclability of deportee labor, socialization within Mexican society and the work environment, English usage, police harassment and stigmatization were identified as factors preventing reintegration. Thus, this research offers policy recommendations to aid in the socio-economic reintegration process of the region.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“You feel like you grew up being an *American* and being *deported* you felt *lost* and like you don't belong...and basically when you come over here unless you have family members here or people that can give you a helping hand everybody feels scared "Where am I at?" "What's going on here?"

-- An interviewees' response to discussions about citizenship and belonging in Tijuana, Mexico.

When asked to identify his familiarity with the language, culture, and traditions of Baja California, Mexico an interviewee promptly responded by describing his post deportation experience as a “culture shock.” Surprisingly, his description of this experience did not deviate drastically from the rest of the collected narratives. The choice of verbiage to describe an individuals' place of birth generates questioning of how an individual is able to equate his place of birth to that of a foreign environment when returning and the causation for said responses. As stated in the introductory quote, deportation can be described as loss and feelings of not belonging in particular if individuals decide to stay in close proximity to the San Ysidro border. Precisely for deportees in the generational cohort referred herein as the “1.5 generation,” exploring life after deportation in the northern border area of Baja California is critical because returning to a place once referred as ‘home,’ is enigmatic and filled with unfamiliar norms and barriers.

In unpacking the complexities of post-deportation and the impact of returning through forcible proceedings, addressing the role of the U.S. is significant since in the wake of the current U.S. presidential administration, the forced removals of immigrants are unsurprisingly familiar. Deportation under the Obama administration peaked in 2013 at 435,000 (Gonzalez-Barrera and Krogstad 2016). Since then, the current presidential

administration has focused on strict anti-immigration measures through the increase of border security. The policy emphasis on deportation has caused scholars to examine this issue. Previous scholars have linked mass deportation to the gendered removal of men in the U.S. suggesting that Latino and Afro Caribbean men face disproportionately higher rates of deportation, giving rise to the “gendered racial removal program” (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013: 272; Rodkey 2016: 36). Through the examination of gendered removal of men exist deportees that belong to the “1.5-generation.” Rumbaut (2004) coined the term “1.5 generation,” to refer to individuals who were born abroad, immigrated to the U.S. as children with their parents, have been socialized in both their own culture and American culture, and express cultural values and beliefs of each. Arriving to the U.S. typically before age 12, the variance of age is dependent on what stage the migration experience occurred, such as between the early childhood age of 0-5, middle school ages 6-12, and adolescence in the teen years (Rumbaut 2004:1167).

Within this group of deportees exist individuals who made the conscious decision of joining the U.S. military in order to establish a military career. Detailed with greater depth in the following chapter, foreign-born soldiers that are discharged are subjected to deportation when committing a deportable offense. It is an issue that suggests that veterans have been discharged and then discarded to Mexico. Although deportation of U.S. veterans is not the sole focus of this thesis, participants that had prior military experience were included because they belonged to the “1.5-generation” and because their narratives offer a distinct and heavily understudied contribution of their reintegration process both in the call center context and in Baja California’s society. As a whole, this generational cohort’s experiences are shaped by their parents’ decision to

immigrate and the U.S. deportation policies that disregard the barriers created in the reintegration process.

Purpose and Significance of the Thesis

Based on two months of summer fieldwork in Tijuana and Rosarito, Mexico, this research focuses on the experiences of a particular group of deportees that have a mix of prior U.S. military experience. The purpose of this research is to offer an in-depth understanding of the “1.5 generation” by examining how this group negotiates transnational identity within the call center industry and how self-identification affects the socio-economic reintegration process in the northern border area of Baja California, Mexico. The role of identity construction, particularly for individuals with bicultural and military experiences, is viewed in the context of the global call center industry; which serves as a space for examination of the economic component of reintegration. In line with this, Tijuana and Rosarito society are utilized as informing on the social aspect of reintegration through identifying the local’s perception, treatment, and acceptance of deportees navigating Mexican society.

This research is designed to address the major deficits in knowledge regarding the negotiations of identity for deportees within the Tijuana and Rosarito call center work environment. This includes the lack of research focus about the economic and social reintegration of the “1.5 generation” and specifically for deported U.S. military veterans in this specific region. This research advances theoretical and practical knowledge of identity constructions, reintegration, and transnationalism among this respective group. Thus, the central question of this thesis asks: How do negotiations of transnational identities for deportees belonging to the “1.5 generation” in the call center industry, affect

the socio-economic reintegration process in the northern border area of Baja California, Mexico?

This research is important because limited studies have utilized the call center industry as the backdrop of identity negotiations within the socio-economic reintegration process. Utilizing the call center industry as the center for economic reintegration is able to inform on the employment opportunities, wages, employee culture, and job security. The region of Baja California provides insight on the societal reintegration, perception, and acceptance of deportees by locals, barriers faced when navigating society, and spaces that provide acceptance. The “1.5-generation” has faced the hardships of deportation, however their clear differentiation from other groups of deportees adds value to this research because identity negotiations and the present bicultural experiences are an added factor that is lacking from that of individuals that entered the U.S. as adults. Therefore this group of deportees’ reintegration process will differ socially and economically in regards to employment.

Additionally, the continued deportation of this group to their country of origin is significant to explore as deportation proceedings will continue to be processed. Therefore, providing in-depth insight of the socio-economic reintegration process can aid by identifying the specific barriers that deportees face in the call center sector/while navigating Tijuana and Rosarito. With equal importance, providing policy recommendations has the capacity to improve the socio-economic reintegration of this group. The established knowledge, research methodology, and findings aided in the formulations of the offered contributions and recommendations. In order to provide a map of this thesis, this research was organized in the following format.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. This current chapter serves as an introductory remark addressing the purpose and significance of the socio-economic reintegration of the “1.5-generation.” Chapter Two discusses the relevant literature and current debates on construction of identity, identity within the call center sector, transnationalism in line with deportation and the work environment, reintegration, stigmatization of the deported population, and deported U.S. military veterans in the region. Chapter Three details the respective time spent in the field, research design, site selection and recruitment of participants, development of instruments, coding scheme, data collection, validity and credibility of the data, and a discussion of the limitations of this research. Chapter Four illustrates the profile of the research group to compliment the discussion of the empirical findings. The collection of data and the discussions of results are separated in Chapter Three and Four for clarity and in order to develop the analysis of the research thoroughly of the reintegration process of this group. Lastly, Chapter Five offers the concluding remarks and policy recommendations of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S. immigration system’s policies toward Mexico have reflected patterns of mass deportation. Despite these patterns, deportation to Mexico and the reintegration process of deportees has been the focus of limited studies. There is a small but existing literature on forced return migration to Mexico and El Salvador (Golash-Boza 2015; Anderson 2015; Da Cruz 2018) and the effects of deportation in the context of reintegration (Rumbaut 2004; Coutin 2007; Brotherton and Barrios 2009). The focus of these studies on Mexico and El Salvador illustrate the deportation crisis of immigrant

men and the impact on their reintegration process after deportation because of the shifting boundaries of citizenship. At the same time, within the exploration of post-deportation and its effects, scholars suggest that in order to understand the impact of deportation on reintegration in its entirety research is needed to analyze the role of transnational identity within the reintegration process. Adopting a cross-disciplinary approach, my thesis will contribute to studies of post-deportation, identity, transnationalism, and stigmatization of migrants in their parents' countries of origin. Precisely, this thesis will achieve this by engaging with a research agenda that shifts away from the disposability of deportee labor vis-à-vis the process of deportation, to reconfiguring employment of deportees in the call center as reusable labor (De Genova 2002: 438).

The call center industry has emerged from the historical transformation of client interactions that are part of the business-client relation process. In contrast to the traditional interactions with clients at a local level, the technological advances in information systems have transformed the way businesses employ communications/relationships with clients, through the use of call centers to facilitate the centralization of customer services at an international level (Valverde et al. 2007: 146). The use of technology by call center agents in order to provide customer services at an international level, supports the definition Valverde offers of the call center industry adopted herein as,

A commercial activity mediated by computer and other information technologies, that allows the efficient classification and distribution of allocation of incoming and outgoing calls, in which call center employees communicate with clients in order to offer a wide range of services including telemarketing, promotion and general commercialization of products and services, the provision of technical support, and the collection of information (Valverde et al. 2007:147-148).

The call center industry is an imperative employment niche to study the “1.5-generation” because the increase integration of the Salvadorian and U.S. labor market in the case of El Salvador, has resulted in an alternate opportunity structure for stigmatized child migrants by American telecommunications i.e. call centers. (Rumbaut and Dingeman 2010: 399). In line with this, Rodkey’s (2016) study of the employment of the deported population in the call center industry stresses that the call center industry facilitates lower labor costs for offshored work (2016: 36).

Operating the offshored labor markets requires the usage of telecommunication by making the call center industry both appealing for lower labor costs whilst simultaneously recruiting from a workforce of readily available deportees that are pursuing labor market reentry. Thus, the call center industry will be adopted as the space to explore the recyclability of the “1.5 –generation” through analyzing transnationalism. The identity constructions that are central to the negotiations that occur within this employment sector will be developed first to provide an understanding of the constructions of identity of the “1.5-generation” in order to address the reintegration barriers to both labor market reentry and social reintegration.

Identity Constructions of the “1.5-generation”

The interdisciplinary literature on the children of immigrants who arrived to the U.S., articulate the identity formation of this group as facing conflicting social contexts during the process of identity construction and during the process of making meaningful sense of self of “here” and “there” (Erickson 1968; Rumbaut 1994; Harper et al. 2013: 2). The understanding of “here” and “there” is a reference to negotiations of belonging between the origin country and host country. The identity construction occurs in the

placement of language, culture, and the respective ethnic communities of the origin country. However, simultaneously once in the U.S., an added layer allows the formations to take place in the host educational system where local customs and language proficiency are reinforced (Bernal and Knight 1993; Berry 1997; Rumbaut 1994; Harper et al 2013). The duality of contexts is reflective of the complexity and differentiation between immigrants that entered the U.S. as adults because children of immigrants who have lived through both childhood and adulthood have become immersed in both locations.

Cohen, Brotherton and Barrios note that, “identity is intrinsically connected to a subjective notion of ethnicity based on a population’s experience of inclusion/exclusion and linked to their identification with place and their relationship to politics or more specifically symmetries of power” (1978: 385; 2009: 39). Identity is viewed as a sociocultural marker and thus depending on the identification it can produce issues of exclusion that are enacted when identification is made. Kebede exemplifies the power dynamic, defining identification of the disenfranchised group as “the struggle occurs between the powerful, who aim to define the other group’s identity while the disenfranchised group attempts to exercise its own power and ability to define its identity for itself” (2010: 10).

This discourse is mirrored through the “1.5 -generation’s” experiences growing up in the U.S. through adulthood since socialization in American cultures, norms, and traditions commenced at a young age. The experience of arriving to the U.S. at a young age positions children of immigrants to face negotiations of a transcultural identity in which youth, “creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and

the new culture or cultures.” (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 142). The theoretical discourse around identity constructions suggests that identity is fluid and their social constructions are a continuous process (Bhabha 1994; Hall 1990; Howard 2000; Harper et al 2013). The anthology of Suárez-Orozco’s (2004) examination of identity formulation argues that identity is not the subject of passing through stages to achieve a stable identity rather the process is a fluid one. The styles of adaption suggests the following identity pathways of immigrants and their children:

In some cases identity can be highly focused upon the culture of origin, identity that is adversarial to the dominant culture can emerge, youth of immigrant origin can embrace full assimilation and complete identification with mainstream American culture, and in certain cases a new ethnic identity incorporates selected aspects of both the culture of origin forging with mainstream American culture (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 139).

The identity pathways are diverse and the socialization in the receiving country is an influence on the identity formation. In line with Suárez-Orozco’s work, I adopt Harper et al.’s concept of identity formation among the children of immigrants in which the “1.5 generation’s” negotiations of identity are viewed as a continuous process in which both the origin and host country aid in the creation of dynamic hybrid patterns of identification (2013:1). The bi-cultural duality of negotiations and the role of self-identification that shape transnational identity, are examined in the post-deportation experience of the “1.5-generation” in this thesis. Thus, the theoretical underpinning of the fluidity of identities rejects that identities are fixed because of the bi-cultural context in which the “1.5-generation” exist, a prime reflection of the fluidity of their identity in the host and country of origin.

Emergence of the Call Center Sector

Literature on the growing transnational call center industry have viewed call centers and their workforce as a vanguard of new methods of production, accumulation,

and labor production because of this sectors placement in a globalized neoliberal model of post-Fordist production through the transformation of work under industrial capitalism (Goodfriend 2018; Pietrykowski 1999: 177). Placement in the post-Fordist production identifies the differentiation in the control of workers and their attributes, which facilitate this type of management. The shift from exploitation of the *bodies* of workers during the Fordist mode of production to post-Fordist control of the *minds* of workers illustrates that call center agents and their mental labor/repetitive work produces immaterial financial instruments that increase profitability (Woodcock 2017: 55-56). Mirchandani and Poster identified that the basic work material of the call center sector is language and therefore the product is conversations that are essential in order to successfully provide customer service (2016: 210). Linguistic ideologies in the post-Fordist production reaffirms the repetitive work of call center agents because the usage of English and Spanish in the work environment contributes to new production processes that draw from the mental labor of agents.

In line with this model, the call centers industry in Mexico has expanded drastically throughout the years because of the increase usage of deportees' mental labor. Since the passage of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Act (IIRIRA), the economic crisis of 2007-2008, and the escalation of detentions and deportations during the Obama administration, the rise in forcible repatriation through the draconian deportation policies contributed to the availability of a deported labor pool for the call center sector (Anderson 2015: 12). The forcible return of deportees has evidently transformed the work force structure in the call center sector. Exemplified in Thirion's research, he illustrated the exponential growth of the cell center sector at a growth of 116

percent from 8,631 locations to 18,701 locations in Mexico relatively at the same time between the time frame of 2007-2010 when deportees returned to Mexico via deportation and voluntary return (2011: 163).

The correlations between the forcible return of the respective group and the growth of the sector illustrate the global client service industries employment and business strategies. These strategies can be understood through the conceptualization of the sector, “within Mexico the call center industry is representative of the progressive “maquiladorazation” of the Mexican economy beyond the US-Mexico border wherein global capital provides labor opportunities at low wages in a national economy where poverty is high and opportunity and wages are scarce” (Anderson 2015: 18). The correlations between the expansion of the sector, the forcible repatriation of this population, and their employment are the reasoning for the call center industry to be the most effective backdrop for the exploration of identity negotiations in this labor context.

