Grieving in the "Golden Cage": How Unauthorized Immigrants Mourn from Afar

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ABSTRACT

In the past four decades, the United States has created a population of long-term unauthorized immigrants. As this population ages, issues of death and dying are increasingly salient. Though we know much about how families maintain close bonds despite geographic distance, death and dying remain undertheorized in transnational family scholarship. Yet the death of a family member can significantly impact family structure and functions. Based on ethnographic and interview data collected between 2017–2022 with unauthorized Mexican immigrants and their families, this study examines how unauthorized immigrants anticipate and mourn the death of family members in their community of origin and how their undocumented status creates challenges for themselves and their families after a transnational death.

I find that the specter of transnational death shapes the emotional wellbeing of older unauthorized immigrants years before they experience it. Undocumented status creates and compounds transnational grief, leading to additional challenges. Individuals use a variety of strategies to grieve, including mourning by proxy, paying funeral expenses, and participating virtually. This research advances immigration scholarship by uncovering underappreciated social and emotional penalties imposed by current immigration laws and highlighting the value of mourning as a collective ritual — the absence of which has lasting costs.

Keywords: undocumented immigrants, immigration, aging, death, transnationalism, mixed-status families

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> The foundation of mourning is the impression of a loss that the group feels when it loses one of its members. But this very impression results in bringing individuals together…
>
> The group feels its strength gradually returning to it; it begins to hope and to live again. Presently one stops mourning, and he does so owing to the mourning itself.
> —Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* p. 465–466

Funerary rituals allow groups to renew their bonds and provide a space for individuals to confront death and express negative emotions (Durkheim 1912). Yet not everyone is able to gather and grieve. Individuals may be cut off from attending funerals for a variety of reasons, including incarceration or public health restrictions, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.[1] In the past three decades, as countries have tightened their borders, many people have been prevented from mourning their dead in person by immigration policies.

Scholars have called attention to rising immigration restrictions and enforcement that have made entering the United States without authorization more dangerous (De León 2015), increased deportation risks (Golash-Boza 2015), and prevented unauthorized immigrants[2] from adjusting their immigration status (Menjívar 2014). These changes have significantly disrupted circular migration patterns (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2015), leading to long-term family separation (e.g., Abrego 2014). As a result, when unauthorized immigrants lose loved ones in their communities of origin, they are very rarely able to attend funerals. This study adds to

[1] As Ávila (2021) notes, transnational death and death due to COVID-19 can be overlapping experiences, given the overrepresentation of immigrants in "essential jobs" that place workers at higher risk.
[2] Foreign-born non-citizens who live in the United States but lack "legal resident" status. In this paper, I use "unauthorized" and "undocumented" interchangeably.

transnational families and migration scholarship by calling attention to additional, widespread hardships: the pervasive fear that friends and relatives will die before migrants can return to their communities of origin and the inability to attend mourning rituals when they do.

In this study, transnational grieving refers to the experience of mourning the death of a close relation and being unable to attend mourning rituals due to immigration status (Bravo 2017).[3] I focus on unauthorized Mexican immigrants mourning deaths that occurred in Mexico.[4] Using ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted in the United States and Mexico between 2017 and 2022, I ask three questions: (1) how does the fear of transnational death shape the lives of unauthorized immigrants, even before it impacts them directly?, (2) how does unauthorized immigration status create and complicate transnational grieving?, and (3) what strategies do unauthorized immigrants use to mourn from afar?

The findings are divided into three sections. First, I argue that as unauthorized immigrants age, the possibility of transnational death becomes a specter that shapes emotional wellbeing. This specter is twofold: unauthorized immigrants worry about being unable to say goodbye and mourn their loved ones in person; they also worry that they themselves may cause their loved ones in Mexico transnational grief if they die in the United States. The second section focuses on how undocumented status creates and complicates transnational grieving. I find that, in addition to experiencing common feelings of grief, undocumented transnational mourners report having added feelings of powerlessness and guilt, directly and explicitly attributable to their inability to cross the border. The death of a support person can also cause a domino effect of additional losses — ranging from losing a caretaker for children who remain in Mexico to

[3] The terms "transnational grieving" and "transnational mourning" have also been used to refer to publicly mourning deaths that occurred across national boundaries as a form of protest (see, e.g., Chéry 2017).
[4] Deaths of immigrants in the United States are also a type of transnational death. That experience is acknowledged here but is not the primary focus.

losing administrative support for remittances and savings. The third section discusses the strategies that unauthorized immigrants use to grieve. Strategies include mourning by proxy, providing financial support for funeral arrangements, and/or participating in end-of-life moments and funerals virtually. Importantly, access to these strategies varies, as does the comfort they provide. Taken together, the evidence underscores challenges of aging without documentation and the importance of integrating death and dying into the study of migration. It also highlights the value of mourning as a collective social ritual — the absence of which has specific and lasting costs for transnational families.

DISRUPTED MIGRATION PATTERNS AND THE SALIENCE OF UNDOCUMENTED STATUS

Beginning with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), the U.S. government has increasingly penalized unauthorized migration and militarized the Mexico-U.S. border, disrupting longstanding patterns of circular migration. As migration has become riskier, many would-be temporary Mexican migrants have stayed in the United States instead of going back and forth (Massey et al. 2015). During the same period, the United States has restricted opportunities for unauthorized immigrants to become legal residents (Durand and Massey 2019).

These changes have led to an increased undocumented immigrant population. The current undocumented population is estimated to be triple what it was in 1990 — with nearly half hailing from Mexico (Lopez, Passel, and Cohn 2021). These changes have led to longer stays. Nearly 85 percent of unauthorized Mexican immigrants have lived in the United States for more than ten years (Lopez et al. 2021).

Some studies describe longer migration stays as settlement. They note that since the late

‘80s, Mexican immigrants have established long-term residences, with a large proportion marrying and having children in the country or bringing family members from Mexico (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2016). Even when unable to adjust their legal status, undocumented immigrants participate in their communities, which creates a sense of belonging despite lacking official recognition (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1995; Chavez 1994; Isin 2008).

