Economic remittances to middle class peruvian families: origins, use and impact

Guadalupe Morales Gotsch

University at Albany, State University of New York, guadalupemorales@yahoo.com

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Economic Remittances to Middle Class Peruvian Families: Origins, Use and Impact

by

Guadalupe Morales Gotsch

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my educators At the University at Albany, SUNY. I dedicate this dissertation to my doctoral committee members: my thesis advisor, Professor Susan M. Gauss, who has been a true partner in this journey, your commitment and passion for this project has been the greatest motivator for its conclusion and future projects. Thank you for your constructive criticism, for being with me every step of the way, and for believing in this project as you did.

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To my husband Steve, thank you for your love, support, and encouragement.

To my siblings and all my friends, thank you for your support.
Abstract

This dissertation generates a broader qualitative and quantitative profile of Peru’s middle class. It examines an unstudied group of Peruvian immigrants living in the greater New York City area, who are largely of middle-class origins, as are their families who remain behind in Peru. It analyzes immigrants and non-immigrants’ lifestyles, changes in family dynamics that occur as a consequence of emigration of one family member, and the effect of remittances on middle-class lifestyles, identity, and experience at home. A close analysis of participants’ life-styles and interactions provides conclusions about what defines Peruvian middle class status, and the factors that shape an immigrant’s decision to migrate and pursue remittances. By closely examining immigrants from Lima now living in the greater New York area, and their economic, social, and cultural ties to their households back in Peru, I examine remittances as the nexus linking immigrants to their families that are now redefined by a more distant relationship. As social ties are commodified, the relationships between immigrants and non-immigrants prioritize decisions about money, including its production, transmission, reception, and distribution. Consequently, family structure often shifts to reflect a new priority on investment projects for the future over family reunification. By researching immigration and remittances, I analyze this shift in middle-class Peruvian family structure and its impact on social class, identity, and even plans for future emigration. This dissertation also refocuses the analytical lens on the uniquely middle-class origins of Peru’s immigrants, challenging scholarly and popular assumptions about immigration that portray poverty eradication and reduction as the primary reason for migration.

Keywords: Transnational Peruvian Immigration, Peruvian Middle Class, Peruvian Remittances.
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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

Latin American immigration to the U.S. has surged since the neoliberal turn of the 1980s and 1990s. The Latin American-born population in the United States has grown from 1,725,408 immigrants in 1970 to 21,224,000 in the year 2010. The total Latino population living in the U.S. has reached more than 50,477,594 (Panfichi, 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Many in the new wave of immigrants have been driven to the U.S. by poverty, the eradication of social welfare programs, and economic restructuring that has led to growing unemployment and under employment in their home countries. Peru, for example, had an unemployment rate of 8.4 percent and an underemployment rate of 49.7 percent in 2008 (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Consequently, much of the literature that explores the reasons for emigration involving different regions of the world emphasizes poverty eradication through remittances.

However, this focus on poverty overlooks the ways in which globalization and economic restructuring have impacted middle-class Latin Americans as well, including how it has pushed them to emigrate internationally in search of jobs or other opportunities that include better salaries, benefits, cultural opportunities, and education. My dissertation examines this largely unstudied group by researching Peruvian immigrants in the greater New York City area—who are largely of middle-class origins—as well as their families who remain in Peru. I investigate their lifestyles in Peru, as well as the effect of international migration on gendered relations. Following Mahler and Pessar’s (2003) suggestion that scholars explore the impact of transnational migration on gender (p. 823), this study provides vital information about changes in
family dynamics that occur as a consequence of emigration of at least one adult family member, and the effect of remittances on middle-class lifestyles, identity, and experience at home. In doing so, I will draw conclusions about what defines Peruvian middle class status, the factors that shape their decisions to immigrate and pursue remittances, and the socio-economic and cultural effects of remittances on Peruvian households.

Structural analyses provide only a limited understanding of the definition of class and how it functions in Peru. Therefore, in this study, class structure, class experience, and class identity are analyzed together in order to provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how class functions in Peruvian society. Pajuelo and Sandoval (2004) suggest that culture is responsible for individuals’ personality and personal identity, and is a consequence of the “structure” of a universe – one that encompasses in the same way all members of a community. Therefore, each culture has behavioral patterns and shared traditions that are essentialized into a collective identity (p. 376). In the Peruvian case, middle-class society struggles to maintain its distinct cultural identity, one based upon conceived needs thus fuel immigrants and non-immigrants’ aspirations, which themselves are a defining element of class identity.

The World Bank’s (2013) recent studies of the middle class in Latin American and the Caribbean include two decades of data about mobility and the rise of the middle class. Interestingly, “predicted income”, class self-reports, and the concept of a common “lifestyle”, which includes consumption patterns and cultural habits, were important variables in defining middle class among participants. In addition, the World Bank also added economic security as a defining characteristic of the middle class, which it measured as the converse of vulnerability to falling into poverty (pp. 1-35). The
methodological approach to defining the Peruvian middle class in this dissertation is very similar in that it relies on class self-reports and socio-economic profiles; however, this dissertation also heavily emphasizes lifestyles and consumption patterns, since the Peruvian middle class cannot be only identified by socio-economic indicators or income, and the security that comes with them. Rather, the Peruvian middle class is a class rooted in inherited historical patterns of behavior and emulation, such as education, social relationships, culture, and consumption patterns, among other determinants. The Peruvian middle class is also a social class that has emerged from massive immigration from the provinces of Peru to Lima, generating a collective and distinct cultural identity. In most cases, it is a class that enjoys the conceived notion of the privileges that come with a middle class self-identification, regardless of specific socio-economic indicators.

This dissertation refocuses the analytical lens on the uniquely middle-class origins of Peru’s immigrants and challenges scholarly and popular assumptions about immigration that portray poverty eradication and reduction in the country of origin as the primary reason for immigration. Scholars like Gamero and Zeballos (2003) and Plaza (2007) suggest that Lima’s middle class is generally self-identified according to their consumption patterns and middle-class lifestyle, regardless of their earnings, educational level, or neighborhood. My goal in this dissertation is not only to generate a broader qualitative and quantitative profile of Peru’s middle class, but also to situate their identity within transnational flows of capital that have not only generated the conditions whereby Peru’s middle class must emigrate to seek employment, but also the conditions whereby remittances facilitate the continuation of a previously established middle-class status or the improvement of the immigrant and non-immigrant’s social class.
By closely examining emigrants from Lima now living in the greater New York area and their economic, social, and cultural ties to their households back in Peru, I examine remittances as the nexus linking immigrants to their families that are now redefined by a more distant relationship. As social ties are commodified, the relationship between immigrants and non-immigrants prioritizes decisions about money, including its production, transmission, reception, and distribution. Consequently, family structure likely shifts to reflect a new priority on investment projects for the future over family reunification. By researching immigration and remittances, I analyze this shift in middle-class Peruvian family structure and its impact on social class, identity, and even plans for future immigration.

My dissertation contributes significantly to understanding the “push-pull” factors (Massey et al., 1993) driving Peruvian immigration. Two main factors have been encouraging Peruvian emigration since the 1980s: the lack of a Peruvian educational system that enables graduates to compete in a globalized economy and the lack of jobs in the Peruvian labor market. Moreover, since the 1970s, other important factors driving Peruvian emigration reflect a decades-long weak economy due to the nationalization of foreign companies, the Agrarian Reform, and the restriction in immigration policies that prevented foreign capital from investing in Peru due to a misguided attempt to protect native laborers.

In the 1970s, a decade of military regimes in Peru, many upper and upper middle-class Peruvians emigrated in response to the effects of new governmental restructuring and reforms. Peru’s internal socio-economic, political, and cultural crises therefore not only decreased foreign immigration and investment into Peru, but encouraged Peruvians
to emigrate internationally, mostly to the United States (Altamirano, 2000). The primary “pull” factors for Peruvian immigrants to the U.S. were the economic returns provided by their human capital investment including higher wages, job stability, and benefits offered in the labor markets abroad.

To date, there is no solid data regarding the number of Peruvians who immigrate to the United States who are of middle class origins. However, a comparison of Peruvians living in the United States with the overall U.S. population allows us to see the relatively high socioeconomic status of Peruvian immigrants in the United States. Demographically, Peruvians are prominent in a few key areas in the United States, including New York. In the year 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated 78,066 Peruvians were living in New York State. Among South American groups living in New York State, Peruvians were outnumbered only by Colombians and Ecuadorians, with 145,195 and 258,579 persons respectively living in New York (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates).

Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau (2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate) estimates that New York ranks fourth among the fifty states for the number of Peruvians living there. The state with the highest population of Peruvians is Florida (99,979), followed by California (87,456), New Jersey (76,533), and New York (68,766). One way to describe the socio-economic profile of Peruvians in the United States is to compare Peruvians to the total United States population. The median age of Peruvians in the United States is 34.9 years old while the median age in the United States is 37.2. The average Peruvian household size is 3.30 people, and the U.S. average is 2.63. The median household income for Peruvians living in the United States in 2010 was
US$48,755, while the average for the total U.S. population was US$50,046. In terms of 
housing characteristics, the median value of Peruvian housing was US$263,700 and the 
average for the U.S. population was US$179,900. Additionally, in the year 2010, the total 
population of Peruvians reached 531,358, of which 89.0 percent were high school 
graduates or higher, and 29.2 percent had bachelor’s degrees or higher, exceeding the 
educational attainment of U.S.-born populations of 85.6 percent of high school graduates 
or higher, and 28.2 percent with bachelor’s degrees or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 
American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates). The comparison shows that Peruvians 
are younger, have very close mean incomes, higher home values, and higher education 
levels than the U.S. averages.

Taking into consideration the socio-economic advantages Peruvians have in the 
United States, it is important to emphasize the value of human capital they possess. A 
"brain drain" occurs as a result of massive emigration of people with technical skills and 
knowledge. In the Peruvian case, the "brain drain" reflects the emigration of people with 
technical and/or professional training migrating from smaller provinces to the capital and 
other major provinces of Peru for better job opportunities. International emigration 
however, occurs mostly among the most prominent professionals, students and workers 
of the country. This continues to be a problem not only in Peru, but also affects receiving 
countries where most immigrants are not able to use their knowledge and skills after 
spending large sums of money in their education (Altamirano, 1996).

The effects of the high rates of middle-class emigration can be viewed on both a 
macro- and micro-level. While fostering a “brain drain” at a national level, family units 
are significantly transformed. Migration affects family members; in most cases, children
have to face the loss of their parent and assume new roles. This situation also affects couples who experience significant changes in their relationships due to the length of separation from each other. My project seeks to integrate these elements by examining how immigration has affected immigrants and non-immigrants, with a special focus on class status and the role of remittances on their households in a transnational setting.

Ultimately, I will show how transnational flows of capital are reshaping domestic class arrangements in Peru, while also sustaining class identities amid a global restructuring that threatens Peru’s middle-class with downward mobility. To analyze this, relevant research questions include:

- Why do middle-class Peruvians emigrate?
- What are the “push” and “pull” factors?
- What defines Peruvian middle class status?
- What are the social, economic, and cultural effects of remittances on Peruvian households?
- How do immigrants perceive remittances they send to their home country?
- How do non-immigrants perceive the remittances they receive in their home country?

Therefore, the overall research question guiding this dissertation is:

How do economic remittances shape the middle-class social, cultural, and economic experience for Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants?

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of this section is to situate my research within two important bodies of literature and theory. This section first discusses the basis for Peruvian emigration: the
uncompetitive Peruvian educational system, and the lack of jobs in the Peruvian labor market, both of which act as the main push factors for Peruvian emigration. Second, by providing a wider profile of Peruvians in Peru and the United States, I seek to expose important socio-economic differences among Peruvians and other Latin American immigrant groups in the United States. In doing so, I shed light on the identity and culture of Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants, on their unique middle class structure and perceived needs, and on the effects of remittances in their households.

In Peru, the lack of jobs and the uncompetitive educational system bifurcated between public and private universities have been the primary causes of international immigration. Panfichi (2007) suggests that the uncompetitive educational system in Peru has generated a growing number of Peruvian university graduates, most of whom are unable to find jobs in their area of academic specialization. Additionally, the imbalance of international educational agreements with foreign universities between Peru’s public and private universities encourages international immigration. While each system is selective in accepting students, only the wealthy can attend private schools.

Public university students have a slim chance of continuing their education at a foreign university and must enter an overcrowded Peruvian workforce with little chance to work in their field of study. Private university students face the same situation if they remain in Peru; however, as private universities feature international educational agreements, their students have an added ability to transfer internationally with a greater chance to remain in their area of specialization.

With the rapid increase of universities and students, the Peruvian labor market has become more competitive for those with degrees. The reality is that professionals such as
engineers, administrators, and teachers are often not employed in their areas of specialization. They are more likely to take any available job, for which they are mostly overqualified. Panfichi (2007) exemplifies the “waste” of Peruvian human capital and underemployment demonstrated by taxi drivers in the big cities: “In the collective popular imagination, it is said that we have the most illustrative taxi drivers in the world” (p. 53).

As reported by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INEI-Perú) and the latest Peruvian census, there were 28,220,764 inhabitants in Peru in the year 2007. Of those, 7,605,742 lived in the city of Lima. Furthermore, the total Peruvian immigrant population in 2007 reached 1,617,803. Of those, 237,636 immigrated to the United States in 2007. Currently, there are 531,358 Peruvians in the United States with 68,766 of those living in New York State. They constitute approximately 1.1 percent of the total Hispanic or Latino population in the United States, and 2.09 percent of the total Hispanic or Latino population in the New York State (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Briefs and 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates).

Even though Peruvians constitute only the third largest Hispanic population from South America in New York State, they have a unique profile that differs significantly from other groups. The U.S. Census Bureau (2006-2010 American Community Survey) estimates that of Peruvians aged 25 and over living in New York State, roughly 86 percent had at least a high school diploma. Of that same group, about 26.9 percent Peruvians had a bachelor's degree or higher. The Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil (RENEC- Perú; 2006), the Dirección General de Migraciones (DIGEMIN-Perú), and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INEI- Perú) corroborate that between the
years 1995-2005, 39 percent of Peruvian emigrants were students, professionals, scientists, and intellectuals. In short, Peruvian emigrants are largely young, educated, and middle class.

This unique profile is significant because the majority of Latin American immigrants in the United States are distinct; they come from very poor origins and have generally low levels of education (Terry & Wilson, 2005). There is a factual relationship between Latin American remittance recipients and educational level. In comparing the Mexican and U.S. Population Censuses, we find that Mexican immigrants in the United States are more educated than non-immigrants in Mexico. As a result, “between 10 percent and 15 percent of those with less than four years of education receive remittances” (p. 36). Therefore, remittances are going from more educated immigrants to less educated non-immigrant households among Mexicans. These findings apply to Paraguay and Ecuador as well, where recipients tend to be represented among the less educated groups. In comparison, in Nicaragua, only 10 percent of those without education receive remittances. Similarly, only 2 percent of Peruvian recipients are without education (Fajnzylber & López, 2008). These facts are significant in suggesting a comparatively higher level of educational background among both remitters and recipients.

My dissertation challenges current literature in the United States, and authors such as Özden and Schiff (2006), Munzele, Maimbo, and Ratha (2005), Terry and Wilson (2005), among others, whose findings on international migration and remittances focus on remittances and money distribution as the means to eradicate or reduce poverty. Their emphasis tends to be on the effects of remittances in Latin American countries, focusing
on global economic changes and development. Their general interest is on getting to know how much money enters the economic system of the region, and how this money is channeled systemically. However, there is no literature that shows how economic remittances directly affect individual immigrants’ and non-immigrants’ experiences. In the Peruvian case, remittances only help fulfill economic needs in the households. Poverty alleviation, rather than poverty eradication, is a more accurate terminology when defining the effects of remittances on Peruvian households in this study. In my interviews, in no cases were remittances the main source of income in non-immigrants’ households. My dissertation therefore provides vital new information about the impact of remittances on households in both Lima and New York, and seeks to develop a clearer understanding at the micro-level of the processes and content involved in making decisions about the distribution and spending of money.

Moreover, Peruvian immigrants around the world sent US$2.8 billion in remittances to Peru in 2006. These numbers are equivalent to 3.1 percent of Peru’s GDP (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2006). In the year 2010, the Inter-American Development Bank’s Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) confirmed Peru as the third largest recipient in South America; however, remittances to Peru decreased to US$2.53 billion in 2010 mainly due to lower flows from Spain and Japan, whose slow economic recovery after the financial crisis is affecting immigrants significantly. In discussing the impact of remittances on the Peruvian economy, Torres-Zorrilla (2006) suggests that they only have a short-term impact at a national level because recipients spend remittances shortly after receiving them on property or domestic consumption. Nonetheless, the impact of remittances on the Peruvian economy is higher than
traditional exports (mining and fishing) and investments because remittances are not affected by high export or investment costs and fees (Panfichi, 2007). In other countries where poverty is a primary motivation for emigration, poverty and remittances have a positive relationship (Özden & Schiff, 2006). Globally, remittances have a significant impact on the recipients’ household and national economies, especially in the eradication of poverty (Munzele Maimbo, & Ratha, 2005). For example, in Haiti and Guatemala, remittances reduce extreme poverty by filling basic household needs such as food, healthcare, and clothing (Terry & Wilson, 2005).

The case of Peru is unique because the profile of Peruvian immigrants is different in terms of social class and education. Fajnzylber and López (2008) suggest: “remittances are not necessarily targeted to the poorest segments of the population in Peru. Instead, in a number of cases, they seem to flow to better-off households” (p. 3). Moreover, studies about Peruvian households and remittances suggest that 50 percent of remittances are received in Lima, with only 27 percent going to the Peruvian coast, 12 percent to the Peruvian highlands, and 10 percent to the rain forest region. The Peruvian highlands and the forest region include a disproportionately large percentage of Peru’s poorest. Therefore, remittances disproportionately benefit urban upper and middle class families with only 5 percent of remittances reaching the poorest rural households (Torres-Zorrilla, 2006).

Panfichi (2007) argues that in Peru, unlike in areas where remittances provide for daily basic household needs, remittances augment domestic income, increase savings, and help offset the impact of economic downturns, since they continue to flow even during times of crisis (p. 163). While the material impact of remittances on Peruvian
middle-class households has already been examined, albeit superficially, I intend to deepen our understanding not only of the material impact of remittances, but also of the impact on middle-class identity and culture, including the significance of the idea that national class identities are perceived by current research on the field as sustained by international earnings.

As previously mentioned, there are two main “push” factors that contribute to Peruvian immigration: the lack of a competitive Peruvian educational system and the lack of jobs in the Peruvian labor market. The crisis in the Peruvian public educational system has led to exchanges between Peruvian private universities and foreign private and public universities, encouraging Peruvian students to emigrate. With globalization, the external market has become more selective and those who are better prepared by having graduated from Peruvian private universities have better opportunities because of the possibility to continue their studies abroad. When Peruvian students graduate abroad, the chances of returning to Peru are slim (Altamirano, 2006).

According to the dual labor market perspective (Portes, 1997; Massey, 1999), Peruvian immigration is caused by “pull” factors in receiving countries. These factors include higher wages, job stability, and benefits in the labor market abroad. As Peruvians face political, social, and economic instability at home, immigrants have sought to invest their human capital anywhere they will benefit from economic returns.

Portes and Hoffman (2003) suggest that social class is characterized by the access to different resources that offer power to individuals. In the developed world, those resources are directly connected to markets and individual capacities to compete in them. Latin America, however, shows a different structure than developed societies. The
majority of Latin Americans “are not incorporated into fully commodified, legally-regulated working relations, but survive at their margin in a wide variety of subsistence and semi-clandestine economic activities. These are generally referred to as the informal sector” (p. 4).

Portes and Hoffman’s analysis of class structure identifies the emergence of an informal proletariat based on the lack of legal protection, the increase of emigration by professionals, and criminality. The three aforementioned characteristics of an ‘informal proletariat’ result in the lack of a public space where different sectors of society are able to identify themselves as middle class, as is the Peruvian case. Scholars like Gamero and Zevallos (2003) and Plaza (2007) argue that Peru’s middle-class is an emergent self-identifying social class wherein individuals differentiate symbolically from others. Thus, they are aware of the differences of social class, income, social identity, values, principles, or behavior that are attached to their culture in a symbolic manner.

The authors also suggest that there are two different middle classes. One is the traditional middle-class that developed with Lima’s industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s, but whose members were impoverished and victimized by governmental adjustment programs in the 1990s; since then, they have not been able to recover the middle-class status acquired with their prior economic success. The other Peruvian middle class is the emergent one, the new middle class with popular origins and whose members live largely in the periphery of Lima due to their relatively recent immigration in the 1950s and 1960s, mainly from poor provinces of Peru.

The main goal in this dissertation is to understand the relationship between immigrants and non-immigrants’ origins, middle-class self-identification, lifestyle, and
consumption patterns. It examines the diverse consumption patterns of Peru’s middle class as well as changes to those patterns due to remittances, and thus, the effects of remittances on their lifestyle. A central question seeks to elucidate if those changes serve to maintain the lifestyle established before immigration, and if Peruvian emigration is in part a response to a fear of downward mobility.

In most cases, remittances were not the only income in the Peruvian household. Thus, the changes and effects on family structure are not as pressing concerns as the preservation of remittance flows. Rather, Ansión et al. (2008) suggest that families in Lima undergo a change in roles after immigration that has a negative influence on family function. Parental responsibilities shift, depending on which parent stays. Typically, it is more difficult when the mother emigrates. In this case, the father plays both roles and has to also assume a role that he never played before in a society where typically men go to work and women stay at home with the children. Children also assume new responsibilities by being in the immediate care of only one parent and they tend to receive less attention and care than when both parents are present.

The additional work is not only physical but also emotional. The parent left behind often feels lonely and unsure since he or she can no longer make decisions with his or her partner. For the immigrants, the goal is to provide for the family they left behind, to improve children’s education and living conditions, and to save for the future. With the immigrant’s financial support, some families also aim to send their children abroad to further their studies. Despite these shared interests, the relationship between immigrants and non-immigrants changes over time, and often becomes distant. They make plans for future investments and how to maintain the flow of remittances, but they
do not plan on reuniting as a family. The authors conclude that international immigration gives immigrants and non-immigrants the possibility to improve their economic situation. However, it produces negative effects on families and their lives (Ansión et al., 2008).

My dissertation aims to enhance the understanding of identity and class among Peru’s middle-class immigrants and their families, and how the transnationalization and commodification of family structures has shaped Peruvian middle-class identities and practices. This study elucidates the effects of immigration on a select group of middle class Peruvian immigrants and how they pursue remittances as a way to maintain their social status. Valuable information comparing immigrants’ experiences in transnational settings before and after immigration exposes these realities. By examining this, this dissertation seeks to understand how historical processes affecting Peruvian class formation and identity are one of the stronger motivations for Peruvians to emigrate. Additionally, the existing connection between class status, identity, migration, and remittances has transformed Peruvian family structures in all spheres of their socio-economic and cultural lives; this reinforces the idea that the Peruvian middle class needs to maintain a middle class status fulfilling and improving their socio-economic and cultural needs.

Authors such as Torres-Zorrilla (2006), Ansión et al. (2008), Panfichi (2007), Gamero and Zeballos (2003), Altamirano (2006, 2000, 1996), and others who focus on Peruvian emigration have generated significant macroeconomic data about Peru. They have successfully shown that the changes in the household due to the emigration of family members have significant structural and social effects. However, they offer few details about the experiences of the individuals or family units that constitute those
statistics. My dissertation goes in a new direction by linking the experiences of immigrants and non-immigrants in order to generate a more comprehensive understanding of class behavior, interests, and issues. In doing so, it sheds new light on identity and experience for Peru’s newly emergent middle class.

My dissertation contributes to the current literature about Peruvian international immigration, the effects of remittances on Peruvian households, and the motivations of a self-identified middle class to emigrate. Even though the experiences of migrants and non-migrants are analyzed separately, they are never analyzed in isolation, since economic remittances provide a constant link between them, are critical in defining their experiences in both countries, and reveal much about their economic, social, and cultural life in both countries. This dissertation also elucidates if the economic effects of remittances are positive (as defined by the immigrants and non-migrants themselves) in the immigrants and non-immigrants’ social lives, as well as seeks to identify who benefits most from them.

**Research Objectives**

Massey et al. (1993) suggest that the creation of new immigration theories is necessary in order to have a better understanding of the immigration process and the immigrant’s experience. However, the process of developing new theories of immigration relies in part upon developing a better understanding of immigrant populations. The goal of this dissertation is to develop a profile of middle-class Peruvian immigrants, a group that remains under-examined in the current literature. Therefore, in this dissertation, I analyze how economic remittances shape the social, cultural, and economic experiences of both middle class Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants. This question connects
different aspects of my study and aims to integrate concerns about Peruvians’ middle class status, remittances, culture, and economy that affect immigrants, their families, and remittance recipients in Lima.

With the increased interest in immigration and remittances in current literature, and a substantial Peruvian immigrant population living in the region, it is surprising that so little research has actually been conducted about Peruvian immigrants living in New York. This dissertation examines a largely unstudied group of Peruvian middle-class immigrants living in the greater New York area and their remittance recipients in Lima. Due to the size of the Peruvian population in the State of New York, its location within a vibrant immigrant community, and its strong ties to families back in Peru, my study can be especially useful in enabling the creation of new understandings and theories of immigration.

**Creating a U.S Sample through Interviews at the Peruvian Consulate**

The starting point for data collection was the Peruvian consulate in Manhattan, New York, where I conducted a survey of the public (Appendices D and I for English and Spanish versions). Babbie (2007) defines survey research as a popular social research method. Through completing survey questionnaires, Peruvian immigrants at the Peruvian consulate provided substantial information about their culture and practice in immigration, including about where they shop, socialize, and work. The initial survey questionnaires given to the public at the Peruvian consulate had specific questions that allowed me to identify potential interviewees. This survey questionnaire was self-administered and composed primarily of closed-ended questions (see Appendix D); closed-ended questions were necessary in order to select participants who displayed the
required profile for this study as well as to complete their general initial profiles. Though I tried to avoid being intrusive, a few participants seemed to be uncomfortable when answering necessary questions about remittances, economic changes, and English proficiency. Additionally, I used these surveys to create an initial excel spreadsheet that allowed me to store and update profile information of Peruvian immigrants in New York and Lima. Regardless of social status, immigrants interviewed were required to meet basic qualifications that were obtained from the survey questionnaires: reside in New York State; have one family member in Lima, Peru and actively send remittances (see questions 5 through 8 and 10 through 12, Appendix D questionnaires). Answers to questions 20 and 21 of Appendix D include self-identification of immigrants’ social class before and after immigration. However, when selecting participants, immigrants’ middle class membership was not as important as the three basic qualifications mentioned above for two main reasons: the first was to avoid the possibility that participants would link emigration and remittances with an automatic improvement of their social status (three of them did). The second reason was to leave open the possibility of finding a group of participants who would not identify as middle class. However, the qualified majority of participants were self-identified as middle class.

A total of 84 survey questionnaires with potential interviewees were collected at the Peruvian consulate. They all contained names, telephone numbers, or email addresses to contact the participants. Every potential interviewee was contacted in order to start the interview processes. Only 64 potential interviewees could be reached due to unanswered emails, or non-existent telephone numbers provided. An important issue identified in this study was some of the participants’ concern to maintain their names and immigration
status anonymous. Of those 64 interviewees, I randomly selected 54, with a total of 27 males and 27 females purposely who were willing to proceed with the interview, and also willing to provide contact information of their family members in Lima to continue the interview process with them. The elimination process in New York included different group profiles in order to obtain as diverse a participant group as possible, using age, educational levels, occupation, and the neighborhood they lived in as some of the determinant variables.

However, it is worth noting that the elimination process still continued in Lima due to some unanswered phone calls, emails, or last-minute unwillingness to participate in my research. This behavior was expected, and the elimination process served to limit the problem of “reactivity” in which people being studied might modify their behavior in a variety of ways just because they know they are being studied (Babbie, 2007). All participants who contributed to this research not only signed the consent forms voluntarily, but they also felt comfortable in participating, especially after learning of the purpose of this study and confidentiality of their interviews.

**Interviewing U.S. Immigrants who Met the Criteria**

The next stage was to conduct an open-ended interview with some of these respondents. In this case, the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the questions. It is a data-collection encounter in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another (a respondent). These interviews may be conducted face-to-face or by telephone (Babbie, 2007). After identifying potential interviewees who lived in the greater New York City area, send remittances to Lima, and maintain a relationship with a receiving person in Lima, I contacted potential interviewees by telephone or email for an
open-ended interview. The interview took place at the date, place, and time of their convenience; all interviews were voice-recorded and most of the respondents and their surroundings were photographed. I saved and used these materials to increase the validity and reliability of my data.

Creswell (2009) suggests that validity issues may relate to sample selection, sample size, follow-up on contradictory results, bias in data collection, inadequate procedures, or the use of conflicting research questions. Questions were carefully designed and approved by the IRB. Avoiding biased phrases such a ‘wouldn’t you’ or ‘would you’, for example, and maintaining question order in simple understandable words and context with a clear intent was important in limiting bias and contradictory results. In order to increase the quantity and reliability of my data, I also took field notes about the neighborhood, the environment, the setting where my interviews took place, and any other observations while the interview was developing with each one of my interviewees. Non-immigrant interviewees in Lima responded to a set of open-ended questions using a questionnaire guide (see Appendices F and K, for English and Spanish versions).

The purpose of these U.S.-based open-ended interviews was to obtain a series of answers from the participants to also build up a qualitative interview database. Questionnaires, field notes, and open-ended interviews were organized via NVivo 8, Microsoft Word, and Excel spreadsheets for further analysis, for both New York and Lima participants.

Creswell (2009) suggests that accuracy in qualitative research requires debriefing between the researcher and participants, “using one or more of the strategies to check the
accuracy of the data with participants or across different data sources” (p. 91). Field notes including detailed information of participants’ behavior and environment were especially useful in Lima when determining non-immigrants’ self-definition of class and description of their social status. It was important to have different sources of information; however, due to the complex definition of the Peruvian middle class in this study, which cannot be defined solely according to socio-economic standards, additional sources served to confirm and complicate even more the resultant definition. In more than one case, participants self-identified as middle class members, explaining their memberships through the acquisition of new appliances or receiving presents from their family members in New York. In these cases, field notes were useful to analyze participants’ housing, educational level, social behavior, and the economy of their household in general.

Outhwaite and Turner (2007) and Creswell (2009) concur that identifying the research problem is important to formulating research questions that will be meaningful for others beside the researchers. Understanding the respondents’ definition of middle class and how it applies to their lives was instrumental in allowing me to seek out the reasons for immigration. With this purpose in mind, the next subsidiary question to analyze was: Why do middle-class Peruvians emigrate?

With this question, I sought to understand their motivations or the “push” and “pull” factors that influenced the decision to migrate. It was fundamental for the development of this dissertation to explore why a middle-class society was interested in international immigration, knowing that their class status in the United States in most cases could not be the same as in their home country. To this end, it was worth noting
that “push” and “pull” factors were not limited to the economy, but included political and cultural issues as well. Other “push” factors included religious freedom, sexual orientation, lack of independence, and ending an undesirable relationship, among other factors. There is a distinctive connection between familial altruism shown by emigrants and their reasons for immigration; immigrants are seeking to improve their own livelihood in what they believe is an environment with richer opportunities, and in turn to share their wealth with the family they leave behind. This distinctive connection creates a strong bond between immigrants and non-immigrants as well between immigration and remittances in my study.

The goal was to complete forty interviews in New York and forty interviews with their family members in Lima. As mentioned before, I selected a total of fifty-four interviewees in New York. Once all the interviews were completed in New York and participants accepted to share information about their family members in Lima, I provided this information to the IRB in order to extend my authorization to work there.

**Interviewing Families in Peru**

After the interview in New York, interviewees were asked to provide either an email address or the physical address and telephone number of the family member to be contacted in Lima. Working in Lima was a different adventure. Before my trip to Lima, I contacted each one of my participants in New York to let them know that I was traveling to Lima to interview their family member. This helped me save time trying to convince interviewees in Lima that the reason of the interview was to pursue academic research. An important reality to consider as researchers in places like Lima is its underdevelopment and high costs for basic services. For example, telephone service in
Peru is very expensive. Normally, people can maintain a cell phone line with only S/. 5.00 Nuevos Soles (US$1.78) a month because whoever originates the call pays for it. This system also applies for landlines.

As soon as I arrived in Lima, I left messages to set up the interviews, but people were not calling me back because they were avoiding telephone charges. This meant that I had to wait until later hours for people to get home from work or other daily occupations. In other situations, I confirmed the appointments with potential interviewees and they would not show up or be available at their homes to meet me. Fortunately, I had a total of 54 potential interviewees, for 40 interviewees needed in Lima to complete my research.

A characteristic of citizens in Lima is the lack of trust in strangers and their tendency to disallow them access to their households due to frequent robberies. Despite this socio-economic problem and lack of trust, ninety percent of non-immigrant participants received me in their homes in Lima for their interviews. The other ten percent met with me in cafes or commercial centers. Again, having access to their households was a way to observe their living environment and collect more useful measurements of their reality and authenticity. Lima interviews took place in a total of twenty-five different districts or neighborhoods, all of them located within three hours proximity travelling by bus, taxi, and/or ‘moto-taxis.’

Some of those districts or neighborhoods included Villa María del Triunfo (12.5 percent), Los Olivos (10 percent), San Juan de Miraflores (7.5 percent), Provincia Constitucional del Callao (5 percent), San Miguel (5 percent), Barranco (5 percent), San Borja (5 percent), Lince (5 percent), and Puente de Piedra (5 percent). Other
neighborhoods included Villa el Salvador, San Isidro, Breña, La Molina, Pachacamac, Surco, San Martin de Porres, Santa Catalina, Montr rico, Miraflores, San Juan de Lurigancho, Chorrillos, Jesús María, Centro de Lima, Magdalena del Mar, and Pueblo Libre. Each neighborhood in the second list includes 2.5 percent of Lima’s interviews, and are marked by heterogeneous inconsistent socio-economic profiles. Except for the districts of San Isidro, La Molina, Surco, Montr rico, and Miraflores, which are considered upper middle class districts, all other districts visited in this study were the typical emergent middle-class districts.

Lima’s participants responded to a preliminary questionnaire and a set of open-ended questions. Unlike the group of Peruvians living in New York, non-immigrants in Lima were asked directly: How would you define your social class? What social class do you belong to? And why? Two (5 percent) of them belonged to a privileged upper middle class; thirty-two participants (80 percent) indicated they belonged to a middle class; two (5 percent) of them to a low middle class; three (7.5 percent) of them indicated they belonged to a poor social class; and one participant indicated to belong to a ‘normal’ class. As observed, the majority of Lima’s non-immigrant participants indicated belonging to a middle class.