A growing literature examines the burgeoning transnational call center industry and the role of identity within the work place (LeBoeuf 2016; Carillo, Malhotra, and Perez 2013). The structure and services offered by this industry varies in regards to the nature of the job and the U.S. clientele. The offshore call center services used by American firms facilitates customer assistance, contact centers, banking, marketing, sales activities, technical support, and in certain circumstances, health care services (Da Cruz, 2018: 39). As a cost effective measure of cheap labor for this industry, the services provided by the call center also provide facilitation of daily exposure of American culture and the English language through digital means and telecommunication to the United States. Some scholars argue that “call center labor enables a form of movement that is

considerably not movement and travel that is not travel per se, rather a virtual migration that enables all types of mobility that becomes possible through the body's confinement to the homeland" (Carillo, Malhotra, and Perez 2013: 466).

This non-physical mobility transcends time and space through the frequent communication to the States by call center agents located outside of the States, which can have an impact on identity negotiations because of the transnational space. Reshaping the discussion of labor mobility by placing the flows of labor at the level of global capital flows, allows viewing certain social aspects of the transnational reintegration of labor like that of "migrations" of work without the bodies through the use of technology that are invisible in the economic language of outsourcing and subcontracting (Aneesh 2006: 3). In this context of deported individuals that are pursuing labor market reentry, deportees become employed to work in their country of birth for the country that processed the deportation proceedings in the first place. Reshaping conversation of labor mobility in unison with the added dimension reimagines the conventional understanding of labor migration through a virtual lens that exemplifies the immobility of call center agents.

Anderson's sense of community is underlined in the perception of communities being "imagined" since it is not possible for members to know everyone within a nation however, "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...and becomes imagined as a community because the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1983: 6-7). In the context of large-scale human migrations across national borders understanding the relationships between notions of community, nationalism, and identity informs on the sense of connectedness (Chavez 1994: 52)

Chavez's research on the power of the imagined community within the settlement of undocumented Mexican migrants in the U.S. demonstrates that "members of a community internalize an image of the community not as a group of anomic individuals but as interconnected members who share equally in their fundamental membership in the community" which has the capacity to influence their decision to stay permanently in the U.S. (Chavez 1994: 54).

Labor immobility and its aftermath can be analyzed through Anderson's (1983) "imagined communities" since by definition it is imagined and therefore the sense of community is not limited to the physical geographical and territorial spaces (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 7). The construction of 'imagined communities' within the workplace involves the skilled workers interplay of their desire to belong/sense of belonging and active participation as a worker of the sector. In the call center sector the nature of the work environment and the inability to return to the U.S. fosters this type of 'community' in the work place. For deportees, their immobility to return to the U.S. and their transnational linkages with U.S. clientele and co-workers, "imagined communities" are developed and attached to 'imagined places' since displaced individuals are reminded of homelands on the daily basis (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10-11). Thus, the transnational virtual space of the physical call center environment facilitates fostering these 'imagined communities' in the work place and aid in the sense of belonging.

Transnationalism: Post-Deportation and the Work Environment

Golash-Boza defines deportation as, "the forced removal of a non-citizen from a host country to his or her country of citizenship, a form of state-sponsored forced migration" (2014: 63). In the study of deportation and its aftermath, the involvement of

transnational participation is a critical component for the comprehension of the reintegration process. De Bree et al., notes that in migration literature transnationalism tends to be discussed in the context of the receiving country however, transnationalism plays a significant role in the reconstruction process of post return belongingness (2010: 489). Transnationalism has the capacity of informing why deportees adopt transnational practices and whether or not these transnational practices facilitate or complicate the reintegration process. In line with Vertovec, “transnational practices undergo structural transformations that involve an ‘enhanced bifocality’ of outlooks underpinning migrant lives through the concept of ‘here’ and ‘there’” (2004: 970).

The impact on identities and social networks occur through these transnational practices that inform on the sense of transnational belonging and transnational identities. Transnational belonging is transmitted through the networks that situate transnational identities and practices in the returning country. According to some scholars, both of these factors are interlinked because, “transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation states” (Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1994: 7). The role of transnational identities is adopted in the examination of the reintegration process because returning to the origin country is far more complex than ‘returning home’ where the sense of transnational belonging is challenged by the social surroundings both in Mexican society and in the work environment.

Much research has been devoted to mobility by theorizing transnationalism in the work environment. Smith and Guarzino view the dichotomy between movement of people and resources through the conceptualization of transnational capital (1998:22-23).

This theorization contradicts the role of mobility as a required precondition for transnationalism, a matter that is crucial for understanding the role of fixed subjects in transnational labor employment like call centers. Negotiations of time and space boundaries supported by some scholars, are confronted through the nature of the call center work that services without mobility (Castells 1996; Harvey 1990, and Sassen 1991). In contrast to these studies, the transnational and fluid subjectivity can be present without the necessity of physically crossing international borders. This thesis applies this virtual migration phenomenon to demonstrate that this setting provides the grounds for contrasting identities of call center agents engaging in the local process while simultaneously engaging the global processes via non-mobile travel. It calls into question the transformative effects and the role of identity within the transnational service work of non-mobile deportees that immerse themselves into the services they provide to a global clientele.

Existing studies on outsourcing service jobs suggests that various transnational linkages produce the mobility of non-elite digital workers as a form of labor control (Kawashima 2017: 495). Non-elite digital workers partake in the sectors of offshoring IT-enabled service jobs that produce more money for the elites that benefit from the production sites. Essentially, labor control is the offshore outsourcing services that digital workers sustain through their work in the call centers. The experiences of these workers have a significant role in the labor market in which the exploitation of the transnational nature of the workers experience is carried out as part of controlling the labor of workers through the digitalization of work that is carried out in cheaper productions sites

(Kawashima 2017: 488; Kelly 1999: 73). This type of labor control of workers is linked to the effects of neoliberalism, mass migration, and mass deportation of deportees. Scholars have explored the elements that create a neoliberal cycle of migration and deportation that consists of inequality, social and border control, and economic shifts (Golash-Boza 2015: 201). Golash-Boza defines the neoliberal cycle as the, “interconnected aspects of neoliberal reforms implemented in the U.S. and abroad such as outsourcing transnational call center operations” (2015: 2). The digital service labor is directly correlated with the transnational virtual mobility through the call center work. I will analyze the role the neoliberal cycle has on the deportation of the “1.5-generation” in order to examine how this particular group is impacted by the neoliberal reforms that places restrictions on their mobility as workers that are now employed in the Mexican call center industry.

The conceptual framework in this research builds on the theoretical underpinnings as described by DeGenova (2002) conceptualization of reusable labor. The offshore call centers in Mexico serve as one of the avenues for labor opportunities and an entry port to economic reinsertion (Da Cruz 2018: 43). Deportees entering the labor market in their new locations are participating in the transnational labor process fueled by the neoliberal cycle. In line with Anderson, “the call center is the setting for an emergent “transnational subculture” within the economic imperatives of neoliberal globalization” (2015: 8). The creation of a transnational subculture thrives with this specific type of pool of workers because of their cultural and linguistic understanding of the U.S and their recruitment contributes to the economic strategies of businesses. The familiarity and formations of

belonging in the transnational work environment are examined as a factor in the reintegration process.

Components of Socio-economic Reintegration

Preston and Brown's (1993) study on returning migrants illustrate that the environment in which the return occurs is vastly incomparable from the initial departure, in which re-adapting is enacted. Scholars such as Dingeman-Cerda extended the concept of segmented assimilation to post-deportation studies to illustrate the different paths deportees follow to reintegrate, explained through the context of return (government policies, social reception, economic structure, and the deportee community) and migrant characteristics (demographics, criminal and migratory histories, economic resources and social ties) (2018:118). Thus, return and engagement are based on both the social and economic aspect of the new environment. Scholarly advances in the literature of reintegration of migrants suggest the social and economic dimensions are critical for effective reintegration (International Organization for Migration IOM 2015: 13). Ruben et al. (2009) argues in his study of rejected asylum seekers and migrants in six different countries, that in order for effective reintegration to occur it is critical that there is an existence of economic opportunities to be self sufficient, avenues for social networks, and access to psychosocial health treatment.

Economic opportunities and its availability for employment for this group can vary depending in the line of work, however complications in obtaining employment can be affected by barriers of stigmatization which can to an extent disrupt the development of social networks. The economic aspect of reintegration requires measurement in order to provide a full depiction of long-term reintegration. In order to achieve this, indicators

of levels of employment illustrate the measurement of economic reintegration through access to vocational training and employment opportunities that when achieved has the capacity to affect feelings of belonging (International Organization for Migration IOM 2015: 14). Factors aligned with economic reintegration that can impact belongingness are the ability to obtain housing and healthcare.

The economic reintegration process is intersected with what is available in terms of employment and wages earned and the expectations influenced by the country where returnees are resettling. Cassarino's theorization of return migration exemplifies the success or failure of a returnee through correlations of the 'reality' of the home economy and society of the origin country with the expectations of the returnee (2004: 257). This thesis will utilize indicators of enrollment in higher education and past and current employment history as a measurement of economic reintegration. It is noted that economic reintegration solely cannot depict the full reintegration process because it lacks depth in the socialization aspect. Including social reintegration provides insight on what long-term reintegration entails and on feelings of belonging that align with the identity negotiations.

In line with Bowd and Özerdem (2013) assessment of social reintegration, this thesis captures social reintegration through the bonding and bridging of social capital of deportees involvement in the socialization of the community which increase feelings of solidarity, informal networks in which exchanges of information and resources occurs, and trust and social cohesion in the community. These indicators are suggestive of when social reintegration is achieved successfully it reinstates feelings of trust, communication, cooperation, and coordination within the community and thus becomes a driver for

reinstating social capital (Bowd and Özerdem 2013: 469). In Fokkema and de Haas's study of sociocultural reintegration of African immigrants in Italy and Spain, the addition of the ethnic nature of migrant's circle of friends and the fluency in the dominant language of the destination country enhances the degree of reintegration through these added indicators (2011: 133). It is noted that assessing social reintegration is difficult to measure because it calls for determining and defining what 'successful' reintegration should look like. However by adopting this scholars' assessment approach in this thesis, the bonding and bridging of social capital of deportees is an attempt to analyze the possible impact of identity in both the social and economic process. Kuschminder provides a method of inquiry of social reintegration assessment through the key concepts of social networks composed of resources, social structure, and social capital (2017: 32). Social networks and its analysis in the context of deportation "bridges the micro- and macro-level of analysis that is the structural and cultural environment and the individual and the household in order to analyze the relationships and connections between individuals" (Kuschminder 2017:32).

Griffin (2002) and Boodram (2018) posit that a psychosocial analysis of the reintegration process experienced by deported men illustrate the psychological scarring as the result of being sent to a place where deportees face rejection. The rejection faced can produce psychological problems in a new environment in which the lack of treatment is available. This is supported by Chaundry et al.'s research on the barriers that deportees face consisting of family economic hardship, housing instability and homelessness, and food insecurity (2010: 70). With the hardships faced in the country of origin, re-migration is not discarded in its entirety because of the impact it has on the sense of belonging.

Schuster and Majidi exemplifies that for migrants that have been forcibly expelled from the country where they originally migrated to, return occurs because of family commitments and the presence of shame of failure that paves the path to stigmatization (2015: 635). The decision to return rather than to reintegrate is a difficult avenue because of the possibility of apprehension that will result in a new deportation. These barriers detrimentally impact the reintegration process as a whole and therefore these diverse avenues draw from both the social and economic dimensions of the process as a way to measure effectiveness. In addition, Heckmann (2006) offers a discussion on the framework in which to analyze reintegration through addressing structural reintegration via employment, housing, or education and sociocultural reintegration via socialization and belonging. Thus, this thesis adopts and measures reintegration through the socio-economic framework and referenced indicators.

Stigmatization of The Deported Population

A large literature emphasizes the stigmatization that deportees face post-deportation (Coutin 2007, 2010; Golash-Boza, 2015; Silver, 2018: 211; Dingeman-Cerda 2018). Equating immigrants to criminality prior to deportation undergoes transformation when an immigrant is deported to his or her country of origin. Some scholars suggest that Mexican deportees returning to their country of origin as legal Mexican citizens, face stigmatization due to criminal associations embedded within social constructions of illegality (Coutin 2007, 2010; Golash-Boza, 2015; Silver, 2018: 211). Illegality in this context is suggestive of the long-term effects, which transcends borders and development of repercussions in a new environment. The understanding of illegality within the states is a driving factor of stigmatization, and therefore during post deportation the, “legal

marginality and the stigma of migrants status becomes a constant reminder of their outsider status” (Sarabia 2017: 93). The correlations between the U.S. illegality experience and the post-deportation experience are illustrated by the creation of rejection of acceptance.

The level of criminal stigmatization varies depending on the location deportees are forcibly returned to. Golash-Boza (2015) and Dingeman-Cerda (2018) found that deportees are more stigmatized in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic than in Brazil because they are linked to present crime waves. Similarly, studies in the Northern Triangle and the Caribbean find that deportees often become objects of state surveillance and police brutality (Brotherton and Barrios 2011; Dingeman-Cerda 2018). Since navigating society can be tinted with the stigmatization of deportees, some scholars have explored stigmatization in spaces such as within the work environment. The socio-cultural realities of the call center industry are reflected through the deconstruction of discourses of deportee stigmatization.

According to Brotherton and Barrios (2009) and Young (2007) the use of cultural criminology with sociological discourses is used to understand identity negotiations that are tinted by notions of stigma within the call center industry. Link and Phelan address the issue of stigmatization and its elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination as effectively producing stigma when labeled individuals are discriminated whether in society and or in the work environment (2001: 367; Schuster and Majidi 2014: 3). The call center industry as a space of interactions with both U.S. clientele and co-workers is a unique exploration of negotiation of identity and

stigmatization of deportees because of the dynamic of the employment structure and the transnational nature of the space.