Other studies emphasize structural constraints that problematize the notion of “settlement,” pointing to constraints that lead unauthorized immigrants to live in the United States long-term with no change in status. Scholars describe this as a “caging effect” or *“jaula de oro,”*[5] noting that undocumented immigrants feel trapped within the borders of the United States because there are economic incentives to migrate, but circular migration is so risky (Minian 2018; Reyes 2004). Research comparing documented and undocumented Mexican immigrants finds that documented immigrants travel, while undocumented immigrants are “caged in as long-term settlers” (Massey et al. 2015). This has created a system of “slow violence” that “routinely leaves noncitizens … helpless in their efforts to remain or reunite with their family members” (Lee 2019).

Undocumented status is not equally salient in all contexts (Gleeson and Gonzales 2012). State, local, and institutional policies can ameliorate or exacerbate vulnerability (see e.g., Enriquez and Millán 2021; Walker and Leitner 2011). However, transnational grieving is most shaped by the inability to leave and re-enter the United States. Thus, unlike other issues that impact unauthorized immigrants, transnational grief is a penalty that is unlikely to differ by local context.

[5] The term comes from the band Los Tigres del Norte, who sing, “Aunque la jaula sea de oro, no deja de ser prisión” (“Even if the cage is made of gold, it’s still a prison”) alluding to the economic opportunities available in the United States and the freedom of mobility undocumented immigrants must sacrifice in exchange (Minian 2018).

Understanding transnational grief advances immigration scholarship by highlighting underappreciated costs of current policies: being forced to mourn from afar and anticipatory fear about having to endure this experience. Furthermore, the period of time following a transnational death — as well as the period preceding it, if the deceased was known to be dying — likely heightens the salience of undocumented status. If, as previous research suggests, unauthorized immigrants feel that the United States is a golden cage, transnational grief may make the cage feel more constricting.

PERSEVERING FAMILIES

Despite years-long physical separation, many immigrants remain socially and economically connected to their communities of origin (see Van Hook and Glick 2020). Migrants adopt a "transnational family strategy" when economic opportunities lead some members to migrate while others stay behind because they cannot migrate safely together (Abrego 2014).

Transnational families use technology to communicate more frequently and in new ways (Baldassar 2008; Francisco 2015). But technology is insufficient for managing crucial responsibilities of transnational family life, and its usefulness varies by circumstance. Previous research finds that technology is unsatisfactory during periods of illness and dying (Baldassar 2014). Migrants typically rely on a strong relationship with someone in the origin community to handle financial affairs, relay news, answer calls, and carry out work that must be done in person, such as caring for children or elders (Dreby 2010; Parreñas 2005; Thai 2014). Losing such a person can pose significant challenges.

Transnational family scholarship largely focuses on relationships between parents and young children, but immigrant populations are aging, and familial bonds persist throughout the

life course (Migration Policy Institute 2019; Lopez, Passel, and Cohn 2021). The few transnational studies of relationships between adult migrants and their own parents have found that immigrant adult children use remittances and technology to care for their parents, despite high emotional and financial costs (Miyawaki and Hooyman 2021), but distance and lack of mobility complicate the ability to provide such care (Baldassar 2007) and to receive familial support (Bruhn and Oliveira 2021).

This study adds to this literature by examining how transnational families use technology and other tools during periods of mourning, and how they are impacted by death, especially when the deceased was vital to maintaining transnational bonds.

MOURNING FROM AFAR

Mourning rituals bring people together. They serve as ceremonies through which groups reinvigorate bonds and redefine their boundaries. Durkheim (1912) argues that by coming together, a group asserts that it will survive. Through mourning rituals, groups assert who their legitimate members are and what statuses members hold (Walter 2008; Woodthorpe 2017). Recent research suggests funerary rituals not only reaffirm social bonds but can also be used to create new bonds (Prickett and Timmermans 2022).

Mourning rituals are designed to help individuals come to terms with death and provide a sense of closure (Doka 2008; Bailey and Walter 2016; Davies 2017). Within funerals, individuals build solidarity by confirming one another's emotions and expressing negative feelings together, in ways that are not socially sanctioned in other spaces (Collins 2014; O'Rourke, Spitzberg, and Hannawa 2011). Physical touch mitigates grief and is an essential component of in-person mourning rituals (Petry, Hughes, and Galanos 2021). It follows that

being prevented from gathering to mourn is a significant penalty for unauthorized immigrants and their families.

Recent death studies and psychology research examines how undocumented status impacts mourning from afar. Immigrants in this position struggle to accept the death (Le Gall and Rachédi 2019). Among unauthorized Mexican immigrants, experiencing transnational death is a predictor of clinically significant distress (Garcini et al. 2020). In Mexico, families of immigrants who were able to practice circular migration seem to experience less trauma than families who were unable to reunite (Ortíz Ruíz, Aguilar Magaña, and Rivera Heredia 2020).

Though other fields have focused on transnational grief, a sociological lens helps reveal the social function of community rituals around death and dying, as well as the strategies that immigrants undertake when participating in such rituals is impossible.

METHODS AND DATA

This research emerged from a binational ethnography examining how transnational families maintain relationships despite prolonged separation. I did in-person fieldwork in New York City and central Mexico over three consecutive summers in 2017, 2018, and 2019, along with digital fieldwork and phone interviews (since 2017, but more so since 2020). I resumed in-person fieldwork in New York City in 2021 and continued in 2022. I began asking all participants about their experiences with transnational death after the topic emerged in 2017. From 2020 through 2022, I also conducted extensive digital fieldwork: attending events on Zoom, interacting with social media posts made by participants to memorialize loved ones, doing telephone interviews, and attending funerals via Facebook Live. These methods allowed me to collect data inaccessible through in-person methods. They have also allowed me to broaden the

geographical representation of my study.

However, because I planned to continue using in-person methods and knew I would not be able to travel to many places, the majority of participants I recruited were based in New York or central Mexico. Most Mexican immigrants in New York City arrived between 1990 and 2007 and hail from the state of Puebla. Nearby states, including Tlaxcala, Guerrero, and Morelos, as well as Mexico City, are also well-represented (Massey, Rugh, and Pren 2010, Smith 2005). This strong migration flow allows me to conduct a binational study by visiting family members in both countries.

As a Mexican immigrant with close transnational bonds and experience in the low-wage workforce, I entered the field with relative ease. In the United States, I began by spending time in community centers catering to Latine immigrants. I also worked different jobs (ranging from selling churros on a subway platform to working in the kitchen of an upscale restaurant), lived in a predominantly Latine neighborhood, became a regular at restaurants and a park, went to church, spent time in people's homes, attended parties and community events across New York City, and volunteered with two organizations that support older Latine immigrants.