Waters (2001) points to an important ethical issue when deciding whether the interviewer should be paying the respondents for the interview or not. The author also questions if the payment is a form of coercion for poor people and adolescents. Most scholars, including Waters, agree that paying interviewees is a way of compensating them for their time. This study offered a compensation of US$10 for each interview to all participants in New York and Lima. Most participants in New York refused to receive the
US$10 incentive for their participation. However, at the end of the interview, all participants received their US$10 in cash for each interview. Participants in New York did express their disposition to help with my project regardless of the incentive. In most cases, I was invited to their homes, and they offered me light refreshments. In other cases, they would include me in their family dinner or lunch, and conclude their invitations with the interview. In general, most participants in New York were very interested and involved in my project, wanting to learn more about it, understanding the importance of their participation, and willing to participate in a project that involves Peruvians and their individual immigration experiences.

In Lima, non-immigrants knew the reason of my visit and that I would contact them within a period of days. However, it was very difficult to reach them because of unreturned calls due to the high cost of communication in Lima. Participants were also unclear about the purpose of my project; some of them feared having their stories published, especially if their family member in New York was undocumented. They also expressed a lack of time for the interviews, among other reasons.

After three days in Lima calling and leaving messages, and having very little luck, I decided to remind my interviewees that they would be compensated for their time. I had an immediate positive response after mentioning the compensation, and all my interviews were on schedule until the end of my research in Lima. Some interviews had to be rescheduled due to lack of time to finish the interview, and some of those interviews lasted as long as two or three sessions. In those cases, participants collected US$20 or US$30 for the interviews, which in Lima is a significant amount of money. I believe the immediate response to be part of a paid interview can be considered as a way of coercion
for poor people, especially in Lima. However, I also observed that due to compensation received, interviewees took their participation seriously and objectively. In other words, they proceeded and complied with their interviews as if there was a contract between us, and I believe it was because they were compensated for their time.

Many researchers agree that safety is an important issue to consider when doing fieldwork. When traveling in New York and Lima, I always carried tape recorders, cameras, notebooks, and some personal items, and I did not experience robbery or threat from anyone either on the buses or walking on the streets. I believe it is important to maintain a sense of caution that people would have in any urban environment such as in big cities like New York and Washington, D.C., among others. Moreover, transportation in Lima is affordable and diverse. There are buses, taxis, moto-taxis, and now trains available in the city of Lima; however, traffic in Lima can still be chaotic, and traveling ten miles can take up to an hour in rush hour. I visited neighborhoods using a combination of transportation systems.

Creswell (2009) suggests that some issues occur in relation to purpose or questions addressed to participants while interviewing, and deception takes place when participants understand one purpose but the researcher has a different purpose in mind. Due to the importance of my interviewees’ perspectives on middle class self-identification, I asked interviewees in Lima to define their own social status and explain why they define it in that way. This study concluded with an analysis of middle-class immigrants’ goals and changes in their personal lives and motivations in the United States.
Some questions guiding this segment of my study were: what is the motivation to stay abroad after their goals are reached? What can these goals tell us about middle class identity? Finally, how do these goals potentially shift as a result of the migrant’s experience in a foreign country? In this set of questions, probing—a technique employed in interviewing to solicit a more complete answer to a question—was used to expand interviewees’ answers. Some examples include “Anything more?” “How is that?” (Babbie, 2007).

Creswell (2009) and Babbie (2007) agree that the use of subsidiary, or subsequent, questions help break down the main topic of the dissertation. One subsidiary question of my dissertation was: What defines Peruvians’ middle class status? With this question, I sought to understand the real meaning of middle class in Peruvian society. I expect that middle class self-identification may differ from the Peruvian nation’s per capita income of US$4,453 (IMF, 2008) or be affected by urban-rural differences. Peru’s per capita average monthly income in urban areas in 2009 was S/.596.30 (Nuevos Soles), approximately US$213.00 and S/.213.10 in rural areas, approximately US$76.00 (INEI-ENAHO 2004-2009). How is Peruvian society differentiated? What defines middle-class in Peru? Is it income? Is it educational level? Is it the neighborhood that people live in? Is it their access to technological consumer goods? Is Peruvian middle-class status driven by self-identification?

In seeking answers to these questions, I situated myself in my interviewees’ surroundings and environment. This allowed me to observe the material conditions of non-immigrants’ lives, as well as how they situate themselves and behave in those conditions. This in turn provided additional insights about how and why they defined
themselves as middle-class. I included questions in my questionnaires (see Appendix G) that helped determine where they live and socialize, where they spend their money, and what technological tools they prefer to use (if any) on a daily basis. The next subsidiary question helped clarify this relationship: how do middle class people in Peru perceive remittances? To get an answer to this particular question, I used the open-ended questionnaire in Appendix G. Interviews in Lima took place from June 1st, 2010 through August 10th, 2010. As noted, the goal was to interview each one of the family members of my interviewees in New York. Immigrants in New York voluntarily provided addresses and telephone numbers of their family members in Lima. This was an important accomplishment and facilitated the interview process in Lima, considering how difficult it would have been to visit immigrants’ families and their households without immigrants’ recommendations.

Other relevant questions that contributed to my analysis were: Is emigration the response to a fear of downward mobility? It is possible that immigrants living in a middle class society in Peru see their status threatened by their economic instability? It is then pertinent to examine if remittances served to maintain the lifestyle established before immigration. Do middle class Peruvians see labor emigration as a lower class activity? How do they assimilate labor-seeking emigration into their Peru-based class identities?

These questions allowed me to closely engage cultural and social aspects of my study, and in particular to investigate the changes in the social, cultural, and economic situations of participants as a result of remittances and immigration. How much do consumption patterns change due to remittances? How much do remittances affect their
lifestyle? How do immigrants perceive remittances sent to their home country? How do non-immigrants perceive remittances received in their home country?

The objective was to achieve an understanding of their individual experiences due to immigration and remittances and how these two phenomena affect the lives of immigrants and non-immigrants. In order to connect the experiences of immigrants and non-immigrants for further analysis, each one of the questionnaires and open-ended interviews were codified separately. These variables allowed me to observe, compare, and analyze the results individually and as a group, but also as a whole without ignoring the different circumstances and authenticity of their lives. I also considered significant factors that could possibly influence in the resultant analysis, such as the economy of the country, cultural practices, and societal rules, among others.

**Methodology**

This research project was designed within a transnational context—New York, U.S.A. and Lima, Peru—and involves an interdisciplinary approach in social science research. It relies on quantitative and qualitative methodologies, in which research questions are analyzed and answered through the review of existing literature and results from surveys and interviews. Using mixed methods strategies (Creswell, 2009) has given me the opportunity to examine multiple approaches to data collection. Surveys and interviews served to discuss and analyze research questions specifically addressed to interviewees’ personal experiences in New York and Lima. These results have also been used to challenge existing literature and hypothetical questions leading to the development of this dissertation. Using both methodologies allowed gathering information from different sources for analysis. These results provide larger data for
analysis; however, these different approaches reinforced each other allowing a better understanding, and providing higher data reliability of the topics of discussion, as well as a more structured but comfortable interview process for participants. In addition, according to Outhwaite and Turner (2007):

…our understanding and our ability to predict and explain phenomena will be limited by the many idiosyncrasies that exist within individuals, situations, time periods, and cultures. The behavioral and social sciences require patience, replication, and respect for the complex causes of human behavior (p. 175).

The topic of immigration is sensitive for both immigrants and non-immigrants in general. Immigrants and non-immigrants were asked to complete questionnaires and answer open-ended questions in order to give objective answers, closer to their real experiences (see Appendices F, G, K and L). Babbie (2007) suggests that establishing rapport with interviewees is important, and can take place in part through providing them with better explanations of the study. He also affirms, however, that explaining the purpose of the study to potential interviewees causes an ethical dilemma. It might eliminate their cooperation altogether, or affect their behavior. These ethical conflicts did not seem to take place in participants once they were committed to participate.

Explaining the purpose of my study served to make participants more interested in the topic and confident enough to participate without fear.

Several factors helped me establish rapport with the participants: sharing their culture, being a woman and a mother, and understanding the Peruvian economy. I also considered my appearance as a researcher and reminded my interviewees of how much I valued them and their contribution to my study, regardless of their educational level, appearance, or economic status in general. This attitude helped establish a solid rapport with them before, during, and after the interview process.
In most cases, non-immigrants felt free and confident to talk about their experiences and receive me in their homes. In New York, immigrants also talked about their experiences freely, re-living each one of their adventures as immigrants. Even those whose immigration experience happened a long time ago were still very sensitive when talking about it, feeling the initial effects of immigration. They talked about family separation, a lack of acculturation in New York, and a concern with being able to maintain their jobs. Immigrants in general hoped this study would help them improve the perception of the U.S. government towards international immigrants. They also indicated having participated in order to use this research as the means to express their personal experiences, so other potential immigrants could benefit from it. They wanted to let other immigrants know that their immigration process was difficult, and it was important to clarify what people mistakenly say about immigration and opportunities in the U.S. In other words, they felt it was proper to help other potential immigrants without real knowledge of the circumstances and real possibilities to avoid mistakes when immigrating. The following statements embody some of the immigrants’ feelings about their immigration experience, and can be observed through their answers to open-ended questions in this research:

**Interviewer:** If you would have the opportunity to repeat the whole immigration process again, would you do it? Why?

**Berta:** I wouldn’t do it again. I wouldn’t live all that I have lived. I would stay in Peru and fight to stay. The beginnings were horrible and really hard. I came across the borders, and I will never be humiliated like that ever again (personal interview, August 15, 2009).

**Alfredo O.:** No, I wouldn’t. I would just stay in Peru, finish my studies, and right now I would have rights and obligations somewhere in my country. It is and has been really hard, coming to New York and surviving in New York. No one knows how difficult it is until you really experience it (personal interview, February 20, 2010).
Luis D.: Yes, I would do it again. This is the only way that after three years I can help my dad in Lima. I worked in construction in Lima, but I would never make there what I make here. However, you need to just focus on what you are coming to do, and do not expect to have friends, or anyone caring about you. Life is hard here, and it is better if you come here with that idea, instead of all the pretty things people talk about this country, and all the great opportunities you have available. It could be true for those who have papers and rights, but not for those in my situation (personal interview, June 26, 2009).

Roxana D.: No. I have a feeling of regret. Nothing is good if you are alone, if you don’t have family and friends. I don’t think I will ever adapt, and I would never advise anyone to come here. There is a reality that has nothing to do with what you are told before coming to this country. I can go back and forth to Peru, but I feel alone, and I miss everything about Peru (personal interview, June 23, 2009).

Establishing rapport with non-immigrant participants in Lima was a successful experience. Interviews caused different types of emotional responses in participants. Mothers and wives left behind cried remembering the separation from their children or spouses. These feelings reminded them of the uncertainty of their separation, not knowing if they would be reunited with their children or spouses again. For most interviewees in Lima, regardless of their emotions and memories about immigration, having their family member in New York was in the end a positive experience for them. This positive perspective relies on the immigrant’s economic success and support:

Interviewer: If you would have the opportunity to repeat the whole immigration process again, would you do it? Why?

Emilia: Yes, only if it works out just like it did. My son has his papers, he comes back all the time, he bought my apartment, and he is doing well (personal interview, July 15, 2010).

Tanya: Yes, there is so much economic improvement for me and my son, and our future (personal interview, June 17, 2010).

Mariela: Now that she helped us to set up the business, and changed our lives, I want her here. I know she is suffering alone, and it is hard for her, but I guess she had to go through really hard times to accomplish all she did for us. So I guess it was necessary for her to experience all those years of sacrifice and loneliness (personal interview, June 20, 2010).
**Rosa:** Yes, my daughter is fine, and her children are too. They went to New York for a better life and opportunities, and they have it. I know she feels lonely, but I would support her again (personal interview, July 14, 2010).

Even in cases where non-immigrants showed sadness due to separation from immigrants, they connected their success and wellbeing only to the immigrant’s economic attainment, possibly because their shared reasons for immigration are solely related to their personal economy.

Working with Peruvians in New York and in Lima was a positive experience. Being an ‘insider,’ speaking the Spanish language, knowing the city of Lima, sharing the Peruvian culture, and knowledge of the economic system helped me greatly with the interview processes. It was useful to have these advantages and it granted me the understanding of my participants’ emotional levels, frustrations, interactions, hopes, and realities beyond my structured academic research.

Babbie (2007) suggests that “effective interviewing involves skills of active listening and the ability to direct conversations unobtrusively” (p. 315). In general, Peruvian participants had an excellent disposition to participate in my study. Prior to our interviews, participants and I had varied opportunities to discuss my project. Understanding that this dissertation is developed in a transnational context was critical, since it is necessary to connect immigrants and non-immigrants in this study. Preparing participants while obtaining their consent framed their responses, and got them thinking in transnational terms. This frame of reference has surprisingly provided a space for immigrants and non-immigrants to communicate (either implicitly or explicitly) through me. Most of all, immigrants in New York, and non-immigrants in Lima were eager to hear about and discuss their family members. This allowed me the privilege to be their transnational interlocutor by creating a space across two continents that allowed them to
implicitly or explicitly discuss with each other their interpretations of class, expectations for the future, and aspirations related to their immigration experience.

**Data Analysis**

In order to analyze data from my open-ended interviews, I transcribed the tapes (then destroyed them), and added the data using the computer program NVivo 8 for all the literature, field notes, pictures, and results from my Excel spreadsheets for all numbers and graphs. These programs allowed me to code text materials obtained from my interviews and field notes created for each participant. Using a software program for qualitative data analysis helped me design and handle larger amounts of information, and its use maximized varied sources of information for analysis. I would like to point out how important it was to actively listen to interviewees while taking notes of the environment.

A more accurate definition of who my interviewees were in New York and Lima was based on taking notes of the voices in the background, the expression of the interviewee, the tone of their voice, the behavior of people or children around them, and their interaction with each other in general. Other important elements were their environments: the colors of the walls (if any), their furniture, appliances in the household, the way they were dressed, even what they kindly offered me to drink or eat during the interview, and any other attitude or behavior during the interview process which could help me identify their socio-economic status and cultural behavior.

In order to analyze how my subjects have been socially, economically, and culturally affected by the immigration process, notes for each participant were transcribed into English and recorded. As a request from Javier (one interviewee), only one interview
in New York was conducted in English. The rest of the interviews in New York and Lima were conducted in the Spanish language. After transcribing all the interviews, primary and secondary sources of literature were examined and compared. Other sources of information included pictures of my participants and their surroundings, Internet sources from private and governmental databases, and local newspapers among others. Due to the demographics of my sample population, consent forms (Appendix C) surveys and questionnaires were available in Spanish (Appendices H-L).

From this database, I analyzed, classified, and categorized each response. Coding the information allowed me to pursue different lines of analysis and to compare and contrast distinct categories and variables. A demographic database was created in English, which recorded the effects and changes of their individual immigration processes. Analysis included but was not limited to behavior patterns, interests, motivations, immigration process, effects on their economy, future plans, among other changes in their lives before and during immigration. The resulting qualitative insights provided data critical for the development of quantitative analysis. Coded raw data from my interviewees and their responses were also used for later analysis importing results from Acrobat, Excel spreadsheets, or Word documents.

The core of my study focused on immigration, middle class status, and remittances. An analysis of documents and materials through qualitative and quantitative mixed research methodologies explained the different meanings of social behavior observed in my group of study. Results varied depending on the social class, income, social identity, values, principles or behavior of my subjects. While this is sure to have complicated my research, it also allowed me to contextualize and compare different and
similar behaviors observed in my subjects in reference to the applied variables. These variables included but were not limited to: age, sex, educational level, current employment and position, current employment and education, neighborhood description, housing type, and cultural practices. In the end, the results of my study could be analyzed from two distinct but reliable qualitative and quantitative mixed methodologies.

The following chapter, “The Peruvian Middle Class”, elucidates who is the Peruvian middle class. An important part of the analysis in this dissertation relies on knowing what defines the Peruvian middle class. Understanding who the Peruvian middle-class is will help categorize the economic effects of remittances in Peruvian households. How has Peruvian middle-class history influenced the formation of this class? What makes Peruvians believe in a middle-class membership? Is their social behavior or consumerism enough to sustain this definition? Understanding these definitions makes it possible to set up the bases for understanding the reasons for immigration, plus the social, cultural, and economic effects of remittances at both ends; remittances have significant effects on those receiving them, but also on those who produce them.

In Chapter 3, I will analyze how international immigration and changes due to immigration define Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants’ lives and how long-distance relationships between immigrants and non-immigrants have been affected in the process. I will use data collected in New York and Lima to analyze the immigrants’ life before and after immigration, as well as the effects of immigration at both ends. I will explore the definition of immigrants’ “temporary” life, which has been developed through immigrants’ cultural and emotional dependency after immigration.
In Chapter 4, I will analyze the effects of remittances on Peruvian households as the main dependable variable in family consumption and expenditure. The term ‘secondary location’ was developed after exploring immigrants’ lives in New York, allowing a better understanding of their cultural behavior, as well as how in practice Peruvian remitters are economically affected, and how they interact with receivers in the process.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of findings in this dissertation, as well as suggestions for future research based on the necessity to expand, or have a better understanding of sub-topics and additional topics that could not be included in this dissertation.
CHAPTER 2—THE PERUVIAN MIDDLE CLASS

This chapter is divided in three sections: History of the Peruvian Middle Class; Race and Class Identity in Peru: Effects on Transnational Ties; and Class Perception among Peruvian Immigrants and Non-Immigrants: Samples from New York and Lima. My goal is to develop a broader understanding of the Peruvian emergent middle class by discussing its history, evolution, and recent formation. The Peruvian emergent middle class strongly identifies with social and cultural markers, rather than solely economic factors. Nevertheless, while they share ideas about class in part as a result of their common origins in a massive rural-to-urban migration - from the highlands and remote rural areas of Peru to the capital of Lima and other big cities of Peru – this has exacerbated social divisions between ethnic groups in Lima. Therefore, racism, marginalization and segregation play a prominent role in perceptions about class and identity among both non-immigrants in Peru and among immigrants living in the United States.

History of the Peruvian Middle Class

The idea of the middle class in Peru has been generally connected to social standards that apply to those individuals who live comfortably and enjoy the economic security that comes from the ability to sustain themselves (Gamero & Zeballos, 2003). This statement, however, does not apply to a group of Peruvians living in New York and Lima. Following Parker (1998) and his idea of the middle class, the self definition of the Peruvian middle class includes an understanding of concepts, cultural practices, and ideals that together constitute a large and complex ideological structure. Understanding these factors is therefore fundamental in evaluating the history of the Peruvian middle
class, the current experience and identity of Peru’s emergent middle class, and the consumption patterns, life styles, and motivations that drive this recently-formed social class.

The Peruvian middle class has its roots at the beginning of the twentieth century. Parker (1998) explains that the Peruvian middle class was an invention of the twentieth century. White-collar workers gained a sense of identity, in part from social legislation in which blue- and white-collar workers would benefit with shorter hours, a weekly day off, and a salary that kept pace with inflation (p. 94). The idea of the middle class became part of a newly-differentiated imaginary of social hierarchies, in which status and rules were now negotiable, and where white collar workers could claim social prestige; in other words, middle class membership was a synonym for a prestigious social status. In the case of Peru, a prestigious social status was differentiated by the ‘gente decente’ and ‘gente de pueblo.’ The former were wealthy, educated, cultured, and well dressed, and had a good name, a rich godfather, and in many cases, just a particular motivation to belong to the middle class, which they sought to do through emulation. This specific definition and idea of the middle class was a model followed by middle class members, the majority of whom undertook economically unaffordable social activities while trying to maintain dress codes and education levels; all of these societal qualities were designed to reflect an apparent middle class membership (Parker, 1998). Nevertheless, in twentieth-first century Peru, a good name, income, or educational level does not define Peruvians’ middle class status because of the impact of neoliberal economic reforms on income and employment.
Parker (1998) explains that at the beginning of the twentieth century the Peruvian middle class suffered more due to the rising cost of living in Peru and the high maintenance costs of their lives imposed by their social circle. In the end, a middle class ‘empleado’ member suffered because he had to maintain a respectable life, as demonstrated by prestigious social relationships maintained through an appearance of success and its attendant monetary expenditures. Likewise, the caste-like distinction between ‘obreros’ and ‘empleados’ played an important role in shaping public discourse in Peru (Parker 1998).

Even though my study is not specifically focused on distinctions between ‘obreros’ and ‘empleados,’ Parker’s (1998) distinction between working-class ‘obreros’ and middle-class ‘empleados’ helps to shed light on current socio-economic divisions in Peruvian society. The Martínez family—one of forty cases in this study—is an example of this division, and reflects how members of Peruvian society have adjusted their practices in order to assert a middle class identification.

The Martínez family lives in ‘Los Olivos,’ a district that Gamero and Zeballos (2003) define as middle-class. Some results in their research suggest that the population of ‘Los Olivos’ have strong beliefs about personal development as a mechanism for upward social mobility, believe in self-control in terms of family planning, are oriented toward thinking about the future, have particular feelings toward popular areas and the upper classes, have a deep respect for their jobs and for discipline, especially within the family, and seek to accumulate wealth. At the same time Gamero and Zeballos (2003) point out that Los Olivos’ middle class membership is not clear, possibly due to a perceived risk of downward social mobility generated by the district’s capitalist
development, which is promoting excessive commerce, services, and industry in the area. This seemingly contradictory definition of social class membership exemplifies the negative association that the middle class has toward excessive commerce, services, and industry in some areas of Lima, which it associates with the working class. It also reflects the reality that many Peruvian entrepreneurs face in crowded informal markets.

Matos-Mar (2005) affirms that by 1984, previous large-scale immigration to the capital had made Lima the scene of a massive ‘popular overflow’ predominantly composed of Andean populations and reflecting their lifestyles. Andean populations, who according to Matos Mar (2005) are the real representatives of Peru, are mostly located in popular sectors of Lima, and they experience social exclusion (Matos Mar, 2005; Gamero & Zeballos, 2003). Similarly, lifestyle plays an important role in the development of the current emergent middle class society in Lima. Despite the social conflict due to the presence of Andean indigenous populations in Lima, Andean indigenous populations have had significant influence in shaping life styles, including middle-class lifestyles, in Lima. Specific behaviors, preferences, and values that middle class members identify in this study include their housing and living conditions, consumption and expenditure patterns, cultural practices, and religious celebrations, among other characteristics, which generally differ from people who grew up on the coast. Matos Mar (2005) points to important differences in the architecture of the houses, which reflect similar architecture of those houses built in the Peruvian highlands. In shaping life styles in Lima, Andean indigenous populations include traditional ceremonies in the construction of their homes, in which the participation of the community is important and necessary. After these gatherings, the blessing of the houses follow with crosses, talismans and amulets to
protect their homes from evil and thieves. These celebrations are linked to the identity of their hometown, and their lives revolve around the folkloric festivals, and Andean music. Their constitution as a community in the city of Lima focuses on all aspects of their social, cultural, economic, and political lives, and has been influencing the city of Lima in every aspect of the city’s development (pp. 79-81).

Gamero and Zeballos (2003) reaffirm the emergent middle class come mostly from the provinces of Peru. Degregori (2005) emphasizes that they share in the goal of developing practices and strategies that will allow them to improve their living conditions and to take advantage of new possibilities. They seek to construct of their own homes, to obtain property titles, and to improve the living conditions in their communities in general, reflecting their sense of community and the lifestyle in the provinces of Peru (p. 286).

All of the non-immigrant participants in this study perceived a lack of unity among Peruvians. Regardless of their circumstances or living conditions, they all have feelings of isolation and individualization in terms of placement within Peruvian society, even as they tirelessly work to improve. Even though immigrants in New York have no say in how non-immigrants in Lima feel about the socio-economic and cultural clashes in Peru, there is a mutual understanding between immigrants and non-immigrants about their shared determination to succeed in a cohesive and progressive way, even at a distance.

**Race and Class Identity in Peru: Effects on Transnational Ties**

This section explores the influence of history and internal migration in Peru on immigrants’ and non-immigrants’ perception of class. It also explores the impact of the
attachment that immigrants have to their roots and their efforts to preserve their culture and middle class status affecting their assimilation and acculturation in New York.

Ulla and Paerragad (2005) point out that the transnational ties immigrants maintain with their families in Peru make their assimilation and integration in the foreign country more difficult. As an example, few immigrants in this study claimed that maintaining attachment to their roots or strong ties with their families in Lima had led them to experience discrimination. This is in part because maintaining strong ties or attachments not only strengthens ties with family members left behind, but is also a way to preserve and practice their Peruvian culture every day and in every way. This was indeed necessary and helpful for immigrants, especially during their first years of immigration. However, in a few cases, it isolated them and it made more difficult for them to explore, learn, and experience their new lives in New York during the first years.

A major concern has been language proficiency. Peruvian immigrants feel that not being able to speak English has isolated them, and it has in fact diminished their opportunities in New York. This isolation and their strong ties to their families have also negatively affected their economic improvement and it explains why even though there are apparent economic improvements in immigrants’ and non-immigrants’ lives after immigration, 62.5 percent of New York immigrants in this research affirm their social class status was the same after immigration.

This strong attachment to their roots explains the need to feel a sense of belonging and of their assertion of their prior, established social standard, even though their income, consumption patterns, and socio-economic behavior in general have changed significantly after immigration. This is an important finding that provides the first
indicator of middle class self-identification in this study, and it is not necessarily related to economic attainment alone. In most cases, the psychological impact after immigration creates a need to feel attached to their roots, and to what they know and trust. Immigrants certainly know what they have accomplished or improved in terms of income. Nevertheless, in this group of participants, their membership in the middle class does not necessarily connect to their economic advancement. Plaza (2007) affirms that social class structure is the conceptual and/or real expression of a society’s general structure. But a structural analysis of society is of limited utility for understanding how Peruvians experience being part of the middle-class. Social class, while shaped by structural factors, is deeply personal and class identity can only be understood by observing their social and cultural individuality within their economic structure.

The distinction between ‘gente decente’ and ‘gente de pueblo’ stated by Parker (1998) also represents the division between races in Peruvian society. In the 1908 Lima census, of 6,610 ‘empleados,’ 3,379 were white, 1,606 were mestizos, 596 were Indians, 42 were black, and 982 were Asian. ‘Gente decente’ openly discriminated against the ‘gente de pueblo’, labeling them as ‘inferior’ races (pp. 41-2). Furthermore, ‘empleados’ did not have formal contracts at work specifying their salaries or duties. Both parties understood that the employee was to serve his employer in whatever manner was required, being always available for any task, without being paid overtime (Parker, 1998).

Parker’s description of the middle class ‘empleado’—those who were not lawyers, engineers, or architects—portrays a self-identified middle class Peruvian society that still, 100 years later, reflects their submission, willingness to take jobs without contracts, and work overtime, all the while hoping that their disposition and dedication to
their jobs will not get them fired. Gamero and Zeballos (2003) maintain that the Peruvian middle class reveals a social class image adjusted to contemporary socio-economic reality. In terms of social and cultural identity, Salgado Lévano (1999) points to the lack of interaction among the Peruvian middle class and ethnic groups such as Indians, blacks, or ‘cholos’ within Peruvian communities. She explains that this indicates the racism, segregation, and marginalization that characterize social relations in Peru, adding that this indicates a lack of national identity as well. Wade (1997) adds:

… the origins of racism are located in the class relations of colonialism and the basic functions of racism remain essentially the same over time… more recent approaches have tended to move away from treating race and class ‘as two distinct sets of relations, which interconnect in some essential way’ and which are involved in some kind of mutual determination (pp. 22-4).

Moreover, “racial and ethnic identities must be seen in a national and global context, as shifting, decentered, relational constructions, subject to a politics of identity, culture and difference that encompasses gender, sexuality, religion and other cultural expressions” (p.108). These are important suggestions to keep in mind when defining social class in this study. The authors’ point of view in terms of lack of national identity among Peruvians and Latin Americans is critical to understanding an individual’s perception of their middle class. Historically, colonization in Peru and Latin America established racial differences in which whites, the caste, and ‘criollos’ were a superior race, and the only ones with the privileges to pursue education. Pajuelo and Sandoval (2004) state that this was critical in defining social relations of domination. History has indeed shaped the perception of class in Peruvians, which is reflected not only by their unique definition of class, but also by their intersecting consciousness of race and skin color. Even though Peruvian immigrants in this study live in a multicultural and
ethnically diverse society such as New York, some immigrants are reluctant to socialize, or interact with other Hispanic immigrants or Peruvian compatriots.

According to Gamero and Zeballos (2003), the effects of internal migration in Peru since the 1940s increased confrontation through the creation of new social classes in Lima and its urban areas. The concept of the creation of new social classes in a society that lacks national identity suggests the need for further analysis in this study. Pajuelo and Sandoval (2004) interconnect three notions of integration, territoriality, and centrality to explore national identity. They suggest that identity is a symbolic construction, a historical product of human kind, in which national memory plays an important role in defining identity: “it is a cultural and ideological construction, a selection, an ordering of certain memories…it is a land of disputes in which diverse conceptions of society take place” (p. 383). Social relations, however, are articulated by more extensive dominance of politics, economy and religion, in which all individuals share many components of collective consciousness. Additionally, modernity and individuality delegitimize dominant national identity. Furthermore, in countries such as Peru and Bolivia with a strong presence of indigenous populations who never integrated, the dominant national consciousness is even weaker (pp. 385-8).

Understanding the critical role of the interaction of race and class in shaping social identity is central to this study. An analysis of New York immigrants’ living conditions and interactions in New York shows that twenty-one (52.5 percent) New York participants shared living spaces with other immigrants, sacrificing privacy and comfort. These were not necessarily Peruvians, but also immigrants from other parts of the world, though mostly Hispanics (80 percent). The other nineteen (47.5 percent) of the group
lived in single-family homes enjoying comfort and privacy, with either their families or alone.

For those immigrants whose personal circumstances do not allow them to enjoy the privilege of privacy, interaction with others has proven to be difficult. Interacting with other ethnic groups has not necessarily helped them to assimilate with New Yorkers or immigrants of other ethnic backgrounds:

…two of my roommates speak Spanish, one is from Guatemala, and the other one is from El Salvador…my third roommate is from Pakistan…we normally don’t do anything together, we are all very different and we all have different schedules…Ahmed, the guy from Pakistan, he doesn’t work in construction, he works in a gas station even on the weekends, and he never talks to us…my roommate from Guatemala is okay…but I am constantly fighting with my roommate from El Salvador…he doesn’t respect us, or our privacy, and we are always fighting…I have some friends at work from other countries and from here as well, but my English is limited…it is difficult to understand people and what they do in their lives…there are differences in the food they eat, how they think, and the religions they practice…they are different from me and how I live… (Luis, personal interview, June 26, 2009).

For the fifty-two and a half percent of immigrants in this study who share living spaces, it has been difficult. In some cases, immigrants have responded by excluding themselves, rather than pushing themselves to learn and embrace new cultures.

The connection between New York immigrants and Lima non-immigrants is an important affiliation that provides a better understanding of the Peruvian social middle class in this study. According to Plaza (2007), social classes are the historic expression of inequality, linked to the modern state and industrial capitalism. Classes are defined by the positions in the productive process such as type of job and property. Current global studies suggest that family socialization and formal education play an important role in determining social classes in advanced capitalist societies. Even though Peru is not an advanced capitalist society, this suggestion connects both worlds in this study.
Immigrants and non-immigrants have individually adapted to social, cultural, and economic realities—in Lima as part of a homogenous ‘middle class’ reality, and in New York by sharing spaces and adapting in their new society, thus preserving their self-identified status. There are enormous gaps between Peru and the United States in terms of economic opportunities and socio-cultural realities. Moreover, these bifurcated realities represented by immigrants and non-immigrants are important connectors in the definition of class and identity in this study. I expand Plaza’s (2007) narrow focus on structure to include individual experience and identity in this study, arguing that a better understanding of the interaction of race, class, and identity is critical to understanding social relations in this transnational context.

**Class Perception in Peruvian Immigrants and Non-Immigrants: Samples from New York and Lima**

The resulting analysis of this group of Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants in New York and Lima sheds new light on the ideological reality of middle-class Peruvians and how they interact. Peruvians’ middle class self-identification is contradicted by their socio-economic reality. Of the eighty interviewees, forty in New York and forty in Lima, twenty-eight participants (70 percent) in New York indicated belonging to a social middle class, and thirty-two participants (80 percent) in Lima indicated the same status. These facts were derived from a preliminary questionnaire and open-ended questions given to Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants in New York and Lima during the elimination process from potential and actual interviews. In New York, part of the analysis centered on two specific questions about their social status: before coming to the United States, what social class did you belong to in Peru? Of forty
interviewees, twelve of them (30 percent) indicated they belonged to a poor working class in Lima. Twenty of them (50 percent) indicated belonging to a middle working class, and eight of them (20 percent) said they belonged to an upper middle class before coming to the United States.

Then they were asked: after moving to the United States did your or your family’s social class in Peru improve? From those twelve interviewees in New York that belonged to a poor working class in Lima, six of them (50 percent) indicated their social class in New York was the same, and the other six (50 percent) indicated their social class changed to middle class. Of those twenty participants who belonged to a middle working class in Lima, fifteen (75 percent) maintained the same class status in New York, two (10 percent) belonged to a middle class, and three (15 percent) were part of an upper middle class in New York.

Of those eight interviewees who belonged to an upper middle class in Lima, four (50 percent) indicated their social class status in New York had not changed and the remaining four (50 percent) indicated their social class status lowered to middle class. In other words, twenty-five (62.5 percent) Peruvian immigrants living in New York perceived their social status had not changed after immigration; only eleven (27.5 percent) perceived their social status had improved, and four (10 percent) perceived their social status had lowered after immigration. Certainly, these results are the perceptions of immigrants facing specific social status changes after immigration, specifically due to how they feel about changes in their residence, job performance, and social environment, among other indicators.
In New York for example, twenty-three (57.5 percent) participants invited me to their homes for the interview. This was an opportunity for me to observe and compare their intrinsic perceptions to their living conditions. The neighborhoods visited for interviews in the state of New York were diverse and included a total of twenty-eight different neighborhoods in Long Island (27.5 percent), Queens (22.5 percent), Manhattan (17.5 percent), Westchester County (25 percent), and the Mid-Hudson Region (7.5 percent). In general terms, it is difficult to specify or assign immigrants a social class membership due to their area of residence in New York. According to Duncan (1974), social indicators involve functions that cannot be performed by any system of indicators alone. In this research, Peruvian immigrants’ residence in New York is a great example of how they cannot be identified as members of a middle class even though their domicile in New York places them in a middle class neighborhood. In most cases, there are additional indicators such as how they share their home with other families, money expenditure, income, priorities, or social behavior that impedes a singular or narrow definition and categorization in terms of class membership. Of those 40 immigrants living in New York, all of them shared living spaces with families or other immigrants in New York after arrival, and 45 percent of them were still sharing living spaces with other immigrants in New York at the moment of the interview. While 55 percent of them have enough economic resources to live independently, their independence is not necessarily due to an improved economic situation, but to the changes in their marital status, personal preferences, and the need for a change, among other reasons.