This thesis utilizes these discourses to explore the transnational status of deportees through a different lens. The ethnographic portion of this thesis will locate the deconstruction and reconstruction of discourses by deportees that will be linked to hegemonic cultural assumptions of deportees' negotiations of identity and displacement. Discourses of criminalization specifically in the Tijuana and Rosarito region will demonstrate to what extent this criminalization discourse affects labor reinsertion and negotiations of identity for deportees. By combining insights of the criminal stigmatization of deportees and the social constructions of illegality, the effects of stigmatization will address the possible exclusion some deportees face by Mexican society and the possibilities of obtaining the economic opportunities that are sought for economic reinsertion. The existing social sanctions and discrimination that is attached to deportees may place them in the call center sector because this sector has demonstrated that it has bypassed this form of stigmatization since deportees are highly recruited and employable, supporting the argument of the recyclability of their labor.

Deported U.S. Military Veterans

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services statistics for 2001 through the fiscal year 2017, "since October 1, 2001 USCIS has naturalized 125,452 members of the military" (USCIS 2018). In the U.S. military, foreign-born soldiers and U.S. born soldiers have simultaneously served and fought in the same wars. Over the time span of the referenced 16 years the total number of naturalized military members appears to be staggering however, foreign-born soldiers serving in the U.S. military have

and continue to face deportation. Martinez's work draws correlations between the convictions of deportable offenses with the role of psychological ailments stemming from the military service as a significant factor influencing involvement in criminal activity resulting in deportations (2017: 356).

Scholarly literature written on deported U.S. veterans is incredibly limited, with a focus primarily on potential health consequences and denial of Veteran Affairs Health services in the country of origin because of veterans' deportation status (Horyniak et al. 2018: 1369; Hartsfield 2012). Aside from the issue of lack of health services, deported veterans face issue of acceptance of their deportation because of their military service. Martinez identified that after spending a large portion of their lives in the U.S. in unison with swearing of the oath to abide, defend, protect, and risk their lives for the U.S., after being honorably discharged and deported many are fighting to return home (2017: 323). The fight to return to the U.S. is rooted in the lived military experience and familial ties in the U.S.

A report by the ACLU of California identified that nearly all deported veterans left behind families, the federal government failed to provide resources to service members in order to naturalize during their service, being subjected to deportation was higher for veterans that did not become U.S. citizens during their military careers, and veterans deported to both Mexico and Central America are more prone to be recruited by gangs and drug cartels (ACLU 2016: 3). Navigation in their new environment is met with risky encounters that complicate their physical health as well as their psychological health. The barriers faced post-deportation in regards to health is vital in understanding how to provide the needed psychological assistance. However, at a deeper level the role

of identity and belonging in an environment that will considerably become a possible long-term reality and its process of adjustment is necessary in order to assist in the rebuilding of their lives socially and economically.

The scholarly work on deported veterans illustrate that some non-citizens serving in the military belong to the “1.5 generation” due to individuals entering the U.S. as children and living through childhood and adulthood in the states. Similar to U.S. citizens, foreign-born soldiers that serve in the military can be honorably discharged. Veterans that have undergone deportation can be viewed as being ‘discarded’ to their country of birth. Discharged and discarded is a central issue that was not foreseen in the formulation of the research proposal, rather through fieldwork the discovery of a community of U.S. deported military veterans working in the call center industry was one of the most striking findings. Including the literature on this group was not only necessary but in this thesis compliments the collected narratives through a different lens that examines the negotiations of identity in the reintegration process with an added factor of military linkages. Concluding the review of the relevant literature, the following gaps and contributions will be offered.

Identified Gaps and Contributions

This thesis offers the following contributions to the aforementioned studies. The theoretical contribution of this study will offer the understanding of negotiations of identity and its effects on social and labor reintegration. This contribution identifies the gap that negotiations of transnational identity are an understudied field in the context of labor reintegration for deported call center agents. In line with this, an additional gap this thesis contributes is the deported U.S. military veterans belonging to the “1.5 generation”

experiences specifically in the work environment, which provides insight on their reintegration process in the respective region. Limited scholarly literature has focused on U.S. deported veterans in regards to psychological and mental health issues and services, however this thesis fills the gap of the understudied area of employment and socialization of this unique group, what coping mechanisms are utilized in the process, and what social networks are made to assist in the process.

Secondly, a policy contribution will be made in addressing the criminal stigmatization of deportees in relation to employment opportunities in Tijuana. Examining the stigma that employed deportees from the “1.5 generation” face has the possibility of contributing to policy recommendations that assist in remedying the stigmatization to improve the social navigation in the region. In addition, offering a pathway that provides more available positions for call center agents has the capacity to improve their economic stability. Through the cycle of deportation and the complications of pursuing better paying employment opportunities, this thesis will also demonstrate that harsh immigration laws in the U.S. have a detrimental impact of the social and labor dimensions post-deportation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Map of the Chapter

This thesis is based on the fieldwork conducted in Baja California, Mexico primarily in Tijuana and Rosarito over the course of Summer 2018. This chapter details the respective time spent in the field. Transparency is used as much as possible to provide a full report of the fieldwork experience and its diverse components. First, a description of the research design is explained to situate the components that were used in the field.

The reasoning for the selection of Baja California is discussed in line with a description of the population that was interviewed, the successes and difficulties attached to the site selection, recruitment of participants, and the process of conducting interviews. Next, I expand on the development of the instruments used in the field such as the research question guide. Analyzing the process of the data collection, description of the data analysis, coding scheme, and the identification of the relevant themes follows. Discussions of the validity and credibility of the data is next. The limitations of the study conclude the chapter.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Undertaking a qualitative interview study required the careful selection of the most effective research method. The research design is composed of 15 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews of call center agents that belong to the “1.5-generation.” This research draws from in-depth semi structured interviews in order to, integrate multiple perspectives, incorporate description of processes, and develop detailed descriptions of the participants narratives (Weiss 1994: 9-10). Adopting Weiss’s reasoning for the consideration of conducting a qualitative study, both of these instruments were imperative in understanding the complexities of life after deportation from narratives of deportees. This research method adoption resulted in the full detailed descriptions of life in the United States, ICE detention/incarceration, deportation, life in Mexico, and personal in-depth experiences working in the call center industry.

Understanding the structure of the call center industry required incorporating diverse viewpoints. In efforts to understand the role of call centers in the economic integration of deportees, qualitative semi-structured interviews allowed perspectives that

ranged from positive experiences to negative since working in the call center industry cannot be fully understood from the perspective of a single individual. Weiss's description of the process and the development of holistic descriptions as reasoning to conduct qualitative research, allowed understanding the call centers high employment of deportees, the sectors within the industry, and how its employment affects reintegration in the region (1994: 9). This process couldn't have been examined as successfully through quantitative research methods since it would lack the depth, dialogue, and perspectives of participants. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, qualitative methodology was chosen because the research aimed to uncover the comprehensive narratives of individuals in relation to their U.S. and Mexico lived experiences. This research method facilitated the creation of vivid mental depictions of the hardships deportees face in the attempt to reintegrate in Mexico and why the reintegration process is far more complex.

SITE SELECTION, FIELDWORK, AND RESEARCH METHODS

The initial thought process during the formation of this thesis topic was to decide on a region where deportees belonging to the "1.5 generation" were located. Baja California was viewed as meeting that requirement, with a special focus on Tijuana. Baja California is located south of San Diego, California in close proximity to the San Ysidro border, one that is "recognized as the worlds busiest land border crossing for being responsible for 37% of the migrant flow between Mexico and the U.S." (Brouwer, Lozada, Cornelius, Firestone Cruz, Magis-Rodriguez, Zúñiga de Nuncio and Strathdee 2009: 1-2). With the significant activity of this border, there is a relative presence of enforcement and removal by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As

demonstrated in the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report for the fiscal years of 2015-2017, the removals of undocumented individuals as a result of ICE's interior enforcement demonstrate that 235,413 individuals were removed in 2015, 240,225 in 2016, and 226,119 in 2017 (2017: 12). It is evident that the trend comparison between 2015, 2016, and 2017 reflects a decrease in the amount of removals since the decline in border apprehensions occurred during the year 2017. The decline in border apprehensions however, is not an indicator that there is a halt in the deportation of the "1.5-generation" of men. On the contrary, this group continues to be deported and continues to face the hardships of reintegration as evidenced by the referenced statistics, deportation literature, and fieldwork interviews.

The forced return phenomenon and its trends are demonstrative of the gendered removal of men in the United States. As Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo suggest, Latino and Afro Caribbean men face disproportionately higher rates of deportation, giving rise to the "gendered racial removal program" (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013: 272; Rodkey 2016: 36). In the context of Tijuana, the deportation of men of particular ethnic backgrounds and Mexican nationals has an effect on the international metropolitan conurbation of San Diego-Tijuana since Mexico is the receiving country. Thus, focusing on Baja California was crucial since the researcher had familiarity with the region, there was feasibility for in person travel to the San Ysidro border, and because of the large presence of deportees in Tijuana.

Participants that were recruited for this study were chosen because of the focus on their "1.5-generation" status. However, the following requirements had to be met for the selection process of participants:

- (1) Individuals who were 18 years or older

- (2) A minimum of 1+ years living in the U.S. prior to deportation
- (3) Individuals who had a minimum of 1+ year living in Tijuana including combining scattered months if re-migration and new deportation(s) occurred.
- (4) Individuals who were current call center employees or had previous call center experience.

The focus on this specific type of deportee was done purposefully because of the participant's vast exposure to the U.S. and limited exposure to their homeland.

This research study required flexibility in regards to the openness of the participant's experiences thus the development of a solid researcher-participant relationship was necessary. In an effort to gain trust and provide comfort for the participants, the entirety of the month of July 2018 was spent visiting the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center, Madres y Familias Deportadas En Acción, and Deportados Unidos. Participants were willing, descriptive, and raw when sharing about life in the U.S. and deportation. The trust between researcher and participants was able to sustain throughout the entirety of the interviews especially during the discussion of prior encounters with law enforcement. A notable pattern when interviewing participants was that participants with prior military experience had the tendency to shift the conversation towards discussions about their military experience and about the U.S.'s lack of action and assistance during deportation proceedings. When this occurred successful attempts were made to guide the conversation back to the interview questions when necessary.

The recruitment of participants was carried out via referrals from the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center, Madres y Familias Deportadas En Acción, Deportados Unidos, and from previous participants. Recruitment was also successful through the use of social media, primarily Facebook. Joining the closed private group named "Tijuana Call Centers" was instrumental in the recruitment of participants. The moderator of the page was contacted to obtain permission to post about this research

project. The Facebook post facilitated interviewing 5 participants. The use of social media was crucial in the recruitment of participants because of the time constraint of employment hours of agents. The call centers that were visited in person expressed that they did not allow researchers to interview call center agents during working hours. Joining the Facebook group provided the direct connection to call center agents in which it allowed the scheduling of interviews at the call center agents convenience. Employing a two-part recruitment approach both online and in person allowed the participants to gain a level of trust in participating in interviews because of the familiarity with the researchers presence at the previously referenced organizations. Referrals from the founders of each organization were notably efficacious in successfully securing future interviews and the expressed consent of the moderator of the page included in the post demonstrated to call center agents that the post was approved, authentic, and trustworthy.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants. Participants were interviewed for a minimum of 50 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour and 20 minutes. Interviews were conducted in a public setting in the location of the participant's choice such as cafes, outside of the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center, outside and inside of Deportados Unidos, and inside of a gym office. Participants were explicitly informed about the study, their rights as participants, the themes of the research questions, and the researchers contact information. Every participant in this study gave oral consent and all questions prior to commencing the interviews were answered. In addition to reading the oral consent guide to participants, participants read the oral consent guide before commencing the interview in order to confirm what the interview entailed. All interviews were conducted in English since this

was the language preferred by all participants. The questions were structured by themes consisting of life in the U.S., ICE detention, deportation, life in Tijuana, and call center employment. Interviews were recorded utilizing a recording device while manually hand writing field notes in two pocket notebooks. Field notes were recorded while conducting interviews but also in collective spaces where deportees frequented such as the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center and Deportados Unidos.

DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUMENTS: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The data for this research study was collected and administered through semi-structured open-ended interviews utilizing a prepared interview schedule that prompted employed call center deportees and/or deportees with prior call center experience into a discussion about migration, life in the U.S., post deportation experience and employment in the call center industry. Participants were allowed to share their stories with comfort. Follow up questions were expressed as a possibility to participants in order to gain any additional missing information about the experience of participants. A total of 22 questions were asked throughout the interview process with expressed knowledge of participants that they had the option of declining to answer a question(s) if they felt uncomfortable. In addition, participants were aware that they could end the interview if they were inclined to do so.

The categorization of the questions into themes primed the participants into sharing their personal experience navigating life in the U.S. and life in Mexico. It was critical to incorporate questions prior to deportation to uncover what shaped their experiences such as childhood memories consisting of the place of residence once participants migrated to the U.S., family and friends, highest level of education, and

employment history. The U.S. experiences demonstrated to what extent that can affect the economic and social reintegration process in Mexico. Exposure to the culture, language, and traditions of the U.S. was pivotal in relation to the additional themes of questions because it appeared to influence the sense of belonging and citizenship in Baja California. In focusing on the sense of 'citizenship' and what that meant to participants, it became one of the early stages to the linkage of transnational identity and its negotiations. The linkages were drawn both from growing up in the U.S. and the clash of identity formation once participant's were living in Tijuana and Rosarito.

Police encounters and criminal activity is sensitive material to disclose for any participant. Participants were open to disclose police encounters both in the U.S. and Mexico. The importance of incorporating this theme in the questions was to determine and categorize the reasoning for deportation and the level of the offense. The offenses were primarily drug related (refer to Appendix B). Incorporating discussions about ICE detention and the deportation process was critical in the possibility of obtaining realistic accounts of what that process entails, the treatment by ICE officials, and the first encounters with Mexican officials after deportation. In addition it also offered details on what type of services were available and how those services were accessed such as housing and employment opportunities that participants sought once they were deported to Mexico. Questions about housing and employment opportunities were beneficial for understanding the first phase of reintegration and how it becomes complicated by stigmas and limitations in advancing in a professional environment.

Understanding the mental thought processes and decisions in the reintegration process prompted to incorporate in the interview guide a section about how deportation

changed participant's lives and their familiarity to the language, culture, and traditions of Tijuana and Rosarito to examine if familiarity assisted in the reintegration process.

Through these questions participants were able to share their level of familiarity with the region and reflect on how that level of familiarity aided in their decisions on where to live, where to look for work, and how to navigate Tijuana and Rosarito in general.