In 2017 and 2018, I traveled to Puebla and Morelos to meet the social networks of people I met in New York. In Mexico, participant-observation entailed spending time in private homes, attending social events like weddings and birthdays, and accompanying people to work in agriculture and commerce. I also observed daily life in a town of several thousand with strong connections to New York, where remittances and businesses that serve transnational families shape economic life.

My cultural fluency facilitated rapport. I also shared my migration story and experiences with transnational death, while being honest about my class and citizenship privilege, which

have always enabled me to return to Mexico for funerals. This increased transparency about how my social location might limit my perspective. After learning about my trajectory, respondents were more comfortable telling me about what they knew I did not know firsthand because I have always had "papers."

All interviews and participant-observation were done in Spanish. Questions included "How did you learn that your loved one had died?" and "Were you able to participate in any formal rituals to honor their life (e.g. attending the funeral virtually)?" Most participants were undocumented at the time of the study. All respondents identified as cisgender and heterosexual.

Interviews were transcribed and translated into English. Using NVivo software and flexible coding (Deterding and Waters 2021), I analyzed field notes from in-person and digital fieldwork, as well as transcripts from 27 in-depth interviews conducted in person or by phone with 20 participants who experienced transnational death. Seven participants were interviewed twice, either because they had not experienced a transnational death when first interviewed or because transnational death was not the main focus of the first interview. The interviews that were not focused on transnational death helped me gain insight into the important relationships for the interviewee and how they maintained transnational bonds. In two cases, I met the deceased before their death and learned about their perspective on transnational family life.

TRANSNATIONAL DEATH AS SPECTER: HOW FEARS OF TRANSNATIONAL DEATH IMPACT UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS

Transnational death looms large even before it impacts individuals directly. This fear takes two forms for unauthorized immigrants: (1) the fear of losing a loved one in their community of origin and (2) worries about their own possible death at their destination site.

Fear of losing a loved one from afar

When I met Verónica in 2018, she worked full-time as a nanny and picked up shifts at a factory on her days off. Gregarious and extroverted, she maintained a full social calendar. I usually saw her rushing to parties or talking to friends in Mexico on social media. She often joked about not sleeping and said that her dream vacation was a hotel on a desert island where she could sleep, uninterrupted, for days. Once, walking home from the laundromat, I asked her if that was really where she would go. Verónica's smile shrank. Her voice dropped as she shook her head, "I need to see my mom."[6] Due to her immigration status, she had not seen her mother since migrating to New York in the 1990s. As her mother got older, Verónica increasingly worried she would not be able to see her again. The preceding conversation happened two years before Verónica's mother became ill and passed away. Her story illustrates how long-standing the fear of transnational loss can be, and how little can be done to prevent it, given the limited opportunities unauthorized immigrants have to change their immigration status in order to cross the border.

Participants who were able to adjust their immigration status described reuniting with family as a primary motivation for doing so. Galilea was able to adjust her status in 2013 thanks to her son. Having experienced two transnational deaths, she recalled praying that her "papers"[7] would be granted before the death of her father. Ultimately, he died just two months before she was granted legal permanent residency. "That was really terrible for me, because I thought, how is it possible that I didn't make it in time to see him?"[8] Galilea's story points to the fact that current immigration policies do not account for the urgency of family reunification. Though she

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6 "Necesito ver a mi mamá."

7 "Pápeles," slang for a valid visa, legal permanent residency, or citizenship status.

8 "Eso fue bien tremendo para mí, porque yo dije, no puede ser posible que no lo haya alcanzado."

knew her father was ill, there was no way to expedite her documents.

Fear of dying without having returned

I met Elena a few years after her husband died suddenly in New York. She described worrying about never going back to Mexico, a worry shared by her daughter in Mexico City: "[She] told me the other day that she's getting used to the idea that she's never going to see me again. She said, 'It's going to be like it was with my dad.'"[9] Elena's voice broke. She explained that she wanted to promise her daughter that they would see each other again but knew she could not.

In New York, I frequently witnessed people pitching in to help send remains to be buried in Mexico. For example, in 2018, I spent an afternoon with Rosana and Azucena while they figured out how to donate money to a family whose daughter had been run over in a parking lot. Her parents wanted to send her body to be buried in Mexico so that her grandparents would get to "meet" her.[10]

In Puebla, I met return migrants who listed avoiding a transnational death as a silver lining to having returned to Mexico. Ernesto described it as his primary motive. He recalled that when he lived in New York in the 1980s, fellow Mexican immigrants would knock on his door when someone died. He and his roommates would donate to help send the body back, even if they did not know the deceased. Having endured a difficult migration journey in the back of a tractor-trailer, Ernesto knew that going back meant he might never return to the United States, but the thought of returning to Mexico in a casket frightened him more.[11]

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[9] "Mi hija el otro día me dijo que ella se estaba haciendo a la idea de que ya no me va a volver a ver. Dice ella, 'Va a pasar lo que con mi papá. Me estoy preparando porque yo creo que nosotros ya no te vamos a volver a ver.'"

[10] Repatriating the deceased is a common practice rooted in the belief that if families cannot be together in life, they should at least have the chance to say goodbye to their loved ones and that migrants who hoped to return to Mexico should have the right to be buried there.

[11] Several factors facilitated Ernesto's return. First, he was single and had no dependents. Second, though not wealthy, his family did not have significant financial struggles. Third, he came from a region in Puebla known for

HOW UNDOCUMENTED STATUS COMPLICATES TRANSNATIONAL MOURNING

Undocumented status significantly constrains how people can grieve. This heightens the salience of undocumented status for mourners, who report feelings of powerlessness and guilt along with experiences of stigmatization. Unable to attend funerals, they miss out on the benefits of mourning rituals and have little reprieve from daily life. Moreover, transnational death often prompts additional losses — ranging from losing a caretaker for children who remain inMexico to losing administrative support for remittances and savings.

Feelings of powerlessness

Transnational grief can heighten the salience of immigration status and provoke feelings of powerlessness. Heriberta has endured two deaths and met other transnational mourners through her church. She explained, "It's sad because when something like that happens, you'd like to go, see [your family] … spend those difficult moments together. And we can't. … It's sad; it's difficult, but it's our reality."[12]

Migrants who knew that someone they loved was dying described anguish at their inability to help. Knowing her mother needed a soft foods diet in her final months, Florencia found it difficult to eat. She ran a small restaurant, and anytime she had to make food that her mom could have eaten, she started to cry. Her thoughts would fixate on the fact that she was feeding dozens of people every day, but she couldn't feed her own mother. She said, "It was

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tourism. When I met him, he ran a corner store owned by his sister in an area with a lot of foot traffic. Most of the people I met during fieldwork did not have such advantages.