It is worth noting for the New York immigrants in this study, their living conditions in terms of comfort and privacy are also associated with secure jobs, higher
educational levels, and documented immigration status. Also, Peruvians’ middle class self-identifying status is associated with privileges before immigration. These privileges are mostly observed in the domestic help most Peruvians have in their Lima households. Besides family helping other members of the family, Peruvians can enjoy very affordable help at home to raise their children and perform all chores inside their households. This gives Peruvians the opportunity to share more time with family and friends, especially over the weekends. Changes affecting Peruvian immigrants’ lives in New York can be significant depending on their adjustment processes; however, comfort or help at home is no longer a priority. Peruvians are focused on finding and maintaining a job to secure remittances, improve their education, and obtain documentation to work if they have not yet obtained it. Even though there were not specific questions about immigrants’ status in my questionnaires, most participants voluntarily revealed their legal status when they narrated their experiences about coming to the United States.

Participant observation allows for the description of a complicated group of non-immigrant participants with different economic, social, and cultural profiles. Their commercial activities and the prestige that comes with them rely in part on a historical context that includes unresolved frustrations among those who migrated to the capital in search of new and better opportunities, and a series of governments that were perceived as abandoning the population and failing to alleviate poverty. This was evident in every single immigrant participant I interviewed, each of whom had come to the conclusion before emigrating that this context of failure, poverty, and abandonment forced them to seek a change. They faced nonexistent possibilities in Lima, and fought to create new opportunities, giving up the stability—including psychological stability—that comes with
the comfort of having friends and families as a network of support. In all cases, frustration due to non-existent possibilities in the labor market in Lima has been the greatest motivator for immigration, as they have sought economic alternatives to achieve success, which they defined as the realization of their aspirations for a better life for them and their families left behind. The following statements exemplify immigrants’ collective frustration due to lack of possibilities in the Peruvian labor market:

**Interviewer**: …What would have been needed for you to stay in Peru?

**Maritza**: …and what I would have needed to stay in Lima? Hum, that’s a very difficult question because I needed a job, but not just a job, I needed a job with a real salary… I was working twelve hours a day as a secretary and I was making around US$232 a month… there is no way to pay for bills or help at home with an income like that… I didn’t even have children… it was so frustrating, and you start thinking when is this going to get better? Then you realize it is never going to get better, so you start looking for alternatives (personal interview, April 10, 2010).

**Alfredo O.**: I was hesitant to come to New York…I think I was really afraid not knowing what I would find here, and if everything people talk about coming to New York was true…I spent the last nine months in Lima without a job…I have a technical degree in science and I worked at a laboratory… when I had a job, the hours were long, and the salary wasn’t even enough for me alone… I made about US$190 a month… I needed a change because I felt so frustrated and miserable that I couldn’t stand my situation anymore… I tried very hard to stay in Lima, but there aren’t opportunities to earn money and take care of you and your family… my family supported me economically, my mother didn’t want me to leave, but what other options did I have in Lima? I am working in housekeeping now, doing something I didn’t expect to do, but it is a job, and I can take care of my family now… If I had the opportunity in Lima, I would have stayed, but I think it is better to think in the future now (personal interview, February 20, 2010).

**Gabriela**: I went to law school in Lima and I graduated as a lawyer…the best possible education my parents could give me and I ended up like the rest of professionals in Peru, unemployed… having a good apparent life in Peruvian society, but in reality my family was about to lose the house. My father couldn’t make the mortgage payments anymore. He always gave us the best, and he was so embarrassed and sad to go through this situation… I needed a plan to help him keep the house… coming to New York was a tough decision. No one in my family wanted me to come to New York because I was a girl and it was very dangerous… I saw the opportunity and I made arrangements with a friend who
was living in New York, and he helped me...at that moment I felt that I didn’t have any other choice, and I was right...my parents were devastated with the news but I was determined...there was nothing to do in Lima, except seeing my parents’ whole life investment disappear...what I needed to stay in Lima was beyond realistic possibilities (personal interview, July 26, 2010).

**Javier:** after studying architecture, I enrolled in professional international projects, which helped me end up living in Canada...coming to New York from Canada was easier...Staying in Lima after graduation wasn’t in my plans...there was no way for me to grow professionally as an architect, and that is the reason why I considered emigration...there were also personal changes I wanted to make in addition to poor possibilities in the labor market and professional development (personal interview, August 15, 2009).

Gamero and Zeballos (2003) examine the Peruvian middle class and affirm that clearly not all Peruvians who claim a middle class status belong to it. The authors suggest that the Peruvian middle class and globalized middle classes are difficult to understand if the focus for its definition remains on consumption, income, credit access, or other more traditional criteria such as education and status. In order to transnationalize our understanding of the Peruvian middle class and attempt a definition, this study has two interactive facets: immigrants in New York and non-immigrants in Lima. Immigrants in New York provided information to contact non-immigrant family-member participants in Lima. Visiting non-immigrants in their homes served as a participant observation of their social class self-identification, through the evaluation of their environment and social behavior.

These results were interesting considering the different social indicators in each of their households. Half of those who indicated that they belonged to the middle class appeared to have poor socio-economic profiles, suggesting the need to develop a more thorough analysis based on their lifestyle and experiences at home. Observation and analysis further complicates the definition of the Peruvian middle class. Additionally, a
total of forty-five percent of non-immigrant participants lived in the districts or neighborhoods of Villa María del Triunfo, Los Olivos, San Juan de Miraflores, Provincia Constitucional del Callao, Villa el Salvador, San Martín de Porres, San Juan de Lurigancho, and Chorrillos. These neighborhoods are among the most populated in Lima, and also have a concentration of homes where the majority of houses are deficient. In other words, these neighborhoods include lower-class barrios.

The Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática - Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (INEI-ENAHO Peru), states that, in 2007, there were 385,411 deficient houses in Lima and 45,530 in Callao. A deficient house is determined by the lack of specific amenities in the home, as well as by other factors such as the amount of people living in the house, the quality of the house according to its structure and materials used in its construction, and access to public water, electricity, and the sewer system (INEI-ENAHO Peru, 2007).

In 2007 in Peru, 45.5 percent of deficient homes were located in urban areas, and 54.5 percent in rural ones. Deficiencies in urban homes primarily are related to deficient wall construction and overcrowding in the house, with more than three people sharing the same room, excluding areas such as the garage, kitchen, and bathroom. Rural deficiencies are also related to overcrowded living areas as well as to the lack of basic public water, electricity, and sewer services (INEI-ENAHO, 2007). In this study, all participants’ houses were located in urban areas; however, twenty-three (57.5 percent) participants were living in deficient houses at the time of the interview. As a result, it is necessary to keep in mind that 45.5 percent of deficient houses are located in urban areas including those neighborhoods where most of the interviews took place in Lima: Villa María del
Triunfo, Los Olivos, San Juan de Miraflores, Provincia Constitucional del Callao, Villa el Salvador, San Martín de Porres, San Juan de Lurigancho, and Chorrillos.

This reality suggests a broader view and understanding of a middle class definition in this study. On the one hand, some neighborhoods in Lima clearly reflect an individual’s class status; on the other hand, it complicates the definition of the middle class when additional social indicators such as living conditions and social, economic, and cultural behavior are considered. Ansión et al. (2008) emphasize the effects of immigration on the social development of non-immigrants, suggesting the necessity to better understand the conditions in which families live after immigration. For the authors, it is not only about economic improvement, but also social changes affecting the households and their members. This concept serves as a point of departure for my analysis, which focuses especially on the way non-immigrants interpret their experiences before and after immigration. To be more specific, apparent class status, as judged by their homes, does not reveal much about the way in which participants interact in society, especially when social behavior is affected by international immigration, and its consequences and impact on their lives in general.

Immigrants in this study came to New York with a perception of what their social status was when they lived in Lima. As noted, when talking about their class status in general, eighty percent of interviewed immigrant participants believed they belonged to a middle class while living in Lima. This self-identification was reflected in part by the fact that after arriving in New York, they felt their class status would automatically improve, but also because they continued to identify with Lima. In all cases and statements, self-identity was shaped not only by moving to a developed country, but by their hopeful
belief that their economic situation would improve by having a job; they were confident that they would surpass their previous, sometimes non-existent earnings in Lima, and that they would be able to send money back and take care of their families in Lima.

Regardless whether this aspiration was fulfilled, and whether immigrants got a job immediately after arriving in New York or not, the effects of immigration were apparent in all areas of their socio-economic and cultural lives.

Immigrants’ blind certainty about their ability to access new and improved opportunities reflects the singular determination that immigrants have to improve their lives. This is evidenced in this study by the fact that, in order to produce money, immigrants are willing to take any job regardless of the physical activity the job requires.

Many scholars in Lima have examined the labor market in Peru. For example, Rodríguez-Cuba (1995) examines changes in the labor market in order to develop political proposals geared toward improving working conditions and the lives of employees and their families in Peru. The author addresses the problem of Peruvian unemployment, seeing links between the poor Peruvian educational system and the weak labor market. He concludes that the educational system in Peru has very little or no value. In other words, post-secondary education does not guarantee a job in chosen areas of specialization, or a contractual job with benefits. This problem was experienced by one hundred percent of interviewed educated immigrants, all of whom were unable to find a job where they could apply their knowledge, training, or specialization in Lima; they had experienced first-hand the complicated relation between educational and economic systems in Peru. Educated immigrants who moved to New York to improve their economic situation in this study have also found themselves working as what Parker (1998) would define in
Lima as ‘obreros’, rather than ‘empleados’. The critical disconnect between the Peruvian educational system and the labor market in Lima is visible through the improvisation of job-related activities. Unemployed professionals such as engineers, architects, teachers, and economists, among others, create their own opportunities as taxi-drivers if they own a car, or security agents at night if they had some military training, among other jobs. In most cases, active unemployed professionals start their own business as entrepreneurs in the informal job market.

By contrast, many of these same workers would not take jobs in Lima that did not reflect either their accumulated prestige or experience in at least a supervisory position. They would not take jobs working in restaurants as servers, or in offices as office clerks or messengers. Of twenty-three (57.5 percent) immigrants who held jobs in Lima in corporate offices, the government, or organizations in this study, two (5 percent) had high school diplomas; twelve (30 percent) had some technical studies or a technical degree; seven (17.5 percent) had some college studies or a college degree; and two (5 percent) had education beyond college. After immigration to New York, of those twenty-three immigrants who maintained professional jobs in Lima, six (26 percent) were working as housekeepers, manicurists, or in restaurants as helpers or cooks at the time of the interview.

These findings suggest that changes in job activities were possible in a different economy. In Lima, working as housekeepers, manicurists, or as restaurant help would not maintain a household or pay most of the household bills. None of the immigrants expressed disappointment about changes in their labor activities in New York at the moment of the interview. Despite the socio-economic effects of immigration, immigrants
in New York continue to identify as middle class Peruvians. Performing unskilled jobs in New York was not a loss of prestige for Peruvian immigrants. In all cases, they expressed feelings of personal accomplishment and pride to be in New York. Nonetheless, they did express anguish and preoccupation for the continued and progressive lack of jobs in New York. In other words, for at least 15 percent of immigrants in this study, there was no other objective in New York than producing money, taking any available opportunity in the labor market. A lack of opportunities in the labor market in Lima continues to drain not only ‘brains,’ but the possibility to count on trained citizens who can help in a growing economy, and whose only option for personal improvement is seen abroad. Peruvian immigrants’ ideas of class remain situated within the national setting of Peru, and not the United States. Therefore, in the Peruvian case, money ameliorates the loss of prestige associated with the unskilled jobs they perform in New York.

The definition of the Peruvian middle class in this dissertation relies in part on the veracity of Peruvians’ lifestyle—not only as a result of a questionnaire and an interview, but most importantly through observation of their living environment, their socio-economic activities in general, and social behavior. Additional to these results is a preliminary profile that is still subject to participants’ own perception of their social status and authentic economic changes due to remittances received in non-immigrants’ households. Their personal attributions of social status versus their reality is also analyzed and challenged by social standards and definitions established by the Peruvian government. Immigrants’ and non-immigrants’ perceptions of social class being in New York or Lima are complicated, and profoundly shaped by the experiences associated with international migration and living in across-cultural context.
It is also necessary to compare and evaluate the immediate changes in immigrants’ socio-economic status after immigration, specifically changes in job performance and how they adjust in the U.S. labor system, especially when changes are challenging due to language limitations, employment opportunities, and social interaction in New York. Massey et al. (1993) define social labeling in receiving societies and explain: “once immigrants have been recruited into particular occupations in significant numbers, those jobs become culturally labeled as ‘immigrant jobs’ and native workers are reluctant to fill them” (p. 453).

This point is demonstrated by the fact that those Peruvian immigrants in this study who came to New York without a job offer knew beforehand what opportunities were available, and they focused their job search in areas labeled as ‘immigrant jobs’ and in industrial or commercial areas where they felt they could best find an opportunity. Indeed, in this study, only five (12.5 percent) immigrants came to New York with work or student visas, and thirty-five (87.5 percent) ventured into the ‘immigrant job’ market at their arrival, taking jobs as service industry employees. Added to this reality is the fact that only seven (17.5 percent) of those thirty-five (17.5 percent) who ventured into the ‘immigrant job’ market spoke basic or moderate English at their arrival in New York.

Eighty percent of non-immigrant Lima participants in this study claimed a middle class status. There are indeed clear differences between neighborhoods such as San Isidro and Villa Maria del Triunfo in Lima for example. Both are districts and include defined differences in terms of population, building structures, security, and appearance in general. Notably, Villa Maria del Triunfo is an emergent middle class district, where the population increased due to invasion, mostly of immigrants from different regions of
Peru to the city of Lima, and includes a variety of buildings and neighborhoods. These are the predominant neighborhoods where the majority of Peruvian middle class participants in this study lived at the moment of the interview.

Toche (2005) suggests that noticeable economic needs in Peruvian neighboring families are those that can be recognized and generalized in the same streets, neighborhoods, and districts: “in the same street there are professionals or people with low salary, but secured jobs, while there are others that live selling recycled products or doing laundry for somebody else… or looking for temporary jobs in whatever they can find” (p. 277). For the authors, the same differentiation existed when it came to housing where there were visible houses with several stories and proper construction materials and others made of straw in the same street.

Significantly, when non-immigrant participants expressed their reasons why they considered themselves middle class, participants included some of the following responses:

**Interviewer:** What social class do you belong to? And why?

**Lucio:** Middle Class. Because I have everything… if we look at our economy in the household, we are middle class, we eat well compared to other people, and we live in a decent neighborhood (personal interview, July 19, 2010).

**Tanya:** We are middle class because we are not poor, but we are not rich either (personal interview, June 28, 2010).

**Rosa:** We are middle class because we eat well, we have an income, it is a low income, but we have it, and that’s what makes me and my family middle class in this country (personal interview, July 1, 2010).

**Jorge:** We belong to the middle class because we are educated, even though we don’t have steady jobs, my wife and I have an education, and we live decently. I think that’s the most important to consider in defining your social class (personal interview, July 5, 2010).
Zoila: We are middle class because we own our home...poor people do not own homes, and we do (personal interview, July 6, 2010).

Tomás: We are middle class because we live in a decent home, and we have a decent life (personal interview, July 15, 2010).

Mariela: We are middle class. We have a business, my parents and I live a good decent life thanks to my sister who works in New York (personal interview, June 25, 2010).

Interestingly, none of the non-immigrants with well-constructed houses or apartments connected their perception of class to the appearance or the construction materials used in their houses, nor did they connect their perception to their specific neighborhood if it was one of those including most middle class populations in Lima. They did not express specific amounts of income or combined factors that would convey an assertive knowledge of the definition of the middle class. Middle class membership for Lima respondents in this study is defined by having one or two areas where they sense that their lives are improved in terms of their experiences and where their needs are satisfied. As an example, there are educated participants who consider themselves to be middle-class but who are living in buildings or apartments lacking walls or basic electrical, public water, or sewer systems; other profiles include non-immigrants who have a job, but the salary does not cover basic needs at home; they are entrepreneurs, but their business does not produce enough to sustain their families, among other examples.

Participants in Lima seem to understand the definition of the middle class and what applies to it. Any of their reasons given would make us agree that they more likely belong to a middle class. Nevertheless, only twenty (50 percent) of the interviewed non-immigrant Peruvians who self-identified themselves as middle class lived in homes with proper construction materials, public water, electricity, a sewer system, and enough living
areas for all of their family members. The other fifty percent lived in overcrowded homes; some of them lived in unfinished homes, without connection to a sewer system, electricity, or water in their buildings. But having the basic middle class needs satisfied was not a decisive factor when self-defining their social class status.

Curiously, while non-immigrant participants might not have a steady job, walls in their homes, or education, their children attend local private schools. These are not necessarily prestigious schools, but they are private. Immigrants and non-immigrants expressed their trust in the private Peruvian educational system. One hundred percent of non-immigrant participants with children sent their children to private schools. They felt that sending their children to private schools in Lima would bring better opportunities for the children’s futures, even though their children do not socialize with people outside their own neighborhoods or interact in spaces other than their own neighborhoods. In other words, all participants receiving remittances and living in poor districts share their social, cultural, and economic interaction within their own neighborhoods, and attend local schools, academies, or institutes. Living and socializing in poor districts albeit with economic improvement through remittances reflects how immigrants and non-immigrants’ limited aspirations have effects on their definition of class.

In addition to their middle class self-identification and activities, eight (20 percent) of the non-immigrant participants—7 female and 1 male—had small informal businesses at the time of the interview. These informal businesses were mostly dedicated to re-selling different products that non-immigrants buy in bigger quantities and sell to the public in small units with a profitable margin. These products include but are not limited to cleaning items, clothing, cosmetics, shoes, underwear, candies, cigarettes,
groceries, flowers, handicrafts, and prepared foods. Earnings are not substantial for each product. In most cases, it is only cents of Soles that they earn. However, if this is their only job, they spend most of their daily time, about ten or twelve hours in the kiosks or the streets of Lima selling those products. At the end of the day, it is a profitable business for them, maybe not be well remunerated for the time and effort involved, but it is a steady, reliable income.

Even when these entrepreneurs have to stand in the streets of Lima or go on public buses to offer their products, there is always a sense of pride in what they do. This was stated by one hundred percent of participants with small businesses who perform these jobs. I also had the opportunity to observe this while taking public transportation and interacting with some of these vendors in Lima. They have a job, there is a market for their products, they offer competitive prices, and they are helping with, or sustaining the economy in their households. The increase of informal markets in Lima is related to Peru’s socio-economic problems, especially the lack of jobs in the Peruvian labor market during the last decades. Exploitation and the nonexistence of contractual jobs with basic benefits in the Peruvian labor market have induced the emergent middle classes to start businesses as new entrepreneurs (Plaza, 2007; Gamero & Zeballos, 2003; Matos-Mar, 2003).

Another influencing factor on the growing informal market in Lima is the lack of support from financial institutions. There are very few or no institutions that provide loans without documentation of collateral or paycheck stubs. Considering the reality of the Peruvian labor market during the last decades, there are more possibilities for
Peruvian entrepreneurs to enter the informal economic sector with minimum capital for investment—in many cases obtained through family members or friends.

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the effects of remittances on Peruvian households. These results will be detailed in Chapter 4 and will be based on the current profile of Peruvian non-immigrants in Lima and how remittances affect them in the social, economic, and cultural spheres. Research questions in this dissertation include the connection between the use of remittances in Lima, the alleviation of poverty, and the use of remittances for the continuation of a middle class status. In terms of using remittances to continue an established middle class status in Lima, there are several social activities supported by remittances in Lima households. For one hundred percent of non-immigrant participants, remittance money has allowed them to increase or initiate for the first time social activities in non-immigrant receiving households. Social activities include but are not limited to participating in religious celebrations such as saints’ processions, vacation trips within Peru, and going out to restaurants and movie theatres more frequently with friends and family, among other activities.

Panfichi (2007) suggests that remittances help assimilate negative external economic impacts, in part because they are relatively stable even during recession periods (p. 163). Help assimilating negative economic impacts could describe a temporary solution to negative economic periods, and it certainly does not mean poverty eradication in this study. Furthermore, none of the non-immigrant participants have shown or expressed the tendency to use remittance money for basic needs only or as the sole income in the household. In all cases in this study, remittance money alleviates their household needs and it is basically assigned to improve their living conditions:
…Gaby sends money for my mom. She really doesn’t need anything. But it is good for my mom to have extra money, and spend it in what she wants… (Carmen D., personal interview, June 29, 2010).

…I have my own business…I am sixty-three years old and I am strong enough to work…what my daughter sends is what I use in an emergency, or to buy a new appliance at home…it gives me freedom and peace of mind, but I wouldn’t say that I depend on that money to eat… (Lucia, personal interview, June 26, 2010).

…my daughter sends money for the housekeeper, so I have somebody cooking and cleaning for me…I have my retirement compensation, I own my home, and I really don’t need much money to live, so I use my daughter’s money for birthday parties in the family, or to take my grandchildren to the movies, or eating out at Kentucky Fried Chicken or Pizza Hut… (Zoila, personal interview, July 5, 2010).

This does not diminish the importance of remittance money in non-immigrant households, but rather establishes a factual difference between poverty eradication and poverty alleviation in this study. In other words, poverty alleviation is a more accurate terminology when defining the effects of remittances on Peruvian households in this study.

In addition to the lack of educational and job opportunities and the critical national identity crisis in Peru, there is a cultural crisis that has developed due to the effects of international immigration noted in these studies. Middle class self-identified immigrants and non-immigrants’ cultural behavior after immigration provides a particular insight in this regard. Eleven (27.5 percent) non-immigrant participants maintained they did not feel American culture has influenced their lives.

However, after their family member immigrated, they became interested in watching the news from New York, especially politics and the weather. Thirteen (32.5 percent) non-immigrants maintained that having family members living in New York motivated them to learn English, and especially immigrants’ children of all ages have a great deal of interest learning the language and practicing it with the immigrant when
they communicate. In some cases, parents of children in Lima affirmed that their children speak English better than their parents in New York. Immigrants have expressed their interest in supporting their children in future immigration plans. Also, as an intercultural interchange, immigrants support the use of technology, music, and reading materials in English.

Three (7.5 percent) non-immigrants expressed their dislike for American culture in general and for thirteen (32.5 percent) non-immigrants, nothing has culturally changed or influenced them since their family member emigrated. While participants in Lima focused their answers about the effects of U.S. culture on the news and what happens in the towns or cities where their family members are, the improvements in technology, and the desire to learn English, immigrants in New York focused their answers on celebrating Peruvian holidays, how much or little they practice their religion, how much they miss and try to cook Peruvian food, the necessity of speaking Spanish at home, as well as listening to Hispanic music, and watching TV in Spanish.

In this study, eight (20 percent) immigrant participants did not practice Peruvian tradition or culture at home on a regular basis. They had diverse reasons, but the most important for them was the need and desire to learn English. They stated that they now live in the United States and they want to improve their living conditions. There is a general perception in this group that speaking Spanish most of their time will lower their possibilities in the labor market, in the new labor market, and in New York in general. Speaking Spanish for this group of participants means interacting in a closed, limited community of Hispanics or Peruvians where possibilities are either scarce or the same as if they were still in Peru.
In three cases within this group, Peruvians believed that socializing with other Peruvians is “expensive” because “Peruvians like to drink and eat” and that “money spent in social activities can go to their families in Lima,” notably, not to improve immigrants’ living conditions in New York. They also expressed that Peruvians behave in New York as they did in Lima, drinking and celebrating over the weekends instead of working, and taking the opportunities they now have in New York very lightly. These three participants expressed their embarrassment when dealing with other ethnic groups, saying that it is a shame that Peruvians have to be seen that way. It is interesting to point out some of these comments considering that twelve (30 percent) immigrants have expressed their lack of connection and solidarity with other Peruvians in New York in their interviews. They also expressed that some Peruvians in New York do not have the will to be better citizens, refusing to learn English if they can get away with it, and interacting only with Hispanics. Additionally, they seclude themselves and live in crowded homes, and insist on speaking Spanish even when people cannot understand what they are saying.

Immigrants who criticized their Peruvian compatriots added that they prefer to avoid socializing with Peruvians who are not willing to improve in this country, or those whose behavior will affect their reputation, expressing a sense of shame by being related to them. Indeed, the cultural clash continues to exist not only in Lima, but also among Peruvians abroad. Regardless of geographical location, Peruvians in this study clearly identify the importance of maintaining certain societal rules pertaining to their appearance and social behavior, and they remain absolutely certain that their interaction and social behavior with others will affect their social status.
Unlike those eight Peruvian immigrants who do not maintain their Peruvian
traditions at home, thirty-two (80 percent) strongly believe that maintaining their
Peruvian culture and traditions is a way of living a better life in New York. They affirm
that they feel less lonely by maintaining their traditions, and compared their practices at
home with those they used to practice when they were in Lima. They eat Peruvian food at
home or at Peruvian restaurants, listen to folk Peruvian music in Spanish, watch Peruvian
and Hispanic TV channels, celebrate independence and religious holidays, teach their
children about Peruvian culture and folklore. They practice Catholicism or Christianity at
home, but interestingly, only twenty of those thirty-two go to church or attend a Sunday
mass regularly. Some of the reasons cited for not keeping up with their religious
practices, or being part of their church community were excessive hours of work; a lack
of services in Spanish, or that life in the United States had simply changed them.

This change is attributed to the necessity to work as many hours as possible in
order to fulfill their economic responsibilities at home in Peru, and it is certain that for
some immigrants, social responsibilities or the need for socio-cultural interaction are not
a priority anymore. Additionally, of those thirty-two immigrants practicing their Peruvian
culture at home, only twenty participants spoke Spanish as their primary language at
home with their family or friends. The other twelve immigrants used Spanish only when
they socialized with Peruvians or Hispanics, but they use English on regular basis as their
main language at home.

The definition of the Peruvian middle class is observed in two different groups in
this study. The first group included twenty (50 percent) non-immigrants with a socio-
economic status that reflects a transparent middle class membership in Peru. They live in
adequate homes, have steady incomes that are above poverty levels, and are educated. They received remittances to support their already pleasant living conditions, and spend their remittance money on social activities rather than basic household needs. In other words, those twenty non-immigrants (a full 50 percent) receive remittances to maintain their lifestyle, rather than for subsistence.

For the second group of self-identified non-immigrant Peruvians, middle class involves specific socio-economic ideas, aspirations, attitudes, and behaviors, rather than a socio-economic status. This group of Peruvians do not exclude themselves from the middle class just because they do not have a steady income and education, or live in a middle-class neighborhood. Their self-identification as middle class Peruvians is mostly characterized by their strong determination to succeed—a determination that could not be fulfilled if they stayed in Peru.

Difficult circumstances due to economic problems at home—the risk of losing social status, becoming poorer, an absence of ways to improve their circumstances—were the primary drivers of the decision to emigrate. Immigrants and non-immigrants faced relationship problems before immigration, with 100 percent of participants experiencing signs of personal unhappiness before immigration. In most of these cases, immigration has helped to improve or make their relationships stronger; in others, relationships have turned into businesses, where money and its remission are the only topics of conversation between immigrants and non-immigrants. It is relevant to observe that there are nine married couples that expressed having relationship issues even before migration took place; wives and husbands did not communicate frequently, and it is only their children who speak with the parent abroad, by telephone or the Internet.
In this study, the matrimonial institution confirms an important part of those social standards that immigrants and non-immigrants hold on to as one of their most important assets. Regardless of their personal situation and how damaged their relationship is, married immigrants and non-immigrants with relationship issues do not consider divorce as an option. From this particular group of nine married couples, either the immigrant in New York or the non-immigrant in Lima expressed relief and satisfaction to be separated from their partners due to immigration. This is the Martínez’s case, as an example:

It was a nightmare in Lima; I was working at the fruit market, but you know how it is. Now I am here, I don’t even make enough. The economic crisis in this country is killing me… maybe you can tell her how my situation is when you see her, so she doesn’t ask me for more money… I have to work in different places to get by, and I have to live here too… come back to Peru? No, no way I am coming back, for what? (José Martínez, personal interview, June 12, 2009).

In Lima, his wife Andrea was happy to hear that I met her husband and that he had contacted her to schedule the interview with me, showing an unusual excitement to be part of my project. I could later read that Andrea was happy to hear about her husband. However, only a few minutes after we met, Andrea expressed her disappointment about her husband, who was not sending her enough money for her and the children.

We had an agreement. I need to finish this house for my children, look how we live. I am so disappointed about the money, I have loans to still pay for his trip, and he doesn’t care. He has been sending money to his family to organize parties, hiring musicians, being the godfather of the virgin in our community. All this is being done behind my back with his mother and sister. He knows we don’t have the money. He sends $200 a month, and $100 is to pay his loans for the trip, and $100 for my kids to eat. The kids have so many needs… My son already finished high school, and he wants to be a Marine…José just keeps ignoring them… But, you know, I am very happy that he is not here with us. He cheated on me so many times… he physically abused me and the children when he was here, he drank every day, spending every sol he had, depriving my children of everything… now, I don’t have to worry… I work very hard for my children in my business, but I prefer this than having him around us again. I don’t even want to remember
those horrible days, and I pray to God every day that he is not caught, and stays in New York (Andrea Martínez, personal interview, July 24, 2010).

In analyzing the situation of the Martínez family, José and Andrea were living in a difficult situation before immigration for several reasons. The lack of money was not the only issue. They have two children, a sixteen-year-old boy, and a six-year-old girl. They both agreed that their economic situation in Lima before immigration required immediate action.

Andrea was not convinced that José would pursue the trip as a solution, so she decided to obtain all the connections, money, and papers to get her husband on his way to New York. There was not a clear motivation for José to leave Lima, since his life was apparently fine and comfortable. He was living, as he stated, as a middle-class man; he had food on the table, he had his family with him, but his job was temporary, and he was not making enough money. This situation was sustainable only because his wife Andrea was working to maintain the family. Andrea also had her sister to help her and her children.

José has been in New York for three years and he sends $100 a month for his children. This money does not make much difference in Andrea’s household. She continues to struggle on her own to support her children, educating them the best she can. Interestingly, Andrea expressed pride in being the wife of an immigrant who is in New York, sending her and her children money. It is known that the amount of money Andrea receives is not significant in her household, and we also observed that there is a clear disconnection between husband and wife, but notably there is interest in preserving appearances. In addition to their joint commitment to “keep up appearances,” the Martínezes also are both genuinely committed to improving the lives of their children.
Middle-class membership for twelve (30 percent) non-immigrants—excluding those self-identified as low-middle class, poor, normal, and upper-middle class—is an assumption that comes from the idea of having a decent life. This is a life that is reflected in having good manners, being well groomed, having food on your table, having some sort of income, sending your children to private schools, and being as educated as possible. In other words, as Salgado-Lévano (1999) suggests, to be middle class is to be ‘well regarded.’ What does being well regarded really involve? In this entire group of participants, there is a collective perception that there are no socio-economic barriers to being part of middle class society, but only the will to bring stability into their homes through continual improvement. The meaning of middle class for non-immigrant participants relies on aspirations and perceptions that do not include economic achievement.

Interestingly, in Lima, there is a common belief among all the participants in this study that middle class is an inherited collective status. This is sustained by the reality in which non-immigrant Peruvians live, and frequently is reinforced by assertions that while Peru is not a rich, powerful country, nor is it the poorest in the world. The association between class and money is less active than the association of class and culture in this study. This group of Peruvian middle class citizens seemed to experience a near constant level of frustration and limitation—not only struggling to find their identity and physical space in Peruvian society, but also to maintain a certain economic status and to emulate the behavior of what they see as the standard for ‘gente decente’. This constant struggle was the basis for Parker’s (1998) definition of the Peruvian middle class as the “suffering middle class” (p. 95).
The topic of how non-immigrants’ personal economy changed before and after immigration and the effects of remittances in Peruvian households is developed in detail in Chapter 4. It is important to point out here that fifteen (37.5 percent) non-immigrants attest that their economic situation at home after immigration is the same as it was before. The significance of this finding is that for those middle class participants, there are no evident economic changes in their households; they were middle class before receiving remittances and they are middle class after receiving remittances. It is clear that not all of them belong to a middle class status per se, and even with their economic, cultural, and social connection with immigrants in New York their perception of class has not changed.

There is a group of non-immigrants who do not acknowledge that the money received from New York makes a difference in their households. This is contradictory because it is evident that even though in the majority of non-immigrants’ households remittances are not the principal income, it still is a reliable, and as they claim, necessary source for the alleviation of economic distress, and its discontinuation would substantially affect non-immigrants more than economically. Due to remittances, non-immigrants have improved their lifestyle, and once this has occurred, it became a norm. According to Schultze-Rhonhof (2006), the effects of globalization generate wealth through international immigration. The author suggests that Peruvian immigration to the north involves the possibility to solve not only immigrants and non-immigrants’ economic problems, but also conflicts of inequality and social exclusion. For a large group of non-immigrant participants in this study, immigration is still a process difficult to understand. The reality is that generating wealth is not automatic after immigration and
signs of solutions to any of their economic, socio-inequalities, or exclusion are persistent issues in Peru and abroad.

It is evident that a large group of participants in this study lack a middle class membership. Their affiliation to a middle class status is questionable due to their socio-economic profiles. Thus, defining the Peruvian middle class involves dealing with contradictory social indicators and cultural factors. The Peruvian middle class in this group of study is, in general, an emergent social class, a popular class, or a ‘regular’ class as Tanya, a participant in Lima, identified her social class. It is a class that did not exist in Peru before the 1960s, and the main reason that its members define themselves as middle class is their vigorous and determined will to succeed. There are no signs or findings that this group of participants follows a structured profile as a whole. They are all different in terms of their individual economy, culture, and social behavior. All are middle class by self-identification and even though some authors propose a lower- or upper-middle class definition in order to more clearly differentiate between them, this group does not identify itself as anything else but ‘a middle class’—the class they learned to emulate, the class that is neither the upper nor the lower class.
CHAPTER 3—PERUVIAN MIGRATION TO NEW YORK: A “TEMPORARY” LIFE

Chapter 3 analyzes the ways in which international immigration and its process have shaped the lives of participating Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants. This chapter is divided in five sections. These sections explore immigrants’ expectations and socio-economic changes in New York. It analyzes immigrants’ participation in the labor market, the use and value of their education, and their determination to accumulate wealth. It also illustrates immigrants’ experiences, in which immigrants live by choice a life style that reflects their temporary situation in New York. It explores the effects of immigration on immigrants’ quality of life, as well as their decisions about economic investments for emigration, including the use of irregular methods for emigration and their consequences, which exemplify the determination immigrants have to take their journeys. The last two sections and subsections explore the advantages and disadvantages of social networks, both those encountered in New York and those maintained with family members in Lima. It also illustrates immigrants’ skills and education before and after immigration, and how those skills contribute to their opportunities in New York. Finally, this chapter analyzes Peru’s socio-economic conditions as an influential factor for international migration, and how diverse circumstances affect immigrants’ idea of living a “temporary” life in New York.

Peruvian International Migration: Behind the Dreams, Causes, and Motivations

Altamirano (2000) suggests that Peruvian immigrants abroad maintain positive expectations about international destinations where they can improve personal, social, and family wellbeing. These expectations confirm their beliefs about the nonexistence of
possibilities to attain success in Peru, and encourages immigrants to think that immigration will instantly improve their financial situation. The idea of immigration as a dream and an opportunity for a new life are the strongest motivators for international immigration, and are shared by all Peruvian immigrants in this study:

…I was a student before coming to New York…I am now working in a restaurant and I am making money to sustain myself, help my dad in Lima, and continue my education here in New York…I always dreamed about a better life when I was in Lima, but I just didn’t know if it was possible (David, personal interview, August 8, 2009).