Establishing familiarity fostered a discussion about local stereotypes that deportees face to draw connections between participants and their social and police encounters and their employment opportunities that they pursued. The concept of acceptance was incorporated in the question guide for participants to open up about their living situation in Mexico.

Acceptance was an indicating factor that shed light on how this group of deportees navigates the region.

The call center employment questions were quintessential in the interview guide because prior discussion about life in the U.S. and deportation was the final connection to view reintegration through an economic/labor lens. The call center theme collected responses about the driving factors to seek call center jobs and provided a mental image of the call center experience from an employee's perspective. The call center employee questions provided answers about the dynamics of the work environment and the segregation between call center agents who got deported, local college students, and locals of Tijuana and Rosarito. The interactions between these groups also suggested the camaraderie between the deported population and the U.S. deported veterans. Lastly, the call center employment was a major focus in the questioning in order to determine whether the call center job is a driving factor in the continuation of living in Tijuana and Rosarito, moving to another state in Mexico, and/or attempt to return to the U.S.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection process for this research required a consistent coding scheme in order to engage in categorizing and theming of the data. Coding was used as a method in order to enable the organization and grouping of similarly coded data into categories because of their shared characteristics in order to illustrate the initiation of pattern(s) (Saldana 2015: 8). Salient features of the data were placed into codes within the text and later placed into respective categories. Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory was applied as an inductive approach to assist in the process of categorization of codes that emerge from the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Leavy 2017: 148). This theory was employed in order to refine the codes into themes and to meet data saturation.

The 15 semi-structured interviews were transcribed and printed in order for the generated data to be processed without the use of computer-assisted software. A transcribing company transcribed 10 interviews and the researcher transcribed the remaining 5 interviews manually. Coding manually was chosen as a personal preference because of the freedom it provided to physically write notes on the margin, highlight, draw connections between paragraphs, and attach memos to the transcripts. *In vivo coding* was employed in unison with grounded theory as a strategy to preserve the exact words shared by participants in order to generate codes that included words verbatim from within the transcripts (Strauss 1967). Each segment of the transcript was assigned a word using a black ink pen. Words and sentences were also highlighted using a highlighter and sentences and words were underlined and/or circled. The initial coding facilitated the categorizing and theming process of the data. The initial codes and the refined codes were grouped into existing categories depending on which category was

relatively similar or best fit the respective code. Once all codes were grouped into similar categories, themes organically were produced and documented. Theming provided the opportunity to analyze sentences or extended phrases that signaled a larger meaning behind a group of codes (Saldana 2014).

Achieving a greater understanding of the coded and categorized data was achieved in part because of memo writing. Memo writing was completed for all 15 interviews. Engaging in memo writing involved analyzing and systematically writing about data that has been coded and categorized (Leavy 2017: 152). Throughout the process of analytical memo writing observable patterns were summarized, a better understanding of the data was reached, key ideas of quotes were recognized, and questions were generated about the data for myself. Memo writing was instrumental as it aided in connecting and refining codes and in the development of the respective themes that were generated. In order to synthesize the data, refining the codes again was necessary while working on the analytical memos, which generated a holistic overview of the narrative that was portrayed in each interview.

As stated previously after the collection of data was completed, the 15 interviews were transcribed to identify commonalities in the personal life historical recount of each participant. Achieving meaning from the data was carried out through a multi-step process that involved interpretation and analyzing the memo notes, field notes, recording observable patterns, and noting links between themes. Particular attention was paid to the identified emerging themes (socio-economic reintegration, transnationalism, and identity) and its relationship to age, ethnicity, and years spent in the United States.

Employing qualitative data analysis techniques assisted in identifying the reintegration path of participants. I referred to reintegration via a multidimensional measure of structural integration and sociocultural integration. In line with Heckman (2006), in the context of migration, this framework views structural integration in relation to access to the economy and labor market, education, and housing; and sociocultural integration in relation to social interactions and expressed feelings of acceptance (Mercier 2016: 4). I established the paths of reintegration for participants by creating a general image of reintegration and its measurements through employment, housing in the respective region, barred educational opportunities in connections with call center employment, and unified feelings of belonging both in the call center, and in Tijuana and Rosarito as a whole.

Transnationalism in this thesis refers to the connections, activities, and behaviors in which linkages are created among the home and host country (Levitt and Waters 2002: 9). Transnational involvement and practices were assessed through a qualitative perspective. Participant's answers about connections with family and friends living in the U.S. elicited answers about their country of heritage. It also provided the frequency in the connections and to what extent those ties are strengthened. The call center as a space was also considered as strengthening the transnational linkages in the work environment that provided a depiction of the 'imagined communities' in the work place. The data elicited from the responses allowed me to determine the activeness of transnationalism of the research participants. In addition, assessing research participant's transnational work environment assisted in viewing the strengthening of their identity.

Negotiations of identity in this thesis were viewed as identities being fluid, in which change occurs in accordance to a subject's shifting relations with transitory moments of time and space (Agnew 2005; Everett and Wagstaff 2004; Hall 2006; Howard 2000; Kumsa 2006; Park 2004; Kebede 2010:10). Questions about post deportation and call center employment elicited answers that drew from identity construction and belonging. Interviewees reflected on what "being at home" meant to them and how living in the U.S. affected their experience in Baja California. Thus, the cyclical process of coding, categorizing, theming, memo writing, and interpretation produced an in-depth understanding of the themes that are used to answer the research questions posited in this thesis.

VALIDITY AND CREDIBILITY

The researchers responsibility for authenticity of the aforementioned data is essential for the validity and credibility of this research. The data was retrieved from self-reported accounts, and because of the nature of this choice of method there is no official guarantee of complete accuracy. In the participation of conversations of prior criminal activity, it is noted that the existence of reliability can be impacted in this research. Concerns of reliability in relation to criminal activity have been discussed previously in different research studies (Harrison and Hughs 1997). However, additional studies have demonstrated that it is possible that valid and reliable measures can be achieved through self-reports (Huizinga and Elliott, 1986; Seymour and Costello, 2005).

A couple of strategies were employed in order to address threats to validity. Participation in the interviews was voluntary since inducement of any kind was not a factor affecting participation. Participant's willingness to be interviewed leads the

researcher to believe that answers to the interview questions are genuine since participants did not receive monetary compensation and because all participants actively chose to answer all questions with detail. In addition, the implicitness of the lack of use of participant's names and the protection of confidentiality provided a space to freely disclose sensitive information, especially regarding prior criminal activity/background and deportation proceedings. Power imbalances concerns between researcher and participant were diminished because participants were introduced to the researcher via the non-profits that participant's had knowledge of. Familiarity with the researcher was achieved because the researcher spent Monday-Friday at the non-profits and one call center.

In a further attempt to strengthen validity measures, the research participants offered personal accounts voluntarily through the use of the semi-structured approach that was employed. A research questionnaire guide was drafted however during the interview process the freedom to discuss a certain subject in depth was an option that research participants had in order to add flexibility in the conversations. The majority of research participants expressed they had no issue with being transparent and open as evidenced by the duration of the interviews. All participants answered the 22 questions in their entirety with lengthy responses. In certain occasions more time was spent discussing with more depth selective questions from the question guide in order to gain more insight on a specific theme. In regards to research participant's criminal activity, the deportation offense(s) were disclosed. None of the research participants became visibly emotional to the point of having to end the interview, which could of affected the completion of the interview and their responses.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In assessing the value of this study its strengths and limitations can inform future research on this subject. The strength of this research lies in the core of the reality of the hardships of reintegration and what that entails from the perspective of the lived experience of individuals engaging in reintegration. This research required discussions with deportees with current or prior call center experience in order to provide an informed insight of negotiations of identity in relations to socio-economic reintegration. An additional strength of this study was the research question guide that produced an in-depth description of the employment and housing opportunities sought in Mexico, the organizations that deportee's frequent, and the non-profit organizations role as a space of familiarity for deportees that are rebuilding their lives.

The development of the initial research proposal hypothesized plausible limitations that were foreseeable and that drove this research in a different direction. A notable limitation that is addressed by the literature is the lack of inclusion of women call center agents in the sector. Women in the call center industry make up 70% of the work force however the reluctance in participating in studies has led to research solely focusing on the male employee experience (Dursun and Butun Bayram 2014: 35). It is noted that the lack of female inclusion in this study portrays the negotiations of identity and post deportation solely from a male perspective. Recruitment for female participants for this study was carried out via the snowballing method and branching out to social media. Referrals for women call center agents were very limited by the organizations in Tijuana. The social media post on "Tijuana Call Centers" Facebook group did produce interest by women call center agents, however when contacting online was carried out, potential

participants did not write back. This research failed to incorporate women belonging to the “1.5 generation” resulting in a gendered narrative. However, although women narratives were not incorporated, this research is pertinent. It is imperative to continue research of the “1.5 generation” in relation to negotiations of identity in this region even if the participants are all male because it can still produce contributions and identify groups that were not foreseeable like the deported veterans. A suggestion for future research recommendation is to find a way to secure interviews with women from the “1.5-generation” perhaps by spending more time in the field and gaining trust through organizations that assist women in particular.

Although the limitations were present there was one major discovery that was produced through fieldwork and the recruitment of participants. There is an existence of a group of deported U.S. veterans that served in the U.S. Army and Navy living in Tijuana and Rosarito. The discovery of U.S. military veterans guided this thesis in a different direction, particularly in policy recommendations for deported veterans that are employed in the call center industry. Future research can focus on deported veterans and their reintegration process extending to the complexities attached to having served in the U.S. military and how that effects obtaining their VA benefits, what type of psychological services are provided in Tijuana for their usage, and the potential remedies that can address the issue of pardoning and returning of veterans to the U.S. via a legal pathway.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Profile of the Research Participants

This chapter will discuss the empirical findings and analysis of this research project. The themes that emerged from the data will be presented and unpacked to

illustrate how stigmatization, police harassment/police corruption, the lack of fluency and use of Spanish, prior U.S. military service, and call center employee culture have a role in identity negotiations and how it affects the socio-economic reintegration process for the “1.5 generation.” In addition, the body-mind dichotomy of deportees in the call center industry is addressed to illustrate how the space of the work environment is able to produce this dichotomy. In order to gain a better understanding of the results from the data analysis, the profile of the research participants requires assessment. The characteristics of the 15 subjects consisting of age, place of birth, ethnicity, highest level of education, veteran status, deportation offense, length of time in the U.S, and length of time in Mexico will be discussed.

Research participants that were interviewed ranged in age from late 20’s to early 60’s (refer to Appendix A). The youngest participant was 25 years old and the oldest participant was 62 years old. The youngest participants were in their late 20’s and a total of four participants were 25-29 years of age. Participants in their early 30’s followed in the next category of age. A total of two participants were 30 and 31 years of age. Four research participants belonged in the early 40’s category and one participant belonged in the late 40’s category. Three participants were in their early 50’s and lastly one participant belonged to the early 60’s age category. These age groups were significant for the analysis because I found that younger participants in their 20’s-early 40’s had a higher tendency to seek temporary reintegration while participants in their late 40’s-60’s were more prone to long-term reintegration. Research participants were not sought after based off of belonging to a younger and/or older age category. The recruitment process consisting of the snowballing method, referrals, and social media post. The breadth and

variance of the ages were imperative because it prevented solely focusing on one specific age group. Rather, the age variances aided in illustrating the differences in length of time in the U.S., the length of time spent in Tijuana and Rosarito, and how the differences in ages can be a factor in the choice of staying or re-migrating.

The place of birth of the participant's research sample was dominated by Mexico. Fourteen interviewees were citizens of Mexico, with the majority originating from the South of Mexico. One single participant was from El Salvador. Similarly, the recruitment process refrained from recruiting research participants from a singular ethnicity and/or race. The organic process of recruitment, the proximity to the San Ysidro border, and the previously referenced gendered deportation of Mexican men unsurprisingly produced a research group dominated by individuals with Mexican nationality.

Mexico	El Salvador
14	1

Table 1.1 Place of birth of participants

The demographics also provided the highest level of education that was a significant indicator of how many individuals were pursuing higher education prior to deportation (refer to Appendix B). Five interviewees disclosed their highest level of education was university and/or community college. The schools recorded in the transcripts were the University of Texas, California State University Los Angeles, East Los Angeles College, University of California Los Angeles, San Jose State University, and San Jose City College. One participant shared he had attended trade school and was classified apart from the university/college category. The degrees and/or certifications ranged from audio engineering, contractors license, general tech mechanic, and personal training.

The larger category of highest level of education was dominated by the completion of high school. Nine participants disclosed their highest level of education was high school. Initial hypothesis in regards to higher education of deportees was a larger number of high school completions and a low number of individuals pursuing higher education. However, it is evident that college education was the second dominant category following the 60% of participants that finished high school. Forty percent of participants had college education prior to deportation. This illustrates the value placed on higher education by participants and the passion for the line of work that was chosen because of the monetary and time investment of participants in higher education in the U.S.

In the initial proceedings of both the research proposal and fieldwork in Mexico, there was no consideration of addressing U.S. military status. Through the referrals by my summer internship to non-profit organizations in Tijuana and fieldwork, prior U.S. military service became an essential topic for discussion during the interviewing process. As a result of the completion of the interviews, it was recorded that six interviewees out of the fifteen participants were U.S. military veterans, having served in the Navy and Army. This discovery made in the field directed this research in a different direction by incorporating veteran status as an additional factor in conversations about life in Baja California.

During the interview process explicit questions about deportation were included to gain insight on a first person account of the deportation proceedings and experiences. The deportation offenses were disclosed and the findings illustrated diverse categories of

deportable offenses. Drug charges constituted the highest number of deportable offenses followed by aggravated felonies and the following remaining categories;

Drugs	Perjury	Domestic violence	Vandalism	Gangs	ICE Stop	DD	Self Deportation	Aggravated Felony
5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3

Table 1.2 Recorded deportation offenses

The categories of perjury, domestic violence, vandalism, gang involvement, ICE stop (random encounter with ICE), drunk driving (DD), and self-deportation had corresponding participants marked once for each offense. The drug offense category was the highest, with marijuana, illicit pills, and heroin as the drug of choice. Participants who referred to aggravated felonies, as their deportation offense did not disclose the crime with specificity, hence the category as an umbrella for the three participants.