[12] "Es triste porque cuando pasan esos casos uno quisiera ir, verlos, apoyarlos, pasar momentos difíciles con ellos. Y no podemos hacerlo. Lamentablemente. Es triste; es fuerte, pero es la realidad."

something that was impossible to fix. Your only option is to accept that you can't do anything."[13] Florencia described it as the "price" that immigrants who are undocumented are forced to pay to live in the United States.[14] This is something that came up in almost every interview, with participants lamenting that if they had their "papers," they would not be in this position.

For unauthorized immigrants in mixed-status families, documented family members are contrasts to their lives, examples of the rights they would gain if they had a different immigration status. Florencia has a brother and a sister who migrated before she did and were able to become legal permanent residents. After her mother's health declined, leaving her unable to communicate via telephone, Florencia relied on her siblings who would travel to Mexico and report back. In effect, Florencia lost the ability to communicate with her mother directly in the last year of her life, while her siblings did not.

In the two decades since she migrated, Galilea's oldest brother, mother, and father have all died in Mexico. She remembers the frustration and loneliness of watching her brother, who has had his papers for decades, leave to attend family funerals in their hometown while she stayed in Texas. Despite not having returned for nearly fifteen years, when her status changed, Galilea began visiting Mexico for important occasions, just like her documented brother had before her. Though she has not experienced another death in her family since becoming a permanent resident in 2013, she traveled as soon as she could to visit her father's grave and has gone back many times since. In 2018, she celebrated her fiftieth birthday with a big party in her hometown, complete with mariachis.

Saúl is an immigrant in his seventies. When he migrated, his wife stayed in Mexico with

[13] "Era algo que no había de qué manera poderlo arreglar. No queda de otra más que aceptar que no puedes hacer nada."
[14] "Ese es el precio. Ese es el precio de estar aquí."

their children. She passed away in 2019. Saúl used metaphors that evoke incarceration to describe the experience: "She died, but I couldn't go. I stayed here, locked up. … I couldn't get out." Then, he clarified, "Well, I *can* get out, but I can't get back in."[15] Echoing these themes, Verónica lamented, "I could easily get on a plane [to Mexico]. The problem is how to get back."[16] She began to sob. Galilea described getting papers in similar terms: "We are free now,"[17] she said, underscoring the idea that being undocumented was tantamount to being captive.

Being unable to give or receive physical affection seems to heighten feelings of powerlessness due to undocumented status. I called Diana after learning of her father's death in the fall of 2020. She described wanting to comfort her mother, whom she saw crying on video calls: "Being here, I can't do anything, not even give her a hug."[18] Verónica described feeling an acute need to hold her mom's hand while she saw her on video calls near the time of her death. This speaks to the physical gestures people use to express sympathy and solidarity. Through their screens, mourners see loved ones whom they would like to console but cannot touch.

Guilt and stigma

Participants reported believing that their absence caused their loved one to suffer more at the time of their death and felt they had behaved selfishly by not returning. These feelings coexisted with the recognition that structural obstacles prevented their return.

Verónica felt overwhelming guilt about not having returned to see her mother, who died

[15] "Ella se murió pero no pude ir. Me quedé aquí encerrado. … Y yo sin poder salir. Bueno, puedo salir pero no puedo entrar."
[16] "Yo fácil me puedo ir en un avión. El problema es cómo regresarme."
[17] "Ahorita, ya podemos ir, ya ahorita estamos libres."
[18] "Estando aquí no puedo hacer nada, ni siquiera irla a abrazar."

from a prolonged illness. She lamented that she did the wrong thing.[19] In a phone call with me, Verónica explained, "[My mom] told me a week before she died that she wanted to see me. She asked me to come."[20] Similarly, Florencia is haunted by the knowledge that her mom died missing her: "It hurts to know that she died searching for me, thinking about how she never saw me again."[21]

Diana described her "decision" not to go back for her dad's funeral in November 2020 as "choosing money over family."[22] I have known Diana and her family for five years, so I reminded her that she migrated in order to send money back to support her parents and her young son after becoming a single mother. Diana told me I was right, but she still felt guilty for not having returned when she learned that her parents had COVID. She worried that she could have saved her father's life by taking him to the hospital sooner.

During my first interview with Diana in 2017, I asked her when she migrated. She began shaking and struggled to speak. This signaled that she may have experienced trauma while migrating. Though all migrants are at heightened risk if they attempt to cross the border into the United States without authorization (see, e.g. Infante et al. 2012), women are particularly vulnerable (Soria-Escalante et al. 2022). However, being aware of the risks and understanding why she had not attempted circular migration did not fully alleviate Diana's guilt. This was also evident in other participants' accounts. Though Mariano explained that he cannot go back to Mexico due to his status, he described the fact that he did not return for his father's funeral as proof that he lacked courage.[23]

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[19] "No hice lo correcto."
[20] "Una semana antes de morir, me dijo que quería verme y me pidió que regresara."
[21] "Me duele saber que ella se murió buscándome, pensando que ya nunca más me vio."
[22] "Escogí el dinero sobre la familia."
[23] "No tuve el valor."

Ernesto, who lives in Puebla, told me about a man who had returned for his mother's funeral. He planned to return to the United States after the funeral and asked a nephew if he wanted to go with him. The nephew had been thinking about migrating, so he said yes, and they traveled together. They crossed the border into Arizona in the winter, when temperatures frequently drop below freezing. One night they huddled for warmth next to a tree. In the morning, the nephew woke to find that his uncle was unresponsive. He allowed himself to be found by Customs and Border Patrol officers with the hope that his uncle would receive medical care and recover, but he had already died. His uncle's body was repatriated to Mexico. The nephew also returned to their community of origin, where their recently bereaved family gathered to mourn another death.[24] This is the only instance I heard of someone returning to mourn, which highlights how difficult circular migration is under current laws.

Despite these difficulties, unauthorized immigrants may doubt that their social networks in Mexico understand how constrained they are. This provokes feelings of stigmatization, either because family members ask migrants to come home directly and judge them for not returning *or* because migrants feel that their families do not really understand why they do not return, even if they do not express it outwardly.