I was working in Lima selling electronic machines…I knew something had to change that reality because I always wanted something different and better…I needed to take the chance for a better life for me and my family…and I did it (Roxana D., personal interview, September 13, 2009).

However, immigrants’ experiences in the labor system in New York reflect acculturation conflicts and provide specific examples on how these conflicts can create issues between immigrants in New York and non-immigrants in Lima, which in turn distorts the idea of immigration as a dream come true. It also exemplifies Peruvian immigrants’ skills and how immigrants apply those skills in the New York labor system, the value of previous education in Peru, and personal development in the U.S. labor market. Finally, it considers the transfer of learned skills and education to non-immigrants in Peru as a way to improve or maintain their class status.

Peru’s political and economic crisis of the 1980s and early 1990s generated massive emigration. A lack of jobs and political instability were major factors encouraging international immigration during those decades, especially to the United States. The most recent Peruvian immigration phase extends from the 1990s through today (Altamirano, 2000; Panfichi, 2007; Torres-Zorrilla, 2006). The nineties represent a decade of Peruvian political and economic stabilization and recovery; however,
Peruvians continued to emigrate internationally and at considerable volumes during the following decades.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), there are 531,358 Peruvians in the United States, showing an increase of 127.1 percent from the year 2000. It is estimated that there are 66,318 Peruvians in the State of New York alone. Of the forty study participants in the state of New York, eighteen (45 percent) came between 2001 and 2010, fifteen (37.5 percent) between 1991 and 2000, and seven (17.5 percent) in the year 1990 or before. In other words, twenty-three (57.5 percent) Peruvian immigrants have been living in New York from one month to ten years, ten (25 percent) have been living in New York for eleven to twenty years, and seven (17.5 percent) have been living in New York for more than twenty years at the time of the interview.

The top four reasons that participants emigrated were Peru’s economic problems, including the lack of jobs in the Peruvian labor market; the need for a change, including a change in their socio-economic life or to escape undesired relationships; the desire to continue their studies, a specialization, or graduate school; and also to join a family member, such as a spouse, parents, or siblings. In some cases, immigrants’ documented status allowed them to bring their families to New York with visas. In other cases, non-immigrants came to New York undocumented following immigrants, and used them to establish networks. In this study, only twelve immigrants are mothers or fathers with children living in the care of other family members in Lima. Only five (12.5 percent) of those immigrants came to New York with authorization to work. At the time of the interview, a total of twenty-three immigrants had obtained authorization to work in the United States (9 male and 14 female), and there were still seventeen immigrants (11 male
and 6 female) without authorization to work in the United States at that time. Some of them were in the process of obtaining their documents and others were still working on a way to regularize their migratory status. Those who obtained documentation to work in the United States have faced positive changes in varied ways. Those changes were observed in differences in job activities, income, and personal life in general, plus the possibility of bringing their family members left behind to live with them in New York.

Immigrants expressed that their motivations to support their family members in Lima were in general altruistic, due to affection for those left behind, and to the desire to see positive changes in their family economy; however, it is relevant to point out that as much as immigrants wanted to start helping non-immigrants financially immediately after arriving in New York, it was difficult for them to comply. In part, this was because they only came to fully understand the reality of living expenses and labor possibilities in New York once they arrived. It is relevant to understand that immigrants reflect varied reasons for immigration. Regardless of their lifestyles or socio-economic realities, immigrants have definite perceptions of class and their conceived needs before and after immigration.

Using the dual labor market theory (Massey et al., 1993), this dissertation analyzes push-pull immigration factors on a global scale. It also examines additional push factors related to the immigrant’s social sphere. According to Massey et al. (1993), immigration is not caused by push factors in sending countries, but by pull factors in the receiving ones. But in this study, push factors have been identified and balanced with generalized factors in developing countries such as low wages or high unemployment rates. Similarly, a constant pull factor in developed countries has been identified as a constant and inescapable need for foreign workers (Massey et al., 1993). In addition to
those general economic push factors, immigrant participants have expressed two important social discontents identified as social push factors in this study. One of them was observed in two different male cases (Pedro and Javier) who are homosexual, and due to cultural intolerance of their sexual orientation, it was difficult for them to continue living in Lima. They both expressed the lack of understanding and support from their parents and siblings, and also friends who were ashamed of them after discovering their sexual orientation. They expressed disappointment for not having support in Peruvian society or being able to talk about their sexual orientation freely, causing them to feel misunderstood, disrespected, and segregated. Interestingly, regardless of their feelings about and motivations for leaving Peru, both Pedro and Javier have solid plans for going back to Peru.

The second social push factor found in this study includes two cases of two male immigrants who did not wish to continue living with their spouses (José and Marino). They expressed their frustrations at not being able to divorce their wives due to social standards and family reasons, including the shame they would bring into the family, and the disappointment for the children. José and Marino spent several years of their lives in relationships where they hurt or ignored their spouses. Toche (2005) examined shame as identity and suggested that shame is an attitude that does not allow Peruvians to recognize themselves. It takes place in part due to the absence of a thorough analysis of an individual’s own condition.

This analysis of Peruvians’ social behavior helps identify important social issues in this study. It does not mean that Peruvians do not get divorced or that there are not homosexuals in Peru. But marriage, for example, has proven to be an important asset in
separated spouses in this study. It is a necessary status that “gente decente” maintain at any price regardless of the circumstances. Marriage, even at a distance and through the experience of long-term separations, gives immigrants and non-immigrants a sense of prestige, and with it, the image of being reliable, stable citizens in society. Culturally, the concept of shame also influences Peruvian society and the way Peruvians choose to live their lives. Most immigrants like Pablo and Jaime feel that they are not allowed to recognize themselves or analyze their sexual orientations in a developing society like Peru. This study shows that for those immigrants who felt obligated to stay in their marriages, and those who could not live according to their sexual orientations, international immigration opened up the possibility to change not only their economic realities, but also provided the opportunity to live freely. In these cases, the idea of living a “temporary” life has become a way of negotiating time and separation between immigrants and non-immigrants who do not talk about social tensions openly.

In analyzing the pull factors on a global scale, the demanding labor market in the United States serves as the main pull factor in which high- or low-skilled New York immigrant workers could use their accumulated skills. This does not necessarily reflect that immigrants earn incomes at their skill levels; moreover, even those immigrants living in undocumented circumstances were able to accomplish most or all of their goals after immigration. Some of those immigrants migrated with tertiary education from Peru, and took service industry jobs in order to start accumulating wealth, sacrificing the middle class status and lifestyle they had had in Lima. In other cases, immigrants were sponsored by companies they worked for or married U.S. citizens to regularize their immigration status.
In general, no matter how much it demoralizes immigrants to work in the shadows due to their undocumented status, for them, having the opportunity to perform any job that will lead to their economic success is more important:

…not having documentation to work is difficult…I have to take jobs that require lots of physical strength and they don’t pay much for the amount of hours I work, or the type of work I do…at the end, this doesn’t matter…I have a job and I came to New York for this opportunity…there is much more to lose than to gain if I don’t take what is available…what I make in New York is impossible to make in Lima…I have plans for the future and that’s why money is important (Carlos J., personal interview, July 16, 2009).

…I just want to continue having a job…I don’t care what it is as long as I can make money…it is not only the pressure and responsibility that I have, but this is an opportunity that wasn’t easy to get…it doesn’t really matter if you don’t have documentation to work…you will always find something, and you will be able to make money if you work hard…that’s what I came here for… (Maria V., personal interview, July 21, 2009).

No matter how many changes immigrants face due to job-related conditions in New York, and how much these conditions affect their perceived social status and lifestyle, economic success is the continuous motivator and it removes any option of being selective when it comes to taking a job.

At the other side of the continent, years pass, relationships change, and children grow up. Family composition and interaction is reduced to a ‘virtual’ reality, where communication is basic, sporadic, and limited to immigrants and non-immigrants’ needs. Nevertheless, results show that immigrants also pursue psychological support from their families in every way they can, because regardless of their circumstances, life in New York is difficult in terms of both social acculturation and economic gain.

Transnational living refers to a wide panoply of social, cultural, political, and economic cross-border relations that emerge, both wittingly and unwittingly, from immigrants' drive to maintain and reproduce their social milieu of origin from afar. The concept of transnational living allows us to detect myriad economic multiplier effects spawning from immigrants' transnational engagement, whose
sought-after and unforeseen compounding effects cut across multiple geographical scales, from the translocal to the transnational to the global. (Guarnizo, 2003, p. 667)

This “translocal to the transnational to the global” living is exemplified by the Peruvian case. Immigrants’ social and cultural lives are not the only components connecting them to their families in Lima; income distribution is anchored to the Peruvian economy and living standards as well. It is in Lima where immigrants spend their money, send their children to private schools, buy new appliances, improve their living conditions in general, and save or invest in a future.

As an example, in their interviews, immigrant participants answered a group of questions involving changes to their lifestyle and cultural practices in New York, as well as about their future plans to return to Lima. Seven (17.5 percent) immigrants who are part of a social network system seem to be living by choice in a lifestyle that places them in what they admit is a “temporary” life. They long for their loved ones, and practice their culture as a means of coping with distance. There is also the uncertainty of not knowing when they will go back to the life they have on hold. In general, immigrants agree that cultural changes affect their lives significantly; however, their ties to their families in Lima prioritize their needs in and around their family in Lima. Even though immigrants’ socio-economic realities are different after immigration, in general, immigrants claim that living standards in New York are basically the same as they had in Lima, stating that there are no changes in the way they live. They assert that they have succeeded in living a ‘Lima-style’ kind of life in New York, preserving their customs and culture as much as possible. In other words, New York has become the secondary location where they go to work temporarily in any job that will give them a strong possibility of attaining economic and social success.
**Peruvian Immigrants in a Secondary Location**

Guarnizo (2003) examines the concept of “transnational living” and suggests that: “Transnational living is shaped by the historically determined social, economic, political, and cultural micro and macro structures of the societies in which the lives of immigrants are embedded” (p. 670). Indeed, in this study immigration and the pursuit of remittances are important not only in their effect on Peruvian households, but also in how they affect the immigrant and their quality of life in New York. Remittances, as significant as they are in receiving households, are not insured to continue flowing. Immigrants face difficult circumstances with the labor market abroad and experience extreme hardships in order to send remittances. This study shows that there is a collective and consistent expectation among recipients that remittances will be sent on a regular basis. Remittances not only affect non-immigrants’ households, economy, and consumption patterns, but also affect immigrants’ opportunities, decisions, and lives in New York.

Non-immigrants’ certainty that remittances will continue flowing despite their immigrant family member’s hardship causes them to focus on remittances as a major resource, and especially on negotiating the amount of remittances and its usage. There were two specific non-immigrant participants who received fewer remittances than what they expected or what they agreed to receive from the immigrant; however, immigrants affirmed remittances would increase soon “because the economy has to improve” (Prudencio, personal interview, June 12, 2009; Leonardo, personal interview, July 17, 2009). Immigrants working in the service industry in New York have collectively expressed their disappointment in the labor market, stating how difficult it has been for them to make ends meet while having to send remittances. Their income and remittances
rly mostly on immigrants’ physical work. There are twenty-four (60 percent) immigrants who work in the service industry; of those, seventeen find these jobs challenging not only because of the physical component, but also to their undocumented status. The predominant age group in this study includes immigrants between the ages of twenty-nine and forty-nine years old. Thirty-two (80 percent) have at least a high school diploma. Even so, they work as housekeepers, nannies, restaurant help, cooks, and construction workers, among other service industry jobs (see Appendix A).

Londoño de la Cuesta (1996) analyzed the role of education in Latin America’s societal development and suggested that in order for Latin America’s human capital to merge with international structures, Latin American countries need additional educational investments over the next twenty-five years. It is a reality in this group of participants that immigrants with school-age children focus their investments on their children’s education in Lima:

Education for his son is a priority…he goes to a private school now…he is learning English and the use of computers…he will have a better future if he speaks English and knows how to use computers, this is what his father says because he is in New York and he learned how important this is working as a house painter (Rosa, personal interview, July 17, 2010).

…everything he sends goes for his children’s education…they always went to private schools and institutes to learn English and be ahead in their classes…their father want them to be very successful and have the best opportunities in Peru and wherever they go (Yandira, personal interview, July 7, 2010).

Non-immigrants collectively trust that education pays off and it is also because immigrants’ exposure in the labor system of an advanced society abroad has taught them about the possibilities of increasing their incomes through education. They believe that the more education a person brings to the labor market, the better income that person will have. In believing so, they transfer these experiences to their children, encouraging them
to emigrate in the future, therefore supporting the idea that learning English as part of their education will help them get a better job. In reality, education obtained in Lima, or anywhere else, will not necessarily place immigrants in a better position compared to natives if they lack authorization to work. However, speaking English in any type of job in the service industry will allow immigrants to obtain a more permanent job or acquire more than one job, as noted in this study.

Immigrants stated that it was crucial for them to find a job as soon as they arrived in New York. Finding a job resolves the most important immigrant concern and fulfills the purpose for immigration. In most cases, immigrants have originated debts in Lima. They left their family members with the responsibility to pay the debt and in many cases non-immigrants used their assets as collateral for the loans:

…Maritza knew that her cousin had the loan from the bank and if she didn’t pay, she was going to lose her house…I fortunately, Maritza started working and paying it off right away… (Zoila, personal interview, July 5, 2010).

…I was worried about the debt with the bank, because if we didn’t pay I could have lost my house…I had to get the money from other members of the family for the first two payments, but Inés started sending money and everything was fine (Carmen, personal interview, July 12, 2010).

In other words, non-immigrants are placing their properties at risk if they do not comply with payments. In all cases, immigrants’ responsibilities are vast and they do not have much time to start producing money. In other words, immigrants come to New York with a clear understanding of their economic obligations and the certainty that New York is the place for them to produce the money they need. These jobs are mostly in the service industry and are remunerated with untaxed cash earnings.

Research on assimilation shows that immigrants assimilate rapidly into the U.S. job market; within a few years of arriving, they earn roughly as much as skilled native-
born workers of the same national origin (Borjas & Freeman, 1992). Once immigrants establish themselves as part of the system, the opportunity to continue earning money depends on their ability to retain their jobs. Immigrants, however, are committed to fulfilling non-immigrants’ economic needs in Lima, and New York offers the resources to fulfill those needs:

…my health has improved because I can go to a clinic, and I can also buy non-generic prescriptions and supplemental vitamins… (Genoveva, personal interview, July 5, 2010).

…I bought a new washer and dryer, I never had those before…I have arthritis and as you get older you develop different needs and it is great not to worry about washing clothes at my age…the electric bill went up significantly, but my daughter is also taking care of that (Angela C., personal interview, June 30, 2010).

New York, as distant as it is from Lima, becomes a secondary location where immigrants have the opportunity to earn an income that will allow them to solve long-standing economic problems in Lima. Earnings are first designated to cover the most urgent needs, such as paying off loans, if any, originated with financial institutions to finance their trips (10 percent). Then, they focus on their children—their education and wellbeing (47.5 percent). If they do not have children in Lima, immigrants’ motivations to help their family members vary. Regardless, immigrants’ motivations and economic reasons to do well economically are primarily connected to their homes in Lima as noted in this study.

The responsibility to make the immigration decision work is not only about producing money to start solving their economic situation in Lima, but to start a continuous flow of remittances if possible. We have previously observed the effects of remittances in non-immigrants households in this study; yet the source of remittances and the pressures of sending them have a deep and often unexamined impact on immigrants and their lives in New York as well. Immigrants in New York live under very frugal
conditions. One hundred percent of immigrants in this study shared living spaces with families or other immigrants in New York after arrival, and 45 percent of them were still sharing living spaces with other immigrants in New York at the moment of the interview.

On average, immigrants send 45 percent of their income to their families in Lima, leaving them with a very tight budget to manage in New York. Immigrants sacrifice their privacy in order to save as much cash as possible to fulfill their economic obligations in Lima. It is ideal for immigrants to find a place to live close to their job. Eighty-five percent of immigrants in this study did not own a car for the first three years living in New York, and 55 percent still did not own a car at the time of the interview. For those who live in Manhattan or Queens, it was convenient to use public transportation, but those who live in other areas of New York, such as the Mid-Hudson area or Long Island for example, needed to buy a car or arrange car pooling with other immigrants to go to work, go shopping, and socialize.

In general, immigrants do not come to New York to live the so-called “American dream” and to experience the lifestyle that goes with it. Peruvian immigrants in this study perceive New York as a secondary location, where they have the opportunity to work, and help alleviate their economic situation at home, depending on their income and economic success. Additionally, as noted in this study, immigrants do not invest in their own wellbeing, unless it is a sporadic social gathering with co-workers, other immigrants, or a religious activity. Peruvian immigrants socialize with other Hispanic immigrants, sometimes due to the language barrier involved in interacting with other ethnic groups, and sometimes due to fear of rejection or lack of trust in others. As an example, Jenny expresses the collective feeling of some Peruvian immigrants:
I prefer to socialize with other Hispanics, even if they are not Peruvians... it is
good to know that you share the same culture, and other Hispanics don’t judge or
criticize anything you do... sometimes I try to speak English a little bit when I am
working, but people who are not Hispanic look at me in a weird way, maybe
because of my accent... One of my roommates always says to me that I need to
include other friends and learn more English because that will help me to get a
better job, but I don’t feel comfortable talking to other people... other Hispanics
make me feel at home (Martha, personal interview, August 16, 2009).

This is an isolating condition that helps Peruvian immigrants cope with distance
and the immigration process itself; however, by decision or as a circumstantial fact, the
lack of contribution from immigrants to develop their New York communities is visible.
It is a reality that affects New York immigrants’ communities significantly, especially
because immigrants have in mind to stay in New York only until they have reached their
economic goals, after which they will return to Peru. This contributes to the perception
among immigrants that their migratory experience is temporary, as well as defined by
their documented status.

**Against All Odds: Possibilities in New York**

This section analyzes immigrants’ decisions about economic investments for
emigration. It also elucidates immigrants’ use of irregular methods to send remittances
and their consequences. After relocating, immigrants’ major concern lies in finding a job
that will allow them to repay debts for traveling expenses and help their families satisfy
economic needs in Lima. While immigrants’ perception of a temporary condition in New
York seems to be part of a longer strategy to maintain and enhance their middle class
identity, working in service industry jobs provides them with an immediate economic
base. However, class and identity are not defined by immigrants’ occupations, but by
their ability to accomplish economic success:
…it hasn’t been easy…I get up at four in the morning to go to Connecticut to the nursing home where I take care of senior citizens and housekeeping…sometimes I wish I could use my degree as an accountant, and work in an office…I am not ashamed of what I do…with my job I am helping my parents in Lima…they don’t have to see or know what I do…they are proud of me because I am successful…I have a job and I make money to take care of me and them… (Berta, personal interview, August 15, 2009).

…it was hard at the beginning, especially because I had a job in a laboratory as a technician…then I came to New York to do what domestic help at home in Lima does for you…it is weird, and hard, but you also realize that that’s not who you are…it is more important to think of your new reality and all the things you can change with the money you earn… (Alfredo O., personal interview, February 20, 2010).

The results of this research show that twenty-three immigrants (57.5 percent) in New York had to obtain loans for their trips from Lima to New York. Of those, only one immigrant who was living in New York for three years at the time of the interview was still re-paying loans from the trip. This loan was for US$6,000 and was being paid to a family member in Lima in installments of US$100 a month. The other twenty-two immigrants who came to New York with loans from financial institutions, friends, or family paid their loans within a period of one to two years of their time of arrival in New York. These loans were between an average of US$3,000 and US$15,000, depending on the immigrant’s needs and how much they decided to invest for the trip. In this study, some immigrants had a tourist visa and they only needed their tickets and traveling expenses.

Others however, needed to obtain a passport, a visa, and coaching services through irregular methods to come to the United States. Using the latter method has proven to be complicated, dangerous, and expensive. Most participants in this study who used irregular methods to immigrate to New York have overcome the difficult circumstances they were involved in during their trips. However, there are significant
differences in the way immigrants travel to New York. Even when they know that using irregular methods will make their journey difficult and put them at extreme risks, their determination to arrive in the United States for a better life becomes the main focus, regardless of any circumstances. In the following case, Victoria narrates her immigration experience. Her case is unique in this study and Victoria wanted to share her story to expose the dangers immigrants face while crossing the borders using irregular methods:

I came to this country six years ago, and no, I didn’t even have an idea of what I was going to do … My father died in Huancayo and he left me some land. I was only a child, and I never worked on the land with my father, so I sold everything, then I went to Lima to get my passport … I wanted to leave the country like my neighbors did four years before I did … I put all the money in a new bank account in Lima, so when the embassy would see that money, they would believe me that I was going to come back to Peru, but they didn’t … the U.S. embassy didn’t give me the visa, but Mexico did, and I decided to come through Mexico … I met a woman in Mexico who helped me contact a guy who could help me pass to the U.S … I paid US$6,000 to pass the borders … They took me in a car all the way in the desert, and there was another car waiting with other five people inside. We lived inside the car nine days … we were only two women in the group, Rosa from Mexico and I … The two guys who were with us all those days were nice … at the eighth day three more ‘coyotes’ showed up. Those three forced Rosa and I to have sex with them … They threatened to kill us, or leave us in the middle of the desert … no one said anything, no one defended us, not even because we shared food and a roof for a week … none of those men would help us in that situation; it was heartbreaking, they saw us crying and screaming … I can’t get over that experience; I can’t forget their faces … the next day we crossed the borders, and we were supposed to be happy, we all prayed so much for that day to arrive … I still feel, after six years that something died in me that damned day in the desert … when I remember that I am now living in New York, I also remember how I got here (Victoria, personal interview, July 7, 2009).

Even though Victoria’s experience is one of most disturbing experiences in this study, other immigrants who used irregular methods to cross the borders have also observed similar experiences. Three other participants had observed sexual attacks on women while crossing the Mexican-American border. The World Bank (2009) estimates that according to the U.S. government, 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across borders in 2003. Eighty percent of them were female and fifty percent were minors.
Victoria, like many other immigrants who are victims of sexual abuse while crossing the Mexican-American border, struggled to overcome the pain caused by her immigration experience. It was not only Victoria’s emotional distress of overcoming rape, but as she expressed, it was also difficult to be mentally and physically ready to acculturate in any way in New York. This once again reflects how challenging it is to understand the determination immigrants possess to migrate utilizing irregular methods and against all the adversity. Berg and Paerragad (2005) suggest that growing international demand for cheap labor and immigration restrictions in the United States and Europe increase trafficking in which immigrants pay considerable amounts of money to arrive in the United States or Europe. As observed in this study, immigrants and their families incur enormous debts without knowing if they will be able to arrive to the United States.

In most cases, the trip to the United States lasts between 30 to 60 days. According to immigrants’ statements in their interviews, they have used a system in which they obtain visas in Lima to go to Central America as tourists, crossing the U.S.-Mexican border and walking for several weeks, or if they are lucky, riding in very crowded vans with other people. When they cross the borders without visas, they normally wait in specific areas inside vans or trucks with other groups of people from different Latin American countries. This can take weeks or more than a month until the ‘coyotes’ find the right time to cross them into the United States. Immigrants affirm that the vehicle they travel in becomes the only shelter for the period of time they have to wait to cross the borders. They sleep, eat, and spend most of the day inside these vehicles at extremely high or low temperatures. Considering the geographic locations of Lima and New York,
plus cultural differences and realities, the options or conditions some Peruvian immigrants incur in order to change their economic situation in Lima are important factors that reflect immigrants’ determination to immigrate and acculturate regardless of the circumstances.

In this study, twelve (30 percent) Peruvian immigrants who used irregular methods to come to New York attested that most of them lost all their valuable properties, such as money or jewelry they had during the trip. A participant in this study was raped in front of other immigrants and their children, and the ‘coyotes’ took away two Guatemalan children who were travelling with an uncle to meet their parents in the United States. A group of four immigrants (two Mexicans, one Nicaraguan, and one Guatemalan citizen) was abandoned in the middle of the desert after walking incredible distances. This was due to their failure to give ‘coyotes’ jewelry, money, or anything valuable they had left during the trip, even though they had already paid large amounts of money for the trip at their point of origin. Even though several years have passed since immigrants in New York had witnessed or experienced these atrocities, immigrants are still reluctant to talk about it openly with their families in Lima, and they advise family and friends to avoid coming to the United States using irregular methods.

It was also astounding to hear that immigrants in this study knew before-hand the circumstances of these trips. They knew what to take for the trip, the type of shoes or clothes, the amount of money, and how it had to be divided in small bills, and where they had to hide them. They were also advised to adopt certain behavior in front of the ‘coyotes’ during the trip. It is challenging to comprehend immigrants’ determination to continue their trip under these circumstances and reach their destinations despite all the
adversity. However, the profile of immigrants leaving Lima for a better life reflects similar characteristics: they were in debt even before their loans to pay for the trip, placing family property or assets at risk.

In general, immigrants believe that regardless of the lack of protection or assurances that they will arrive at their destination, the promise of improving their economic situation means they have more to gain than to lose. Moreover, the use of irregular methods has increased over the last decades. Immigration from Lima to New York has become more difficult since September 11, 2001. Immigrants coming to New York before the September 11th attacks said they had crossed the borders without difficulty. Three participants in this study who came before September 11th bought airplane tickets through travel agencies in Peru and Central America, traveling in groups or individually, pretending to be tourists and boarding the planes by showing a boarding pass without identification. It is well known through the media in general that the United States has not only enforced border protection, but has also changed the way tourists and Americans travel in the United States for the last decade.

All 40 immigrants in this study came with feelings of uncertainty and fear as to what they would find in New York. These feelings continue even after their arrival to New York, and include stress about their economic responsibilities and distress due to separation from their families. These feelings are even observed in immigrants with documented status, as well as in those who speak English. In other words, this uncertainty is directly related to the unknown and their lack of control, as they do not know how they will deal with their new lives, regardless of how prepared they feel psychologically or in terms of language or social networks.
Peruvian Immigrants Seeking a Connection of Opportunities

This section analyzes the importance and effects of social networks in New York, and of those maintained in Lima. It also examines how immigrants and non-immigrants benefit from those networks. Özden and Schiff (2007) examine the presence of undocumented immigrants in the United States concluding that “numerous immigrants remain unrecorded” (pp. 21-4). This occurs because the U.S. Census Bureau makes no distinction among foreign-born persons in the United States as to whether they are documented or not. The Census simply uses foreign-born vs. native-born populations as categories. Therefore, undocumented immigrants are not specifically recorded. Moreover, the authors also affirm that undocumented immigrants do not want to be noticed, and authorities are not politically motivated to acknowledge the problem.

Living in the shadows has not impeded Peruvian immigrants in this study from reaching their goals. Their main focus is on their encounter with the labor market in New York, which has proven to be one of the most significant concerns in their immigration process. Finding a job where they can apply their human capital encourages them both by giving them a sense of pride and purpose and by allowing them to provide for their families left behind (see Appendix A for immigrants’ job distribution in the New York labor market).

Even though thirty-two (80 percent) Peruvian immigrants in this study have at least a high school diploma, the economic crisis in the United States during recent years has significantly affected immigrants’ jobs, decreasing their projected incomes and opportunities. Of the 40 immigrants in New York, twenty-six (65 percent) worked in service industry and construction jobs as housekeepers, cooks, waiters, mechanics, house
painters, bakers, and manicurists, performing general though skilled labor jobs at the time of the interview; thirteen (32.5 percent) held professional jobs; and one (2.5 percent) was a graduate student. Immigrants working in service industry jobs and construction have stated salaries between US$150-US$300 a week, working an average of ten hours a day for five days a week. Massey et al. (1993) suggest that as migrant networks develop, private institutions and voluntary associations emerge to provide a range of services, such as counseling, social and legal services, lodging, credit, job search assistance, as well as smuggling and transport assistance, counterfeit documents, and arranged marriages. In this study, eighteen (45 percent) immigrants had social networks available at their time of arrival in New York. They had family, friends, or some sort of social connection in the United States that helped them establish themselves and find a job almost immediately after arrival.

This study shows that the reality remains that if immigrants lack a supportive social network, they will need time to adjust until they find a connection. Immigrants will need to overcome language barriers, to figure out work possibilities to generate income, to find new living arrangements, to figure out the amount of money they need to rent a place to live and eat, and how to get around using public transportation and learning schedules, and so on. In other words, they need to understand the socio-economic system of the receiving country while dealing with their need and accompanying stress to start producing and sending money to their families as soon as possible:

…it was very difficult for me in the beginning…I didn’t know anyone…I stayed in places where I didn’t know if I was going to wake up alive…little by little you meet people, sometimes not the right people…but you also learn from bad experiences…no one cares about your situation, so you need to show strength…then you get introduced to other people who know other people and then you get a job…getting a job was not that hard…but I was always worried
that I wasn’t going to get a job, and I wasn’t going to be able to start sending money soon after my arrival in New York…the hardest part was that I didn’t understand anything, and when I did, everything was so expensive…the little money I had disappeared like nothing, then I realized that I had to find roommates so I could afford living in a room…then I had to put money away for Lima, for my meals and bus tickets or carpool…I didn’t even understand bus schedules, we don’t need those is Peru…it was hard and confusing…but when I understood everything then things were easier and I also felt better being here… (David V., personal interview, August 13, 2009).

Özden and Schiff (2007) examine the importance of networks in determining the immigration decision and suggest: “international immigrants are wealthier than domestic immigrants in the United States” (p. 105). This finding can also be observed in immigrants’ human capital returns through remittances. However, there are three relevant points to observe from this citation in this chapter: the actual success of immigration networks in this study, the short time immigrants took to pay their loans, the fast accumulation of wealth to be able to pay those loans, and dealing with economic personal responsibilities in New York and Lima. This highlights the importance in the relationship between international immigration and available networks at the destination, plus the actual use of those networks.

Social networks have helped newly arrived immigrants to adjust in their new life in New York, facilitating an easier and smoother transition. Kuznetsov (2006) suggests that diaspora networks create a bridge between traditional worlds of immigrant workers and the knowledge economy, where immigrants are trained to acquire problem-solving skills and teamwork. Importantly, not all newly arrived immigrants had support through a social network in this study, where they could be trained for at least service industry jobs. Of those forty immigrant participants, eighteen (45 percent) had supportive social networks of friends or family to start their lives in New York. The other twenty-two (55
percent) had to look for room and board while establishing themselves and looking for a job on their own.

Previous research on the topic suggests that social networks help immigrants to acclimate faster to their new lives. However, interviews indicate that those immigrants who arrived without strong social networks in place nevertheless attained their goals. As an example, of those twenty-two (55 percent) immigrants arriving in New York without social networks, thirteen (32.5 percent) held professional jobs at the time of the interview. In general, this was due to the resolution of their documented status after immigrating to the United States. Some of them got married or came to the United States with working or student visas and pursued permanent residency and citizenship. The remaining seven immigrants (17.5 percent) of those twenty-two lacking social networks were still working in the service industry at the time of the interview. In its majority, those Peruvian immigrants who arrived with social networks in place have expressed that their process of acclimation was easier compared to other immigrants in the U.S.:

My sister was already living in New York…I had a home in New York, and started working soon after my arrival in New York…I my sister came to New York first and she helped me with the immigration process until I got here…I can’t imagine how hard it was for her coming from Lima to New York not knowing anyone or anything…I am thankful, but I am also very lucky because everything was easier for me in the beginning…I am learning English now, and I got better job offers during the last year in New York…I also want to buy a house with my sister as an investment…I don’t know if I can do that with my undocumented status… (José S., personal interview, March 18, 2010).

…my sister and my mother were living in New York when I came…I still have to learn English and start studying something so I can get a real job…I still have problems adapting in New York, but I think it is because I miss my wife in Lima…it takes a while to adapt, but it is a matter of time…I am glad I have the support of my family…I would’ve never come to New York without having my family here (Carlos D., personal interview, August 13, 2009).
Experiences like José’s and Carlos’ have motivated immigrants to create and achieve goals that were not part of their initial plans after migration. These include improving their education, such as learning English, saving more money, buying real estate, and getting married.

Those immigrants coming to the United States with supportive social networks are still working in the service industry, and six of them (16.8 percent) in the same service industry job they held a decade ago when they first immigrated. There are several reasons why immigrants do not improve their jobs and working and living conditions in general. One of the main reasons is their continued desire to work in places where they can speak only Spanish and which share their Hispanic culture. Sometimes it is because they do not speak English; for others, it is because they do speak English but feel uncomfortable using it. Even though living in closed environments where Peruvian immigrants use only Spanish to communicate improves their focus on sending steady amounts of money on regular basis, it shows that social networks did not necessarily help immigrants to access better possibilities in New York.

This study shows that the priority of immigrants is to find a steady source of income abroad and to start sending remittances. Berg & Paerragad (2005) analyze the existence of a strong transnational conscience in the Peruvian community abroad, in which ‘transmigrants’ maintain multiple socio-economic relationships in more than one nation or state. These multiple socio-economic relationships and strong transnational conscience also reflect how immigrants’ acculturation is more difficult to attain because Peruvian immigrants’ socio-economic participation is divided in both sending and receiving communities. Additionally, this duality in both economic responsibilities and
acculturation makes it difficult for immigrants to give back to their receiving communities in New York, as their main purpose of international immigration has been on improving the lives of their families left behind.

As stated before, some immigrants had important social networks among families and friends; other immigrants did not have family or friends and had to start out on their own. Of those forty New York participants, there was one immigrant whose determination to help others and will to give back to her community encouraged her to create an organization to help recently-arrived immigrants. Gabriela, an immigrant who came to the U.S. nineteen years before the time of her interview, established Somos la llave del Futuro (We are the key to the future), an organization that offers free aid for immigrants including education in the English language, lessons in understanding the U.S. system, and orientation workshops to improve immigrants’ lives in general. Altamirano (2000), who also examined the creation of Peruvian organizations in the United States, adds that the diversity in activities and roles of these organizations improves the image of Peru and Peruvians in terms of socio-economic accomplishments.

Immigrants face radical changes in several different aspects of their lives. Besides economic changes, acculturation also plays an important role in this study. In general, immigrants share a profound desire to acculturate, speak English, and communicate, all in order to improve their working conditions and feel more independent:

…I don’t speak English fluently, but what I learned has made me more independent…I can ask people if they need help at home, I can make my own arrangements…I used to depend on the agency, but I always had to pay a commission because they got me the job…it is not that hard, and being independent is better…I make more money, and more people call me directly to my cellphone… (Haydee, personal interview, September 16, 2009).
Immigrants realize that learning to speak in English will make it possible for them to communicate and make business deals directly instead of depending on a translator. Interestingly, some immigrants rely on social networks as a secure zone where they can speak in Spanish and learn words in English at their own pace from those who have been in the system for a longer period of time. At this point, nothing becomes more challenging for immigrants than understanding at least basic words that will allow them to perform their jobs initially.

