

Chapter 13

Un Paso Adelante (A Step Forward): A Family's Migration Testimonio and Recommendations for Mental Health Providers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter includes powerful testimonios in Spanish and English of the history and impact of immigration on individual and familial levels. Framed from the perspective of different family members, the authors share their migration experience to the U.S. South between 1980 and 1990. Topics of pre-migration, acculturation, trauma, the impact of post-migration experiences, and psychological growth are addressed from the perspective of first-generation Mexican immigrants and children of immigrants. The chapter also provides recommendations for mental health providers as they assess and conceptualize Latinx immigrant communities in the U.S. South.

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INTRODUCTION

All the authors of this chapter are members of the Cardenas-Bautista family. In it we share the migration experiences of our family to the United States between (U.S.) 1980 and 1990. The *testimonios* that we share describe the pre- and post-migration experiences from the perspective of a father, mother, and two siblings. In particular, we talk about how our family experiences in the U.S. South. Our migration stories, shared from four different perspectives, provide an insightful description of the history and impact of immigration on an individual and familial level. Our *testimonios* seek to connect with readers who may share similar experiences and provide mental health providers with recommendations to consider while working with Latinx immigrant populations in the southern regions of the U.S. We conclude our chapter by providing recommendations that go beyond considerations of language acquisition and acculturation. Through our stories and recommendations our objective is to move away from the generalization of complex personal history of a community and encourage the introspective dive of rich *historias* that we carry beyond borders and time. It is also our intention to keep the *testimonios* of our father and mother in the language they chose to write their stories. Readers can find the English versions of their stories in the X. We note that not including the English version of their testimonios represents our intention to relocate our gaze of the reader.

LA DESCENDENCIA DE UN SOBREVIVIENTE ANTIGUO

Un Testimonio de Padre

Mario Cárdenas Villanueva

Yo nunca pensé que pudiera compartí mi historia, pero mi familia tiene una historia de inmigración que vino más antes de mi propio viaje al Norte. Siendo yo nacido de una población de San Miguel Enyege, Municipio de Ixtlahuaca, Pueblo Masagua, podría decir que yo estaba creciendo sin presencia de mi padre pues nos frecuentaba seguido, en mi hogar esta mi mama y mis hermanos. Soy el penúltimo de siete hermanos y nuestra responsabilidad era estudiar hasta que pudiéramos y trabajar. En una ocasión, salí de clases y le pedir un *ride* a una camioneta. Al bajar se me quedó un pie atorado y la camioneta me arrastró. Ese día, yo perdí parte del cuero cabelludo de mi cabeza. Por este accidente yo estuve hospitalizado un año y al salir mis padres emigraron al Estado de México con nuestra vacas y puercos. Comenzando a sobrevivir en colonia era fuerte. Empezaba trabajando duro con más necesidades de agua, luz, drenaje, nueva escuela. Para ayudarnos económicamente mis padres pusieron una tienda, y yo cuida a mis vacas y asistir a clases. Con el resto de mi tiempo surtir la tienda de mercancía, con transporte público. Yo recuerdo que llevaba costales de papá, cajas de plátano, cajas de jitomate, un costal de naranja, y todo era en bultos. Pasaron los años y los hermanos se casaron y se acabó la tienda. Se vendieron las vacas, y mi vida era muy presionada por la zona urbana que era grande. Mis medios me permitieron estudiar hasta el sexto año y empecé a trabajar en una fábrica de piezas de carro.

No había nada de superación. La policía presionaba al joven. Todo el tiempo lo arrestaba, golpeaba, y en el año 1980 era fuerte, como hasta hoy. Mis amigos estaban en toda la colonia, y de tantos amigos había un jovencito, que en paz descansa, había venido a Houston, Texas. Y me invitó a que viniéramos para la oportunidad de superarnos. Yo era muy aventado al trabajo, pues mi niñez siempre era de trabajo.

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