In Verónica's case, she felt judged by her siblings and by her mother's doctor. As the health of Verónica's mother declined, Verónica paid for her mother's medical care and was in frequent communication with the doctor in charge of her care. In the weeks before her mother died, Verónica asked what more could be done to help her. She expected to hear about more expensive treatments, but the doctor said, "'What would help your mom is for you to come be

[24] Ernesto brought the nephew from this story to the house where I was staying so I could interview him, but the nephew decided he was not ready to discuss the events with me. I learned these details from Ernesto.

with her.'"[25] Verónica recalls tearfully explaining that it was the one thing she could not do. She felt compelled to disclose her immigration status and explain that working in the United States was the only way she was able to afford her mother's healthcare. The doctor may not have intended to shame Verónica, but his comments added to her guilt and the sense she had that her family judged her for not returning.

Little reprieve from daily life

Unauthorized immigrants who have experienced a transnational death lack reprieve from daily life. This is partly because they tend to be concentrated in low-wage jobs with no paid time off and partly because, even if they are willing to take unpaid time off, it is expensive to do so. Finally, knowing that they cannot physically attend the formal rituals honoring their loved one's life, they may feel that they have "nowhere to go."

Some participants reported being unable to take any time off from work. "On Monday, I buried my mother. On Tuesday, I went to work,"[26] Verónica explained. Others were able to miss work, with no paid time off. Efraín told me, "I took two or three days off from work to recover because my spirits were so low. … Thank God they let me miss a couple of days."[27] Notably, Efraín felt lucky — rather than entitled — to miss work.

Finally, lacking the opportunity to attend a funeral, some participants did not even consider missing work. Margara worked at a restaurant owned by a fellow Mexican immigrant who was sympathetic when he learned that her mom had died. He offered Margara paid time off,

[25] "'Lo que le ayudaría a su mamá es que usted viniera a acompañarla.'"
[26] "Sepulté a mi mamá el lunes, y tuve que presentarme a trabajar el martes."
[27] "Bueno pues en esos días, me tomé como dos o tres días sin trabajar, para recuperarme un poco de los ánimos, porque tenía los ánimos muy bajos. … No tenía ganas de hacer nada, solo quería estar en casa. … Pero también tuve que cambiar el chip rápido porque los gastos acá y el trabajo. Entonces, eso te hace volver otra vez a la normalidad. Entonces en el trabajo, gracias a Dios me dieron permiso de faltar esos días para recuperarme."

but she refused. As she saw it, her only two options were going to work or going back to her shared apartment. Margara told him, "'Please don't make me leave. Because I won't feel OK if I go back to my room. Inside those four walls, I won't feel OK.'"[28] Santiago felt similarly: "I thought that if I kept working, I could keep my mind busy. Instead of dwelling on the regret of 'I should have gone to see him.'"[29]

Additional Losses for Transnational Families

For immigrants with close transnational bonds, the death of a loved one can prompt a domino effect of additional losses. The losses participants experienced ranged from losing a caretaker for their children to losing administrative support for their financial affairs in Mexico to losing their primary connection to their community of origin.

Saúl relied on his wife to manage the remittances he sent back, oversee the construction of a house, and take care of the small plot of land his family uses to grow plums. When we talked about his wife's death, Saúl told me he was afraid of what would happen to those investments. I asked him if, in one sense, he and his wife were also business partners. "Yes, exactly," Saúl replied, "because now there's nobody to tell me, 'Here's how things are going. Here's what we need to do.'"[30] This weighed on Saúl. He worried he would get deported or have to go back to Mexico after aging out of work with no way to support himself.

Aside from relying on someone to manage financial matters, immigrants with children in Mexico rely on other family members to be their caregivers in person. The death of such a

[28] "'No me corra,' le digo, porque yo no me voy a sentir bien de llegar a mi cuarto,' le digo, 'y en esas cuatro paredes no me voy a sentir bien.'"

[29] "En ese momento pensé que si me mantenía trabajando podría mantener mi mente ocupada. Y no mantener como el remordimiento de 'me hubiera yo ido a visitarlo.'"

[30] "Sí, exactamente, porque ya no hay nadie que me diga "así están las cosas, hay que hacer esto."

caregiver has reverberating impacts for transnational parents who must find new ways to ensure their children are cared for. Diana has a ten-year-old named Edwin, who had been living with Diana's parents since age 5 when she migrated. When Diana's father died, she worried about Edwin and her mother, since only her father knew how to drive, and he was the person in charge of their family business selling tortas[31] at town fairs in the region surrounding their small town.

For Margara, the death of her mother meant that she had to find a new place for her children to live because they did not inherit their grandmother's house. One of her daughters was legally an adult at the time of the death, so Margara counted on her to become the primary caregiver on paper, but Margara felt more responsible for ensuring their children's wellbeing after such a significant loss. In Margara's view, her children had already endured a painful separation from her — their mother — and now had lost not only the grandmother who raised them in her absence but also their home.[32]

Other immigrants felt that they themselves had lost their home after experiencing transnational death. I met Florencia in the summer of 2017. The TV was always on in her small restaurant, and sometimes we would watch the news together, in between the lunch and dinner rushes. Once, when a news anchor on Univisión was reporting on Trump's promise to deport every undocumented immigrant, she said matter-of-factly, "I cannot go back to Mexico because my mom is gone."[33] This came up often in conversation, with Florencia lamenting that her immigration status had prevented her from going back to take care of her mom. After her death, she told me, there was nothing for her in Mexico. Returning would only emphasize her loss. Saúl felt similarly. Imagining his potential return, he said, "Now what will I do? There's nobody who

[31] In Mexico, "torta" refers to a type of sandwich.
[32] "Siempre se criaron ahí; desde que yo me vine los dejé ahí; siempre estuvieron ahí."
[33] "Yo no me puedo regresar a México porque ya no está mi mamá."

misses me there."[34]

STRATEGIES USED TO MOURN FROM AFAR WHILE UNDOCUMENTED

Untethered from the demands and support of traditional funerals, transnational mourners must improvise mourning strategies. Participants reported coping with the loss of a close family member using strategies ranging from sending proxies in their stead, providing financial support at the time of bereavement, and using technology to participate in funeral rituals virtually.