Learning how to perform their jobs according to American standards and demands as quickly as possible facilitates job security and new job opportunities for immigrants. American standards and demands is a concept that came across while interviewing Peruvian immigrants who work in service industry jobs. A very common phrase was “como les gusta a los Americanos” (“as the Americans like”), which means performing their jobs having in mind a sense of professionalism in both tasks and mannerisms. Upholding this idea was a way for immigrants to experience success in the labor market, as well as to start their own network. Immigrants’ networks also help immigrants obtain occasional or additional hours of employment and provide support while dealing with unemployment. Through this system, they can obtain occasional jobs or be part of small community projects if full-time jobs are scarce. LaLonde and Topel (in Borjas & Freeman, 1992), who examine the assimilation of immigrants in the U.S. labor market, suggest: “for relatively unskilled new arrivals to the United States they estimate that changes in skill prices may have reduced the wages of new immigrants relative to natives by as much as 8 percent. Thus panel estimates of assimilation may be sensitive to ‘time effects’ caused by economic-wide conditions” (p. 88).
This analysis reflects immigrants’ dependence on networks for two important reasons in this study. The first reason is related to immigrants’ belief that relying on networks avoids the possibility of being cheated by new employers in the labor market. The second reason is related to the difficulty of finding a job in the current labor market. In both cases, immigrants believe that networks can ease the assimilation period and establish the means to succeed economically, as their main focus is based on earning money. Moreover, several immigrants in this study have realized that, while becoming part of a network system, it does not allow them to advance into real or better possibilities after immigration. Staying within immigrants’ networks after they have already learned to manage the system in New York provides comfort in sharing their culture and speaking in Spanish; however, it does not encourage them to go beyond basic words in English or educate themselves in other areas. In addition to pursuing comfort by sharing culture and language, Peruvian immigrants have created a system that establishes a steady income, and even though they want to take every opportunity to earn more money, they feel secure having a steady system that does not require changes in their jobs, as they rely on steady earnings and the ability to plan ahead:

…I was so desperate to start working, so I could pay my cousin as soon as possible… I was so happy that I was able to work, and I also wanted to start studying right away, but that moment was to make money and to make sure that I was going to have all the money to send my cousin so she wouldn’t lose her house in Lima… it took me a while to get used to the system in New York. My sister taught me everything. From moving around in buses from New York to New Jersey to go to work, to buying fast food for my meals… and how to handle myself outside our neighborhood and household… it was always better to just stay with Hispanic friends… you don’t have to worry about anything because most of them are in the same situation… I am glad I was working in New Jersey because that pushed me to learn fast… that is also how I met my husband, he is not Peruvian… He made me want to learn English, and go to school… having documentation to work changed everything for me… (Maritza, personal interview, August 1, 2009).
Immigrants’ living conditions do not necessarily improve if they stay within immigrant networks. Also, if they find a steady and reliable job, they adjust their lifestyle to become more frugal and to focus on how much they can produce and take out of the country to help their families and/or save, but not necessarily to improve their personal living conditions, to give back to their local communities, or to grow professionally in New York.

**Applying and Transferring Learned Skills and Education in the U.S. Labor System**

The following section analyzes immigrants’ skills and education before and after immigration, and how those skills contribute to their job opportunities in New York. Language proficiency has been an important factor to consider when immigrants apply their skills; however, lack of English language proficiency does not impede immigrants from achieving their goals. Moreover, even though the Peruvian economy is still developing, immigrants in New York depend on resources available in Lima. Due to their undocumented status, immigrants benefit from having family members in Lima to help educate their children whose education has been denied to them because their parents are undocumented or because it is too expensive in the United States. Additionally, immigrants’ goals focus on initiating new sources of income through the creation of small businesses in Lima, which supports immigrants’ perceptions about living a “temporary” life in New York.

Fajnzylber and López (2008) examine the age profile of immigrants and suggest that in their majority, Latin American immigrants are young adults, below thirty years old, who want to start a new life. There are a total of forty New York immigrant
participants, twenty men and twenty women, and five different age categories in this study. There are four immigrant participants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight years old, two male, and two female; there are ten immigrant participants between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-nine years old, six male, and four female; there are eighteen immigrant participants between the ages of forty and forty-nine years old, nine male, and nine female; there are six immigrant participants between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine years old, two male, and four female; finally, there are two immigrant participants between the ages of sixty and sixty-nine years old, one male and one female (see Appendix A for age categories).

This means that the predominant groups of immigrants in this study are those twenty-eight immigrants between the ages of twenty-nine and forty-nine years old. In these two predominant age category groups, seventeen immigrant participants are working in the service industry in New York. Of those seventeen participants in New York, thirteen were unemployed, students, or held similar jobs in Lima. Four participants changed from professional occupations in Lima to the service industry in New York after immigration. Those professional occupations in Lima included a bilingual secretary, an economist in a financial institution, an accountant assistant, and a researcher in a laboratory. Changes were basically from those jobs in Lima to the service industry in New York, including cleaning houses, hotel housekeeping, helping in restaurants, and assisting senior citizens in nursing homes (See Appendix A for job distribution and changes from Lima to New York). Even though changes were significant in terms of social status earned through their jobs or positions, immigrants’ conviction that their
situation in New York was temporary allowed them to assimilate that they were now working in jobs that belied their middle-class status.

In this study, twelve immigrants (30 percent) spoke basic to fluent English, twenty-four (60 percent) did not speak English at all, and four (10 percent) did not respond to this question. Moreover, of those seventeen immigrants who were working in the service industry at the moment of the interview in New York, ten of them did not speak English at all. One of those immigrants was living in New York for twelve years, three were living in New York for seven years, and four of them were living in New York for three years without English proficiency. Borjas and Freeman (1992) suggest that new immigrants rapidly accumulate skills such as language and culture that are specific to the American labor market. Moreover, immigrants are typically less skilled than representative natives. These two factors reflect the existence of unequal opportunities for immigrants in the labor market, where natives have considerable advantages.

This reality did not seem to prevent less-skilled immigrants from obtaining and performing their jobs in this study. Moreover, immigrants’ advantages in this study are observed in their disposition to work overtime, late shifts, weekends, and holidays, and to travel domestically if necessary. Additionally, some less-skilled immigrants’ wages are reduced by between 5 and 10 percent (Borjas & Freeman, 1992). These differences, well known by immigrants in this study, do not seem to affect their conviction that there will always be an opportunity in the U.S. labor system:

I was a taxi driver in Lima, I had my little car, and I would go every night around looking for passengers … it is very dangerous in Lima … I was assaulted twice, and my wife was always worried … I didn’t mind working all night long, but the danger and lack of passengers willing to pay the tariff for the ride was the problem … Here, if you come with that attitude, just to work, and take whatever is available, you make money, and you take those jobs that Americans would
never do … They don’t want to work over time, they don’t want to leave their families on the weekends, they don’t want to work in the middle of the night, they can’t be bothered if there is an emergency, well, thank God for that … I solved my documented status … my family is joining me very soon, and I am still in the service industry, but look at all I did by taking what Americans don’t want to take (César, personal interview, July 31, 2009).

Kuznetsov (2006) suggests that entry-level jobs immigrants take in factories or the health care sector in receiving countries teach them problem-solving skills. Even though there is no way to know if immigrants can redeploy these new skills back at home, this may form a “distinctive, medium-skilled diaspora network,” filling those spaces complementing the diasporas of managers and entrepreneurs (Kuznetsov, 2006, p. 6-9). The author’s approach to the topic confirms immigrants’ determination and the capacity to adapt and succeed in the labor market abroad successfully. Importantly, immigration and medium-skilled diaspora networks provide significant contributions to the business perspective of both immigrants and non-immigrants in this study.

Furthermore, my data supports Kuznetsov’s (2006) argument. Immigrants have adapted to new job-related activities, and they have learned and maintained those jobs successfully. In several cases, they have created new economic possibilities for their family members in Lima, including through the establishment of businesses. Immigrants’ interaction in a developed environment has not only allowed them to learn, practice, and transfer knowledge to their families in Lima, but has also opened them and their families up to new visions about future economic success, including through establishing their own businesses. Immigrants’ participation in the labor market in any industry in New York has its limitations; however, no matter how limited immigrants are in terms of developing businesses in New York, they are focused on success, and this success—though not tangible in many cases—is transferred to their family members in Lima. They
encourage their family members in Lima to think big. As a result, nine (22.5 percent) non-immigrant participants were operating businesses at the time of the interview and seven (17.5 percent) of them created businesses with the immigrant’s economic help. These businesses include grocery stores, food kiosks, a veterinary office, and beauty salons.

Living a “non-temporary” life is an option for those immigrants who have mostly obtained documentation to work in the United States. Notably, documented status opens up infinite opportunities for immigrants. Interestingly, there is a collective belief among Peruvian immigrant participants (37.5 percent) that having children born in the United States will somehow support their undocumented status and increase their chances of gaining legal immigration status and thereby transform their temporary condition. These beliefs and practices raise an important and controversial issue between undocumented immigrants, the government, and the future of U.S. citizen children with undocumented parents. United States citizen children whose parents cannot prove residency or citizenship are not allowed to receive public university education in some U.S. states. Children are asked to show their parents’ proof of residency and tax filing information, otherwise their tuition costs are the same as out-of-state or international students. They are also ineligible for financial aid, even if they should be receiving it according to their needs.

Two immigrants in this study who had college-age children at the moment of the interview did not believe that a college education in the United States prepared students for a better future. They believed college education in the U.S. is expensive and students do not even get half of what they or their parents pay for. They suggest that going away
to college is just an opportunity for kids to start experimenting with life at an extreme cost. One of those immigrants, Maria, has a daughter Carla who was born in the United States. Maria sent Carla to study in a private university in Lima after graduating from high school. Maria has family in Lima and family members are helping her take care of her daughter. Another immigrant, David, has a son, Tony. Tony was also born in the United States and finished high school around the time of the interview in May 2010. David encouraged his son to enter the workforce as a mechanic in a car shop in New York, but Tony was unhappy about that because he wanted to have the experience of going away to college. David also expressed that his son did not understand the significance of all the sacrifices David made by immigrating to New York to have a different life for himself and his family.

Both cases expose an important and new understanding within the immigration experience. The fact that second-generation immigrants such as Maria’s daughter are returning to their parents’ country of origin to continue their education suggests a new understanding of the possibilities offered by global networks, as well as in the way Peruvian immigrants consider their home country for education and future possibilities for their children. It also shows that education in Peru holds possibilities that the United States does not, either because it is too expensive and parents do not trust the system enough to incur great debt, or parents cannot provide documentation to schools due to their undocumented status.

Peruvian immigrants send their children to be educated in Peru, and when they finish their education, they come back to New York and apply all their education and skills in the United States. Parents extend their Peruvian citizenship to their children
while living in New York. This is a benefit that all immigrants have passed on to their children in this study, allowing children to enjoy benefits available to Peruvian citizens in case of need. The plan for Carla, for example, is for her to complete her undergraduate and graduate education in Lima in a period of six years in the best private universities. Her parents are planning to invest between US$10,000 and US$20,000 for Carla’s education without debt to pay back, neither in Lima nor in New York. Maria’s case suggests an interesting approach to the ‘brain-gain,’ a phenomenon that has been examined by Özden and Schiff (2006) in which educated immigrants benefit the receiving country with their skills or education. Carla is bilingual and that will help advance her studies in private institutions in Lima. Additionally, Maria arrived in New York with only a high school education and learned other skills while working in New York. Moreover, her daughter, who is second generation and who was born in the United States, is returning to Maria’s home in Peru to be educated.

Again, this case emphasizes not only the use of resources in the immigrant’s country of origin, but also the use of social networks still available in Lima after decades of international immigration. The advantage for children who grew up in foreign countries such as the United States is that they have direct admission to the Peruvian university system. In the typical scenario, high school students must take admission exams that require a high level of preparation. They also compete with thousands of other applicants for very few admission placements. This exemplifies a connection between the Peruvian middle class and education, in which Peruvians growing up in foreign countries are not only perceived differently in terms of social status, but they also have better chances for education than Peruvians growing up in Peru.
The private educational system in Peru is very expensive, and it is attainable only by a few middle class Peruvians. There are also public educational systems; however, school classes are always interrupted due to repeated strikes by professors who earn very low salaries and are frequently asking for salary adjustments from the government. These regular interruptions in the public educational system do not allow students to graduate on time. Due to living standards in Lima, the opportunity to study in a private university in Lima is less difficult when tuition expenses come from abroad. Moreover, as Tony expressed, part of the ‘dream’ that was passed on to him is to have the opportunity to create a better future. However, Tony is now confused to learn that, according to his father, his maximum aspirations must be on becoming an apprentice in an auto shop where he will become a mechanic one day in the future. This is relevant to point out because for Tony it shows the lack of connection with his father’s motivations for coming to New York, which were about creating a different and better future for his family. For David, this does not include the experience of going away to college, especially since he does not trust the U.S. educational system, and believes that education in the U.S. is unnecessary. For Tony, born and raised in the U.S., his ideas about success are deeply American in their outlook; for David, they still are rooted in first-generation immigrant ideas about success, which do not include higher education as a pre-requisite to success.

As noted in previous chapters, immigrants’ definition of the middle class is a unique definition, and it contains ideas about decency, employment, and wellbeing as revealed by having a decent home or food on the table. On the one hand, twenty-five (62.5 percent) middle-class self-identified immigrants were students or held professional jobs in Lima before immigration. The reality is that of those twenty-five immigrants, ten
(25 percent) of them started working in the service industry in New York, performing jobs in the service industry that they never performed before. The other fifteen immigrants who held professional jobs in Lima continued having professional jobs in New York. On the other hand, fifteen (37.5 percent) immigrants who held jobs in the service industry or had no jobs in Lima before immigration continued having the same or similar jobs in the service industry as they did in Lima. This also includes five immigrants who were not employed in Lima at their time of immigration. In those cases, these five immigrants started working for the first time, and their first job was in the service industry in New York.

These cases exemplify two important effects of the immigration process: the first is the transfer of immigrants’ skills to the U.S. labor system, especially from those who worked in the service industry in Peru before immigration. The second one is that regardless of their education, immigrants migrate convinced and prepared to perform service industry jobs for at least the first three years after immigration. This conviction gives them the confidence to establish and acculturate without the pressure of having to speak in English or be immersed in the labor and social system without understanding it fully. Immigrants figure out the ways to understand the system regardless of their language barriers. In most cases, immigrants would follow instructions from a bilingual supervisor or fellow workers who have been performing the job for a longer period of time. In the lack of language skills, immigrants’ job performance becomes automatized. Nevertheless, even though Peruvian immigrants are mentally prepared to start working in the service industry in New York, they truly believe that jobs in the service industry are temporary because they are impossible to avoid. All twenty-five participants (62.5
percent) who started in service industry jobs in New York perceive that it is simply the way everybody starts in a foreign country and, in the end, they are inconsequential because the main focus is on finding a job and accumulating wealth as soon as possible.

Immigrants who performed jobs they considered denigrating to their middle class status in Lima (such as housekeeping, washing dishes at restaurants, or cleaning tables, among other jobs that required only physical but not intellectual work), saw their work period in New York as temporary jobs, and jobs they needed to be engaged in at that moment. Immigrants shared an understanding that jobs and working conditions are temporary, and that performing these jobs does not define their class and identity. They affirm that they only take these jobs as an opportunity to produce money, to pay loans, and to provide for their families left behind. Immigrants also demonstrate determination to improve their lives in New York by continuing their education. This can be observed in some of the immigrants’ interviews in New York:

I had a tourist visa to travel to the United States, I wanted to improve economically. I didn’t have a job in the United States … Imagine coming from Peru to a country where you don’t know anyone; you don’t know the system, it was a huge adventure … I knew it wasn’t going to be easy in Peru either … I started with the hardest job, washing dishes, now I know a lot of people do it, but at that time, it was very difficult and denigrating … the first six months were the hardest, but I found the way to solve my undocumented status … and I knew that doing jobs that I would never do in Peru was going to change my economic situation, here and in Peru as well … In Peru, I had a great job until I was fired two months before migrating. I worked for a construction company, and I had a very good position sitting at my desk, working on my computer, and here, I don’t do anything like that … I don’t know when I will reach that level, but I am planning to get there someday, I’m still working in the service industry, yeah, I know … My documentation process is over now, my next goal was to buy the apartment in Lima, and that is also done, I am working on my English to continue studying in college until I get a major … I have goals and goals, and my next goal is to also establish a business in Peru …. (Pedro, personal interview, July 27, 2009).
Pedro’s description of his first job as the “hardest, [most] denigrating job” is an example of immigrants’ perceptions of lowering their self-identified middle-class social standards and performing those jobs under temporary conditions. However, these jobs are also part of a strategy to enhance and maintain immigrants’ middle class identity. Immigrants do not realize completely what working in the service industry is until they start performing those jobs. Once again, immigrants’ selectivity in terms of jobs is scarce, and that is also due to the pressure to start producing money as soon as possible. The case of Pedro demonstrates that class and identity are not defined by occupation or performing “denigrating jobs,” but for the ability to improve, maintain, and accomplish economic success. Pedro has accomplished every one of his goals since he immigrated to the United States; however, his last goal is still in progress, and the fulfillment of that goal will give Pedro the possibility to travel between both countries and establish a secure income for his future and his family in Lima.

Similar is the case of Marino Rojas. Marino came to the United States with a tourist visa from Mexico. He was working in Mexico for about a year and decided to apply for a U.S. tourist visa when he realized that his working visa in Mexico was not going to be renewed. Marino obtained a tourist visa to come to the United States sponsored by the company he worked for to buy medical supplies for the company. He came to New York and never went back to Mexico. Marino’s family, his wife, and four children have always been in Lima:

I came to the United States due to economic reasons. No, I didn’t have a job in New York … It was very hard, but I spoke a little English … and there isn’t a single job I haven’t performed … It is already six years that I have been living in this country. I can’t say I am fine because I don’t have residency. I can’t go any further from where I am, but I am really trying. I have my family in Peru, and they depend on me, and I work for their wellbeing … I want my children to
continue their studies, to become professionals, and to study as much as they can until they become very important people in Peruvian society … My motivation, and my dream is to fulfill them … I only think about them … yes, I forget about myself all the time, but that’s just the way it is, this is what we come to do here … my family doesn’t have any idea how they can have everything with what I do, and the life they have because of me, and that is fine (Marino, personal interview, July 20, 2009).

Marino’s immigration experience illustrates the importance of preserving a middle-class social status in Peru through education. He is determined to help his four children obtain higher education and he is convinced that education will give his children the tools to succeed. Marino’s belief in the Peruvian educational system as a guaranteed way to improve social status reflects broader beliefs about the links between education and quality of life in Peru.

Marino knows that education does not necessarily improve chances in the labor market in Lima; however, education does reaffirm middle-class social status there. Marino does not miss any opportunity to help his children in every way he can. He feels physically tired and concerned for his health due to all the physical effort that working in construction implies, but he does not share any of these feelings with his family in Lima. Importantly, Marino’s migratory status has not impeded him from generating a stable income for his family in Lima through the creation of business. Even though he can go back to Lima any time to his home and family, he continues working and sending money from New York to support as much as possible his children’s education. In any case, Marino’s undocumented status is less stressful knowing that he has a home to go back to at anytime.

Even though economic improvement is their motivation to take risks, some immigrants have also taken the opportunity to improve their lives using each available resource in New York:
I applied at the U.S. embassy in Lima three times, and they denied me the tourist visa. I had no option but to come through Mexico … it was a risky, very difficult experience, but in 1988, it wasn’t as difficult as it is now. I had all my documents prepared from Lima, so, as soon as I crossed the borders, I got a ticket, and a boarding pass to go directly to the plane. It was so scary, but somehow, I managed to be calmed and didn’t even speak until I arrived in New York. My cousin helped me in Lima giving her house to the bank as collateral to get the loans for this trip. I had nothing, and I was a secretary with a miserable salary that hardly covered anything in Lima … I was so desperate to start working, so I could pay my cousin as soon as possible, and I did it in a year. But finding a job took a while … I found a place in Flushing, Queens … my sister was already here in New York, and she had documents. I used her documents to work, I didn’t speak English that well, but very soon I learned a lot … I had to take the bus very late at night because I was working late shifts for two years in a factory in New Jersey, until I changed schedules to work during the day … I had to always wait for the bus, or rides to get home; it was very difficult due to the weather in the winter especially, and distances from one place to the other … At that time I was already in love with my husband, we got married, then I got documents, and he taught me to drive … I started classes at Queen’s College, since then, my life has only improved little by little (Maritza, personal interview, August 1, 2009).

Maritza’s main concern was to start paying the debt originated by her trip. Her cousin helped her by using her house to obtain the loan from the bank. The main risk was defaulting in payments resulting in her cousin losing her house in Lima. Maritza had the advantage of having her sister living in New York, which far exceeded the typical immigrant network.

Maritza’s sister allowed her to use her U.S. residency card and social security number in New York. This improved Maritza’s work opportunities to include not only jobs wherein she competed with native workers, but also in jobs in different industries than the service industry. After marriage, Maritza could obtain her documentation to work in the United States, but her sister’s help expedited Maritza’s assimilation process in an unusual and faster way. Even though Maritza took late night shifts in order to minimize suspicion because her sister had a full-time job during the day, she took some baby-
sitting jobs for cash, and took English courses during the day to improve basic language skills she already had from Peru.

After immigration, Maritza’s struggles were due mostly to the acculturation process to the U.S. system. Those struggles were connected to living in a diverse ethnic community, realizing that not everyone was Catholic, and not being able to go to church every Sunday because there were not masses in Spanish. She also had to force herself to eat fast food because she did not have time to cook at home. Nevertheless, after Maritza got married, obtained her documentation, and had her family, she starting living in New York the way she always wanted: appreciating her culture, cooking Peruvian dishes at home, speaking in Spanish with her children, and traveling back to Peru to visit her family.

Özden and Schiff (2006), who have closely studied Mexican immigration in the United States, suggest that:

Wages in low-skill jobs frequently are more than ten times the minimum wage in Mexico; however, they generally do not depend on education. Few U.S. farmers, contractors, or households are aware of the unauthorized Mexican immigrants they hire… individuals’ years of completed schooling do not significantly affect their probability of international immigration to either farm or non-farm jobs. The number of females with secondary education also is not associated with international migrations to either sector. (p. 40)

At the moment of the interview, immigrants’ jobs in New York included jobs as maids, housekeepers, cooks, waiters, house painters, construction workers, mechanics, physician assistants, designers, architects, office clerks, executives, teachers, social workers, engineers, and interpreters, among others. Immigrants performing professional jobs are generally those with documentation to work in the United States. As noted in chapter 2, only five participants (12.5 percent) came to New York with working or student visas and held professional jobs at the moment of the interview. Nineteen
immigrant participants (47.5 percent) who came to New York with tourist visas and stayed without documents to work in the United States have been working and are still working as service industry employees since their arrival in New York. Twenty-five (62.5 percent) immigrants had professional jobs or were students in Lima before immigration. Fifteen (37.5 percent) had jobs in the service industry in Lima as workers or no jobs at all at the time of immigration. Moreover, thirty-five (87.5 percent) Peruvian immigrant participants started working in the service industry at their arrival in New York. Again, only five (12.5 percent) of forty (100 percent) Peruvian immigrants did not work in the service industry after immigration.

For those fifteen immigrants who worked in the service industry in Lima, nothing changed in terms of job activity. They more likely continued to hold the same or a similar job in New York after immigration. It is necessary to point out that economies between Peru and the United States do not relate at all. The great difference between service industry jobs in Lima and New York is the income workers receive. In Lima, service industry jobs generate a very small income, which is only good as extra money, or to help with some expenses; in New York, it is a salary that supports the immigrant, and also their families in Lima. Moreover, depending on accommodations in their lifestyles, immigrants send more and/or save money in New York or Lima. In general, immigrants’ living conditions are very simple and practical as noticed in this study, covering only basic needs in New York. Immigrants do not buy clothes if they do not need them, they eat twice a day, they car pool if they need a ride, or take the bus, and they walk as much as they can to avoid transportation expenses. Living in extremely frugal circumstances is
not always the argument for savings or sending remittances. However, it reflects the concept of temporality immigrants live in by living as frugally as they do.

The economic systems of the United States and Peru are radically different. So is the lifestyle that people have in each country. Massey et al. (1993) suggest that people immigrate because people in general work not only for income, but also for the maintenance of a social status, finding very few avenues for upward mobility in their places of origin. As noted before, all immigrants in this study identified themselves as middle class members but they all had different perceptions about their class membership. Nonetheless, there exist common concerns and distress among all immigrant participants for having performed low-skilled jobs after immigration to New York. In general, immigrants do not share a sense of pride in performing low-skilled jobs, compared to how non-immigrants entrepreneurs feel about their kiosks or small businesses in Lima.

_Lack of opportunities for the Middle Class in Peru And the Idea of a “Temporary” Life in New York_

This subsection analyzes the lack of opportunities in the Peruvian labor market and its influence on international migration. It also examines the experiences of Peruvian immigrants who demonstrate a lack of conviction to live a permanent life in New York. Some of these experiences are exemplified by their plans to solve immediate economic needs in Lima, the ways in which they adapt in their new environments, their undocumented status, and socio-economic changes after immigration. Massey et al. (1993) examine the differences between developed and developing societies and find that low wages abroad are generous compared to the standards of the communities at home.
Understanding immigrants’ economic situation and non-immigrants reality in Lima was a good way to understand their needs, changes, and transitions through immigration. The Peruvian government divides the concept of poverty in two categories: objective and subjective poverty. Objective poverty levels are analyzed in monetary or non-monetary classifications. At the same time, monetary classification is divided into relative poverty or absolute poverty. Additionally, non-monetary poverty deals with anthropometric indicators and basic unsatisfied needs. Subjective poverty is the result of direct surveys of individuals and their levels of satisfaction of basic needs plus the amount of money they require to satisfy those needs (INEI-ENAHO-Peru, 2009).

In Lima, extreme monthly poverty per capita expenses were at S/. 154.40 (US$60.00 using S/. 2.80 Nuevos Soles per dollar in the conversion), and total monthly poverty per capita expenses was at S/. 318.00 (US$123.00 approximately). Even though extreme poverty in Peru fell from 17.1 percent in 2004 to 11.5 percent in 2009, statistics show that monthly expense per capita in Lima (2007-2009) was S/. 438.90 (US$170.00 approximately). Additionally, the monthly minimum vital salary in Peru in December 2009 was S/. 550.00 (US$213.00 approximately). This indicates a marginal difference of S/. 111.00 (US$43.00 approximately) per capita per month between per capita expense and income in Lima and Peru. These statistics show the contrast between the low per capita income and monthly per capita expenses in Lima; it also shows non-immigrants’ ability to survive in a difficult economic reality as seen in this study. These statistics also help explain the reasons for immigration in a middle class society whose members claimed to have had good living conditions before immigration (INEI-ENAHO-Peru, 2009).
The reality is that minimum vital salary in Peru hardly covers monthly expenses per capita in Lima. In the year 2009, the national poverty average in Peru was 34.8 percent, and Lima alone registered 15.3 percent that year. Toche (2005) suggests that Peru has emerged from the labor reform of the 1990s showing a great deficit of decent labor. Internal immigration in Peru since the 1950s has increased Lima’s overcrowded population, resulting in socio-economic problems as well (pp. 243-300).

Some of those problems have generated the job shortage or demand for less skilled jobs as well as socio-cultural problems due to lack of acculturation of immigrants from different regions of Peru (Toche, 2005). Governmental predictions in terms of a better economy and a more tolerant and diverse Peruvian society are and have always been optimistic; however, it is important to point out that the three most important reasons why immigrants left Peru in this study were: Peru’s economic problems, lack of jobs in Peru, and the need for a change. These three reasons express the awareness of a weak Peruvian economy, the desire to work and produce money, and the need for change, including a better life for the migrant and their families as stated by 100 percent of immigrant participants. Even when immigrants migrated with a job offer in New York and their immigration process was fairly easy and documented; the reason to leave Peru was still the instability in the Peruvian labor system. Not many, due to infinite reasons, who have the chance to leave their countries seeking better opportunities, have any clear objectives of what they are coming to do in New York. It is worth noting the high number of Peruvian immigrants (87.5 percent) in this group of study that have started their lives in New York working in the service industry, even those who held professional jobs in Lima.
Immigrants are focused on earning money to pay loans, send remittances, and save as much money as they can, either in New York or Lima. In this study, there are cases in which immigrants were not able to obtain documentation to work, but they had children born in the United States. In those cases, they focused their efforts on buying a house or starting a business in the United States. In other words, immigrants may have had the initial idea to come to the United States to help their families in Lima; however, their situation changed (observed in 15 percent participants, 3 male and 3 female) and affected any commitment they previously made to their families in Lima. As their responsibilities increased in New York, it was reflected in the amounts of economic remittances or gifts normally sent back to Lima.

Thirty-two (80 percent) immigrants who came to New York without permission to work in the United States do not believe in comfort or privacy:

…living in a place by myself would be nice, but the most important is to save and send as much as I can…besides, I only use my bed to sleep at nights, I don’t really care if I don’t have privacy or a room for myself…I came to New York to work, it is supposed to be like this… (Luis A., personal interview, February 18, 2010).

…I didn’t have a car in Lima either, so taking the bus and walking long distances is fine…sharing my room with strangers is okay because I am sending more money…everybody lives like this at the beginning…I know it is not forever…I don’t know how long I will be in New York… (Luis D., personal interview, November 21, 2009).

The lack of investment either in real estate, education, or savings in the United States reflects an adapted temporary situation:

…I wish I could buy a house or start my own manicure business here, but if I am deported, then I will lose everything…I always think that this is temporary and I will eventually have to go back to Lima with my family…also because I can’t imagine living as a senior citizen in this country…I know I haven’t done much for myself either…everything is in Lima…I am living in New York for eight years, and I always wanted to learn to speak English well…sometimes I think it is fine
just the way it is because I keep thinking this is temporary, until I have to return, even though I’m not sure if I want to return… (Julia B., personal interview, August 12, 2009).

It is worth observing and comparing their living environments in New York, and how it was in Lima before immigration to understand their easy adaptation to the circumstances. As noted before, only fifty percent of self-identified middle class non-immigrant participants lived according to a middle class status in Lima. Their homes in Lima still constitute the immigrants’ home and social status before immigration, because no significant changes have been made by their family members in terms of domicile, or improvement of their education, employment, house, or neighborhood. One hundred percent of non-immigrant participants claim middle class membership, but through their socio-economic profile, they reflected the typical current “limeña” emergent middle class group—those who do not belong to a middle class by the standard social class definition. Additionally, the way they chose to live in New York is very much determined by the legal possibilities of staying in the United States.

Immigrants do not openly appreciate how much those low-skilled jobs in the U.S. have provided for them and their families. In most cases, immigrants feel that those jobs are denigrating and something to be done temporarily. It is observed that immigrants showed an aversion to performing low-skilled jobs in Lima before immigration, not only because of insufficient pay, but also because they feel that working in a low-skilled job or the service industry does not go along with their middle class social status. In three cases in this study, immigrants who lost their jobs in Lima had the chance to continue working if they accepted jobs that were considered less skilled than the jobs they held before, but
they did not. Nevertheless, they had no problem coming to the United States to wash dishes, take care of senior citizens, or clean houses.

Once they entered the U.S. system, they took any available job as long as it was a source of income, regardless of the activity the job required. It would be simple to understand this behavior if we only rely on economic opportunities, but the reality is that class and status have been important factors in Peruvian immigrants’ decisions as well. For instance, in Lima, part of the middle class lifestyle is to have help at home such as cooks, cleaning services, or babysitters for children at a very affordable rate or no cost at all. In general, families bring young girls from the provinces of Peru (especially from the highlands) to live with them in Lima. They train them and offer them a place to live. These girls have food, healthcare, education, and in some cases, a small allowance. In return those girls have to work inside the house doing chores for the family members. Twenty-six (65 percent) non-immigrant participants in Lima had domestic help in their homes at the time of the interview. Having domestic help at home in Lima is not considered a luxury, but a lifestyle. It is indeed very affordable. Salaries for domestic help are in general between US$50.00 (S/. 140.00) and US$400.00 (S/. 1,120.00) per month. Some people would even work helping in houses for room and board only. In some cases, families who have domestic help do not provide a salary but an assigned allowance for personal expenses.

Those same twenty-six non-immigrants mentioned above had domestic help at home before and after immigration. This means that immigration and remittances serve to support those living standards. It also means that immigrants’ adaptation and self-sufficiency due to help at home in Lima was a factor difficult to deal with in their
acculturation process in New York. In other words, immigrants not only took jobs in the service industry, but they learned to take care of their own personal needs such as laundry, cooking, and cleaning their living spaces. Their disappointment at having to do household activities was observed when immigrants were asked: what do you miss the most from Lima? Most of those answers included food, friends, and family, but also several immigrants expressed shared feelings on the topic: “the system, everything is easier in Lima;” “having somebody helping you for so little money;” “you can’t have help in this country, you would have to work only to pay for it; it’s ridiculous.” This exemplifies an important but inexpensive privilege of the Peruvian middle class. It also reveals immigrants’ motivations to maintain their middle class status at a distance, connecting their idea of living a “temporary” life in New York and the desire to return in the future to enjoy those privileges.

Immigrants in New York have a negative perception about Peruvian socio-economic growth. One hundred percent of immigrants who send remittances back home agree that the Peruvian economy affects them tremendously. The value of the dollar continues decreasing, and with this, making it harder to maintain their middle-class lifestyle in Lima. Immigrants also wish to increase business opportunities between the U.S. and Peru, but express that there are fewer possibilities than if they were trying to build business ties with Europe, where the euro holds a higher value. This is in fact a push factor, which encourages immigrants to resist ideas of creating or expanding businesses between the U.S. and Peru. They consider a better option to be to continue working in New York and save as much as they can for a future either in Peru or in the United States with or without their families. In the end, their perception of the Peruvian
economy is influenced by what their family members experience in their households and daily lives. As a result, non-immigrant households will continue to rely on the contributions of immigrants because from the immigrants’ perspective they will always find a way to earn money and help their families.

Previous studies of international immigration reflect the lack of jobs and economic stability in developing countries as the main reasons for emigration. The Peruvian case does not differ much from that reality; however, Peruvian immigrants display unique characteristics in terms of social class standards and education that distinguish them from other U.S. immigrants. Therefore, Peruvian motivations are specifically related to the preservation of their class and status.

While Peruvian immigrants’ job opportunities in the U.S. labor market do not differ from the opportunities other immigrants have, it is observed in this study that regardless of their documented status, stability back at home, or accumulated wealth, Peruvian immigrants live a “temporary” life in New York:

…I used to work for the Peruvian Congress in Lima and I have a business here in New York now…we are doing fine, we fought very hard to have this beautiful house and our kids were born here, but my wife and I know that this is all temporary…we will never have the quality of life we will have in Lima when we retire if we stay in the United States…we are living in New York for thirteen years already but when the time comes we want to go back home…it will be very different going back after so many years and having very different lives, but we always knew this was temporary… (Iván O., personal interview, July 21, 2009).

…it is like an investment…working and saving as much as possible so I can set up a business in Lima…I am still young and working in construction is really hard, but we all know this is temporary…I don’t worry much about my documents, if I get them fine, but I am focused on maintaining my job, helping my dad and saving for a better future in Peru (Rafael, personal interview, October 16, 2009).
This “temporary” life has created a gap between immigrants and non-immigrants as a result of distance and separation. However, it is noted that the relationships between immigrants and non-immigrants became stronger and more lasting due to remittances. This connection enables immigrants to preserve a notion of separated physical spaces that include their past, present, and future, but also parallel virtual lives between Peru and the United States.