Conversations about deportation are incomplete without addressing the length of time spent in the U.S. The discussions about life in the U.S. were critical in understanding what cultural capital was acquired, self-identification, and what experiences were gained. The time length of interviewees in the U.S. varied between 4-50 years. The variance in time is reflective through the years of how individuals participate in the formation of their life in the U.S. The cultural roots in the U.S. were identified in the conversations about life in the U.S., growing up in their neighborhoods, experiences as adolescents and young adults, work history, and acceptance in the community. In line with the time spent in the U.S., it was of equal importance to record the time frame of interviewees in Mexico. Tijuana and Rosarito were the two locations where interviewees lived at the time of the interview. Tijuana houses 11 participants from this research study and Rosarito houses the remaining 4 participants. The time spent in both Tijuana and Rosarito varied (refer to Appendix C). The shortest length of time was 3 months and the

longest consisting of 18 years. The time in Mexico was essential to capture in order to compare and contrast it with the time spent in the United States. The respective time frames are used to analyze the reintegration experiences at the local level.

The call center industry as the backdrop of this research is part of the reintegration process viewed through the lens of labor. Call center experience of agents were extensively recorded by the months and/or years of experience in the transcriptions. Interviewees providing a lengthy summary of call center employment in both Tijuana and Rosarito and in certain interviews, call center experiences in the U.S. Due to interviewees combining the time frame of the call center experience, I generated a combined years of experience for each interviewee.

Months/years	1-11 months	1-5 years	8-12 years
# Of Participants	6	5	4

Table 1.3 Call center experience in Tijuana and Rosarito

The shortest time span in the call center industry was 1 month and the longest consisted of over 12 years of experience. The breadth in call center industry experience was necessary in order to capture the differences in the length of employment of deportees in relation to employee culture, makeup of the call center sector, and hardships of employment. Through conversations about call center employment, it was discovered that two interviewees had previous call center experience in the U.S and sought the same employment opportunities in Mexico. One interviewee with prior experience shared his thought process while determining where to seek employment: “And over here, when I got over here I just started working at call centers...wherever my English was needed.” Similarly, a different participant with prior call center experience shared about his arrival to Mexico and his skills developed in the U.S:

The first few months I had a little bit of money that I saved when I was in the States, so I didn't work for a few months. I just wanted to clear my head, because I had just done four years in prison, and so I just took a little mini vacation. So I didn't work for a few months, but then after I got my IFE, which is my Mexican ID, I started applying at call centers. I figured that was the best paying jobs for my skill level, you know?

Prior U.S. call center experience was not an initial factor that was considered whilst commencing fieldwork. However, it is evident that previous experience can play a major role in facilitating labor reintegration specifically in Baja California since there is a large presence of the call centers. The qualifications and skills gained in the States can help secure a job within the same sector more easily.

Interruptions of Reintegration: Factors to Return “Home”

This section analyzes the forcible return of the “1.5-generation” and the methods utilized to establish transnational links in the U.S. In efforts to answer the proposed research question one has to first deconstruct what interrupts the reintegration process. Understanding the disruptions aids in informing the casual factors for return through the perspective of a first person narrative. Among the discussions about contemplation of returning to the U.S. common driving factors emerged from the data consisting of:

- (1) Not having friends and/or family back in their home country
- (2) Inability to see family and friends living in the U.S.
- (3) Viewing the U.S. as their real home and
- (4) Better economic opportunities in the U.S.

All deportees in this study migrated to the U.S. when they were children. For these participants, Mexico and El Salvador were places that were considered the home of their parents. However, because most participants are from Southern Mexico and in the case of one interviewee from El Salvador, once in Tijuana and Rosarito they are geographically removed from any familial ties. An interviewee whose birthplace was Mexico shared a

difficult moment before his deportation, a conversation he had with the immigration judge:

Actually, before I was being deported I asked the judge if he could deport me to Brazil. He asked me why Brazil, and I said, "I don't know anybody in Mexico. I know more people in Brazil. I have more relatives in Brazil."

His children were Brazilian-American and therefore had more extended family in Brazil than in Mexico. Entering the U.S. at 3 months old, this interviewee had no recollection of connections in Mexico. Pleadings for deportation other than place of birth illustrate the lack of familial support to where an individual will be forcibly returned. Similarly, the participant from El Salvador described factors such as,

The fact that back home I didn't have any friends...I mean I couldn't make as much money as in the States. Even though I was born in El Salvador and I only lived there for 10 years when I was a kid, but the fact that you get used to a better lifestyle, I was chasing that again.

The driving factors for return illustrate that regardless of their place of birth, the "1.5-generation" possess unfamiliarity and lack of connections to their place of birth hence fueling the decision to return to the U.S. and enacting temporary reintegration.

As previously presented in the profile of the research participants, 14 out of 15 participants were citizens of Mexico. The majority of interviewees from Mexico discussed the hardships of not having the access to see their families. A participant viewed the hardships of deportation as, "the family separation is the hardest, and not being able to cross back home is the hardest..." Similarly, when asked about what factors would trigger his decision to return to the U.S., he shared, "Because my family. I miss my brother...he still talks to me, Facetimes me all the time on Facebook." Family separation was a recurring theme in the interviews, however dialogue about consideration of the U.S. as "home" dominated the interview discussions and vital in the reintegration

process because stronger connections to the U.S. was suggestive of temporary reintegration. Initial contact with Mexico, resulted in the immediate realization of the stark differences between Mexico and the U.S. The lack of access to economic opportunities and resources was highlighted as an immediate barrier. For one participant, his post deportation experience pushed him to illegally return to the U.S.:

Well the first time I got deported, I had an aunt, she's passed away, and a cousin that lived here. So I had a place to stay. I was one of the very lucky ones. And the very first time I got deported, because I had 20 years plus experience in the tourism industry, I thought, okay, I can work for one of the airlines, I can go work at a hotel, at a travel agency, no problem. Three months after I got deported I went back undocumented because I couldn't find a job. I did go back. I couldn't find a job. I couldn't even find a job as a security guard. I spoke perfect English, worked in the tourism industry, all kinds of aptitudes that I had, but at that time here unless you knew somebody somewhere it didn't matter.

Multiple deportations were common with some of the research participants because of the previous factors described. Uniquely, the incorporation of the research participant from El Salvador provided insight on the reasoning behind the choice of reintegration in Tijuana instead of returning to El Salvador and staying permanently in the participant's home country. When asked about post-deportation and where the interviewee sought access to resources for housing and employment, the Salvadorian participant expressed,

Well back in El Salvador, nowhere. The Salvadorian government doesn't offer any type of assistance. I remember they gave me nothing. They just received me, they stamped my passport in they gave us a little chat. "Don't flee the country. Don't try to go back to the States.

This interviewee had previously forcibly undergone the deportation process three times and in one additional occasion, via a voluntary departure. Travel back to El Salvador was carried out three times, once when he was a child and two separate times during his consecutive deportations. Although this interviewee was from El Salvador there was a definitive correlation with the Mexican interviewees about the reasoning for re-migrating to the U.S. and the factors that drove that decision.

Preliminary Factors for Reintegration

Migration and deportation literature has axiomatically viewed deportees as not settling in the country in which they were deported; rather, deportees will leave again and participate in the re-migration cycle (Schuster and Majidi 2013; Alpes 2012; Arowolo 2000; Brotherton and Barrios 2009). However, the re-migration cycle is however challenged in this thesis because although the literature does illustrate that deportees attempt to return to the U.S., existing personal deliberations and experiences in their home country post-deportation suggest an alternative to re-migration for migrants, i.e. long-term reintegration. There is an existence of personal measures that discourages deportees to return. Through discussions of first exposure and adjusting after deportation to Mexico, insight on prevention factors for return was gained. Prevention from returning to the U.S. illegally was rooted in the uncertainty of the journey back to the U.S., the process being economically staggering, lack of physical safety, and deterrence in returning to the justice system. The price of the uncertainty of the journey back to the U.S. and fear played a major role in the following participant's deliberation,

I never tried and at first yeah I thought about it. But like I said when we first started this it scared me. It scares me in the way that it's not a sure thing. It's an expensive, uncertain possibility that you're going to get there. And if you don't it means going back into the jail system.

Similarly, another participant's contemplation was also based on the certainty of going back to the jail system in the States. "I was getting out of jail and I said, if I go back I'll go back to jail. I didn't want to go back to jail."

The alternative to re-migration in this thesis is viewed through the participant's social network they develop in Mexico. There was a mix of viewpoints on the topic of re-

migration with a couple of participant's explicitly stating they would not go back to the U.S. One of the research participants recalls his experience:

Well I had the opportunity to go back when I first got here. I just refused because I made a life here. I love life here in Mexico it's really nice. The way I was raised with my mother and my father the values they instilled in me is that it doesn't matter if you live in Honduras, Mexico, Russia, any third world country it's what you make out of it. What you do out of it.

The values instilled in the participant can to an extent assist him in the reintegration process if however successful navigation of Mexican society and employability is obtained. The following participant's recount of whether he would like to live in the U.S. again exemplifies navigating society and employability: "No, I mean, here I found a place where I have to be. First I'm gonna get my house over here. I have a job. I don't have the intention to go back there to work over there." In regards to Mexico as the place to rebuild his life another participant shared his experience highlighting the importance of freedom in relation to his legal status:

In Mexico you feel free. You don't feel like trapped like every time I was in the United States I felt like even when you want to go to one place or another you feel trapped. You feel you don't have the liberty to do a lot of things. Not here in Mexico you feel free if you want to go out you just go out.

Expressions of rejection of returning to the U.S. were in the minority of the data set.

However, it is essential to discuss the alternative of the accepted narrative that all migrants want to return to the U.S. Deportation does not always equate to re-migration and understanding why is the core of reintegration. Although rejection of returning is in the minority it is still able to inform on long-term reintegration because of the factors that influenced long-term reintegration for participants. Factors such as obtaining a stable job, renting and/or buying a home, owning a car, starting a family, adjusting to the region, and

having feelings of freedom that they lacked in the U.S. Therefore, these factors have a transformative impact on how Tijuana and Rosarito are viewed.

Deportees that made the choice to remain in their birth country are faced with how to commence adjusting both economically and socially. Similarly to their experiences in the U.S., Scholars suggest that the process of adaption for migrants, “will largely determine the chances for social stability and economic ascent of this population as adults” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 22). The extent to which this can happen successfully depends on whether permanent or temporary reintegration is sought. I am not dismissing the possibility that temporary reintegration can transform into long-term/permanent reintegration because the possibility exists that a preliminary decision can be changed because of the impact of a new environment. However, based on the data collected in this research, I found that some participants were adamant about returning to the U.S. and in certain cases did return illegally, some participants contemplated returning but never acted on it, others considered returning legally to stay and/or visit, and lastly a select few had no desire and/or intent to return. These categorizations were a combination of the depictions of the very first contact with Mexico during the first few weeks after deportation and current reflections on life after deportation.

Burciaga (2016) research on the undocumented “1.5-generation” in the U.S., found that young adults negotiate multiple social and legal contexts during the transition of adulthood in the U.S. The barriers faced from childhood to adulthood can be linked to the undocumented status of the “1.5-generation” while in the States. Scholars have identified that the practices of the bio-politics of citizenship and governmentality such as surveillance, random detentions, and ability to obtain a drivers license illustrates how

abjectivity and illegality penetrate this groups lives and generate internalized fears (Gonzalez and Chavez 2012: 255). Aside from the barriers faced in the U.S., individuals from the “1.5-generation” adopt self-identification that has connections with their U.S. experiences. Tovar and Feliciano postulate that for individuals with Mexican ancestry, American identity is a label utilized for self-identification (2009: 199). For the “1.5 generation,” their shaped experience in the U.S. and self-identification is placed in a contrasting environment once deportation is enacted. Deportation in unison with the call center work/environment that is obtained because of its aftermath is reimagined as, “a shift to a transnational space where the economics and the sociocultural dynamics are distinctly U.S. American” (Anderson 2015:16). The scholarship on the barriers and self-identification in the U.S. informs on how deportees view the U.S. I found that if a participant does not let the constant feeling of wanting to return “home” control their new reality in Mexico, reintegration could commence more easily. A mental state that doesn’t constantly cloud the participant’s emotional and physical well being, coupled with seeking employment and navigating the society, is a prime example of the previous reference of “made a life here.” It suggests that it is a pathway toward permanent/long-term reintegration.

In addition, having a grasp on the reality of Mexico and accepting the creation of a brand new life aided the reintegration process. If however participant’s reject the idea of creating a new life in Mexico, their thoughts constantly revolve around the idea of returning to the U.S., employment is sought as a temporary measure to obtain income, and participate in their exile of societal immersion temporary reintegration is therefore enacted. The discussions about adjusting in Mexico were able to provide insight on

factors that complicated reintegration regardless of what type of reintegration was sought (permanent or temporary) through constructions of identity, call center hardships, deportee stigmas, police harassment, navigating Mexican society, language barriers, and locals and their treatment of deportees.

Economic Reintegration: Identity Markers: “I am American”

Deconstruction of identity of the “1.5 generation” was carried out to reveal how the categorization of these deportees can inform negotiations of transnational identity when deportation is carried out. The first thing to consider is the nature of this group’s entrance and time length in the United States. The “1.5-generation” entered the U.S. as children and spent the majority of their lives growing up in the U.S. until deportation. As referenced previously in this chapter, interviewees time length in the U.S. ranged between 4-50 years. It is therefore evident that this group grew up in U.S./American culture that influenced their identity construction. The second factor that aided in this process is this group’s English language proficiency. In the data I found that negotiations of identity were driven by the participant’s identification as American. This self-identification in a predominately Mexican society and within the call center was explicit. Regardless of lack of U.S. physical citizenship, feelings of being American dominated the conversations about citizenship and belonging. A participant shared his viewpoint on how he classified himself in Mexican society:

I never cared about deportation because I didn't think that it would affect me. Because I'm an American. That's part of my identity. It's part of who I am. I mean you're not gonna take that away from me by removing me from my country. I'm gonna stay an American no matter where the fuck you put me at. I've been an American ever since I can remember.

American identification in the context of deportation was critical because I found correlations of American identification with temporary reintegration. Deportees have a

higher probability of participating in temporary reintegration if American identification is stronger. An interview illustrated exactly that, “Well until I'm able to go back to the States... I don't plan on being here forever, but, as soon as they fix this situation with deported veterans, I'm going back to the states.”