Mourning by proxy

Transnational mourners in mixed-status families may choose to send a close family member or friend who is documented to attend the funeral in their place. For example, when Florencia's mom died, her daughter Gema had a valid passport, and Florencia decided to send her to the funeral. Gema was able to do what Florencia herself wished she could have done at the funeral: say her last goodbyes and take flowers to her graveside.[35] Though losing her mom was painful, Florencia told me that she felt good about sending her daughter.[36] It allowed her to meet what she saw as her familial responsibilities.

This strategy is not available to transnational mourners whose loved ones are undocumented or in a liminal migration status. Such was the case for Verónica. Verónica has a daughter in her thirties who offered to go to Verónica's mother's funeral in her place. Verónica wanted to say yes but worried about jeopardizing her daughter's future. Verónica's daughter has Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) so, technically, she could have applied for

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[34] "Era la madre de mis hijos y era la que me esperaba. ¿Y ahora qué voy a hacer? No hay nadie que me espere."
[35] "Le dije, hija, le dices a mi mamá que me perdone. Porque, cuando tú tienes a una persona de frente, estás con ella, pues es diferente, le puedes hablar, pero yo ya no. Entonces, le dije a mi hija que le dijera eso a mi mamá y que le pusiera unas flores y ya."
[36] "Por eso me siento bien."

permission to leave and return to the United States. However, because DACA is a tenuous status, Verónica worried that if her daughter went, she might not be able to return.

Providing financial support

Transnational mourners may seek to cope by sending money to pay for end-of-life care or funeral expenses, which assuages the guilt of being unable to return to be with the people they love in a difficult time. However, this strategy requires savings or the ability to earn or borrow more money during this time.

Participants who were able to increase their remittances evinced a sense of pride. Margara sat up straighter and smiled as she told me that she's always "been there one-hundred percent for [her] parents."[37] She described the end of her mom's life as a time of high expenses: "She didn't have health insurance [and she stayed in] expensive hospitals for two or three days at a time; they'd call me and say, 'It's $40,000 [pesos]; it's $30,000 pesos.'"[38] This was hard for Margara whose restaurant kitchen job did not pay much. She had to borrow money from people she knew and ask for extra shifts at work, but paying for high-quality medical care helped her feel better about being far away. Similarly, Verónica comforted herself by remembering that if she had gone back to Mexico to be with her mother, she wouldn't have been able to afford her medical treatment, and her mother would have suffered more. Florencia described this as the benefit of remittances, explaining that sometimes sending money is the closest someone can get.

Immigrants in difficult economic circumstances during periods of transnational death may feel that they are failing their families. For example, when his mother died in 2020, Efraín

[37] "Yo siempre he estado al cien con mis papás, siempre."
[38] "Cuando se enfermó mi mamá, que no tenía seguros, que de hospitales caros, se iba de dos días a tres días que me marcaban que son 40.000, que son 30.000, a sacar dinero, a sacar dinero."

had been out of work for six months, due to the economic downturn. He described feeling shame because he did not send money for funeral expenses: “I wanted to help, but I couldn't. And that feels awful.”[39]

Using Technology to Mourn

Participants who are unable to return for a loved one’s funeral may rely on interpersonal communication technologies to connect with fellow mourners and attend rituals virtually. However, I find that, while this is true for some immigrants, not all have access to technology during periods of dying and bereavement. Those who do use technology for mourning report varied experiences. Some find it useful for mourning; others describe added emotional trauma owing to differences between participating virtually versus in person.

Participants described being unable to use communication technologies due to health or access issues. Diego, an immigrant in his thirties who lives in New York, wanted to use phone calls to say goodbye to his mom who was dying of cancer, but she lost the ability to talk in the weeks leading up to her death.[40] Smartphone use was not widespread in his hometown, so there was no way to video call his mom or attend her funeral from afar.

Florencia’s mother was resistant to technology use, refusing even to install a landline in her house. When her mother was in good health, Florencia could call her by calling neighbors who lived somewhat nearby. However, as she grew frailer, the long walks to the neighbors’ became difficult for her, so Florencia talked to her less frequently. Finally, her mother lost her hearing, so phone calls became impossible. Though Florencia’s mother died in 2015, because her

[39] “Me dio pena con mi familia porque pues nomás no mandé dinero. Y pues eso me duele un poco, porque pues yo queriendo mandar o ayudar, no tuve la posibilidad de hacerlo. Y pues eso se siente feo. En lo personal, yo me siento mal por eso.”

[40] “Cuando mi mamá murió ya no podía hablar, por su enfermedad, así que yo no podía hablar con ella.”

mother lived in a rural area with limited internet and cellular access, there was no way for Florencia to video call her mother or see her funeral.

Other participants found technology helpful for mourning. Margara was able to see her mom's funeral on a video call. She vividly remembered seeing the casket as it was taken out of her childhood home and how her children held the phone above the open casket so that she could pay her last respects on the screen. As is tradition, Margara's family had mourned the body at home before taking the casket to be buried. She explained how her family called her as they were beginning the funeral procession.

> On the day of her burial, the day that she left my father's house, they videocalled me ... [T]hey showed me the casket, and they showed her to me in there. My children showed me. I saw how she was taken from the house. What hurts most is hearing the mariachis arrive playing the song 'Amor Eterno.' It cuts you to the core — and today you hear it and it's the same, it hits you because you remember.[41]

Though she longed to be there in person, Margara reported feeling grateful to have been able to participate in the funeral in this limited capacity, and her syntax suggests that she did, for a moment, feel that she was actually at the funeral because she switched from speaking in first-person ("I") to the general "you.". It is common to hear mariachis playing "Amor Eterno" at a funeral, though most people experience this in person rather than through a screen. Yet, for Margara, the feeling was immediate enough that she generalizes her experience and views herself as a typical Mexican mourner.

Efraín was raised by his grandmother and considered her his mother. Knowing that they were very close, his family members sought to involve him in her funeral when she died in 2020.

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[41] "El día que la iban a enterrar, el día que salió de la casa de mi papá me hicieron la videollamada; me hicieron la videollamada, me la pasaron, o sea, me pasaron la caja, me pasaron ahí ya ella, mi mamá en la caja, me la pasaron mis hijos, la vi cómo salió de la casa, más que nada te duele mucho los mariachis llegando con la canción, la de 'Amor Eterno," te llega hasta -- y hoy la escuchas y lo mismo, te llega porque te acuerdas."