**Women's Jobs in New York: Transferring More Than Learned Skills and Education**

This subsection analyzes specific cases of women taking on domestic occupations as nannies, the effects of these jobs on mothers with children left behind, and their contributions and experiences. There are a total of twenty women immigrants in this study. In general, women shared the belief that jobs working as nannies or housekeepers are less dangerous. They referred to less danger as not being noticed in the streets, as men do, working in construction, exposing themselves to the authorities if they do not have authorization to work in the United States. It is less dangerous they said; however, it is a never-ending job inside those houses. Two female participants, Gisela and Maria, are between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine years old, and another participant Yolanda is between the ages of forty and forty-nine years old. All of them have been working as nannies since their arrival in New York. Maria has been living and working in New York for eighteen years, Yolanda for nine, and Gisela for three years. Maria left Peru due to economic problems. Her husband abandoned her and she never worked before coming to New York. Maria left Peru when her two sons were ten and nine, and her daughter was seven years old. As Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) point out, nanny-housekeepers
develop strong affection for their employer’s children, transferring to them the love they cannot express for their own.

For Maria, motherhood has been the most difficult role to play at a distance, especially because she had children in Peru. Every year she repeated to herself that her situation in New York was temporary, and that she was going to see her children soon. Her children grew up with her younger sister, who had always helped her with the care of her children. Maria says that she tried to go back Peru several times, but it was difficult for her to go back and stop the main income her sister and children have in Lima from her job in New York. Working as a live-in nanny developed in Maria feelings of guilt, and made her deeply sad, knowing that her children were growing up without her:

Raising other people’s children is painful, and makes me wonder if they (her children) will ever understand my decision … I raised those children (referring to the children in New York) as if they were mine. I held them, and I cried so many times at night thinking of my babies in Lima … My children, because they are my children (the children in New York), they love me, and they tell me more than what they tell their mother … My Jake, (referring to the older kid), will go to college next year, and he said he will miss me the most … I know money is not everything, but my children in Lima would have nothing without this job … I grew up in a good family, I don’t know how to be poor … I was so scared for my babies … They are grown-ups now, and only my Sarita (her daughter) when she became a mother finally understood how much I love them (Maria V., personal interview, July 3, 2009).

Even though Yolanda had been working as a nanny with the same employer for eight years at the time of the interview, she did not feel the same way as Maria about her employer’s children. Yolanda’s case is different. She has a fifteen-year-old son and a seventeen-year-old daughter in Lima. Yolanda never lived at her employer’s house and she came home every night to her husband (also Peruvian and father of her children in Lima). She talked about her job as a nanny as any other job. She complained about the long hours and lack of consideration from her employer. Her employer has three sons
whom she has taken care of since they were born. Thinking that the separation from her children in Lima was a temporary situation, coming back home every night and sharing her sadness and frustrations with her husband made Yolanda cope with separation from her children in a different way. Gisela, like Maria, is also alone in New York. She has two sons - thirty-five and twenty-nine-year-old - in Lima. Gisela came to New York on a vacation trip gift from her sons and stayed in New York with friends. She said she is very affectionate with her employer’s daughter but she knows she is working in New York temporarily. She might go back to Lima soon because her family needs her there and they do not approve of Gisela working in New York.

These women taking on domestic occupations, regardless of their other skills, is part of what Özden and Schiff (2006) call a brain-waste, which takes place when immigrants in the United States earn less than natives who have the same skills. This is a common situation in the United States and the immigration labor system.

Chapter Conclusion

This study shows that Peruvian immigrants have developed an immense responsibility taking care of their families and their wellbeing in Peru. No matter how long they have been living in New York, they have the same motivations and reasons to enter the immigration process. In several cases, immigrants’ living conditions have not improved. This is due to several socio-political and economic factors, but also because there is evidence that immigrants in this study live—or need to believe they live—a “temporary” life. It does not matter how much time immigrants have spent living in New York, they all feel that a job in the service industry to start—even though they have accumulated years of work in that industry already—will eventually end. Some of them
are realistic enough to know that they are growing old and will not be able to perform jobs that require extreme physical activities anymore; however, they also realize that time has passed and they lost the opportunity to be with their children and see them growing up. They also lost the opportunity to instill in them their principles and education. The concept of living a “temporary” life in New York is aimed at preserving identity with a middle class status. In the end after being in New York for so long, the reality of living a “temporary” life does not actually exist.

It is hard for them, especially in cases where mothers took care of children in New York, and they cannot help feeling guilty for having taken away the most important years from their children. Ironically, this was done to ‘improve’ the lives of their children in Lima. As a result, thinking of a “temporary” life in New York encourages immigrants to continue one day at the time without their families. In general, immigrants live as if any time in the near future they will go back to the lives they left on hold. However, this perception and hopeful wish is only a motivator, which encourages them to continue their journey. Immigrants feel that there is no other option than staying as much as they can regardless of their migratory status and with only one objective: to earn money.

Parallel virtual lives, which rely mostly on the use of technology for communication between both continents, have made it less difficult for immigrants to maintain their presence in the life of non-immigrants in Peru. As noted in this study, the most prevalent reasons for emigration—a weak Peruvian economy, and a lack of jobs and opportunities—have caused immigrants to believe that New York is a place where they will be temporarily, giving them the notion that they will eventually go back to Peru and that their economic situation will be resolved in a short period of time. However, these
notions also reflect a belief among immigrants that New York is a ‘secondary location,’ not necessarily perceived as in a different continent, but as the place where any changes and improvements are possible due to its vast opportunities.

In the following chapter, I will closely analyze the distribution and effects of remittances on Peruvian households, and most importantly how immigrants and non-immigrants’ lives are affected in the process of sending and receiving remittances. Some of the cases being analyzed will provide a better understanding of immigrants and non-immigrants’ needs in this economic and cultural exchange.
CHAPTER 4—THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC REMITTANCES ON PERUVIAN HOUSEHOLDS

This chapter provides an analysis of the effects of remittances on Peruvian households using family consumption and expenditure as the main dependent variables. There are eight identified cases with higher remittances inflows, which can shed light on the unique ways in which remittances are used by Peruvians, and in particular their lack of ties to poverty alleviation among Peruvian recipients, as suggested by Özden and Schiff (2007) in their findings. These cases also exemplify the collective drive to succeed among Peruvian immigrants, their experiences as remitters and recipients in New York and Lima, and the shared motivation among immigrants and non-immigrants to preserve their middle class status and values and prevent downward mobility.

Economic remittances to Latin American countries have contributed significantly to households, communities, and nations. Latin American countries constitute the largest remittances market in the world (Terry & Wilson, 2005). Immigrants’ economic returns from investing their human capital abroad have been the greatest motivators for immigration, allowing them to improve the lives of their families left behind. In 2006, Peruvian immigrants around the world sent US$2.8 billion in remittances to Peru. The capital city, Lima, alone received 50 percent of those remittances; 27 percent were sent to the Peruvian coast; 12 percent went to the Peruvian highlands; and 10 percent went to the rain forest region. A study by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática del Perú (INEI-Peru) of a total of 18,598 families in Peru (2002) receiving remittances from abroad shows that 9,226 (49 percent) of those families belong to the poorest social
stratum in Peru. In other words, remittances from abroad benefitted mainly upper and middle class families (Torres-Zorrilla, 2006, pp. 51-4).

**Importance of Remittances for Peruvian Households**

A 2012 study by the World Bank shows that the percentage of Peru’s population living on less than US$1.25 a day (2005 international prices) dropped from 9.5 percent in the year 2003 to 4.9 percent in 2010. Similarly, according to INEI- Perú (2012), Peru’s poverty decreased from 27.8 percent in 2011 to 25.8 percent in 2012. These numbers reflect that poverty in Peru has dropped at a steadier pace than in other Latin American countries, where in the past decade it declined from 56 percent to below 30 percent (El Comercio, 2012). Prior to this, Peru’s political and economic stability had been recovering only slowly after years of terrorist attacks that started in 1980 and ended in 1992 with the capture of “Shining Path” leader Abimael Guzmán. The Peruvian economy stagnated in these years as well, due to the lack of foreign investment and credibility (Altamirano, 2000). This is despite the fact that Peru’s Constitution guarantees foreign investors the same rights and benefits as national investors, including tax exemptions as noted in the 1992 Peruvian Supreme Decree 162-92 EF.

The measurement of poverty in Peru takes into account living costs or expenses in the household, but not the income of individuals. In terms of individual income in the year 2012, extreme poverty in Peru affected 19.7 percent of the rural population and 1.4 percent of the population in urban areas (ENAHO-Peru, 2012). Overall, roughly 6 percent of the Peruvian population was living in extreme poverty in 2012, defined as earning and living at S/151.00 monthly (about US$54.00 monthly approximately). Furthermore, another 7.1 percent of the population lived at poverty income levels of S/.
284.00 (US$101.00 approximately) (INEI-ENAHO Peru, 2012). According to reports, the Peruvian economy has improved in the last decade, and poverty has been reduced. However, economic improvement has not eliminated persistent poverty. It is in this context of economic growth alongside persistent poverty that remittances have played a significant role in reshaping households, incomes, and family relationships. The role of remittances is even more complex when we consider that while overall income remains low in Peru, living costs in Lima – where the majority of remittances are received and distributed – are much higher than in the rest of the country.

This study confirms that the amount of remittances non-immigrants receive matches and often surpasses incomes of extreme or total poverty levels in Peru. Significantly, the percentage of Peruvians living in extreme or total poverty has continued to decrease over the past few years. In the years 2009 and 2010 respectively, 29.8 and 23.8 percent of Peruvians lived in extreme and/or total poverty in rural areas, contrasting with urban populations where only 2.0 and 1.9 percent respectively, lived in extreme and/or total poverty (INEI-Peru 2012). This reaffirms the lower percentage of the population living in extreme or total poverty in the city of Lima. In most cases, remittances received in Lima do not eradicate poverty; rather they serve to alleviate constant or temporary economic distress in the households of non-immigrants. These results are shown in part because none of the non-immigrant participants in this study lived in extreme poverty at the moment of the interview or received remittances as the only source of income in the household; rather, remittances are used to help maintain or improve non-immigrants’ living conditions or to fulfill economic needs beyond basic consumption in the household.
Approximately three fourths of all remittances to Latin America are earned in the United States. Statistical reports provided by money transfer agencies in Peru show that 50 percent of remittances received in Peru originated in the United States and, on average, totaled US$190.00 a month per household (Panfichi, 2007). New York immigrant participants in this study send remittances to Lima non-immigrants in varied ways. The majority of immigrants (55 percent) prefer to send money on a monthly basis. In this study, 22 immigrants sent monthly remittances to Lima from New York, each time averaging US$280.00 (S/. 784.00 approximately, using an exchange of S/. 2.80 Nuevos Soles per dollar). Of those sending remittances, a few (10 immigrants) send an average of US$100.00 (S/. 280.00 approximately) a month; those sending remittances weekly (5 immigrants) send an average of US$516 (S/. 1,445.00 approximately) a month, and those sending remittances biweekly (3 immigrants) send an average of US$510 (S/. 1,428.00 approximately) a month.

Of 18,598 Peruvian homes receiving remittances surveyed by ENAHO in 2002, the average household consisted of 4.4 inhabitants. Of those households, only 16 percent belonged to the richest stratum, while 84 percent belonged to the poorest (Torres-Zorrilla, 2006). ENAHO used five different segments to classify families: educational level of the head of household, family income, food and education expenses, family banking use or affiliations, affiliation to Essalud—Peru’s social security health system—and housing characteristics that include flooring, use of electricity, water or sewer systems, as well as the availability of bathrooms and kitchen areas in the household, use of appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, TVs, radios, washers, personal computers, and telephones, and car ownership. These classifications are relevant because participants in this study use
these types of markers to identify themselves socially, and they reflect and influence how participants use remittances.

As previously observed, there were twenty-two non-immigrants (55 percent) receiving remittances in amounts exceeding the poverty income thresholds at S/. 284.00 soles a month (US$101 approximately) per capita established by the Peruvian government. However, not all participants’ households in Lima consisted of only one member. The average number of family members residing in households of surveyed remittance recipients was two; of those households receiving more than per-capita monthly expenses in remittances in Lima, the average household size was three family members. The Peruvian government currently establishes that a family of three would need to have an income of S/. 792.00 a month (US$283 approximately) to cover their basic household consumption expenses. Moreover, of the twenty-eight (70 percent) recipients in Lima in my survey who were heads of household, only eighteen (45 percent) had permanent jobs. Of the remaining twenty-two non-immigrants (55 percent), those who were not heads of household, twelve (30 percent) were retirees or had never had a job and ten (25 percent) were without steady employment. These results confirm that even those heads of household with permanent jobs were not entirely responsible for the household’s economy. Nevertheless, those twelve and ten heads of household who were retired or occasionally employed had the same control over remittances and decision making at home as those who had permanent jobs. This is significant because it reaffirms the fact that remittances become and are handled as if they were an income and are distributed based on current needs within the family.
Terry and Wilson (2005) suggest that receivers of remittances in general have a limited educational level, low income, and lack of knowledge of banking systems in both their country of origin and in the United States. But the Peruvian case is a bit different. One hundred percent of Peruvian remittance remitters and receivers have knowledge of local and U.S. banking systems.

This study shows that Peruvian immigrants prefer to use money transfer agencies (MTA) to send remittances. Thirty-six (90 percent) immigrants who used MTAs to send remittances affirmed that using MTAs is safe and easy. It can be done at home, at work, or at any computer through the use of the Internet. It can also be done at supermarkets or any of the thousands of agencies in most towns. In general, Peruvian immigrants do not consider sending fees to be high, even though fees vary depending on the financial institution and have increased over the last few years. They added that there are many different MTAs to choose from, and that fees are competitive but relatively cheap if you avoid using a bank.

Their primary concern is that remittances arrive at the destination as soon as the transaction is finished and without problems for the recipient. Interestingly, only three (7.5 percent) immigrants used banks to remit their money. Due to their undocumented status, not all immigrants were able to open a bank account. However, in cases where immigrants had bank accounts in New York, their family members used additional ATM cards in Lima to retrieve the money from the same bank’s ATM. There is an average fee between US$3.75- US$6 applied to transactions between US$100-200 in Lima. This fee does not include the ‘Impuesto de Transacción Financiera’ or ITF (Financial Transaction Tax) of S/.0.05 established by the Peruvian government. There was only one immigrant
participant who remitted money through a friend who traveled to Lima every month. She
affirms that the method is safe and she has been using this method for the last ten years
without problems. Immigrants in this study did not use combined methods to remit their
money and they were consistent with their chosen method of remittance, even if they
moved to different towns. They have been consistent in remitting money, and in using
and trusting the same financial institutions in the U.S. for years. Trust in transnational
financial institutions and the consistency in the flow of remittances has a significant
impact in receiving households. They are critical in establishing the foundation for new
businesses and business relationships that benefit remitters and recipients. Even though
there are established financial programs that allow remittances to count as income in
order to purchase real estate or to obtain lines of credit in Lima, remitters and recipients
tend to be penalized with higher fees and interest rates for using remittances as an
income. Indeed, this study shows that interest rates applied to loans for real estate
purchases where remittances are a part of the income are extremely high (at least 4 points
higher) compared to rates being offered to Peruvian citizens living and earning in Lima.

While trust and consistency in remittances have created new opportunities to build
businesses in these transnational families, there are still obstacles in the Peruvian bank
and lending system that work against those who send and receive remittances.

Remittances: Use and Impact

This section explores the effects of remittances on middle class Peruvian
households. It highlights how in Peru, in contrast to most other Latin American cases,
remittances largely help to maintain middle class status, rather than alleviate the
conditions of poverty. It takes into account the economic situation of the immigrant and
non-immigrants’ household prior to migration, and shows the effects of remittances on their quality of life after migration.

Terry and Wilson (2005) suggest that arrangements between family members in countries of origin and abroad are informal and implicit ‘contracts’ in which the immigrant sends periodic payments to maintain their family members in their country of origin. This not only provides material support for the household, but ensures its social reproduction by assuring a place for the immigrant until his or her return. The participants in this study created these informal contracts before departing Lima by discussing the handling of remittances. The initial agreement between immigrants and non-immigrants regardless of their gender was to arrive in New York and start producing money, primarily to pay debts. They discussed how money would be distributed in their households in Lima after emigration. However, once departed, immigrants found that they did not necessarily have any influence in the household’s monetary distribution. More often, non-immigrants convinced immigrants that they had special knowledge about how to distribute the remittances because they were in Lima and experiencing the economic changes taking place around them, a knowledge no longer available to the remitter far away in New York. They argued that this knowledge gave them a better perspective on how to prioritize and balance the distribution of remittances, always in a frugal and intelligent way:

…but my husband doesn’t ask me anymore what I will do with the money… he used to ask me… but ten months later he finally understood that I am here with all the bills to pay… once he understood that I am very careful with the money he stopped asking… I always tell him about new projects or extra money I need to cover unexpected expenses, sometimes he doesn’t agree… at the end he says oh well, I guess you know better, you are there, and you are a smart woman… (Carmen, personal interview, July 17, 2010).
Only one (2.5 percent) male immigrant had control over remittances. This was because the immigrant deposited remittances into a bank account, which he monitored from New York. In fourteen (35 percent) cases, immigrants and non-immigrants together decided the distribution of remittances in the household, and twenty-five non-immigrants (62.5 percent) decided alone. In other words, non-immigrants seem to have more control over the distribution of remittances. Their decisions about remittances exemplify their function in maintaining middle class lifestyles. In most cases, non-immigrants assign certain amount of remittances to new social activities, such as going to the movies, the theater or concerts for the first time, or to adding or improving appliances and consumer electronics, or also to home remodeling projects.

There are gender differences in immigrants’ remittances in this study. In terms of sex and age, immigrant remitters are divided in two groups: 20 men and 20 women. Twenty-eight (70 percent) immigrants are between the ages of twenty-nine and forty-nine years old, comprising the predominant group of remitters in this study. Non-immigrant recipients, include thirteen men (32.5 percent) and twenty-seven women (67.5 percent). Of those forty immigrant participants, male immigrants send an average of US$350.00 and women send an average of US$254.50 a month in remittances. The almost one hundred dollar difference in remittances between male and female remitters can be attributed to their distinct earning power and the cultural aspects associated with the head of household role, in which traditionally males are more responsible for family income.

Twenty-eight (70 percent) non-immigrant participants in Lima were heads of household at the time of the interview. As noted, twenty-five non-immigrants (62.5 percent), seventeen women and eight men, made individual decisions about money
distribution. In fourteen cases (35 percent) both immigrants and non-immigrants made decisions together, and only one male immigrant made decisions about money distribution alone. As stated by non-immigrant participants, the three main uses of remittances in Lima are: to help with household expenses, to cover all household expenses, and to pay utility bills. Ten non-immigrant recipients (25 percent) asserted they received remittances to cover all living expenses in Lima, but in practice they did not because they had other sources of income, which covered most of the household expenses. Similarly, those other eleven (27.5 percent) and eight (20 percent) non-immigrant recipients rely on remittances to cover some of their basic needs as well, even though they have expressed that remittance money is only to help with household expenses, pay utilities, and help with healthcare or education expenses.

Of those thirty non-immigrants (75 percent) receiving remittances on a regular basis, excluding those ten that cover all household expenses through remittances, twenty of them (67 percent) receive an average of US$280.00, which is approximately S/. 784.00. This is S/.204.00 more than the S/. 580.00 minimum vital (subsistence) monthly income in Lima (INEI- Peru, 2010). Lima, compared to other cities and areas in Peru, has a relatively high cost of living (INEI-Peru, 2010). The US$4-$5.00 (S/. 14.63) Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) as defined by The World Bank (2013) is the initial per capita daily income. Based on national poverty standards in Peru, it can be enough to supply one person with food and transportation expenses for a day. However, people get sick and incur many other expenses such as rent, taxes, education, personal care, entertainment, social events, and family or personal emergencies.
The following eight cases exemplify the collective drive among Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants to preserve middle class values and prevent downward mobility. They also demonstrate the dissociation of remittances and poverty alleviation as suggested by Özden and Schiff (2007). Of those eight cases with the higher inflows of remittances, the first case to closely analyze is the case of Jesús (immigrant), his son Jorge, and his wife Rosa (non-immigrants). Jesús immigrated to New York three years before the interview. He has a son who is a U.S. citizen (Alberto) and lives in New York. Alberto petitioned Jesús (who had already separated from his wife) to come to the United States to live with him and his family. At sixty-five years old, Jesús was still working in Lima. Alberto wanted to offer Jesús a better life and insisted that Jesús came to live in New York with him and his family.

Very soon after his arrival in New York, Jesús moved to a small efficiency room close to his son’s neighborhood. His continued disagreements about his granddaughters’ education and the way his son and daughter-in-law were raising his granddaughters caused problems within his son’s family. Jesús regrets the decision he made coming to live in New York, except for the fact that unlike the Peruvian job market, and even though he does not speak English, at sixty-five years old, he could find a job. He spent three months without earning money in New York until he finally got a job as a baker at Dunkin Donuts, which is the first and only job he has had for the last three years. Jesús sends remittances to his wife (who never had a job) through his younger son, Jorge, who also lives in Lima. Jesús and his wife do not speak to each other. Even though he and his wife were separated (not legally divorced) and were living in different homes, Jesús has always taken care of her. Jesús sends a total of US$440.00 a month in remittances.
His wife uses the remittances to pay utilities and rent for her small apartment. Jesús’ other two children living in Lima, a girl and a boy, help their mother with additional expenses. It is noticeable that Jesús’ motivation to help his wife is only a moral obligation since they were not together even before he immigrated. Jesús stated in his interview that he has been separated from his wife for a while; however, she is the mother of his children and for that reason she deserves any economic help Jesús can provide. He also said that they are still married and it is his obligation to take care of her. Jesús’ remittances improved the quality of life for his wife in Lima. After immigration, with his job as a baker, Jesús sends 100 percent more than the money he used to give his wife when he was living and working in Lima. When Jesús was living in Lima, he used to give his wife US$220 a month to help her with the apartment rent. In other words, his wife could improve her living conditions due to Jesús’ immigration to New York and remittances. Additionally, his wife Rosa emphasized the improvement in her quality of life in that she could save for emergencies, socialize, and attend the theater in Lima more often. Jesús knows that this situation could be temporary. He said he has the debt of his car to pay off in New York, and maybe he will go back to Lima after that. However, Jesús is not sure what he will do in Lima because he does not have savings, and it would be impossible for him to get a job in Lima at his age. In fact, at the end of Jesús’ “temporary” life in New York, his return to Lima would significantly affect his wife’s middle class lifestyle.

A different case is that of Pedro (immigrant) and his mother Emilia (non-immigrant). Even though Pedro used irregular methods to come to the United States, he obtained his residency within five years of his arrival in New York. Pedro decided to
move to New York after he was fired from his job in Lima. Uncertainty in the Peruvian labor market and his need to experience a change in his life (he lives with his same-sex partner in Manhattan) were Pedro’s motivations to emigrate. He has been working in the service industry since his arrival in New York and sends a total of US$800 a month in remittances. All his life while living in Lima, Pedro’s mother rented the places where Pedro, his brother, and sister grew up. These unstable circumstances motivated Pedro to buy a home for his mother, negotiating the mortgage in a local bank in Lima using his remittances as income. Remittances have a positive and significant impact on bank deposit and bank credit, as pointed out by Fajnzylber and López (2008). However, Pedro affirms that the interest rates he was offered for mortgages are around four points higher than interest rates offered to Peruvian citizens working and living in Lima. He also explained that regardless of the high interest, his apartment is still held as collateral by the bank in case Pedro fails to pay. Pedro pays his mortgage directly from New York; this means that the remittances Pedro sends to his mother are for her care and personal expenses.

Remittances are used for her food, health care, and savings (60 percent of remittances), as well as for other projects Pedro has in mind for the future. Pedro’s brother and sister moved into the apartment with their mother and Pedro’s sister had a baby by the time they were moving into the new apartment. Pedro’s brother and sister go to school with Pedro’s financial support and contribute economically to the household with temporary jobs they have in Lima. In this case, Pedro’s family could improve the neighborhood in which they lived, and their living conditions in general, with Pedro’s remittances. Pedro’s mother and her two other children expressed their satisfaction with
being able to say that they now belong to the middle class. His mother also said: “I was poor, and I used to belong to a poor class, now I belong to the middle class” (Emilia Paredes, personal interview, July 15, 2010).

Furthermore, Pedro is not planning to go back to live in Lima unless he can set up a business there. His next goal is to finish paying for the apartment in Lima, continue his studies, and obtain a college degree. After that, he intends to set up a family business in which his brother and sister could have also an opportunity to work. It is important to point out Pedro’s determination to succeed, not only to help his family live a better life and by building new businesses, but also in assuring his education as a valuable asset for his own personal development. Pedro embodies the direct link between education and aspirations to the Peruvian middle class in this study.

The third case is the case of Rafael (immigrant) and his parents (non-immigrants). Rafael immigrated to New York seven years before the interview. Rafael stated that he was doing fine working in a glass company in Lima, but his wife left him unexpectedly and he ended up alone with two children. He moved to his parents’ house so his mother could help him with child care. Soon after that, Rafael decided to immigrate to New York, searching for better opportunities for him and his two children left behind in Lima. Rafael lives in a house in Queens that he shares with three other immigrants. He has been working in construction since his arrival to New York and he could not improve his working conditions or earnings due to his undocumented status. He also added that he only speaks elementary English.

He sends his parents US$650.00 in remittances monthly. Rafael’s father is retired and has a pension, and his mother has a job in a government office in Lima. Rafael’s
remittances are used to cover his two children’s education and personal expenses. His
two children attend a local private high school and are learning English in a private
academy. Rafael is not planning to go back to Lima until his children become
professionals in Peru. He is aware that his income is making relevant differences in his
children’s lives and Rafael believes that they can have a promising future if he continues
earning at the same rate at his construction job in New York. He also expressed a positive
attitude towards the job market in New York, stating that at thirty-six years old, he still
has many years of job opportunities ahead, and if he goes back to Peru, he will lose every
possibility to educate and care for his children. Rafael believes that while he is still
young, he can continue earning money, even if he has to sacrifice his own personal
development for the wellbeing of his children.

Marino (immigrant) and his wife Yandira (non-immigrant) are the fourth case. Marino
came to New York on a tourist visa (long since expired) six years before the
interview. Marino lives in Brentwood, Long Island in a three-room house, which he
shares with other immigrants, and works in construction. He does not speak English
fluently, but what little he does know has helped him obtain better working conditions
with more responsibility supervising and translating for other immigrants; this increases
his working hours and allows him to earn more money despite his immigration status.

Marino sends US$1,000 a month in remittances and, since coming to New York, has helped his wife establish a grocery store in the front area of their house in Lima. The
business is profitable, and it is the main income in his family of five children. Marino’s
remittances are used to help with college expenses for three of his children who are
already attending college in Lima. Marino is not planning to go back to Lima any time
soon. He affirms that he was determined to live away from his wife. His relationship with his wife was complicated before immigration and part of his reasons for leaving Peru was to start a new life. But Marino also feels that regardless of his reasons for leaving Peru, it is his obligation to take care of his family. Immigration for Marino and his wife is a way to maintain their middle-class status, not only economically, but also socially and culturally in that Marino left his marriage without causing pain to his family for having to face a divorce. In this way, Marino is away from home and his children, but he is part of their lives and he feels rewarded by having the chance to give them a better future.

Marino was fifty-two years old at the time of the interview and he understood that working in construction would not be a long-term job due to his age and the extreme physical activity that this job requires. However, he was not worried as he ultimately knew he had a home and a business to go back when needed. He expressed his desire to see his children, but his priority is to help them become professionals. Until then, he is only focused on working in New York, hoping that one day he can travel to visit them or they can visit him.

Mercedes (immigrant) and her sister Gloria (non-immigrant) are the fifth case. Mercedes came to New York twenty years before the interview. She lives in a house in White Plains with her husband and their two children. When Mercedes and her husband lived in Lima, they owned a restaurant. She affirms that knowing about the restaurant business helped her adjust in New York while working part-time restaurant jobs when they first arrived. Mercedes’ sister-in-law is a U.S. citizen and she petitioned for Mercedes and her husband to come to New York with authorization to work.
Before immigration, Mercedes was not sure about moving to New York, but unfortunately after the tragic death of one of her three children, she decided to leave Lima for a change. She left her mother and sister in Lima. Her mother is a senior citizen who needs health care and attention. Mercedes’ only sister, a teacher, takes care of her mother in Lima.

Mercedes owns a gas station and a small shop in White Plains where she sells imported products from Peru. Her sister represents Mercedes’ business in Lima and she is in charge of shopping for Peruvian products to be exported. She also prepares export documentation for shipments to be sent to New York. Mercedes sends US$700 in remittances monthly, which is used to cover her mother’s health care and personal expenses. Mercedes goes back and forth to Lima, not only to visit her mother and sister, but also to keep up with her business in Lima. As noted before, Mercedes is not the only immigrant who has helped non-immigrants’ economy at home with the creation of a business in Lima. Moreover, the quality of life of Mercedes’ mother has improved. Before migration, Mercedes’ mother used the social security hospital system services, but now that she is receiving remittances, she is able to go to a private clinic. Her daughter Gloria, who lives with her in Lima, expressed that she is happy not having to wait for long periods of time to get an appointment at the hospital. She also indicated the quality of her medication is better because she is able to buy exactly what the doctor prescribes instead of taking alternative medication that the hospital gives her due to high demand and lack of medicine.

In terms of the positive impact of remittances on financial development, Fajnzylber and López (2008) suggest that the impact on Latin American countries might
be smaller compared to other regions. This is because Latin Americans are typically less likely to use financial institutions because of greater distrust of banks in that region. Mercedes, for example, does not trust the financial system in either Peru or the United States. Mercedes has expressed her disappointment in having to pay transaction fees when she uses financial institutions in Lima, and for the same reason, she does not use money transfer agencies to remit her money either. Mercedes believes that using MTAs to remit money is unnecessary, and having friends or family take remittances to Lima is safer and does not cost her at all. Moreover, all the transactions of Mercedes’ business in New York and Lima are in cash and she buys and sells merchandise for her business using cash only, including buying fuel for the gas station she owns in New York.

Mercedes’ avoidance of financial systems is related to her unwillingness to use technology in general. Mercedes wants to continue taking part in an economic system where she believes she can maintain control of her finances by using only cash for her transactions and by avoiding taxes. She expressed her satisfaction at being able to also avoid fees for maintaining a checking account, on transactions using ATMs, for using cashiers at the bank, or by using telephone systems. Mercedes’ decision to handle her finances without using financial institutions shows that Mercedes’ middle-class status and identity is not reflected in her capacity to use financial institutions, but in her determination to avoid what she considers unnecessary expenses. It is relevant to point out that the use of checking accounts for financial transactions is new in the Peruvian banking system. Most people do not write checks to make payments or open checking accounts because they do not pay any interest. While maintaining a personal or business checking account in Peru is a sign of prestige and financial stability in terms of class, it
has not really influenced consumers’ behavior considerably. Mercedes’ case is an example of how immigrants apply their experiences when taking care of their finances without using financial institutions in New York.

The sixth case is that of Yolanda (immigrant) and her daughter Rosa (non-immigrant). Yolanda emigrated from Lima nine years before the interview and lives in Port Chester in a two-room apartment with her husband and her three-year-old daughter, who was born in New York. Yolanda’s husband had temporary jobs and she had a refreshment stand in Lima before immigration; but the income from their refreshment business was not enough and she was always struggling for money. Once in New York, Yolanda started working in the service industry until her daughter was born. It was difficult for Yolanda to work while her daughter was an infant, but now that she is attending pre-school, Yolanda can work a few hours to earn the US$590 a month she needs to send her two children and mother in Lima.

Yolanda’s mother is in charge of her children in Lima. Just a few months before the interview, Yolanda’s daughter, Rosa, had a baby and the father of the baby abandoned her. Rosa expressed that her situation is difficult because she does not have a job and it is difficult to find one having a baby at home. Yolanda’s mother is a senior citizen, and she manages the refreshment stand Yolanda used to have in Lima. Yolanda also has a son who is finishing high school and is planning to attend college with Yolanda’s help. Yolanda sends remittances to cover her children’s expenses in Lima and help with household expenses in general. Yolanda’s mother, two children, and granddaughter live in the ‘Los Olivos’ district in a two-bedroom apartment that belongs to Yolanda’s mother. Yolanda wants to go back to Lima to reunite with her family;
however, she is realistic about not being able to earn the amount of money in Lima that she is earning with her part-time job in New York if she goes back.

Her only concern is to be able to work in New York and earn the US$590 a month, because it is an income that her family in Lima depends on. Ansión et al. (2008) studied the importance of extended family members helping those in cases in which either one of the parents left home to work abroad. Grandparents, uncles, or aunts find a way to support children left behind. After years apart, the rupture between couples separated by migration is mostly inevitable. However, when children are left behind in the care of family members other than their parents in Lima, the relationship between the immigrant parent and the children remains strong across the distance. Family members such as grandparents, uncles, or aunts emphasize the importance of making children understand the sacrifices their parents face working in New York. They also teach children the importance of remittances in terms of improving their education and quality of life in general.

Immigrants experience not only feelings of guilt, but also the constant preoccupation that the person taking care of their children is getting older or sick. Yolanda’s case also reflects how transnationalization and the commodification of her family structure have shaped Yolanda’s family practices at home. While Yolanda is in New York trying to work as many hours as possible to help her family in Lima, her daughter Rosa, a high school student, got pregnant and had a baby. It has been difficult for Yolanda’s mother to handle this situation in Lima, and it has changed the interaction within the family in Lima. Rosa, who is now a single mother, lives in the same household with her grandmother, younger brother, and the new baby boy. She has problems
interacting with her grandmother because she is not able to adapt to her new role as a mother, and assume her responsibility economically or emotionally. This situation has caused additional emotional and economic distress for Yolanda because she feels that she is now also responsible for her grandson as well.

Regardless of the problems in Lima, Yolanda’s son is motivated to continue post-secondary education with Yolanda’s economic help. In other words, Yolanda’s children rely on remittances to maintain their lifestyle and fulfill their future plans, regardless of Yolanda’s situation or options in New York. Changes taking place at Yolanda’s home in Lima with her family, especially her daughter’s new role as a mother and her inability to deal with the consequent economic responsibilities, is an example of how Yolanda’s support through remittances is extended to preserve the well-being of her family—not only economically, but through the preservation of their middle-class status as well. Yolanda’s daughter’s experience with single motherhood challenged the expected behavior of gente decente. Yolanda is mortified about this unexpected situation, though she continues to send remittances in order to enable her family to overcome it. Yolanda expresses feelings of guilt for leaving her daughter in the care of her mother and suggests that her daughter’s pregnancy happened as a result of her absence. For Yolanda, sending remittances is a way to hopefully preserve, or recover, the family she left. The only sense of control she has over her children, besides sporadic telephone communication, is their mutual satisfaction that her remittances are supplying for their wants and needs. Filial obligation is commodified.