The identification as American follows and is reaffirmed in the call center industry. As part of the fieldwork process, I was able to interview one participant inside of a call center that is also a non-profit organization (Deportados Unidos) assisting deportees with familiarizing with the Tijuana region. Field notes about this call center as a space informs about the continuation of practices utilized in the States. This particular call center reflected an office setting that mimics a U.S. counterpart. The use of English was present throughout the entirety of the workday. Agents sat in individual cubicles with headsets on to answer incoming calls and outbound calls. Call center agents were dressed in business casual attire. A break area had an assortment of snacks such as donuts, water, coffee and tea. An unexpected incorporation to the call center as a space was the English radio transmitting Hip Hop music throughout the entirety of the workday.

The call center as a space utilizes both a work environment and language that mimic the employment experiences deportees had in the U.S. The call center as a space was consistently referenced as “Americanized” by interviewees because of the adaption to U.S. customs and recognizing American holidays. This environment is able to provide a space of familiarity to call center deportees. One participant recalls how growing up in the U.S. and identification as American was beneficial for his call center job:

We know the American lifestyle. We have insight on how Americans think because we were over there, we think we're Americans. So we know how to approach you. We know how to talk to you we know how to tell you jokes we know how to make you laugh we know when you're a bigot we know when you're good. We know all that because that's where we come from.

When deportees enter the call center industry with a previously established American self-identification, the call center as a space reaffirms U.S./American qualities in the work place. Thus, this identification and language proficiency in the context of the work produced can be seen as beneficial to the sector because of the ability to relate, understand, and most importantly depending on the call center, sell to U.S. customers. However, relational attributes of the “1.5-generation” complicate economic reintegration in the region because the American influence is a causation of internal dilemmas of a fixed body and mind in the U.S., dichotomy for call center agents.

Call Centers Entrapment: Body in Mexico, Mind in the U.S.

The variance of the call center work in the data was composed of sales, technical support, and customer service. The line of work of the call center agents consisted of selling solar panels, company loans, jewelry via jewelry channel, promotional items for businesses (pens, tote bags, holiday items), gathering radio and grocery surveys, insurance, setting appointments for car dealerships, home services (internet, cable, home phone), fitness products, security systems, and collections. Call center agents typically have to seek U.S. clientele depending on the focus of their line of work. An astounding finding was that a couple of recognizable companies employed deported call center agents. Notable companies that outsourced their work in the data I collected were Verizon, Avis Budget Car Group, Hotel.com, 1-800-Dominos, and Etsy.

The work that call center agents do for these companies on a daily basis in Mexico has the capacity to transform agents into a fixed body and transcend the mind into the U.S., nullifying citizenship status in Mexico. Since agents are physically in Mexico, the call center and its practice of the labor occur in a fixed space. The

transnational mobility of companies contrasts with the fixity of the laborers as deported subjects because these interactions are made through the nature of the work as a transnational phenomenon. This mental transcendence is viewed in the context of the legal inability of call center agents to return to the U.S. Deportation reaffirms the permanence of the subject in the region and in the call center industry. The transcended mind is facilitated through the constant contact with U.S. clientele, the use of English, and the work environment as a space facilitating these practices. A participant described the following:

So I have an easy job. Then I mean, you're speaking English all day. So for a minute you kind of forget that you're in Mexico. But then you get out of the building and you realize you're in Mexico.

Similarly the choice of telling U.S. customer's that the call is being placed from the U.S. is an additional factor that can enhance the mental transcendence. A participant shared his call center experience and highlighted that "playing the part that you are working out of San Diego" produces feelings that "makes you feel like you are over there a little bit." The combination of these factors produces a state of mind of being in the U.S. consecutively for more than 10 hours a day in some cases.

I found that the use of technology is able to enhance the mental return to the U.S. Web pages such as Google maps was referenced by one interviewee as the main tool to assist him in his job selling security services to U.S. apartments, businesses, etc.

So what I do with Google maps, let's say I'm given an area every day, in a type of industry I'm going to hit. So this week I've been having housing, so since we provide security services like cars and patrolling. I was given housing. I've been given L.A. in Orange County. So what I do, I go into Google maps. I have a list of leads, which I follow but then since I don't have many, I only have like 20 or 30 a day, I get done with those pretty quick and then I start droning. I go into Google maps and I search apartments or condos in a certain area.

The same participant described his experience as having ‘flashbacks’ due to his line of work. The use of Google maps for the entirety of the work hours is a prime example of the enactment of fixed body and transcendence because the agent spends hours immersed in ‘droning’ around via Google maps in U.S. territory whilst utilizing the language English to communicate with the apartment or condo complexes to sell security services. Analyzing the fixity of the laborers as call center agents and the transcended experiences is meaningful to understand these demographics experiences because it informs on the transnational ties that are established within the work environment. Since the majority of the working hours are spent serving clientele living in the U.S., communicating in English, and using technology this experience places the individual in a mindset of being in U.S. territory and generates feelings of familiarity and connectedness that is kept while navigating social and economic reintegration in a new environment.

The Recyclable Labor of the “1.5-generation”

The burgeoning call center industry and employment of deportees in Mexico, “challenges the competitiveness in a billion-dollar global industry of rival call center dominant countries like that of India and the Philippines” (Carroll, *The Guardian* 2017). Through the examination of the participants’ call center experiences Tijuana and Rosarito were the two locations where current or past experience was obtained. Employment of the “1.5-generation” revealed what factors made deportees more appealing to the call center industry and how their sense of self was profitable in the workplace. The call center industry as a backdrop to economic reintegration is able to inform about this groups employability, obstacles, and negotiations of identity in the work place.

Evoking De Genova's conceptualization of deportability of the undocumented workforce and equating the workforce as "disposable" and a "commodity" in the global economy, the call center employment in Tijuana and Rosarito is posited to be recycled work rather than disposable (2005: 247; Rodkey 2016: 41; Goodfriend 2018). Although the deported population has evidently forcibly participated in the repatriation process, the "1.5 generations" qualities and skills transform their labor from that of "disposable" to recyclable. Thus, recycled labor is utilized for the production of profits for U.S. businesses from fixed locations such as in the case of Tijuana and Rosarito.

The data illustrated that two factors were vital in the recyclability of this pools labor, English and understanding of American culture. Given the profile of the "1.5 generation" English was learned growing up in the U.S. immediately after entering the U.S. Children of immigrants born in the U.S., have similarities with the "1.5 generation" in regards to the English learning process because English was learned in school simultaneously while learning Spanish at home. Some participant's expressed that they were not able to pinpoint when exactly they learned English since the language learning process occurred organically with both languages. There is a stark difference between entering the U.S. as an adult and learning English during adulthood from entering the U.S. as a child and learning English and Spanish at a young age. Participants belonging in the latter, were able to grow up learning formal English and slang whilst using it interchangeably thus, enhancing their practice of the language both formally and informally.

Participants' experiences as children growing up in the U.S. enhanced their capacity to utilize and perfect their English throughout their childhood and adult life. It is

clear that participants' English proficiency is instrumental for the call center industry.

During conversations about the call center experience, participants constantly referenced their usage of English as a skill in unison with their knowledge of Spanish as well. One participant viewed his skills as a 'profile' that this sector seeks:

The people that are hiring me are looking for my profile. It's a special profile they look for. They are looking for somebody that is bilingual. English speakers but bilingual is a plus. You get paid like \$200 pesos extra. For Voxcentrix I get paid \$280 pesos extra. I got to show up all week and bam.

Language is viewed as appealing and this group is reformulated as a distinct deportee profile. With the high interest for this type of profile, there is an evident correlation of the high employability of deportees. Employability is however deeper than just language abilities; the cultural immersion in the U.S. is the second factor that fuels the recyclability of the work of this group. Similarly to learning English, the time spent in the U.S. is critical in obtaining knowledge of traditions, customs, experience, and overall cultural capital. Growing up in the U.S. gives these participants a competitive advantage in the call center industry because of their ability to excel in all aspects of their work.

The nature of the call center work varies in regards to the campaigns participants are employed in. However, the common thread is their daily interactions through phone calls and emails with U.S. clientele. One participant provided insight on the competitive edge of his 'profile' in this sector and how he is able to connect with U.S. clientele:

We know the American lifestyle...so yeah in reality it does help you. It gives you more confidence it's like you're not talking to a stranger. You're basically talking to business owners and you know it's a good benefit to have grown up over there and been able to recognize who you are talking to. What kind of attitude they are and if they are going to buy something from you or not. So it does help you.

The connections are facilitated through knowing how to approach the customer to simple conversations about the weather from where the caller is located, football games, popular

food chains, American pop culture, humor, etc. A prime example of this is with the campaign of sales. A participant shared how he initiated his conversations for sales. A simple phrase such as, “Come out here I’m going to take you to the world famous San Diego Zoo we’ll throw peanuts at your mother in law” can make the client laugh and provides hints of a good attitude and establishes a connection with the client. It is posited that there is less of a possibility that a person who did not live in the U.S. could have the cultural accumulation gained which prompted utilizing that approach that some U.S. clientele could be familiar with when conversing. I am not dismissing that the same approach could be used in a different country however, interactions like the one the previous participant shared was his consistent approach to connect with U.S. clientele. Establishing a connection is imperative since participants who had current or previous experience in sales were faced with having high sales in order to obtain their bonuses. Participants with the appealing ‘profile’ coupled with the tactics they learned were able to excel in their work and were able to determine whether or not a U.S. client would buy from them. Since the work of the “1.5-generation” produces high profits, the benefit of profit is for the call center industry and thus their work is not only recycled but also valuable.

Employee Culture and Socialization

Exploring economic reintegration through call center work is incomplete without discussing the role of employee culture and its effects on the socialization and acceptance of the “1.5-generation.” The ‘makeup’ of the call centers in Tijuana and Rosarito are represented here through the participants own reporting of the number of call center agents that are deported, the number of locals, and the number of students (college and

high school) employed in their respective call centers. However, it's noted that due to the variance and differences of individual call centers, this generalization is providing a small depiction of the region limited in scope to the respective call centers participants are currently/were previously employed at.

The patterns I found of the composition of the call centers in the northern border area of Baja California is that there are three different employee structures displayed in the following chart:

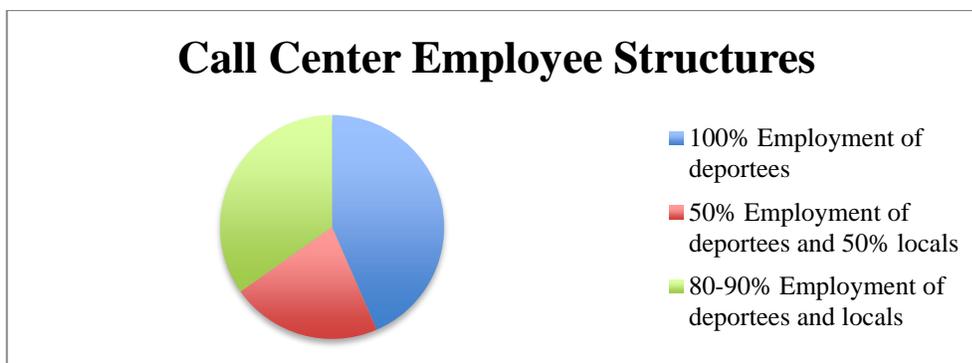


Chart 1.1 Employment of deportees and locals in Baja California's call centers

The first call center displays a structure of 100% employment of deportees with a large majority belonging to the "1.5 generation." The second employee structure is around 50% deportees and 50% locals that are high school and college students. The last employee structure is made up of 80 to 90% deportees with around 10% local agents. The makeup of the call center provides insight on how the deportee population dominates the sector. In addition, dominating the sector enacts questions about the socialization and acceptance of the deportee population during economic reintegration.

Throughout the data I found patterns that illustrate that deported call center agents tend to socialize with other deported call center agents more than with locals because they are able to relate to each other's experiences. There is a sense of familiarity within

the work environment because its employees are deported and because those deportees have lived similar experiences since they spent their formative years in the U.S., some have been involved with gang activity, past incarcerations, and deportation. A participant working at a call center with 100% deported employees described the relational benefit of working with other individuals like himself:

We come from the same culture, from the same background, from the same cities, from the same neighborhoods. And basically a lot of us were incarcerated so we come from the same background so that's a plus. So we know each other's culture we know each other where we come from where we grew up at. And some of us know the same people on the other side. The same stores same restaurants everything.

In examining discussions about U.S. criminal activity, I found that participants repeatedly referenced gang culture had a civil presence within the workplace. Gang affiliation and gang culture is determined by the affiliation of a participant to a certain gang such as Norteños or Sureños. Common references in the work environment to determine allegiance with gangs were, “where you from?” “who do you run with?” Gang affiliation in the work environment is an interesting factor that changed the dynamic of the employee culture and the socialization between the deportee populations itself. One interviewee shared an experience he had with a rival gang member and how after the disclosure of “who he ran with” they kept their distance in the work place:

You can see that in the telemarketing is the same thing. I was talking to this guy he has tattoos I told him I want to get this tattoo fixed up I want to put *Cuyoacan* and fix it up right. “Yeah man hook it up homes lets do that.” There was a lot of guys from L.A. some guys from A.T. some guys from Verdugo from San Bernardino from Logan. “Say where you from.” “I run paisas.” “Oh Sinaloa huh?” “Orale pues.” After a while, “hey what's up?” “Ya te salude no? Like ya te salude no?” I thought he was going to hook up my tattoo up. And I said. “what's up” and he said “ya te salude no.

Through conversations with the participant about the meaning and inference of “Ya te salude” translated to, “I already said hi to you,” there was a clear indication that because the participant was from a rival gang back in the States, there could be no existing

friendship rather simply a civil employee relationship in this specific experience. This is a prime example of how prior gang affiliation can change the dynamic of socialization within the workplace since as one participant shared, “people like the *cholos* stick to their own little group.” Participants’ discussions about their call center experiences identified the effects of gang affiliation on their socialization with additional prior gang members. However, it is important to note that in the data similar gang affiliated experiences did not severely affect the socialization of the agents since civility and teamwork was still a priority to succeed in the work environment. Being surrounded in a work environment by individuals that mirror similar experiences regardless of gang affiliation is critical for reinsertion because there is an existing center of support on the daily basis. Since for the most part, this vulnerable population lacks connections in their place of birth, the comfort and familiarity is filled by the workplace. In addition, understanding the hardships of reinsertion and having lived or living through it provides a strong support system for deportees belonging to any respective category.