Efraín was able to see his grandmother in the casket. His cousin offered to livestream her funeral Mass for him, but Efraín worried that the priest would find it disrespectful.[42] He was also unable to see her one last time to say goodbye on the screen before her body was cremated due to a scheduling change. I told him I imagined that must have been difficult, since he was expecting to have that opportunity. Efraín said it was, but that he was grateful for the video calls not just because they allowed him to say goodbye to his grandmother like he would at a funeral; they were also a way for him to see estranged relatives:

> I liked seeing that my family was a little more united. It actually really brought us together. Some of my cousins that we hadn't seen in so long went [to the funeral]. They all got together. … Seeing them all together gave me some comfort.[43]

Efraín's story suggests that technology can provide one of the most important benefits from attending a funeral: the opportunity to renew bonds (Bailey and Walter 2016).

In contrast, other participants found that using communication technologies added to their pain. For example, Ashley got a video call from her cousin when her great-grandmother was dying, but Ashley immediately hung up because she did not want to remember her great-grandmother like that.[44] Saúl described a similar experience. He recalled receiving a text message from one of his daughters while he was walking down the street by himself. The text contained a photo of his wife lying in her casket. Saúl had not been expecting to see that photo, and the shock made him feel sadder and more isolated.

Verónica has been in New York for about twenty years. In that time, she has lost both of

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[42] "Como dices tú, precisamente en una videollamada, me la pasaron y la vi ahí tirada, la vi en el ataúd. En la misa no quise estar presente porque, como que se me hacía un poco de falta de respeto estar con el teléfono y estar ahí haciendo el padre la misa y rezando y uno con él teléfono ahí mirando. Como que no me gustó mucho la idea."
[43] "Me gustó que la familia estuvo un poco unida, sí se unió la verdad. Fueron gente de mis primos que no veíamos en tanto tiempo. Se juntaron todos y pues fue algo unido, verlos juntos a ellos me reconfortó un poco."
[44] "Yo le colgué porque no quería yo ver a mi abuelita así."

her parents. Reflecting on her mother's death, she said it was hard because she was able to witness so much. Video calls with her mother in a hospital bed left her feeling helpless. "I could see she was in pain, and there was nothing I could do to help,"[45] she explained. In contrast, she added, "When I lost my dad, I didn't have to see everything."[46] Months after the funeral, she struggled to know what to do with the photos and videos on her phone from those days. She did not want to see them, but she could not bring herself to delete the last images of her mother.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Migration

This research illustrates the social and emotional consequences of undocumented status that exist alongside more remarked employment and civil rights penalties. Crucially, previous research has established that, though unauthorized immigrants long to remain in the country legally, they feel trapped because they cannot travel between their country of origin and the United States (Minian 2018; Reyes 2004). I find that transnational grief exacerbates the sense of being trapped, which highlights that there is a temporal dimension to the penalty of undocumented status.

Because transnational death is a widespread penalty, unauthorized immigrants and their families anticipate such losses but lack recourse to avoid them. Previous research examined how immigrant communities contend with the fear of deportation (e.g. De Genova 2002). This study demonstrates that unauthorized immigrants are similarly forced to contend with the fear of transnational death — an experience far more likely than deportation. Like the fear of deportation, this fear hangs over daily life. In the case of transnational death, the fear worsens as

[45] "Yo veía que estaba sufriendo, y no había nada que podía hacer para ayudarla"
[46] "Cuando falleció mi papá, no tuve que ver todo."

migration stays lengthen and immigrants age, which leads people to feel that they are "running out of time" to adjust their status and reunite with loved ones.

Importantly, the ability for transnational family members to be together in person is shaped not only by the migrant's legal status but also by their family members' ability to travel to the United States (Bruhn and Oliveira 2021). This affects transnational grief because, though they may still long to return for funerals, mourners may take solace in the fact that they were able to see each other again. However, even if unauthorized immigrants are able to see some people from their communities of origin in the United States — an experience deeply shaped by economic stability and other demographic characteristics — it is unlikely that everyone they love would be able to visit. It follows that most unauthorized immigrants will be deeply impacted by at least one transnational death.

Transnational Families

Though we know much about how families maintain social and emotional closeness despite geographic distance, death and dying remain undertheorized in transnational family scholarship. This study adds to this literature by examining how transnational families are impacted by the death of one of their members, especially when that person played a vital role in maintaining transnational bonds.

I find that families may lose emotional closeness if family members in the community of origin do not understand how constraining U.S. immigration laws are and thus feel abandoned by migrants who do not return during periods of illness and bereavement. Given that immigrants rely on a small number of people to manage their care responsibilities and administer remittances (Dreby 2010; Parreñas 2005; Thai 2014), the death of a support person creates a domino effect of

practical and emotional hardships. Such a death can thus transform — or sever — transnational bonds, a fact underscored by respondents who explained that they felt like they had lost their home after enduring a transnational death.

Grieving from Afar

The negative feelings and challenges that transnational mourners report highlight the value of mourning as a collective ritual — the absence of which has specific and lasting costs. Understanding the experiences of transnational mourners also contributes to our understanding of strategies that can be used to process grief when traveling to mourn is not an option. These strategies include sending a proxy, providing financial support, and participating in end-of-life moments and funerals virtually. However, access to these strategies varies, as does the comfort that each strategy provides. Mourning by proxy requires close relationships with people who can travel. Remittances are often considered "signs of love" (Mckenzie and Menjívar 2011), but unauthorized immigrants tend to be concentrated in precarious low-wage jobs, so it can be difficult for them to send additional remittances near the time of their loved one's death.

Regarding technology, previous research suggests that social media provides an alternative mourning space (Gutierréz Nájera and Alonso Ortiz 2019) and that attending funerals virtually is "second best [to] being physically present" (Bravo 2017: 42). In contrast, my data suggest that, while some people find comfort from using technology, mourning virtually differs significantly from mourning in person and carries risks for additional trauma.

First, seeing loved ones suffering on the screen, while being unable to comfort them in person, can provoke feelings of powerlessness. Second, in person, people experience difficult moments once, but if those moments are recorded — as transnational funerals often are —

mourners can easily relive them. Third, painful moments surrounding death and mourning are often experienced in groups, but the transnational mourners I interviewed described many instances of being alone when they received such calls and images. Fourth, people usually experience these moments in specific contexts intended to allow the expression of negative emotions and to strengthen bonds with fellow mourners. But grieving from afar often occurs with little to no reprieve from daily life, so mourners are likely to receive these videos and photos at unexpected times or when such images contrast sharply with their surroundings (e.g. at work or in a store).