The seventh case is that of César (immigrant) and his wife Nancy (non-immigrant). César came to New York thirteen years before the interview and lives in
Queens in a one-room apartment he shares with two other immigrants. Before emigrating, César was unemployed and became a taxi driver in order to earn money and maintain his family in Lima. He did not have authorization to work when he arrived in New York, but through his job, and after eight years, César obtained his residency. César sends US$1,000 a month in remittances to his family. His wife, Nancy, was not working after her younger son was born two years before her interview in Lima. César has two sons with his wife, ages sixteen and two.

With remittances, his older son has attended local private elementary and high schools. At the time of the interview in Lima, his son had already graduated from high school and was attending an intensive English program in Lima. Nancy stated that César used to send more money in remittances, but since he got residency, he needed to start saving and spending more money preparing the place where they would live as a family in New York. They did not own the apartment where Nancy and her children were living in the district of Chorrillos in Lima, therefore remittances included rent expenses for Nancy and her two children. Remittances also helped maintain the family’s middle-class status in Lima by giving his family the ability to live in a safe neighborhood in Lima, to enjoy cable TV and the use of computers and the Internet, and to improve the education of his children by sending them to private schools and academies.

Nancy and her two children had obtained U.S. residency and were preparing to join César in New York in the weeks following the time of the interview. César has sisters in Lima who sporadically received remittances through Nancy. Because César’s sister expressed disappointment in the future lack of remittances, Nancy indicated she would probably continue to send them money when she is established in New York; she
understands how much extra money helps even when there are no emergencies at home. This case reflects an example of non-immigrants’ expectation to maintain their middle-class status through remittances, and how much their hopes rely on them, regardless of the immigrants’ actual economic situation or possibilities in general.

There is a collective belief among non-immigrants that immigrants are in a much better economic position in New York, and it is not really a problem for them to help with remittances. Remittances can also become an issue when immigrants assign them for specific expenses, such as children’s education, health care, or helping with utility bills in the household, and when in some cases non-immigrants re-assign those remittances. This includes supporting non-immigrants during periods of low-income or unemployment. Remittances then are not only to help fulfill household needs, but to support other members of the family in need, creating and imposing an obligation for the immigrant to continue sending remittances regardless of their economic situation or responsibilities abroad.

The eighth case is the case of Carlos (immigrant) and his wife Norma (non-immigrant). Carlos’ mother and sister had already been living in New York for six years when they petitioned for Carlos to move to the United States. Carlos and his family live in Manhattan in a two-room apartment. At the time of his immigration to New York, Carlos was unemployed and engaged to his wife. He immigrated alone, leaving his wife in Lima, three years before the interview, and he has been working in the service industry since his arrival in New York.

Carlos expressed the need to start learning English as soon as possible in order to improve his employment opportunities in New York. His wife lives in the district of
Barranco in Lima with her daughter and granddaughter. Carlos sends US$400 in remittances a month. His wife owns her home; she is unemployed, but her daughter has a full-time job in a corporate office in Lima. Remittances are used to contribute to household expenses. Norma plans to start working in New York as soon as she immigrates in order to continue helping her daughter through remittances. Norma is also a self-identified middle class Peruvian citizen who has always had middle class financial stability in Lima. She owns her home and she performed only office jobs in Lima. She was unemployed because she would not accept a job that was not appropriate for her office/secretarial skills. In other words, Carlos’ remittances cover Norma’s personal expenses in Lima and help maintain her middle-class status. It is relevant to point out Norma’s perspective on work once she arrives in New York: “it is different in New York; you can do anything, and even clean tables like Carlos does… It doesn’t matter because no one knows you” (Norma D., personal interview, July 8, 2010).

The eight cases presented above include immigrant participants sending the higher remittances inflows in this study. These cases illustrate the collective drive Peruvian immigrants have to preserve their middle class status and prevent downward mobility. They demonstrate the lack of association in Peru between remittances and lower poverty levels. As a result, the main motivation all immigrant participants shared was an altruistic obligation to their family members in Lima. According to previous studies on remittances, higher remittances inflows are generally associated with lower poverty as suggested by Özden and Schiff (2007). As observed in these cases, immigrants’ economic conditions in Peru are very different. For the most part, remittances help improve and maintain middle-class status in Peru. They cover a range of
expenses, including utility bills, children’s education, family healthcare, and general household expenses. Importantly, the remaining thirty-two cases in this study reinforce the eight cases described above, and each focused on maintaining their families’ middle class status through remittances. In general, this group of immigrants relies on their ability to find jobs, and, even though those jobs are not permanent, they have maintained uninterrupted steady incomes to remit. This productivity points to the fact that Peruvian immigrants are not selective when it comes to jobs and occupations in New York. In the Peruvian case, money ameliorates their loss of prestige, because in the end it is mostly non-immigrants who benefit with the continuation of a previously established middle class and its associated values. In reality, remittances are not the only source of income in any of the recipients’ households; in all cases, there was established economic stability both before and after immigration.

Remittances have also served (in two cases) to establish successful businesses in Lima regardless of the immigrants’ migratory status. In one case, the immigrant has a home, a family, and a business to go back to if he is not able to solve his migratory status in the U.S.; in another case, the immigrant goes back and forth to Lima, and has also created a business opportunity and a source of income for her sister.

Remittances affect families in different ways because needs vary in receiving households, but remittances are not the only income on which these families depend either. Nevertheless, remittances are significant in the household economy and they make relevant differences in the receivers’ lives. As a result, there are specific cases in this group that involve children benefiting from remittances through improving the quality and continuation of their education. Besides paying utility bills, improving food quality,
buying home appliances, or contributing to savings, education is one of the most important investments in households with school-age children. Eighteen non-immigrant households (45 percent) designate part or all of remittances to the education of their children. Remittances have been a great contributor to children’s education in developing countries and Peru is not the exception. In this research, there are eighteen non-immigrant female heads of household and thirteen of them have school-age children. They all affirm that children are focused on their studies and look forward to remittance flows in order to continue or to improve their education. Significantly, this study shows that in Peru, children are highly motivated by the opportunity to be educated in private schools, and parents or family members in charge of children’s education in Lima teach them to have a special appreciation for their education because it depends on the received remittances. Children also learn that a privileged education will assure them a different and more promising future. In fact, through these experiences at home, children learn about the existent relationship between education and social middle class. In these cases, the absence of remittances would have a noticeable, negative impact in children’s lives; they would either have to continue their education in a public system with fewer educational resources or possibly end their education at the elementary or high school level altogether, a clear contradiction of middle class expectations.

**The Peruvian Middle Class and Remittances**

The highest inflow of remittances in this study includes eight Peruvian immigrants sending an average of US$698 a month. This reaches 20 percent of non-immigrant middle class households in this study. The analysis on non-immigrants receiving the highest remittances inflows provides a better understanding of the effects of
remittances in Peruvian households because according to their socio-economic profiles and remittance expenditures, these recipients are not focused on lowering poverty, but rather on preserving their middle class status and values, as well as preventing downward mobility. Wilson and Terry (2005) affirm that the average Latin American remitters in the United States are younger than 35 years old. Of those remitters sending the highest flows of remittances in this study, there are two remitters between the ages of sixty and sixty-nine years old; one remitter between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine years old, three remitters between the ages of forty and forty-nine years old, and two remitters between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-nine years old. In this same group, there are six male and two female participants. Six of them held jobs in Lima as taxi drivers, office assistants, house painters, and in the food industry before emigration. One of them was a student and was fired from his job three months before emigration; the other immigrant was unemployed for a long time before emigration. For Peruvian immigrants, age is not a limiting barrier. In evaluating the risks associated with immigration in New York, Peruvian immigrants are confident that they will find a job regardless of their previous work experience, language proficiency, or middle-class status, among other factors. This distinguishes the New York labor market from that of Peru, where some of these are critical obstacles to employment, which is central to middle class values.

In terms of occupation in New York, seven have jobs in the service industry and one has an import/export business in New York with a small office branch in Lima. Two live in Manhattan, two live in Queens, one in Port Chester, one in White Plains, one in the Mid-Hudson area, and another one on Long Island. In Lima, their non-immigrant family members include six females and one male who receive remittances. Two are
between the ages of seventy and seventy-nine years old, two are between the ages of sixty and sixty-nine years old, one between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine years old, two between the ages of forty and forty-nine years old and one between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine years old. Of this group, only three non-immigrants have jobs: one has a grocery store business, the second non-immigrant handles her sister’s import/export office branch in Lima, and the third one has temporary jobs in the service industry. Of those five non-immigrants without jobs, two of them never worked, one is unemployed, and two are retired.

Moreover, the eight different districts or neighborhoods with high remittance inflows were identified as San Miguel, Breña, Santa Catalina, San Martín de Porres, Pachacamac, Los Olivos, Chorrillos and Barranco. The National Latino Survey of the Hispanic Pew center and the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that Hispanic remitters are young, and those who immigrated at 20 years of age or younger are more likely to send remittances (Terry & Wilson, 2005). In summary, remitters with the higher remittances outflows in this study are younger than receivers but not necessarily young compared to the average remitters in the United States. Moreover, they are not associated with lower poverty as suggested by Özden and Schiff (2007). This also exemplifies the collective drive among Peruvian immigrants to associate employment, Peruvian middle class values, and the prevention of downward mobility.

Of the middle class Peruvians featured in this study, twenty-eight (70 percent) of the non-immigrants considered immigration to be the best option for themselves and for their immigrant family member; eight (20 percent) non-immigrants considered that it was ‘okay’ for the time being; and four (10 percent) considered that immigration was the
worst decision. Of these four non-immigrants, three of them agreed that they are not making enough money from the immigrants and they would be better off if they came back to Lima and found a job there. The reality in New York is that those three immigrants decided to focus their lives in New York, and they are not interested in increasing the amount of remittances because they do not see a future or the necessity to invest in a future in Peru. However, they do not seem to be clearly establishing or investing in a future in New York either. The idea of temporality affects these three immigrants; they are facing significant economic and social challenges in New York, such as the lack of a full-time job or the desire to improve their new social conditions. Sending remittances in these cases interferes with their current and future plans in New York. The non-immigrant participant who considered immigration the worst experience expressed her disappointment to learn that she sent her daughter on vacations to New York and her daughter stayed in New York to marry a stranger, adding that all of a sudden, “she is an American” who forgot her roots. Additionally, six (15 percent) of those non-immigrants who considered immigration the best option blamed immigration for their non-existent relationships with immigrants. Coincidentally, these six non-immigrants (four women and two men) were left in Peru to the care of their children and none of them wish to reunite with the immigrants at all. Moreover, in New York, their family members have no plans to go back to Peru in the near future either.

Munzele Maimbo and Ratha (2005) suggest that remittances play an important role in poverty reduction. This argument has been one of the greatest motivators in this dissertation. However, in all cases, remittances clearly serve to fulfill or maintain a middle class social status previously established by immigrants and receivers before
immigration. It is relevant to point out that due to Peru’s socio-economic profile and poverty levels, Peru’s economy and the distribution of remittances there should not be compared to the U.S. economy or U.S. citizens’ economic and socio-cultural needs. This study concurs that remittances can change social structures and cultural practices, and that the impact of social remittance on the transfer of ideas and attitudes, as well as on social structures and values, is ambiguous (Munzele Maimbo & Ratha, 2005).

In several cases, non-immigrants have improved their social lives by using remittances for activities such as going to the movies, organizing family parties, and getting together with friends more often, among other activities that are part of Peruvian middle class cultural behavior noted earlier in this study. But also, within the household, non-immigrants have acquired cable TV for the first time, as well as have improved appliances such as new stoves, microwave ovens, and washers and dryers. They also have better technology and have bought computers. They state they need a computer to communicate with immigrants. This is all relevant because remittances did not only help improve non-immigrants’ economy or their technological skills, but also helped to improve their connection to society as well, since they have adopted social changes transferred by immigrants through social remittances.

Salgado Lévano (1999) affirms:

Many Peruvians have found significant relationships between cultural and historical identity with modernization… Modernization has had an impressive influence in the organization of jobs, economic exchange, in politics, in education, in transport, in urban slums, in ecological balances, and many other areas of interest of social life. (p. 33)

Moreover, not only do immigrants motivate non-immigrants to learn English, use technology, and join social networks, but in return immigrants in New York also take with them Peruvian handicrafts, religious pictures, paintings and statues, music, movies,
books, and other Peruvian products they share with new friends. They display them in their households proudly as objects that represent their Peruvian cultural identity. In this exchange of culture, social and economic remittances play an important role, allowing immigrants and non-immigrants to invest significantly.

In analyzing class and identity in a transnational context (Portes et al., 1999; Glick, Schiller, et al., 1992; Guarnizo, 2003), immigrants have expressed frustration due to their economic and socio-political limitations in receiving communities. They also express the desire to create opportunities to give back to those receiving communities, to be both active socio-economic contributors and also citizens. There is a collective and conscious thought among immigrants expressing the desire to live openly and freely in New York. Peruvian immigrants believe that a documented status would change more than their ability to route their earnings and remittances back to Lima to maintain their identity as middle class citizens and their ability to help their families there. In the end, they believe that a documented status would give them the possibility to continue working with the freedom of being a U.S. citizen in New York.

An important factor that immigrants in this study believe influences their ability to send higher remittances is connected to their immigration status. This is in part because immigrants connect better working conditions and higher wages with a documented status, even if they have not necessarily experienced those changes or effects. Of those eight cases, five immigrants are authorized to work in the United States. Those immigrants have improved their working conditions, including with better salaries and more working hours, even though two of them do not need to speak English to perform their jobs. Undocumented immigrants are convinced that a documented status
will also allow them to be educated and learn other skills and, more importantly, to increase their wages. This is a clear indicator that immigrants seek not only economic success for themselves and their families left behind, but also the freedom to perform their jobs, continue learning, and maintain their middle-class status and identity both in Lima and abroad.

It has been difficult for immigrants to maintain their notion of class and identity in a transnational setting. In fact, Peruvian immigrants’ middle class self-identification and standards reflect the contradictions of how they live after immigration. In most cases, it is a life restricted by their own isolation, frugality, and most importantly the idea that they would perform any job in New York to accumulate wealth; in essence, standards that say that middle class citizens in Lima would not perform jobs that are not appropriate for their class status are geographically bound, and culturally compartmentalized.

Indicating the complex relationship between their beliefs and practices, Peruvian immigrants complain about performing service industry jobs in New York even though a great number of them performed service industry jobs in Lima before immigration. Regardless of their discontent, their earnings are mostly destined to support their families’ lifestyle through remittances to Lima. In New York, immigrants do not consider class status and living standards as a major force influencing their behavior or determining the socio-economic activities they perform. This is in part because the main reason for immigration is to change their economic situation at home.

The New York participants’ ability to send remittances to their families changes not only their perception of class and identity, but also of themselves. It has been difficult for Peruvian immigrants to deal with the concept of ‘transnational’ living and to comply
with economic responsibilities to non-immigrants back at home. Remittances do not improve immigrants’ middle class lifestyle in New York, as they do for non-immigrants in Lima. This is primarily because remittances have greater influence in homes where the remittance is not the sole source of income. But immigrants do improve the lives of their families left behind in several different ways. They have been helping family members to establish successful businesses in Peru, to buy homes, and to improve their children’s education, among other things. Even when remittances can be a cause of conflict between immigrants, non-immigrants, and other family members due to non-immigrants’ use of funds outside of the household and immigrants’ attempt to control remittances from New York, remittances encourage children and young adults to continue their studies and to focus on building a successful future. Remittances also allow non-immigrants to enjoy leisure activities, improve their living conditions, have extra cash for emergencies, and most importantly, maintain their lifestyle and middle-class status.

Additionally, due to immigrants’ sense of temporality living in New York, remittances are perceived as an investment for the immigrant’s future and as critical in their ability to return to their home country one day. However, immigrants realistically know that after improving and maintaining non-immigrants socio-economic lives, their possibilities of returning home and still maintaining those changes are slim.

**Conflicting Expectations within The Transnational Family**

This section examines important socio-economic issues exposed between immigrants and non-immigrants due to the process of migration and remittances. Some of these issues appear as conflicting expectations between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as the lack of trust between them due to separation and lack of communication.
Nonetheless, this separation and lack of communication can also generate positive changes in the transnational family structure.

Several cases in this study have shown that the continued dependency on remittances discourages receivers from seeking a job. At the same time, as Ansión et al. (2008) point out, separation between family members can also have a positive influence, in that those left behind are now able to use their skills in a violence- or tension-free environment. This study also shows that immigration has provided family members in Lima with a peaceful, stress-free life without the immigrant. Most of those cases included immigrants who had engaged in violent behavior towards the children, wife, or husband due to alcohol, depression, or aggressive personalities. There are four specific cases, including three males and one female immigrant who left Lima seeking to change their conditions at home.

In those four cases, their motivations were revealed by their belief that economic improvement would ease tense relationships between a husband and wife if they lived at a distance. After immigration, abusive relationships ended and homes turned into peaceful environments for non-immigrants and their children. However, immigrants occasionally used remittances to control their families in Lima. Of those four immigrants, two males (Prudencio and Leonardo) send remittances that barely cover loans or their children’s education. They both expressed their concern about sending money to maintain their spouses’ new free lives, and possibly a new partner:

…I have to be careful because she tells me what she does with the money, but I don’t see it…maybe she has a boyfriend or someone she is helping economically, and I am not working here like a slave to support that…besides, things are very difficult here… (Prudencio, personal interview, February 18, 2010).
The third male immigrant (José) continues spending money on alcohol and social activities with new Hispanic friends in New York. He has been telling his wife that he can only send US$100 a month because he cannot get more hours to work, but in his interview in New York he stated that he is working fifty hours a week. In other words, José’s earnings also finance his drinking habits. Interestingly, in her interview in Lima, his wife knew that José is drinking as much or more than what he used to drink in Lima, but she is fine with that because his aggressive behavior due to the use of alcohol is no longer hurting their children.

José calls home frequently and he is always drunk, therefore he cannot have productive conversations with his wife or children. His wife does not question her husband’s lack of interest in his children or what he does with his money, and she is thankful that he is far away and hopes that he never comes back to Lima:

…he was such a bastard hitting my kids and me in front of them…he doesn’t send money for his children…I know he lies, and says he doesn’t have any money. He is doing the same thing he used to do here, spending money on women, parties and alcohol…God will listen to my prayers and he will never come back… (Andrea, second personal interview, July 3, 2010).

Furthermore, Inés, the fourth and only female immigrant in this group, who used to abuse her son when she was in Lima, expressed that it was hard for her to be a single mother, and she needed to get away to start a new life. She left her seven-year-old son in the care of her parents. She is sending remittances to pay for her son’s education in a local private elementary school. In their interview in Lima, her parents expressed their concern about the lack of communication Inés has with her child; if there is any phone communication, the child ends up crying at the end of the conversation. This is because Inés yells at her son, using sharp words and bringing up issues that are not appropriate to
discuss with a child. The grandparents have been trying to protect their grandson when Inés calls, telling her that the child is sleeping or playing, and he cannot talk to her. Inés does not accept these excuses and calls back insisting on talking to him; every time she talks to her son, she is very angry and makes her son feel sad:

… it is a very difficult situation, we don’t know what to say to Inés to change her attitude with her son…he is never happy to talk to his mom, and he cries a lot…but if we don’t let her speak with him, then she won’t send the money he needs…we really don’t know what to do here… (Mr. and Mrs. Mendoza, personal interview, July 6, 2010).

In her interview in New York, Inés expressed her feelings of anger at being abandoned by her husband in Lima and for having to go through the ordeal of immigration to solve her economic problems and to take care of her son. Georges Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller (in Pessar & Mahler, 2003) document how “Haitian immigrant women often gain power and prestige among nonmigrant family members and friends through the remittances they send home” (p. 822). As it is in this case, Inés’ power through immigration and remittances may fulfill economic needs in the non-immigrants’ households; however, abuse and hostility that existed before immigration often persist even at a distance that brings physical separation of immigrants and non-immigrants.

Furthermore, in six cases, remittances have helped non-immigrants maintain the self-identified middle-class status they had before immigration took place. In two other cases, remittances have substantially improved non-immigrants’ lives and status within this group.

Even though remittances improve non-immigrants lives significantly, non-immigrants are reluctant to talk about remittances with members of their family, neighbors, or other people in general. As Ansión et al. (2008) point out in their findings:
“non-immigrants do not talk about remittances because they fear to be robbed” (p. 114). Interestingly, non-immigrants in this study expressed their concern about talking or sharing information regarding the amount of money they receive through remittances, or how they distribute them. Also, they affirm that it is in their best interest “not to show too much improvement” or “sudden acquisitions” because this could cause a problem with neighbors and family members outside the household (p. 114).

In a case study about national identity of a group of Lima inhabitants of low socio-economic level, Salgado Lévano (1999) suggests:

the Peruvian of today is characterized for showing personal interests that seek only his own wellbeing, high levels of corruption and immorality, plus a ‘crisis of values’ characterized of mediocrity, conformism and social climbing. Both consider that generally, Peruvians feel they must share the same past, present, and future… (p. 146).

This suggests a connection that remittances—as an indicator of economic success—separate non-immigrants from other family members who do not receive remittances. In this study, five non-immigrants shared remittances outside their household. Non-immigrants indicated that remittances shared with other members of the family or friends were designated to help those people with emergencies, such as with medicine for a sick child, to pay bills after the suspension of electricity or water service, and with transportation costs to go to work, among other emergencies:

Sometimes my sister calls me … She doesn’t have money to go to work the next day. Her daughter needed cough medicine and she spent the money she had saved for her bus tickets. So I have to go and drop some money off … It is difficult, she has two children, a job that doesn’t pay anything … Her husband died four years ago (Leslie, personal interview, June 8, 2010).

In other cases, not all non-immigrants are as compassionate as Leslie or share remittances with other family members. However, there are also valid reasons and consequences:
As soon as my daughter left to New York, my son and daughter whom I haven’t seen for so long started showing up at home … they started asking questions about how much their sister sends me every month … I wondered where they both were when my daughter was struggling to make ends meet here in Lima, and when she also helped me because my husband’s pension was never enough … nobody was here to ask how much money we needed to get by … I basically do not see any of my children in Lima anymore because I told them that I am not going to share any information with them. It is none of their business … they always complain that they have so many economic problems. My daughter in New York works so hard to send me that money … I can’t share what my daughter shares with me, sacrificing so much so I have a better life (Angela C., personal interview, June 24, 2010).

Both cases reflect opposite feelings about sharing remittances outside non-immigrants’ households. Realities and needs vary in each non-immigrant household; however, in Angela’s case, there is an additional consequence that comes along with her isolation from family members. Angela is a widow, she lives alone, and she was seventy-two years old at the time of the interview. Even though her daughter can take her to New York to live with her, Angela is not interested in leaving her home in Lima. Remittances are helping Angela to have somebody at home taking care of her, and to have a better life in general, but she has not socialized much with other family members for the last decade. She felt sad many times because her other two children in Lima do not visit her at all. In the meantime, her daughter Marilú calls her frequently and visits her twice a year.

Immigrants normally end up agreeing to what non-immigrants decide to spend money on. But it is also usual that immigrants constantly question non-immigrants about their decisions at home. The following case is a common case repeatedly observed during interviews in Lima:

… He thinks I can do miracles with what he sends, and he wants to be in control for every cent he sends … yeah, it is his money, but his son needs to eat, and I only know what he needs here … everything goes to pay the mortgage … every time he calls we fight so much, I hardly want to talk to him … I just want to know that the money is there to be picked up (Tanya, personal interview, July 6, 2010).
Tanya and her husband Leonardo had their differences even before immigration. Leonardo sent Tanya US$200 a month in remittances. In his interview, Leonardo made clear that the money he sent was for his child and some household expenses, but that it was to go mainly for his child’s education. Tanya’s frustration lies in the fact that she does not have a permanent job and has too many expenses for her and her son. In reality, Leonardo also helps his mother economically and sends US$100 in remittances monthly to her directly according to Tanya. This is a common situation between immigrants and non-immigrants, in which other family members in a different household are also benefiting from remittances, increasing the tension between spouses and the other family members involved. Moreover, ‘sharing the wealth’ is a way for immigrants to extend their care and concern for other middle class family members who do not share the same household as recipients, but who are also affected by economic downturns. It is understood by both parties that there isn’t any obligation to share the wealth, however, ‘sharing the wealth’ allows other family members some extra cash for expenses, and entitles non-immigrants to ask those family members for special favors such as taking care of their children if needed, or running errands for them as stated by non-immigrants.

In other cases, immigrants who obtained documentation to work and have been sending remittances for several years have diminished the amount of remittances significantly (on average 40 percent) for several reasons. In six cases, remittances were adjusted after the immigrant had the opportunity to travel and visit their families in Lima, finding out that remittances were not needed in the amounts non-immigrants claimed to need them. For example, non-immigrants would express their needs for remittances to cover specific household needs; however, they would save part of that money in the bank,
or they would say that they were paying internet or cable services and they did not even have those services at home. Another issue remitters found in Lima included the fact that remittances were shared or re-assigned to different people outside the household. In these cases, problems between immigrants and non-immigrants developed, creating even more differences in their already ‘virtualized’ and ‘distant’ relationship.

In general, these findings did not seem to affect immigrants emotionally as they stated. In four cases, immigrants explained that somehow they always expect to hear that whatever the amount of remittances they send is never enough:

…every time I ask my mother how are you, she says everything is wrong… every time I call there is some need for extra money…it doesn’t bother me anymore, and it doesn’t affect me… when I just arrived in New York, I used to cry and get desperate to send money as soon as possible, but after a while you realize that money is all they want…how come their needs keep growing…sometimes I wonder why they don’t even call to say hi to me after all I do for all of them… (Marilú, personal interview, February 12, 2010).

Immigrants also conclude that these incidents have helped them to focus their lives and economic projects in New York. They affirm that they do not feel bad for non-immigrants’ lack of honesty, and it does not affect the way they feel about them. But they expressed their disappointment at the lack of consideration displayed by non-immigrants ignoring the sacrifices they have made, living under extremely frugal conditions in order to keep remittances flowing on time, but there is nothing they can really do to avoid it.

Family interaction and relationships have been transformed due to distance, transnational migration and remittances. However, Peruvian non-immigrants and their families benefit from remittances, which primarily serve to create and maintain a middle class social status among recipients by broadly improving their living conditions.
Remittances have created solid socio-economic improvements in non-immigrants’ households. There is however, a division between immigrants’ sense of temporality living in New York as an investment for the immigrant’s future, and returning home. This is mainly because immigrants know that after maintaining non-immigrants socio-economic lives, their possibilities of returning home and maintaining those changes are slim. Those changes are significant and have created new opportunities to build businesses among transnational families. There are still obstacles in the Peruvian bank and lending systems that work against those who send and receive remittances and plan on investments. Although, children learn that privileged education will assure them a brighter future, learning through their experiences at home the existent relationship between education and social middle class. This analysis of immigrants and non-immigrants experiences has challenged the position that remittances typically are used to lessen poverty in the Peruvian case, showing instead how most are motivated by their desire to preserve their middle class status and values and prevent downward mobility. Nevertheless, the transnationalization of familial relations has introduced new types of emotional and economic distress, especially as filial obligations are commodified. In the end, this study shows that family practices reflect the transnationalization and commodification of the family structure in the Peruvian case.
CHAPTER 5—CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusions

Economic remittances have had a critical influence on the middle-class social, cultural, and economic experience of Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants. This dissertation has focused on the interconnected factors of class structure, class experience, and class identity to define and analyze the Peruvian middle class. Experience and identity are critical elements in understanding Lima’s middle class, since it is generally self-identified according to consumption patterns and middle-class lifestyle, regardless of earnings, educational level, or neighborhood. Middle-class membership is most closely correlated with the idea of living a decent life. Outwardly, this idea is marked by being associated with people who have good manners, who are well groomed, who have food on their table and some sort of income, who send their children to private schools, and most importantly, who believe in education as a way to achieve or maintain middle class status.

The Peruvian middle class formed by the process of remittances is an emergent social class. As a class, it did not exist in Peru before the 1960s. Though internally differentiated by income, cultural practices, and social behavior, all are middle class by self-identification. Some authors have proposed dividing the middle class into a lower and upper grouping, but this would largely be for academic purposes, since this group does not identify itself as anything else but ‘middle class’—the class that is neither the upper nor the lower class.
The socio-economic reality of Peru over the last two decades has generated the conditions whereby Peruvians must emigrate to seek employment. But, as a corollary, it has created the conditions whereby remittances have facilitated the maintenance of a previously established middle-class status or, in some cases, the improvement of an immigrant and non-immigrant’s social class. As demonstrated in these interviews and in the secondary literature, factors pushing Peruvians to immigrate include low wages and high unemployment rates in Peru. Pull factors in developed countries include the constant demand for foreign workers, as in the United States. In addition to those general economic push factors, immigrant participants in this study identified two important discontents as social push factors. In two cases, both participants experienced social rejection and discrimination in Lima due to their sexual orientation. Two other participants left Lima in order to free themselves from their spouses and from undesired relationships. In these cases, they used immigration and the promise of economic improvement as a way to maintain their marital status and family structure from a distance, in the process upholding expected middle class behaviors.

I show that some Peruvian immigrants in New York experience the fear of rejection, and they do not easily trust other immigrants or U.S. citizens in general. Based on my data, immigrants live frugally, especially during the first years of immigration. A lack of social interaction with other immigrants or within their communities is due to several important reasons. In some cases, it is due to their undocumented status and their focus on maintaining their income to remit. Moreover, many see their time in New York as temporary, to be endured only until they achieve their economic goals. Immigrants are embedded in multiple socio-economic relationships, ones that exist from the local to the
transnational, and their acculturation in the United States is often more difficult because their socio-economic relationships are divided between both sending and receiving communities. This duality in both economic responsibilities and acculturation makes it difficult for immigrants to give back to their receiving communities in New York, since their main purpose for international immigration is to improve the lives of their families left behind.

As I show in the Peruvian case, social networks do not necessarily assist immigrants in accessing better possibilities in New York. Those immigrants coming to the United States with supportive social networks are still working in the service industry, and six of them are still in the same service industry job they held a decade ago when they first immigrated. There are several reasons why immigrants do not improve their jobs and working and living conditions in general. One of the main reasons is an immigrant’s desire to work in places where he or she can speak only Spanish and that share their Hispanic culture. Sometimes this is due to a lack of English language proficiency; at other times, the immigrant does speak English, but he or she is self-conscious due to their accent or lack of fluency. Those immigrants who have not been able to obtain documentation to work believe that obtaining documents would help them improve their wages and working conditions in general. However, in cases in which the immigrants do not have documentation to work, English language proficiency was not necessary to earn a decent income. This is in part because immigrants often do not rely on only one source of income. Rather, they work at two or three different jobs to increase their earnings.
The conception of “middle class” among Peruvian immigrants is derived from their prior living experiences in Lima, and it is there that they feel a responsibility to create or maintain those middle class standards for their families. Indeed, my data shows that immigrants most often set aside their conventional standards for middle class identity and behavior when they arrive to New York and are open to almost any type of employment, even jobs that would have been derided as below them if performed back in Lima. Regardless of their education or previous work experience in Peru, most immigrants started working in the service industry after arriving in New York; they were paid in cash and did not pay taxes. For some immigrants, performing service industry jobs abroad comes at the sacrifice of their perceived middle class status and its privileges. However, for Peruvians, money ameliorates the loss of prestige associated with the unskilled jobs they perform in New York.

Peruvian immigrant women who work in the service industry as nannies shared the belief that jobs working as nannies or housekeepers are less dangerous. They felt that those who work in public, for example men working in construction, were more likely to be caught without their authorization to work in the United States. However, they all agree that jobs as nannies are never-ending, in that the hours were not fixed. While service work can provide for adequate remittances, it brings with it complex social and emotional implications. Moreover, mothers of children left behind in Lima expressed guilt and sadness at sharing with strange children the love and care they cannot share with their own children in Lima. Nevertheless, men focus more on their economic success as a way to let their children know how much they care. For male immigrants, it is important to maintain their jobs to continue providing the best education for their
children in Lima, confident that this will give them the chance to have a better future. Additionally, this research shows that gender was not an issue for Peruvian immigrants to start producing money immediately after their arrival in New York. They took any available job, including those jobs they considered inappropriate for their middle class status. While immigrants may be fulfilling their economic role in maintaining the middle class status of their families in Peru, working abroad has had a significant impact on intra-family relationships in many middle class Peruvian families.

Family composition and interaction is often reduced to a ‘virtual’ reality, where communication is basic, sporadic, and limited to immigrants and non-immigrants’ needs. In other words, they primarily maintain discussions about children, remittances, and expenditures in their communications. Interaction between immigrants and non-immigrants has been difficult, especially for separated couples with children. However, in some cases this separation has brought better living conditions to children and spouses who were victims of abuse by the immigrant. In New York, immigrants often perceive these shifts in family power dynamics, and occasionally still try to control non-immigrants through remittances. Whether collaborative or coercive, however, discussion over the use of remittances often becomes the central way that immigrants feel connected to home and can participate in transnational decision-making.

The narrowed focus of their relationship and the new economic significance of their relationships often means that, after years of separation, immigrants and non-immigrants develop a lack of trust in one another. This is mainly due to discrepancies when trying to agree on how to handle new expenses or needs that develop for the family in Lima, though occasionally conflict arises when either the non-migrant or immigrant
‘shares the wealth’ with other members of the family. Disempowered due to their distance, and living in a setting in New York that provides few social supports, many immigrants develop a sense of insecurity or emotional instability that, while articulated through discussions over money, reflect larger shifts in transnational family dynamics over which they feel they have little control. In general, it has been difficult for immigrants to strengthen family relationships across the distance, as well as to create strong ties in New York through social interactions. In other words, in this research, I show that the process of migration and remittances has negatively affected immigrants and non-immigrants’ family relationships.

Technology has been the greatest ally for immigrants and their families in Lima, not only for easy and cheap communication, but also because immigrants have encouraged and supported non-immigrants to learn how to take advantage of technology as well as to buy computers. They instill in their families an interest in the news in the United States and a desire to learn about culture and diversity in the United States, as well as inspire them to learn the English language. Learning to use technology to communicate over distance has been very beneficial for immigrants and non-immigrants. Prior to migration, the use of computers and the Internet was relegated to using a public internet café in Lima to communicate with friends or family through emails or chats. After migration, going to an internet café is an inconvenience because people have to physically go to these places, incur transportation expenses, set up a time frame with the person to chat, and use public machines without any privacy. Immigrants and non-immigrants who bought computers and internet services could experience the benefit of privacy and convenience at home. They are able to communicate instantly at much later
hours of the day, and also can send emails, pictures, or videos. While the use of technology has increased household spending, it has certainly reaffirmed in several ways the middle class social identity with which participants are identified. Their experiences were not only educational at the technological level, but also a way to increase living standards closer to a middle class reality.