Social Reintegration: Locals, English, and a Community of Perceived “Gabachos”

A participant’s recollection of home was described as the following, “I really felt accepted [in the U.S.], I felt like that’s my home I still feel like that’s my home I don’t feel any different.” Acceptance in a new environment is difficult while navigating through the idea of a new ‘home.’ The post-deportation experience was described as a hard process to go through because of the difficulty in achieving economic opportunities and because of the lack of feeling accepted in the region. Throughout discussions about feelings of acceptance in Tijuana and Rosarito, the common theme of being negatively labeled by locals as a result of having lived in the U.S. complicated social reintegration.

The following names were recorded as the common terms used to refer to the “1.5 generation:” gabacho, señor plastico, pocho, gangster, guero, and white boy. The terms gabacho, pocho, guero, and white boy refer to a persons labeled identification of their formative years in the U.S. Terms referring to an individuals Americanization hinders an image of the deported as having lost their Mexican roots and becoming a *señor plastico* (plastic man). One participant described the reason why locals viewed him differently, “Yeah it was the locals they didn't like my American attitude, they didn't like my American-ness.” The term gangster is used as a reference to prior criminal activity and suggestive of continuous criminal behavior because of deportees perceived or previous gang involvement in the U.S. The choice of terms used to refer to this group challenges the acceptance by locals both in Tijuana and Rosarito, because of the negative connotation produced by the labeling and treatment.

I found that some Tijuana and Rosarito locals, born and raised in Mexico adopt a similar U.S. racialized approach of criticizing an individual’s language choice such as the “Talk English you’re in America.” In the Tijuana and Rosarito region participants consistently felt that the use of English was viewed through the lens of “Speak Spanish you’re in Mexico.” Participants described experiences of locals reacting annoyed because of the use of English, were asked to quiet down, and/or explicitly addressed the situation. The following participant’s experience is a prime example: “a few people we're like "We don't talk English here," thinking that you're still in the United States, an American.” Given the significant time frame spent in the U.S. all participants use English socially and in their line of work. English can be a barrier for social reintegration because of the disapproval of its usage by the country of origin. The correlations I found was that

the use of English was one of the signifiers for locals that a person is deported and therefore associations are made between a persons status as deported and branding them as being Americanized because of their language choice. As referenced by a participant, his experience with his use of English was a signifier for being deported:

Oh yeah. You can hear it. If they hear me speaking English or something like that, I hear all kind of, "oh there's another one of them there speaking English, is probably deported. Probably no good. Probably a criminal. What are they doing here. Why they gotta come here." You know, shit like that. It makes me feel like what the fuck other choice do I have, or what the fuck is it to you. I'm deported and I'm trying to live.

Throughout the data it was evident that there was a correlation between the uses of English as a signifier of criminality. This type of negative categorization affects the social reintegration of deportees because it feeds to the hardships of rebuilding their lives, reaffirms feelings of not being accepted, and prevents from seeking simple services. One participants experience supports this claim when he sought an accountant for the creation of a non-profit he was working on:

I was working with another organization and we were putting together a non-profit and we went to go see an accountant. And the very first thing that accountant said was "we don't like to work with deported people." Like "Okay?" Like "yeah, because you know most of them are just criminals."

Similar to the discussion of the use of the English, the use of Spanish becomes a signifier that a person is deported as well. All of the interviewees in this study were bilingual. Although they all learned Spanish growing up at home, their fluency and ability to speak it formally varied. These native Spanish speakers grew up conversing in Spanish informally, using slang, and *Spanglish*. The result of this form of learning and usage in Tijuana and Rosarito is that this group is immediately signaled out that they are foreign to the area drawing assumptions that they are deported. A participants experience provided support for this claim:

I thought I was up to date but it's a whole different thing when you get here. The language, over there you speak Spanglish or you speak Spanish but it's Americanized. Right here you try to speak Spanish like you did over there and it's like what the hell. Where did you learn your vocabulary? It's because you got to get with the lingo.

Conversing in Spanish in the region intensifies when coupled with the attire of deportees as part of the profiling as a 'foreigner' and criminal. In conversations of negotiations of transnational identity the use of English over the use of Spanish informs on the self-identification of an individual. However, the consequences of the use of the preferred language coupled with the perceptions of this group strains the process of societal reintegration.

A Common Thread to Police Targeting and Corruption

Adjusting to a new environment involves navigating society and learning about the surrounding areas to become familiar with the region. Learning and adopting societal customs, the use of language, and to an extent the change of attire were patterns that showcased social reintegration. The individuals I interviewed quickly learned that immersion into the society was challenging. The concept of branding the deported was present and enhanced police harassment/corruption by taking money from an individual in exchange of freedom and/or keeping money regardless of release. A large majority of interviewees described numerous police encounters which, ensued harassment more in Tijuana than in Rosarito. Interviewees described encounters as walking in a certain area and being followed and approached by a police officer. When stopped by police, conversations about whether the individual had an I.D. were a common theme.

The *Zona* (zone) where the person was located during the encounter was vital because there is a correlation between higher police stops with the more criminally inclined *Zonas* such as *Zona Norte*. It is noted that a possibility exists that interviewees

could have been participating in illicit activities at the time of the encounter. However, all participants that disclosed police encounters consistently described being stopped simply because they were walking or sitting in the area and because they believed their appearance of displaying tattoos and baggy clothing prompted the interaction. The fact that the majority of the interviewees described similar experiences reaffirms there is an issue with police targeting and corruption. The deportee profiling was described as stereotyping by a police officer in the following interviewees response:

A lot of people that get deported, they got deported because they were in gangs. They were gang banging. They were doing criminal acts. When they get here part of the stigma is that they're gonna continue that kind of activity here in Mexico. So to the police down here, when they see for example somebody with tattoos and dreads, like a *cholo*, they're gonna keep an eye on em'. You're putting a target on yourself for them to stop you. If you're homeless, your all dirty, your clothes are all raggedy, to them you are either a thief or you're a drug addict and we're gonna stop you because if you have any money or drugs, we're gonna take it away from you and we're gonna take you to jail.

The dominant stereotype that plagues this group is related to their past U.S. criminal activity as a confirmation of the continuation of criminal activity in the northern border area of Baja California. Thirteen interviewees in this thesis did in fact have a criminal background with the exception of two. The exceptions were the result of a random apprehension by ICE during a commute to work and self-deportation as advised by an attorney.

Although the large majority of interviewees have a criminal record that solely should not be sufficient to assume criminal activity will continue. Brand's research on how former prisoners experience reintegration in Cork, Ireland captured the obstacles of cessation of offending such as homelessness, lack of money, stigma, alcohol and drug use, and negative peer networks (2016: 251). Her research identified that, "distancing away from negative peer networks that will ensue offending and fostered substance

abuse, was the most significant step towards successful reintegration” (Brand 2016: 251). Having stable living accommodations and employment were additional factors that assisted former prisoners. In the context of the former prisoners, the fact that the participants all had current or prior call center employment and have stable housing is a big indicator that they are less likely to resort to criminal activity.

The problem with stereotyping the entire “1.5-generation,” is the disruption it causes to the social reintegration process. Deportees are faced with navigating Baja California with the constant fear of being targeted by police and being exposed to police corruption. This cycle of targeting can produce issues of lack of trust in the police, believing all locals view deportees as criminals, and detrimentally economically impact deportees’ lives because of the police corruption. Police corruption was the second common theme that emerged from the former interviews. Establishing that an individual is not a local and therefore must be deported guides the initiations of police targeting. The realization that a person is deported brings economic consequences both in the taking of money from an individual by a police officer and through jail time if a person does not have money to give and/or lacks an I.D.

They do pull stereotype in talking about the police here. There was a police officer who picked me up one time, and he wanted money, of course. He said, "You didn't give me anything," and took me to jail. When he took me to jail, the lady asked me some questions, the lady that was in charge. I don't know if she was a judge or what. Once she found out I was deported, she goes, "Oh, you're deported?" She automatically put me in jail. Yeah, she put me in jail for three days. The only thing that mattered to her was that I had been deported. What the people think here, that the deportees are criminals, they're violent people. They don't think that deported people are people who are trying to reestablish, trying to make a living. They don't see deportees like that.

Similar encounters as the one described, are recorded in the transcripts, which illustrate the corruption of police officers in the region. Another recorded encounter by a different interviewee described a police officer placing his hands in the subject’s pockets. “Even if

I had 50 or \$60 pesos it's gone," the equivalence to \$3.00 U.S. dollars. The act of taking money from this vulnerable group is a direct result of the profiling. It is evident that the illegal retention of money in exchange for freedom and/or keeping the money regardless of letting an individual free, detrimentally impacts the economic survival of this group. Referring back to the section on call center employment and payment, the low wages that this group receives is not sufficient to live a comfortable lifestyle. If this group's economic survival is challenged by employment, the added layer of corruption weighs down the process. The full force of these stereotypes is the common thread to police targeting and corruption. This casts a shadow on the alternative to criminality; that of deportees who are attempting to rebuild their lives free of criminal activity.

The Costs of Navigating Mexico

Forcibly returning to Mexico is accompanied by the lack of documentation that demonstrates Mexican citizenship. The majority of the interviewees lacked Mexican birth certificates and Mexican I.D.'s because their parents had misplaced their paperwork or never acquired the paperwork since all participants left Mexico at a young age. The post-deportation experience of this group resulted in the theme of the hardships of physically navigating Mexico because of the lack of documents. The government agency that provides the *credencial electoral* (elector's credential) is the National Electoral Institute (INE). This credential is the identification that is required in the region in order for employers and police officers to be able to verify identification. In order to obtain this I.D. there is a process of presenting a document that shows Mexican nationality such as a birth certificate, an original document that provides identification with a photograph, and proof of address (Instituto Nacional Electoral 2018). Interviewees described that when

they presented a document that was expired or not the original they were told that it did not meet the requirements, which complicated obtaining an I.D. The consequences that emerge from not having an I.D. are the prevention of employment in certain cases since some call centers require identification verification and police targeting/harassment. An interviewee shared his thoughts after he was denied the processing of his I.D.:

I don't have \$400 pesos to get my birth certificate. And I told the lady the one I have is a copy. She said no. So ugh I told that lady "I'm not a *mantenido*." I can't get a job because you guys don't want to provide me with a damn I.D.

Delaying the process for obtaining identification is detrimentally impacting the ability to obtain employment and therefore impacts economic reintegration in regards to securing a job and earning money. Similarly, it cannot be stressed enough how critical it is to have an I.D. in possession because the lack of this identification in unison with profiling is the causation for police harassment and police corruption. A participant's account supports this assertion: "So the cops when they find you without an I.D. here they uh, they take you in or they charge you...that's why you got to have identification." Participants described that police officers always asked for an I.D. and if it were not presented they would have to either pay the officer to be released or be taken to jail. Remedying the validation of documents for processing of an I.D. has the potential to make the reintegration process more bearable for deportees.

U.S. Military Veterans: An Emergence of a Community of Brotherhood

Six out of fifteen participants, whom were current and/or past call center agents have served in the U.S. military. The two branches that were commonly referenced were the Army and the Navy. Four individuals served in the army and the remaining two served in the Navy. The length in time of service ranged between 3-8 years. The employment reported from some interviewees during service was for paratrooper special

forces, field artillery, deck seaman, and mechanic on aircraft. The collection of prior U.S. military service and discussions about their experience pertaining to the military was not anticipated nor planned. Rather, due to the nature and practice of fieldwork, I noticed a pattern of veteran status during the interviewing process. It prompted questioning the role of veteran status in the negotiations of identity whilst participating in the socio-economic reintegration process. Insight on identity construction as deported veterans, issues of citizenship, life after deportation and brotherhood in Baja California was achieved.

For this select group joining the military was a reflection of “doing my part as an American” as one individual stated. What I found from their dialogues was the influence that growing up from childhood to adulthood in the U.S. had on their sense of belonging and inaction of obtaining U.S. citizenship. As discussed previously in this chapter, growing up immersed in American culture aided in the construction of identity as seen through the following self-identification of an interviewee, “I guess I'm technically a citizen of this country [Mexico], but in my thoughts and feelings I'm an American, as anybody else.” Common patterns in discussions of citizenship and identity with the veterans were met with the mentality of growing up like any other American child where feelings of belonging in the U.S. trumped the necessity of gaining U.S. citizenship. It suggests that the power of belonging trumped obtaining a physical paper that recognized their belongingness. Associations of being an American regardless of the physical document demonstrating U.S. citizenship were found to be a strong driving factor in the way veterans navigated through their military and personal life in the U.S.

I didn't care about citizenship, I never cared about deportation because I didn't think that it would affect me...I've been an American ever since I can remember. I was an American in Israel. I was an American in France. In Haifa, In United Arab Emirates, in Abu Dhabi, in Bajaran. I was always an American in uniform at that time. So what's the difference now, but I'm deported.

Self-identification as American was reassured by the recruitment process in the military through the explicit confirmation of gaining official U.S. citizenship. Once in the military, the belief that taking the oath was sufficient to gain U.S. citizenship through the military service was a common pattern found in the data. Four out of the six veteran interviewees shared they were under the impression they would become U.S. citizens because recruiters told them and/or because they took the oath to become a U.S. national. One participant described the conversation exchanged with his recruiter explicitly stating citizenship would be processed:

So when I was joining the military my recruiter said, because they have to find out your pedigree, they have to find out where you're from, what your paperwork says, all that, before you join. So my recruiter said, "okay well you got your paperwork, you got your green card, you're good. You're gonna join, you're gonna do good, you're gonna do great. And citizenship don't worry about that that's gonna be taken care of."

It was shocking hearing veterans discuss how they were under the impression that service in the military would automatically grant them U.S. citizenship. Another participant shared a state of feeling "solid" after the army "because my recruiter told me I was going to become an American citizen." What the recruiter failed to inform was "...he didn't tell me is that I had to go through a paper work process."