In sum, though technology may at first appear to offer a way to be there without being physically present, mourning virtually is qualitatively different from mourning in person. My findings call attention to the importance of attending to the risks of virtual funeral participation, rather than focusing only on possible benefits.

Future Research

Because the specter of transnational death and transnational grief are so common, more research is needed to understand these phenomena. Future research should include LGBTQ+ immigrants since gender and sexuality often shape family relationships, migration decisions, and desire to return to one's community of origin (Carrillo 2017). Previous research found that diasporic communities are able to carry out mourning rituals from afar (Gutierréz Nájera and Alonso Ortiz 2019). This suggests that local context matters and can mitigate transnational grief. Future research should consider how cities offer different resources based on the size of a particular immigrant population and its diasporic connections. As transnational death has become more common, faith communities increasingly support their members in grieving at a distance, which calls for research about the strategies and rituals developed to provide social support in

religious contexts. Existing research finds spillover effects for members of immigrant families and communities, regardless of their own legal status (Dreby 2012, Asad and Clair 2018, Zayas 2015). Future research should examine the spillover effects of transnational grief. For example, researchers might focus on U.S. citizen children who are unable to attend a grandparent's funeral because they are too young to travel by themselves; in effect, their parents' immigration status transforms them into de facto transnational mourners. U.S. policies also result in transnational grief in sending countries where people are forced to mourn migrants who die in the United States. Future research should build on the limited research about this experience (Ortíz Ruíz et al. 2020) and examine how families decide where to bury immigrants who die at destination sites.

Grieving at a distance affects other populations, as well, including individuals who are incarcerated, in the military, or subject to public-health restrictions, a common experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should consider how these experiences of grief differ from those of unauthorized immigrants.

Implications

This study focuses on unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, but transnational death affects all unauthorized immigrants, regardless of country of origin, a population estimated to number 10.5 million (Budiman 2020). Current policies effectively preclude this population from participating in end-of-life rites that serve important social and emotional functions. Transnational grief is a result of hardened borders that impede immigrants from practicing circular migration and lead transnational families to endure long-term separation. Understanding transnational grief and its impacts is fundamentally necessary for uncovering the "slow violence"

of immigration laws (Lee 2019). Under the current system, unauthorized immigrants are denied freedom of mobility. They long to be allowed to travel between their countries of origin and the United States. For immigrants in this position, transnational death is the worst-case scenario. Death transforms separations that immigrants hoped would be temporary into permanent losses, and immigration laws further prevent immigrants from gathering to grieve and bury their dead. Restrictive immigration laws deny unauthorized immigrants and their loved ones the opportunity for reunification. Transnational death is the culmination of this slow violence.

This study highlights that the undocumented immigration crisis is a crisis of mobility that cannot be fixed by allowing people to remain in the United States legally *without* the freedom to leave and re-enter the country. Most immigrants have strong connections to their communities of origin and the destination sites where they now live, and they long to be able to move freely between both of their homes, especially during important moments like death and bereavement.

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Appendix: Interviewee Demographics

Table 1: Summary Statistics for Interviewee Demographics

	Min	Max	Median
Age in 2022 (all)	11	74	47
Age in 2022 (migrants)	29	74	51
Age when first migrated	15	52	25
Years since first migrated	6	37	25
Gender	Male (8), Female (12)		
Legal status	15 Unauthorized, 1 Documented (formerly unauthorized), 1 Return migrant (formerly unauthorized), 3 Documented (U.S.-born, mixed-status family)		

Table 2: Pseudonyms Demographic Details for Interviewees

Pseudonym	Year(s) Interviewed	Immigration Status	Age in 2022	Gender	Where they reside	Mexican State of Origin	Approximate Year(s) of Migration	Whom they mourn(ed)
Heriberta	2017	Unauthorized	55	Female	NY	Puebla	1987; 1994	Mom, Brother
Florencia	2017; 2021	Unauthorized	60	Female	NY	Puebla	1991	Mom
Gema (Florencia's daughter)	2017	Documented (Mixed-status Family)	24	Female	NY	Parents are from Puebla	N/A; born in U.S.	Grandmother
Elena	2017	Unauthorized	71	Female	NY	Mexico City	2003	N/A fear their own death
Margara	2018	Unauthorized	44	Female	NY	Tlaxcala	2003	Mom
Galilea	2021	Documented (formerly unauthorized)	54	Female	TX	Zacatecas	1999	Brother, Mom, Dad
Verónica	2018; 2021	Unauthorized	56	Female	NY	Chiapas	1997	Mom
Diana	2017; 2021	Unauthorized	29	Female	NY	Puebla	2016	Dad
Rosana	2018; 2019	Unauthorized	40	Female	NY	Puebla	1997; 2004	Grandmother-in-law
Ashley (Rosana's daughter)	2019	Documented (Mixed-status Family)	21	Female	NY	Parents are from Puebla	N/A; born in U.S.	Great-grandmother
Efraín	2021	Unauthorized	39	Male	NY	Mexico City	2003; 2005; 2015	Mom (grandmother but raised him)
Ernesto	2017	Return migrant, previously unauthorized	61	Male	Puebla	Puebla	1986–1990	N/A fear their own death
Saúl	2017; 2021	Unauthorized	74	Male	NY	Puebla	circular migration 1985–1994	Mom, Wife
Diego	2018, 2021	Unauthorized	37	Male	NY	Guerrero	attempted at age 15, migrated at 26	Mom
Mariano	2021	Unauthorized	60	Male	NY	Puebla	1986	Father
Santiago	2022	Unauthorized	49	Male	NY	Puebla	1992–1994; 1994–Present	Father
Felipe	2022	Unauthorized	51	Male	NY	Puebla	1990–1993; 1995–1997 (circular	Grandmother

							migration); 1999–Present	
Guillermina	2022	Unauthorized	39	Female	NY	Puebla	2002	Mother-in-law
Álvaro	2022	Unauthorized	39	Male	NY	Puebla	2001	Mother
Julieta (Guillermina and Álvaro's daughter)	2022	Documented (Mixed-status Family)	11	Female	NY	Parents are from Puebla	N/A; born in U.S.	Grandmother