The main motivations for Peruvian immigrants to relocate to New York have been to improve their lives and the lives of their families left behind. It is mostly their middle-class lifestyles that have motivated Peruvian immigrants to seek opportunities in New York. Immigrants and non-immigrants agreed that the plan was to immigrate, find a job, and send remittances. Because none of the non-immigrant participants in this study lived in extreme poverty at the time of the interview or received remittances as the only source of income in the household, remittances received in Lima are not needed to eradicate poverty, though they serve to relieve constant or temporary economic distress in the non-immigrants’ households. These remittances also help to maintain or improve non-immigrants’ living conditions or to fulfill economic needs beyond basic consumption in the household.

Regardless of immigrants’ legal status, remittances make it possible for children to attend private elementary and high schools. In these cases, they do not have to worry much about the strikes taking place in the Peruvian public educational system, improving their education significantly. Similarly, college-age children also have benefited from remittances by having the opportunity to earn a post-secondary education. Furthermore, in some cases, remittances have given non-immigrants the opportunity to build businesses in Lima. Not only does this exemplify the transferral of immigrants’ skills,
knowledge, and business projections, but it also creates a long-term means to maintain the household economy in Lima.

Discussing remittances with the immigrants I interviewed in New York for this research also exposed immigrants’ concerns about and lack of trust in financial institutions. This of course has a negative impact on receiving communities, as there is little reinvestment. It has been difficult for immigrants to acculturate and be active participants in their communities in New York. In some cases, as explained, the lack of both English language proficiency and documentation to work in the United States have been important factors; however, immigrants’ lack of acculturation and participation in their communities in New York also exemplifies and reaffirms the sense of temporality that immigrants experience in their receiving communities.

Additionally, due to immigrants’ sense of “temporarily” living in New York, remittances are perceived as an investment in the immigrant’s future, one typically tied to returning to their home country. However, at the same time, immigrants know that, if they want to continue to improve or even just maintain the middle-class existence of non-immigrants in Peru, their chances of returning home and maintaining those changes are slim. Through immigration and remittances, immigrants have reaffirmed the non-immigrants’ middle class status. If immigrants have not saved money or built up a business in Lima, there are no realistic ways for immigrants to earn the same income in Lima as they do in New York. Despite the legal risks of living in New York and the difficulty of working in physically demanding jobs, the risks associated with returning to Lima are higher than the risks of staying and working in New York. In New York, immigrants will always find a source of income, while opportunities in Lima are scarce.
Age and education level – two factors that do not stop them from earning a Peruvian middle-class living in New York – would significantly restrict their opportunities in Lima and would imperil their family’s middle-class status.

The ability of New York participants to send remittances to their families not only changes their perceptions of class and identity, but also of themselves. It has been difficult for Peruvian immigrants to deal with the concept of ‘transnational’ living while fulfilling their economic responsibilities to non-immigrants back home. Service work and sending remittances do not lead to a middle class lifestyle for immigrants in New York, as they do for non-immigrants in Lima. Not only does the money go further in Lima, but also, remittances have a greater influence in homes in Lima because they are not the sole source of income. As seen, while they enhance the quality of life for their families left behind in Lima, it most often comes at a significant social and economic cost for the immigrant.

Discussions and Suggestions for Future Research

The topic of Peruvian immigration is wide and diverse. Though there is substantial secondary literature on the subject, there is still the need to conduct further research, especially to expand research to transnational settings. The purpose of this dissertation has been to better understand who the Peruvian middle class is, why they immigrate, and how remittances received from family members living in New York affect the personal economy and socio-cultural life of the household in Lima. In doing so, this transnational research offered the opportunity to transcend geographical spaces between Lima and New York and to connect immigrants’ and non-immigrants’ socio-economic and cultural experiences.
Political and economic changes taking place in the last half of the twentieth century in Peru influenced the creation of a new emergent Peruvian middle-class society. More concisely, the Peruvian middle class can be identified by socio-economic standards established through historical processes in which the emulation of middle class behavior was important in order to become gente decente. Gente decente in fact is a phrase that still has a symbolic meaning in Peruvian society. Moreover, above all the Peruvian middle class portraits education as a privilege and as a means of achieving social status.

However, their ability to fulfill this is challenged by the scarce job opportunities in Peru, so that their ability to develop professionally or to use their education in a job is limited. Immigration to New York is a way, in almost all cases, to venture into profitable employment opportunities for the first time, ones that provide them with the ability to give their families economic stability not found through work in Peru. Immigration has also contributed to immigrants' personal development, in that now they have a job that goes beyond providing financially for their families. Though they rarely use their educational resources or previous academic preparation in these jobs, they are able to regain the respect of their families and assert their ability to provide for them regardless of their gender.

Moreover, this study shows that regardless of the amount of money, non-immigrants receive remittances to alleviate household expenses that are not limited to basic consumption. In some cases, planning a religious celebration is as important as replacing a broken washer. This exemplifies the different socio-economic reality experienced before migration, in which most immigrants were hardly providing economically in their households in Lima. Their contributions were limited and unsteady.
For this reason, economic changes in Lima after immigration have more empirical effects on non-immigrants’ socio-economic lives than on those immigrants in New York. Meanwhile, this also reflects immigrants’ sense of living a “temporary” life in New York, a sense underpinned by their undocumented status and desire to reunite with their families.

There is still the need to explore class within other Latin American immigrant groups in the United States and how the concept of the middle class among immigrants differs from the concept of the middle class among the native-born in the United States. After exploring the unique profile of the Peruvian middle class and understanding the importance of socio-economic changes that affect their lives after emigration, a deeper understanding of immigrants’ cultural practices would facilitate the interaction between immigrants and the native-born in receiving communities. Until now, social and economic indicators have been only a reference point when it comes to Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants in this study. It is crucial to understand the concept of class among immigrants and how both sending and receiving communities are affected by immigrants’ beliefs and their practices; in the end, both sending and receiving communities are socio-economically affected by the process of immigration.

The socio-economy of Peruvian immigrants reflects significant changes after immigration. In all cases, variations in the immigrant experience partially occur based on how an immigrant adapts in New York. As seen in previous migration studies, immigrant network systems help to ease the transition of immigrants abroad. At the same time, in the Peruvian case, immigrant networks can also have a negative effect on an immigrant’s social and economic growth in New York. This has been attributed to immigrants
remaining in social migrant networks for longer periods of time, even when they are able to expand their labor options by learning English or advancing their education.

Understanding the reasons and motivations behind Peruvian migration sheds light on the disadvantages of developing countries like Peru. The main reason that Peruvians emigrate has been the lack of jobs, economic opportunities and professional development opportunities. Investigating the experiences of Peruvian immigrants and non-immigrants not only elucidates the idea of the middle class among Peruvians, but also contributes to better understanding their cultural practices in New York and Lima after migration. By creating a space between New York and Lima, and connecting immigrants and non-immigrants in both contexts, it was possible to closely observe Peruvians’ unique socio-economic needs and experiences before and after migration, affirming their motivations to immigrate, and thus the sending of remittances. Nevertheless, Peruvian immigrants’ experiences exemplify the need to continue learning about immigrants, their diversity, and other unexplained circumstances.

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## Appendix A

### New York Immigrants' Profiles

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<th>Names</th>
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## Appendix B

**Lima Non-Immigrants’ Profile**

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Appendix C

(English)

Consent Form

Name of the Study: “Economic Remittances to Middle Class Peruvian Families: Origins, Use, and Impact”

You have been asked to participate in a research study that examines the experiences of Peruvian individuals sending remittances to Lima, Peru. This study will be conducted by Guadalupe Morales Gotsch, PhD student at the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Department at the University at Albany, SUNY. You were selected to be a possible participant because of your Peruvian national origin. There are no risks associated with this study. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to fill out an initial questionnaire without monetary compensation. Some participants will be asked to participate in an audio taped interview.

If you are selected to continue participating with the study after filling out the initial questionnaire and you accept to participate, you will receive a monetary compensation of $10 for each interview that could last from one to two hours of length. These interviews will take place at the time and place of your convenience. They may also be photographed and voice recorded. Photographs will be mainly taken in the participant’s environment, household, or surroundings. Although you may not receive direct benefit from your participation, others may ultimately benefit from the knowledge
obtained from this research. Consent for the interview, voice recording, and photographs will be recorded on the voice recorder. The voice recording and photographs are voluntary, and the tapes and photographs will be used only for researching the experiences of individuals who send remittances to Peru. These tapes will be identified by participant’s fictitious name or pseudonym. Voice recordings and photographs will be kept under lock for five years and once the study is completed the tapes will be destroyed. If you do not agree to be voice recorded during the interview conducted by Guadalupe Morales Gotsch you may still continue to participate in the study.

The information gathered in this study will be used in an academic project. The study is confidential. The records of the study will be kept private. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw from the study at anytime without your relations with the university, job, benefits, etc. being affected. You can contact Guadalupe Morales Gotsch at (518) XXX-XXXX or gm544354@albany.edu with any questions about this study or, her advisor, Dr. Susan Gauss at (518)-XXX-XXXX or sgauss@albany.edu with any questions.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, University at Albany -SUNY. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University at Albany Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 518-442-9050 (toll free 800-365-9139) or orrc@uamail.albany.edu
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

I accept ____________________________ ____________________________
Printed Name/Signature Date

I do not accept ____________________________ ____________________________
Printed Name/Signature Date
Appendix D

(English)

Survey for the Peruvian Consulate in Manhattan, New York

Please choose the letter that best applies to your answer. You may select your answer from the options below or in some cases, write your answers:

1. What is your place of Birth?
   a) Lima
   b) Province other than Lima: ______________

2. How many years have you been living in the United States?
   a) 0-4
   b) 5-9
   c) 10-14
   d) 15-20
   e) More than 20 years

3. Do you speak English?
   a) I understand it, but not speak it
   b) I understand and speak a little bit
   c) I understand and speak moderately
   d) I speak, read, and write fluently

4. Did you speak English before coming to the United States?
   a) Yes
   b) No

5. In what State do you live in the United States?
   Name of the state: ________________________
6. Do you have family in your place of origin?
   a) No
   b) Lima
   c) Other Province: __________

7. Please check any of the family members living in your household at your place of origin. Please check all that apply:
   a) Wife
   b) Husband
   c) Children
   d) Parents
   e) Other ______________________ (Please specify)

8. Do you send money to your family in Peru?
   a) Yes
   b) No

9. If you send money to your family in Peru, how do you send it?
   a) Money transfer agents
   b) Friends or family
   c) Bank accounts
   d) Other_________________ (please specify)

10. How often do you send money to your family in Peru?
    a) Every week
    b) Every month
    c) Every year
    d) Special occasions only
    e) Other__________________ (please specify)

11. If you send money to your family, approximately how much money do you send them? Please write an amount and circle the frequency in which you send money:
    $________________
    a) per week
    b) per month
c) per year

d) on special occasions

12. What are the expenses that the money you send cover in Lima? Check all that apply:
   a) Buy food and clothing 
   b) Pay utilities 
   c) Pay for loans 
   d) Pay for loans related to my trip to the United States 
   e) Help with household expenses 
   f) Completely cover household expenses 
   g) Pay for education 
   h) Build a new house 
   i) Healthcare 
   j) Improve/buy new household appliances 
   k) Pay for cable and internet services 
   l) Savings in Peru 
   m) Investments in Peru 
   n) Set up a business for when you return to Peru 
   o) Retirement plan in Peru 
   p) Help with organizations established in the United States 
   q) Other expenses ____________________________ (please specify) 

13. Is the family member in Peru who receives/administers the money the same head of household as when you were living there?
   a) Yes 
   b) No 
   c) Who is the head of household? ____________________

14. Does the family member who receives the money in Peru have a job?
   a) Does not have a job 
   b) Has a part-time job 
   c) Has a seasonal job
d) If he/she has a job, in what occupation? ___________________________

15. Did you have a job in Peru before coming to the United States?
   a) No
   b) Yes. In what area? __________________________

16. How much did your personal income change after moving to the United States?
   a) 10% more
   b) 20% more
   c) 50% more
   d) 100% more
   e) More than 100%
   f) My income changed about ______% more (or less) than my income in Peru

17. Please check the educational level you achieved before coming to the United States. Please check all that apply:
   a) Elementary school
   b) Some secondary education (without diploma)
   c) High School diploma
   d) Completed technical studies
   e) Some college studies (without diploma)
   f) Completed college studies
   g) Beyond college
   h) Other_________________________________________(please specify)

18. Did you improve your education after moving to the United States?
   a) Yes
   b) No

19. In what industry are you employed in the United States?
   a) Construction
   b) Marketing
   c) Health
   d) Education
   e) Transportation
f) Domestic Service

20. Before coming to the United States, what social class did you belong to in Peru?
   a) I was very poor and I did not have a job
   b) I was poor working class
   c) I was middle working class
   d) I was middle class
   e) I was middle upper class
   f) I was upper class
   g) Please explain: __________________________________________

21. After moving to the United States, did you or your family’s social class in Peru improve?
   a) Changed to a lower class
   b) It didn’t change at all
   c) Changed to middle class
   d) Changed to upper class

Thank you for participating in my survey. I intend to use this information for academic purposes only. I would like to continue my research in Peru with one of your family members. If you are interested in participating further in my research please leave your name, a telephone number or an email address where I can reach you. Thank you.

My name is ____________________________________________________.

You can contact me at telephone number: __________ - _____________________.

Email address: _________________________@____________________.__________
Appendix E

(English)

Survey for family members to be contacted in Lima

Please answer the following questionnaire. Circle the answer that applies and/or write your answers.

1. Are you the head of household?
   a) Yes
   b) No

2. How long have you and your family members been living in this house?
   a) 0-4 years
   b) 5-9 years
   c) 10-15 years
   d) More than 15 years

3. When was the last time you moved from a different neighborhood?
   a) I always lived in this neighborhood
   b) I moved to this neighborhood ________ year(s) ago

4. In what neighborhood were you living before?
   I lived in _________________

5. What were some of the reasons that your family member left for the United States? Check all that apply:
   a) Peruvian economic problems
   b) Peruvian political problems
   c) Lack of jobs in Peru
   d) Needed a change
   e) Family problems
f) To continue studies  
g) New job offer in the U.S.  
h) To join a family member  
i) Other reasons___________________________________ (please specify)

6. Did you and your family member who is now in the United States decide together the benefits of the trip before it happened?
   a) Yes  
   b) No

7. Did you or your family member in the United States have money saved to finance his/her trip?
   a) Yes  
   b) No

8. How can you describe the economic situation in your household before your family member left to the United States compared to how it is now?
   a) Very poor  
   b) Poor  
   c) No difference  
   d) It is better now

9. Were you employed when your family member left to the United States?
   a) No  
   b) Yes. What was your job? ________________________

10. If you are employed at this time, please select the area of employment. If you are not employed, please check NO ___
    a) Construction  
    b) Marketing  
    c) Health  
    d) Education  
    e) Transportation  
    f) Domestic Service  
    g) Other____________________ (Please specify)

11. How many children under the age of 18 years old do you have in your care?
12. Have the members in your household grown in numbers after your family member left to the United States? If yes, how many more were added to your household?
   a) No
   b) Yes. How many more do you have now? ___________
   c) Any visiting or non-immediate family members in your household? Please explain: _____________

13. Who makes decisions when it comes to money distribution in the household?
   Please choose only one:
   a) My family member in the U.S and I
   b) My family member in the U.S alone
   c) I am the only one making decisions on money distribution____

14. How do you and your family member in the United States communicate? Please check all that apply:
   a) Through internet, messenger, or email
   b) Through telephone calls
   c) Through mail (letters, telegrams, postcards)
   d) Through messages from neighbors, friends or family
   e) He/she only calls when the money is ready to be picked up

15. How can you describe the experience of having a family member living in the United States? Please check all that apply:
   a) I think it was the best decision
   b) I think it was the worst decision
c) I think it is ok for the time being

d) I have money but I do not have a relationship anymore

e) I have neither money nor a relationship after the trip

f) All I have is debt after the trip

g) We thought it was going to be profitable but he/she is not making enough money there and I still have to work hard in Lima to be able to pay the bills

h) I can only pay loans with the money he/she sends

i) It is what we expected to be. All our future plans are on schedule

Thank you for participating in my survey.
Appendix F

(English)

Open-Ended Interview Questions for the Emigrant

1. What can you tell me about your decision-making process about moving to the United States?

2. What were the main reasons for you to immigrate? Did you have a job in the United States?

3. What are the benefits of sending money to your family in Lima?

4. Are you here temporarily? Or are you planning on going back to Lima?

5. If you are planning to go back to Lima, what are your future plans?

6. What do you think about the Peruvian economy?

7. Does the Peruvian economy affect you in any way?

8. How is your life in the United States now, compared to how it was when you just arrived?

9. What are the major changes that you have seen in your life through the last years living in the United States? For you, and for your family in Lima.

10. How are cultural practices different in your daily life in the United States? Do you still practice Peruvian traditions during the holidays for example?

11. What are the things that you miss from Peru?

12. What are the things that you do not miss from Peru?

13. What are the things that you like the most about your immigration experience?

14. What are the things that you do not like about your immigration experience?
15. If you would have the opportunity to repeat the whole immigration process again, would you do it? Why?

16. If you look back to when you came to the United States, would you say that all your projects were on schedule and that you accomplished everything you wanted? What were those projects? Did they change through time? What would have been needed for you to stay in Peru?
Appendix G

(English)

Open-Ended Interview Questions for the Family Member in Lima

1. How do you feel about your family member living in the United States?
2. In what way(s) has your family member’s trip changed your life(s) in Lima?
3. How do you distribute the money received from your family member in the United States? Why is that money important?
4. Is your family member planning to return? If so, are you part of that plan? How?
5. What are the major changes that you have seen in your life since your family member left to the United States?
6. Would you go through the emigration experience again? Why? Or Why not?
7. Did you and your family member discuss the benefits of the trip before it happened? What were those reasons that you or your family member had to go to the United States?
8. Do you feel that your cultural practices in Lima have changed because your family member is in the United States? In what ways?
9. What are the things that you like about the immigration experience?
10. What are the things that you do not like about the immigration experience?
11. If you would have the opportunity to repeat the whole immigration process with your family member, would you do it again? Why?
12. If you look back to when your family member left to the United States, would you say that all the plans that you had together were on schedule and accomplished as
they were planned? What were those projects about? Are they still the same or did they change through time?

13. What do you consider is the most important accomplishment of your entire family after your family member left for the United States? Why? What has been sent or brought back that is not material?

14. What social class do you belong to? And why?
Appendix H

(Spanish)

Hoja de consentimiento

Nombre del estudio: Remesas económicas para las familias de clase media peruana: sus orígenes, uso e impacto.

Se le ha pedido que participe en un estudio sobre las experiencias de peruanos enviando remesas a Lima, Perú. Este estudio será conducido por Guadalupe Morales Gotsch, estudiante doctoral del Departamento de Estudios Caribeños y Latinoamericanos en la Universidad de Albany, SUNY. Usted ha sido elegido/a como posible participante debido a su nacionalidad peruana. No hay riesgos asociados con este estudio. Si acepta participar en el estudio, se le pedirá que llene un cuestionario inicial que no incluirá compensación monetaria. A algunos participantes se les pedirá que permitan la grabación de sus voces en la entrevista. Si usted es seleccionado para seguir con el estudio después de haber llenado el cuestionario inicial, y usted acepta participar, entonces recibirá una compensación monetaria de $10 (diez dólares) por cada entrevista que podría durar de una a dos horas. Estas entrevistas se llevaran a cabo en el lugar y en el momento que a usted le convenga. Asimismo, las entrevistas podrán ser fotografiadas y las voces de los participantes podrán ser grabadas. Las fotografías serán mayormente tomadas al ambiente donde se desenvuelve el participante, su lugar de residencia y sus alrededores. Aunque usted no reciba un beneficio directo por su participación, usted y otros podrán beneficiarse del conocimiento obtenido a través de esta investigación. El consentimiento
para la entrevista, la grabación de voz y las fotografías serán grabados en la grabadora de voz. La toma de fotos y grabación de voz es voluntaria, y las cintas y fotografías serán usadas solamente para estudiar las experiencias de las personas que envían remesas al Perú. Las cintas serán identificadas con nombres ficticios o pseudónimos. Las fotografías y grabaciones de voz serán guardadas bajo llave por cinco años, y serán destruidas una vez que los datos sean registrados y el estudio haya terminado. Si usted no acepta que se le tome fotografías o se grabe su voz durante la entrevista conducida por Guadalupe Morales Gotsch, usted aun puede seguir participando en el estudio.

La información contenida en este estudio será utilizada para un proyecto académico solamente. El estudio es confidencial. Los archivos de esta investigación serán guardados confidencialmente. Si usted decide participar, es libre de negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que le incomode. Puede retirar su participación en cualquier momento sin que sus relaciones con la Universidad, trabajo, beneficios, etc., sean afectados. Puede contactar a Guadalupe Morales Gotsch al (518) XXX-XXXX o gm544354@albany.edu o a la Dra. Susan Gauss (consejera académica) al (518) XXX-XXXX al correo electrónico: sgauss@albany.edu con preguntas sobre este estudio.

Este estudio a sido revisado por el Comité Institucional de Revisión de Sujetos Humanos, la Universidad de Albany –SUNY. Si usted tiene preguntas en relación a sus derechos como participante en este estudio, que no hayan sido respondidas por el investigador o si usted desea reportar cualquier interés personal sobre el estudio, deberá contactar la oficina del Regulatory Research Compliance en la Universidad de Albany, SUNY al teléfono 518-442-9050 (número gratis 800-365-9139) o al correo electrónico orrc@uamail.albany.edu Por favor asegúrese de haber leído toda esta información, de
haber hecho preguntas y de haber recibido respuestas que lo satisigan. Se le dará una copia de este formato para sus archivos.

_________________
Acepto
_________________
Nombre / Firma
Fecha

_________________
No acepto
_________________
Nombre / Firma
Fecha
Appendix I

(Spanish)

Cuestionario para el consulado peruano en Manhattan, Nueva York

Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas. Seleccione la letra u opción que vaya de acuerdo con sus respuestas. En algunos casos deberá también escribir las respuestas.

1. ¿Dónde nació usted?
   a) Lima
   b) En otra provincia peruana, ¿cuál?: ___________________

2. ¿Cuántos años tiene viviendo en los Estados Unidos?
   a) 0-4
   b) 5-9
   c) 10-14
   d) 15-20
   e) Más de 20 años___

3. ¿Habla usted inglés?
   a) Sólo lo entiendo pero no lo hablo
   b) Lo entiendo y lo hablo un poco
   c) Lo entiendo y lo hablo moderadamente
   d) Hablo, leo y escribo inglés con fluidez

4. ¿Hablababa usted inglés antes de venir a los Estados Unidos?
   a) Si
   b) No

5. ¿En qué estado de los Estados Unidos vive usted?
   Nombre del estado: ___________________

6. ¿Tiene usted familia en su lugar de origen?
7. ¿Quiénes son los familiares que viven en su ciudad de origen? Marque todos los que sean:
   a) Esposa
   b) Esposo
   c) Hijos
   d) Padres
   e) Otro familiar: ________________________ (por favor especifique)

8. ¿Envía usted dinero a sus familiares en Perú?
   a) Sí
   b) No

9. Si usted envía dinero a sus familiares en Perú, ¿cómo envía usted el dinero?
   a) Agencias de transferencia de dinero
   b) Con la familia o amigos
   c) Por cuenta bancaria
   d) Otra forma. ¿Cómo? ________________________

10. ¿Con qué frecuencia envía usted dinero a su familia en Perú?
    a) Cada semana
    b) Cada mes
    c) Cada año
    d) En ocasiones especiales
    e) Otra ocasión ________________________ (por favor especifique)

11. Si usted envía dinero a sus familiares, ¿cuánto dinero aproximadamente les envía?
    $ _________
    a) A la semana
    b) Al mes
    c) Al año
    d) En ocasiones especiales solamente
12. ¿Para qué se usa el dinero que usted envía a Lima? Marque todos los usos que apliquen a su respuesta:
   a) Comprar comida y ropa
   b) Pagar recibos de luz, agua, teléfono
   c) Pagar préstamos
   d) Pagar el préstamos del viaje a los Estados Unidos
   e) Ayudar con gastos de la casa
   f) Cubrir todos los gastos de la casa
   g) Pagar educación
   h) Construir una casa nueva
   i) Seguro médico
   j) Mejorar o comprar nuevos electrodomésticos para la casa
   k) Pagar los servicio de Internet y cable
   l) Ahorrar en Perú
   m) Inversiones en Perú
   n) Plan de retiro en Perú
   o) Formar un negocio para cuando regrese al Perú
   p) Ayudar con organizaciones establecidas en Estados Unidos que operan en Perú
   q) Otros usos: ____________________________ (por favor especifique)

13. ¿Ese miembro de la familia que recibe o administra el dinero que usted envía, es el mismo jefe de familia que cuando usted estaba en Lima?
   a) Sí
   b) No
   c) Quién es el jefe de familia? ______________________

14. ¿Ese miembro de la familia que recibe el dinero que usted envía tiene trabajo en Perú?
   a) No trabaja
   b) Tiene un trabajo de medio tiempo
   c) Tiene trabajo temporal
15. ¿Tenía usted trabajo antes de venir a los Estados Unidos?
   a) No
   b) Sí. ¿En qué trabajaba usted? _______________

16. ¿En qué proporción cambió su ingreso económico después de mudarse a los Estados Unidos?
   a) Cambió en 10%
   b) Cambió en 20% más
   c) En 50% más
   d) En 100% más
   e) Mi ingreso económico cambió en _____% más (o menos) comparado a mi ingreso económico en Perú.

17. ¿Tenía usted educación antes de mudarse a los Estados Unidos? Marque todos los estudios que haya completado en Perú:
   a) Estudios primarios
   b) Algo de secundaria (sin diploma)
   c) Algo de escuela técnica (sin diploma)
   d) Estudios de escuela técnica completos
   e) Algo de estudios universitarios (sin título)
   f) Estudios universitarios completos
   g) Más allá de estudios universitarios
   h) Otro tipo de estudios. ___________________ (por favor especifique).

18. ¿Mejoró su educación después de mudarse a los Estados Unidos?
   a) Sí
   b) No

19. ¿En qué área de trabajo está usted empleado(a) actualmente en los Estados Unidos?
   a) Construcción
   b) Ventas y negocios
   c) Área de salud
d) Educación  

e) Transporte  

f) Servicio doméstico  

g) Otro tipo de empleo: _____________________ (por favor especifique)  

20. Antes de venir a los Estados Unidos, ¿a qué clase social pertenecía usted en Perú?  

a) Era muy pobre, no tenía empleo  
b) Era de clase pobre trabajadora  
c) Era de clase media trabajadora  
d) Era de clase media  

e) Era de clase media alta  
f) Era de clase alta  

21. Después de mudarse a los Estados Unidos, ¿la clase social de usted o su familia cambió?  

a) No cambió para nada  
b) Cambió a clase media  
c) Cambió a clase alta  

Gracias por participar en mi cuestionario. Tengo la intención de usar toda esta información solamente para propósitos académicos. Me gustaría continuar mi investigación con uno de sus familiares en Lima. Si usted está interesado en continuar participando en esta investigación, le agradecería que me dejara su nombre, número telefónico o su correo electrónico para contactarlo. Muchas gracias.  

Mi nombre es: ____________________________  

Número de teléfono: ________ - _______________________________  

Correo electrónico: __________________@___________________________
Appendix J

(Spanish)

Cuestionario para los familiares que serán contactados en Lima

Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas. Usted puede hacer un círculo en la respuesta que mejor le parezca o en algunos casos por favor escriba la respuesta.

1. ¿Es usted el jefe de familia?
   a) Sí
   b) No

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo hace que usted y su familia viven en esta casa?
   a) 0-4 años
   b) 5-9 años
   c) 10-15
   d) Más de 15 años

3. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que usted se mudó de un vecindario o barrio diferente?
   a) Siempre he vivido en este barrio
   b) Me mudé a este barrio __________ año(s) atrás

4. ¿En qué barrio vivía usted antes?
   Vivía en ______________________________

5. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las razones por las que su familiar se mudó a los Estados Unidos? Marque todas las razones posibles:
   a) Problemas económicos en el Perú
   b) Problemas políticos en el Perú
   c) Falta de trabajos
   d) Necesidad de un cambio
   e) Problemas familiares
f) Para continuar estudios  
g) Nueva oferta de trabajo en EEUU  
h) Para reunirse con un familiar  
i) Otras razones: ________________________ (por favor especifique)  

6. ¿Usted y su familiar en los Estados Unidos decidieron juntos las ventajas y desventajas del viaje?  
   a) Si  
   b) No  

7. ¿Tenía usted o su familiar el dinero ahorrado para el viaje a los Estados Unidos?  
   a) Si  
   b) No  

8. ¿Cómo describe la situación económica de su casa antes de que su familiar viaje a los Estados Unidos, comparada a como es ahora?  
   a) Muy pobre  
   b) Pobre  
   c) No hay diferencia  
   d) Es mucho mejor ahora  

9. ¿Tenía usted trabajo cuando su familiar viajó a los Estados Unidos?  
   a) No  
   b) Si___ ¿En qué trabajaba? ____________________  

10. ¿Tiene usted trabajo ahora? ¿En qué área trabaja usted?  
    Marque NO___ si usted está desempleado o haga un círculo en el área de trabajo en el que se desempeña:  

   a) Construcción  
   b) Ventas  
   c) Salud  
   d) Educación  
   e) Transporte  
   f) Servicio doméstico  
   g) Otra área________________ (por favor especifique)  

11. ¿Cuántos niños menores de edad tiene usted bajo su cuidado?
12. ¿Creció el número de miembros de su familia después de que su familiar viajó a los Estados Unidos? Si la respuesta es sí, entonces, ¿cuántos más se sumaron a su familia?
   a) No
   b) Si. Ahora hay _________ más en la familia
   c) Hay alguien en su casa que no sea de la familia o que esté de visita? _________

13. ¿Quién toma las decisiones en cuanto a cómo distribuirse el dinero en la casa? Por favor sólo escoja una opción:
   a) Mi familiar en los Estados Unidos y yo
   b) Mi familiar en los Estados Unidos solamente
   c) Solamente yo

14. ¿Cómo se comunican usted y su familiar que está en los Estados Unidos? Marque todas las respuestas posibles:
   a) A través del Internet, chateo o correo electrónico
   b) Por llamadas telefónicas
   c) A través del correo postal, con cartas, tarjetas, postales
   d) Por mensajes de mis familiares o amigos
   e) Mi familiar en los Estados Unidos sólo llama para avisarme que el dinero está listo para ser recogido

15. ¿Cómo describiría usted la experiencia de tener un familiar viviendo en los Estados Unidos. Marque todas las respuestas posibles:
   a) Creo que ha sido la mejor decisión
   b) Creo que ha sido la peor decisión
c) Creo que por el momento está bien

d) Tengo dinero ahora pero ya no tengo una relación

e) No tengo ni dinero ni una relación después que él o ella viajó a los Estados Unidos

f) Todo lo que me tengo ahora es deudas

g) Pensé/pensamos que el viaje iba a ser provechoso pero mi familiar no está produciendo suficiente dinero allá y por eso tengo que trabajar muy duro para poder pagar las cuentas

h) El dinero que mi familiar envía solo alcanza para pagar préstamos o deudas

i) Este viaje es lo que esperábamos. Todos nuestros planes futuros están encaminados

Gracias por participar en mi cuestionario.
Appendix K

(Spanish)

Preguntas abiertas para la entrevista del inmigrante en Nueva York

1. ¿Qué me puede contar usted del proceso en su decisión de mudarse a los Estados Unidos?
2. ¿Cuáles fueron las razones más importantes para migrar? ¿Tenía usted un empleo asegurado en los Estados Unidos?
3. ¿Cuáles son los beneficios o desventajas de enviar dinero a su familia en Perú?
4. ¿Está usted acá temporalmente o planea regresar al Perú?
5. Si usted planea regresar a Lima, ¿cuáles son sus planes futuros?
6. ¿Qué piensa usted de la economía peruana?
7. ¿Le afecta a usted la economía peruana? ¿De qué forma?
8. ¿Cómo es su vida en los Estados Unidos ahora comparada a como era cuando recién llegó?
9. ¿Cuáles son los cambios más importantes que usted ha visto en su vida durante estos años de haber vivido en los Estados Unidos? Para usted y su familia en Lima.
10. ¿Cómo han cambiado las prácticas culturales en su vida diaria en los Estados Unidos? ¿Practica usted aún las tradiciones peruanas en los feriados por ejemplo?
11. ¿Cuáles son las cosas que usted extraña de Perú?
12. ¿Cuáles son las cosas que no extraña de Perú?
13. ¿Cuáles son las cosas que le gustan acerca de la experiencia de migrar a otro país?
14. ¿Cuáles son las cosas que no le gustan acerca de la experiencia de migrar a otro país?

15. Si usted tuviera la oportunidad de repetir todo el proceso de migración otra vez, ¿lo haría? ¿Por qué?

16. Si usted mira hacia atrás, al momento en que vino a los Estados Unidos: ¿Diría usted que sus planes estuvieron en marcha tal como se lo propusieron usted y su familiar? Y ¿Diría usted que han logrado todo lo que se propusieron? ¿Cuáles fueron esos planes? ¿Cambiaron con el tiempo? ¿Qué hubiera necesitado usted para quedarse en el Perú?
Appendix L

(Spanish)

Preguntas abiertas para la entrevista del familiar en Lima

1. ¿Cómo se siente en cuanto a tener un familiar viviendo en los Estados Unidos?
2. ¿De qué manera su familiar en los Estados Unidos ha cambiado su vida o la vida de los miembros de la familia en Lima?
3. ¿Cómo distribuye usted el dinero recibido de su familiar en los Estados Unidos? ¿Por qué ese dinero es tan importante?
4. ¿Está planeando su familiar en los Estados Unidos regresar al Perú? Si piensa regresar, ¿es usted parte de ese plan? ¿De qué manera?
5. ¿Cuáles son los cambios más significativos que usted ha visto en su vida o la de su familia desde que su familiar se fue a los Estados Unidos?
6. ¿Viviría usted de nuevo la experiencia del proceso de migración? ¿Por qué?
7. ¿Discutieron usted y su familiar en los Estados Unidos los beneficios del viaje antes de que sucediera? ¿Cuáles fueron las razones por las cuales su familiar tuvo que irse a los Estados Unidos?
8. ¿Cree usted que sus prácticas culturales en Lima han cambiado porque tiene un familiar en los Estados Unidos? ¿De qué forma han cambiado?
9. ¿Qué es lo que le gusta de todo el proceso de migrar?
10. ¿Qué es lo que no le gusta de todo el proceso de migrar?
11. Si usted tuviera la oportunidad de repetir todo el proceso de migración otra vez con su familiar, ¿Lo haría de nuevo? ¿Por qué?
12. Si mira usted hacía atrás, al momento en que su familiar se fue a los Estados Unidos, ¿diría usted que todos los planes que tenían juntos se dieron tal como se lo propusieron? ¿Cuáles fueron esos planes? ¿Son aún los mismos planes iniciales o han cambiado a través del tiempo?

13. ¿Cuáles cree usted que son los logros más importantes de toda su familia a través de la salida de su familiar a los Estados Unidos? ¿Por qué? ¿Qué puede decir que haya enviado o traído del Perú que no sea material?

14. ¿A qué clase social pertenece usted y por qué?