Despite the false insinuation of automatic U.S. citizenship, serving in the U.S. military was a considerably valued experience for many of the deported veterans to the extent that they continue communication with both U.S. and deported veterans, and their U.S. ties were not denounced since the U.S. is viewed as their real home. With the negotiations of American identity coupled with the influences of the military experience, I found that social and economic reintegration for deported veterans is a far more difficult process than with participants that lack a military background. The post-deportation

experience for deported veterans reflected temporary reintegration because of these factors that enhanced the desire to return back to the U.S. In the initial understanding of deportation, for some participants, being deported was reimagined as 'being deployed' to Mexico as a coping mechanism of being an "American" living in Baja California. Reimagining deportation draws from the veteran's military experience. As one participant described, "oh man I'm down here, I'm like hey I got deployed over here this is my new deployment this is where I can help." Reimagining deportation was necessary for some participants in order to become grounded, make sense of what this experience entails in terms of the continuation of their lives in a new environment, begin to navigate Mexican society, and form social networks.

The deported veterans that were interviewed provided insight on the interactions and social ties made in the region. Similar to the interviewees without military experience, deported veterans in the call center industry were subjected to the same hardships in regards to the low pay by the sector, a stronger identification as American in the work place and in society, police targeting and corruption, and a cordial employee culture with more communication/friendships with the deported population than with locals. Deported veterans expressed a strong bond with other deported veterans because of the support and brotherhood that exists. As one participant described, "I associate mostly with the veterans, *Los Americanos* [the Americans] that's what I grew up with."

Connecting with deported veterans is facilitated through the existence of the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center located in Tijuana. This organization assists deported veterans with working towards obtaining their V.A. benefits, psychological help, advocacy to bring awareness about deported veterans in Mexico, and

aiding in the reintegration process through referrals for employment and connections.

This non-profit organization similar to the call center where deported veterans are employed, is a space of familiarity and remembrance of 'home.' It is a space where this group is able to bond with individuals that mirror their experience both in regards to deportation and the military. The formations of brotherhood transcend through time and space regardless of borders. The following participant shared the creation of bonds and being able to connect when he meets new deported veterans:

I had met another guy who was in the military, and there still was that ... If you meet somebody, and there's a military experience no matter what country the person served in the military. There's still some type of bond there, knowing that this person at one time ... they're kind of like you. They have very similar beliefs. Anybody who comes to me and tells me, "I was in the service here", when I see them, I'm going to see that person as there's something about me in him, and something about him in me. There's some kind of ... I never met anybody who came up to me, "I was in the Mexican military. We're a lot better, or we're a lot..." I've never met anybody who did that. There was always a bond, a small bond.

Deported veterans have found a source of familiarity and brotherhood that reaffirms their transnational identity which I found to be a positive assistance to both social and economic reintegration. The support that they give to one another has impacted many of the veterans lives however issues rooted in their post military experience remain pending. Through discussions about life in Tijuana and Rosarito, obtaining veteran benefits was complicated because of their status as deported and the possibility of return remains a faint reality as described by the following participant:

Four of those five guys got pardons, and I was supposed to be with their group. Two of those guys, I think went back already, and one of them became a US citizen when we went back. There's been people that they've been bringing back, so there is hope. They are going back. It's something that is just a matter of time. I haven't lost hope in going back. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen. It's not something ... It wasn't like it was in the beginning. I wanted to go back so bad. Now, it's just like, if it happens, it happens. If it doesn't happen, it's fine.

Seeking legal return to the U.S. via a pardon was a significant pattern in the data and it's what deported veterans are currently advocating for. The variance in desire to return was recorded in the data through this group's narrative. A strong desire to return to the U.S. dominated because drawing from a participant's narrative, as much as Tijuana and Rosarito can be viewed as "...a little piece of paradise...it's not home." An different participant described living in Mexico as the following analogy, "I feel like I'm on vacation, and I'm tired of being on vacation. I want to go back home already." For these deported veterans, they will continue to remain in Tijuana and Rosarito until a legal pathway is created to achieve the successful return to their real 'home.'

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECCOMENDATIONS

Concluding Remarks

Due to the continued inability to pursue broad immigration reform that can respond to the undocumented population within the U.S., Mexico will continue to receive deportees and therefore addressing this prevalent issue is required. With the continuation of the cycle of migration, deportation, and re-migration, there is an existence of an alternative; reintegration into the country of deportation. As a complex multifaceted issue, specifically focusing on the "1.5-generation," the post deportation experiences were analyzed in this thesis through a social and labor lens. These lenses were able to inform on the socialization in the region in regards to treatment by locals and police and feelings of belonging in the country of deportation. It also offered viewing the employment experiences within the call center industry and the strengthening of transnational ties because of American self-identification. The post deportation experiences of the "1.5-generation" are unique because childhood and adulthood

experiences in the U.S. influenced temporary and long-term reintegration. Examining the hardships that this group of deportees face in the northern border area of Baja California in regards to employment and navigating Mexican society, was critical in learning at the local level how both the temporary and/or long term reintegration processes can be facilitated and what changes are required in order to achieve this. Providing these recommendations required this thesis to be driven by the following research question: how do negotiations of transnational identities of deportees belonging to the “1.5 generation” in the call center industry affect the socio-economic reintegration process in the northern border area of Baja California, Mexico?

This research question was answered through the following data:

1. The dominance of self-identification as American
2. The call center sector work environment as a space that produces a fixed body and a mental transcendence to the U.S. whilst being a transnational space of familiarity
3. The recyclability of the labor of the “1.5-generation” because of their U.S. cultural accumulation/cultural capital and English speaking abilities
4. The employee culture of deportees in the work environment reflecting the dominant socialization relations between deportees that assist as social networks
5. Tijuana and Rosarito locals classification of deportees as Americanized because of their use of English and lack of the correct use of the Spanish language that disrupts the social reintegration and feelings of belongingness
6. Deportee profiling based on clothing and tattoos as a common thread to police targeting and corruption which are both detrimental to the social and economic reintegration process because of the confiscation of money and producing feelings of distrust and persecution
7. The barriers surrounded obtaining an I.D. in order to navigate Mexico
8. The discovery of an emergence of brotherhood of the deported call center U.S. military veterans
9. And the dominance of this group’s American identity as strong factor that influences temporary reintegration.

I found that negotiations of transnational identity indeed affected the reintegration process both socially and economically. In the data, the complete rejection of Mexican nationality was not renounced since there was an existence of “Mexican-American tendencies” or “Chicano tendencies” as one participant described. However, the identity

negotiations in the call center industry were dominated by self-identification as American. Self-identification as American and expressions of belonging in the U.S. through labeling the U.S. as 'home,' were found to be the single most important factors in answering the research question because the strength in the self-identification enacts temporary or long term/permanent reintegration. The desire to re-migrate, lack of social networks, stigmatization, economic opportunities, and feelings of not belonging enacted temporary reintegration. However, long term/permanent reintegration was achievable through accepting deportation, having secured employment and employed for a longer time span, forming families, learning how to navigate the region, strong social networks, and gaining a liking/acceptance for the new environment.

I found that the call center sector is a space that provides comfort and familiarity because of adopted U.S. practices such as the use of English all day, recognition of American holidays, and an *Americanized* employee culture where a large majority of call center agents are deported and belong to the "1.5-generation." The formulated social networks of post-deportation in the work environment were able to assist during the reintegration period because it provides the void of familial support in the country of birth. This sector thrives on the profile of the "1.5-generation" because of their English language skills and prior immersion in American culture. These qualities and skills make deportees employment recyclable as evidenced by the large number of employed deportees in the Tijuana and Rosarito region and the specific targeting for their recruitment.

Although the call center sector has utilized the recyclability of this group's employment, demonizing the call center industry is rejected since participants did

describe that, “call centers have helped a lot of Hispanic people that are deported...since the people who have been working long-term at this call center usually live a better lifestyle than people who are born here.” It is recommended that future research should focus on agents that have been employed for a respectively longer time frame (12+ years) in the call center sector in order to explore additional factors from the sector that assist in achieving long term reintegration. In line with employability of this sector, the physical space provides transnational connections and familiarity to customs from the U.S. It is transparent that the negotiations of transnational identity are evidently present in the call center industry and serve as a driving force in achieving temporary or long-term socio-economic reintegration of the “1.5-generation,” in which during the duration of both paths they remain connected to ‘home’ whilst navigating Baja California.

Policy Recommendations

The observable patterns of hardships participants discussed in regards to economic reintegration in the call center industry were rooted in the pay. Since the sector is utilizing the recyclability of the work produced by deportees it is urged that call centers remedy the pay for this group. Participants are paid in pesos and based on the disclosure of pay in the data some participants are typically paid around \$200 pesos a day an equivalent to \$10.37 for a day’s work. Although this sector’s wages are considered the best paying job for deportees in the region, the wages are insufficient because during conversations about identifying the hardest aspect about working in the call center industry, low wages were a recurring theme. Since their work is measured by *metricas*, all of the surveys must generate outstanding performance for agents or their bonuses are impacted and less money is secured. Less pay from an existing low wage impacts

economic reintegration because discontent with job security can influence temporary reintegration. Furthermore, the makeup of the call center industry positions agents at the bottom of the employment structure. Common concerns about the inability to move up in positions were noted as a hardship of economic reintegration. As shared by participants, locals of Tijuana and Rosarito fill the majority of management positions, with some managers lacking the ability to speak English and college education is required for upper management positions where higher pay is obtainable.

Improvements in regards to the pay of agents are necessary because in order to aid in the economic reintegration process, the ability to survive in a new environment is critical. From a business perspective, since the call center industry is competitive and more call centers are opening businesses in the region, ensuring a workforce through higher pay secures the longevity of the agents. The management positions filled by locals in the region require a change in pathways in regards to opportunities for deportees to move up in positions. Similarly, a study on return migrants demonstrated that deportees are more prone to facing barriers when attempting to enroll in college post deportation because “U.S. high school education is sometimes not sufficient for enrollment and required tests with expensive fees are needed to replace the missing elementary, middle school, and high school transcripts complicating their transfer of education” (Silver 2018: 217). The opportunity to move up to the higher paid positions needs to be made available for deportees especially if they are qualified. Inability to pursue higher education is a preventive measure, since as reported by participants some of their U.S. schooling was not transferred smoothly. A policy recommendation for this region is to improve the transferring of U.S. education in order for agents to be able to move up positions. If

however, the respective education does not align with the requirements of the positions, there is a need to establish an easier pathway toward college education in Tijuana and Rosarito. The increase in pay for call center agents will be able to possibly assist agents to afford college. In this region, making college education accessible especially for this group is absolutely necessary for improving the economic reintegration process.

In order to attempt to remedy police targeting and harassment of deportees which disrupts social and economic reintegration, the following policy recommendation is urged: making the process of obtaining identification easier for deportees. Not having an I.D. was referenced as being sufficient reasoning for harassment by police and jail time. Participants shared that they didn't have their original birth certificate or any other original documents and presentation of copies or expired passports were not accepted. It is urged that the process of obtaining identification should be reformed for deportees in order for this group to begin reintegration as easily as possible and to minimize police harassment and targeting since police tend to target deportees because they tend to lack an I.D. The acceptance of a copy or an expired passport should be met with leniency since when deportees begin to reintegrate they lack original documents and don't have the economic means to obtain the required documents.

Equally as important it is absolutely necessary to reject the stereotypes attached to the deported population. It is a very difficult process for this group to adjustment to a new culture, lifestyle, language, and ultimately new reality. The socialization in the country where deportees left when they were children should not be met with actions that enact fear or feelings of isolation. The acceptance of this group by society facilitates the reintegration process since it has the capacity to produce feelings of acceptance that can

have a positive impact on long-term reinsertion. Reimagining this group requires considering the actions of the “1.5- generation” in order to distance themselves from the stereotypes that brand this group as simply criminals. Through their employability and formulation of connections and friendships that assist in their navigation of Baja California, this group is seeking to avoid resorting to criminal activities thus disrupting the stigmas. In essence, the “1.5-generation” are the embodiment of change and growth since, in the words of a participant that does not plan on leaving Tijuana, “We have something to prove. We want to prove our families, we want to prove ourselves that we can make it here that we can do better — and we have.”

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Veteran	Place of Birth	Age of Arrival to the U.S.
LL	27	Mexican	No	Tampico	6 years old
JE	43	Mexican	Yes, Navy	Mexico City	7 years old
O	26	Mexican	No	Morelia	4 years old
LX	40	Mexican	Yes, Navy	Nogales	1 year old
RV	62	Mexican	No	Mexico	6 years old
MR	55	Mexican	Yes, Army	Mexico	4 years old
JJSP	25	Mexican	No	Jalisco	6 years old
FP	55	Mexican	Yes, Army	Culiacán	5 years old
JA	41	Mexican	Yes, Army	Mexico	3 months old
MGD	49	Mexican	Yes, Army	Mexico	4 months old
AS	43	Mexican	No	Mexico	9 months old
JV	29	Mexican	No	Tijuana	1 1/2 years old
F	30	Salvadorian	No	El Salvador	10 years old
I	31	Mexican	No	South of Mexico	14 years old
L	54	Mexican	No	Ciudad Juárez	4 years old

Appendix B

Highest Level of Education	Deportation Offense(s)	Length in the U.S.
University of Texas	Possession of illicit pills	12 years
Trade school	Domestic violence	27 years
High school	Self-deportation	11 years
High school	Marijuana charge	36 years
High school	Aggravated felony	41 years
East L.A. college, Cal State L.A.	Assault with a deadly weapon	42 years
High school	Cocaine and heroin	13 years
High school	Assault, resisting arrest	32 years
Soritos college	Aggravated felony	40 years
UCLA	Evasion of payments, perjury	42 years
High school	Gangs/concealed weapon	32 years
High school	Prior felonies, vandalism	20 years
High school	Fourth degree DWI	15 years
High school	Random ICE apprehension	4 years
San Jose City College, SJSU	Methamphetamines	50 years

Appendix C

Length in CC Industry	Place of Residence	Years in Baja, CA
2 years and 3 months	Tijuana	5 years
8 years and 3 months	Rosarito	8 years
1 year and 6 months	Tijuana	4 years
8 months	Rosarito	6 years
5 years	Tijuana	15 years
3 years and 3 weeks	Rosarito	10 years
2 and 1/2 months	Tijuana	6 years
3 months	Tijuana	18 years
1 month	Tijuana	1 year
4 months	Tijuana	7 years
Over 10 years	Tijuana	11 years
9 and 1/2 years	Tijuana	8 years
11 months and 2 weeks	Tijuana	4 years
12 years	Tijuana	12 years
2 years and 2 weeks	Rosarito	3 years

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